

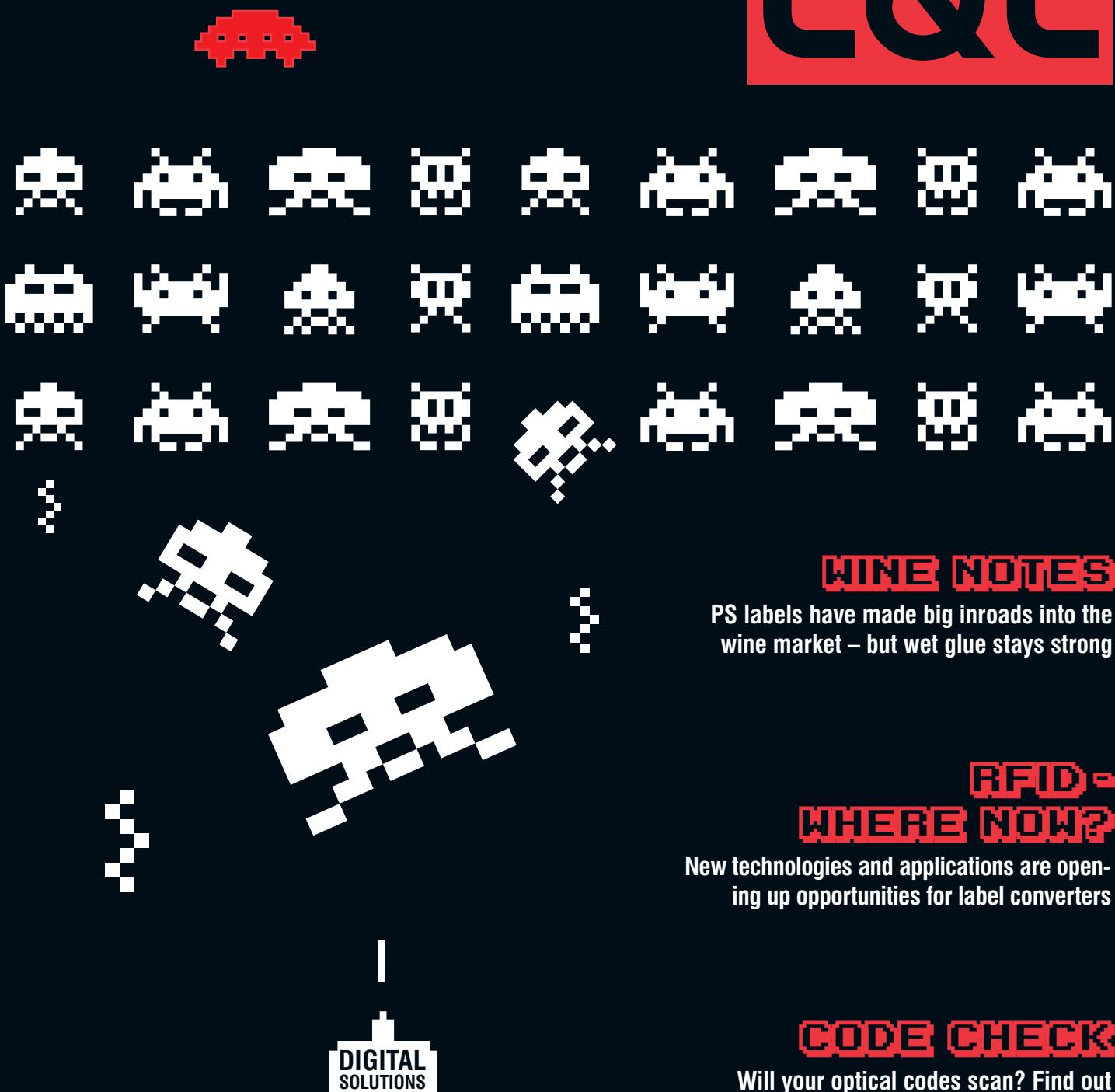
# DIGITAL DASH

The launch of four new digital label presses and standalone print/cut systems sets the scene for Labelexpo Americas

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VOL.32 ISSUE #3 JULY 2010  
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## WINE NOTES

PS labels have made big inroads into the wine market – but wet glue stays strong

## RFID - WHERE NOW?

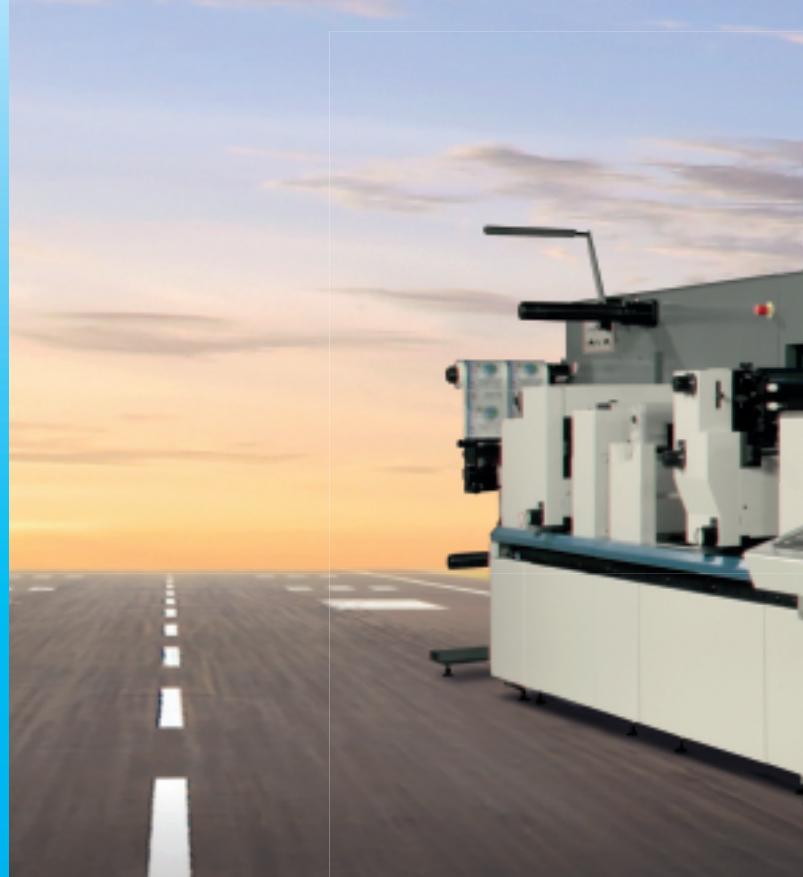
New technologies and applications are opening up opportunities for label converters

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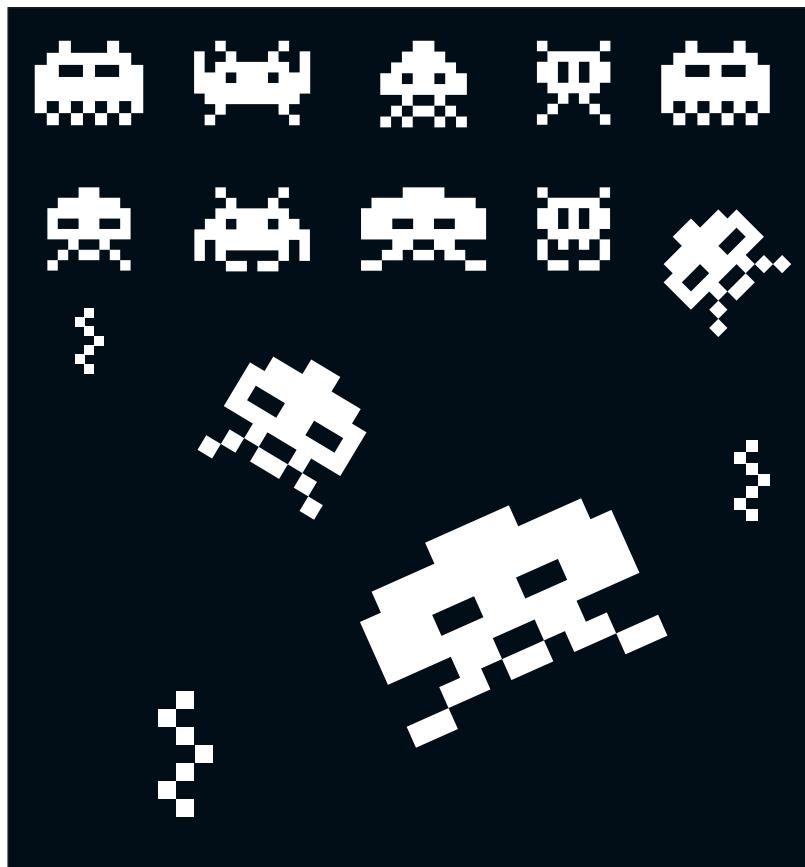
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Bob Van Horn  
Magnetic Cylinders - Ext. 167

Troy Brodhagen  
Flexible Dies - Ext. 160

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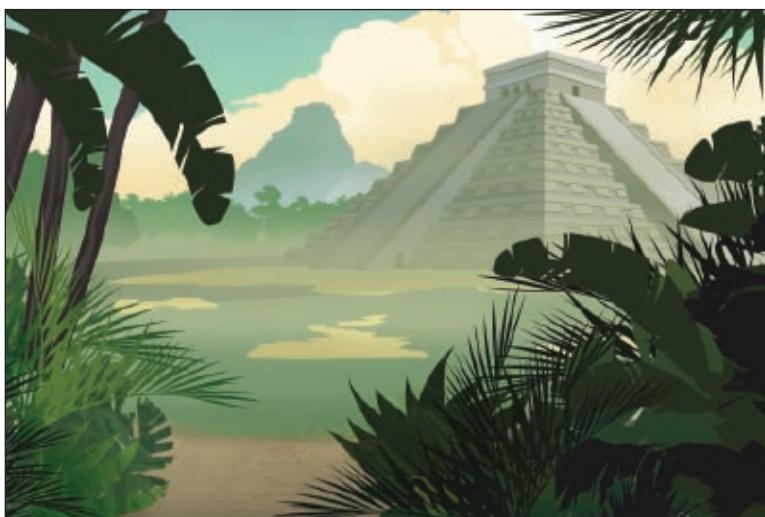
Tamar Labels looks to double turnover with niche digital products guided by a sophisticated MIS

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## LATIN AMERICAN SUMMIT DEMONSTRATES GROWTH POSSIBILITIES

At the Latin America Label Summit organized by L&L in Mexico City – a full report appears in this edition – three very interesting themes emerged which will be of interest to label converters globally as we move out of the recession.

Firstly, there was a fascinating panel discussion around global partnerships of label converters featuring Kurt Walker of Tesa Banfix in Switzerland and his Mexican partner Fernando Aranguren of Flexoprint. The two talked about the practical issues around working with teams on different continents. But the partnership was a striking success, enabling a major multi-national brand to launch a global product simultaneously in Europe, Latin America and China.

The benefits of such an alliance are that medium-sized label converters on different continents can effectively act as single global companies, delivering to end users the advantages of centralized artwork and local distribution of print-ready images.

Another theme which emerged clearly was the growing reality of environmental issues for label converters outside Europe and North America. Speakers from Procter & Gamble and Mexican brand Tequila Sauza both spoke of 'very aggressive measures' their companies were taking in the area of environmental sustainability. The fact is, environmental issues are no longer confined to end users and consumers in North America and Europe – brands want global solutions implemented locally, and they want them now.

Equally interesting, both P&G and Tequila Sauza emphasized the importance of converters providing them with a full service rather than simply manufacturing and supplying labels, citing collaboration on new product development as one area where converters can provide added value.

So here are the three 'big themes' which will effect all converters and drive business growth in the coming years: global converter alliances; environmental pressures and the opportunities they present; and converters turning from manufacturers to service providers.

### ANDY THOMAS

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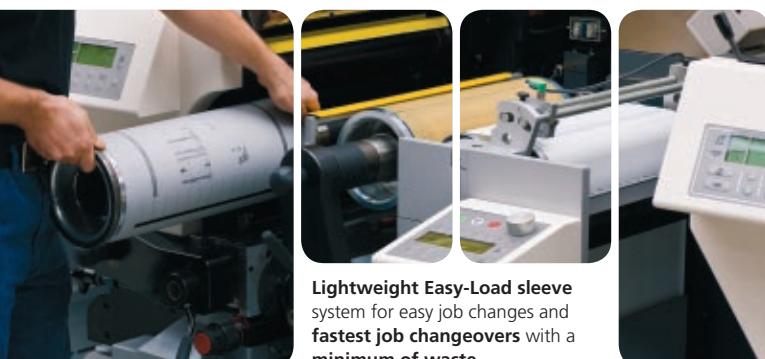
# The *future* offset platform is based on *sleeve* technology

Jakob Landberg  
Sales & Marketing Director



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# INBOX

## Sustainability: important, but boring

Thomas Wailgum, senior editor at [www.CIO.com](http://www.CIO.com), a resource for executives and IT leaders, authors numerous features and analyses on the business world's most challenging topics.

One of his recent posts, titled 'Sustainability: Important, but Boring as Hell', is in response to a discussion surrounding sustainability and SAP, the leading management software provider.

He said: 'I can't stand any more sustainability talk', and even went so far as to create a list of topics that he'd prefer to listen to, including the 'history of socks'.

What does the label industry think about sustainability? How do you feel when you hear the term 'Green' at an industry conference? Do you think the term sustainability is still too vague in the label industry? What are your issues surrounding sustainability? What do you find compelling about the issue?

Sustainability is clearly an important factor for all industries, particular ours where a huge amount of what we create results in a wasted by-product. We try to offer and provide 'green' alternatives whenever possible but clients are often reluctant to pay the difference, which is understandable in our current economic climate.

Sustainability has a long way to go before it is more widely accepted by the clients, and at the end of the day this will be the deciding factor in how "green" our businesses are.

Anon, Matform Self Adhesive Labels, UK



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'Over 16,000 visitors to Labelexpo Asia. Chinese market coming of age in terms of label quality.'

'In Shanghai. Pudong was swamp 20 years ago; now playground for modern architecture. Inspiring.'

#### Danielle Jerscheske – [@DanielleJersche](#)



'There will be helpful educational sessions for brand owners & packaging designers at Labelexpo this year. Learn what's new – help your business!'

'Fantastic meeting today with Vibrant Graphics in Milwaukee. Digital innovation with in-mold labels.'

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'In Guatemala: at DACSA, Central America's leading converter, small local market has encouraged extraordinary level of diversification.'

'Printing division of SABMiller in Colombia (country's no.1 brewery) produces 120 million sqm of labels per year on 3 Heidelberg presses.'

#### Roger Pellow – [@RogerPellow](#)



'In Barcelona: label associations agree that the industry needs a global sustainability solution.'

'Two weeks in India: label industry very healthy. Average printer growth 10-15%; top ones 40%.'



### CONTINUED GROWTH FOR STORE BRANDS SAYS PLMA CONSUMER STUDY

A new nationwide study in the USA reveals that more than eight out of ten supermarket shoppers see no improvement in the economy, and forty percent believe the situation has worsened.

As consumers continue to cope, the study affirms, the appeal of store brand products is stronger than ever and may even be intensifying. The findings are based on a poll of nearly 800 main household grocery shoppers conducted in February 2010 by GfK Custom Research North America for the Private Label Manufacturers Association, based in New York. Among the study highlights: For most American shoppers, the recovery has yet to begin. Asked whether the economy has changed over the past few months, 40 percent said conditions were worse, while another 42 percent said things have stayed the same. Fewer than one in five felt the economy had improved.

As a result, the recent surge in store brands sales is likely to continue. When asked how important economic conditions were in deciding to buy a supermarket store brand, four in ten responded 'very important'. A solid majority of consumers – more than six in ten – said they plan on buying more private label as they attempt to stretch their food dollars. Another finding that may also accrue to store brands' benefit: Half of shoppers intend to spend less money on groceries in the months ahead.

Shoppers who identify themselves as 'frequent' buyers of store brands are at an all-time high. Some 57 percent say they buy private label products frequently, a figure that has been increasing (it was under 55 percent a year ago). A greater number of shoppers are switching to store brands in product categories where they had previously only purchased a national brand. Some 43 percent report they have recently forsaken a familiar national brand for a private label counterpart, a marked increase since the June 2009 when only 35 percent said they had done so.

PLMA commissioned GfK to monitor consumer attitudes and behavior toward store brands in the US as private label sales and market shares across all retail channels began to surge about two years ago. Sales of store brand products topped USD \$86.4 across the major US retail channels over the past year, according to the latest data compiled by The Nielsen Company for PLMA. In supermarkets alone, where market share in units reached an historic high of 23.7 percent, store brands growth outpaced national brands by a spread of 8 basis points and dollar market share also set a new record at 18 percent. Store brands accounted for 90 percent of the sales growth in supermarkets, adding USD \$1.5 billion in incremental sales (+2.9 percent), while national brand sales were virtually flat for the year at +0.1 percent.

# NEWS

## THE INSIDER

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

### CHESAPEAKE ACQUIRES POLISH LABEL AND CARTON CONVERTER

Chesapeake, a supplier of consumer packaging, has reached an agreement to acquire Poland's leading producer of labels and cartons, Cezar. The operation is said to complement Chesapeake's existing facilities and further extends its supply network to develop and support its presence in Central Europe.

Jerry Kerins, chairman and CEO, said: 'Cezar is an impressive, well-respected operation and an ideal partner to further extend our position in Central and Eastern Europe. Cezar operates to exceptionally high production standards and benefits from new generation machinery establishing them firmly as a world-class manufacturer. This acquisition extends our service to customers and Cezar's rigorous quality standards, proactive approach to innovation and customer service closely match our own philosophy.' Cezar's main production site is based near Bialystok, north-east Poland, two hours drive from Warsaw. Cezar also has a satellite operation across the Polish border in Belarus. The business produces folding cartons as well as wet-applied, self-adhesive and in-mold labels. Employing over 300 people, Cezar is focused on the alcoholic drinks, pharmaceutical, confectionery and beauty-care markets supplying both pan-European and local customers. The business is certified to many international standards and has embraced lean manufacturing techniques including Kaizen, Kanban and has an established 5S system in place.

Jerry Kerins continued: 'The acquisition of Cezar is an important step in our strategy to develop and further extend our integrated supply network. We have also embarked on a major investment program which has benefited sites in the UK, Ireland, France, Germany and China. As well as new production equipment, to maximize efficiency and strengthen customer service levels, we are committed to product innovation to help our customers develop and extend their markets.'

### LOPAREX TO DOUBLE RELEASE LINER CAPACITY IN CHINA

Loparex has announced investments which will double manufacturing capacity at its Guangzhou, China, facility by the first quarter of 2011. The new capacity aims to meet the demands of both local Asia-Pacific customers as well as Loparex's global clients.



## FIRST GRANITE PRESS INSTALLED IN LATIN AMERICA

C5 DESIGN installs Gallus ECS 340 granite press

C5 Design, the newly established label printing division of plastic bottle producer 4E de México, hosted an open house at its facility in Tultitlán on the outskirts of Mexico City on the day after Label Summit Latin America, writes James Quirk. Around 40 people saw demonstrations of the Gallus ECS 340 granite press, the first installation of the machine in Latin America.

4E de México, founded in 2006, created its label printing division in March with the installation of the ECS 340 to speed up turnaround of the products it supplies to various retailers in Mexico, including Wal-Mart.

The company produces plastic bottles for gels, shampoos and detergents with a line of over 150 different products. The installation of the Gallus press, says general director Jorge Gonzalez, coupled with in-house design and pre-press departments, will help the company to turn a job around in just eight hours from label design, plate-making and the printing of the job. Workflow and platemaking equipment are supplied by EskoArtwork.

'We often had to wait for a month labels to be done externally,' he says, so in-house printing allows much quicker turnaround. The speed of the press is a key element of this. The machine also helps us to produce products that we previously were not able to, such as fragrance varnishes which are applied on the press.'

4E de México has experienced rapid growth since its foundation, with 500,000 bottles now being produced daily. Three years ago the company employed 10 people; it now has a staff of 200 after a high last year of 500. Increased automation in the plant was cited as the reason for decrease in employee numbers.

The company has won a number of Wal-Mart best supplier awards, including first place out of 10,000 companies in 2008 and third place last year. It will shortly begin to supply Wal-Mart in Central America and the US.

The ECS 340 installed at C5 Design is a fully UV, servo-driven 8-color press with cold foil and lamination. Hans-Ramón Hofmann, Gallus's sales director for Latin America, says: 'A big advantage of the ECS 340 is its very short web path – 11 meters for 8 colors – so job changeovers don't generate a lot of waste. The quick changeover means that it is ideal for short runs, while the granite base results in stable register.' Hofmann revealed that a water-based version of the machine will be available at the end of the year.

The ECS 340, with over 30 installations worldwide since its launch at Labelexpo Europe 2009, is constructed from recyclable technical granite, which helps eliminate vibration and noise from the press line. The press is designed to reduce initial investment levels to allow the cost effective processing of commodity labels.



## EFI TO ACQUIRE RADIUS SOLUTIONS SOFTWARE integrated into Jetrion

EFI has reached an agreement to acquire Radius Solutions, a provider of print MIS software for the packaging industry.

'We are very pleased to add Radius to our growing portfolio of industry-leading software solutions targeted to the print industry,' said Marc Olin, senior vice president and general manager, Apps, EFI. 'EFI's goal is to offer our customers a complete product portfolio that assists them from job creation to production, while allowing them to be more efficient and effective, and ultimately, more profitable. Radius allows us to bring this concept to the packaging market, which is one of the largest segments of the print market and an area of strategic focus for EFI, joining our Pace and Monarch MIS systems which are targeted to the display graphics and commercial print markets.'

Radius Solutions will become part of the Advanced Professional Print Software (Apps) division of EFI. EFI intends to integrate a number of its products including Fiery, Vutek, Jetrion, Digital StoreFront, PrintFlow and Auto-Count, with the Radius product line.

Radius Solutions is headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, with direct operations in the United States and Europe.

'We are very excited to have Radius Solutions join the EFI family,' said David Taylor, President and CEO of Radius Solutions. 'Our ERP packaging software fits strategically within EFI's solutions portfolio. Our clients will gain a supplier with a global footprint and the additional resources of a tier one organization. I look forward to managing the Radius product line within their world class organization.'



## SPARTANICS OPENS LASER DIE-CUTTING RESEARCH LABORATORY

Label and packaging converters can test materials in laboratory

Label and packaging converters seeking to use laser die-cutting technology for pressure sensitive labels, RFID tags, paperboard and cardboard products, finishing plastic products and other converting/packaging applications, can now determine if the materials they use can be handled by the technology by sending samples for engineering studies and analyses to the new Spartanics Laser Cutting Applications Laboratory for Materials Research.

Spartanics laser die-cutting applications engineers have tested laser die-cutters with varying laser strengths and software configurations with a wide range of materials including: plastic films; polyesters; polycarbonates; foams; textiles; paper; adhesive tapes; non-wovens; wood, laminates, pressure-sensitive substrates, magnetic materials, polypropylene, polymides, abrasives, rubber, among others. 'Formalization of the laboratory signals Spartanics intent to systematize this growing

knowledgebase for cross-industry access,' said the company in a statement.

The Spartanics laboratory provides free, detailed engineering analyses of maximum material thicknesses that can be handled with these different substrates, including brand name materials, correlated to laser power and other variables. Paul Dirienzo, Spartanics director of engineering, said: 'The explosion in new materials with different properties – tensile strengths, toughness, resilience, etc. – has been especially pronounced in the last decade. During this same time period, laser die-cutting technology, largely due to more sophisticated software engineering, continues to evolve at such a rapid pace that the conclusions one might make today about whether a certain plastic, non-woven, or even nanomaterial can be adequately handled by digital die-cutting is likely not going to be the same in just a few years.'

## ROTOMETRICS TO BEGIN MANUFACTURING IN THAILAND

RotoMetrics, a manufacturer of rotary tooling, is increasing its investment in Asia with plans to add a manufacturing facility in Bangkok, Thailand.

Michael Bryant, RotoMetrics' president and CEO, said: 'Investing in this state-of-the-art facility will ensure that we can provide the region's highest level of manufacturing quality and customer service to the growing markets in South East Asia, China and India. It will be modeled after the RotoMetrics facilities in other parts of the world, including

implementation of a rigorous lean manufacturing program to maximize efficiency and quality.'

The addition of manufacturing capacity means Bangkok will become RotoMetrics' fifth full-service facility, spanning four continents – Asia, Australia, Europe and North America.

The initiative to implement manufacturing at RotoMetrics SE Asia is already underway and production is expected to begin later this year.

## HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

### XEIKON APPOINTS DISTRIBUTOR IN INDIA

Xeikon, a division of Punch Graphix, has partnered with India-based Flexo Image Graphics (FIC) to strengthen its network in the digital label printing and folding carton markets on the Indian sub-continent. Under the terms of the distribution agreement, FIC will support Xeikon in the label and packaging printing market, by providing sales and service support for the Xeikon 3000 family of digital presses as well as Xeikon's finishing, workflow and substrate products for the label market.

'Being in the label printing market for almost a decade, we closely monitor new trends and expectations of our customers,' said Gourav Roy, managing director at Flexo Image Graphics. 'During a recent market survey, we identified that large label converters are looking for high quality, short run applications. So we wanted to work with a partner who could deliver excellent print quality for short runs – and who scores better than competing products on productivity and cost effectiveness. The only name that came to mind was Xeikon.' Hans Gerinckx, international channel director for Xeikon, sees significant market opportunities in India during the coming years. 'With an annual growth rate of 30 percent, the label market in India – followed closely by the folding market – is rapidly becoming a very important market for us,' said Gerinckx.

INDIA Label Show 2008 marketing campaign theme



### LABELEXPO INDIA EXTENDED TO FOUR DAYS

Labelexpo India has been extended by an extra day, with the event now scheduled to take place on December 8-11 at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi. The show's organizer, Tarsus Group, has cited 'high demand' as the reason for the extension.

Tarsus reports that a number of leading international suppliers have already booked stands, including Avery Dennison, Erhardt + Leimer, Gallus, HP, Omet, Mark Andy, Martin Automatic, Nilpeter and UPM Raflatac. Among the local companies to have confirmed their presence are Holostik India, Kaygee Loparex India, Kurz India, RK Machine Tool Industry, SMI Coated Products, Stic-On Papers and Weldon Celloplast. Tarsus says that the show floor is set to have more machinery and live demonstrations than ever before.

During the event, Nilpeter will launch its FB-3300 Servo Build press, built in India. The machine is said to have a number of

features for value-added printing, such as a splicing table/web infeed, slide-out print stations and a Midpoint Pacing system which resets the tension between the print and die-cutting stations to improve register and reduce waste. The press has an Instant Registry Response system which enables multi-direction register adjustment without affecting web tension.

Roger Pellow, Labelexpo managing director, said: 'Even with eight months to go we can see that Labelexpo India will support the vibrant Indian label industry and provide a platform to present the latest innovations. There will be more working machinery and live demonstrations than ever before, ensuring the strong growth of the market and show. Labelexpo India will be the only event to be at for professionals in the Indian labeling industry this year and we are looking forward to welcoming everyone to New Delhi in December.'

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## AVERY LAUNCHES MICROSITE

SITE targets end users

The Roll Materials division of Avery Dennison has launched [www.enhanceyourbrand.com](http://www.enhanceyourbrand.com), a new microsite focused on pressure-sensitive labeling.

The site demonstrates to visitors the visual impact and operational efficiencies of pressure-sensitive labels. It targets packaging designers, brand managers and packaging engineers with consumer packaged goods (CPG) companies serving the food, beverage/beer, wine, home and personal care segments.

'Fasson pressure-sensitive labeling technology from Avery Dennison offers CPG companies a more impactful way to present their brands to the market,' said Jon Maley, vice president marketing for Avery Dennison. 'As an innovative alternative to traditional labeling technologies, pressure-sensitive labeling boasts an array of benefits such as versatility, improved shelf-appeal, functionality, better end-use performance, capital and operational efficiencies, and simplified operations. Enhanceyourbrand.



com is a definitive source for pressure-sensitive dialogue and information about these benefits.'

### The new microsite offers:

- A comparison between pressure-sensitive labels and older labeling technologies, such as shrink and glue-applied.
- Technical information about Avery Dennison pressure-sensitive technology.
- Information about the diversity of Avery Dennison's innovative self-adhesive solutions for consumer products.
- Case studies showcasing the shelf-impact and sales-lift aspects of pressure-sensitive labels.
- Myths, preconceptions and the facts about pressure-sensitive labeling.

'Great product packaging promotes sales, makes consumers aware of improvements and supports the product brand,' Maley said. 'Packaging can make the difference between success and failure of a product.'



L-R: Markus Seeger, Kocher + Beck; Francisco Xavier Vilas, Vigma; Frank Hasselberg, Marisa Ramirez, Scott Windmeyer, all Kocher + Beck

## KOCHER + BECK APPOINT SOUTH AMERICA PARTNER

Kocher + Beck has partnered with Buenos Aires, Argentina-based Vigma, a supplier of rotary tooling equipment throughout South America.

Francisco Xavier Vilas, president of Vigma, has over 18 years of experience in the label converting industry with a primary focus on solid and flexible die technology.

Frank Hasselberg of Kocher + Beck USA said: 'Kocher + Beck has been active in the Latin America market for many years and South America is especially known as a very competitive and demanding market. Kocher + Beck is now able to support South America with a wide range of products, combined with local service representatives.'



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## ESKOARTWORK REPORTS SUCCESSFUL USER EVENT

ESKOWORLD conference sees good growth

The EskoWorld 2010 worldwide conference, held from April 18-21, 2010 at the Marriott Tampa Waterside Hotel and Marina in Florida, USA, was 'a great success', according to customers attending the event. EskoWorld brought together customers and EskoArtwork industry partners to exchange ideas and product knowledge.

The event saw good growth from last year, with attendees coming from many different market segments: packaging and graphic arts companies such as converters, commercial printers, publishers, sign and display firms, to packaging designers and brand owners. Users also came from around the world, including Australia, Japan, China, India and South America.

'EskoWorld was extremely well attended with nearly 10 percent growth and over 250 customers. Our objective was, as always, very simple: to listen to and inform our customers and provide a forum where they could intermingle with our staff and each other. The Partner Zone was very well received, offering users a great opportunity to interact with other vendors and learn how to get full value from EskoArtwork solutions. It was very successful,' said Mark Quinlan, president of EskoArtwork North America. 'In particular, people were excited about the new Automation Engine. It will provide significant value to, and take costs from, their businesses.'

EskoArtwork arranged for a broad spectrum of speakers with presenters from multiple brand owners as well as leading partners, such as Hewlett Packard and Bobst. Harry Epstein, VP innovation at HAVI Global Solutions, delivered the keynote. EskoWorld offered more than 75 different sessions covering a wide range of topics, including digital flexo; commercial printing pre-press; packaging pre-press; structural design and short run production; 3D design applications; brand management software; and packaging digital print.

EskoWorld's Partner Zone was sponsored by a broad number of supporting packaging technologies, including those from DuPont, AICOMP Consulting, Bobst, Flint Group, HP, Dr. Lauterbach and Partner, Prism, Pantone, Dassault Systèmes, SunChemical and Strata.

'EskoWorld 2010 was a very positive event. We wanted technical information, and that's exactly what we got,' said Scott Collett, electronic pre-press technician at Prime Package & Label in St Louis, Missouri, USA. 'We wanted to plan around EskoArtwork's software updates so, for us, the product roadmaps were very helpful, as was the Software Lab. The HD Flexo and color management presentations were technically oriented and well explained. And the dinners and entertainment made it easier to network with others.'

EskoArtwork is already making plans for the next EskoWorld 2011, which will be held in the spring of 2011.

**LABELS&LABELING**

AC Labels is a subsidiary of the Mercian Labels Group, which manufacturers LabelLock security seals



## AC LABELS TO SUPPLY DETEX LABELS FOLLOWING CUSTOMER COLLAPSE

AC Labels, which previously manufactured Detex labels for the verification of gamma radiation sterilization, has launched the Gammatex brand following the collapse of its largest customer for that range, Sessions of York.

Dr Adrian Steele, managing director of AC Labels, said: 'It was with great sadness that we have witnessed the administration of Sessions of York last week, which supplied many satisfied customers with Detex labels over the years. Detex labels were commonly used in the medical and pharmaceuticals industries as verification that products had been subjected to the necessary dosage of radiation to ensure full sterilization.'

'Without Sessions of York to act as a route to market for us, we have been approached by their previous customers with requests to manufacture a radiation sensitive product directly. This we will happily do under the name of Gammatex, with a price guarantee that will be a pleasant surprise to former customers. We already have new products in the pipeline, and will be working with current users to bring new innovations in gamma sterilization indicating labels to the marketplace.' AC Labels is a subsidiary of the Mercian Labels Group based in Staffordshire, UK, which has a portfolio of specialist labeling products including LabelLock security seals.

## DAYMARK TECHNOLOGIES ACQUIRES MILLIKEN CONVERTING

US-based DayMark Technologies has acquired Milliken Converting's coating facility in Ontario, Canada. The Canadian will now do business as DayMark Technologies, Markham Converting Facility.

Bob Piefke, division manager for DayMark Technologies, said: 'We are now vertically integrated in the supply chain. The acquisition gives us wide-web, pressure-sensitive capabilities in conjunction with in-line silicone coating, enhancing our ability to meet all pressure-sensitive and specialty coating needs of the market.' DayMark Technologies is the newest division of CMC DayMark, and manufacturers dissolving, water-soluble materials and adhesives for labeling, welding applications, packaging, creative consumer products and more.



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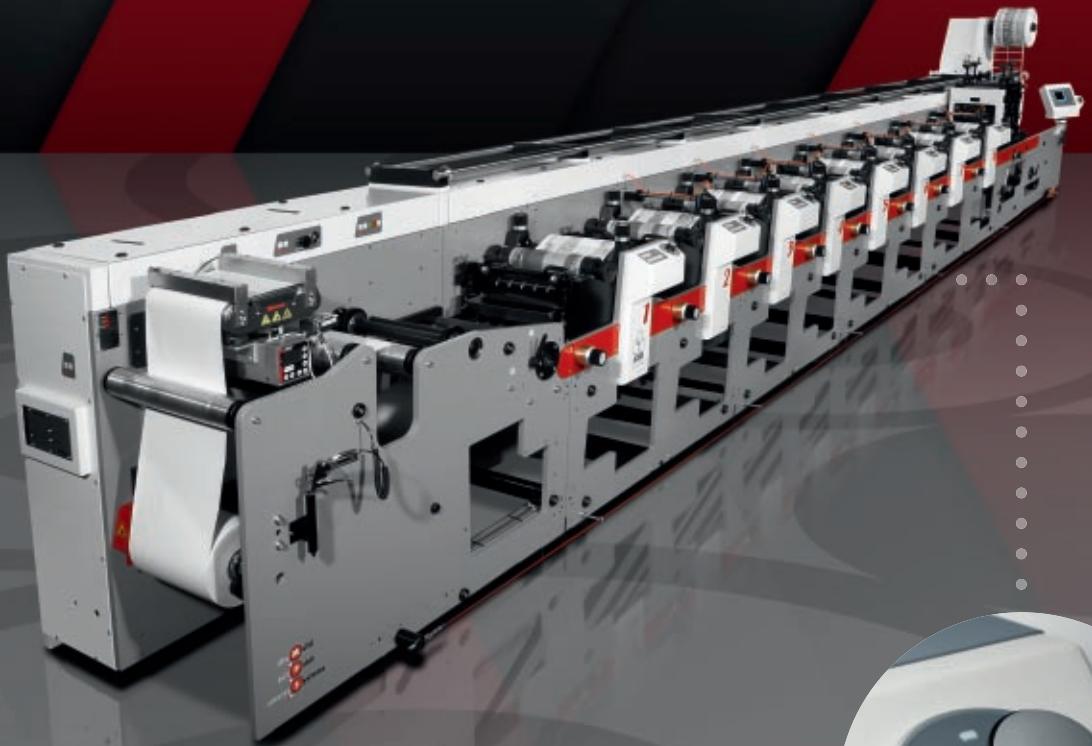


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# NEWS

## STUDENT WINS ESKOARTWORK PACKAGING CHALLENGE

**SWEDISH** graduate awarded prize for Suite 10 packaging design

At the 2010 EskoWorld User Conference in Tampa, Florida, EskoArtwork awarded Anna-Lena Jansson, a 2010 graduate student in packaging design at Broby Grafiska in Sweden, the company's Software Packaging Challenge grand prize.

Earlier this year, EskoArtwork invited anyone involved in packaging – from design agencies, tradeshops and converters to educational institutions and students – to show off their creative talents by entering the EskoArtwork Software Packaging Challenge. The competition challenged entrants to design the packaging for EskoArtwork's Suite 10, an upgrade of the company's portfolio of software for packaging and print professionals. The winning design will be produced to ship more than 10,000 EskoArtwork Suite 10 software packages.

An independent panel of five industry experts from all over the world evaluated the entries. 'We were completely overwhelmed by the interest in the contest. We received

over 500 inquiries expressing interest and, ultimately, 62 entries,' said Susie Stitzel, EskoArtwork's design lifecycle manager. 'It was an interesting twist for EskoArtwork. While we develop all of the tools, in this role we were acting as the brand owner challenging the global packaging design community. And it was typical to the way the process works: we supplied the design brief, branding elements, technical support and logistics, and left it up to the participants to create packaging designs that stood out – and a group of independent judges to determine the winners.'

'I was pleasantly surprised with the diversity of the entries, and the scope of the creativity that was demonstrated by each of the submissions. There were so many different creative ideas on something that you would think would be as "straightforward" as software packaging. Design creativity and the ability to realistically produce the packaging cost-effectively were very critical to the overall judging process and the determination of winners, along with sustainability,' explained Chris Lyons, publisher of the design group for ST Media and chairman of the judges. 'What was intriguing about the grand prize winner was the extraordinarily clean lines and visually stimulating use of structure and graphics, together. The cube design was nice, with an adjustable sleeve to accommodate the multiple DVDs. I think that it bodes well for the future of the packaging design that a student won this competition.'

The grand prize was awarded to Anna-Lena Jansson, a 2010 graduate student in packaging design at Broby Grafiska in Sweden. During the three-year education program, Ms Jansson received training and developed her skills in special subjects such as structural design (using ArtiosCAD), graphic design, packaging construction and pre-press.

'I have a passion for packaging design and ArtiosCAD. So, I knew this contest was just the thing for me,' enthused Jansson. 'My basic idea was to create a simple packaging design that looked high-tech. It's produced entirely in paper, making it both environmentally friendly and low-cost to produce. I also put a great deal of attention to branding and marketing. The package can thus stand on its own for demonstrations at trade shows and can be fully branded by the company.' As winner of the contest, Jansson receives 2,000 euros.



### THE INSIDER

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES



### SANDON WINS EFTA AWARD FOR THIRD CONSECUTIVE TIME

Anilox roll manufacturer Sandon Global Engraving has been awarded the Supplier of the Year award in the Silver class by EFTA. The award honors companies nominated by EFTA members as their supplier of choice for 2009. 'This award is the result of the incredible efforts put in by the team of people at Sandon Global from sales through to manufacturing and service. Winning this award for the third time running is a great achievement and reflects both customer confidence in our products and the rapid growth we have achieved since the company was founded in 2004,' said John Millington, managing director.

### US PRINTERS MERGE

Western Shield Label Company, a converter in Southern California, USA, has merged with California Pacific Label (aka Anaheim Custom Printed Label), a printer based in Anaheim, California, that specializes in gourmet food labels and short run jobs.

'The combination of Western Shield and California Pacific gives us immediate access to additional markets, as well as some great capabilities and personnel,' said Frank Connnelly, CEO of Western Shield.

'The merger will also improve our efficiencies and buying power,' added Thomas Moyer, president of Western Shield.

'By joining forces with Western Shield, we will be able to continue providing our customers with the great quality and service that they've come to expect. Western Shield is a top-notch converter and I will be working with them personally for at least the next five years to make sure the transition goes as smoothly as possible for California Pacific's customers,' said Gary Dimick, president and founder of California Pacific Labels.

Manufacturing has been consolidated into Western Shield's Rancho Dominguez plant, and all orders and billing will be handled under the Western Shield name.

# NEWS



## GULF PRINT & PACK ANNOUNCES NEW DEVELOPMENTS

F&E has announced several new initiatives for the next edition of Gulf Print & Pack, which will take place at the Airport Expo in Dubai on 14-17 March 2011. All of these are aimed at addressing the exciting developments within the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

As previously announced, the exhibition is now under new management and is being run by the same team that organizes the LabelExpo Global Series exhibitions around the world, specializing in printing events with the latest working machinery. The show will be marketed under one brand (Gulf Print & Pack), instead of the former Gulf Print and Gulf Pack shows.

In terms of packaging, the focus will now be on package printing and converting. In particular, this will include flexible packaging, carton and box production and corrugated case production. The materials as well as the printing and packaging processes for these will also be covered extensively in a series of workshops being run throughout the four days. Bottling, filling, canning and logistics will also feature, while the event will also host a dedicated section for labeling technology.

In addition to the latest printing technology, there will also be a series of workshops focusing on digital printing. They will highlight the latest technologies, opportunities and the wider reach of digital printing as well as demonstrating how digitalizing a businesses printing environment will help cost production and profitability.

Gulf Print & Pack will attract printers and brand owners with its focus on working machinery and interactive workshops. Key manufacturers in the industry have secured their exhibition space and large delegations are expected to attend from across the Middle East and North Africa.

Roger Pellow, Gulf Print & Pack managing director said: 'The MENA region continues to be one of the most exciting hubs for the world's printing and packaging markets. Many recent advances in technology provide extraordinary opportunities for print and packaging converters and manufacturers. We look forward to be in Dubai with visitors and exhibitors alike to benefit from generating business, to share knowledge and, most importantly, to network and set up new partnerships and contracts.'

**LABELS & LABELING**

## REPACORP UNVEILS DIGITAL LABEL QUOTE MODULE

US label converter Repacorp has launched a quote module for label distributors that is linked to their website. For a small fee, Repacorp will provide code that links a distributor's website to an instant online quote module. Within 15 minutes, distributors can sign up and offer digital labels on their website with accurate live pricing. The quote module allows distributors to maintain their markup, upload their logo and choose a color scheme that matches their branding. Repacorp will continue to update and enhance the quote module, adding new features in the future.

Repacorp has the ability to digitally print label widths up to 7.55 inches. The company's digital presses use UV inks that are durable even without coatings, while matte and gloss varnishes and overlaminates are available. Variable printing and the ability to print opaque white ink are also options. Digital presses eliminate the need for plates, and Repacorp's tool-free cutting system eliminates the need for dies.

'Our digital cutting system eliminates tooling. Just include a die line with your artwork or tell us what shape you want, and we will cut your label to your specification. You can now create any shape imaginable to make your label stand out on the shelves,' said Tony Heinl, executive vice president of Repacorp. 'We are seeing very creative labels coming out. We have freed designers to create any shape without tooling restrictions. They are designing brand recognition through shape as well as with logos and color. Pricing is low enough that even small companies can afford to run multiple versions of a product label for marketing research.'

Repacorp offers a large selection of material for a wide variety of label application: synthetics, papers, tag, fluorescents, foils and environmentally sustainable materials. 'Different materials, protective coatings, variable printing, the ability to print an opaque white and multiple versions – all of these are selections the customer can choose in the quote module,' Heinl continued. 'A lot of distributors have asked for this. Even if you are a label manufacturer, you can sign up for our quote module and instantly offer your customers digital labels. You can build up your digital business and purchase equipment at a later date. Imagine – you and your customers can receive accurate live pricing on your website, and you can enter any size or shape label without tooling cost.'



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# NEW PRODUCTS



1

2



## 1 NANOTECHNOLOGY FOR PRINTED ELECTRONICS NTERA

Ntera has launched a nanotechnology to mass produce electronic displays on a wide range of paper, packaging, ticket and greeting card products. The technology, which is being market-tested in Europe, allows color displays to be 'printed' on almost any traditional printed product at low cost and with minimal power requirements, says the company.

Working on a similar principle to how automotive mirrors are able to darken in response to light stimulus, Ntera's NCD display deploys an array of electrodes made of a metal oxide semiconductor mounted on a flexible film that reportedly allows it to produce images with a resolution equivalent to conventional inkjet print resolutions. When electrochromic molecules are attached to a film of semiconducting nanoparticles, it effectively creates a film that is several hundreds of layers of electrochromic molecules thick. A charge applied through the semiconducting particles causes the molecules at the surface to be charged and therefore to change color. Because the film is many layers of particles thick, the optical change, barely detectable in only one layer of particles, is dramatic. Adding an opaque white layer behind the electrochromic layer as background to the images makes these displays even more vivid. Like printed text on paper, NCD displays can be viewed clearly from virtually any angle and under a wide range of lighting conditions, and require only a fraction of the power of LCD displays to maintain the image.

Ntera's NanoChromics technology is translatable to virtually any kind of printable surface. Applied using Ntera's NanoChromics ink systems, which enable cost-effective manufacturing of printed electronic NCD displays on a variety of flexible substrate materials using industry standard screen printing, flexo and inkjet printing techniques and equipment, the printable nature of NCD displays will create ubiquity throughout numerous markets and product categories. 'The ability to print low-power electro-optical displays on virtually any type of item, using existing industrial printing infrastructure, heralds a new dimension of interaction between people and information,' said the company in a statement.

## 2 DIGITAL LABEL FINISHING SYSTEM PRIMERA TECHNOLOGY

Primera Technology, a manufacturer of digital label presses and printers, has unveiled its new FX1200e digital label finishing system.

FX1200e is an off-line label production machine that accepts up to 305 mm (12") O.D. rolls of printed output from digital label presses such as Primera's CX1200e digital color label press. It offers a variety of features, including lamination, digital die-cutting, matrix waste removal, slitting and rewinding.

Using Primera's patent-pending QuadraCut technology, virtually any size and shape of label can be produced including complicated contour cuts, without the need to purchase expensive rotary or flat dies, says the company. Up to four cutting blades can be installed at one time, which is claimed to quadruple the speed compared to machines that use only a single blade.

'After introducing our CX1200e digital color label press last year, we discovered that the few existing finishing systems available were not fast enough, not reliable enough and not easy enough to use. So, we built our own,' said Mark D. Strobel, Primera's vice president of sales and marketing. 'The result is FX1200e. There's nothing else that compares to it for even four or five times the price. Although FX1200e is ideal for finishing digital output created by a wide range of digital presses, it's the perfect companion to Primera's CX1200e digital color label press.'

Primera says that the FX1200e is the industry's first digital label finishing system to be UL listed, CE certified and FCC Class A approved.



### 3 FACESTOCKS FOR PREMIUM LABELING AND 'NO LABEL LOOK' UPM RAFLATAC

As a new member of UPM Raflatac's wine range, Opaline WSA provides a pearlescent sheen which gives the label a shimmering effect. The new Castgloss WSA has a consistently smooth surface that delivers cloud-free gloss across the printed label, with its whiteness and opacity allowing maximum contrast. The company has also launched a top coated PET face material designed to add an extra effect to 'no label look' applications. PET Tinted TC 36 has a metallized, silvery shade aimed at premium beverage and cosmetics products.

The new face material can be combined with the durable PET30 liner to maximize performance during conversion and high-speed dispensing.

### FLEXCEL SRX SYSTEM KODAK

Kodak is leveraging the core technology used in its Flexcel NX digital flexographic system in its newly launched Flexcel SRX system, which is said to offer the print stability and robustness of a conventional flexo plate with the tonal reproduction of a digital system. 'The new Kodak Flexcel SRX system provides an entry level into the superior print benefits afforded by Kodak's flat top dot technology and proven flexographic plate imaging technology,' said Doug Edwards, general manager, pre-press solutions and vice president, Kodak.

### NEW PLATEMAKING PROCESS MACDERMID

MacDermid Printing Solutions has introduced a new platemaking process, called Lux, which is claimed to produce digital plates with an extended print gamut, reduced fluting in corrugated, and improved print performance with smoother vignettes, higher contrast and faster press start-up. The process works with MacDermid's existing plates, does not require modification to current equipment, and can be used with all flexo lasers.

'The print results that our customers have reported during testing have been spectacular,' said Dr Timothy Gotsick, director of innovation at MacDermid. 'By including this simple step in the platemaking process, we create an enhanced dot profile that can quite simply print better.'

CSW, based in Ludlow, Massachusetts, USA, has been using MacDermid's new Lux process for several months. Marek Skrzynski, director of graphics, R&D, at CSW, said: 'It has been very easy to integrate this technology into our pre-press workflow. We are able to use our existing equipment and products with Lux. The biggest plus of this technology is that it enables us to offer digital flexo plates for the first time to customers across all packaging segments; wide and narrow web, folding cartons, and corrugated printing. They are delighted with the print quality and consistency.'

'With the introduction of Lux, we are offering our customers the ability to differentiate themselves in the flexo marketplace,' said Scot Benson, vice president and general manager at MacDermid. 'By offering this versatile new technology that can be used with the same plates and same equipment that our customers already use, we are providing them the greatest amount of freedom in how they choose to run their business.'

# NEW PRODUCTS

4



## 4 NEW FEATURES FOR RSC SLITTER REWINDER ROTOCONTROL

Rotocontrol has announced a number of enhancements to its RSC slitter rewinder inspection machine line, including a new, moveable operator console, standard motorized slitting system, improved razor slitting cartridge and the addition of an onboard, 800mm roll lift option. 'We take customer feedback seriously and strive to accommodate special requests,' said Marco Aengenvoort, managing director of Rotocontrol. 'As part of our continuous improvement program, if a special request is a feature that will benefit other converter applications, we will integrate it as a standard feature in the next generation product.'

## 6-COLOR DOTRIX MODULAR LM AGFA GRAPHICS

Agfa Graphics has launched its Dotrix Modular LM press, designed to handle low-migration packaging applications. 'Printing with low-migration inks is crucial in the food service industry, ensuring that no contamination occurs from the ink on the outside of the packaging to the food inside,' says the company, which has also unveiled a new low-migration ink, Agorix LM. Jan de Vooght, head of sales and marketing, industrial single pass inkjet, Agfa, said: 'UV inkjet printing methods are green and safe and are considered the future of the package

printing industry. Agfa has worked closely with end users, print head manufacturers and industry experts to launch the low migration application. To packaging designers, printers, converters and brand owners this is the most advanced and most cost efficient system on the market for short and medium runs of high quality printing.'

The new Dotrix Modular LM features 6-color printing; up to 90 percent reproduction of Pantone colors through the use of Apogee ColorTune Spot and Apogee ColorTune CMM; medium web (63 cm) single pass inkjet UV printing at 32m/min; and in-line rotary sheet cutter and stacker with variable sheet size cutting for folding carton and plastic substrates.

## NEW E+L INSPECTION SYSTEM ADDED TO FINISHING PRODUCTS ROTOFLEX

Rotoflex has added a new 100 percent inspection system from Erhardt + Leimer on most of its finishing products. The LT web inspection system will provide 'high-quality inspection at a very competitive price', says the company.

## DIGITAL LABEL PRESS EPSON

Epson launched its SurePress L-4033A digital label press at Ipx. The company says that the versatile narrow web press has been designed to print labels efficiently and profitably to meet the growing global demand for fast turnaround, low volume and multiple version label jobs.

Since it was first shown in prototype form three years ago, the SurePress L-4033A has reportedly undergone significant development. It uses Epson's Micro Piezo inkjet technology and a new six-color, water-based pigment ink. The press prints on a choice of off-the-shelf paper and film up to 330mm wide, at speeds of up to 5m/min. A range of post-press options are available to suit specific needs.

The SurePress L-4033A has been designed to fit into existing digital workflows. Epson is working with partners on every aspect of digital label production from color management to substrates and finishing options. On the Epson booth at Ipx, EskoArtwork demonstrated a new digital front-end developed specifically for the SurePress L-4033A, and GM showcased its new DC330 mini-converter.

Marc Tinkler, senior business development manager at Epson Europe, says: 'Epson's Micro Piezo technology is ideal for industrial printing applications. The Epson SurePress L-4033A is our first industrial press and demonstrates the company's strong commitment to delivering professional solutions to the packaging and labeling industry.'

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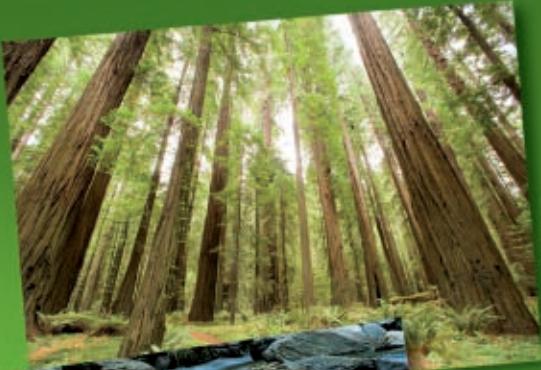
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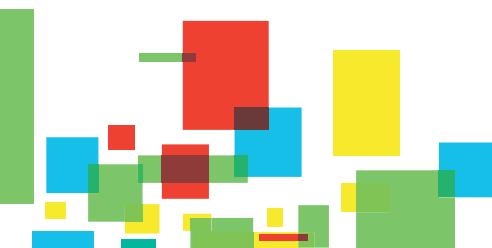
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# ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS



## TETRA PAK TO INTRODUCE FSC-LABELED CARTONS IN CHINA

**TETRA PAK** will introduce aseptic cartons bearing the label of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) in China starting this July

The first Tetra Pak cartons with FSC labels in China will be available in three carton formats: Tetra Fino Aseptic, Tetra Prisma Aseptic and Tetra Brik Aseptic. It is expected that Tetra Pak cartons with FSC labels will reach two billion in 2010 in China alone, with a goal of reaching 14 billion FSC-labeled Tetra Pak packages sold in China in 2011.

'This represents another step in Tetra Pak's ongoing commitment to support responsible forest management and drive environmental performance,' says the company. 'On the raw material front, Tetra Pak works closely with its paperboard suppliers to ensure that all supply comes from known and acceptable sources. Tetra Pak's ultimate goal is to have all supply certified to the highest standard, currently set by FSC.'

Since the introduction of the world's first FSC-labeled liquid food cartons in the UK in 2007, Tetra Pak has introduced FSC-labeled cartons in several markets around the globe, with the total number exceeding 2.3 billion in 2009.

'Tetra Pak is committed to sustainable development and is working together with suppliers, customers, consumers and NGOs to create a green chain from the upper stream all the way down to the end user,' said Hudson Lee, president of Tetra Pak China. 'We are working hard to

support responsible forest management and certification in China, building a convenient platform for consumers to be able to support environmental protection and participate in low-carbon activities by teaming up.'

In China, Tetra Pak is actively supporting the country's sustainable forest management efforts. Since 2006, Tetra Pak has been working with WWF, the China Green Foundation (CGF) and the forestry authority to promote responsible forest management, to provide support for China's forests to get certified and to provide support for the local sustainable forest management system in the country. In July 2008, with support from Tetra Pak, over 100,000 hectares of forests of Yongan Forestry in Fujian obtained FSC certification, bringing the total area of FSC-certified forests in China to over 700,000 hectares and making China a leader in this area in Asia. In 2010, Tetra Pak is providing support for responsible forest management and certification work in the Tengchong forest, in Yunnan Province.

The FSC label guarantees that the wood fibers in the package are traceable all the way through the supply chain back to the forest and that the paperboard used in the package comes from FSC-certified forests and other controlled sources.

### ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

THE LATEST ON SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

### TORRASPAPÉL PURCHASES 86% CERTIFIED PULP IN 2009

Torraspapel, part of the Lecta Group, significantly increased the purchase of pulp sourced from certified forest plantations, reaching 86 percent in the year 2009.

The remaining 14 percent came from controlled sources accepted by the certifications themselves. In this way, the company has advanced, and even surpassed, the objective set out in its 2008 Environmental Report of 70 percent in the purchase of certified pulp for 2010.

Torraspapel guarantees the sustainable origin of the wood it uses to manufacture its products and can document that this wood comes only from legal and uncontroversial sources, all either certified or controlled. Proof of this is the securing of multi-site PEFC and FSC chain-of-custody certifications for all of its operations and product lines.

### TAGHLEEF INDUSTRIES INVESTS IN BOPLA FILM PRODUCTION

BOPP film producer Taghleef Industries (Ti) has introduced a film range based on NatureWorks PLA (PolyLactic Acid) polymers, which are marketed under the brand name Ingeo and are made from renewable resources.

When disposed in an industrial composting facility, PLA film is biodegradable and compostable according to European standard EN13432 and converts into carbon dioxide, water and biomass by microbial digestion. In addition, Ingeo biopolymer is registered by AIB Vincotte under the OK Biobased certification scheme with the highest four star rating of renewable carbon content.

Valerio Garzotto, CEO Taghleef Industries Europe, explained: 'We are putting substantial efforts into upgrading our production for the manufacturing of BoPLA films at our Italian site.

'We will launch our new BoPLA product range in the fourth quarter this year and will offer a film portfolio of different thicknesses and aesthetical appearances to meet customers' requirements.

'The new compostable films can be used in various packaging applications, such as fresh produce, bakery, dairy or confectionery and will complement the existing bio-plastics used in packaging already.'

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# INSTALLATIONS



RIT installs HP Indigo WS6000 for media certification



AUSTRALIAN converter installs Gallus ECS 340 granite-based press

## RIT INSTALLS HP INDIGO WS6000 FOR MEDIA CERTIFICATION

Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) has installed an HP Indigo WS6000 digital press in its Printing Applications Laboratory – the research facility that HP uses to certify compatibility of media for use with Indigo products.

Members of the lab staff at the Rochester, New York-based institute now certify media for the HP Indigo WS6000, a step that helps substrate manufacturers successfully bring new products to market. Like all HP Indigo products installed at RIT, the press also provides hands-on learning opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students in the institute's School of Print Media.

'RIT's certification activities play an important role in the progressive development of the digital printing market,' said Jan Riecher, vice president and general manager, Graphics Solutions Business, Americas, HP. 'HP Indigo is already one of the best-selling label press technologies in the world, and RIT's WS6000 certification activities will help magnify the ways digital printing addresses mainstream label and packaging production.'

'The WS6000 further enhances our world-class digital printing platform and expands the services RIT can provide to the labels and packaging segment of the market, where we are finding increasing opportunities for innovation,' said Bill Garno, director of RIT's Printing Applications Laboratory. 'It will also expand what we can offer to media suppliers for comprehensive certification processes.'

## FIRST UK INSTALLATION OF EPSON STYLUS PRO WT7900

Waldo, a Lincolnshire-based flexo tradeshop serving the flexible packaging and corrugated markets, has become the first UK company to install the Star Proof and Epson Stylus Pro WT7900 proofing system. Waldo previously supplied Digital Cromalin and, more recently, Kodak Approval proofs.

Phil Walmsley, director of Waldo, said: 'We had been aware of the dot proofing capabilities of Star Proof for some time. With the release of the new Epson device, now capable of printing white ink on clear and metallic substrates, the decision to make the investment was a no brainer.'

In June 2009 Waldo upgraded its digital platemaking system to an Esko 8050 CDI with high resolution optics and HD screening. Star Proof is reportedly able to reproduce the same dot structure achieved when imaging with HD screening technology. Walmsley said: 'If we are producing high quality plates, we need the proof to replicate that same quality, right down to the dot. Star Proof also gives us the ability to match over 95 percent of the Pantone color library and if we need to match a specific custom color, the process is very straightforward – we can even produce a certified report detailing the match we are achieving for each individual spot color in a job.'

The proofing system was supplied by Pomeroy Pressroom Products and installed by Graphic Republik, whose managing director Steve Donegan is confident that this will be the first of many such installations in the UK. 'We knew a few months ago about the

strengths of the Star Proof and Epson WT combination from installations we have in mainland Europe,' he said. 'The dot quality is superb, particularly when it comes to producing a proof at screen rulings of 150 LPI and above. The ability to reproduce accurate Spot colors on multiple substrates such as clear proof media is also a great benefit to all involved in the packaging supply chain, from designers and artworkers through to repro houses and printers.'

## SQUID INK DONATES PRINTING SYSTEM TO TRAINING INSTITUTION

Squid Ink has donated a new VDP In-Line variable data printing system to Dunwoody College of Technology in Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA. The donation enables students to gain hands-on experience of printing variable data on their flexographic presses.

The donated VDP in-line variable data printing system has been mounted on to Dunwoody's existing 10 inch Mark Andy flexo press. Squid Ink's VDP in-line system uses industrial inkjet technology to print variable data including sequential barcodes, sequential numbers, traceability codes and game codes on tickets, tags and labels. The system's four 2.1 inch high-resolution printheads can print up to 8.4 inches wide on a variety of porous and non-porous surfaces. The system will be used by students learning to run flexographic equipment at Dunwoody.

'Squid Ink is excited by the opportunity to support Dunwoody College of Technology's efforts with this donation,' said Bill Hoagland, president of Squid Ink. 'By providing students with hands-on



access to the latest technology in the high-demand area of variable data printing, we feel certain that they will enter the workplace better prepared to begin their careers and contribute to the industry.' Flexographic instructor Shawn Oetjen expressed his appreciation for the donation. 'We are grateful for Squid Ink's donation and our ongoing partnership to better prepare our students for careers in flexographic and variable data printing,' he said. 'Variable data printing is in high demand right now, and I am excited to be able to offer our students the ability to

add variable printing to their training.'

#### UK CONVERTER INSTALLS AB GRAPHIC DIGICON SERIES 2

AB Graphic International has supplied a Digicon Series 2 label converting line to Kingsway Printers of Humberston, Lincolnshire, UK.

The system will be used to process a variety of substrates printed on the company's newly installed HP WS4500 digital printer.

Richard Pullan, managing director of Kingsway Printers, said: 'We have

purchased label converting equipment from AB Graphic International in the past and HP recommended their Digicon Series 2 for this installation. The new converting line has enabled us to enter the digital label market and we will soon be offering variable data plus unsupported film and carton work.'

Kingsway Printers was formed in 1972 as a commercial printing company and subsequently moved into label production with the installation of narrow web UV flexo equipment. The company supplies labels to the cosmetics, food, beverage, household, industrial and health and beauty markets where it is seeing increasing demand for short runs, frequent design changes and reduced stock. The 330mm Omega Digicon supplied includes varnishing, die-cutting, servo driven nip roller and UV flexo station. 'We print and convert a wide range of substrates including paper, metallic, PE, PP and vinyl and have found the accuracy of the die cutting and re-register on the Digicon impressive,' added Pullan.

#### AUSTRALIAN CONVERTER INSTALLS GALLUS ECS 340 PRESS

Queensland, Australia-based converter QLM Label Makers has installed the granite-based Gallus ECS 340 press, launched at Labelexpo Europe 2009. The

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press is the first of its kind to be installed in the Southern Hemisphere.

The press brings additional wide-format manufacturing capabilities to the company and is particularly suited to high volume label runs. The installation is also said to be part of QLM Label Makers' efforts to reduce its carbon footprint. The press is based on a core of technical granite, ensuring short web travel, minimal waste and short set up times.

Awarded the Queensland Print Industry Award for Business Excellence for 2008, the company's general manager Simon Pugh said: 'The installation of the Gallus ECS340 adds to the diverse print capabilities offered by now providing high volume production runs more efficiently and effectively.'

QLM Label Makers employs 60 staff across Australia, with manufacturing and warehousing facilities in Brisbane and sales offices in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne.

#### **CLONDALKIN SELECTS RADIUS SOLUTIONS MIS**

Clondalkin Group has appointed Radius Solutions as its preferred global supplier of print and packaging MIS systems across its packaging division.

Clondalkin Group is an international producer of printing and packaging products and services with two business

divisions. Its packaging division comprises folding cartons, labels, leaflets, literature and inserts/outserts businesses and also paper packaging and printing businesses.

The company selected Radius 'because of the quality of its Pecas Vision software product offering in addressing the needs of a diverse and professional Print and Packaging Group, and because of Radius' ability to support Clondalkin in all of its important markets; the UK, Ireland, mainland Europe and the US,' it revealed in a statement. Clondalkin has successfully installed and gone live with the Pecas Vision software with plans to roll out to the remaining companies within the Specialist Packaging division.

Craig Liggins, chief financial officer at Clondalkin's packaging division, said: 'We have a positive experience of working with Radius in several sites across Europe over recent years, and we are pleased to announce this strengthening of the relationship between the companies.'

#### **ALTEA SUBSIDIARY INSTALLS DCM SLEEVE MACHINE**

Porta Egypt, a subsidiary of Altea Packaging Group, has expanded into the shrink sleeve market by acquiring a new sleeve machine from the DCM Group. The DCM Sleeve is a high-speed forming

and sealing machine for the production of shrinkable sleeves.

'This investment aims at producing high quality shrinkable sleeve to feed a growing market,' said Mohamed Ibrahim, chief operations officer of Porta and Rotopack. The new DCM sleeve machine is equipped with a nonstop rewinder and is able to produce at 400 m/min. DCM has designed, especially for this machine, a motorized unwind for keeping the web tension accurate. Furthermore, DCM has integrated an inline lay flat sleeve width reading with ultrasonic sensors. Gerard Lansade, sales director at DCM Group, highlighted the successful partnership between Altea Packaging Group and its subsidiaries, and DCM Group. For 25 years there has been a strong relationship between both founder companies of Altea Packaging Group, Cogitel and Sied, and DCM Group.

According to Slim Zeghal, CEO of Porta and Rotopack and of the Altea Packaging Group, shrink sleeves represent 'an exciting new trend in the world of packaging and a growing opportunity for converters'. Almost 400 t/year of shrink sleeves are produced in Cogitel (Tunisia), Porta and Rotopack (Egypt) facilities.

Altea Packaging provides sleeves to a wide range of customers in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Senegal.

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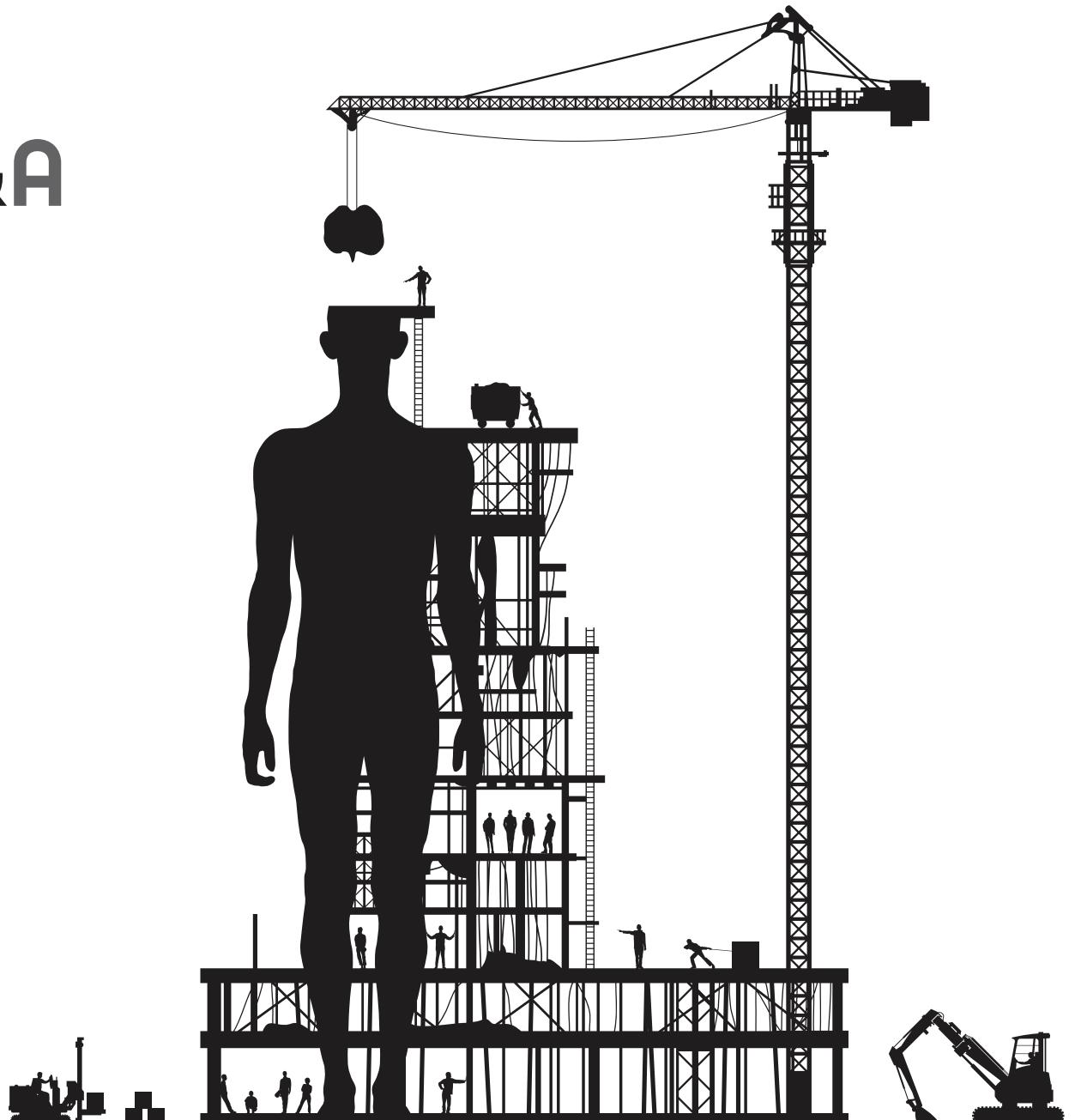
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# Building a successful

L&L columnist Bob Cronin, managing partner, The Open Approach, reviews the factors influencing expansion and change in the global label market

The label industry has undergone remarkable change. Amidst technological breakthroughs, steady new substrate introductions, and increasing global competition, M&A has become of vital importance – as a method for both growth and survival.

In the last 24 months, we've seen huge activity: Multi-Color grabbed Collotype. Fort Dearborn bought Renaissance Mark. And York Label made a number of moves – including a Chilean acquisition. Outside of the name brand power, these transactions made headlines because size brings significance. Competition is getting larger, better... tougher to beat. And customers are increasing demands for full-service providers.

#### M&A CAN HELP IMPROVE YOUR POSITION

Big company or small, M&A can help improve your position. It's not just an option for the industry majors; it's an opportunity for every label provider, and is often the quickest way to increase revenues, gain marketshare, and boost profitability.

While some activity has slowed down in light of the new economy, M&A remains one of the most influential factors for the label industry's expansion and change.

In order to capitalize of this lucrative trend, it's important to first understand the drivers behind it.

#### WHAT'S DRIVING THE INTEREST?

- **Customers** – Pushed by the need to cut costs, streamline ordering, and maximize purchasing power, customers continue to shift their loyalty to providers with a robust and diversified lineup of offerings. At the same time, customers want superior service – giving more flexible players a distinct advantage.
- **Fragmented US marketplace** – Despite its girth, the label industry – and print at large – is highly fragmented, with numerous players of all types and sizes scattered across the nation. Great opportunity exists in combining complementary capabilities while improving overall visibility.

- **Private Equity Activity** – In addition to the label 'notables', private equity firms are leading a significant amount of label M&A activity. JW Childs, Diamond Castle, Arsenal, Genstar, Linneage Capital, and WindPoint have all made acquisitions, and more investor groups are becoming interested in the label industry and the diversity of growth opportunities it presents.
- **Global Competition** – US label companies face stiff competition from Eastern Europe, Asia, and other big markets, which produce various imports (for example, wines & spirits, foods, etc.) along with the labels/packaging that accompanies them. This effect is being exacerbated as US manufacturers outsource more production, losing the print that goes with their products and containers.
- **'Hot' Trends** – Macro trends for premium branding, security, anti-counterfeiting, standout POP, and the like have label buyers seeking providers with the depth and ingenuity for expeditious response.
- **Retirement/Ownership Exit** – Finally, many label entrepreneurs are selling their businesses. Whether to retire, diversify their investments, or simply change course, these individuals are adding numerous, interesting growth opportunities for prospective investors.

#### SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO YOUR UNIQUE COMPANY?

At that surface, these drivers mean that as time goes on, your business will be faced with even more competition, continued cost pressure, and domestic market shrinkage. That said, however, these factors also present outstanding – and multiple – options for building, enhancing, and sustaining a highly profitable business.

Consider the overwhelming positives. At USD \$6.9 billion, the label industry continues to grow at a rate of 5–6 percent annually – far outpacing general commercial print and numerous other. Profitability is also superior, and is even more so for the well diversified. New

#### THE VALUE OF M&A ACTIVITY

The wisest M&A activity is not that which simply adds size, but truly yields growth. Plenty of reputable companies make hearty acquisitions only to find no real tangible value. In my past life as CEO of Wallace, I struggled with this issue myself. At the time, all the buzz was about 'electronic forms', and EVERYBODY agreed that it was a 'must' to succeed long term. I jumped up the bandwagon, and for the tune of about \$8 million, acquired an electronic forms software company. It turned out that EVERYBODY didn't include any of our customers. The experience, while expensive, provided a valuable lesson on how to pinpoint and examine true, value-driving acquisitions.

In our work at The Open Approach, we have guided numerous companies through the process, and have devised eight key considerations proven to generate the greatest outcomes:

- **Operational synergies/diversification** – Does the candidate broaden your capabilities, provide a new specialty, or help you move up the customer value chain?
- **Geographic expansion** – Does the candidate extend your reach into additional strong label-buying territories?
- **Customer impact** – What products/services does the partner bring that can be effectively sold to your customers? On the flip side, can your current offerings be sold to their customers? Are your pricing structures comparable and profitable based on the customers you will serve?
- **Supplier impact/purchasing power strengths** – What economies of scale will you gain? (Don't overestimate this; review purchases carefully and make a fair assessment.)
- **Management team** – Will you gain a strong, collaborative management team that can facilitate integration and optimize the new enterprise's performance?
- **Services platform** – What's the depth of the company's services platform, and how will this enrich what you have (ERP, web-to-print solution, etc.)?
- **Position in prime segments** – Does the candidate have a good position in growth segments (such as digital, anticounterfeiting/security, or specialty decorative, among others)?
- **Position in prime verticals** – Can the company expand you into additional, strong verticals (pharmaceuticals/nutriceuticals, food & beverage, wine & spirits, consumer packaging, logistics, and others)?

M&A holds tremendous value for label providers of every shape and size. But, in light of recent economic circumstances, lending has become tighter – and some banks are on hold through year's end. While this slows down current activity, it also gives label companies some time to determine an M&A course of action.

In the meantime, review your strategic vision/direction and assess ways to capitalize on the proliferation of trends and opportunities. Tough times call for progressive – but judicious – strategies. A well-planned acquisition or sale may be the best means to ensure your company's growth.

# future

developments and materials (foils, holograms, 'Smart' labels, and microprinting, for example) continue to ramp up, making for exciting additional applications. The global marketplace (and weakened US dollar) presents an entree – not just competition – into a bigger venue. (US companies hold only 28.4 percent of label share.) And finally, more properties on the market mean more possibilities to create an enterprise with a truly unique value proposition.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bob Cronin is managing partner of The Open Approach, an investment banking/M&A firm focused exclusively on the world of print. The firm's proven results have made it the exclusive member-recommended firm of PIA/GATF and IPW. For more information, visit [www.theopenapproach.net](http://www.theopenapproach.net), email [Bob Cronin](mailto:Bob.Cronin@bocrcronin@aol.com) at [bocrcronin@aol.com](mailto:bocrcronin@aol.com), or call +1 630 323 9700.





## JUST KEEP YOUR GOAL CLEAN!

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Rainer Jäger, programmer and CNC lathe administrator,  
has been with Kocher+Beck for 12 years



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# Wider yet and wider

BARRY HUNT reports on Omet's latest approach to package printing

It is no longer uncommon for companies to run combination presses that allow them switch between self-adhesive labels and flexible packaging products. The Italian press maker, Omet, has followed this path with the VaryFlex series for some years. At its first 2010 Open House it showed its latest approach towards a mixed, packaging-oriented future. Over 200 European label and packaging printers attended the three-day event, entitled 'Creating Opportunities in Labels and Packaging', at its headquarters in Lecco on Lake Como, some 50km north of Milan.

The event marked the debut of the VaryFlex-F1 850 UV flexo press. With a maximum web width of 33 inches (838mm), it joins the VaryFlex-F1 430, 530 and 670. The four-model series is aimed at converters wishing to produce flexo-printed PS labels, flexible packaging or small folding cartons. Also shown was a four-unit Varyflex Offset 430-F1 combination press. It was introduced last year at Labelexpo Europe with web widths of 340mm and 430mm. Variable print lengths range from 12 to 25 inches using interchangeable cassettes.

Two daily technical seminars were available. One covered trends in global label demand, while the other dealt with the short-run flexible packaging market. In highlighting opportunities for converters, a major focus was the fast-growing sleeve label market. Now estimated to represent 8 percent of global label demand, it is led by shrink sleeve labeling, followed by stretch film sleeves and roll-on-shrink-on sleeves. The many

options they offer brand managers in decorating conventional or irregular-shaped plastic containers with 360-degree coverage help explain this growth.

An increased demand for shorter run lengths has forced press manufacturers to focus on electronic and mechanical features that facilitate fast turnaround times. Omet's answer is the VaryFlex-F1 series of servo-driven combination presses. Besides allowing fast switches between substrates, their single-pass finishing facilities can include multi-web lamination and hot and/or cold-foiling. Compared with wide-web CI flexo presses they are also more flexible in terms of color sequences and configurations, while offering lower prepress and plate-related costs.

The gearless VaryFlex-F1 850 follows a trend towards combining the economics of direct laser-engraved sleeve/plates with highly automated UV flexo printing. Like other VaryFlex presses it prints up to 650 ft/min (200 m/min), but its wider mid-web format is seen to compete directly with larger CI flexo presses. Target buyers are more likely to be established packaging printers who wish to augment their existing CI presses with a more versatile model.

The new press has an inter-deck, walk-in platform for improved operation and ergonomics. It uses Omet's Vision-1 print register control, with electronic web control. Interchangeable processes comprise UV and conventional flexo, gravure, rotary screen and offset, plus rail-mounted hot



and cold-foiling, hologram inserting and embossing. In-line lamination of printed transparent or white PET or BOPP is another option, using a modified flexo unit to apply adhesive to a secondary web. Alternatively, a heat sensitive and low density PE film can form the secondary web with the adhesive applied with a gravure unit.

The demonstration press ran with five UV flexo units, equipped with dual inter-deck UV curing and hot-air drying units, printing a test forme using white unsupported

OPS film of 50 micron. Demonstrations of a VaryFlex-F1 530 featured another roll-to-roll job, this time printing a HDPE film of similar thickness using eight UV flexo units and three gravure units.

As on other models, the press includes Omet's MonoTwin die cutting system. It uses a single magnetic cylinder for all label sizes, which eliminates the need to retain different sizes of tooling. MonoTwin-Cut operates by rotating at constant speed during the cutting phase, while a servo control motor allows it to adjust its

idling speed to the acceleration and deceleration of the press while staying perfectly synchronized for the next cut. The company claims that the precision of its cut-to-print register and production speed capability makes the MonoTwin-Cut ideal for all types of labels and any print run length. Other benefits include the elimination of potential production problems associated with late delivery of tooling and variable tool quality. The unit is said to be simple and intuitive

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to use, requires no lifting tackle for heavy cylinders, and completes a changeover by simply replacing the cutting sheet. Operational control of the unit, web tension, and waste extraction is facilitated by the main operator control board, while pre-register and register control is fully automatic.

Omet's other main attraction was an X-Flex 430. It was configured with ten UV flexo units, hot air dryers, rail-mounted cold and hot foiling units, flexo and screen modules on interchangeable cassettes and a MonoTwin die cutting system. Introduced three years ago, the same model was demonstrated at last year's Labelexpo with an in-line X-Jet inkjet module (although it did not form part of the event's program). As a multi-substrate press it features a short web path to aid fast make-readies and reduce waste, augmented by the company's Vision automatic register system. Interestingly, one of the jobs included a self-adhesive wine label printed on embossed paper (see the separate feature on wine label printing in this issue). This slowed print speeds down to 80-90 m/min, but demonstrations of a shrink sleeve label job using 50-micron PVC allowed a top speed of 200 m/min.



## NEWS IN BRIEF

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

## WORKFLOW INTEGRATION

EskoArtwork has emerged as one of the key integrators of digital printing with conventional printing equipment and enterprise-wide graphic management and MIS systems. So it was interesting to look at the company's new product offerings to see how they enhanced this strategy.

The most recent announcement was the integration of Sun Chemical's SmartColour ink profiles into the over-arching architecture of EskoArtwork's Suite 10. SmartColour profiles are used to generate color-managed previews of spot inks on screen as well as to produce color-accurate inkjet proofs. This gives users realistic expectations of the printed result very early in the design process. Production jobs stored electronically contain a reference to SmartColour data so that recurring jobs are processed quickly and consistently.

## PRE-PRESS PROOF CHALLENGE

To conquer the challenges of the diversity of substrates and spot colors in the packaging sector, pre-press specialist Athena Graphics has installed the Epson Stylus Pro WT7900 printer with white ink along with GMG ColorProof. Proofing with white ink on transparent or metallic foils was not previously possible.

# Good Reflections

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# In vino veritas

**BARRY HUNT** examines the wine label sector and why PS growth remains relatively slow

Nobody has the precise figures, but it is estimated that pressure-sensitive labeling accounts for around 10 percent of the total wine labeling sector. This may represent millions of wine labels, but it is still a relatively small share of a major global market, given PS label growth in most other consumer-led applications. The market share is even smaller within the European wine industry, where traditional wet glue, or glue-applied, techniques remain more firmly entrenched. One reason is that it is more fragmented compared with the 'New World' wineries, notably those in Australia, Chile and South Africa. Convincing European wineries to switch to PS labels is therefore harder, especially when most use familiar processes that are perceived to be less expensive.

This point is made by Andrea Vimercati, sales manager of

Pilot Italia and current president of FINAT: 'Many European wineries cannot see any economic reason to change, which is one of the reasons why bottlers stick with wet glue labels. The industry consists of a large number of very small to medium-size producers – often family owned – who have invested heavily in using integrated bottling and labeling lines. They are therefore less willing to invest in automatic labeling systems. In a traditional market such as the wine business, product image, continuity and tradition all remain very important. Hence there is a greater resistance to change. When my company started to promote self-adhesive labels to the wine market over ten years ago we invested heavily in trying to convince customers that the quality of web-fed labels was better. We also stressed that printing them on a combination

of integrated bottling and labeling lines with conveyors can include modular equipment with options to combine both wet glue and pressure-sensitive adhesives for increased versatility.

The fact that the paper facestocks for PS wine labels emulate those used in wet glue labeling is highly significant. The availability of antique whites and creams with laid or textured surfaces, as well as those with gloss, matt coated, pearlescent or metalized surfaces help maintain high levels of decorative possibilities. These are enhanced by the different grades of transparent or white filmic labelstocks, which wet glue printers cannot match as part of an in-line production process.

Of course, it has long been recognized that the label's appearance in terms of graphics and material used greatly influence consumers' choices. This was a major discussion point at a seminar for wine producers, bottlers and specialized design consultancies held recently by Avery Dennison to promote its Fasson-branded wine labelstocks. Around 40 delegates attended the event held in London. The agenda spanned both the technical and creative possibilities of self-adhesive labels in the increasingly important context of branding wines. Now that supermarkets have generally taken over from specialist wine retailers, it was agreed that more emphasis must be placed on using the label to sell the contents to the consumer as part of the bottle's total presentation.

#### PUTTING BOTTLES ON SHELVES

It would seem obvious that label converters should have at least a working knowledge of wine distribution methods, if only to track down the buyers. Here, however, lies one of the hardest challenges any converter could face. Every wine producing region supports complex networks, based either on traditional practices or the more modern demands of retail-led distribution chains. With the former, many small or medium-sized estates, or family-owned vineyards, still bottle their produce on site and apply locally-sourced labels. They distribute to the trade through regional agents representing several different wineries. Some traditional wine growing

regions include cooperatives of growers who maintain centralized bottling and distribution plants, selling the produce on to agents or international shippers. Other wholesale traders (such as the French négociant) may bulk purchase grapes from vine growers and winemakers and bottle the finished wine for the shippers. Frequently, the year's output of a particular type of wine may appear labeled with different brand names for distribution to regional markets or such bulk buyers as restaurant chains.

Changing tastes and consumption patterns have led to the rise of varietal differences in traditional wine regions, such as the ubiquitous Chardonnay wines. Already a firm part of New World winemaking culture, its acceptance has been accelerated by the supermarket groups, who universally account for the majority of wine sales. Naturally this strengthens their influence over the promotion and pricing of wines sourced from the larger wineries. Their marketing muscle, plus high transportation costs, means that the smaller wineries in many countries must group together to find a practical distribution synergy. Another facet of the modern wine industry is a greater reliance on shipping the mass-market wines in bulk containers for onward handling by importers, wholesalers or similar agents. It is certainly a cost-effective alternative to shipping cases of wine half way across the world. It also explains why large volumes of labels are printed by companies who are not necessarily identified with a major wine growing region or country.

#### WHAT LABEL PROCESS?

When it comes to production methods, most wine label converters tend to favor UV-cured offset as part of a combination or platform press line. Typical configurations may include six offset units, rotary screen process, hot/cold foiling, UV flexo varnishing and lamination. Gravure modules for printing metallic effects have also appeared. Semi-rotary presses equipped with conventional or waterless offset units have gained a following among those catering for small-to-medium run markets.

'An all-encompassing offset combination press with servo drives offers the best bet for converters seeking wine label orders' says Nick Hughes, managing director of Nilpeter UK. 'The introduction of sleeve/plates has led to even faster changeovers with cheaper handling of repeat sizes. This also means economic handling of shorter runs, at least sufficient to rival semi-rotary production.' Nilpeter recently introduced a flatbed foil embosser for the latest MO-4 series designed to achieve

press offered customers far more convenience compared with sheet-fed printing of wet glue labels.'

Another angle on bottling methods comes from Päivi Reponen, UPM Raflatac's business segment manager for Beverage & Wine: 'These lines normally have a long life, so introducing self-adhesive labels and investing in a new labelling unit involves a major cost. Typically, new investments are done when extending operations, rebranding or introducing new products. Wine can be still considered a conservative market to some extent and wet glue labels – even though somewhat old-fashioned – still do their job well. Self-adhesive labels can gain interest and market share with the adoption of fancy materials and shapes. This is helped when younger generations, who see the value of using the label to increase the bottle's attraction, take control over the wineries.'

#### PS BENEFITS

The main arguments for adopting PS labels, not necessarily to the exclusion of wet glue types, center on flexibility and the creative opportunities they offer. They allow wineries to bottle smaller runs of branded products, as well as handle multi-lingual labeling and limited-edition runs more economically. As in the liquor business, the technology is also well suited to labeling smaller-sized bottles, such as the quarter-sized wine bottles commonly used by airlines and railway operators.

The actual application process is cleaner and quicker to set-up using automatic rotary applicators. Multiple dispensing heads allow users to apply different sized secondary and neck labels, as well as tax stamps where required. Some leading manufacturers

a comprehensive range of embossed effects. A specially-developed web compensator allows full integration at normal press speeds without web buffering.

In-line die cutting techniques offer many imaginative alternatives to enhance a label's appearance. A recent development is Gerhardt International's textured flexible die introduced for the wine and luxury goods label markets. Texture Flexi is offered as an alternative to traditional embossing methods using solid dies. Chemical milling practices allow the embossing of even thin lines and small patterns and details.

Andrea Vimercati singles out the importance of gold and silver hot foiling and embossing for European paper wine labels. 'The best machine is equipped with several different printing technologies. In a single pass it can print a richly decorated label using, for instance, the offset unit to print CMYK, the rotary screen unit for text and hot foil for the customer's logo. Some buyers are beginning to ask for security-related features, such as holograms and sequential numbering, although the use of these applications remains limited.' The high price of security features would appear to be a major barrier here, so restricting their use to only the more upmarket wines. Sequential numbers are seen more as a marketing feature, rather than as a security feature.

While offset rules, a strong letterpress legacy still endures in certain countries. The position of UV flexo, however, is ambiguous. Although it offers speed and cost advantages when printing smooth surfaces, including metalized papers, flexo is generally seen to under perform with embossed or textured papers. Critical attention to adjusting cylinder pressure settings can help, but the process still requires correspondingly more print units compared with offset. The wider adoption of servo-assisted UV flexo presses models may address the printing issues. For example, Omet chose to run a PS embossed paper wine

WINE labels printed by Pilot Italia



label when demonstrating a ten-unit X-Flex 430 with hot foiling at its recent Open House (see report in this issue).

The case for using high-end digital color presses is a little clearer, especially with their extended run-length thresholds. This means digital printing on the latest roll-fed HP Indigo or Xeikon models is not confined solely to ultra-small runs, although its strength in handling small quantities of primary wine labels, including versions for restaurants and special events, commends it to many converters. Some users have, for many years, run wine label plants using both conventional roll-fed presses and digital alternatives to provide greater flexibility in handling mixed-run orders. As a mainstream on-demand process, digital printing has also benefited from a new generation of inline or stand-alone finishing lines. These may include screen printing, hot foil embossing, semi-rotary, flatbed or laser-based die cutting options. Users also have access to a wide range of dedicated paper or filmic substrates.

Further improvements to the print resolutions and speed of emerging CMYK inkjet systems may increase their suitability for on-demand wine label production. Many models can already handle a variety of substrates without the need for pretreatment, lay-down a white ink and handle spot colors. Nevertheless, in a quality-driven market their usage is perceived to be largely restricted to producing secondary labels. That said, an ability to process and print variable data, including bar codes and text, offers useful single-pass capabilities to converters and perhaps bottlers requiring in-house facilities for producing their secondary labels. Other digital solutions include certain wide-format inkjet printers with integrated cutters, as well as stand-alone, reel-fed inkjet or laser color

printers.

Most sheet-fed printers of wine and liquor labels are owned by large packaging groups. They tend to run fast, medium-format presses equipped with at least six offset units with interdeck UV curing or hot-air drying. Extended sheet-pile deliveries, UV flexo coaters, as well as precoaters to achieve metallic or opaque white effects are commonplace. Some presses have single or twin downstream flexo towers to apply solid or spot varnishes to achieve matte or gloss finishes, including tactile effects. Even in-line foiling embossing technology is possible, while a form of inline die cutting is emerging as another option. Significantly, following a recent reorganization of business priorities, Heidelberg is adding extra emphasis to its label printing activities, including new workflow software for the market-leading Speedmaster series.

As in commercial offset printing, label printers increasingly work with digitized workflows based around Job Definition Format files. They can transfer job data automatically into the production process for precisely managing functions from prepress to finishing. Additionally, computer-to-plate techniques deliver comparatively inexpensive metal plates in minutes. Step-and-repeat techniques gives the flexibility to mix different label formats and even separate jobs on the same sheet. Improved color management techniques have also made composite production involving different spot colors even easier. Collectively, these firms offer formidable competition to converters seeking to muscle in on their act. But they know that, as substitutes for wet glue types, PS labels can offer many useful benefits to brand owners and assorted end-users. The trick is knowing where to find them.

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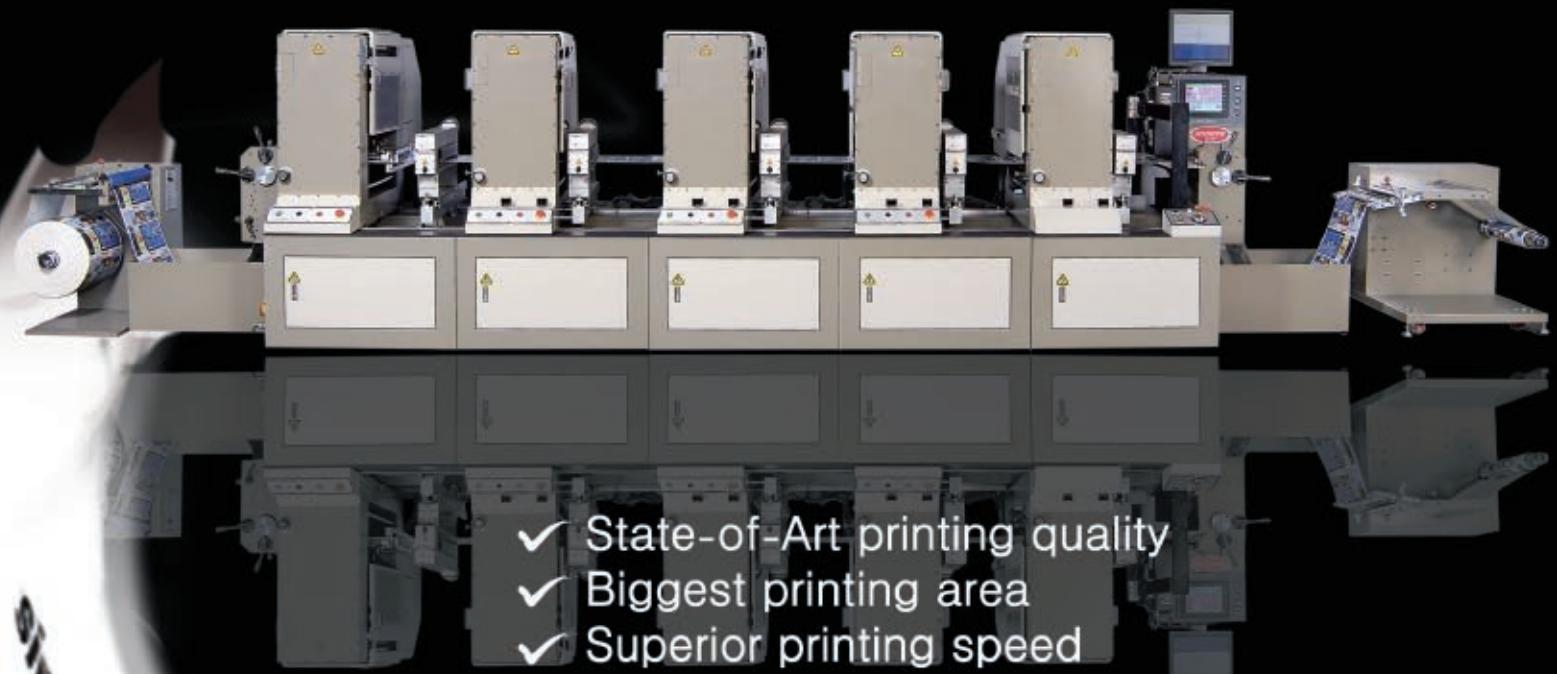
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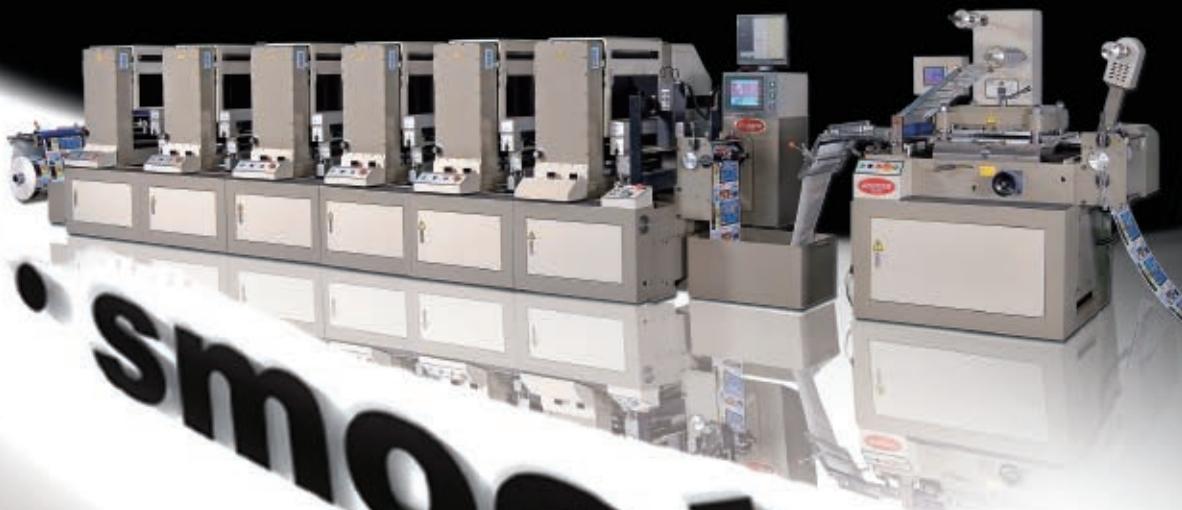
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# Wine labels down under

**AUSTRALIAN CONVERTERS** have forged a reputation for excellence in converting wine labels – a major factor in the global success of the nation's wine producers. Henry Mendelson reports

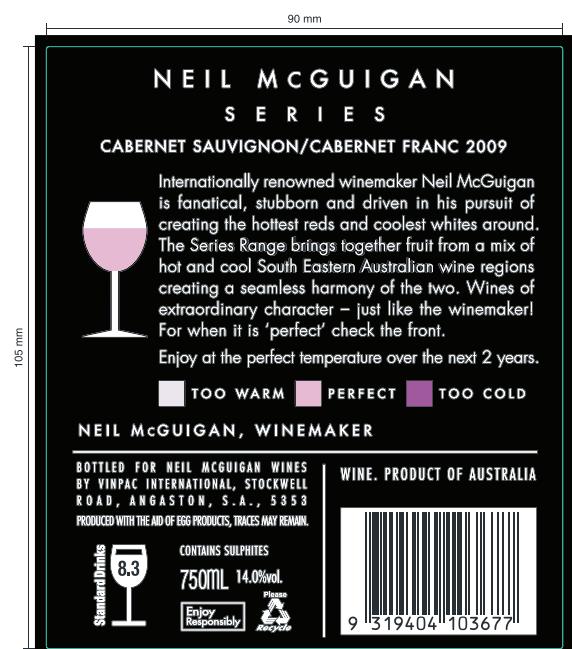
The Australian wine industry, ranked internationally in the top echelons, can equally justify leadership claims in its innovative approach to label printing processes compared to the rest of the world. Word comes daily of converters constantly updating equipment to the latest technology and the local printing industry assiduously adjusting to the ever increasing demands for short run requirements, at the same time confidently walking away with global awards for wine label entries.

That said, warning signals from the downunder wine industry point to its heading for difficult times. A 30 percent over supply in grape production, significant wine inventory, intense international competition and invariably increasing duties and taxes will continue to burden the industry, which has seen bottled volumes decrease in each of the past two years.

None of which fits into a good-news category for aspiring label printing hopefuls. For firmly established converters it requires nimbleness of foot and creative thinking to protect their patch.

A significant development to achieve flexibility to meet industry demands has been the push toward Lean Manufacturing, motivated by a reduced expectation on holding large volumes of label inventories. According

WHEN'S the best time to drink it? McGuigan tells the consumer on the label





to Collotype's Vadis Rodato, 'JIT has other consequences on our business which include very tight lead times, and an ever increasing number of setups'. Like most major wine label printers in Australia, Collotype continues to spread its offering across all technologies. However, Rodato points out that 'due to the high value add nature of wine labels, while digital printing continues to have its place in a range of technology offerings, we have not necessarily seen a significant swing to this process'.

#### LABEL TELLS WHEN TO DRINK THE WINE

Support for flexo technology for Australian wine label printing continues, but according to Rodato there are still many designs and specifications that are better suited to offset. A limiting factor reducing the potential advantage of the digital world is that most wine labels in Australia require some form of embellishments which, for digital, would necessitate an off line (or inline) finishing process. This of course requires similar make ready times to flexo, which has also benefited from the ability to print cold foil.

Such limitations are being overcome in Australia, according to one of its leading designers, Pinnacle Creative's Heather Mitchell, who has been at the forefront of many of the

MCGUIGAN'S series using temperature-sensitive thermal inks which change color as the wine gets cooler/warmer

industry's ground breaking initiatives such as the La Lune label (illustrated) printed on material-like Cotton Twill stock, as well as the McGuigan's series using temperature-sensitive thermal inks which change color as the wine gets cooler/warmer (a legend on the back label recommends the best time to drink the wine).

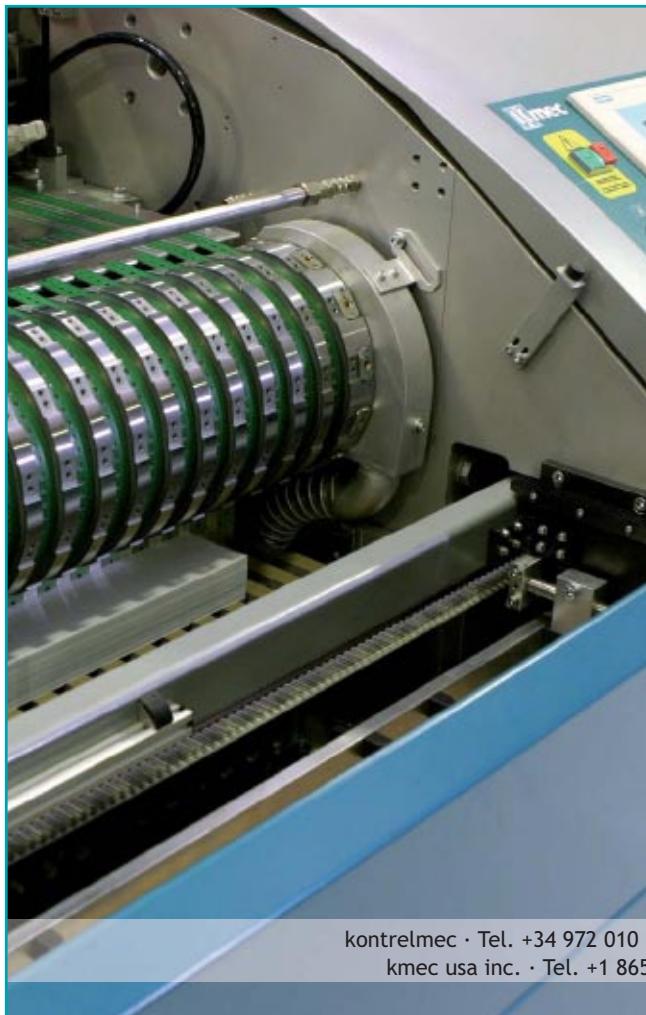
'We use digital where the runs are very small as it provides a cheaper option', she said.

'However the (Gallus) TCS presses used by major printers allow us to print small quantities without having to compromise on quality, as you can embellish the label on press without having to take a digital label and place it on another press to add foil, high builds and other finishes.'

'We have used digital for back labels rather than front as we often require many different embellishments which are not available digitally, whereas we are not as concerned about the overall finish or look of the back label which is more a utilitarian tool providing product information and mandatory information required by law,' Mitchell added.

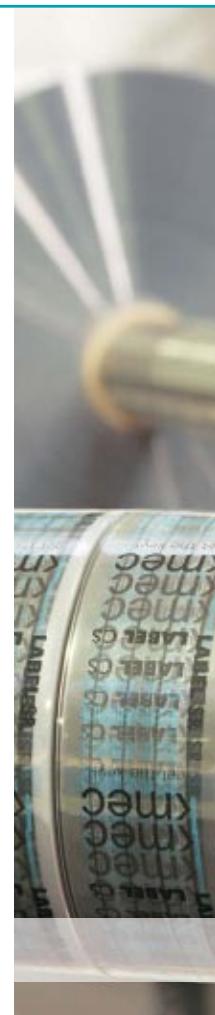
#### HEDGING BETS

That said, Adelaide's Clear Image Printing is reported to have a new press that can embellish on line. According to the company's James Robinson, all wineries, whether large or small, are continually challenged by the need to



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'Traditionally it's been an expensive exercise for most wineries with thousands of labels never used and eventually scrapped. The new press facilitates short runs, incorporating the use of, hot foil stamping, embossing/graining, UV varnishing and sequential numbering,' he noted.

The other side of the coin addresses the role of intermittent offset and letterpress wine label production. Gallus is still reporting strong demand for in-line translative UV-offset presses. One of Adelaide's smaller print suppliers to the wine industry, Studio Labels' managing director Miguel Alemao sums up industry conclusions: 'Offset still plays an important role, particularly for 4-color process on uncoated stock and for large runs. Letterpress is pretty much residual,' he said.

At the same time he hedged his bets on digital by adding: 'JIT, smaller runs, personalised labels (variable data) and points of difference will drive the printing industry more towards digital.'

'At the moment I believe flexo/offset can still efficiently manage 90 percent of wine labels. However with constant technological advances in digital printing, that ratio will rapidly decline. It is already happening'. Gallus MD in Australia, James Rodden agrees.

'While the trend to digital is for short runs, I believe conventional offset or flexo in-line presses are still the chosen solutions for the

wine label industry,' he pointed out, adding that the Australian industry will continue to seek in-line solutions which enable wine labels to be produced in one single pass 'as against a digital solution where several passes may be required to finish the label.'

#### BALANCE BETWEEN CREATING BRAND STRENGTH AND COST

Heather Mitchell's take on this is somewhat more far reaching. She wants to see a time when a back label becomes more than a utilitarian item. Taking this a step further, she envisages talking back labels with RFID chips, currently hugely expensive technology.

Not that this is too far into blue skies. The day may not be too far away from the industry's looking at ways to utilise smart phones (iPhone, Blackberry) to develop an interactive back label that can link to a web site to provide consumers with information about the wine they have purchased!

The last word – and the one which sums up the past, present and future – comes from the Australian Label Industry Association, LATMA's president, Frank Gavrilos, who commented that 'the balance between creating brand strength and cost will continue to be the challenge for all of us, but in wine it is even more pronounced.'

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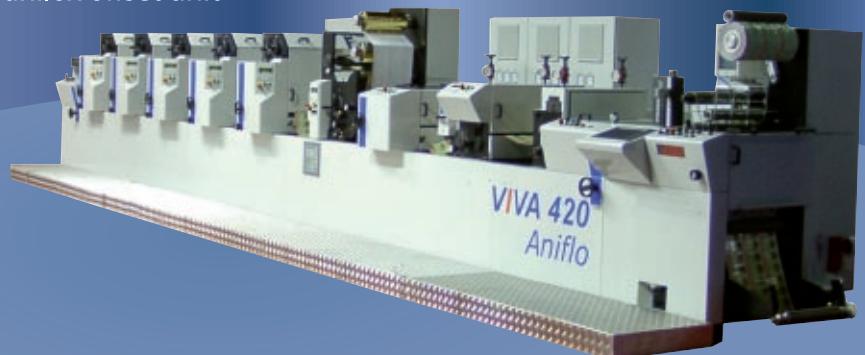


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# DIGITAL Q&A

**INDUSTRY EXPERT** and L&L founder Mike Fairley recently hosted a webinar dedicated to digital label printing technology. Here we publish his responses to two questions posed during the webinar

**Question:** Of the current installations, are there a percentage that end users have installed on their own sites, instead of using a converter? (Dudley Fay, procurement category manager, global demand print, Diagio)

Mike Fairley: To my knowledge there are no HP Indigo liquid toner or Xeikon dry toner presses installed in end user facilities. These machines are mostly used for higher quality work which includes over-varnishing and die-cutting (often gold foiling, etc) and require a level of skill from operators for set-up and running.

Inkjet is slightly different. Using UV inks means that over-varnishing may not be required for many label jobs. If the label sizes are continually the same size, then the complexity of regularly changing die-cutters is much reduced. This is the case particularly in the pharmaceutical industry, and I know that EFI Jetron has now installed some inkjet presses in pharma companies. Printing is usually in only 2/3 colors so that also helps.

The other route that has some installations is where label converters have installed a digital label press in their customer's plant and they then manage the label printing in-house for the end user.

**Question:** If the cost of flexography printing can be cut in half, will this reduce the growth rate of digital presses?

(James Buntain, chief technology officer, Eastman Kodak Company)

MF: In my view, no. The cost of digital (essentially the consumables) is already more expensive than flexo. It is not so much to do with printed label cost, it is more to do with adding value and service to the label business. Run lengths are decreasing all the time; companies are reducing stock holding of printed labels, they are rationalizing their supply chains, looking to do more versions, etc.

The way to make digital label printing profitable is nothing to do with selling on price. Successful digital label printers make their profit from adding value and service, such as: reducing lead times, on-demand printing, managing supply chains, test marketing, short run proofing, producing multi-versions or variations, and production flexibility.

Additionally, the average label print run for digitally printed labels is currently under 10,000 labels. Again, it is difficult to make flexo profitable at this level. Label converting plants with both flexo and digital mostly claim to make most of their profit from digital.



**Question:** What is the main advantage of electrophotographic digital labels versus inkjet digital label production? How about in five years? (James Buntain, chief technology officer, Eastman Kodak Company)

MF: The dominant digital label technology today is HP Indigo, with probably around 80 percent of the total installed 1,200 worldwide base. They have succeeded because of excellent marketing – they undertake feasibility studies with converters, work out their break-evens and investment payback time. They can offer color guaranteed printing. They have a wider color gamut than conventional printing. They give excellent after-sale support.

Color drop-on-demand inkjet arrived some ten years later and has – up until now – been perceived as of lower quality and performance. That, I think, is now starting to change. Quality of reproduction, enhanced definition, better inks, the introduction of white inks, etc, are all making the process more saleable and installations are now starting to grow more rapidly. The fact that some very big suppliers with global reputations (Durst, Domino, Epson, for example) are entering the market is also now changing the perception of performance, quality, support, etc. New inkjet technology, such as the Memjet engine shown at Ipx, which has 70,400 nozzles and claims photographic quality, will undoubtedly also change the perception of inkjet. Initial forecasts that I have seen seem to indicate that inkjet will grow rapidly over the next five years.

There are now something like 30 different digital makes and models of inkjet label presses on the market. Not all will survive, but the market leaders will probably grow fast and succeed rapidly. The Digital Label Summit coming up in Barcelona next month will be addressing these kinds of issues and questions.

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AUTO. LABEL PRINTING PRESS

# EskoArtwork lays down roadmap

**INTEGRATION** of all the functions in a label converting house – and integration with end users – was the key theme of EskoArtwork's 2010 user group meeting, reports Danielle Jerschefske

The annual Eskoworld event is organized in co-operation with the EskoArtwork Users Group International (EUGI), a group of customers who share knowledge and communicate user needs to EskoArtwork product developers. The worldwide user conference welcomed brand owners for the first time among its 250 attendees.

This year's Eskoworld offered roadmaps for Automation Engine10 and digital flexo software, hands-on sessions for 3D in ArtiosCAD and Adobe Creative Suite, and training seminars for various other components of the supplier's workflow software.

Nosco's Prepress Systems technical lead, Robert Potochnik said, 'EskoWorld gave us an opportunity to speak directly with Esko's top executives, engineers and technicians to gain insight into the look, feel and technology that drives Automation Engine10. Since we have been using Artwork Systems' Nexus Rip and ArtPro application with raster workflows since 1996, we were not that familiar with the Esko Odystar Rip or PDF Rip which the Auto-Engine10 interface is based on.'

'This is not 'just push the button' software; it takes skilled people on both sides of the computer/rip to make packaging print happen. Mark Samworth, Julie Bauer and the Esko support team are fine specialists which gives us great confidence in their products. We learned about the direction the company and software will be heading in the future, and we now have a clear path forward as to when different stages of AE10 will roll out and can plan future purchases toward those target dates.'

A brand owner requirement to see the final product as early as possible in the design and production process has been an important driver for EskoArtwork. This was supported by a survey of 500+ customers which confirmed that improved integration with end users was high on users' wish lists.

The partnership between EskoArtwork and Dassault Systèmes, a product life cycle management business that assists brands and their suppliers in streamlining the process of taking a product to market, has been critical in closing the loop on product development. Dassault developed the Solidworks 3D design system and Enovia collaboration system. Labelexpo Americas will host Dassault Systèmes as the tradeshow's opening keynote this year.

EskoArtwork has continued to work with its MIS partners, including LabelTraxx and CERM, to enhance its systems' integration capabilities. The company is also working closely with Radius Solutions following its acquisition by EFI in April.

The introduction of HD Flexo significantly helped drive new and retrofit business in most every global market. EskoArtwork VP product and solution marketing, Simon James said, 'We are seeing converters making the switch from offset, and in particular gravure, to flexography because of the quality that

this technology is capable of producing. This trend is especially high in the labels and packaging sector.'

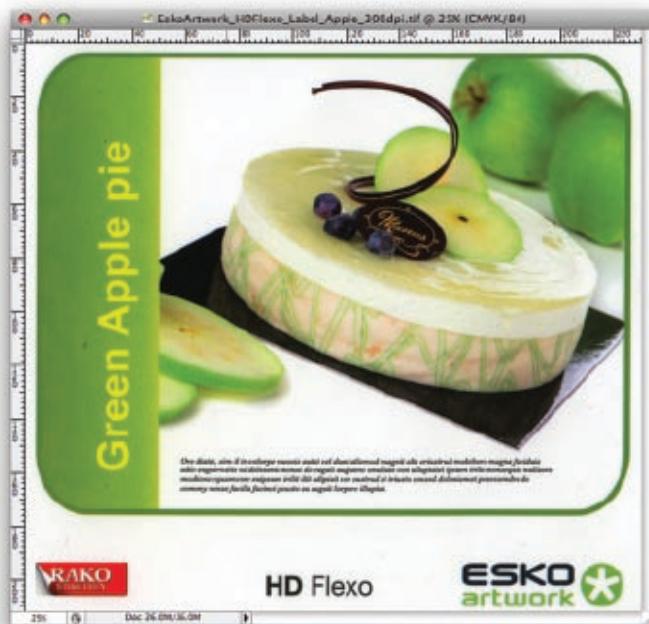
'Brand owners too are seeing the value found in HD Flexo because they no longer have to worry about the quality comparison to digital. For the first time ever, they can freely use and interchange the two technologies to suit their varied needs. HD Flexo gives more brands more flexibility. Converters are now able to print offset quality on flexible plastic.'

The movement towards HD Flexo gained strength in the narrow web market, but it is also moving into wide web. EskoArtwork anticipates that it will have fifty installs of the technology in the US by the end of the year. As of April 2010, it had around 55 total installations worldwide. Shanghai, China has a noteworthy install where a converter made the switch from letterpress to flexography.

Increasing efficiency and productivity was vital to Esko's customer value. It introduced the Kongsberg XL die-less cutting and creasing table, which is twice as fast as the first generation. It allows corrugated manufacturers to effectively produce short run work with minimal tooling. Kongsberg XL is particularly hot in the POP market.

The inclusion of EskoArtwork software on all HP Indigo presses has been a highly impactful partnership for the company, particularly with the increased speeds and throughput now possible with the HP Indigo WS6000 press.

AN example of origination for HD Flexo



# Message in a

DANIELLE JERSCHEFSKE reports on AET's Label Institute held in Miami, Florida in early 2010, which ranged over subjects from consumer trends to sustainability and resin availability

This year film supplier AET hosted its sixth Label Institute, a forum for leading professionals in the labels, labeling and other specialty decorations industries, after a four year hiatus. 'The purpose of the Institute is for industry leaders to exchange views on trends and emerging technologies,' said Thomas Mohr, AET president & CEO.

A little over 150 senior management people from AET's customer and allied supplier base from North America and Latin America attended the invitation-only conference. AET is a supplier of OPP film and invests heavily in research and development to introduce new products for label and other food and non-food packaging markets in North American and Latin America. The three day conference program featured technical presentations, resin supply analysis, consumer-based trend evaluations and sustainability coverage.

In short, the Label Institute sessions proved that IML, shrink labels and flexible packaging are the most opportunistic sectors for product decoration. The North America market for polypropylene will be progressively more competitive, increasing the material's cost. PET consumption will increase in North America and around the world over the next few years. Sustainability and packaging for convenience are key factors to winning a sale from the consumer.

## CONSUMER-BASED MARKET TRENDS BEVERAGE MARKET

### *Beverage Market Corporation*

The US beverage market experienced a slowdown in 2009 with the beer market having the first decline in a decade. Gary Hemphill said that on the positive side, commodity prices are mostly stable and

beverages outperformed many other industries in 2009. 'As the economy continues to improve, beverages will be one of the first to benefit.'

The Harris Poll results revealed some changes in consumer behavior. One in five Americans stopped buying morning coffee, one-third refill their water bottles now and nearly two-thirds choose private label brands.

## TRENDS IN FOOD AND BEVERAGES PACKAGING – AMERICAS

### *Euromonitor International*

Matthew Gantz said he believes that consumer spending may not fully recover until 2014. 'The 300mL bottle gained more market share than bulk sizes in 2009 which shows the buying change that the consumer went through over the last year.'

In 2009 PET bottles experienced 4.5 percent unit growth; glass bottles had a 2.2 percent unit growth. Gantz said that PET will take more market share in 2013. In the US, PET will continue to take share from metal cans in overall use for beverage packaging. Opportunities for the beverage market can be found in sustainability and health concern drives. The market is strong in the private label sector.

Food packaging will require better functionality and more sophisticated packaging design to lure the future consumer. In 2009 thin wall plastic containers took share from glass containers, a trend that is anticipated to continue for the next few years which makes IML decoration appear even more promising.

PET will be a key driver in the overall growth of global packaging. Its ability to allow innovation in shape and size make

it the ideal material to give the consumer what they are looking for: Convenience - lightweight, unbreakable, reclosable; On-the-go - single-size servings. The emerging markets of Asia Pacific and Latin America are regions to watch. Health and wellness and sustainability tactics, the ability to reduce costs and improve brand image, will lead growth in all areas of the world.

## FOOD AND CONSUMERS

### *Statler Nagle, LLC*

The increased rate of obesity is raising concern amongst various demographics of consumers with regard to processed foods. These concerns extend out to the organic movement, bioengineering and the contamination of ingredients.

Tom Nagle said, 'consumers say that they are consuming or want to consume less processed foods.' His firm conducted a media analysis with Weber Shandwick to reveal details of the de-selection of process foods and the impact on the packaging industry. Results showed that the key strengths of processed foods are convenience, consistency, inexpensive and the ability to stay fresh longer.

Nagle explained that within the packaging industry, leaders can guide their clients to fix the words and the message about their brands, staying away from ingredient listing and using the positive associated words as triggers to increase sales.

'An opportunity exists to increase perceptions of processed foods in the areas of healthfulness, safety, and nutrition,' Nagle said. Four out of five consumers are striving to change their behavior for a healthier lifestyle. 62 percent are very concerned about healthiness and string negative

# bottle

connotations to the term 'processed foods'. Consumers with moderate negative views toward processed food, represent about one-third of the population which means there is a large group of customers that are willing to listen, and be persuaded by, a positive message on packaging – as long as the packaging hits one or more of the positive trigger points.

## PACKAGING TRENDS GLOBAL FLEXIBLE PACKAGING MARKET AND TRENDS

### *Applied Market Information, Ltd*

Appearance and functionality have become one in the modern packaging world. Flexible packaging provides a number of advantages such as the diversity of packaging size and the unique look and appearance.

Andrew Reynolds said, 'CPGs need packaging as an identifier and brand tool. The label industry plays greatly into this.'

The global distribution of flexible packaging is as follows: Asia 36 percent, Europe 29 and North America 20. Control of the flexible packaging market has shifted greatly towards those suppliers with strong ties to customers. The ability to develop new product ideas and technical knowledge of materials and processes is increasingly more challenging and more valuable.

Brand owners increasingly 'own' the specification process – but their suppliers have the technical savvy and should be providing this information to their customers.

'There is plenty more opportunity for plastics to grow and develop.' Drivers of growth include: single person households, the reduction of the family meal, eating

on the move and the increase in working women. Food markets will continue to be strong performers for flexible packaging.

## FUTURE OF PACKAGING INDUSTRY

### *Cranial Capital*

The economy will accelerate for the next 12-18 months. North America and Europe will remain flat for next 10 years. Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America will grow significantly.

Tim Burns said, 'The labeling industry will perform better than 90 percent of the economy. In the future we will see brands evolve to have 12 month product cycles. They'll be more tactical acquisitions, severe and continuous cost controls and even more of a focus on store brands.'

Some of the top ten new products for 2009 are color cosmetics, skincare, non-alcoholic beverages, healthcare and bakery; the top five packaging types for new products are flexibles, bottles, tubes, jars and cartons.

The global home and personal care sector will experience a ten percent decrease on average in mature markets over the coming years while emerging markets will see increases as high as fifty percent.

Shrink sleeve labels lead growth for product decoration; IML is second, then PS and wet glue.

## SUPPLY-BASED MARKET INFO GLOBAL POLYOLEFIN MARKET

### *CMAI*

The low supply of propylene in North America is not able to meet demand. Since it is a byproduct, propylene is not abundant or cheap, making polypropylene more expensive. This means that in the future PP will no longer be as cheap as now, requiring

both suppliers and users to compete on material properties and features rather than price.

## PET RESIN AND SUPPLY DEMAND IN NAFTA

### *SBA-CCI – Strategic Business Analysis – Container Consulting Inc.*

There are a number of areas with a conversion opportunity to PET containers: dairy, food, health and medicinal, APET and non-container applications. It is because of these opportunities that NAFTA PET resin consumption is expected to increase 3.5 percent over the next five years.

For the label market specifically, John Maddox said, 'Almost all polymeric substrates are achieving growth except for PET. Still, the material is advancing rapidly on cost grounds in shrink sleeves and pressure sensitive labels.' 70 percent of this demand is in non-food applications. Around 46 percent of labels in the film packaging segment are polypropylene.

## SUSTAINABILITY AET'S RESPONSE TO MARKET CHANGES

### *AET Films*

As a member of the SPC, AET has access to the sustainability report compiled by the group in cooperation with Packaging Digest magazine. The research revealed that over 70 percent of respondents perceive recycled content as the best sustainability characteristic that a product can have.

Craig Ligda, AET Labels business director said, 'The market is trending heavily towards "Buy Recycled" programs and the utilization of the highest possible recycled-content levels, both of which are easily understood by consumers.'



However, recycled content material poses issues for the manufacturer, which needs to deliver quality, price, service and now sustainability all in the same product. AET is therefore developing products with the highest content of recycled material consistent with maintaining quality and cost-effectiveness.

It introduced its RE line of PCR content films that are made up of at least 10 percent recycled content. AET knows that as sustainability continues to gain speed and strength, PS, roll-fed, cut & stack and opaque white films will need to be compiled of PCR content films or be able to be recycled for use in another value stream. This will drive an increase in consumer recycling and consumer awareness of how to properly recycle.

Thomas Mohr, AET president said: 'The label industry is a core business for AET. We therefore need to proactively address changes in consumer buying. As a market leader, AET has to drive its own recycling and sustainability initiatives.'

The critical step with increasing recycle rates is designing for this purpose. AET will support the recycling industry by promoting 'non-bleeding' labels, thereby increasing the value and use of r-PET, a critical step towards improving the percentage of PET material that is recovered. There has to be a value stream. (See Coca-Cola section below).

In addition to RE, AET also took the opportunity to officially announce the launch of a line of facestock films for pressure sensitive labels. The facestock will be sold under the SynCarta brand and is already available to the marketplace. Ligda said, 'These new films will provide another channel for growth within the labels business segment of AET.'

## LABELS & LABELING

THE water category represents one of the biggest opportunities globally for wraparound film labels

## COCA-COLA RECYCLING

### *Coca-Cola Recycling LLC*

Started in 2007, Coca-Cola Recycling LLC is a fully owned subsidiary of Coca-Cola Enterprises. CCR is responsible for realizing Coca-Cola's goal to have 100 percent recovery of its containers in the US by the year 2020. Within this responsibility, CCR must find a means for increasing PET collection and recovery rates.

Landis Frey told attendees: 'The current recycling rate in the US is 20 percent. 75 percent of PET bottles and nearly 50 percent of aluminum cans used in North America go to landfill. Coca-Cola must increase this recycling rate in order to reach its goal.' Note that the SPC is working with Keep America Beautiful to raise consumer awareness with the hope of increasing national recycle rates and reach figures through the Labeling for Recovery Project.

The recycling chain for PET bottles in the US must be developed before Coca-Cola can achieve its goal in 2020. The aluminum can recycling cycle is mature because the material is highly valued. 95 percent of recycled aluminum is used to produce new cans; it's possible to produce a new aluminum can with up to 75 percent recycled content.

Currently there is no valuable market for recovered PET, and more often than not the cost for recovery is so high that it is more effective to produce new material.

This is where efforts to support the increase in value by players such as AET come into play. It's the chicken and the egg predicament.

Frey explained the functional value that packaging holds throughout its life-cycle. Its purpose is for containment and end-use ease. Within the supply chain it performs these tasks through distribution and delivery, providing protection to the product, and security, functionality and information to the consumer.

Coca-Cola has made it a priority to use fewer materials and resources to produce the materials that it currently demands. And it is of course using design to optimize packaging, taking advantage of lightweighting for overall material reduction to minimize the global footprint of its products. Recently it introduced a wholly new solution. The Dasani brand water is now packaged in bottles made of thirty percent sugar cane and molasses.

Frey concluded: 'packaging is not waste. The company envisions a world where Coca-Cola packaging is no longer looked at as waste, but as a valuable resource.'

## CRADLE TO CRADLE DESIGN

### *MBDC*

Jay Bolus talked about design modeled on nature. He said, 'Nature focuses on effectiveness, on reaching the most valuable means to an end. Eco-effective design embraces nature's design



principles.' Manufacturers must design their products while keeping the idea of nature's cycles in mind. They must reorient design principles, taking into account safety, healthy ingredients, product design for recyclability/compostability, and current or needed systems for recycling and composting their products.

#### ADHESIVES AND SUSTAINABILITY

##### *Nordson*

Rick Pallante discussed how to reduce adhesive usage. 'Applying less adhesive makes separating the label from the container easier and it improves recycling channels. Adhesive usage and surface area covered should be minimized to the greatest extent possible to maximize PET yield and avoid contamination.'

He said that patterned adhesive application can reduce usage by as much as 90 percent, and remain effective.

#### IML BROKEN DOWN

##### *Smyth Companies*

Joe Hirtzer explained that there is a better supply chain for IML in the US now than in recent years. He also said that the US is somewhat ahead of Europe in terms of automation of this label production process.

IML has a double digit rate of growth in the US. Some advantages of using in-mold labels include the label's ability to adhere to a thin wall which is being used more often by big brands for sustainability efforts and cost savings. Still IML is price driven and only economical to run at high volumes. In-mold labels can be produced on a variety of substrates offering the same or greater flexibility than other product decorating techniques; they have the ability to decorate more area at a high value for less. Graphics are appealing because the UV inks and varnish tend to be glossier than with other labels.

The North America market requires higher cavitation with IML production, meaning more testing needs to be done. Hirtzer said, 'Test materials well before specifications are finalized. The main IML trend in North America is automated molding systems, which require customization and are not plug & play. Experience is important.'

As for sustainability, claims were made that IML is the most sustainable decorating technology available. 'With polypropylene the container and the label can be reground for re-use again.' On the flip side, inks discolor the resin, making it prohibitive for certain re-use streams.

Yet the general trend in packaging is moving away from containers and into flexibles. 'The label is the most customizable element to meet a market's needs. It is the last moment of differentiation.'

Hirtzer touched on the topic of digital's recent ascent within the label and packaging industry. 'It is a real threat to all forms of package printing. In today's ever evolving marketplace you must innovate or be left behind.'

#### HIGH SPEED PRINTING

##### *Sun Chemical Corp.*

Steve Postle talked about designing inks for faster printing presses. 'Solvent based inks are the easiest to run at high speeds while energy curable inks and water-based are more difficult to print because they have more issues.'

'The key is how to design an ink that will behave perfectly throughout the process – at both high sheer and low sheer.'

Four key areas to account for when selecting inks to run at maximum speeds are: surface tension, rheology, viscoelasticity, and solubility parameters.

Lower surface tension promotes ink spreading whereas high surface tension promotes ink leveling. The best ink for high-speed printing has the smallest MPF

(Maximum Packing Fraction), the point at which ink becomes more solid-like, offers the most elasticity, and has a lower solubility parameter. Getting these opposing forces to work together is the trick. The inherent inelasticity of white ink proposes a real problem for fast-paced printing.

#### ROLL-FED AND SLEEVING TECHNOLOGIES

##### *Sidel*

Sidel is the labeling division of Tetra Laval Company, a food and non-food process packaging company with over \$10B in sales annually. John Pasqua shared that ROSO has a global growth rate of 17 percent while shrink and stretch sleeves have a growth rate of 7 percent.

#### LATIN AMERICA

#### TRENDS IN FOOD AND BEVERAGE PACKAGING

Beverages account for 97 percent of glass and PET bottle consumption in Latin America. Mexico has the highest anticipated plastic bottle consumption growth rate going into 2013, with Brazil and Columbia following behind. The Columbian market is around 80 percent glass, Brazil is about 67 percent PET, and Mexico is about 54 percent PET and 36 percent glass.

Opportunities for growth in Latin America can be found in PET bottles in water and sports drinks, glass, stand-up pouches and liquid cartons in juices. The region will experience a decline in glass bottles for carbonates and sports drinks. Flexible plastics will decline in milk due to the rise of liquid cartons and HDPE bottles.

Increasing urbanization and the growing middle class are trends to closely watch in this area of the world. The region's strengths can be found in returnables and amongst the youth demographic.

#### LABEL PRODUCTION

##### *Labels, S.A. El Salvador*

Carlos Kouri highlights Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Peru and the CAFTA countries: Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua as the leaders in Latin America. There are a number of national companies that are going international within the region. Inca Kola and Big Cola in Peru, and Salva Cola from El Salvador are a few of the beverage companies that are taking the leap outside their borders.

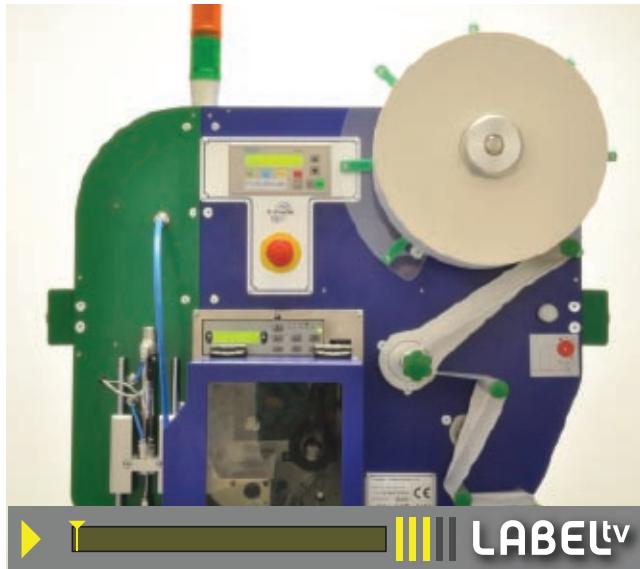
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# TECHNOLOGY EXTRA



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## T-TRADE LAUNCHES LINERLESS PRINT & APPLY SYSTEM

A new linerless print and apply system is now available from Transfer Trade srl, a division of the Italian T-Trade Group. Transfer Trade is a leader manufacturer of thermal transfer ribbons, producing over 40 million sq meters a year. The group also produces self-adhesive labels, thermal transfer printers and readers for the industrial market.

Faced with demands from end users to reduce the environmental impact of PS rolls in the industrial sector, and to increase productivity, the T-Trade engineering division began a project in 2009 to bring a linerless print & apply system to market.

Enrico Friziero, chairman of T-Trade Group, commented: 'we wanted dramatically to contribute to reducing deforestation and to eliminate the need to dispose of the backing silicone paper.'

The result was the TT-PA EVO 150, which is now being made commercially available by T-Trade.

The machine can work with label reels with a diameter up to 400 mm (1,550 linear meters), dispensing three times as many labels as a similar size reel of PS labels. Fewer roll changes are necessary, reducing machine downtime, and reel storage requirements are significantly reduced.

The TT-PA EVO 150 machine was developed by T-Trade Engineering and incorporates a number of innovative features – the subject of four patents. Firstly, there is no need to stop the machine to change label length. With the TT-PA EVO 150 this is achieved simply by changing the settings on the machine, without stopping it. The working width can likewise be changed from 50 mm minimum up to a maximum 150 mm. Loading label rolls has been made simple and fast, says T-Trade. The TT-PA EVO 150 is able to print on any receptive material/media, either plastic film or paper reels. It is a modular machine, assembled from standard components including the user's choice of printer. Application speed is 40 labels/minute, with labels cut on the machine.

The TT-PA EVO 150 is provided with interchangeable application heads – or pallet print & apply, for example – and these can be fitted without modification to the machine.

**LABELS&LABELING**

## MASTERPIECE UNVEILS RIT-CERTIFIED WINE LABELSTOCKS

The Rochester Institute of Technology Printing Applications Laboratory has certified two Masterpiece Graphix materials for use on HP Indigo industrial roll presses: Masterpiece Premium Estate Label #9/Perm/44# PK (R1232), and Premium Estate Label #8/Perm/44# PK (R1233). Both materials are certified for use on the HP Indigo ws4050, ws4500 and the ws6000, and both passed the RIT HP Indigo certification test with high performance ratings.

## DALIM UNVEILS NEW VERSION OF ES 1.1 SOFTWARE

Dalim Software has launched the latest release of ES 1.1, its software for online file delivery and approval. Featured in this release are enhancements to the High Resolution Soft Proofing option, such as extended PDF layer support for improved visual approval. Additionally, specifically for the label and packaging markets, an operator can quickly simulate a specific printing process or ink characteristics by changing opacity and the order of separations. There are two new optional modules, Enterprise Project Tracking and Custom Job Ticket, which complete the circle of incremental production processes by adding the necessary business logic into ES.

## MARABU UNVEILS NEW SCREEN AND DIGITAL PRODUCTS RANGE

Marabu is to launch a new series of products at this year's FESPA exhibition. Screen printing inks will be shown in co-operation with the company's partner Sakurai, printing tactile finishing and special effects onto a fan.

In its screen printing portfolio, Marabu showcases for the first time a new UV-curable series for polypropylene materials. Other highlights include UV-curable solutions for membrane switches, glass, and labels.

Munich will be also see the launch of the MCD Micro Color dispenser – an automated ink dispenser and color mixer suitable, for the first time, for solvent-based inks, and targeted at small and medium-sized screen and pad printing companies. The MCD Micro is supported by the Fespa Innovator campaign.

An exciting launch is Liquid Coatings, which open up new opportunities for both digital and industrial applications. With its partner Buerkle, a leading manufacturer of industrial roller coaters, the new UV-curable Marashield range of products will be shown live on pre-printed UV inkjet prints. The Marashield concept is based on three pillars: primer, finishing, and protection, allowing customers to enter new applications with both rigid and flexible materials. Clearstar LP, a Marabu subsidiary, will demonstrate water-based Liquid Lamination on the StarLam coater for flexible substrates.

New offerings in the digital ink portfolio include solvent-based 'plug and print' cartridges for Mutoh Valuejet and Mimaki JV33 machines. A new hybrid UV Inkjet series for rigid and flexible substrates, will be previewed.

# TECHNOLOGY TO THE RESCUE



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# Verification of optical codes

**WHEN** setting up a quality control system for barcodes and 2D matrix codes, it is essential to use properly calibrated equipment, argues optical code verification expert Wilfried Weigelt

Optical code scanners are designed to achieve low read-error rates throughout the supply chain, increasing speed and efficiency of the logistics operation. The scanner has to read barcodes and 2D codes as efficiently and fast as possible and at a wide range of different reading angles and distances. Environmental conditions should have the lowest influence possible on reading performance.

Testing of barcodes and 2D matrix codes is performed every day with 'off the shelf' (non-calibrated) scanners. As soon the scanner 'beeps', the code is taken as verified and good. Some scanners additionally provide parameters for quality indication.

But in too many cases, these same printed codes cannot be read in the end user environment. Analysis shows this is because the scanning application is very different from the testing setup. So how do you go about putting in place a consistent and reliable optical code QA system?

Testing of optical codes is known as barcode verification. This means taking measurements to provide repeatable information about physical values. However, these results are only meaningful if the limits of the measurement process – and the correct measurement conditions – are recognized.

The early barcode verifiers measured bar and space deviations and one contrast value (PCS). Some more sophisticated systems also measured the

barcode size and absolute deviations. Such verifiers are out of date because the correlation between the result of the measurement and the average reading performance was bad.

In 1990 a new method for barcode verification was introduced by an ANSI Standard. This method is still in use. An additional quality control standard for 2D matrix was added a few years ago, with verification parameters changed and adapted to the available camera technology.

Measurement technology requires defined measuring conditions. Very important is the angle of illumination and angle of the light-sensitive sensor in relation to the sample to be measured. For linear barcode verification the reference setup shown in picture 1 is valid. For 2D Code verification the reference setup is similar. The illumination for 2D Code verification shall be from four sides while linear verification defines illumination from one side only.

The angle of incidence for sensor and light source must be correct to achieve comparable and stable verification results because of the reflectance characteristics of different substrates.

Basically there are two reflectance types, specular and diffuse. Picture 3 shows the behavior of a perfect specular reflectance. Picture 4 shows the behavior of a perfect diffuse reflectance.

Materials upon which optical codes are printed always exhibit a mixture of specular and diffuse reflectance. Picture 5 shows reflectances of materials with a

## INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS DEFINE CODE PRINT QUALITY IN FIVE GRADES:

ISO/IEC	ANSI	Average measurement	Quality
4	A	3,5 up to 4	Very good
3	B	2,5 up to below 3,5	Good
2	C	1,5 up to below 2,5	Satisfactory
1	D	0,5 up to below 1,5	fair
0	F	below 0,5	fail

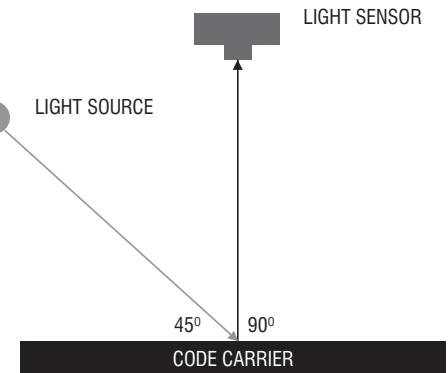


DIAGRAM 1: SIDE VIEW ANGLE OF ILLUMINATION AND SENSOR – LINEAR CODES

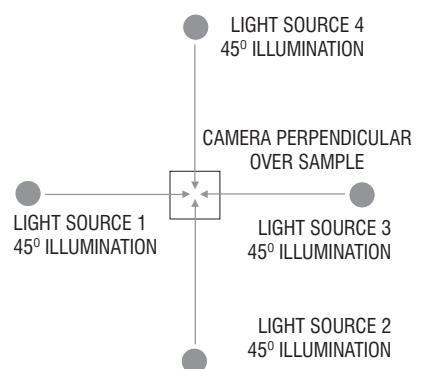


DIAGRAM 2: TOP VIEW – LIGHT SOURCE AND CAMERA – MATRIX CODES

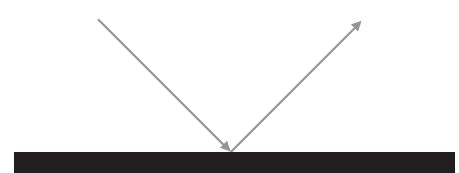


DIAGRAM 3: SPECULAR REFLECTANCE

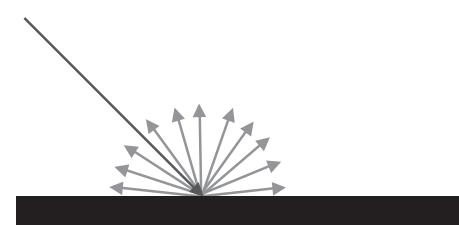


DIAGRAM 4: DIFFUSE REFLECTANCE

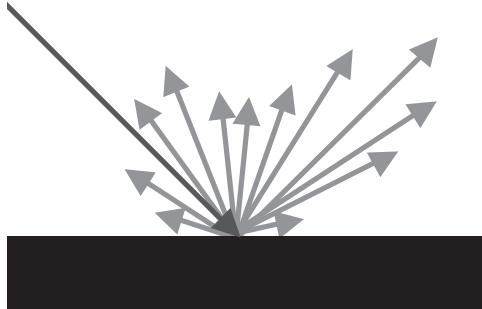


DIAGRAM 5: PROBE WITH MORE GLOSSY SURFACE

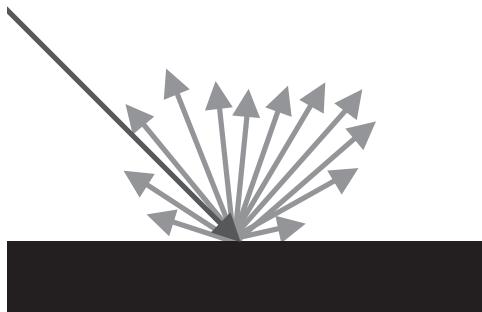


DIAGRAM 6: PROBE WITH MORE MAT CHARACTERISTICS

more mat (diffuse) characteristic while Picture 6 shows reflectances of a material with a more glossy characteristic (specular reflectance).

If the angle of incidence and angle of collection is variable, then a reflectance characteristic as shown in picture 7 and 8 is the result. Individual material characteristics create an individual reflectance curve.

If the angle of the sensor in a measurement is not defined, then each individual sensor angle will provide a different reflectance measurement. A variable angle of illumination also causes different reflectance measurements. Results are no longer comparable under such measurement conditions. This is the reason why the standards define fixed angles for illumination and sensor. Where optical code testing takes no account of angles and measurement conditions, the test results are useless and may be misleading.

#### RESOLUTION AND MEASURING RESULTS

Barcode scanners work by creating a fast moving laser spot (which appears to the human eye as a beam). The size and geometry of the laser spot varies with the distance of the scanner from the optical code sample. In the case of both a CCD scanner and scanners using cameras, the light-sensitive elements appear smaller or larger depending on reading distance. To make things worse, the sensor gets less light back as the distance increases (falling off quadratically),

#### LABELS & LABELING

DIAGRAM 7: REFLECTANCE VALUES DEPENDING ON ANGLE OF INCIDENCE (MAT)

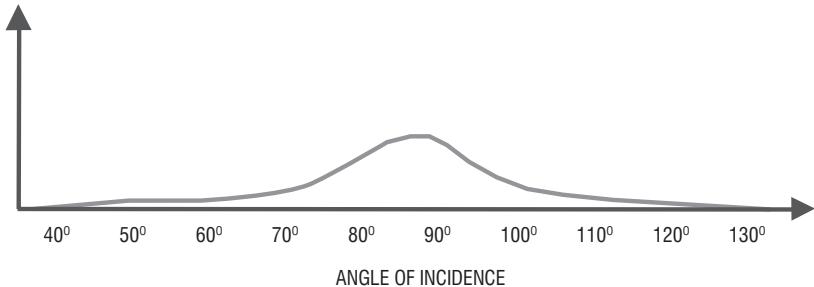


DIAGRAM 8: REFLECTANCE VALUES DEPENDING ON ANGLE OF INCIDENCE

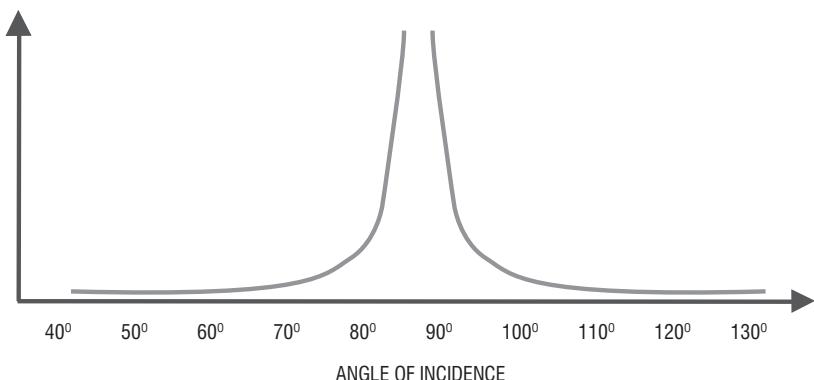
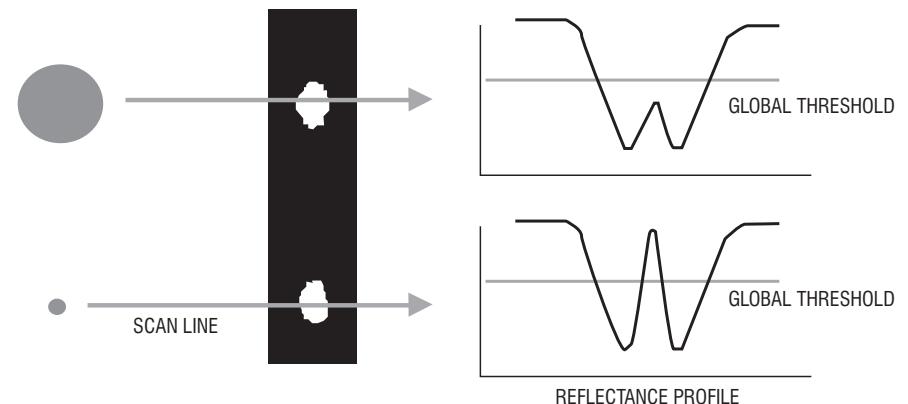


DIAGRAM 9: INFLUENCE OF APERTURE ON DEFECT RESULT



which means reflectance results are dependent on scanner distance.

A laser scanner's spot size is called its aperture. In the case of a CCD scanner the size of the light-sensitive elements defines the aperture. In the case of a camera, a synthetic aperture can be used (as long as the camera resolution is high enough).

In taking a barcode measurement, white spots in bars and black spots in spaces are measured because these are candidates for additional, unwanted bars and spaces. White and dark spots are called 'defects'. Picture 9 shows two reflectance curves from an identical defect using different apertures.

To repeat: if your code verification test does not use constant, defined distances, then a variable and inconsistent response to defects will result. The standards therefore define that a measuring aperture has to be reported as part of the result. If the aperture is unknown, clearly this is impossible.

#### DATAMATRIX CODE MEASUREMENTS

These effects also apply to Matrix code measurements made using a camera system, although the effects appear a little differently. In this case, angle of



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**DIAGRAM 10: OUT OF FOCUS IMAGE LOWERS MODULATION FROM 4 (VERY GOOD) TO 2 (SATISFACTORY)**



**DIAGRAM 11: ILLUMINATION VERSION 1 - MODULATION GRADE 1 (FAIR)**



**DIAGRAM 12: ILLUMINATION VERSION 2 – MODULATION GRADE 2 (SATISFACTORY)**



**DIAGRAM 13: ILLUMINATION VERSION 3 . MODULATION GRADE 4 (VERY GOOD)**



illumination, angle of sensor and distance must be known and held constant.

Variable distances will move the sample out of focus. This effect is comparable to the unknown aperture of a laser scanner: the image gets blurred.

The intensity of illumination is changed by different angles and distances. Pictures 10, 11 and 12, all showing the same code, illustrate the effect. The standards for measurement equipment define a calibrated illumination level to avoid such effects. Without this requirement measurements are not repeatable.

#### MEASUREMENT STRATEGY

To achieve correct measurement results, the following rules apply:

- **Distance** – The distance between verifier and sample must always be identical to achieve correct and constant angles, illumination and aperture (or correct focus)
- The angle between verifier and sample must always be identical and always 90° for the sensor and 45° for illumination.
- In the case of linear barcodes the measuring line (i.e laser or CCD) must cross the bars at a 90° angle to achieve a correct size verification. In case of 2D verification the orientation in the picture is determined by image processing.
- The sample must lie flat. The surface of the sample shall not be uneven or folded. These effects would change angle and distance, which must be constant.
- The sub-surface behind the sample shall always be the same to avoid showthrough effects. This is especially important for transparent materials (ie plastic film with a white print below the code). Even a normal paper with a

weight of 80g/m<sup>2</sup> will suffer the effects of showthrough.

The equipment used must allow the user to fulfill these measurement conditions.

#### CALIBRATION

To achieve comparable results, measurement equipment needs to be calibrated to recognized standards (provided in the case of the US by N.I.S.T.). An excellent resource is provided by Applied Image ([www.appliedimage.com](http://www.appliedimage.com)). A manufacturer of a barcode verifier can adjust and calibrate devices by using these standards. Additionally it is possible to use reflectance standards defined in ISO 7724/2.

#### LIGHT SOURCE

The light source needs to be defined because different light sources - red light, 670nm, 650nm, 635nm or white light - cause different reflectance results. This happens with direct thermal labels and colored samples. Also in this respect, carrier materials have an individual reflectance response in relation to different light sources

#### LIMITS OF MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

Different barcode verifier models - even from the same manufacturer - can have different characteristics regarding accuracy and construction which affect measuring tolerances. These tolerances should be within the specifications of ISO/IEC 15426 (-1 or -2).

But while calibration is performed with a reference test card under ideal conditions, real world samples are not so perfect. They will not always have an even surface and will have varying levels of gloss. Defects defined on test cards have one specific shape while defects on practical samples

have a wide variation in geometry.

Imperfections in real world samples and variations in the construction of barcode verifiers can both cause inconsistent results. In such cases you should check the equipment. It needs to be in good technical condition and a calibrated test is required. If the equipment is working correctly and differences remain, then it can be assumed that the differences are between the two verifiers. In this case, the parties need to judge the differences and recognize these effects in their quality agreements.

#### LIMITED USE OF SCANNERS IN QUALITY CONTROL

In some cases, 'off-the-shelf' scanners are used for code validation – a check of the correct code and code content. If, additionally, the scanner angle, distance and illumination is always constant, a scanner can be used to see changes in the printed samples. This is useful to detect changes in the production process. But where calibration is not available, such results are not comparable to any other systems or installations.

If such scanners get dirty or change their characteristics due to aging, then the results can change without warning. If a scanner is able to adapt itself to bad codes - because its illumination systems have changed, for example - the results will appear more consistent than the samples really are.

Code content validation is at another level of quality control. A scanner is fully useable for such a task.

#### CONCLUSION

The article has explained why non-calibrated 'off the shelf' scanners are not suitable for proper quality control of optical codes. Barcode and 2D code verification is a measuring task which requires a traceable calibration of the measuring equipment. Further, measurement conditions must be stable in terms of sensor and illumination angles, distances and light source types. Typical scanners do not fulfill these requirements because they are built for a different purpose.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Wilfried Weigelt is head of the Barcode Verifier department at REA Elektronik GmbH, a member of the DIN standardization forum DIN NA 043-01-31 <http://www.rea-verifier.com>. This article uses information presented by Wolfgang Weber to the annual AIM Germany meeting



# Evolution and development of Labelexpo shows

THE LABEL INDUSTRY HAS SEEN MANY CHANGES OVER THE YEARS – in materials, technology, printing processes, finishing systems and end-use applications. Labelexpo has always aimed to reflect these changes with new features, additional halls and educational and information events, writes Mike Fairley

Look back over the 30 years of Labelexpo and the industry has seen major innovations and launches at shows in rotary letterpress, in flexo, UV flexo and HD flexo, in combination process printing, in pre-press and plate technology, in die manufacture, MIS and filmic and other materials. This conventional label technology continues to change.

Yet today, the label industry is undergoing even further rapid change. It's certainly been undergoing a revolution in digital technology with almost 40 different makes and models of on-demand color digital label presses now on the market, covering liquid toner, dry toner, UV-inkjet, water-based inkjet, as well as combinations of conventional and digital in integrated label press lines – together with all the innovations in digital pre-press, file management and workflow.

While the self-adhesive label industry has been the prime focus of most of these developments in narrow-web color digital printing, press manufacturers of digital label presses are now increasingly looking towards other types of label printing and at narrow-web package printing applications such as, sleeve labels, in-mold labels, heat transfer labels, flexible packaging and cartons.

Digital technology is also extending into the world of conventional label and package printing, especially pre-press, with ongoing advances in origination-to-press capabilities

that are extending the capabilities of, for example, UV flexo and combination process presses into new markets and applications. All these changes need to be reflected in the ongoing development and expansion of Labelexpo shows if the events are to meet the needs of both exhibitors and visitors. Key changes that need to be considered for the future perhaps include:

## NARROW-TO-MID-WEB WEB CONVENTIONAL AND DIGITAL LABEL PRINTING

With the wide range of both conventional (UV flexo, offset, combination, screen, etc) and digital (liquid toner, dry toner, UV inkjet, water-based inkjet) presses it has become an increasing challenge for label converters to compare the quality and performance of prints from all the various machines when they walk around shows – or even to have comparative guidance on print resolution and performance.

To aid show attendees, attention is already being given to standardizing at least one job across many of the presses on show – whether conventional or digital – in a series of 'Technology Workshops'. In other words, Labelexpo plans to have a standard label design and origination, which will be provided to those press exhibitors that wished to participate. Each participating Technology Workshop exhibitor would



run the same job at different times during the show, so that participating attendees can not only see samples of the same job by different processes and press manufacturers, but also have the set-up and running explained – all followed by a Q&A session. The label design should include an 'ingredients' list containing press make and model, resolution quality, process, etc, to give a true comparison.

#### NARROW-WEB PACKAGE PRINTING

Similar challenges are arising as narrow-web press manufacturers – whether conventional or digital – are looking to sell existing narrow or mid-web presses into the web-fed packaging printing fields to produce flexible packaging (including pouches, sachets, tube laminates, bags, etc) or cartons.

By widening the scope of Labelexpo shows beyond self-adhesive labels and further into sleeve labels, into in-mold and heat transfer labels, or into narrow-web flexible packaging and cartons, and running the necessary educational and technology workshops for specific solution demonstrations, providing comparative printed samples, producing pocket guides to technology – and even materials, etc, it should be possible to further stimulate the label industry to grow and diversify in the years ahead, and to create new markets and applications for narrow-to-mid-web conventional and digital printing in packaging markets.

The self-adhesive label industry has always been at the forefront of the printing industry. It has been exciting and stimulating; it has been innovative in materials and technology, and it can offer more printed and finished solutions than any other field of printing. Let's take this innovation and excitement into new markets and applications, into other types of labels, into packaging solutions and opportunities, and create an even more exciting Labelexpo that will help and encourage the print world to once again grow rapidly, and more profitably, than in the recent past.



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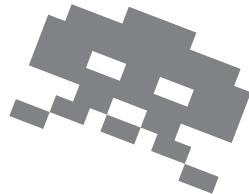
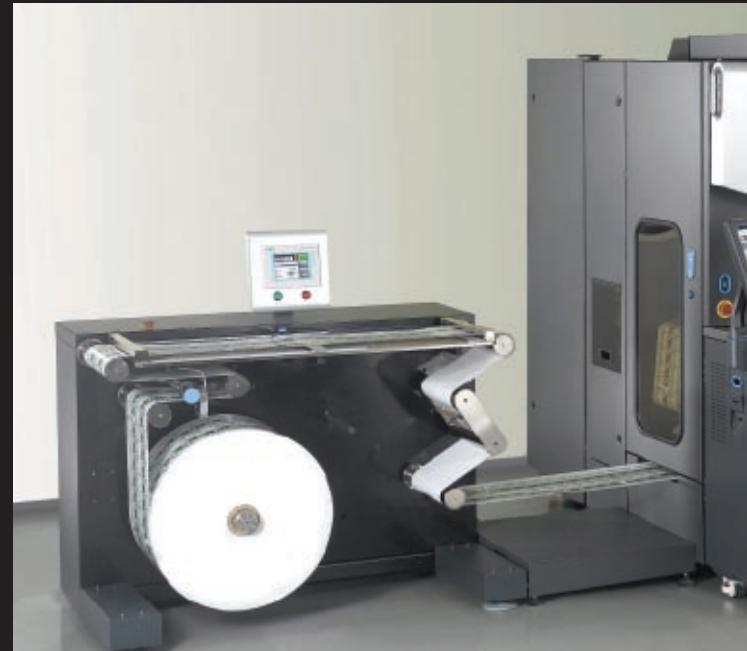


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# Dash for Digital

THE recent Ipex show highlighted developments in both inkjet and toner-based digital label technologies and pointed the way to new developments at Labelexpo Americas in September. Andy Thomas reports

## INKJET AT IPEX

At Ipex, a number of digital label presses and full-color inkjet modules made their debut.

Epson launched its SurePress L-4033A digital label press, which uses the same Micro Piezo inkjet technology found in the company's large-format machines. The press prints in six colors with water-based pigment inks designed to print on a wide range of papers and films without pre-treatment.

In operation, the press contains an array of 15 x one-inch (25.4mm) printheads, which image a 'frame' of up to 914x330mm, giving an average print speed of five linear meters a minute. Depending on the print quality required and the substrate type, the array can accurately over-print the same area up to 16 times. It will handle stock up to 320 microns in thickness and rolls from 80-330mm wide.

No doubt the press is slower than the single-pass inkjet presses seen on the market, but Marc Tinkler, senior business development manager, commercial and industrial printing at Epson Europe, says this 'multiple swipe' mechanism allows a higher quality output which matches good flexography.

Epson is working with a number of system integration partners, and at the show EskoArtwork demonstrated a new digital front-end developed specifically for the SurePress L-4033A, while GM showcased its new DC330 mini-converter.

Domino, already a leading player in the in-line VDP and product identification sector, became a fully-fledged player in the full-color industrial printing market at Ipex, with the commercial launch of its N-Series piezo ink jet range.

Designed as a series of scalable solutions, the N-Series line-up will incorporate both standalone label printing presses and modules featuring scalable print-width for OEM integration. The N600 UV inkjet label press shown at Ipex offers 1200dpi nominal print resolution with a native resolution of 600dpi and four grayscales, and operates at speeds up to 75m/m. Capable

**LABELS & LABELING**

of printing onto a range of paper and plastic label stocks, the press was demonstrated with a print width of 333mm (13.1in) – compatible with most standard finishing solutions.

Standard features include automatic head cleaning while optional quality assurance measures include vision systems for tracking registration and color density.

An optional corona treatment module is available, though Domino says the majority of industry standard label stocks can be used without the need to pre-treat. The durability of UV ink jet means over varnishing is not always necessary.

The N600 press can be configured to operate in-line with a digital finishing solution, such as those produced by GM and AB Graphics, via dancer roller web infeed.

Industrial Inkjet Ltd (IIJ) demonstrated its new CMYK inkjet print engine, the ColourPrint 282, on a 282mm (11in) wide reel-to-reel transport system. The ColourPrint uses KM1024 printheads from Konica Minolta, and can be fitted with a range of different printhead models using six, 14 or 42 pl drop sizes. All KM1024 printheads can run in grayscale or high-resolution binary modes, with the ideal mode quickly selected in software. The ColourPrint 282 uses a total of 16 printheads, four for each color.

IIJ does not plan to offer stand-alone printing systems. Print engines are sold to machine builders or system integrators who are looking for an inkjet solution. A ColourPrint 282 unit is now on demonstration in the UK office of Industrial Inkjet, near Cambridge. Xennia also launched a range of industrial-strength inkjet modules at IPEX. The company's XenJet inkjet modules are designed to help OEM and machine building partners configure inkjet printing solutions for key industrial applications such as ceramics, glass, textiles, packaging and product decoration. XenJet modules form a comprehensive suite comprising all of the major elements of the inkjet printing system, including software, backed up by technical support.

The two systems demonstrated at the show covered the key



inkjet printing configurations – scanning XY flatbed and single pass reel-to-reel.

Durst was also present at Ipxex, demonstrating for the first time in the UK its combined digital narrow web solution, the Tau 150 print engine and Rotoworx 330 finishing system. The combined system was demonstrated reaching production speeds of 48 m/min printing short runs of digital, full color labels.

Impika launched its iPress 2400 digital label press, part of a new series of single-pass, color DOD piezo inkjet technologies. The press was developed with inkjet head supplier Panasonic, and prints at a native resolution of 1200 x 1200 dpi at 76 m/mn (250 ft/mn) – this equates to 37m/mn (122 ft/mn) at 2400 dpi resolution.

The iPress 2400 uses water-based, pigment-or dye-based inks claimed to key over a wide range of label and packaging papers and films, whether coated, matte or gloss. The machine works with roll-to-roll or roll-to-sheet stock using multiple standard formats up to a maximum width of 520mm. A sheet-fed model is under development and will be available by mid-2011.

Agfa Graphics showed for the first time its:Dotrix Modular LM inkjet press printing with the company's new :Agorix LM range of low-migration, low odor UV-cured inks – compliant with stringent EU & FDA food packaging regulations.

The :Agorix LM UV inkjet inks are available in CMYK and CMYK-OV sets. The orange and violet color stations considerably extend the color gamut, offering up to 90 percent reproduction of Pantone colors when using Agfa's color management software.

The demonstration machine at Ipxex was 630mm wide and configured for 6-color printing at 32m/min. The press incorporated the servo-driven VLS-650 variable size, in-line rotary sheet cutter/stacker developed by Agfa's partner Edale.

Over on the EFI stand, the big news was the acquisition Radius Solutions, which will allow the company to integrate its UV inkjet digital presses and inks, and their color control and workflow systems into a packaging-dedicated MIS. We will return to the interesting implications in a later edition of L&L.

## STORK PRINTS LAUNCHES NEW DS1 CAMPAIGN

Stork Prints has launched a new campaign around its Digital System Integration press. At the end of June, Stork Prints will launch an 'action website' where companies can upload their favorite designs. 'We will pick the ten most promising designs and present them at Labelexpo Americas to the respective companies,' says communications manager Désirée Ordelman. This represents a major marketing push for the DS1 inkjet press, as Stork Prints announces several more installations and the launching customer – Jan Frederik Vink at Kolibri Labels – reports a successful installation one year on, printing high-quality short-run labels cost-effectively.

The DS1 is a single pass, UV inkjet digital label press. It is modular in design, allowing configurations from stand-alone digital printing machines up to complete digital printing lines with in-line (semi-rotary) converting. The press has a web width of 13in (330mm) and runs at speeds up to 35 m/min. Native print resolution is 360dpi, with a nominal resolution, with grayscale enhancement, of up to 1,000dpi. Tonal values down to 1 percent can be achieved.

(L-R) Agfa Dotrix Modular LM inkjet press printing with the company's new: Agorix LM range of low-migration, low odor UV-cured inks; HP Indigo announced a strategy to pair the WS6000 with carton and flexible packaging finishing suppliers;

## BEYOND INKJET

Ipxex was the occasion for the 'big beasts' in the non-inkjet digital jungle to unveil new products and strategies. The show was the first chance for converters to see Xeikon's new high-end digital label press, the 3500. The press handles web widths up to 512mm wide and prints at a speed of 19.2 m/min in up to five colors (CMYK+1), significantly raising the cut-off point between conventional and digital printing. The Xeikon 3500 can produce up to 570 square meters per hour in four- or five-color printing on a wide range of substrates. The press features true 1200 dpi resolution and 1200 x 3600 dpi addressability with variable dot density.

Xeikon is offering customers with a Xeikon 3000 or 3300 installation an upgrade path to the 3500, which uses the same X-800 Digital Front End. Another important announcement from Xeikon was the availability of a new generation of toners, designated QA-I, approved for indirect and direct contact with dry food. Xeikon says its latest white toner is opaque enough to allow 'one-pass' white for converting 'no-label look' labels.

HP Indigo was demonstrating the ability of its WS6000 digital press to handle the full range of package printing applications including flexible packaging and folding cartons. To help PSPs enter these new markets, the company shared its stand with an extended range of partners: for folding cartons, these included Brausse Group, Epic Products International, Kama GmbH, EskoArtwork and Kompac Technologies; while for flexible packaging, finishing partners included AB Graphic International, ACPO, Charter Films, D&K Group and Innovia Films.



THE 3500 is a faster, more productive range of digital presses from Xeikon

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Equipped with the Xeikon 3500 high-precision LED-based imaging head it features true 1200 dpi resolution and 1200 x 3600 dpi addressability with variable dot density, generating excellent image quality.

The Xeikon 3500 runs on Xeikon's new QA-I toner, approved for indirect and direct contact with dry food.



# Flexibility of digital with variable data



**DOMINO** has launched a standalone full-color digital label printing press to meet customer requirements for localization. Mike Fairley talks with Philip Easton, who heads the company's Digital Printing Solutions division, to find out what the new technology has to benefit the label converter

When the acknowledged world market leader in in-line variable data printing and product identification decides to make a transition to mainstream supplier of full-color digital label printing equipment you can be sure that it will be with the intention of making a significant impact on the label and narrow web industries as a world leading technology supplier. This is certainly the intention of Domino with the recent commercial launch of its new N-Series piezo inkjet range.

Founded in 1978 and headquartered in Cambridge, UK, Domino already has a well deserved global reputation for the development and manufacture of coding, marking and printing technologies using binary, continuous and piezo and thermal inkjet print solutions to apply variable and serialised data within a wide range of markets, such as tickets, tags and labels, business forms, plastic cards, gaming/lottery and direct mail and postal sectors.

It was therefore interesting to see the first showing of the N-Series at the recent Ipxex show. Incorporating both standalone label printing presses and modules featuring scalable print-width for OEM integration, the N600 digital label printing press offers 1200dpi nominal print resolution with a native resolution of 600dpi and provides four greyscales operating at a leading edge 50-75m/m using durable UV inks.

Capable of printing onto a range of paper and plastic label stocks, the N600 was demonstrated at the show in a

reel-to-reel execution with a print width of 333mm (13.1") – which is compatible with most standard finishing solutions currently available.

'We have been closely monitoring technology and market trends in the digital printing market since before IPLEX 2006, when we test marketed an early 200dpi prototype machine', Philip Easton, director of Domino's Digital Printing Solutions division told *Labels & Labeling*. 'Brand owners are increasingly seeking to address their customers more directly and specifically by means of targeted and localized labels and packaging and initiatives such as special promotions.'

'Combined with this are more generalized trends for efficiency savings: brand owners are wary of holding large numbers of SKU's due to the risk of obsolescence, the potential for waste and the complexity of stock management. For printers, this translates into greater demand for short runs with fast turnaround. Conventional flexo printing involves production economics that incline towards multiple SKU's, while the beauty of digital is that bespoke labels can be produced rapidly using blank or generic stock. The greater flexibility afforded by a fully digital process for both pre-print and variable data enables users to efficiently meet customer requirements for localization, including language changes, and special promotions.'

The N600 label press can also be configured to operate

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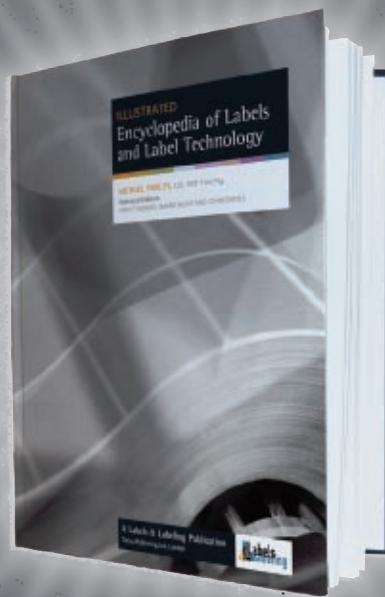
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in-line with a digital finishing solution, such as those produced by GM and AB Graphics, via dancer roller web in-feed. Standard features include automatic head cleaning; if the printer is left inactive for a period of time it will automatically go to the cleaning station so the print nozzles can be flushed and then parked. The fluid management system cycles the ink in order to further reduce the risk of nozzle blocking requiring maintenance. A range of optional quality assurance measures includes vision systems for tracking registration and colour density.

The capability to handle as wide a range of substrates as possible is afforded by an optional corona treatment module if required. However, the majority of industry label stocks are able to be used without the need to pre-treat, while the durability of UV inkjet means over varnishing is not always necessary.

'In Domino's view, there is now an excellent fit between digital printing and the underlying requirements of the brand owner affirms Easton. 'Our objectives in the development of the N-Series have been to provide the flexibility of digital with variable data capability, leading edge productivity and low cost of operation. Ongoing development activities will ensure that Domino continues to sustain its lead in quality and performance.'

Also making its debut at Ipxex was the Domino K600 high resolution single colour piezo ink jet system. The latest addition to the successful K-Series line-up, the 600dpi K600, satisfies the growing market requirement to digitally print complete products. Print widths range from 108mm (4.25") to 780mm (30.8"), with scalability being achieved by mounting print modules across a bar.

The K600 joins a range which includes the K100, K150 and K200 variants. These are available with UV curable and low volatile solvent inks and have been successfully deployed in a variety of applications since their 2005 introduction, such that the range now accounts for an estimated 30 percent worldwide market share in its target markets.

The K-Series' variable data printing capability supports barcodes, 2D codes including QR Codes, numbers, graphics, logos and personalised data in a range of different image sizes.

The capability to accommodate different print widths by stitching heads across the web is key to the K-Series' appeal. The existing stitchable K200 provides up to 244mm (9.6") single image area. The new K600 provides double the print resolution, greyscale capability and is suitable both for narrow web as well as wider format sheet and web applications.

Typical web applications for the K600 include digitally printing single colour language variants for short run production, helping to reduce complexity, changeover time and inventory requirements compared to conventional flexo solutions, while in the sheetfed arena, the system is ideally-suited to sheet-to-sheet game card and security printing applications. In common with all K-Series models, the K600 has a compact modular design to facilitate integration with a range of host machines and is available with both aqueous and UV curable ink options.

These new digital launches are all underpinned by the establishment of Domino's Digital Printing Solutions division – dedicated to the printing, mailing, packaging and converting markets – the focus of the division will be on label printers as well as in-house, near line printing in the packaging sector. The company's existing wide range of inkjet technologies for personalization and numbering will sit alongside the new N-Series full color solution to meet the complete range of digital printing applications.

As one of the pioneers of industrial inkjet technology, Domino's credentials in terms of delivering and supporting inkjet printers are beyond question. The company was formed in 1978: it floated on the London Stock Exchange in 1985 and has just reported its 31st year of consecutive growth, with sales to November 2009 of £256m (290m euros) and operating profit of £36m (40m euros). Today, the Group employs 2,000 people worldwide and sells to more than 120 countries through a global network of 25 subsidiary offices and more than 200 distributors. Domino's manufacturing facilities are situated in Canada, China, Germany, India, Sweden, UK and USA.

## STANDALONE DIGITAL SYSTEMS



New developments in compact 'all-in-one' digital printing systems are increasingly bringing converters the ability to set up low cost, in-house service bureaus to offer digital label printing as an added value service.

At Ipxex, Primera Technology demonstrated an interesting combination of its LX900e Color Label Printer and the new FX1200e finishing system.

Launched last year, the LX900e is Primera's fastest inkjet color label printer. It produces labels at speeds of up to 4.5" (11.43cm) per second – almost 17 times faster than the company's best-selling LX810e, and with comparable print quality.

The FX1200e is an off-line finishing machine that accepts up to 305mm (12") O.D. rolls of printed output from digital label presses. Options include lamination, die-cutting, waste matrix removal, slitting and rewinding onto multiple 3" (76mm) O.D. cores.

Utilizing Primera's patent-pending QuadraCut technology, virtually any size and shape of label can be produced without requiring rotary or flat dies, including complicated contour cuts. Up to four cutting blades can be installed at one time to quadruple the speed. The CX1200e and FX1200e combined will sell for less than £50,000. The FX1200e is UL listed, CE certified and FCC Class A approved.

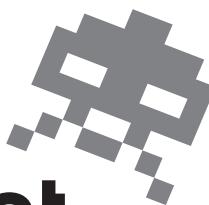
Roland DG used Ipxex to introduce its first UV inkjet system, the VersaUV LEC-330 inkjet printer/cutter. The machine prints, cuts and creases in one pass. Finishing options include both matt and gloss spot varnishes, while its ability to run multiple passes allows the LEC-330 to produce a wide range of highly dimensional effects, including embossing, Braille and lens-doming. Print resolution is 1440dpi, and the VersaUV can work with practically any coated or uncoated stock or substrate up to 1.3mm thick.

Roland DG was working closely with Madico Graphics, a UK-based supplier of pressure sensitive coated film products, to demonstrate niche applications for the VersaUV system. Examples on the stand included gloss white and bright silver polyesters, both coated with a high performance acrylic adhesive, as well as Madico's UV inkjet-printable scratch-resistant gloss ultra-clear polyester, ideal for 'no-label look' applications.

Allen Datagraph Systems, meanwhile, launched at Labelexpo Europe the iTech AXXIS, a complete solution for the printing and finishing of short run, prime quality labels. The iTech AXXIS is based around a proven Epson inkjet print engine which prints on a wide range of substrates from 4" to 8.5" wide. The Wasatch Technology Soft RIP front end has variable data capability, is ICC color compliant and comes with a 32,000 spot color database.

Allen Datagraph's iTech AXXIS Digital Label Finisher uses digital knife cutting technology to die cut any shape which can be designed in Adobe Illustrator. The system has the ability to laminate, matrix strip, slit and re-wind into finished label rolls.

Since deliveries began in December 2009, Allen Datagraph says more than 60 iTech AXXIS Digital Label Systems have been sold worldwide.



# High definition, low cost, inkjet label press launched

**MIKE FAIRLEY** follows up the launch of a new high color inkjet label press that offers low-cost investment to label converters

The digital printing of on-demand color labels has grown rapidly over the past ten years, with more than 1,200 digital label presses now installed worldwide. To-date, liquid and dry powder toner printing technologies have so far dominated the market, but with new UV and water-based inkjet-based label presses also now beginning to have an impact. Certainly the future of label printing already looks increasingly digital.

However, it seems that the impact of inkjet on the world of labels maybe ever faster than originally anticipated following the launch at Ipex of the long-promised Memjet high speed, high definition, inkjet technology incorporated into a label printing system.

Developed by Silverbrook Research in Australia, Memjet – Micro Electronic Mechanical InkJET – is a digital printing technology with an inkjet head which is 223 mm wide and has 5 ink channels feeding an amazing 70,400 nozzles, and all within 0.75 mm of web travel.

Coupled with an astonishing controller chip and newly developed unique inks, which are scratch and water resistant when printed on inkjet coated stocks, the Memjet produces high resolution photographic quality images at up to 18 meters/minute. The ink nozzles are arranged in lines, with 1600 nozzles per inch. These can produce more than 2.5 million ink dots per square inch of paper in a single pass and fire out ink droplets smaller than one picoliter (one millionth of a millionth of a liter), which enables tremendously sharp printed images. The very small size of the ink droplets is important because it helps the ink dry in less than a second. This is a critical factor in high speed printing without smudging.

Capable of delivering 744,000,000 ink drops per second, the Memjet print head has now been incorporated into both a desktop label printing package and a floor standing machine, both built by Rapid Label Systems in Australia, who are working with Silverbrook Research to commercialize the technology in the label, industrial and commercial markets.

The first of the two machines is the RapidX1, a bench top high speed digital inkjet with 1600 x 800 dpi at 18 meters per minute or, in high resolution photo mode 1600 x 1600 at 9 meters per minute. It has a 300 mm unwind and same size rewind and is designed for printing pre die cut labels or plain web for post finishing. The Memjet head in the RapidX1 is claimed as the first technology to deliver high speed color, quietly, with low energy use and in a desktop footprint.

Individual colors will be available in 250ml containers to enable long runs without stopping to replenish ink. The RapidX1 is also capable of printing on continuous media without registration marks.

The second machine, the RapidX2, is a floor standing label press with a 600 mm power driven unwind roll capacity, and uses the same print engine as the RapidX1 but feeds the printed material into a loop control for further processing, varnishing, hot foil stamping, laminating, die cutting, semi rotary or flat, or eventually, if the speed can be increased even further, to laser die-cutting. The machine can be run in line with any Rapid RP hot foil machine or even competitor machines, as long as the machines have re-register ability.

The five color ink range is again delivered in convenient 250ml cartridges. A water-based dye solution that will print on a broad range of media, the ink has no smell or any VOC content, and no ducting is required.

According to Bruce Mansell of Rapid Label Systems, he sees the Rapid machines as the first digital label technology to deliver quality color printing

and high performance with affordable printing costs. 'The real bonus' he explained to *Labels & Labeling*, 'is that the Rapid machines have no click charges or other costs – other than ink – which is supplied in 250 ml bulk tanks, and replacement of the quick change print head after approximately 10,000 linear meters of printing.'

'It may last longer', he added 'but we say 10k as a rule of thumb. The ink is quite unique and is not expensive. The print cost is about 4 cents (Australian) per meter, including ink and replacement printheads – not a big cost factor in the label market. What's more, the press prices are well under 10 percent of the cost of investing in the market leading digital presses.'

At that kind of price, almost any label converter could be investing in short-run digital color label printing to complement their existing business.



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# NEWS EXTRA

## THE INSIDER

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

### AWT WORLD TRADE ACQUIRES SCREEN PRESS LINE

The AWT World Trade Group has acquired the full line of General Cylinder Press and other assets of BecMar Corporation of Bailey, Michigan, USA. General originally developed and patented the cylinder screen printing press in 1948.

'This is an exciting acquisition for AWT that adds a new line to our already impressive array of screen printing-related machines, supplies, parts and services,' said Michael Green, president. 'We intend to shift manufacturing of the General line to our Chicago headquarters and main manufacturing facility.'

Sue Proctor, former owner of BecMar, added: 'This is an outstanding opportunity for General to reach a new level of growth with a well-respected company that has a global presence. We look forward to integrating the product line into AWT's operations and benefiting from its exceptional engineering team.'

Green said Proctor will join AWT to assist in the transition and integration of General products into the AWT line.

General's product line includes the General Pony Express and Ranger 25. The line is now in its fourth generation, with presses that are suited to spot printing, clear coating, heat transfers, decals, pressure-sensitive labels, greeting cards and P.O.P. displays.

Over the years General has developed more than 70 models and sizes of the cylinder presses capable of print areas ranging from 11-by-12 inches to 60-by-120 inches. General also manufactures stackers and feeders with applications for many industries in addition to printing.

'Our highly experienced engineers will be introducing further enhancements to the General line, Green said, 'much like we've done since 2002 when we acquired American M&M, another pioneer in the screen printing industry. We are already quite familiar with the General line. Our parts division, Graphic Parts International, has been manufacturing and distributing General replacement parts for several years.'

### UNIVACCO OPENS US BRANCH

Taiwan-based Univacco has opened a customer service center in western USA to serve the company's clients in North America. The new facility, opened early in the year, has been established 'for efficient and satisfying customer service', says the company.



## EFI APPOINTS CONVERTEC AS SCANDINAVIAN DISTRIBUTOR

EFI has appointed Convertec Graphic Technics, based in Gothenburg, Sweden, as its new sales and service provider for the Nordic market including Scandinavia and Finland.

Frank Janssen, sales development manager for EFI's Jetrion range of inkjet presses, said the technology was especially suited to the Scandinavian label market where run lengths are typically shorter than elsewhere in western Europe, but where demand for quality remains high. 'The EFI Jetrion technology is very advanced, but so simple to use that converters who have no previous experience can scarcely believe it. It offers easy handling with high productivity, which makes the concept very profitably too. The Jetrion ink jet DoD technique is easy to learn, simple to use, and allows so much variety that no other technology can compete in terms of flexibility and unit cost,' he explained.

Carsten Jensen of Convertec said: 'What we are seeing is that the EFI Jetrion 4000 and 4830 models are helping converters to maximize their existing machine

park of narrow web label presses in a more efficient and economical way, at the same time as opening up new and complementary types of print-on-demand business that would never have been possible and profitable up till now.'

Convertect also offers converting products from UK-based AB Graphic, including laser, semi-rotary, rotary and flat bed die-cutting. To mark its appointment as an EFI Jetrion distributor, Convertect recently opened a new demonstration facility in Partille, Gothenburg, Sweden. This will allow the company to give personalized demonstrations on the Jetrion 4000 model to any narrow web producer, and provide the opportunity to test their own print jobs on their own substrates. To improve the demonstrations further, Convertect has upgraded the 4000 model with options for running various types of unsupported films in addition to the standard labelstocks. These include the latest cold-UV system from Dr Honle, a cooling plate system from ESS Technology Denmark, and the latest corona treater from Vetaphone.

## ERREPI REPORTS SUCCESSFUL OPEN HOUSE

Italian company Errepi reports that its open house, held at its facility in Perugia on April 22-24, was 'a great success'.

On display was an automatic core cutter that allows the operator to produce cores of different diameter and length without mechanical adjustments; an automatic non-stop turret rewinder with 520mm web width; and a compact, modular machine, of the same width, for the production of blank labels. The company also showed

equipment for the cutting and rewinding of plastic materials.

'It was really important for Errepi staff to see that the visitors were impressed with the improvements of our machines. The open house was also a good occasion to define a cooperation with agents in Brazil, Poland, Germany and France,' said Luciano Ramaccioni de Sousa, Errepi's foreign sales manager.

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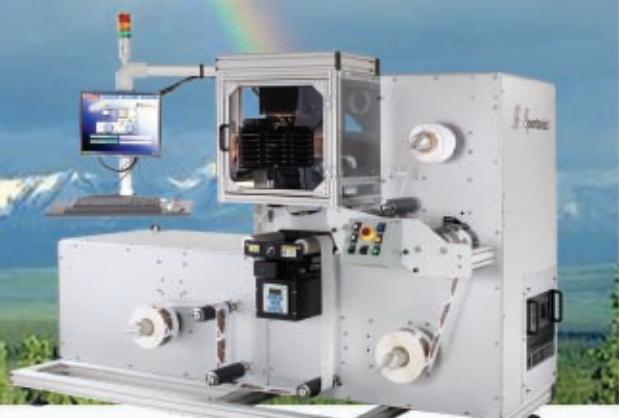
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# Master Combat launched

AT a recent open house, Nuova Gidue showed for the first time its new Master Combat press alongside a redesigned Xpannd combination offset-flexo press. Andy Thomas reports

At an open house in Florence, Nuova Gidue demonstrated the latest press in its Combat flexo line, the Master Combat. The press was shown alongside a redesigned Xpannd combination offset-flexo press. Nuovo Gidue reports that visitors came from around the world to see the new machine.

The Master Combat 430 demonstrated was a 9-color machine printing on unsupported BOPP and on a clear-on clear PET. The label was designed to be technically challenging, matching a high quality process job printed on the adhesive, with opaque printing on the face.

The job was slit and inspected on a Prati Jupiter inspection machine using a BST Shark 100% inspection system. A SMAG Galaxie silkscreen press added a final decoration layer to the label, with washing equipment demonstrated by FlexoWash. The project was jointly developed with Nuovo Gidue by NuMaber, Grafica Panciroli, Bottcher, Kodak, Kurz and Flint.

On the Xpannd offset combination press, meanwhile, an unsupported 38 micron BOPP film was printed using a demanding sheetfed offset test form.

Italian converter Nuceria Adesivi will be the first to install the new Master Combat. 'We "blind" ordered the Master Combat some months ago because we trusted the Gidue technology,' said plant manager Guido Iannone. 'But the machine we discovered surprised us completely. We are very proud to be the very first Master user in the market.'

Peter Tanner from Graphicon AG, the new distributor for German speaking countries, was equally enthusiastic: 'I expected some steps forward from the past Gidue technology. The Master Combat is not only that. It is truly a new milestone in our industry.'

Eddie Gulmen distributes the Gidue technology in Australia. 'I made a 24 hours trip to be at the Open House, and I am happy. We are back into our position of leadership in technology. I will immediately send pictures of the machine to my customers and invite them to see it. The Master Combat is a "must see" now, if you want to buy a press for the label and packaging industry.'

Federico d'Annunzio, managing director of Nuova Gidue, commented: 'at the open-house we could finalize many sales which we had been preparing for the past months. We have nearly completed our budget of sales for 2010, and we are only in April. I believe the quality of our distributors worldwide made the biggest part of it. But I also believe that the Master Combat is such an evident breakthrough in our industry that some sales came in just from the quality of the machine.'

The open house program was completed by a well-attended seminar on digital workflow in pre-press held by EskoArtwork and Kodak.





# Globalization drives Japan Label Forum

THE Japanese market is changing fast, opening up to flexo and digital technologies as the country's converters face the challenges of globalization. Andy Thomas reports

A major label conference in Tokyo, Japan, will address the rapidly changing trends in this key global market, which accounts for one third of the labels consumed in the Asia-Pacific region. Label Forum Japan takes place at the Bellesalle Shiodome Tokyo between 22-23 July 2010.

Japan today is a major user of high quality, gravure-printed shrink sleeve labels, while the self-adhesive sector is characterized by smaller-scale converters printing letterpress. This situation is changing rapidly as gravure comes under environmental pressure and end users source labels outside Japan printed flexo or UV flexo.

Organized by Label Shimbun – Japan's most important labels-dedicated publication – and Labelexpo Global series, and supported by *Labels & Labeling* and the Japanese Federation of Labels Printers (JFLP), the two-day Label Forum features an opening address from Akihiko Ouchi, president and CEO of conference sponsor Lintec. Lintec is in a unique position to understand trends in the label market in Japan, as it both manufactures label stock and narrow web letterpress machines. The company is also agent for Mark Andy and HP Indigo, extending its reach into flexography and digital printing. The keynote address, on trends in the Japanese labels market, will be delivered by Label Shimbun chief editor Natsuki Uchida.

The view of the end user comes from Hiroko Yamada of Kose Cosmepart, a Japanese toiletries and cosmetics products manufacturer which exports its products throughout the Asia-Pacific region. The conference will also hear from Munehiko Takada from beverage giant Suntory, the second biggest Japanese manufacturer of soft drinks, the country's third largest beer manufacturer and main bottler of whisky.

Developments in digital printing are of key interest to Japanese converters, and the conference looks at this area in some detail. On the first day there are presentations from EFI,

Durst and EskoArtwork. On day two the JFLP leads a panel discussion looking at the future direction of digital printing in Japan. Later that afternoon, there are presentations from wide format inkjet specialist Roland DG and HP Indigo.

The growing interest in UV flexo in Japan is reflected in sessions led by Omet and Nilpeter on day two, when there are additional technology and market presentations from Avery Dennison on trends in self-adhesive technology, and from inspection specialist Erhardt + Leimer.

Day two will have a strongly international flavor, with L&L editor Andy Thomas looking at global label industry trends, followed by a panel session of international label converters.

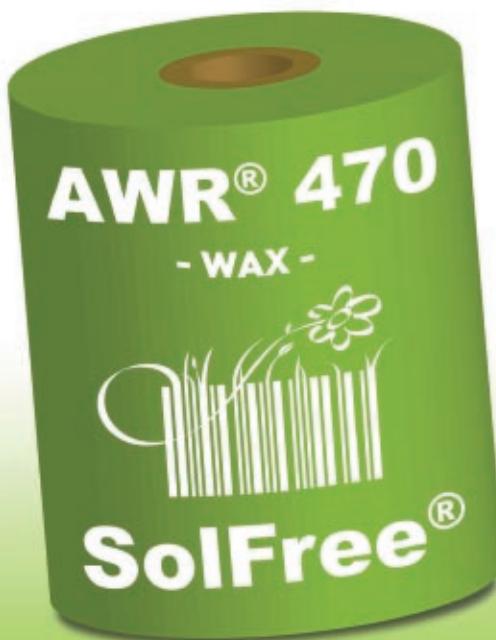
Five leading label converters will talk about their strategy and how they have innovated in label manufacturing. There is a session on in-line label manufacture, including advice on coating release liner and printing and converting of the substrate from Mr Yukosha, president of Masaaki Ono. Sunny Sealing president Hirofumi Tomiyoshi explains how to set up a strategic planning operation. Other converters on the panel include Shojyudo, Takakuwa art printing and CCL.

Wider business trends are covered by two very interesting presentations: Akihiro Nishizawa at design agency Eight looks at label design and brand strategy and Munehiko Takada examines trends in beverage bottle labels.

The Label Forum also includes a tabletop exhibition featuring leading Japanese and international suppliers to the labels industry. The event is sponsored by Lintec, with gold sponsor Avery Dennison. The other sponsors are Durst, E+L, Nilpeter, MTJN, EFI, Esko, HP, Xeikon and Roland.

*For more information and a full program listing visit [www.labelforum.jp](http://www.labelforum.jp) or [www.labelshimbun.com](http://www.labelshimbun.com)*

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## High-productivity printing for labels and packaging

Faster, more versatile, and more efficient than ever – the new HP Indigo WS6000 Digital Press gives users who process high-volume label and packaging orders real and tangible investment benefits when it comes to medium print runs.

In a dynamic marketplace, the demand for fast, flexible production of labels and packaging is high. Brand owners need to be increasingly versatile and agile in their response to fierce mounting competition. Conventional print methods can barely keep pace with the challenges of fast-changing product cycles, shorter times to market and short print runs. More efficient, cost-effective solutions are needed, giving printing companies the opportunity to reap the benefits from a label market that is growing at a disproportionate rate.

*"The HP Indigo WS6000 is a real 'game changing' technology. It can dramatically reduce the time to market for labels."*

Michael Ferrari, associate director, Corporate Research and Development, Procter & Gamble

**Digital printing prospects:** There are good reasons why digital label printing has been so successful over recent years. It offers both printing companies and their customers a number of advantages. These include shorter

production and supply times, greater flexibility and the opportunity to reduce storage costs with on-demand printing.

Digital printing has revolutionised the production process from beginning to end. Instant proofs, reduced quantities of waste, lower costs and the elimination of time-consuming platemaking and setup are now possible. This has paved the way for cost-effective medium-sized print runs and lucrative options such as variable data printing, e.g., of barcodes or best-before dates.

**Fast and cost-effective:** For printing labels, the new HP Indigo WS6000 Digital Press is both economic and cost-effective. The total cost of producing print runs up to 4,000 linear metres is considerably lower than that using conventional technologies. At throughputs of 30 linear metres per minute for four-colour jobs, even very large print orders are processed within a very short space of time. Up to 90,000m<sup>2</sup> or 300,000 linear metres

can be processed per month, single-shift operation.

*"The HP Indigo WS6000 Digital Press is more cost-effective than flexo on such a wide range of work."* Jay Dollries, president and chief executive officer, Innovative Labeling Solutions

A repeat length of 317 x 980mm ensures high productivity, maximising substrate use and reducing media waste. The HP Indigo WS6000 Digital Press prints up to seven colours and has a new improved white specially suitable for metallised labels. The HP SmartStream Labels and Packaging workflow solutions, Powered by EskoArtwork supports colour management and ensures precision colour matching to the PANTONE® Colour range.

**Versatility for a competitive edge:** The HP Indigo WS6000 Digital Press prints to an impressive quality on a wide range of media between 12 and 450 microns thick. The wide range of



HP Indigo White allows you to print even onto metal and transparent labels.



Versatile labels are particularly popular with customers in the foodstuffs industry.



HP ElectroInk ensures precise reproduction of brand and company colours.

colours, substrates and applications offers economic advantages as do maximised uptimes and user-friendly digital printing. The HP Indigo WS6000 Digital Press is the key to profitable new applications and business opportunities.

### ■ Partner solutions extend the possibilities:

The range of applications is extended and supplemented by hardware and software products from leading manufacturers of printing solutions such as coatings used for the application of water-based primers or UV over-varnishes. Modular ABG Digicon solutions are specially designed for efficient label finishing. Many other media partners offer

various self-adhesive papers and films on rolls and foils.

*"The HP Indigo WS6000 with the traditional high Indigo quality appealed to us and allows us to meet our customers' needs even better."*

Isidore Leiser, president, Stratus Packaging Group

### ■ HP Technologies and the environment:

HP Indigo WS6000 Digital Press uses exclusive liquid HP ElectroInk, giving you the choice of mixed spot colours and four, six or seven-colour PANTONE® simulations enabling the accurate reproduction of brand and corporate colours. With no start-up waste and the ability to print only what you need, the HP Indigo

press offers savings in time and in materials. The press also has environmental features that help keep costs down. Power consumption is 25 percent lower than that of traditional printing machines and an oil recycling system reduces the use of consumables and production of waste by about 50 percent.



## HP Indigo WS6000 Digital Press

### Touchscreen user interface

- Intuitive and user-friendly
- Remote press-operator assistance provided by the Support Centre

### Rewinder

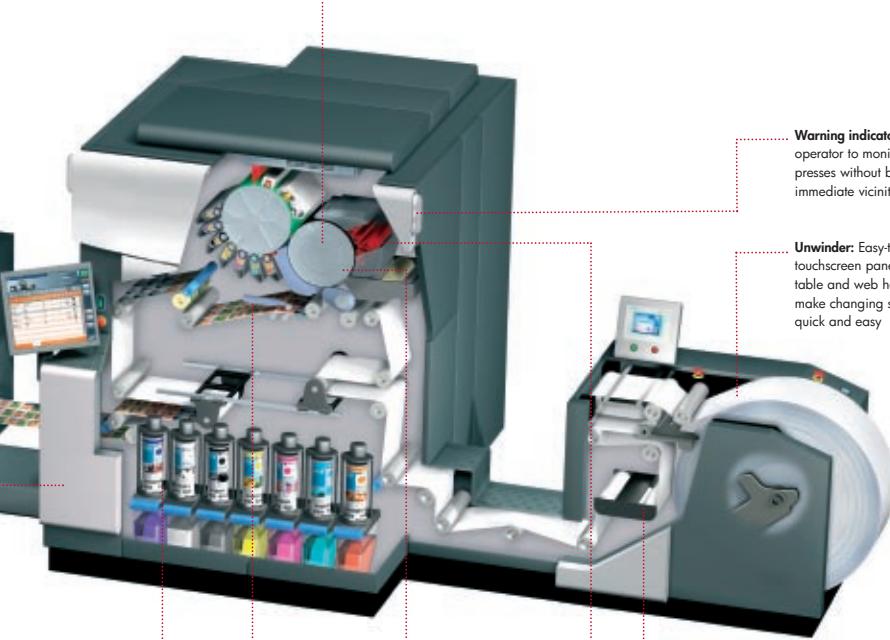
Easy-to-use touchscreen panel, splicing table and web handling make changing substrates quick and easy

### Packer arm



### 7-station colour ink cabinet

- Seven colour stations allow spot colour printing and PANTONE® emulation with 4, 6 or 7 process colours
- On-the-fly On-Press Fast Ink Replacement (OFIR) system for easy spot colour printing



**One-Shot process:** Ensures precise registration and supports repeat print length of 317 x 980mm with efficient use of the substrate, reducing waste

**Warning indicators:** Enable the operator to monitor several presses without being in the immediate vicinity

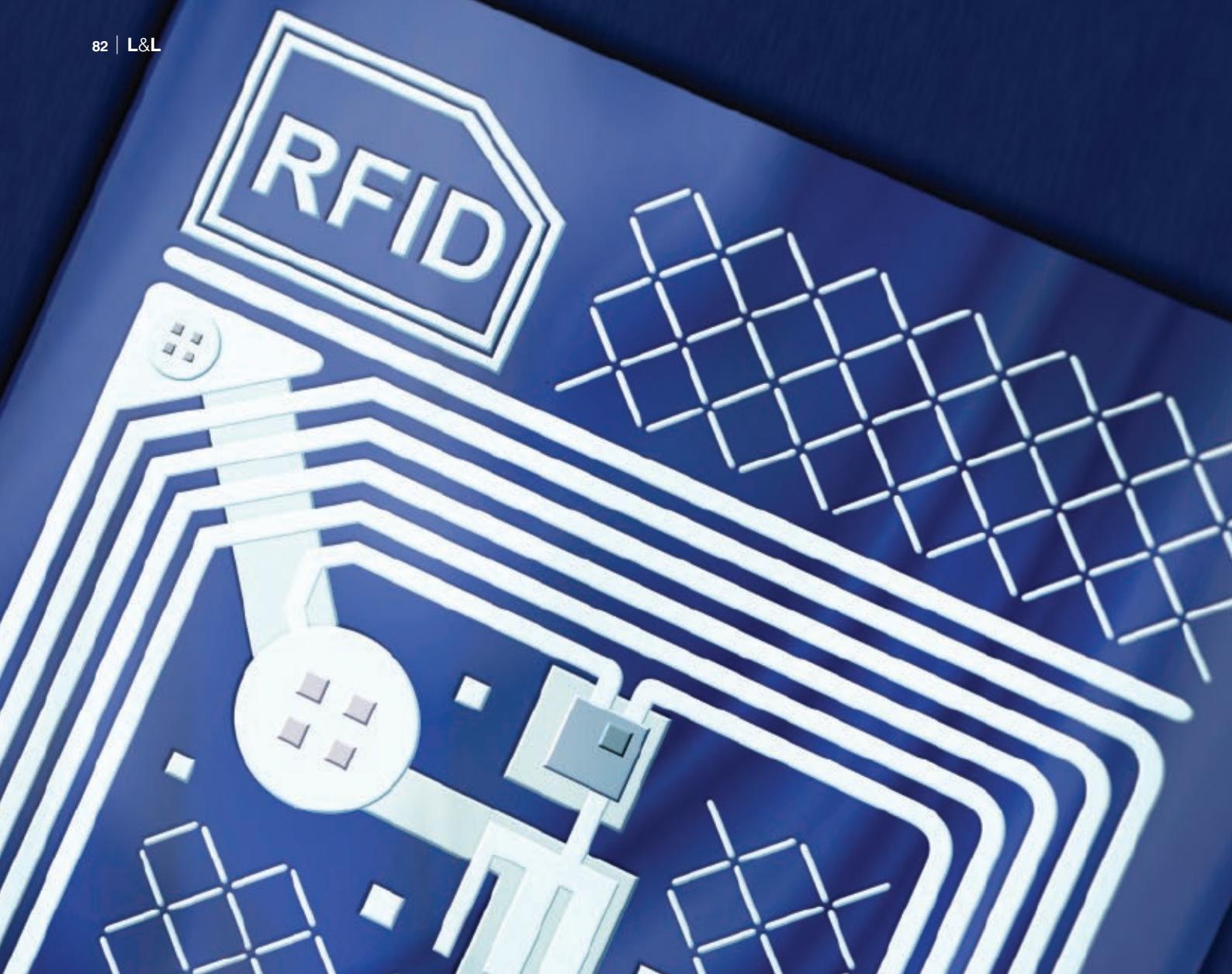
**Unwinder:** Easy-to-use touchscreen panel, splicing table and web handling make changing substrates quick and easy

### External blanket heating

Accurate local temperature control optimises the print process according to the type of substrate

### Web guide

Automatic web guide for continuous substrate control



# Whatever happened to RFID?

**RECENT L&L CONVERTER** surveys have shown interest in RFID labels fading. Andy Thomas looks at how the technology has fared and what opportunities are opening up for converters

Most label converters have passed over the opportunity to move into RFID production because they cannot see a way of making profits from what is, on its own, a low value commodity item. Most of the big projects in the RFID sector have involved RFID inlay manufacturers making deals directly with end users.

These large-scale roll-outs have had met with mixed success. Procter & Gamble and other CPGs, for example, have said they cannot get a payback on pallet/case tagging at current tag costs. But Marks & Spencer and American Apparel have reported a sales uplift of anything up to 25 percent after introducing closed-loop passive RFID-based tracking systems at up to 15cent/tag.

In fact the apparel industry has been one of the notable success stories for RFID. This year global fashion company

Gerry Weber will seek to take things one step further by combining RFID-based inventory management with loss prevention. The company will use RFID technology in over 25 million garments a year through an RFID chip embedded in a care label. The Avery Dennison RFID fabric care labels will be applied in the manufacturing process, eliminating the need for retail staff to fit and remove conventional bulky security tags in-store. The RFID label is automatically deactivated after the customer has paid for the goods at the checkout, while the inlay is washable up to 60 deg Celsius and can be dry-cleaned without damage.

In Japan, the government was behind a consortium of apparel and textile companies which recently implemented item-level RFID technology through the supply chain. The

solution – developed with UPM Raflatac – not only streamlines the check-out process, since clerks can scan all products for payment simultaneously, but also allows the collation of data on customer profiles, trends and goods movement, creating an excellent basis for brand strategy planning and product development.

Airport baggage tracking is an RFID application yet to take off in line with earlier expectations. A major reason has been confusion about the systems available and how to deal with different frequency standards globally. This situation has led Siemens to sponsor the RFID Baggage Tag Benchmark, an ambitious study carried out by systems integrator Odin to help airports and airlines understand the key characteristics behind successful RFID baggage tagging and how current tag offerings 'stand up to scientific scrutiny.'

'We've had airports contact us about using stimulus money to modernize baggage systems in an effort to make their airports more attractive to international carriers and cut costs at the same time,' commented Patrick J. Sweeney II, Odin's founder. 'Airlines and airports must replace 35 year-old barcodes, but don't know what RFID systems are best. Odin's RFID Baggage Tag Benchmark provides answers.'

Outside the commercial sector and mass transit systems, government agencies have been the major customers for RFID tags – particularly for passports, ID cards and military logistics.

#### THE CONVERTER'S WORLD?

As RFID moves forward in terms of functionality and real-world applications, converters should be looking for entry points into the technology – particularly where the opportunity arises to sell a solution in partnership with IT consultancy and hardware suppliers. This approach was pioneered by Swedish converter Nordvalls, which has formed just such a consortium to offer a turnkey RFID service to end users

including leading automotive parts suppliers.

Certainly the RFID converting equipment is now widely available from suppliers like Muehlbauer and Schober. And programming the chips is another service which converters can offer now user-friendly software is available. An example is Tharo Systems' RFID Wizard for the Easylabel labeling package. This allows converters to design, report, program and print HF or UHF smart labels, with automated creation of EPC (Electronic Product Code) and DoD (Department of Defense) smart labels where required. The data encoded onto the RFID chip can be printed onto the label as a text or bar code field.

RFID technology is heading in an interesting direction for label converters with the development of Near Field Communication (NFC) systems. NFC is a two-way, RFID-based communication technology – sometimes called 'contactless' technology – used in a wide array of applications including 'fast-lane' payment at supermarkets and transit payments. Of more interest to converters, NFC is also compatible with the new generation of smartphones, opening up interesting possibilities for direct communication between an RFID label/tag and consumer – communicating detailed product information, for example, or linking to on-line competitions or surveys. Japan has led the way in these applications, and in Tokyo one can find large numbers of POS RFID readers in retail stores, in restaurants and on transport networks.

One print services provider which has already taken advantage of these developments is Hansaprint, which has announced a joint project with UPM Raflatac involving the customization of NFC RFID tags.

The project allows customers to create and buy NFC-integrated print products online through the 'TagAge' portal. TagAge offers customized NFC tags with variable layout, encoding and materials possibilities, supporting an expanding range of RFID products. A recent addition is 'Label-on-metal', an NFC-enabled label for metal surfaces which is only slightly thicker than a normal label.

'Improvements to our web service and product offering are the logical evolution of ongoing market altering work,' enthuses Jukka Saariluoma, development director at Hansaprint. 'We believe we now have the structure and a fantastic start to harness the imagination of users within the NFC market.'

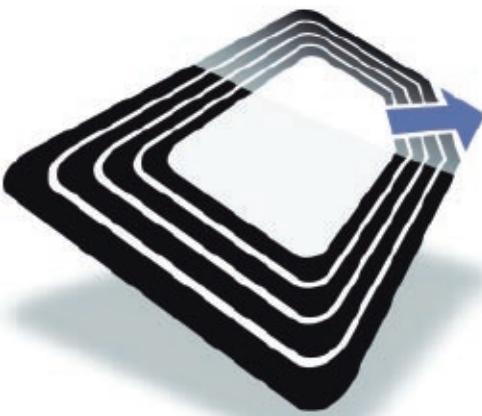
#### RFID ON PRESS

An interesting example of how RFID is being used in the print industry is Fischer & Krecke's smartGPS sleeve system. Flint Group Flexographic Products' rotoc sleeves are the first to be qualified for the F&K system. All rotoc sleeves for the smartGPS system are equipped with an RFID chip and a register sensor. The chip stores data such as the job design and print diameter, and when the plate is mounted, the data is recalled in the printing unit and the sleeves are moved automatically into register and impression. F&K says that as a traditional press proof is no longer required, material usage and set-up times are significantly reduced. Successful tests have been carried out at F&K with rotoc Blue Light Sleeves. The modification of the sleeve has no effect on the print result.

Saariluoma believes that TagAge's focus on small and medium volume customization will help create new market opportunities as end users develop innovative applications with NFC, both in business-to-business and business-to-consumer. It is well worth taking a look at the portal at [www.tagage.eu](http://www.tagage.eu). Printed electronics, greatly reducing the cost of RFID tag production, could also open up some interesting possibilities, as Raghu Das at RFID consultancy IDTechEx points out: 'We will see new consumer services and propositions tackling areas like counterfeiting and gray market diversion because the manufacture of hundreds of billions of disposable circuits is possible.' Among the examples given by Das already on the market is a 30c shelf edge tag which allows the price of a product to be updated remotely.

Label converter Schreiner Etiketten in Germany has shown conclusively that converters can make an impact in the RFID world, making a specialty of these kinds of applications. The company recently launched a temperature-resistant RFID label for use in the harsh environment of an auto industry paint shop. The company's High-Temp labels resist temperatures up to 220 °C (428 °F) as well as the harsh chemicals found in paint shops, and achieve reliable reading ranges even in metallic environments. This allows automakers to mark vehicle bodies between the welding stage and final assembly, something not possible up to now.

So before you write off RFID, give some thought to the possibilities – and remember that you will only make a profitable sale if it is total solution involving IT consultancy and hardware vendors.



# Nikka Research

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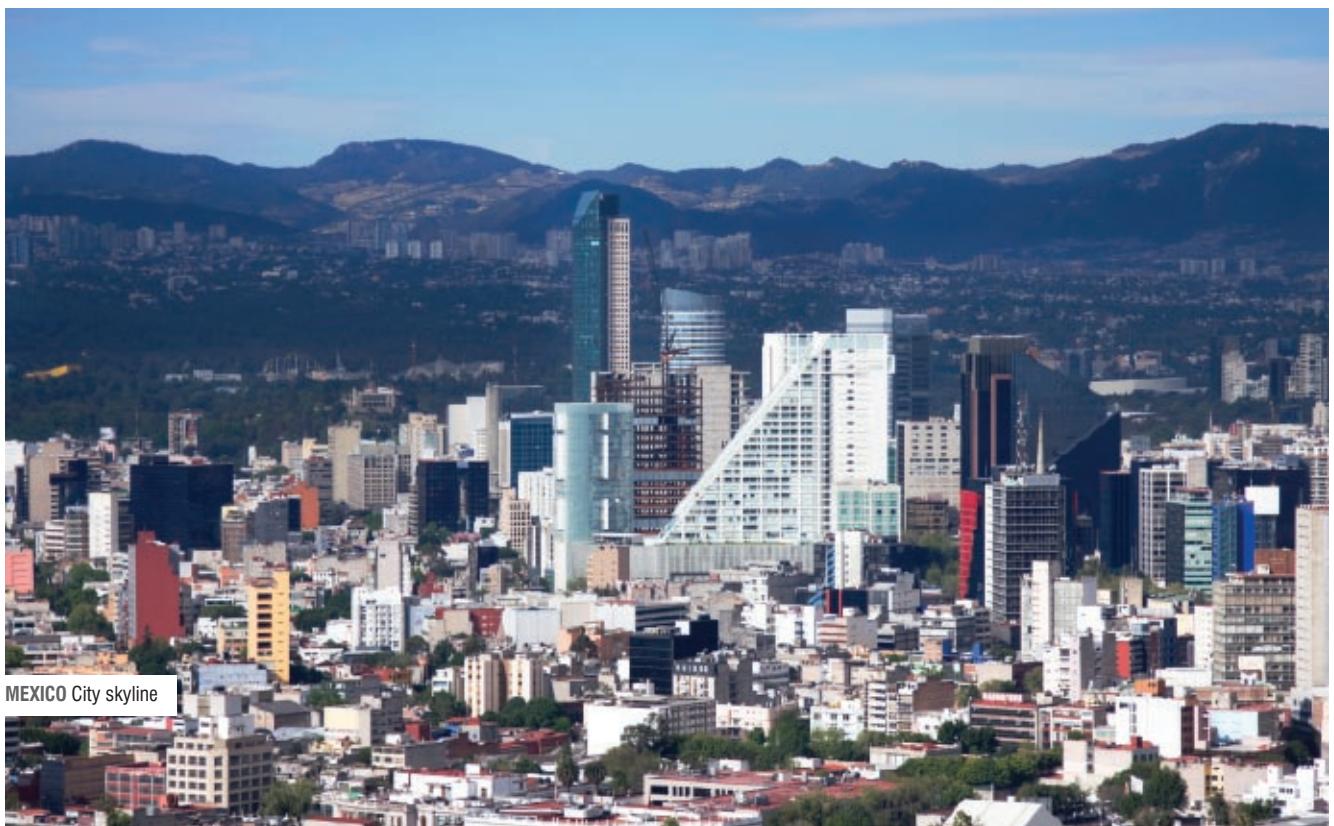
## Technologies

- Print Quality Inspection
- PDF to Print Verification
- Variable Barcode and 2D Code Inspection
- Braille Inspection
- Security Feature Inspection
- Inkjet Numbering
- Vision Slitter Control
- Colour Measurement
- Optical Character Recognition
- Process Data Collection and Analysis

## Applications

- Scanner based Inspection and Proofing
- Camera Systems for Printing Machines
- Slitter / Rewinder Inspection
- Inkjet Group Controller
- Inspect on Press, Repair on Rewinder Workflow
- Reporting System





# Mexico player focuses on offset and digital

**DEFYING THE GLOBAL DOWNTURN**, Eticom in Mexico City is making extensive capital investments and expanding geographically, writes Danielle Jerschefske

From flexo roots, Eticom in Mexico City has expanded its capabilities to include a variety of printing technologies in order to service the diverse Mexican label market. It has invested in HP Indigo digital technology and will add roll-fed offset equipment by the end of the year, making it one of the few label printers in the country to offer this capability. It will move this digital and offset equipment into a new 45,000 sq ft facility near its current location and has opened a completely new manufacturing facility in Monterrey, Mexico.

Jesus Ramirez Ruiz, founder and director general, established Eticom in 2000 after gaining some years experience working in a local label company. The business has grown consistently since its meager start in a small shop using a Mark Andy 830 press to convert labels for a variety of markets.

Today the converter strives to gain twenty new customers each month, adding to the current base of an estimated 2000 clients. With a crew of seventy, Eticom is now a supplier for a variety of big players including Walmart and multinational pharmaceutical companies. Production is completed on two twelve hour shifts, five days each week.

#### SALES STRATEGY

Ramirez Ruiz knows how critical it is in any market to service and support clients. It is for this reason that Eticom remains in close proximity to its customers with sales locations throughout Mexico and provides them with a single point of contact to make their ordering process more effective. Local offices also allow reps the

necessary time to nurture and gain new clients.

The six sales offices outside of Mexico City are located in Tampico, Queretaro, Monterrey, Durango, Puebla and Merida. Ramirez Ruiz says, 'In all of these locations, we are the first of our competition to be face-to-face with our customers. This strategy has significantly helped with our rapid growth over the last few years.'

The new manufacturing plant in Monterrey, Mexico, was opened because the company believes that it has a great opportunity to acquire new business in this area. Ramirez Ruiz says, 'We have the possibility to capture as many as sixty new clients with this new location. It allows us to deliver product to local customers quicker, and gives them the chance to be more hands-on with press checks. We will find growth in Monterrey for these two central reasons.'

The converter's sales representatives double as customer service reps, giving customers one consistent point of contact within the company. 'We take a lot of pride in this,' Ramirez Ruiz comments. 'It opens the door for a stronger relationship between our reps and the client.'

#### MARKET SCOPE

Eticom converts mostly film pressure sensitive and wrap-around labels. It competes in a number of markets because, Ramirez Ruiz says, 'that is the nature of the Mexican market. The majority of the brands are medium to very small companies.'

This is the reason that Eticom is moving forward with its digital



division this year. Eticom has installed two HP Indigo 4500 machines and an AB Graphic Series I converting system. 'We will capture new business with digital,' Ramirez Ruiz says. 'And we will try to move some of our existing flexo business to these machines.'

From the beginning, and still today, Eticom supplies labels to an array of markets in Mexico. It supplies a Canada-based pharmaceutical company that specializes in the supply of generic medicines. For Pepsi Mexico it manufactures the labels for the tap soda corrugated boxes. And it produces labels to one of Walmart Mexico's biggest health & beauty suppliers.

The bottled water market is extremely strong in Mexico; it is the largest market in the world. 'This has been an extremely good market for us,' Ramirez Ruiz tells. 'Here in Mexico there is also a large market in low quality, generic alcohol; the stuff that they use at the all-inclusive resorts in the popular coastal regions of the country.'

#### LEAN MANUFACTURING & MORE

Hugo Ramirez Ruiz, director de operaciones, implemented a color coding system to enhance visual analysis of productivity and efficiency within the main Eticom label plant. Using standard street cones in various colors – green, orange and blue – placed atop the ends of each press, the entire plant can see what each press status is – down, running, changeover – at any given time. Ramirez Martinez explains, 'This simple system definitely has helped us to increase up-time on the shop floor. It is our first small step towards lean manufacturing in our operations. We will be doing more and more in the future.'

Eticom renewed its ISO 9001:2000 certification to ISO 9000:2008 certification in 2009. Ramirez Ruiz explains, 'We feel that ISO certification is an important communication to our customers that we have standards within our plant that will make conducting business with us more consistent than our competition.'

Adding value to the business is important to Eticom. The company joined the TLMI in late 2009 and has been pleased with the membership benefits thus far. Ramirez Ruiz says, 'the ratio study is a fantastic piece of data to have. It is helpful to be able to benchmark our business with other leaders in the North American market.'

#### LABELS & LABELING

Also, Eticom is one of the founding members of AMETIQ (La Asociación Mexicana de Etiqueteros), a new Mexican label association that was initiated in early 2010. The purpose of AMETIQ is to strengthen the flexographic label industry in Mexico to spur growth.

Eticom has acquired a couple of its presses as secondary machines: a Mark Andy 930 and a 7-color Aquaflex dbx. It wasn't until 2003 that it purchased two brand new Aquaflex dbx machines, followed later by a Mark Andy 2200 and another Mark Andy 830.

Its 2007 purchase of two Gallus ECM-280 presses with rotary screen units seriously strengthened the converter's technology portfolio, allowing Eticom to capture new business in the health & beauty and spirits markets. When Eticom gained this capability, there were only five or so companies in the region with screen units. 'We have used this technology to service small and medium sized companies,' Ramirez Ruiz explains.

The converter uses EskoArtwork for all pre-press needs. Analog plates are produced in-house where previously plates had been sourced from local pre-press houses. Still, when digital plates are required, Eticom outsources this work.

The converter's average run length is between 2,000-5,000m. 'Most of the brands only require 10,000 labels,' he says. Still the converter does have a percentage of long run business.

#### OFFSET FUTURE

Eticom is working to complete the purchase of a new roll-fed offset press with three flexo heads and five offset stations. Ramirez Ruiz says that there are only two companies in the Mexican market with in-line offset capability, so the converter is taking a big step with this new investment.

'Offset is a challenge for us because it is a new process, but we feel that there is a lot of opportunity to be captured with bringing the technology into our portfolio,' Ramirez Ruiz explains. It also will give the converter increased press capacity which it is in need of right now.

Eticom's diversification in markets combined with its range of production technologies strengthens the converter's ability to meet the various demands and service needs that the local Mexican and large multinational brands require. Taking this platform directly to customers is a tactical business move that successful converters around the world are adopting. With its wise regional participation and dedication to the Mexican label market, Eticom thrives despite globalization and the strong competition it brings.

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# Tension control

HARPER Corporation's Paul Teachout looks at the challenges involved in maintaining correct web tension on high speed flexo press lines

As the world of narrow web continues to evolve, more and more press designs have shifted from traditional label presses to multi substrate platforms. Now that more and more flexible packaging applications are being done on narrow web machines it is critical to have the correct operational and machine features to run them successfully. Today's presses are designed from the ground up to handle these multi substrate capabilities. Most all of the latest models of narrow web machinery are now built with fully automated servo technology. Full automation and the most precise web handling and web transportation options available.

The ability to control and predict the transportation of the web through the machine is critical to the success of the application. Web tension control determines, in large part, the machines efficiency and product quality. Improper tension control can severely limit the performance of the machine. Slack web or indifferent tensions, both before and after tension zones are the most obvious consequences of inadequate tension control. These concerns will affect print to print registration, print length issues commonly referred to as 'snap back', curling of the web after lamination, core crushing and the worst of all, the excessive waste of web material. Adjusting to all of these concerns will lead to reduction in run speeds to accommodate web handling concerns.

Many of these issues are simply accepted as normal and are not usually attributed to web tensions; however anyone who experiences these concerns and recognizes the relationship can improve the process and machines efficiency. By optimizing the tension control systems on press we can improve production efficiency. But first we must understand the tension control systems available.

A typical inline machine has more than one tension system and zone. Typical tension affecting devices are the unwind stand, infeed tension control, midfeed pull roller, outfeed pull roller and the rewind stand. These are broken up into four tension zones. Unwind to infeed, infeed to midfeed, midfeed to outfeed and finally, outfeed to rewind. This separation exists because the process in any individual zone may require a different tension level or pattern than in the other zones. Let's

break these down individually to understand the importance and performance of each zone.

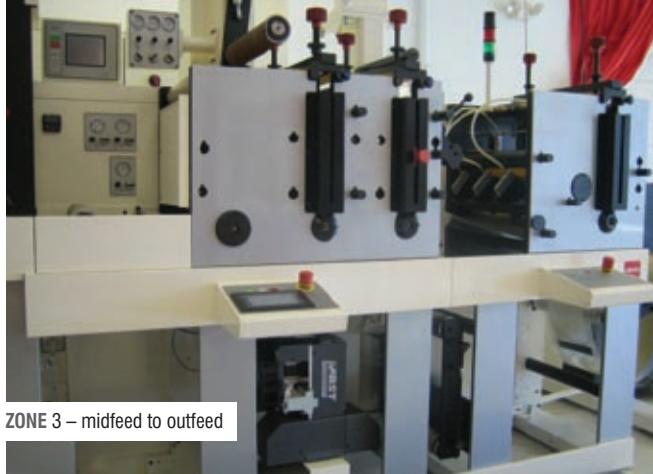
## UNWIND STAND TO INFEED CONTROL UNIT (ZONE 1)

The unwind module can play a very important part in the operation of the press. The required tension of the unwinding substrate should be roughly 15 to 20 percent less than the proper PLI (pounds per lineal inch) needed for the substrate. We do not want more tension on the unwind than we do in the press so it is critical to keep this ratio. Too much tension on the unwind could cause the roll to tighten on itself or telescope, which could also cause equilibrium issues entering the infeed unit. Too little tension and the infeed will have to work too hard to establish proper press tension.

The ultimate goal of the unwind is to efficiently unwind the substrate during acceleration, run speeds and deceleration. Any significant deviation from the constant tension may be reflected in the next tension zone. One of the unwinds biggest obstacles is overcoming core shaft inertia and gear friction without taking away the brakes sensitivities and hinder its proper control of the web. It is for this reason there are various options available to support the application to be run. The most common type of unwind brake systems are either pneumatic or electrical braking systems. More effective for film applications are the closed loop tension control systems. The closed loop tension system vastly improves tension control. The actual web tension is measured by transducer rollers and then matched to the desired settings set forth by the operator. Most transducers are either strain gauges, load cells or use a variable inductor to develop a voltage proportional to the tension and are accurate to within 1 percent. The system will then maintain a constant tension from beginning to end of the roll.

## INFEED TENSION TO MIDFEED UNIT (ZONE 2)

This zone is from Infeed to Midfeed and its main objective is color to color registration as well as the ability to affect print length. This is where the primary substrate tension setting will be set. Understanding its effect on tension is the key to solving many register issues. Following the proper PLI tension



charts will get you in the neighborhood for optimum settings. Since all presses are designed a little differently, such as web lengths and roller diameters, each will require their own optimum setting. Following the proper PLI settings will also allow you to better control any snap back issues while running film. This issue occurs when the web has too much tension applied. The web is stretched through the transport process and then relaxes after converting. The repeat ends up being shorter than the desired measurement. This could ultimately cause product count concerns as well as the inability to convert in the next process.

There are also various options available for tension control on this module as well. The traditional method for most label presses was to have a mechanically controlled variable infeed roller. This design would allow the operator to either speed up or slow down the pacing roller to increase or decrease the web tension. But it would not hold a constant tension through speed changes or stops and starts. Tension in most inline presses will tend to increase with the increase in speed. Tension is the primary function that will allow you to have good registration, without constant tension through the print zone you will not have constant registration. The second and more desirable choice for web tension control on this module is the closed loop system. Just as with the unwind, this system will monitor and correct for tension deviations that do not correlate with the desired setting by the operator. It will also make tension corrections through press accelerations and decelerations thus improving register performance throughout the speed range.

In order to make the proper tension corrections you must first know what to look for. In snap back related concerns you can usually tell very quickly what adjustments you need to make to the infeed unit. If the image is short due to stretching the material you will need to reduce the tension, if the image is long you can increase the tension. On the newer servo automated presses the print length can automatically be controlled by the variable repeat system control on the plate roller. This is a great feature because you can run an optimized tension with the exact repeat length. In other cases where snap back is not a concern you can always monitor the movement of the color to color registration. This is where the pull of the impression rolls comes into play. The impression rollers are not necessarily a zone in themselves but play a very important part in several aspects of printing. Remember that it is the first impression roller that is pulling on the infeed pacing roller. This is where the initial tension is being determined. It is then up to the progression of the remaining impression rollers and the midfeed to maintain the established tension. Most tension

related register concerns are usually seen in long term drifts. By monitoring the first color being printed you can usually identify what type of tension adjustment you need to make. If you are always advancing the first color down than chances are you are pulling it back toward the infeed. In this case I would reduce the tension and let the color drift forward. Register that bounces back and forth within its own color is usually related to a mechanical backlash concern or something related to that particular station. Long term drifts are easily controlled by tension settings as well as the automatic registration systems that most newer presses have. It is the dreaded register bounce that keeps us hopping.

Once the primary tension has been established by the infeed unit and the first impression roller pulling, it is up to the rest of the press to maintain the desired tension. Most narrow web presses are designed with a built in progression into the impression rollers. Although it is minimal with steps much less than a thousandth of an inch per roller, this progression in size is what allows the press to maintain tension, without it the tension would eventually drop off in the center of the press causing registration drifts. The infeed unit can usually maintain the tension for the first two or three stations but after that the press will need a pre determined progression to maintain tension. This is also why the impression rollers most commonly have a 180 degree web wrap. This is what maintains the tension. Picture a small boy playing tug of war with a giant. In a straight line he would certainly loose, but wrap the rope 180 degrees around a tree and the boy will hold him off all day. The webbing and wrapping of the press must be maintained to the press OEM's recommendations in order to hold the proper tensions. Just as the infeed can hold onto the first couple of print stations the midfeed can pull the last couple.

#### MIDFEED TENSION TO OUTFEED TENSION (ZONE 3)

This zone is from the midfeed pacing unit through the outfeed pacing unit. Most commonly called the converting section of the press. Its main objective is the last couple of print stations but directly effects print to die registration. Unlike the unwind and infeed tension control systems that have various drive capabilities and options this one tends to be a fixed drive module. It works in conjunction with the established tension that begins at the infeed and natural progression of the press. This fixed speed roller with a pneumatically controlled nip roll maintains its pull by being a couple thousandths larger than the last impression roller. The web wrapping of this roller as well as the air pressure regulated on the nip roller will allow considerable adjustments to be made to the tension zone. The

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relationship of this roller in reference to the print to die registration is crucial. If the die strike is continuously advancing away from the print, the nip roller pressure can be increased to minimize the slip and drive more web forward. Just as well, if the die strike is continuously falling behind the print we can reduce the nip roller air pressure to increase web slip. This will allow the print to retard and pace itself with the die strike.

Another one of the primary objectives of this unit is to serve as an isolation point between the printing zone and the converting zone. The midfeed roller, with the proper nip roller air pressure will isolate most any web disturbance caused from the converting process. This will minimize the possibility of sending shock waves or tension spikes back to the printing zone effecting print to print registration.

The outfeed tension unit is usually set up the same as the midfeed. It is a fixed drive module that also has a step in progression. This is the largest roller in the progression set. It serves to maintain the tension in the converting section and is the final driving roller in the machine. It also has a pneumatically controlled nip roller to maintain and adjust outfeed tension. This can also be used to control sheeting registration as well as other delivery functions.

### OUTFEED TENSION TO REWIND TENSION (ZONE 4)

The primary objective of this zone is to rewind the product roll with straight edges and uniform density, while preserving the accuracy of registration and repeat length. It must be designed and set up to accurately follow the acceleration and deceleration of the press speed while continually compensating for changes in the rolls diameter. It is also critical that this

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Paul Teachout has been in the packaging industry for more than 25 years. Starting out in offset, he moved to flexo press manufacturing with Webtron in 1986. He remained with the company through its evolution to finally become Aquaflex. Teachout has held numerous key positions including printing management, application specialists, sales support, engineering support, marketing and product development manager. As of March 2008, he became southeast technical graphics advisor for Harper Corporation of America. He is also active on industry committees and is a contributor to numerous technical articles.

product rewind have the sensitivity to handle narrow webs that are perforated, stretchable or stiff.

The center rewind system is the only tension system that is used in Narrow Web. The rewinding force is solely derived from the rewind shafts. This system is usually driven by the main press drive or an independent drive source. This design is most common because it is capable of using two tension control systems, constant (closed loop) and taper tension.

The Closed loop constant tension system works just like the unwind and infeed. It maintains a pre determined tension setting so the rewinding tension is the same on the first wrap of the roll as on the last wrap of the roll.

The Taper Tension control system works slightly different and is adjustable. This is where the tension on the last wrap of the roll will be slightly lower than on the first wrap of the roll. This is a very common system for the flexible film applications requiring lower tensions.

Typically rewinding films will require less tension than that of label stock or tag. This is due to the film being a non absorbent substrate. Ink build up in high coverage areas as well as ink blocking can occur if the roll is wound too tight. To determine proper rewind tension, use this simple test. Apply pressure to the printed roll with your thumb, you should be able to feel a slight compression of the material. If you can't, the roll is wound too tight. Optimal rewind tensions are usually the same if not slightly higher than the unwind settings.

### OTHER FACTORS

There are obviously many other factors that can effect press tension. Adding individual converting applications like turn bars, rotary screens, embossing units and laminations will all contribute to new challenges. Temperature of the driers and air velocity will also affect the stability of the web tension. But understanding the basic concept of the tension system in your press will allow you to identify the root cause and conquer those challenges more effectively. As we continue to evolve in the flexo inline process with higher plate LPI's, lenticular imaging and expanded color gamut printing, we will most definitely need to have control of our web tensions for optimum registration results. I hope you will find this information useful in reducing your stress levels created by uncontrolled tension.

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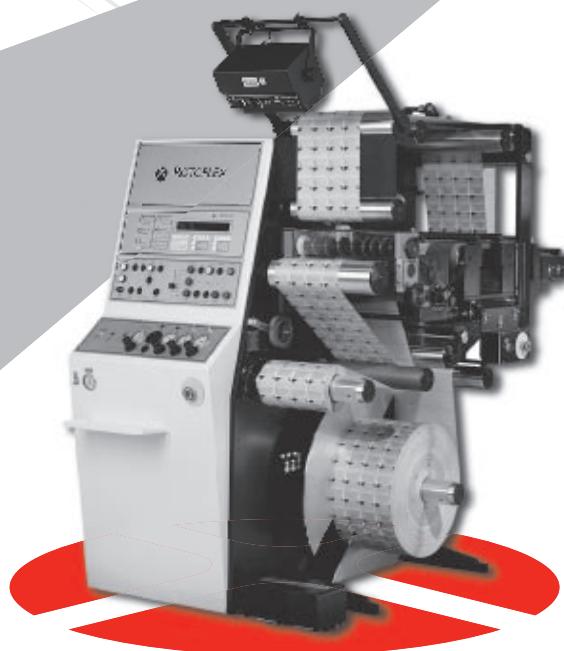


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# looking for growth

**UNDER PRESSURE** from the domestic and global recession, the Japanese label industry finds itself needing to find new business opportunities in a highly developed market. Yukiko Suzuki, editor of Japan's leading label publication, Label Shimbun, reports the results of a comprehensive market survey

While the Japanese printing industry is gradually downsizing its sales, the self-adhesive label market had managed to maintain sales and profit levels. But the domestic recession and the 2009 global economic recession have led to a slight fall in the size of Japanese self-adhesive label market, and the business is now at a transitional stage.

Japanese label converters and industry suppliers are starting to look for new business opportunities in a country which already has one of the world's most highly developed label businesses. Leading Japanese electronics companies, such as manufacturers of inkjet digital label presses and printers will contribute greatly to the development of the future Japanese label business.

These are some of the key findings of a Label Shimbun survey into the current state of the Japanese label market.

## SITUATION OF THE JAPANESE SELF-ADHESIVE LABEL MARKET

The Japanese self-adhesive label market was worth 500 billion yen in 2009 (\$5.48bn), down 3.8 percent from the previous year's (April 2008 to March 2009) 520 billion yen. The market currently accounts for 7.2 percent of the total 6.9 trillion yen Japanese printing industry.

Since its 8.9 trillion yen peak in 1991, the industry has gradually declined, despite a slight pick up in 2007 followed by another fall in 2008. It now stands at less than 7 trillion yen (\$0.07 trillion); a little under 80 percent of the 1991 peak. The Japanese market continues to push forward in the face of ongoing shrinkage in the global market. However, the sluggish state of the domestic economy in 2008 and the global recession caused by the U.S has left no aspect of the printing industry unaffected. The label share of the entire print industry is down 0.1 percent as a result.

Currently adhesive labels count for 55 percent of the total 2.3 billion m<sup>2</sup> of labels produced by Japan. Traditional glue labels count for 22 percent, showing little change from 2008. Due to bottled beer labels decreasing in

demand due manufacturers moving towards cans, glass bottle sake labels have become the new main glue label product. The internationally popular shrink sleeve label currently accounts for 13 percent, up 1 percent from 2008.

The shrink label market continued to expand up to 2008, but became over-saturated in the soft drinks market in 2009. It also suffered from environmental and cost concerns, ultimately going down to 620 billion yen (\$6.8bn), a 20 billion yen decrease from 2008. However other markets are beginning to adopt shrink labels; wine, which increasingly favors plastic over glass bottles, as well as condiments, medicine and cosmetic products. Base shrink material category shares stand at OPS 71 percent, PET 24 percent and hybrids at 3 percent. PVC is almost at a halt, at 0.4 percent.

In-mold labels is holding onto a market share of 2 percent, showing no change from 2008. 40 percent of all In-mould label products are in categories which involve water-related items such as kitchen, bath and toilet, dishwashing and hair/ body care products. 'Chilled-cup' dairy products such as café au lait account for 30 percent and dessert and ice cream tubs account for 10 percent each. Also, due to growing environmental concerns over wastage and package reusability, stand-up pouches have become the standard.

In adhesive label market categories, food, beverage and alcohol are in the highest demand at 34 percent. Affected by industry stagnation, distribution/ logistics label share have dropped 1 point to 19 percent. In addition, the high demand for film labels was significantly affected by the economic recession. Electronic and precision machinery labels had a 1 point share drop down to 14 percent.

The industrial label field saw only a fractional recovery in 2009.



### JAPANESE LABEL PRINTING COMPANIES

There are around 3,100 label printing companies and label providers in Japan. Looking at employee statistics, companies with less than 30 employees represent 73 percent of the total, while companies with 30-50 represent 15% percent. Therefore small and medium-size companies account for just under 90 percent.

The effects of globalization are predicted to lead to a widening gap between small and large-scale companies. In addition, in 2008 the highest profit percentages were in companies where annual sales fell between 1.5 billion and 3 billion yen (\$0.03bn).

Of those Japanese companies who focus mainly on adhesive labels, the largest was Osaka Seal Printing Co. (OSP) Their 2008 sales totaled over 70.5 billion yen. OSP also make labeling equipment and use their own adhesive paper products within their company. The top shrink-label manufacturer was Fuji Seal Group. Their 2008 sales totaled almost 93 billion yen, of which shrink-labels accounted for 63.4 percent and adhesives 9.4 percent. Other products include stand-up pouches and shrink labelers. Sato Corporation, suppliers of label printing equipment had 87.79 billion yen in 2008 sales, of which label products accounted for 60 percent and equipment 40 percent.

### ADHESIVE PRINTING PAPER TRENDS

In 2009 domestic production of adhesive substrates was down 4.3 percent from 2008 to 107 million m<sup>2</sup> per month. Breaking this down; paper-types are down to 88.6 million m<sup>2</sup> per month (-3.6 percent), film-types are at 18.4 million m<sup>2</sup> per month. The paper/film ratio is 83/17 percent. Between 2005-07 there had been positive growth, but a stagnating domestic economy in the first half of 2008 and global economic recession in the second half were responsible for the slump in demand. In adhesive papermaker market shares, Lintec has the highest share at 27 percent. OSP has 22 percent of in-house manufacturing followed by Ojitatc at 22 percent.

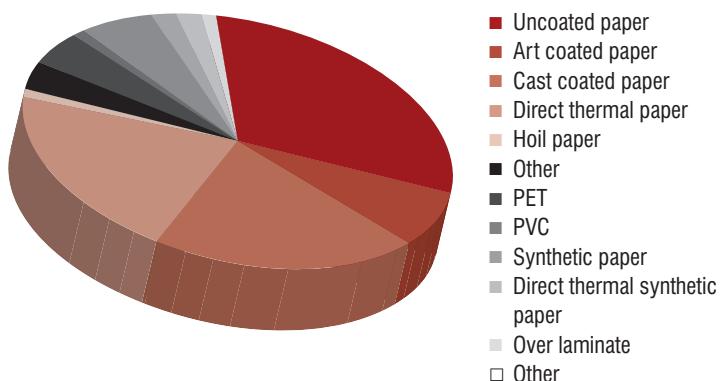
### LABEL PRINTING MACHINERY TRENDS

Flat bed label printing machines hold the highest percentage of the Japanese converter market at 64.1 percent. Recently, however, smaller size intermittent rotary letterpress machines have been replacing these. In 2009 50 machines were installed. This trend has been increasing. It is said that the Japanese printing industry is the most rigorous and stringent when it comes to quality control. Recently in food, cosmetic, toiletries, body care and medical products among others, there is an increased tendency towards the use of point-of-purchase label constructions which are eye catching for consumers. These include products such as multi-page labels and booklet labels, which require investment in additional technologies. Barcode label systems along with home delivery labels are continually developing and moving ahead.

Looking to the future, 'high added value' and 'high quality' are the mottos by which the Japanese market expects to move forward into a variety of new developments.

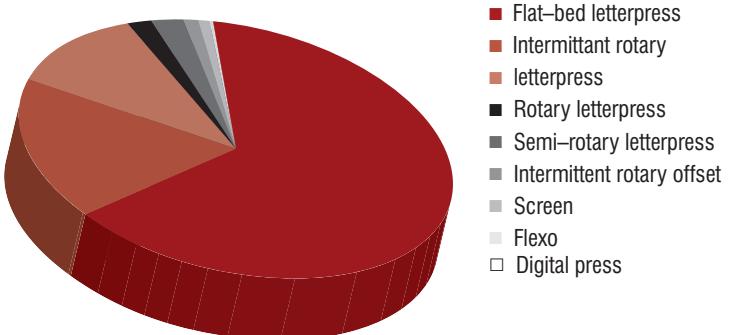
### MARKET SHARE BY TYPE OF SELF-ADHESIVE LABELSTOCK

MATERIAL IN JAPAN (2008 FISICAL YEAR:APRIL 2008 TO MARCH 2009)

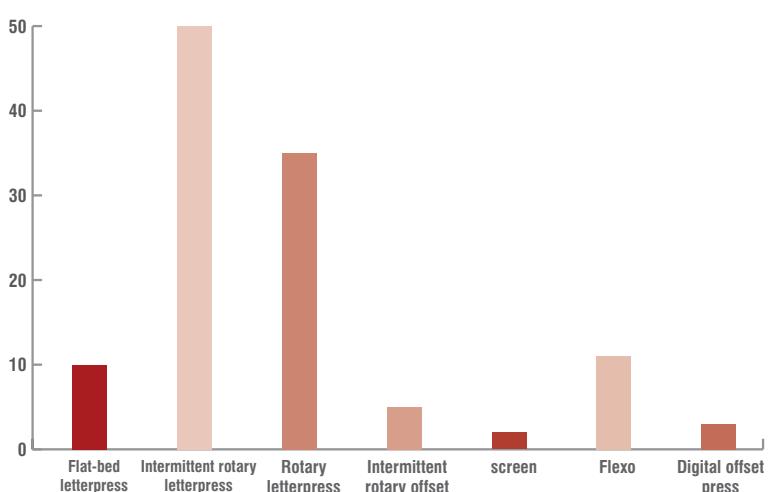


### MARKET SHARE OF ROLL-LABEL PRESSES IN JAPAN

(THE NUMBER OF INSTALLED MACHINES)



### THE NUMBER OF SHIPMENT FOR ROLL-LABEL PRESSES IN 2009



### JAPAN LABEL SURVEY

The full report on Japan market trends will be released on 27th July at the Japan Label Forum 2010, which will be held at the Tokyo, Chuo-ku, hosted by Label Shimbun and Tarsus LabelExpo series (see page 78). The report containing all the data for the Japanese Adhesive Label Market 2010 is available in hardcover at 30,000 yen (Japanese version). For more information visit [www.labelshimbun.com](http://www.labelshimbun.com) or [info@labelshimbun.com](mailto:info@labelshimbun.com).



# Label Summit Latin America 2010 review

**LABEL SUMMIT LATIN AMERICA** welcomed 708 people to the two-day conference and table-top exhibition held in Mexico City on May 11-12. The event drew more delegates and exhibiting companies than any previous Labelexpo Global Series event in Latin America. Report by Andy Thomas, Danielle Jerschefske and James Quirk

This year's Latin America Label Summit saw presentations from industry experts from Latin America, the US and Europe, representing some of the world's leading label converters, end users, technology suppliers and industry associations. The conference replicated the successful afternoon break-out sessions that were introduced at the Summit in Sao Paulo last year. The afternoons divided into separate management and technology streams, with the former focusing on streamlining production and costs, taking advantage of multi-media platforms, waste management in the label plant and diversifying your business. Technology sessions centered on digital and flexo printing, label applicator technology and the growing use of management information systems.

Conference highlights included a presentation by Mexican marketing expert Alejandro Watson as well as sessions dedicated to the growing private label sector and environmental sustainability. Proctor & Gamble and Tequila Sauza provided the end user's perspective, while other sessions focused on the challenges of running a family business and security and brand protection.

Interactive panel discussions dealt with subjects such as challenges in the global label market, international partnerships and diversifying your business into new technological and geographical markets.

Over 60 industry suppliers from around the world presented

their latest technological developments in the table-top exhibition running alongside the conference, including event sponsors Avery Dennison, HP Indigo, Green Bay Packaging, Ahlstrom, UPM Raflatac and Boise.

Label associations Finat (Europe and worldwide), TLMI (North America), Abiea (Brazil), Anidigraf and Ametiq (Mexico) and Conlatingraf (Latin America) all had representatives at the event.

## REGIONAL KEYNOTE

The scene was set with a keynote address from Ronaldo Mello, VP materials division South America for Avery Dennison. In a wide-ranging survey of the trends which are affecting the development of the PS label market in the region, Mello noted that Mexico is the second largest consumer of bottled water and carbonated beverages in the world, and the sixth largest beer market, which will drive the usage of added-value label solutions in the domestic as well as the export market. Mello also noted that sustainability is a critical global trend, especially in the personal care sector where global brands are demanding more environmentally friendly packaging solutions, driven by consumers.

A special guest speaker, Mexican marketing expert Alejandro Watson, advised attendees on how to diversify marketing strategies during times of financial difficulties.

Watson, a consultant to a wide range of national and



international companies, associations and educational institutions, outlined practical ways of differentiating yourself from the competition.

A dynamic presentation urged delegates to maintain a strategic marketing scheme during times of financial difficulty, focusing on tactical planning, competitive advantage and market segments where special value can be offered. 'Business is service,' he said, 'and success is based on differentiating yourself from others.'

#### **GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

A panel session looking at the challenges and opportunities facing converters globally featured José Luis Zamora, president of Conlatingraf, the Latin America graphic arts association; Dan Muenzer, VP global marketing for Spear, the world's largest PS beverage label supplier; Kurt Walker, CEO of tesa Bandfix and Finat vice president; and Roger Pellow, MD of the Tarsus Labels Group.

Looking at opportunities to add value, Meunzer noted that Spear has been able to up-sell brands, moving them from wet glue to pressure sensitive. 'You have to play off the graphic and aesthetic benefits of a pressure sensitive labeling package and demonstrate the efficiencies of the system. Spear shows its customers the total value of using pressure sensitive material and the cost gains that can be found in the application process.'

Additionally, Muenzer noted the importance of partnering with suppliers. 'It's our job to bring the end use need to our supply base and manage the process, and not actually develop it ourselves.'

Roger Pellow said converters must help brands to sell their products, citing Spanish converter Germark which recently set up a highly successful innovation committee to analyse its customers' marketing requirements and develop products accordingly.

Kurt Walker of tesa Banfix talked about how global partnerships between converters can help brands launch global products with all the benefits of centralized artwork and management of the whole workflow to print and shipping of labels to local packing plants. 'This meant we were able to meet the needs of a global brand owner without needing to invest all over the world.'

#### **GLOBAL ALLIANCES**

A second converter panel session on the subject of global alliances allowed Kurt Walker to expand on his experiences in setting up a global group of label converters along with one of his partners, Fernando Aranguren of Mexican converter Flexoprint.

Walker stressed the importance of establishing clear communication channels with your partners, so all sides agree on expectations, responsibilities, product development

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and warranties. From his side, Fernando Aranguren told how Flexoprint's weekly conversations with tesa Bandfix allowed the company to gain significant technology insights as they learned to work to common standards, and were a valuable forum for sharing knowledge.

Luis Maria Garcia of Argentine printer Multilabel spoke of his experiences of setting up subsidiaries in Mexico and Brazil. Garcia explained how uniformity of technology between the plants allowed collaboration on individual jobs. He cited differences of language and culture in Brazil as the main challenge of setting up an operation in the country.

#### WORKING WITH PRIVATE LABEL BRANDS

Danielle Jerschefske, L&L's North America editor, introduced a panel session looking at the booming private label market. Nielsen Research showed that as of March 2010 in the US private label brands hold a 17.3 percent share of dollar sales in the market, an over two point increase from 2007. Research also showed that affluent households with a family income over USD \$100K each year and younger women are among the

fastest growing users of store brands.

Retailers H-E-B Mexico, Soriana and Comercial Mexico use a tiered solution for their private brand solutions, offering consumers a 'good, better best' option. Walmart Mexico and Chedraui, however, offer only one brand of in-store products with no premium options.

It has been said that Mexican consumers distrust private label packaging that looks 'cheap', showing that there is great opportunity within the market to increase private labels sales through higher quality packaging.

The advancement of digital printing feeds into these opportunities, allowing a retailer to produce quality, high end graphics, JIT, on a variety of materials, at an economic cost for lower quantities.

Jay Dollries, president of US-based converter Innovative Labeling Solutions (ILS), and Gary Bernier, strategic business and brand development lead at HP Indigo Labels & Packaging division, gave their own perspectives on how digital printing is impacting the private label market. 'We spend a tremendous amount of our time in educating our customers, the brands, whatever their size,' said Dollries. 'Years ago most of the smaller brands couldn't compete from an aesthetic stand point, and now, that's no longer true. We've had examples where customers have been able to increase their sales just based on the design and making it more appealing on the shelf. It's no longer just for short runs. The technology can now cover the entire product life cycle.'

'We're keeping the brand fresh on the shelf,' added HP's Gary Bernier. 'And with digital we can now cover prime labels, flexible packaging, shrink sleeves, cartons, blister packs, sachets and more, with high end finishing equipment to complete the process. Brand colors are also important. We can now reach 90 percent of the pantone colors using seven colors on the WS6000.'

The pair shared some of the success stories that brands have found by using digital technology. Hobby Lobby invested in its own digital technology to find top-line growth. On a quarterly basis the retailer now changes the labels of its store brand candles to entice the consumer to purchase their products, competing actively with the brands. From a flat growth rate,

#### NEW MEXICAN LABEL ASSOCIATION SETS AGENDA

Label Summit Latin America welcomed the participation of Mexican label association AMETIQ (La Asociación Mexicana de Etiqueteros), which was founded earlier this year by a group of six converters: Coflemex, Eticom, Etiflash de Mexico, La Etiqueta Fina, Lobo Impresores and Etiquetas Anro.

Fabian Silva Yedra of Etiquetas Anro introduced the new association to delegates and outlined its aim of strengthening the flexographic label converting industry in Mexico. The association is seeking further partners, both converters and industry suppliers, who are interested in helping to achieve this objective.

AMETIQ plans to arrange a wide range of activities in the medium term, and Silva Yedra cited examples such as seminars with suppliers, communication with other label associations around the world and collaboration with educational institutions.

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DIVERSIFY YOUR BUSINESS (l-r) Felipe Soto, Ferdinand Rüesch, Jaime Yoshiyama, Roger Pellow and James Quirk



### END USER PERSPECTIVE

Procter & Gamble and Tequila Sauza provided delegates with the brand owner's perspective. Claudia Yrigoyen, packaging materials and process optimization manager for P&G, spoke of the company's 'very aggressive measures' in the area of environmental sustainability, thoughts that were echoed by Sandra Zamora, new product development engineer of Mexican brand Tequila Sauza. Both also emphasized the importance of converters providing them with a full service rather than simply manufacturing and supplying labels, citing collaboration on new product development as one area where converters can provide added value.

the retailer has experienced two and half point growth.

ILS also gave the example of a private label energy drink business where it produced both the shrink sleeves and the shelf carton packaging, matching the colors for each material. The beverages are put into convenience stores throughout the US, each with different purchasing triggers. The company changes the graphics and characters to suit each market, thereby finding growth that far surpassed its customer's expectations – sales increased around 450 percent.

### ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES – THREAT OR OPPORTUNITY?

This panel session brought together the entire value chain to discuss the

issue of sustainability. L&L's Danielle Jerschefske introduced delegates to some of the important global trends that will affect label and packaging converters within the next two years. ISO Sustainable Packaging Standards are being established and should be introduced by the end of 2011, while the Sustainable Packaging Coalition, consisting of global brand owners, their suppliers and various government organizations, is working hard to educate consumers on how to properly recycle various materials. Jerschefske also stressed the importance of developing an Environmental Policy using metrics found in ISO 14000, TLMI's Project LIFE or Lean Manufacturing systems.

Spear's Latin American business director, Tony Estrada, explained the company's well-established environmental policy, SpearEarth, that was enacted under the auspice of Lean. 'It is a global corporate program that addresses environmental products, processes and services. Focus areas include: source reduction, recycling, eco-friendly materials, supply chain involvement and external validation.'

The winner of TLMI's 2009 Environmental Leadership Award has reaped significant cost savings both for Spear and for its customers through waste reduction, documentation and recycling. It has switched a majority of its largest customers to thin film PS material, salvaging 5 million pounds of

material from landfill. It also has been able to source matrix recycling suppliers for a number of its plants, diverting 5.7 million pounds of scrap from landfill. The matrix waste is recovered and recycled into energy pellets that offer a higher BTU than coal. For more details on what Spear has done with its SpearEarth initiative, read the article published in issue 1 March 2010 of *Labels & Labeling*.

Jose Luis Taylor Jimenez, purchasing manager for Grupo Modelo, one of Spear's largest customers, explained how



MEXICAN marketing expert Alejandro Watson



the efficiencies of pressure sensitive material cut waste and costs for the large brewer. Jimenez used Corona beer as an example. Currently the business direct prints the majority of its bottles' front graphics, requiring a ninety day inventory supply. However, if it makes the switch to pressure sensitive, inventory can be dropped to thirty days, providing huge savings to the top line of the business.

What is currently holding Grupo Modelo back is that consumers in various regions of the world prefer the aesthetic feel of the print on the bottle. But through education marketing, Grupo Modelo is looking seriously into making the switch over to PS labels to realize the cost and waste benefits; in a number of markets, the back label has already been switched to PS to alleviate some of the restrictions found with direct printing.

Marco Martinez, marketing communications director at Ahlstrom, a material manufacturer, discussed the importance of communication throughout the value chain in order to meet the requirements of brands for more sustainable solutions. He said, 'Sustainability of products should be evaluated holistically, taking into account the entire lifecycle.' Additionally he stressed the fact that paper is a sustainable resource, especially when it is certified through one of the major global governing bodies FSC, SFI or PEFC.

#### **SHRINK SLEEVE LABELS – THE RIGHT AND WRONG WAY**

Shrink sleeve label expert Seamus Lafferty, VP sales and marketing at Barry Wehmiller company Accraply – formerly MD of Stanford Engineering – took delegates through the process of sleeve labels & labeling.

label production, emphasizing that each step in the process from origination to printing, converting and application was critical to a high quality end product. He showed many examples of poor quality shrink sleeve labels – including a security seal which did not seal, cheap film specified with insufficient shrink-ability, poor pre-press work leading to indecipherable text, wrinkling and ink peeling – again down to wrong choice of inks and materials for the application – wrong orientation of the label on the pack and bad quality seaming.

Lafferty said the biggest opportunities for shrink sleeve labels are where they are currently least established – and that includes South America as a whole, and Brazil and Argentina in particular. Lafferty noted that in these fast-growing markets there will also be a move from cheaper PVC films to more expensive and performance-oriented films like OPS – exactly as we have seen in mature shrink sleeve markets like Japan.

Lafferty then introduced a customer, Alejo Rastellino, managing director of Argentine flexible packaging converter Bolsapel, to explain why he had moved into converting shrink sleeve labels.

'We saw major international opportunities for high quality shrink sleeve labels and few high quality players in our local market. Most were focused on low to medium quality dairy and promotional beverages.' Emphasizing the point made by Seamus Lafferty, Rastellino said Bolsapel needed to acquire a lot of new knowledge on subjects including pre-press

(pre-distortion and 3D visualization), inks, materials, converting equipment and print processes, and also needed to know about application technology in order to support end users moving into shrink sleeve labels for the first time. 'Each detail is important to achieve a successful outcome and satisfy the customer.'

#### **BREAKOUT SESSIONS**

This summit featured a number of technology breakout and business management sessions which allowed delegates to interact with speakers in a series of workshops.

#### **● UV FLEXO**

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TONY ESTRADA, Latin America business development manager for Spear

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INTERNATIONAL partnership session with (l-r) Kurt Walker of tesa Bandfix, Fernando Aranguren of Flexoprint and Luis Marica Garcia of Multilabel



flexography in all its aspects included. The session led off with regular L&L contributor Alexander James, technical graphics manager at Harper Graphics, outlining the steps necessary to set up a quality control system for UV flexo print elements, drawing on his extensive experience trouble shooting UV flexo installations across Latin America. Jaime Dagnino, president MPS South America, considered the application of servo drives to UV flexo presses, while Donald Lewis, international business development manager at Erhardt & Leimer, looked at the trend to inspect on the press with automated control of the rewinder. Uwe Boerner, European sales manager narrow web at Sun Chemical, took up the subject of migration control of UV ink systems, and the challenges and benefits of such low migration/odor systems.

#### • LABEL APPLICATORS

Understanding the evolving technology of label application systems – and what systems end users are installing – is a critical guide for converters considering future machinery investments. So it was fascinating to hear a presentation from Stephan Deichert, after sales manager of Krones Latin America, and Edgar Roman, Krones local area sales manager, pointing out that their fastest selling machines are now multi-head applicators capable of applying multiple types of label – sleeve, cold glue, hot melt, PS – with a simple interchange of heads. Deichert also considered a new type of applicator which applies one large label to wrap together two containers, which could open up new opportunities for label converters and designers.

#### • FUSING INTERNET MARKETING AND DIGITAL PRINTING

Steve Smith, formerly of US converter Lightning Label, discussed the success

of the first all-digital label house in North America. The converter quickly became a leader in the market using its unique internet marketing module rather than conventional marketing methods.

Lightning Labels does not have any sales staff. Rather it drives business through a unique, streamlined and user-friendly quoting process that allows interested parties to receive an immediate estimate. The quoting system requires the user to select size, shape, material, quantity and versions, leaving no room for variation. The user is responsible for uploading artwork in the correct format.

Smith stressed the importance of website design and internet know-how when applying this type of business model. 'A website should be a dynamic living thing that interacts with people – not just an online brochure.' The point of a website, Smith stressed, is to educate and assist current and potential customers about what your business is capable of. 'Engage the visitor or lose them,' he said.

Smith recommended that a specialist be hired in order to companies to increase their SEO (Search Engine Optimization). 'This has quickly become a recognized specialty and there are many highly experienced practitioners.'

One way to increase traffic to a website is through link development which search engines use as evidence of relevance. Blogs were pointed out as another way to add value an

#### CONFERENCE BRIEFS

##### FAMILY VALUES

Siblings Fabian and Nida Silva Yedra of Mexican label converter Etiquetas Anro spoke of the challenges of working in a family-run business. Sales manager and human resources manager respectively, they also have a brother, Amin, who works as production manager in the company that was founded by their parents. They spoke of the importance of defining roles within the company and of separating personal and professional lives as much as possible.

##### BEATING THE COUNTERFEITERS

Jessica Swank, sales development manager for Sun Chemical's brand protection and security division, gave a detailed presentation that outlined the scale of the counterfeiting problem. Emphasizing the potential dangers to the consumer of counterfeit goods such as pharmaceuticals, she provided some interesting stats about trends in falsification, such as that Viagra is the most counterfeited product in the world, and that some 90 percent of all cigars in Latin America are counterfeit. She outlined the various technologies that are available to protect products and trends in security inks and materials.

increase a website's SEO.

Smith concluded: 'Internet marketing is no longer a matter of 'if you get involved'; it's simply when and how.'

#### • MANAGING INFORMATION

A session on management information systems saw Angel Flores, engineering



and development manager at Mexican converter Flexoprint, explain why his company had invested in MIS and the challenges and benefits that flowed from it. Peter Dhont, business development manager at CERM, then outlined how a modern MIS should be set up to integrate graphics management, plant management and electronic links.

#### • WASTE REDUCTION

Mike Jelinsky, sales engineer of Martin Automatic, spoke about waste management in the label plant. He emphasized the importance of reducing downtime and the elimination of material waste, while recommending methods for process improvement and standardization. Green Bay Packaging's Jeff Klieber looked at Lean manufacturing and supply chain automation.

#### • DIGITAL – WHEN AND HOW?

One of the critical questions for converters considering investment in digital technology is how to integrate it into a conventional flexo printing operation. The question was considered by Dario Valenzuela, Latin American sales development manager, EFI, and Ricardo Rodriguez, segment manager Mexico for HP's label and packaging division, discussed digital printing.

#### • DIVERSIFY AND SURVIVE

A panel session entitled 'diversifying your business' brought together Roger Pellow, managing director of Labelexpo; Jaime Yoshiyama, CEO of Peruvian converter Kuresa; Felipe Soto, general manager of self-adhesive material supplier Ritrama Chile; and Ferdinand Reusch, vice-chairman of the board for Gallus. The variety of perspectives provided for a lively session that covered a wide range of topics, including trends in materials and printing technology, strategies for diversifying into technological and geographical markets, and the key challenges and opportunities for label converters in the coming years.



#### XEIKON APPOINTS MEXICO DISTRIBUTOR

Digital press manufacturer Xeikon has appointed Jetrix Soluciones Gráficas as its distributor in Mexico, writes James Quirk. The deal was finalized during Label Summit Latin America 2010 in Mexico City in May.

Filip Weymans, business development manager, labels and packaging, Xeikon, says that the deal reflects the company's increasing focus on emerging markets. 'We are very pleased to work with Jetrix because of their vast experience in digital technology,' he said.

Weymans emphasized that Xeikon is well-equipped to reenter the Latin American market after the launches in recent years of its 3000, 3300 and 3500 digital label presses.

Jetrix Soluciones Gráficas, founded in 2008, distributes products for the folding carton, corrugated and flexible packaging markets, including workflow software and the Agfa Dotrix digital press. General director of Jetrix, Julian Robledo, has 12 years of experience with Heidelberg throughout Latin America and five years with Agfa in Mexico.

This is the company's first representation dedicated to the label sector. 'We specialize in industrial solutions, so the deal between Xeikon and Jetrix is a perfect fit,' said Julian Robledo. 'We are very happy to have this partnership with Xeikon.'

'The packaging and label industries in Mexico are growing rapidly, but there is a lack of local representation for these markets,' he continued. 'Xeikon is a very strong brand and the market has vast potential.'

**ABOVE** l-r: Hans Gerinckx, channel manager, Xeikon, and Julian Robledo, director general of Jetrix Soluciones Gráficas, finalized the distribution deal at Label Summit Latin America in Mexico

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IN FRONT OF A BRAVA PRESS during the Rotatek Open House. (L-r) Elvira Vidal, president; Josep Lopez, production manager and Bibiana Rodriguez, general manager

# Offset Open Day

**ROTATEK'S** offset Brava press is now available in an advanced configuration with semi-rotary screen, while variable repeat Universal press is seeing its first installations. Andy Thomas reports

Rotatek was founded forty years ago, building offset presses for business forms production and roll-to-sheet presses for commercial printers. Over 85 percent of the company's production was exported. In the 1990s, when the business forms market collapsed, the company started producing flexo presses and Combined Offset presses for the narrow web labels market.

The push to develop an offset label press came from Germany. Many German printers were transitioning from letterpress and saw flexo as a lower quality process. In response, Rotatek developed a narrow web press combining offset printing with flexo coating.

The combination Brava press, first shown as a prototype at Labelexpo Europe 2005, was the first machine which allowed switching between intermittent and rotary printing modes. The press is now commercially available with an intermittent screen printing module developed for Rotatek by Stork, along with a hot foil unit developed by Rotatek which can operate in both semi-rotary and full rotary modes. The Brava also has a new, patented web transport system, claimed to allow far more accurate registration to be achieved when printing in intermittent mode.

Rotatek claims to have been the first company to develop an offset cold foil system, which is now available on the rotary finishing section of the Brava press (for the first installation of offset cold foil at Italian converter Zardini, see L&L on-line archive). Applying adhesive with an offset plate is claimed to produce a higher quality result than using a flexo relief plate.

With eleven machines sold, the Brava press has found a niche in short runs of labels requiring multiple converting processes in-line. The press has been particularly successful for converters moving from sheet offset glue labels to pressure-sensitive labels – companies like Marzek, Zardini, Llopert, GIP among others.

Rotatek sees the future in combination presses which freely mix offset, gravure and flexo processes printing on thin, unsupported films.. The company's new Universal press is also specified to handle thin packaging films and shrink sleeve labels for materials down to 12 microns.

An excellent example of this new class of printing is Brazilian converter Metro Labels in Sao Paolo, which runs three Combined Offset presses dedicated to the production of shrink sleeve labels. Metro is matching gravure quality, and can change between multiple designs at the cost of a cheap plate change, rather than having to originate new gravure cylinders. Interestingly, Metro was originally a business forms printer, following Rotatek into the film label market.

An example of a printer moving the other way – from wide web gravure to mid-web offset – is Egyptian converter Rotopack. The converter wanted to move away from using solvents while retaining the print quality of gravure printing (see upcoming feature in LL4).

As well as the Universal and Brava presses, Rotatek has reconfigured its offset roll-to-sheet commercial presses for the narrow web market with the addition of flexo and gravure units, now branded

the 'Perfect' press. Austria-based label converting group Marzek has opted for two 520mm Perfect presses for its newly acquired Ukrainian operation. The gravure modules are used mostly for laying down whites and metallics. Other possible combinations involve placing an offset unit after the hot foil/embossing station to allow printing on the foil.

Rotatek has a handful of in-line carton installations in the developing markets of India, Africa and Brazil, for applications like toothpaste tube packaging. In India, users of Rotatek presses also do a lot of commercial roll to sheet work as well as security work such as lottery tickets, telephone cards and cheque printing, which can require machines with up to 17 print stations.

## UNIVERSAL SOLUTION

Where the Combined Offset press uses interchangeable fixed-sized print cylinders, Rotatek's Universal press is based around variable repeat print units using interchangeable lightweight sleeves. The variable repeat is achieved quickly and without breaking the web, by changing the plate and blanket sleeves.

The 'true offset' sleeves incorporate ring bearers which support a high printing pressure. The sleeves do not require compressed air for repositioning, and are locked into place mechanically.

The Universal is a fully modular servo-driven press, allowing for multiple configurations of offset, flexo, screen, rotogravure, cold and hot foiling. The press is equipped with automatic inking, register and tension control, and can print up to 350 m/min with a maximum width of 520mm and repeats variable between 400 – 820mm.



# MIS and digital boost productivity at Tamar

**UK LABEL CONVERTER TAMAR LABELS** is looking to double its turnover through the development of niche products using a combination of flexo and digital printing and implementing a far-reaching MIS program. Andy Thomas reports

Tamar Labels is a privately owned manufacturer of printed labels and tags utilising a broad range of print production processes including digital printing, flexography, and hot foil lamination. Founded in 1997 the business was the first label producer in the UK to have a purpose built 10,000 square meter facility designed to BRC/IOP (British Retail Consortium/ Institute of Packaging) protocol.

Since its beginnings the Devon, UK-based company has continued to experience steady growth as a label printer producing labels for food packaging and speciality beverages using its Edale flexo presses. However, as a result of an investment program that has seen the addition of two HP Indigo digital label presses, Tamar has since expanded its product offering to include label products for toiletries, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, and a range of adhesive label products designed specifically for use within the automotive industries.

These HP Indigo digital label presses – a ws4000 and ws4500 – provide the company with the ability to produce short run label work with no minimum run and

the company's decision to move forward with digital label production was, as managing director Robert Lee explains, due to market forces: 'Our customers were looking for ways to reduce their costs through reduced stock holding and they were looking to us for more just in time deliveries. This has actually provided us with many more new business opportunities than we originally thought possible.'

Tamar's ability to digitally print high quality process color labels in short runs has opened the doors to a myriad of smaller customers who are more speciality oriented. These speciality products have fast become the company's biggest growth area.

Today, Tamar Labels stands at forefront of digital label production supplying innovative value added label products to brand owners utilising variable data printing. These provide an added boost to on pack promotional marketing campaigns, or provide eye catching multi-laminated label products geared towards adding further added value while providing innovative shelf

appeal for retailers. It's a trend that looks set to continue as Lee points out: 'Digital production is clearly the way forwards. While there will always be a cost justification for longer run flexo production, digital technologies will only get faster, better, and ultimately cheaper. We are one of only a handful of label producers that can boast two HP Indigo digital label presses, and we are in the process of boosting our digital printing offering in ways which would eventually see Tamar Labels become the undisputed market leader in short run digital label production,' he says.

Tamar Labels recently completed a major upgrade to its Shuttleworth management information system (MIS). The first step was to swap out its elderly shop floor data collection system for the latest web browser based application (Dataflow) that enables free flowing communications to and from the shop floor.

'Dataflow is a very powerful business tool,' explains Lee. 'With it we can monitor and gather production data which is used to help spread work throughout



the production facility, thereby avoiding bottlenecks in production. A further benefit of having upgraded the MIS to include Dataflow means that whenever a customer calls to ask about the specifics of any particular job, we are able to immediately respond to their inquiry. We can now track and trace every job on the system which saves both time and credibility with the customers because instead of manually following a paper trail around the factory we can immediately respond to any type query and deal with anything and everything that might arise such as changes to a job specification or new artwork supplied and so forth. The information is all there at our fingertips.'

Lee is a firm advocate of attending Shuttleworth's frequent user group meetings and finds that these meetings add further value to his business.

'The user group meetings are a must if you want to get the very best out of your Shuttleworth system. You need to understand what it is that you want to get out of it before you can move forward, and the user group meetings go a long way to highlight these things. As such we are now looking at an implementation programme for the customer relationship management module and how best to integrate our MIS with a front end web to print solution; all of which is made possible by attending user group meetings.'

Lee has ambitious plans for Tamar Labels: 'We plan to eventually double our turnover through the development of further speciality and niche product developments, and this is where our Shuttleworth MIS is going to play such a pivotal role. We have learned to use the system to such an extent that we can identify all of the actual costs to our business as well as highlight areas where we are not so cost effective. Everybody in the business of printing needs access to this sort of business information. I don't know how anybody could get along without it.'



ROB LEE, MD Tamar Labels, with Shuttleworth MIS shop floor data collection module

## THE INSIDER

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

### INNOVATIVE LABELING SOLUTIONS ADDS QR CODE CAPABILITY

Innovative Labeling Solutions, a digital label and packaging converter located just outside Cincinnati, Ohio, USA, has added Quick Response (QR) code printing capabilities to its portfolio.

While QR codes are in widespread use in Japan, they have just recently started to infiltrate the US. The 2D code has a URL imbedded, and when the code is scanned, using a SmartPhone or web cam, it launches content. Shoppers can therefore instantly view videos, sell sheets, extended content, newsletters, recipes, coupons, or Facebook pages in the aisle. 'The marriage of digital print technology for labels and packaging, along with the QR code is compelling,' said Eric Knop, ILS director of business development. 'We have several projects in the developmental stages right now with clients in the food and beverage and personal care segments. Both brands are looking at how to leverage the intrinsic benefits of digital including speed-to-market, flexibility to customize graphics per retailer, or to easily deliver cause-related promotional SKU's with this new cross media integration tool.'

### RITRAMA OPENS FACILITIES IN COSTA RICA AND GUATEMALA

Ritrama has opened slitting and logistics centers in Costa Rica and Guatemala to serve the Central American market. The company had been represented in the region by DigiFlexo.

'This investment is a sign of our attention to this market, which will benefit from shorter delivery times and a wider range of products from our production sites in Europe and Chile,' said the company in a statement. 'The strategic locations in Guatemala and Costa Rica also allow us to give a better and faster service in El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.' The facility in Costa Rica hosts a warehouse and slitting system in Belén in the Heredia province. The Guatemala site is located in the country's capital, Ciudad de Guatemala, and will have slitting capability by the end of the year.

Both centers are managed by Olga Lucia Botero, said to have vast knowledge of self-adhesive materials after 16 years of experience in Colombia and six years in Central America.

### WINNERS OF PHOENIX CHALLENGE HIGH SCHOOL COMPETITION ANNOUNCED

At the 2010 International Phoenix Challenge High School Flexo Competition, first-place was awarded along with USD \$1,000 scholarships each to Stephanie Hammond and Lianne Chang of Gordon Graydon Memorial Secondary School in Mississauga, Ontario, Canada. They were declared the winners of the thirteenth annual competition which took place at the Harper National Flexographic Center at Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, North Carolina, in late March.

The pair won the first place award by earning this year's highest combined scores in the contest's five exams: written knowledge, math, pre-press proficiency, press operation and plate-making. In addition to the two Phoenix Challenge Foundation Scholarships, the winning team took home the 2010 Harper Flexo High School of the Year trophy cup, for display at its school. Stephanie Hammond is a second year champion, having clinched first place with a different teammate in the 2009 competition.

Top performing students excelled in all aspects of the competition. Second place went to Grant Izukawa and Chong Wang, also from Gordon Graydon Memorial Secondary School. Third place went to James Jackson and Marcus Davis from Fairfield Career & Technology Center in Winnsboro, South Carolina. The competition was stiff among the nineteen participating teams, a number which has grown year over year since the Phoenix Challenge high school program began back in 1998.













# CORPORATE CULTURE



## Micro markets drive growth: dig them out

We all know how to deliver growth: we grow organically, we target mergers and acquisitions. But is this all there is?

In this post recession (or between double dip) times, there are key opportunities around us. They are based on emerging needs that have been redefined as a result of the recession. They may involve new technologies, but mostly they will be based on re-mixing prior offers to meet the changed needs of our customers in this period of new austerity. They are micro markets: emerging opportunities that, carefully developed, provide the basis for sustainable growth.

Micro markets however need to be discovered. They tend to be the result of customers, suppliers and intermediaries all exchanging views, discussing what's changing and using lateral thinking to draw out latent needs and potential solutions.

### AN EXAMPLE:

A client of ours has recently identified a micro market with massive potential, if it can be tapped correctly. The market currently doesn't exist as we know it. But the core drivers of need are there: high carbon fuel costs, static technologies, blinkered thinking, customer frustration with limited technological progress, social pressure to be green, financial pressure to save resources, supplier pressure to stand out and have a sustainable advantage... the list goes on.

The secret to un-wrapping many more micro markets? Thinking laterally with an open mind and a changed set of assumptions to reveal emerging customer needs and reframe existing solutions in novel and imaginative ways.

### Practicalities: digging out lucrative micro markets

- 1. Don't do it alone:** dig out needs and solutions with trusted partners (customers, suppliers, distributors).
- 2. 'Go see':** you can't dig out a micro market by staying at home. Get out and check out. Don't set out to test your assumptions... put them away and listen with new ears.
- 3. Actively research adjacent sectors and status quo busting initiatives from other industries.** (Customers' expectations are not just set by the solutions they get in your sector, they are set by what they experience in all walks of life).
- 4. Use your full network:** professional advisors, academics, opinion leaders, the web, LinkedIn etc.
- 5. Establish a frame of reference and work it:** it's a bit like a crime scene, blunder in and you'll destroy the evidence, plan your approach and you're more likely to reap the rewards.
- 6. Nurture, develop and frame the market** to your solution (and away from competitors' offers).

*Please feel free to comment by contacting: andrew.lester@carr-michael.com or find out more at [www.carr-michael.com](http://www.carr-michael.com).*

### ABOUT ANDREW LESTER:

Andrew Lester is a new contributor to L&L. He is the managing partner of Carr-Michael, business growth specialists. He has worked in a wide variety of sectors and was MD of Jaguar Cars UK from 1996-2001, successfully leading the transition of the company. Andrew is author of the acclaimed book 'Growth Management: Two Hats are Better Than One' (Macmillan 2009) which Warwick Business School recommends on their Executive MBA programme and where he has spoken on managing growth. The reviews and first chapter of his book can be viewed at <http://www.carr-michael.com/ebook>.

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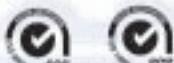
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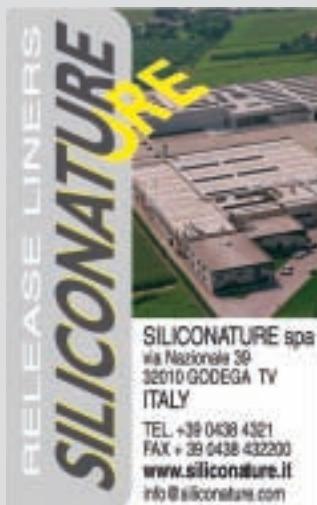
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