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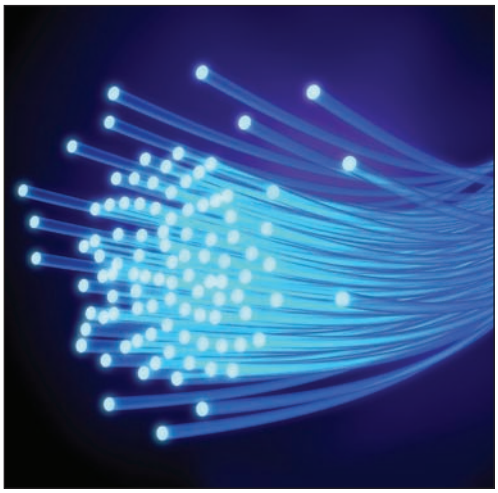
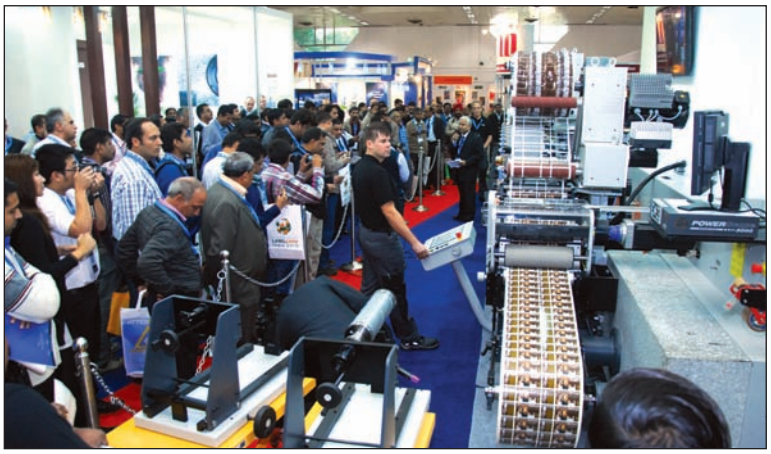


FEATURES

LEADER



REGULARS

SMART LABELS

When news arrived at L&L of a potential breakthrough in printed solar batteries (see LL2 or visit our website www.labelsandlabeling.com), it reminded us that game-changing innovation will increasingly come from outside the industry's traditional circle of equipment and consumables suppliers. The challenge will be to integrate these advances into materials and systems which can be used by converters to develop value-added opportunities for brand managers.

For example, using printed solar batteries, we could offer 'always on' RFID labels capable of monitoring their environment in real time without requiring an RF power source. The latest generation of solar collectors do not require direct sunlight, so it is possible that placement of the product could be quite flexible – for example on a properly lit supermarket shelf.

This is just one area of outside development likely to impact our industry. We are starting to see the practical use of printed codes which are readable by 'smart' phones, using a dedicated downloadable app, or as with the Coors/ SnapTag promotion – highlighted in this edition of L&L – simply requiring a phone camera. After the image has been verified by a pattern-recognition server, the consumer can access promotions, competitions and the brand's social network.

Another interactive technology to watch is Near Field Communication (NFC). An NFC chip embedded in a label (much cheaper than an RFID chip) communicates wirelessly with a smart phone over distances of up to 4in, opening up a range of applications from purchasing the product, to displaying product information or pointing the user to on-line resources. In January, Apple announced it would integrate NFC into its iPhone and iPad products, so things are likely to move fast as brand managers look for ways to incorporate NFC functionality into their packaging.

Rapid technological advances can also be expected from fields such as nano-coatings (applied via inkjet), substrates capable of displaying continuously variable data sets and printable embedded video.

None of these developments represent a threat to the 'traditional' converting industry. On the contrary. The packaging will become the carrier for a new generation of value added opportunities.

ANDY THOMAS
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L&L ISSUE 1

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NEWS

HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

TORRASPAPEL TO OPEN EUROPEAN LOGISTICS HUB

Torraspapel, part of the Lecta Group, is to install a new machine at its plant in Almazán, Spain. The investment, totaling over 23 million euros, will include the opening of a logistics hub in central Europe.

The machine will double the plant's self-adhesive material manufacturing capability and allow the company to offer new lines of hot-melt adhesives and film labelstocks. With the opening of a logistics hub in the center of Europe, Torraspapel will be able to offer quick delivery times in the central and eastern European markets. The developments are scheduled for mid-2012.

DURST OPENS BRAZILIAN SUBSIDIARY

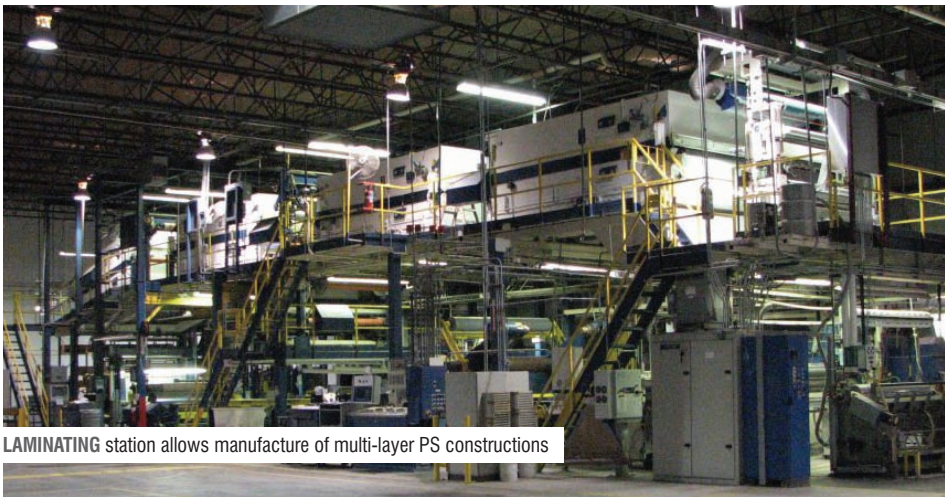
Durst, an Italy-based manufacturer of inkjet printing products, has founded a subsidiary in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The company cites current growth in the large format imaging in Brazil as motivation for the move.

KODAK SIGNS AGREEMENT WITH JET EUROPE

Kodak has signed a distribution agreement with Jet Europe for its Flexcel NX digital flexographic systems, including hardware and consumables. Jet Europe, with presence in almost every European country, was selected by Kodak for its 'strong position in the flexographic market'.

ROTOCONTROL APPOINTS AGENT IN THAILAND

Rotocontrol has appointed SKY Engineering as its distributor in Thailand. With more than 20 years experience in selling equipment and machinery for the plastic industry, SKY is also active in flexible packaging thermoforming and finishing applications. SKY represents more than 20 manufacturers, including AVT 100 percent inspection vision systems and MPS narrow web flexo presses.



LAMINATING station allows manufacture of multi-layer PS constructions

3 SIGMA TO INSTALL NEW PRODUCTION COATING LINE

MACHINE applies multiple coatings to front and back of web

3 Sigma, a manufacturer of specialty top-coating and pressure sensitive adhesive coated products, is planning to add a fourteenth production coating line, which will be its largest and most productive piece of equipment. Work on the project is scheduled to start early in 2011 and to be completed in the third quarter.

The machine, retrofitted to 3 Sigma specifications, will accommodate 78-inch web materials and can apply multiple coatings and/or adhesives on both the front and back of the web. A laminating station will allow pressure sensitive constructions with liner or multilayered product designs.

Tony Rowley, 3 Sigma's vice president of operations, said: 'After weathering the recent industry downturn, 3 Sigma is poised for additional growth and anticipates significant business increases in 2011 and 2012, due to several major new strategic projects.

Not only is the increased capacity needed to handle our expected business growth, this additional coater will significantly expand our process capabilities and enable us to provide more highly engineered constructions for new markets.'

HAMMER TO INSTALL FIRST SPEEDMASTER CX 102 IN US

Hammer Packaging has become the first North American company to purchase Heidelberg's new Speedmaster CX 102 press. The Rochester, New York-based converter, among the largest packaging producers in the US, chose a UV-capable Speedmaster CX 102-8+L with CutStar roll sheeter, Prinect Press Center with Intellistart operator guidance system, integrated Wallscreen, and Axis Control color measurement and control system. An integrated IST UV system uses the new Electronic Lamp Control (ELC) that will enable the system to operate at low energy consumption and take up 50 percent less floor space.

Following its evaluation of the press at the Heidelberg factory in Wiesloch, Germany, Hammer Packaging selected the Speedmaster CX 102 for the speed and efficiency with which the press handles the 2 to 3.2 mil film stock that is a staple of the company's application repertoire.

'In the film category, the CX 102 will expand our capacity and improve our redundancy during peak periods,' said Louis Iovoli, vice president of strategic partnerships, noting that the addition of CutStar will make the printing of film 'more cost-effective, based on the way it controls the sheet as it feeds into the press'.

Positioned between the Speedmaster XL 105 and the CD 102, and targeted at commercial, label and packaging printers. The Speedmaster CX 102 has a web width of 40 inches. It makes key components of the Speedmaster XL platform available in the CD 102 format for the first time.

NEWS

THE INSIDER

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

US FIRM TO ACQUIRE ESKOARTWORK

EskoArtwork's shareholder, the Danish investment group Axcel, has agreed to sell 100 percent of the shares of the print software supplier to US company Danaher for 350 million euros. The transaction is due to be completed in the first half of 2011, subject to customary approvals.

Danaher is a diversified technology leader that designs, manufactures and markets products and services to professional, medical, industrial and commercial customers. Driven by its Danaher Business System, its 47,000 employees serve customers in more than 125 countries and generated USD $11.2 billion of revenue in 2009. Upon closing, the business will become a part of Danaher's Product Identification platform.

INDUSTRIAL INKJET OPENS DEMO CENTER

Industrial Inkjet, the sales and technical support center for Konica Minolta, has opened a new demo center for the Americas region in Las Vegas, Nevada. The company's Americas office and print demonstration and training center will be directed by Ed Garcia, technical support manager. The demo center will feature an Industrial Inkj et ColourPrint 142, using Konica Minolta KM1024 printheads, mounted to a single-pass, continuous feed transport with UV curing station. Other printing capabilities are to include a XY unit, conveyor for rigid substrates and jetting rig for printhead/ink reliability testing.

'The center will allow our customers to gain hands-on experience of Konica Minolta printheads, as well as our ColourPrint single-pass inkjet systems. It will be available for trial and print-sample work as well as for in-depth customer training,' said Ed Garcia. The center is located close to McCarran International Airport, with direct flights to much of North and South America.

HP REPORTS WS6000 SUCCESS IN EMEA

HP Indigo has reported over 100 installations of its WS6000 digital label press in Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA) since its launch in spring 2009.

FINAT'S Young Managers Club committee meeting during Labelexpo India

FIRST SUMMIT FOR YMC

THE 2011 YMC SUMMIT will be held in Austria in March

Finat's Young Manager Club (YMC) has announced its first independently organized summit. The club is intended to attract young managers and to help prepare them to become the company and industry leaders of tomorrow. The 2011 YMC Summit is being held in Hotel Bristol in Vienna, Austria, on March 28-29.

'Based on a poll, young managers indicated that they like to learn about the latest management tools, processes and implementation methodologies,' said Francesc Egea, of IPE Innovaciones Para Etiquetajes, Spain, and chairman of YMC. 'A lot of business improvement is being left unexplored. New managerial skills and practical tools can help label converters to run their business more efficiently, improve their customer service and become more profitable.'

In addition, young managers reported to appreciate the knowledge and expertise transfer through informal networking. 'The upcoming summit will definitely meet their expectations,' said Peter Dhondt of Cerm, Belgium, and program manager at YMC. 'We secured industry specific and inspiring speakers, interactive workshops and ample time for informal contacts with their peers.'

Under the umbrella 'Leadership and strategic management in this century', the YMC summit opens with a presentation by Jan Frederik Vink, former president at Finat and instigator of the YMC, of Netherlands-based Kolibri Labels, about building partnerships and becoming a global player in the label industry.

Ronny Leyman, partner at Belgian company Conlibrio, brings over 20 years of experience as a leader in organizations and as a management consultant for various markets, including the label industry. From 'The Strategic Safari' workshop, participants will gain inspirational ideas around project, process and change management and learn how these can influence their company's culture.

On day two, Els Maes, management consultant at Belgium-based Alnus and a graphic arts and packaging expert, will guide an interactive session on the balanced scorecard, bringing best practices from the labeling industry. The balanced scorecard is a planning tool used to align business activities to the vision and strategy of the organization. It improves internal and external communications and monitors organizational performance against strategic goals and key performance indicators.

The YMC summit will close with a round-table session involving all the participants and moderated by Francesc Egea and Peter Dhondt.

BUNTING offers rebuild program for printing cylinders

BUNTING INTRODUCES REBUILD PROGRAM

BUNTING offers a rebuild program for printing cylinders

Bunting Magnetics has introduced a Rebuild Program to repair and restore magnetic printing cylinders and anvil cylinders. This new program can refinish all surfaces to meet exacting customer specifications. The service covers die-cutting, folding carton, two-piece can, plastic container and corrugated cylinders.

Technical services include replacement of cylinder bearers; repair or replacement of damaged magnets; restoration of bent or damaged journals; installation of hardened races and complete refinishing of the surface of the cylinder. As part of the rebuild process, there is an inspection of new parts prior to the cylinder being reassembled. All new bearers are installed to manufacturer's specifications to ensure proper fit and prevent premature failure. Some rebuild work is limited as cylinders must have enough material on them to permit repairs within the cylinder's specified tolerance ranges.

On-site plant audits are also part of the Rebuild Program. These detailed visits include a visual inspection of all cylinders in stock. All surfaces, bearers and journals are inspected for damage or imperfections. Bunting determines the average size of the cylinder diameter in relation to the bearer diameter to allow for gap analysis, an exercise that is conducted to .00005 of an inch. Also, Bunting performs a run-out test on all journals, bearers and the body of the cylinder to determine any deviations from specifications. Finally, a full report is provided with all the necessary details including gap. Cylinders that may need repair are identified by serial number.

REPACORP ACQUIRES ALADDIN LABEL

US-based converter Repacorp has acquired the assets of Aladdin Label, based in Waukesha, Wisconsin.

'Repacorp is also involved with new technologies like digital printing and RFID. By adding these new technologies to Aladdin, it would give Aladdin's employees and company new growth,' said Richard Schwartz, former owner of Aladdin Label. 'Repacorp has had a presence in Wisconsin since 1999,' added fellow former co-owner Gayle Schwartz.'

Aladdin Label was founded in 1972 by Richard and Gale Schwartz and evolved from a one-press operation to two plants with multiple presses and a full packaging line, totaling 50,000 plus square feet.

FEDERICO D'ANNUNZIO, MD of Gidue, announces new press launch

NUOVA GIDUE LAUNCHES 'DIGITAL FLEXO' COMBAT PRESS

Nuova Gidue, a manufacturer of printing and converting machines for the label and packaging industry, has introduced 'Digital Flexo' technology in its new Combat series of presses.

Register set-up and printing pressure adjustments are fully automated, and eliminate manual adjustment by the operator. Press start-up and production is managed by the 'Digital Flexo' technology, which is based on a combination of 'intelligent' vision and servo-assisted operations on the press.

A proprietary Nuova Gidue high resolution camera – PrintTutor – constantly 'reads' all the printing variables (density, pressure, lateral and length register). Seven servo motors on each print unit automatically set-up and carry out all adjustments.

Federico d'Annunzio, MD of Nuova Gidue, said: 'With the Digital Flexo Combat we continue a long history of improvements on the Gidue flexo technology. The press supports the operator in most of the functions of set-up, production and control, and becomes a predictable "digital" instrument, inside a digital workflow. Printing variables are under control, wastes and production times are greatly reduced. The press behaves as any other digital press, with digital data which manage the entire press operations.'

An 8-color, UV flexo, Digital Flexo Combat, with Double Coupon kit and fully automated press operations, will be displayed at an open house held in conjunction with Graficon. The event takes place on March 15-17 at Graficon's plant in Wittenbach, close to St Gallen, Switzerland.

The Digital Flexo press will display Nuova Gidue's SnowBall matrix waste stripping system for self-adhesive labels, which the company claims can increase a machine's productivity by between 30 and 200 percent.

Several technology suppliers, including Graficon, Nuova Gidue, Rotocontrol, Kocher + Beck, Herma and Siegwerk, will also show run live demonstrations and show their products.

HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

FLINT GROUP BUILDS NEW MANUFACTURING SITE IN INDIA

In order to meet increased demand and to further improve its service to packaging converters, Flint Group is building a new manufacturing site for packaging and narrow web inks in Savli near Baroda in India.

Flint Group has been present in India since 2001, but the company's roots go back much further than this. 'Thanks to strong and long-term partnerships with our customers, Flint Group can look back on decades of innovations and leading product developments,' commented George Lyle, vice president, packaging and narrow web, Asia. 'Our most complete portfolio of product offerings is well known all over the world and investing into a new site in India was the next logical step to prepare the grounds for continuous growth over the next years.'

'We already have an ISO 9001-2000 certified mother plant for packaging inks in Bangalore and blending units in Baroda, Noida and Savli, supported by depots at Pondicherry, Kolkata, Hyderabad and Navi Mumbai,' said Upal Roy, general manager, Flint Group India. 'We are proud to soon be in a position to support the market even further with our new plant in Savli.'

The plant is currently being built and will meet European standards on processes and safety. It will consist of separate areas for the manufacturing of water-based, toluene based and toluene free solvent based inks.

SIEGWERK ACQUIRES US-BASED ENVIRONMENTAL INKS

EIC technologies open US narrow web market to Siegwerk

Ink manufacturer Siegwerk has acquired Environmental Inks and Coatings Corporation (EIC), one of the largest ink suppliers to the narrow web label market in the US and Canada.

'EIC's strengths complement our product portfolio and our strategy to provide sustainable solutions,' said Siegwerk CEO Herbert Forker. 'Over the past decades, EIC has built a strong reputation for environmentally friendly water-based inks for the growing and demanding narrow-web segment.'

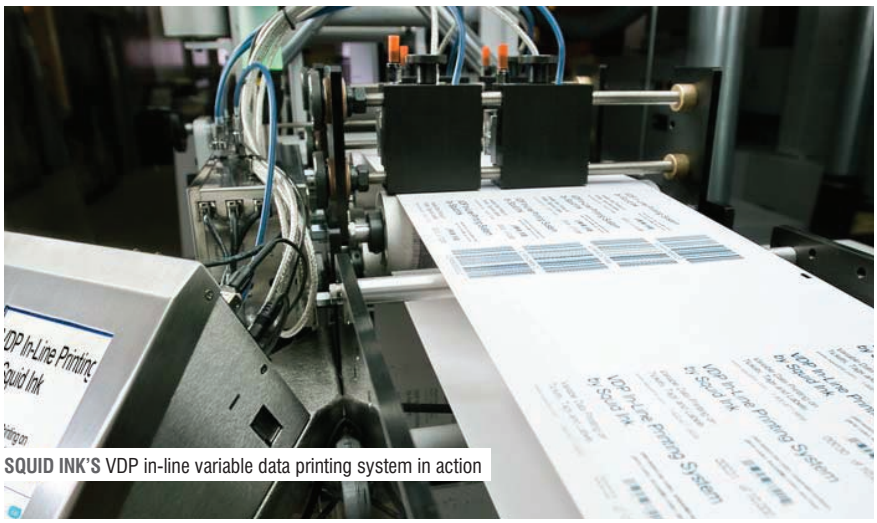
The newly formed organization will operate as 'Environmental Inks – a member of the Siegwerk group'.

The acquisition of EIC is in line Siegwerk's strategy for its North American business. 'Like Siegwerk, EIC is known for consistently high quality, reliable technical sales representatives and exceptional individual service, especially in water-based technology,' explained Ansgar Nonn, president of Siegwerk NAFTA. 'EIC is well positioned to capitalize on excellent growth prospects, particularly in the segment of self-adhesive labels. EIC is the ideal match between Siegwerk's strategic needs and the existing competencies in the group.'

Today, a large portion of Siegwerk USA's market share involves flexible packaging customers operating wide-web printing presses. Almost 80 percent of 2009 revenues were realized in this customer segment, which is dominated by solvent-based ink technology. Together with Siegwerk's recognized competencies in UV-based inks, the combined businesses claim they will be 'the market leader in narrow web labels'.

EIC had sales of approximately USD $40 million in 2009. It operates entities in the US and Canada and employs 170 people, serving the packaging and label manufacturing industries with water-based and energy curable inks and coatings.

Siegwerk is a worldwide manufacturer of printing inks for packaging and publication. The company employs more than 4,200 people worldwide and reported 2009 sales of approximately USD $1.1 billion. Siegwerk NAFTA has sales of USD $250 million with approximately 900 employees.



SQUID INK'S VDP in-line variable data printing system in action

SQUID INK APPOINTS J & H PRINTING SOLUTIONS AS US DISTRIBUTOR

NORTH AMERICAN distributor to handle VDP In-Line system

Squid Ink Manufacturing, a supplier of inks and inkjet printing equipment, has signed an agreement with J & H Printing Solutions for the distribution of Squid's VDP In-Line variable data printing system. J & H Printing Solutions, located in Pewaukee, Wisconsin, USA, is a distributor of flexographic printing and converting equipment, primarily focusing on the packaging and labeling markets in North America. Since 2005, J & H has placed 15 flexo presses and a variety of converting equipment in the US and Mexico.

The VDP In-Line variable data printing system prints up to 8.4 inches of any variable data like sequential numbers, sequential barcodes, traceability codes or game codes on tickets, tags and labels. The system is mounted on an existing narrow web flexo press or rewind/inspection unit and prints in-line to avoid taking labels off-line to print variable information with thermal transfer printers.

NEWS IN BRIEF

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

EFI REPORTS RECORD YEAR FOR RADIUS

EFI reports it had a record year of sales of its recently acquired EFI Radius MIS/ERP software, adding more new business in the second half of 2010 than any period since Radius was founded. Among its new customers are Topflight Corporation, a company focused on printing and converting labels and complex die-cut components for the medical, cosmetics, consumer goods and electronics markets; and The Robinette Company, a flexible and paper packaging manufacturer and converter serving the food, beverage, nutraceutical, construction, textile and health care markets.

'Unlike other ERP offerings, Radius meets our unique requirements without the need for significant customization,' said George Thomas, president of The Robinette Company. 'The financial stability of EFI, strong field support, and ease of use of the system were the other top reasons we selected Radius.'

'Radius will help streamline our business by enabling us to move from our current ERP system and dozens of spreadsheets to one, integrated system,' said Rod Stone, president of Topflight Corporation. 'By improving both data and job costing accuracy, we'll be able to make more informed business decisions.'

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NEWS

MOBILE TECHNOLOGY DEPLOYED FOR COORS LIGHT'S SUPER BOWL CAMPAIGN

RAZORFISH and SypderLynk launch campaign with SnapTag Technology

Razorfish and SypderLynk have launched the largest execution of SnapTag technology to date in the new mobile campaign for Coors Light, official beer sponsor of the NFL and Super Bowl XLV. The interactive mobile campaign delivers a chance to win instant and sweepstakes prizes for Coors Light fans.

Razorfish, the digital AOR for Coors Light, developed the digital campaign to extend Coors Light's Super Bowl presence and connect the brand with consumers prior to game day. Razorfish tapped SpyderLynk to deploy its patent-pending SnapTag technology, an advanced mobile tagging experience that allows consumers to interact with special branded tags using only their mobile phone's camera and standard messaging capabilities.

'Coors Light wanted to provide unthinkable access to the Super Bowl, so we worked with Razorfish and SpyderLynk to develop a campaign that delivers new ways for our fans to experience the big game alongside our brand,' said Dan Hennessy, Coors Light marketing director.

The sweepstakes, which will run until February 6, 2011, provides eligible (21 and older) fans the ability to 'Snap, Send and Score' for a chance to win hundreds of prizes including autographed, game-used items such as kicking tees and footballs, official NFL and Super Bowl gear, flat-screen TVs and NFLShop.com gift cards. To enter, a consumer simply has to snap a picture of the special Coors Light SnapTag, which is found on product packaging, in-store displays, out-of-home advertising, digital ads and other branded materials, and send it in via their phone's standard messaging capabilities.

'Razorfish delivered an engaging mobile experience for Coors Light that not only offers fans a chance to score unbelievable Super Bowl prizes, but also invites them to interact with the brand wherever they are – in the grocery store, standing at the bus stop or at a bar with friends. By doing so, we're able to extend Coors Light's Super Bowl partnership, and provide incredible value for consumers,' said Rachel Lanhem, VP of client engagement at Razorfish.

SypderLynk's SnapTag technology works with any mobile phone and does not require a QR-code or any other downloaded app, which has proven to be a major barrier of entry for mobile tagging. It is also easily customized to provide specific regional extensions to a national promotion.

NEWS IN BRIEF

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

ITL EXPANDS CHINESE OPERATIONS AND BEGINS MANUFACTURING

UK-based Integration Technology Ltd (ITL), a manufacturer of LED UV curing lamps, has relocated its Shanghai operation, added staff and opened a product assembly facility on site.

Relocated close to Hong Qiao airport in west Shanghai, the newly registered ITL Chinese subsidiary – Integration Technology Shanghai – will begin an initial build of SubZero 085 and 170 series miniature high output UV curing lamps with parts sourced from ITL UK. However, it is planned to increase locally-derived content so that by the end of the year only key technology components will remain imported.

Minglei (Sam) Yang, ITL's China business development manager – who has been with ITL since 2004 – is promoted to general manager, while Chen Wenyuan joins as senior technician along with other production, administration and senior accountancy staff.

'Shanghai output meets new incremental business gathered in its domestic market as well as emerging markets in Russia and India,' said ITL CEO Adrian Lockwood. 'Products will be made to the same rigid standards and quality procedures as in the UK, and will be CE and CCC certified. This is an exacting moment in our development within China. We benefit from being a local company, trading in its currencies and closer aligned to its social and business customs. The commensurate reduction in freight movement and increased locally sourced components will also contribute to lowering our overall carbon footprint.'

CENVEO ACQUIRES GILBRETH PACKAGING SOLUTIONS

Cenveo has acquired Impaxx, the sole owner of Gilbreth Packaging Solutions, from affiliates of Aurora Capital Group, a Los Angeles private equity firm.

Gilbreth, which employs 75 people at its facility in Croydon, Pennsylvania, uses multiple printing technologies to produce full body shrink sleeves (FBSS), tamper evident neck bands and medical and electronic tubing. The company serves over 150 customers in a wide variety of industries with an emphasis on the personal care, pharmaceutical, nutraceutical, energy drink and food and beverage markets. The terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

NEWS

THE INSIDER

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

GLOBAL INSTALLATIONS FOR MACDERMID'S LUX PROCESS

MacDermid Printing Solutions introduced the Lux platemaking process at the FTA Forum in Las Vegas in May, 2010. Initially launched in the US, in the second half of 2010, a total of 12 Lux installations have taken place outside of the country, with seven installations in Latin America and five in Europe.

Alberto M. Senado Sidauy, general manager of Multibolsas Plasticas in Mexico, said: 'Print quality is very important to our company, and we are sure that plates made with MacDermid's Lux process will significantly increase the print quality of our products. Lux offers us an extended print gamut and higher contrast in our print jobs, with the freedom to continue to use our current equipment.'

The process works with all existing plates from MacDermid, does not require modification to current equipment, and can be used with all digital flexo plate imaging units, including units equipped with the latest HD flexo imaging technology from EskoArtwork.

'Based on our internal testing, we were very excited about how Lux could help advance the flexo industry,' said Scot Benson, vice president and general manager at MacDermid. 'MacDermid has always insisted upon offering our customers choices. By offering this versatile new technology that can be used with the same plates and same equipment that our customers already use, we knew that the majority of business owners would easily see the value of adding Lux to their line-up. It has also created great opportunities for collaboration with our customers and co-suppliers. The rapid adoption of Lux has accelerated innovation throughout the flexo supply chain and heightened our expectations for the continued development of Lux technology.'

AVT JOINS HP INDIGO PARTNER PROGRAM

AVT, a supplier of print inspection systems, has joined the HP Partner Program for the Indigo division, to provide HP customers with inspection technology for the WS6000 and ws4500 digital presses.

'With HP Indigo presses running at higher speeds, with higher productivity and longer print runs, our customers are seeking ways to automate the digital print production process and to ensure high quality,' said Alon Bar-Shany, vice president and general manager, Indigo division, HP. 'Products like the AVT PrintVision/Helios II can help them in achieving this goal.'

NEW coating line offers both thermal and UV curing facilities

DEP LAUNCHES CUSTOM COATING OPERATION

VERSATILE line increases options for UK coater

Surrey based DEP, a manufacturer of film products for demanding applications in the printing and graphics industries, has opened a coating plant at its new site at Runcorn in Cheshire.

The operation is housed in a modern, 20,000 square foot facility, and will offer both solvent and aqueous coating of web-fed materials. The plant will be able to handle a wide range of materials, including films, foams, papers, fabrics and foils up to 1,600 mm wide.

The new operation will initially comprise two coating lines, and will offer both clean room and non-clean room coating facilities to cater for all types of customers. The newly installed clean room is rated to ISO Class and will be able to offer the cleanliness required for high specification applications in demanding optical, medical and other markets. A wide range of coating techniques can be employed, including gravure, slot die, reverse roll and Meyer bar, and these are supplemented with a full range of converting capabilities including slitting, guillotining and precision sheeting. The coating lines will offer both thermal and UV curing facilities.

DEP's new venture will focus on offering a custom coating and laminating service to customers in demanding markets such as medical, security, speciality labeling and high quality graphics. The manufacturing site is in full compliance with all current emissions legislation.

Jack Kahn, director of DEP, said: 'We will be able to combine state-of-the-art custom coating expertise with DEP's renowned customer service to provide an excellent offering to customers looking for the best in web-fed coating. We have put together a management team with vast experience in custom coating, and are looking forward to the challenges our customers bring to us.'

AVT'S IPRINT REMOTE MONITORING APP

AVT has asked Labels & Labeling to point out that the remote monitoring iPrint application mentioned on p.65 of L&L5 2010 is not compatible with the Apple iPad. It is compatible only with the iPod Touch and iPhone devices. iPrint is a mobile application which allows users to remotely access quality and production information in real-time on printing and finishing lines equipped with AVT's inspection systems. The technology was launched at Labelexpo Americas 2010.

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Where now for digital?

IN A PREVIEW OF HP INDIGO'S DSCOOP6 2011 user group, Danielle Jerschefske reports on a seminar of leading US digital converters and brand owners discussing the future direction of digital printing

Up to now digital has mainly been seen as an opportunity to print variable data, include security elements and run cost effective short-run orders of quality labels. Now leading digital converters have moved on to managing brands' color requirements and generating cost savings and supply chain efficiencies.

These issues were discussed at a VIP event HP hosted in Israel for a number of its North America-based label and packaging converter clients and supplier partners. Guests visited the manufacturing plants for HP Indigo presses and its proprietary ElectroInk, networked with company executives and R&D engineers and learned about related technology advances made by Indigo partners EskoArtwork, LabelTraxx and Avery Dennison. There was a strong focus on the more diverse label and packaging applications that the latest presses can produce, such as shrink sleeves, folding cartons and in-mold labels.

A panel of leading digital converters talked about their experiences with the HP Indigo WS6000, introduced in 2009 as the global recession revealed new opportunities for digital printing.

Jay Dollries, president of Innovative Labeling Solutions (ILS) said 2009 saw a trend toward lowering inventory: 'Before the economic crisis digital was generally ignored by brands since they buy labels on price and don't consider the total cost reduction and overall value that can be found with the technology. But the recession brought total cost evaluation to the forefront of their decision making process.'

Randy Duhaime, general manager at Dion Label had a similar experience to Dollries. 'Customers want to hold as little inventory as possible. They are incentivized by the fact that, with digital, they don't need to put inventory on the shelf like with conventional, increasing their bottom line.'

Sancoa, a label and packaging converter that caters to many international brands, has increased acceptance of the technology in the same way. Ed Wiegand, VP sales, explained, 'we're selling based on the advantages of digital and total delivered cost, reduced inventories and increased response time.'

7-COLOR PROCESS

Global brand owners typically have a couple of thousand brand colors in their books. Expanded gamut printing systems can often hit many of these colors with minimal delta change. If end users can be persuaded to accept process color in place of spot colors, there are big potential advantages in terms of color harmonization, cost savings and speed to market.

Wiegand explained, 'we were able to compel a switch by tweaking color early in the design stage. We proofed the customer's entire line on press and worked with them through the process.'

'There is a lot of skepticism with matching brand colors to ECG,' Dollries added. 'It's all about going through the process with them. Brands are sensitive – we're selling a service versus simply selling labels.'

Dollries and his team at ILS strive to speak to the people at the brand who will understand the benefits of digital technology. 'We create partnerships with brands and the whole supply chain including contract packers.' Some brands leave purchasing decisions up to them. 'This adds value to our service and helps us better understand their process and their thinking.'

All of the panelists that participated in Israel have at least two WS6000 machines, part of a growing trend to acquire a second press shortly after the initial installation. HP's Roy Oomen, a strategic account manager in Indigo's label and packaging

JAY DOLLRIES, Randy Duhaime, Ed Wiegand

division says, 'Across the board, we've seen that once the first unit goes in interest in a second unit comes quickly, and is often ordered and installed within the next, say, nine to 12 months.'

THROUGHPUT & EFFICIENCY

Dollries' decision to install three WS6000 presses at ILS was related to capacity constraints. 'We are converting larger run product lines,' he says. 'It no longer made sense from a technology standpoint to produce longer runs on the ws4500.' ILS' Mexican partner Laserprint was in need of more capacity, so the ws4500 was moved across the border.

At Dscoop5, panelists agreed that the sweet spot for the (then) fresh-to-the-market WS6000 was 15-17,000 feet (4,500 – 5,000m). Now ILS is consistently running 40-50,000 feet up to 100,000 feet. John Dion, president of Dion Label explained his rapid investment in a second machine: 'The quality and productivity of the WS6000 has been opening doors for us since it arrived. With the second machine we gained capacity and backup, of course, but also unified workflows, consumables, spares, training and our maintenance effort.'

BRAND SHIFT

Last year's Dscoop conference had a moderated discussion with some big brand owners. The group, which included representatives from Frito-Lay and Bic, thought digital technology was not at the point where it could effectively produce regular orders of labels and packaging within their current brand structure. The brands didn't know the label industry has digital machines that handle work beyond prototyping and were not always aware of added benefits like personalization.

Dion believed there had been a shift towards acceptance of digital printing technology by the brand owner. 'Of those 'big' brands we've met, we've benefited from introductions to

marketers and product managers looking for the kind of quality that we can provide. Thankfully, the WS6000 can now take us well beyond the prototyping stage.'

Adds Dollries, 'Helping (brands) understand inventory control has significantly helped, as the brands were all ears to any solution that would help them cut costs from their supply chain. They see that it helps them be more responsive to retailer requests.' Dion says brands aren't indicating color consistency as a major objection to digital but 'sometimes, we find a gentle way to point out a lack of consistency in the prospect's (existing) packaging where it hasn't previously been noted.'

WORKFLOW

Workflow is more important than ever when it comes to digital printing. LabelTraxx, for example, has introduced a fully integrated package utilizing JDF links to EskoArtwork's Backstage server to automate file handling. The system automatically queues approved jobs to the press, and is driven directly from the scheduling module of the LabelTraxx system.

The workflow automatically groups different jobs to make best use of the available repeat and web width. Manually planning these jobs would take almost twice as long. Dollries is quite clear that without such powerful automation, the full potential of digital printing cannot be reached. 'As the company was growing digitally all of these issues were overwhelming. We would not have been able to come this far without the software support.'

OPPORTUNITIES BEYOND PS

ILS is making significant progress with shrink sleeve labels as well as flexible packaging. As in other areas of packaging, SKU proliferation is increasing, design life-cycle is dramatically decreasing and there are increasing demands for individualized product marketing.

Kathy Popovich, ILS marketing manager says, 'The consumer trends of interactivity match digital technology perfectly. The value of a brand and its brand equity demand fresh and relevant packaging, and ongoing co-marketing while cross selling, hitting the consumer from every angle possible.'

Dion agrees that interactive packaging presents an exciting opportunity for digital: 'There are unique applications that are not only more secure, but potentially more profitable. With versatile finishing solutions, we are well suited to tackle these. For more typical label applications, the WS6000 makes digital printing the best tool available to capture new business. Much of our growth will continue in labels.'

The panel members believed that a digital 'tipping point' is approaching rapidly. 'We're seeing acceleration towards it,' Dollries says. 'The education time required with brands is much less than it was a year ago or even six months ago.'

The forthcoming Dscoop6 event will be an important marker for where digital technology in label and packaging is moving in 2011.

NEW PRODUCTS

1 DIGITAL LABEL PRESS
EPSON

Epson America has launched the SurePress L-4033A digital label press, and completed the first North American installation at Southern-California based label printer Tape & Label Converters.

Tape & Label Converters will be using the short-run digital label press to respond to the changing demands of the label printing industry – more complex images requiring higher print resolution and multiple spot colors.

'SurePress is a perfect fit for us because it offers the print quality and spot color reproduction our clients demand, as well as allows us to reach out to new clients with greater capability,' said Mas Crawford, vice president of sales, Tape & Label Converters. 'In addition, smaller quantities and shorter lead-times are a given in our business, and with SurePress our make-ready time is dramatically reduced, operation is simple and maintenance requirements are reduced, giving us increased productivity from our previous solution.'

Designed for label converters, large scale product manufacturers and commercial printers, the SurePress digital label press fits easily into existing digital workflows and prints on a range of off-the-shelf substrates with no pre-coating required. Printing up to 13 inches wide at speeds up to 16 feet per minute, SurePress leverages Epson's MicroPiezo inkjet technology and newly-developed SurePress AQ 6-color, water-based pigment ink that produces a wide range of colors.

'From its inception, SurePress was designed to produce excellent print quality with remarkable color at an affordable price, and we expect this installation with Tape & Label Converters to prove it is a solution perfect for small to mid-size converters,' said Mark Elsbernd, North American region sales manager, Epson America.

IN-LINE COLOR MEASUREMENT ON FILM
QUADTECH

Press controls manufacturer QuadTech has unveiled a web-fed, in-line inspection system that measures color on both paper and unsupported packaging film. The new, enhanced version of the company's inspection system with SpectralCam enables continuous, in-line monitoring of virtually all web-fed package materials, including transparent and translucent substrates.

Using a unique suite of advanced algorithms, the new version of the inspection system with SpectralCam inspects the entire substrate one hundred percent of the time, providing real-time quality data, highlighting deviances as soon as they occur, and pinpointing any problems within the roll.

John Cusack, product manager at QuadTech, explains why accurate in-line color measurement of film posed a great challenge: 'Film material, being unsupported, is less stable than paper as it is more susceptible to fluttering and wrinkling during production. The fluctuating distance between sensor and web makes it almost impossible to attain constant results. Furthermore, idlers, though stable, are prone to contamination, which would negatively affect measurement accuracy.

'We have solved the problem by developing an innovative supporting device, positioned between the idlers. Its vacuum system stabilizes the web on to a low friction surface, enabling the web to maintain a stable distance from the camera at the point of measurement. This also enables the camera to record spectral responses, required by ISO standards for calculating accurate L*a*b* values.'

2

2 NYLOFLEX AUTOMATED PLATE PROCESSOR
FLINT GROUP

Flint Group Flexographic Products has launched its nyloflex Automated Plate Processor (APP), a fully automated processing line for flexographic printing plates. The new machine will be available in the first quarter of 2011.

The nyloflex APP combines a round brush washer, a dryer including eight drying drawers, a unit for post exposure and light finishing (UV-A / UV-C) and a stacker with eight drawers, offering a total capacity of up to 120 plates / 320 m2 per day. The nyloflex APP covers plate formats up to a maximum of 1320 x 2032 mm (FV format) and from 0.7 mm to 7.0 mm plate thickness.

'Improvement of productivity and cost reductions play an increasingly important role in the printing industry – automation is one way to impact significantly on achieving these targets,' said the company. 'Today the flexo plate making process is far behind efficient automation, although it is well established in other printing processes like offset and gravure. Working with print-ready files, offset and gravure printing forms are produced today with high levels of automation.'

At the beginning of 2011, a nyloflex APP prototype will be available for customer demonstrations in the new Flint Group showroom in Stuttgart, Germany. In April the first nyloflex Automated Plate Processor will be installed at a trade shop in Central Europe.

DIGITAL ELECTRONIC POWER SUPPLY
UV RAY

UV Ray has launched its i-Power D curing system, containing a microprocessor-controlled electronic power supply. The power supply is half the size of the previous model and does not require a cooling unit.

Digital technology allows instantaneous start-up and adjustable power for a wide range of configurations. The lamp synchronizes with machine phases: on when printing, off when stopped. No user adjustment of the control system is needed. With the lamp much closer to the substrate and a power supply output 30-40 percent greater than its previous systems, drying is improved and the energy requirements reduced.

i-Power D uses traditional mercury lamps and can be combined with ozone-free or doped lamps according to need. The system works with all voltages and frequencies – single or three-phase – without any adjustment.

3

3 DIGILINE SECURITY PRINTING SYSTEM
ATLANTIC ZEISER

Atlantic Zeiser has launched its Digiline Web 300, a modular machine aimed at security printers for coding and serializing tax labels, lottery and event tickets and labels.

The system consists of a modular continuous feed unit, digital inkjet printers (Omega or Delta), curing technology, controller units with an ink supply as well as a camera-based verification system with an automatic splice station that detects, marks and splices printing errors within the production process and continues the print job seamlessly.

Security print service providers increasingly demand high-security, cost-effective and rapid coding and serialization using variable data. Industrial digital printing provides precisely these options and considerably reduces the cost per print, says the company. In addition, verification units with the matching camera systems, combined with automated, mechanical splice stations, are claimed to guarantee 100 percent quality control and zero error rates in production. Depending on the module configuration selected, single color and grayscale printing is possible.

The Digiline Web 300 has a printing width of 300mm. The integration modules available include printers in the Omega and Delta model series from Atlantic Zeiser as well as the suitable curing units. The system can print at a resolution of up to 600 dpi and at a top speed of 150 m/minute.

REMOTE PROOFING NETWORK
GMG

GMG, a developer of color management software, has launched its www.proofr.com internet platform. The worldwide network of remote proofing locations makes it possible to provide online proofing services in compliance with GMG quality standards.

Interested users can order a color-accurate contract proof produced by the GMG system, and select a Proofr partner in their area for the job. This partner then produces the proof in the recipient's vicinity, sending it out within a matter of hours. The PayPal online payment system is used for payment.

Paul Willems, CEO of GMG, said: 'We are delighted to have recruited numerous partners for our proofing network. Proofr.com already covers key locations in Europe, Asia, and the USA, allowing many customers to send color-accurate proofs globally in a short space of time. We're permanently recruiting new partners to improve the network's coverage.'

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Progressive, Profitable Printing

NEW PRODUCTS

4 FACESTOCKS FOR METALLIC EFFECTS
UPM RAFLATAC

UPM Raflatac has launched two label face materials – one solid aluminum, the other gold-metalized on both sides – aimed at wine, beverage and personal care labeling.

Aluminium TC 40 is claimed to combine excellent ink adhesion on a bright solid metal face with a quality embossing result, adding a distinctive touch to premium-look beverages and luxury packaging.

PP Double Gold TC 60 is gold-metalized on the front and reverse to give a luxury look, especially with transparent liquids in clear containers. The solid gold effect can also be used to good advantage by printing on the adhesive side.

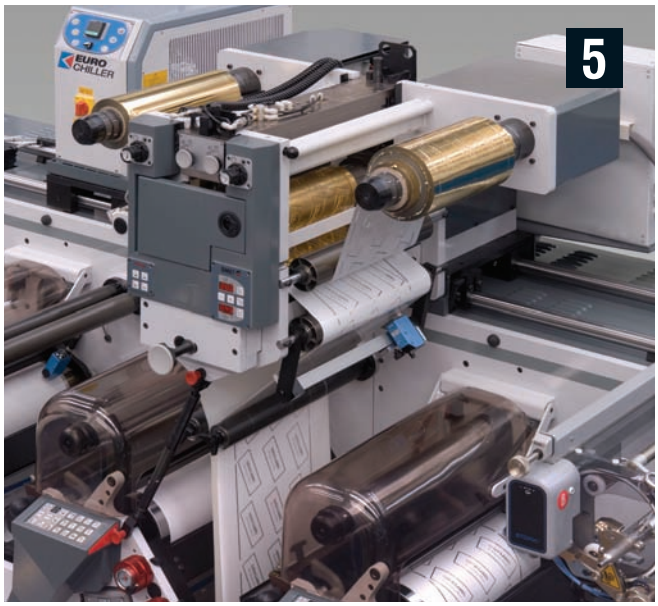
NON-MIGRATION ADHESIVE FOR PHARMA MARKET
UPM RAFLATAC

UPM Raflatac has launched its RP 31 Purus non-migration adhesive aimed at the pharmaceutical market. Whenever labels are applied to liquid-filled low-density polyethylene (LDPE) containers, there is a risk of adhesive migration and a need for a non-migration adhesive. UPM Raflatac's new product satisfies this requirement.

RP 31 Purus is said to be suitable for demanding pharmaceutical applications and to provide excellent functionality on small diameters. It performs equally well on a range of substrates – from PP, PE and glass to LDPE. LDPE is used particularly for squeezable nose and eye drop containers, where a non-migration adhesive is vital.

An environmentally friendly APEO-free (alkyl phenol ethoxylate) formulation makes RP 31 Purus compliant to EU Directive 2003/53/EC. Long-term raw material component supply has been secured to provide the stability required in the pharmaceutical market.

RP 31 Purus is supplied with a full range of pharmaceutically proven face materials to cover a broad spectrum of end-uses. The adhesive is suitable for sterilization by autoclave, ETO and gamma radiation.



5 HOTFOIL UNIT FOR X-FLEX PRESS
OMET

Omet has designed a hotfoil unit that slides on rails to increase the production potential of its X-Flex press. The new unit can be deployed quickly at any position in the printing process, without having to give up the use of a flexo unit.

Thanks to the X-Flex's automatic pre-register and vision control, the adjustment of Omet's new hotfoil unit is automatic in the same way as the printing units. This reduces the time needed to prepare jobs and cuts down to a minimum the wasted material at start-up.

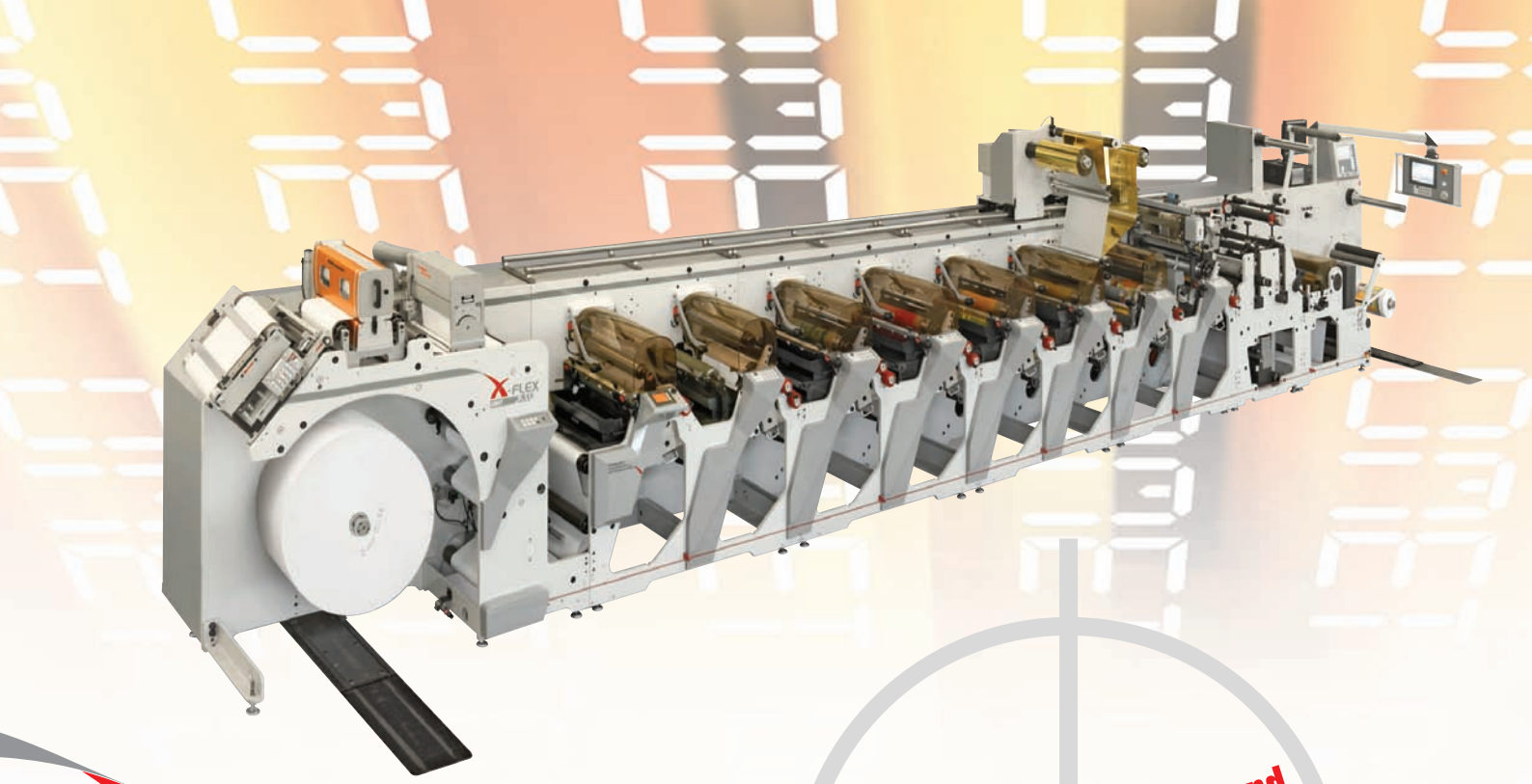
The optional tooling device that is integrated in the unit is said to improve both set-up time for the machine and operator safety. It allows for easy removal of the printing cylinder. A new printing roll can be prepared offline, using the optional change trolley, equipped with a worktable.

The accurate tension control system, which is integrated in the printing head, avoids foil wrinkles that reduce the quality of the finished product. The control panel and the print pressure adjustment system are ergonomically located on the hotfoil unit, and the doors that open to allow cleaning operations on the tools and rubber counter-roll are easily accessible.

INKJET LABEL PRESS
BASCH GROUP

Shanghai, China-based Basch Group has launched the Panthera 300C, a 4-color UV inkjet label machine which uses Konica Minolta 1024 printheads. The Panthera 300C can print at a speed of up to 27 meters per minute with 282mm web width. The machine can support a variety of substrates.

Basch Group, founded in 1990, specializes in printing and card manufacturing equipment, sales and service. The company has eight subsidiaries around China, more than 100 employees and has an annual turnover of USD $20 million.



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L-R: Marcelo Pernuzzi, Impresa Argentina; Alessandro Bonassoli, Nuova Gidue; Walter Ditch, Nuova Gidue's Argentine distributor; Alessandro Bertoletti, Nuova Gidue; and Enrique Questa, Impresa Argentina

NUOVA GIDUE SHORT AND MASTER COMBAT PRESSES
MULTIPLE CONVERTERS

Nuova Gidue has announced a series of installations of its new Short and Master Combat presses.

Antonio Iannone, president of Italy-based label converter Nuceria Adesivi, said: 'Our Master Combat press performs almost double productivity than any of the 27 presses we have in our three plants in Italy. And we know that even more innovation is coming.' The company's 9-color UV flexo Master Combat press, with a web width of 430mm, was installed in the summer of 2010.

Hedy Yani, president of Indonesia-based label converter PT Menara Cipta Profilindo, said: 'We know Gidue presses well and our Short Combat has confirmed all our expectations. It is a clear step forward for our industry.' An 8-color UV flexo Short Combat press, with a web width of 430mm, was installed in the autumn of 2010.

Middle Eastern converter Digital Labels Jordan has installed a 10-color UV flexo Short Combat press with a web width of 530mm. Amer Sabha, president, said: 'Our press converts mainly shrinkable sleeves and we needed fast changeovers, high speed and quality. Job done.'

Label converter Impresa Argentina installed an 8-color Short Combat UV flexo press in the summer of 2010. Co-owners Marcelo Pernuzzi and Enrique Questa said: 'There is nothing like producing with a press to prove its strengths and weaknesses. Our Short Combat produced at full speed since day one, and it is giving us a real competitive advantage in our market.'

MARKET RESPONSE

Federico d'Annunzio, managing director of Nuova Gidue, said: 'We did not expect such a positive market response after the first introduction in April 2010. Short and Master Combat are top-of-the-range technology presses which normally need some time to be introduced in the market. We are further developing new technologies which will strengthen our competitive advantage for the coming years.'

Short and Master Combat lines perform flexographic printing for labels, flexible packaging, aluminum and laminated substrates using Nuova Gidue's SnowBall and PrintTutor systems for automated printing and converting operations. The presses are offered in several configurations with web widths between 370mm and 630mm.

MARK ANDY PERFORMANCE SERIES PRESS
BARCOM INDUSTRIES AND ASTRON PACKAGING

Mark Andy has sold two Performance Series presses to converters in India. Both machines are scheduled to be installed in early 2011.

Barcom Industries, a producer of pressure-sensitive labels, stickers and tags based in Maharashtra, purchased the first Performance Series P5 to be installed in the country. The converter has invested in an 8-color, 13 inch (330 mm) wide machine, complete with a rail system, web turnbar and cold foil unit.

A spokesman for the company said: 'The Performance Series press line encompasses state-of-the-art flexographic print technology with a uniquely engineered print-head design and extremely fast make-ready times. The addition of the P5 will not only bring to us advanced technology but will also offer a high-quality, servo-driven press at a reasonable price.'

Astron Packaging has also invested in a Performance Series P5. The company is a supplier of corrugated boxes and self-adhesive labels. The 10 inch (250 mm) wide, 8-color press is outfitted with extensive options including chilled impression rolls, a rail system to house a web turnbar, cold foil unit and a rotary screen head and a rotary hot foil stamp unit.

Niraj Darji of Astron Packaging, based in Ahmedabad, said: 'We went in for the Performance Series because of its innovative print platform and the machine's consistently high print quality. It is sure to benefit our customers as their demand levels at our end are steadily increasing and with this addition, we are sure to continue meeting our customers' expectations. Not only is the press highly efficient but is also very user friendly due to its simple design.'

Gourav Roy, managing director of Flexo Image Graphics, Mark Andy's distributor in India, said: 'Barcom Industries and Astron Packaging were seeking new servo machines with advanced capabilities, to add to their existing range. After looking at traditional offerings, we presented them the latest servo technology in the Performance Series line.'

NILPETER FA-4 FLEXO PRESS
CANPAS

Canpas, one of Turkey's largest label converters, has ordered a Nilpeter FA-4 press. The configuration includes eight UV flexo units and two interchangeable rotary screen units. It will be the family-owned company's first servo-driven flexo press at its

INSTALLATIONS

HARVEER SAHNI, Weldon Celloplast; Manohar Dhugga and Ralph Beier, Rotocontrol; and Pawandeep Sahni, Weldon Celloplast

L-R: Alex Mulvenny, managing director, Labelgraphics; Peter Mulvenny, joint owner and operations director, Labelgraphics; and Neil Stephenson, Gallus

JAKOB LANDBERG, sales director, Nilpeter; and Aydin Okay, CEO of Canpas

plant in Istanbul and the first supplied by Nilpeter. Delivery is scheduled for February 2011.

According to Aydin Okay, founder and CEO of Canpas, president of the Turkish Label Association and a Finat board member, the new press will allow the 30-year-old company to increase capacity in the higher added-value markets, such as top-quality primary PSA-labels for the fast-expanding health care and cosmetic sectors. The FA-4's multi-substrate capability, which ranges from thin films to lightweight carton board, also gives Canpas the option to produce alternative flexible packaging products in small-to-medium run lengths to meet brand owners' needs in regionalized markets.

As an aid to increased production, the Nilpeter FA-4 has a wider-than-normal web width of 420mm (16.5in) and a top speed of 175 m/minute (575 feet/minute). Other features include a servo-driven infeed, dual-axis servo drives on all print units and a mid-feed pacer. Easy-load plate and anilox sleeve technologies reduce job changeover times. The unwinder and rewinder have the same 40-inch diameter, while a taper tension control on the latter ensures the uniform tension essential for film printing.

GALLUS RCS 430
LABELGRAPHICS

UK-based converter Labelgraphics has invested in a second Gallus RCS 430 combination press.

'We have seen a dramatic increase in business since the first installation eighteen months ago and this second Gallus RCS 430 will increase capacity and also maintain our flexibility, which is important in today's market,' said Alex Mulvenny, managing director at Labelgraphics. 'Quality is also a crucial factor and we consider Gallus to be leading the label printing market here. The proof of the pudding is that we have just won two Gold Awards for combination printing on the Gallus RCS 430 – one from FlexoTech from the European market and the other a globally-recognized award from TLMI.'

Labelgraphics' Gallus RCS 430, which is capable of producing unsupported film and self-adhesive labels, will combine six processes: offset, flexo, screen, embossing and hot and cold foil stamping. It could also have gravure retrofitted.

This recent investment is part of Labelgraphics' five year expansion plan which has seen the company make £4m capital investments over the first two years, with further investment scheduled over the next three. 'We intend to purchase land in the next three months and will then be building our own customized factory,' continued Alex Mulvenny.

XEIKON 3030
CS LABELS

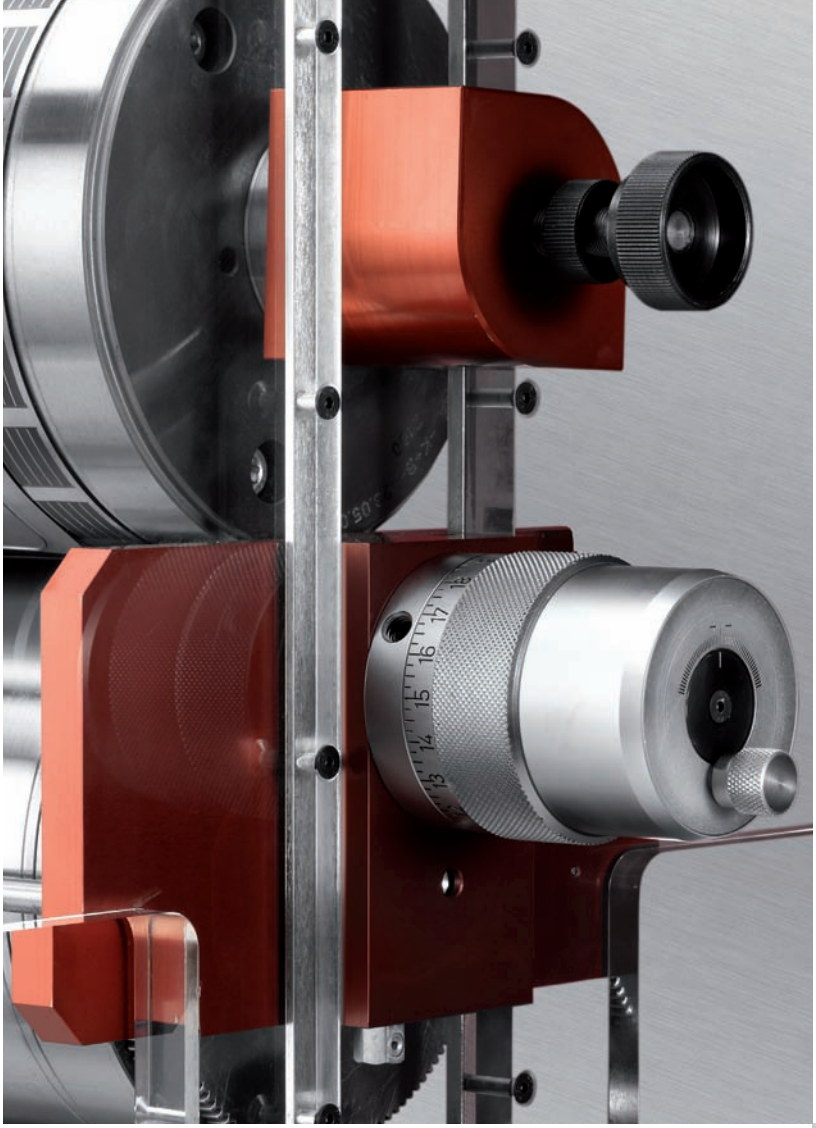
CS Labels, based in Willenhall, West Midlands, UK, has installed its fourth Xeikon label press in four years. The Xeikon 3030 has replaced the first of the company's Xeikon 330 digital label presses, and will run alongside last year's purchase, a Xeikon 3000.

Simon Smith, managing director of CS Labels, said: 'Following the installation of the Xeikon 3000 the advances made with the technology used on that machine really did make it stand out from our original 330 press. It made all kinds of sense to upgrade the second machine to the same level of technology and toner in order to produce consistent printed results across both units.'

Both machines now operate with Xeikon's latest QA-I toner product. 'We are now able to produce the same consistent quality across both of our presses. The new toner also enhances the productivity of the developer in the system, which provides quite significant savings,' said Smith.

Digital has gradually overtaken traditional production techniques at the company, with just one flexo machine remaining in operation from the original bank of six, and two screen printing machines. 'Our business has changed shape significantly since our initial move into digital labels. Flexo and screen printing equipment is still important to CS Labels and to our customers, but digital has certainly taken over as our main production system.'

Xeikon technology is now allowing CS Labels to win back work that used to be produced on its screen print presses. 'For many years we produced the decals for a range of children's footwear. We lost the screen print work on price to a Chinese



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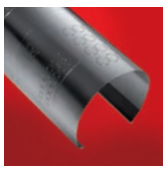

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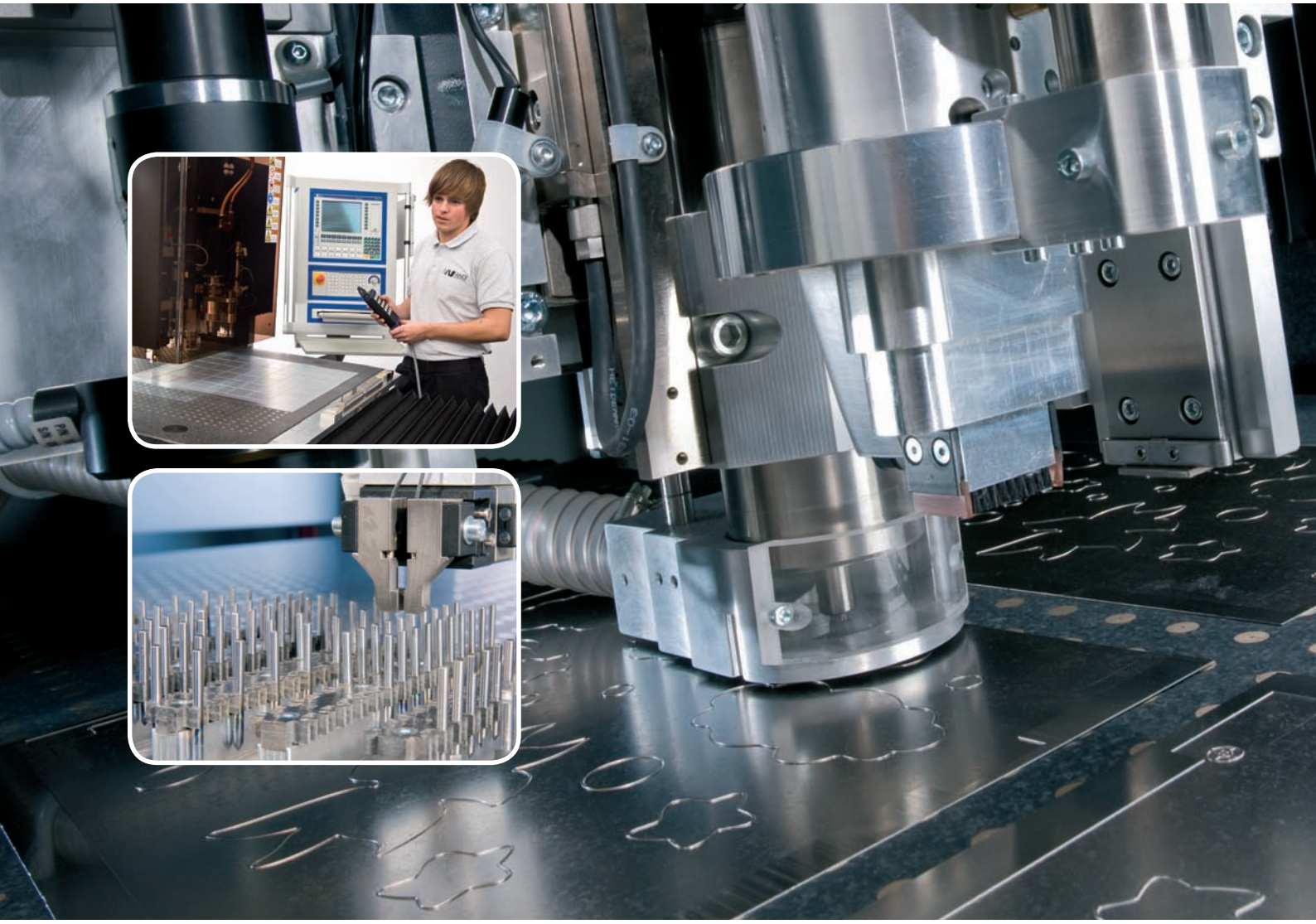

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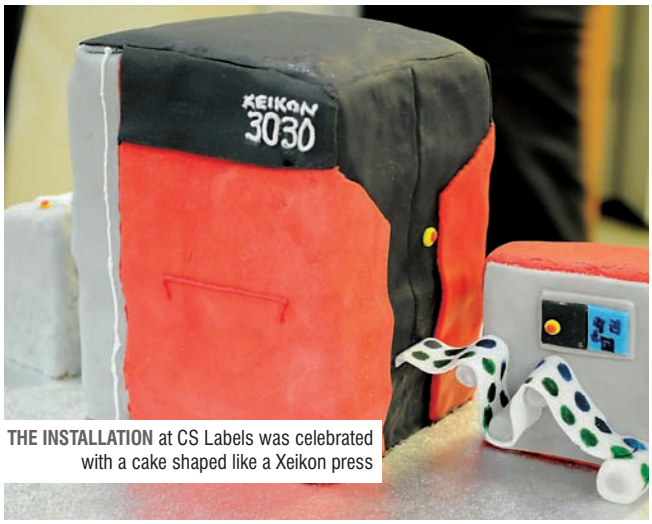
INSTALLATIONS



THE INSTALLATION at CS Labels was celebrated with a cake shaped like a Xeikon press

competitor, but since re-opening discussions with the customer we have been able to convince them to bring work back to us because of the speed of turnaround and the quality of images that we can now produce. The broader range of materials that can be printed on the new Xeikon machines has also helped us to develop new markets,' said Simon Smith.

ROTOCONTROL RSC SLITTER REWINDER
INDIAN CONVERTER

Rotocontrol has received its first order from India for a RSC slitter rewinder inspection machine. The order was taken by Weldon Celloplast, Rotocontrol's recently appointed agent in India, and the machine will go to Zircon Technologies.

'This order was achieved through a combination of superior technology offering, a previous positive client relationship, and the availability of local agent support,' said Ralph Beier, international sales manager. 'It shows that customers want a complete package including reliable support as well as technology.'

ESKOARTWORK HD FLEXO
MULTIPLE ITALIAN CONVERTERS

EskoArtwork reports that 20 HD Flexo systems have been installed in Italy since its launch last year.

One of the first flexo service providers to try HD Flexo was Parma-based Zincopar, which has now obtained the HD Flexo certification from EskoArtwork. Owner Massimo Cipolla said: 'After several trials the technology more than met our expectations. It didn't take long to adjust to a new way of working and we've already seen very positive results, such as higher resolution, increased print definition and better ink transfer. HD Flexo has helped us win new business because it allows you to compete with gravure. In fact, this technology is proving so popular it could well overtake gravure.'

HD Flexo has also been winning praise from Forli-based Sidac. The company designs and manufactures flexible plastic packaging and labels for food, beverages and detergents. HD Flexo accounts for around 15 percent of Sidac's output, and is used on PET, PE, PP, and PVC. Managing director Luca Mazzotti commented: 'We began using HD Flexo after seeing the quality gap between flexo and gravure get narrower and narrower. It delivers top-quality results and has helped us strengthen our relationships with existing customers. HD Flexo

HD FLEXO allows converters to approach offset and gravure quality

is perfect for customers who want the quality of gravure without the associated costs.'

Monza-based Digital Flex, which is part of New Roveco, provides ready-to-print flexo plates. Production manager Andrea Vergnano said: 'After an intensive three-month trial we introduced HD Flexo to the market. Customers were really impressed with the outstanding quality it delivers. The 4000 dpi optics and HD screening technology allow fine gradations that fade to zero, while the increased color gradation results in a wider color gamut. There is now very little difference in quality between HD Flexo and gravure.'

HP INDIGO WS6000 AND ABG DIGICON
LABEL APEEL

UK-based converter Label Apeel, which manufactures self-adhesive labels for the food, beverage, health and personal care industries, has bought a new HP WS6000 digital label press and a Digicon finishing line from AB Graphic.

Stuart Kellock, managing director of Label Apeel, said: 'This is a great investment for our company – and our customers. We've recognized that digital is the future of the industry, and it's time for us to enter the market to give more options to clients of our expanding UK and European operations.

'These new pieces of kit will mean even shorter turnaround times for our customers, as well as being able to show them finished product samples. We really couldn't have spent the money any better.'

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Predictions, Precautions and Prescriptions for 2011

BOB CRONIN, The Open Approach, takes a look at what 2011 holds in store for label converters. Both challenges and opportunities beckon

Charles Dickens had it right: It is indeed the best of times and the worst of times. Regardless of your segment, financial structure, and company, you are likely experiencing some of the most profound effects that have entered our industry in a long time. We've had record closures and failures of so many familiar friends, yet all the while, we've seen renewed energy – and growth – among many of our resilient colleagues. Truly, numerous bright spots still exist and continue to emerge, and the label industry has significant opportunity to mine.

Depending on your market and customers, you could be having your most remarkable sales history or your most disastrous. It all depends on your position. Charting your territory now is truly one of your most important initiatives. Being involved in the industry's progress – rather than the parts that will demise – will ensure you a long and healthy future.

This year's overarching trends, like years past, brings with them a new indicator of what's viable, what's

valuable, and what will be the boon for growth in the future. If you are ailing, hopefully this article will help you identify a new trajectory. If you are on a solid path, may it further advance your success.

THE FUTURE

So what does 2011 have in store for Label providers?

As we start out the new year, Label printers can expect to be greeted by an ever-growing (and ever-changing) barrage of governmental regulations. These too will bring effects both of the best and the worst. As owners, you must remain judicious in salaries and benefits, making room for the increase in healthcare taxes. You also must be prepared for the discontinuation of Bush-era tax cuts and estate tax issues. While these figures are still being hashed out, it is almost certain your tax base will rise.

At the same time, you can plan to continue belt-tightening in anticipation of the moves of your particular state. As real estate tax income and other fund generators decline, more and more states are piling new taxes on the local businesses. These challenges are mirrored around the globe, as every continent takes on the economic hardships of their particular government.

Because of this, I predict we'll see a surge in contract labor along with more hiring/salary freezes. Companies will reduce their training budgets (further, as if that's possible). Many Label companies will struggle simply to respond to their given customer orders. New skill sets will be acquired primarily through outside resources, and new equipment purchases will be stalled in favor of outsourcing to local partners.

Yet, Label companies will also benefit from increased governmental regulations. Changes in labeling/packaging requirements will break loose a groundswell of opportunity – bringing about a convergence of these industries. New mandates in labeling and packaging will support a surge in order volume and frequencies. Updated warnings, environmental-friendliness seals, "health"/freshness/vitamin/allergy/additive-related (glucose, lactose, galactose, gluten, etc.) additions, and even changes in type size will drive demand for significant new shipments. Temperature-sensing, "born on" stamps, and other specialty labels promise to be the next profit-driving regime. Add to that the refocus in origin tracking for recalls (e.g., RFID labels), specialty features for premium products (e.g., wine, energy beverages), and private-labeling distinctions, and you have the fundamentals for the next period of long-term growth.

RFID has not been without its challenges, however, and has been slow to customer adoption. Its evolution and cost-effectiveness are imperatives for its growth. Some companies are already finding new ways to enhance the technology and perpetuate its use. I predict we will see a number of others – possibly even majors – put more R&D into this area.

Digital print for all such growth label categories will be key, as standing inventory is now clearly a thing of the past. Customers will likely be changing orders/layouts on the fly – thus favoring sources that can respond quickly, perhaps via web-to-print portals or better Internet-based communication portals/collaboration software. Label companies are arming themselves with better IT assets than I've ever seen previously. We'll certainly witness some intriguing innovations before year's end.

Added together, you can see the evolving convergence of Labels and packaging, a process that promises to be very fruitful to our companies – and our customers.

AND HENCE THE M&A EFFECT…

M&A activity is always the best indicator for the value, growth, and future of our business. Take a look at what's happening out there. The majors (Cenveo, etc.) are making moves to bring in companies that offer some of the above excitement – expanding their segments and worth. Beverage labeling, private labeling, security-related label companies, and packaging-related labelers are continually being sought out as acquisitions. Investor money, too, is coming only into these most compelling areas.

As bankers continue to increase scrutiny and acquirers shy away from anything but the "sure thing," M&A in 2011 will surely be guided more by substance than size.

Smart (and financially sound) firms are making the moves they need to in order to remain in vital growth areas – whether they are selling or not. If you are unable or unwilling, it may be time for a noble exit. Position yourself toward these growth segments, and set some milestones you can accomplish.

Companies across the globe are hoping for recovery. Five years ago, nobody called their closest competitor for an exit option, but now it seems to happen every day. Struggling companies are hoping for a reprieve, only to find out that their "friendly" phone call gets received (rightfully) as a sign of distress – and most likely spread across their struggles to suppliers and customers. Be careful how you begin listing your company. Your "downfall" could be predetermined for you.

Whether you are in the best position or the worst, our industry is still one of the strongest and most exciting, most dynamic, and most interconnected to the growth of other industries. As long as we are focusing on solutions that advance our customers' businesses, we will indeed remain vital.

When you look forward, you see opportunities for new products that utilize our capabilities; things have never been better than they are today. Considering most of our clients are seeking more ways to differentiate themselves and provide a unique and compelling look to their end customers, nothing does it with more emphasis than a label. Labels provide the entry to the design that generates interest, articulates value, and shows what wonderful thing can be found inside. What this proves is that the current market may not be what it was in 2008; however, long term, as long as we can continue to bring value – by improving market position, increasing the ability to track a product, or keeping people aware of issues or opportunities – the label will remain mighty.

The future holds great promise and potential. What you do with your vision, opportunity, and action is certain to make all the difference.

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, email Bob Cronin at bobrcronin@aol.com, or call +1 630 323 9700.

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THREE DIGITAL AND ONE FLEXO presses are put through their paces in well-attended sessions

Labelexpo Americas Technology Workshop

JAN DE ROECK, EskoArtwork's director solutions management, looks at the lessons learned from the Technology Workshops held for the first time at Labelexpo Americas in Chicago last September – and likely to be repeated this year in Brussels

Anyone who went to Labelexpo Americas was probably impressed with the Technology Workshops. Demonstrations were extremely well attended. Four working presses from Nilpeter (flexo), EFI Jetrion (inkjet), HP (liquid toner) and Xeikon (dry toner) ran alongside each other with a neutral moderator demonstrating how each press produced the same job on identical substrates. Without a doubt, the workshops provided an extraordinary forum to exhibit the quality and speed of each press. The sheer investment of vendor time – and resources – should be commended.

The aim of the workshop was to show attendees how to set up and run label presses, whether conventional or digital, to optimize label print performance and quality. It was also intended to teach how to assess new product and market opportunities, and to compare print quality and performance across different conventional and digital printing processes. EskoArtwork pre-press systems delivered the files to each press, and in some cases drove them, which gave us a unique perspective on the project.

The idea of a workshop came from Mike Fairley, whom we consider the 'guru of labels'. He tested the idea with press vendors and asked us to develop the artwork for three benchmark labels.

MIS: CRITICAL FOR DIGITAL PRINTING

While there is a significant demand for pre-press systems for digital presses, the pre-press workflow that was utilized for the Technology Workshop was pretty classic and, apart from trapping for the flexo press, automated. The challenge was automatically delivering the right file, of sufficient quality, along with correct color. The rules that dictate printing on a traditional press versus a digital printer are not quite as clear as just label quantity. It's also the cost of the press, the number of colors, and the availability of the presses, among other parameters. However, with digital presses typically delivering jobs of smaller quantities, the challenge is not to have a customer service rep spend as much time on a 2,000-unit job as for one of 20,000 labels.

Most of our customers have conventional flexo and more than one digital press. While management information systems (MIS) are relevant for every flexo packaging run, it is more critical for digital presses, putting more pressure on order management systems and pre-press. That's why our best advocates for more automation are among digital print companies. Integrating MIS can create a supercharged automation system, sharing workflow data and automatically driving pre-press. That's why we decided, early on, to talk with MIS/ERP providers.

A few months before the event, we organized ideas with two MIS providers. We decided it would be best if we could look 'like

real', starting with the MIS system, where every job begins. This meant demonstrating an integrated system that could deliver automatic file and data delivery from the MIS to pre-press. When a third MIS provider joined the group, it was more important to focus presentations on the automation between the MIS and pre-press, rather than the systems themselves. While making the labels is an important topic, we decided to look at the entire system rather than age-old topics of preflighting, trapping, color management, and step & repeat.

From EskoArtwork's perspective, our digital front end automates the pre-press workflow. If it's a new label, there may be some human intervention. If it's a re-run, the MIS will tell the production software to find the existing label, make sure it still works, perform a quick step & repeat, and print the job.

Mike Fairley comments, 'There were two real areas of work – agreeing on the pre-press files, and formulating the integration of workflow management and MIS systems. It turned into a real challenge.'

A PRESS CHOICE FOR EVERYONE

One of the major objectives of the Technology Workshop was the comparison of printing done by a flexo press (with plates imaged using EskoArtwork's HD Flexo), an inkjet press, a dry toner press, and a liquid toner press.

To be fair to every press vendor, three different label designs were created – all with intricate designs, and all relevant to real world jobs. A food label had a large image with soft tints and highlights. A shampoo label had a number of tints and vignettes, all starting with a zero dot. A pharmaceutical label had two spot colors, which were reproduced as CMYK builds. There was no different file preparation between the standard flexo and digital presses – for example, the tonal range.

'I drew up the concept specifications,' says Mike Fairley. 'I wanted CMYK as a minimum plus a brand color and a mixture of text, solids and halftone images spread across the labels. For example, the personal care design was developed on transparent material so we could utilize white.'

The entire process was created with the expectation that there would be a color match between each of the presses. Each press vendor received files and an inkjet proof so they knew their color targets based on the ISO 12647 standard, pretty close to GRACoL. Of course, there are different tolerance expectations. How much ΔE is acceptable to a print buyer or provider?

At the Workshops, there were differences, perhaps because press

THE SAME THREE LABEL DESIGNS are printed on all four presses


LABELEXPO Americas 2010

TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOPS

JOB SPECIFICATION: NEO PERSONAL CARE LABEL

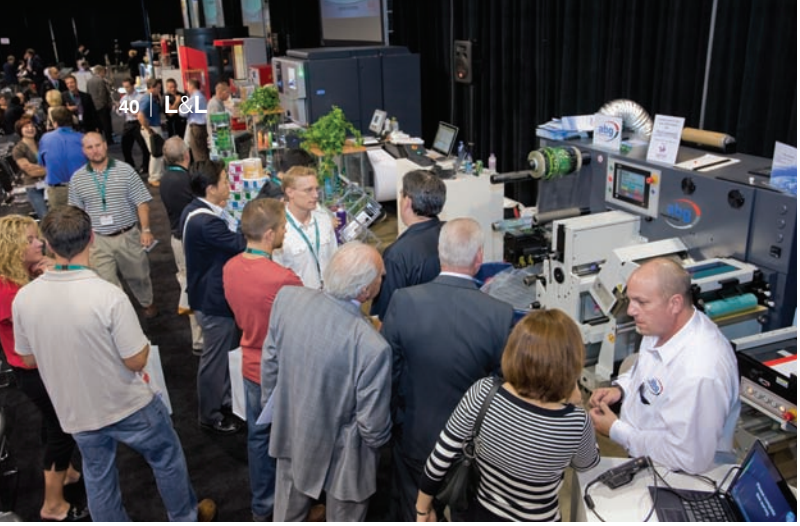
Front and back personal care label printed on a clear BOPP film with PET or Paper liner. Size 135 X 68mm (5.315 X 2.677 inches) with +3mm (0.118 inch) bleed.

ORIGINATION/PRE-PRESS

This label was designed and made print ready using several tools in EskoArtwork's Suite 10 software. The 'Automation Engine' workflow server was integrated with the various MIS suppliers via JDF/JMF, so avoiding any double entry and delivering a high level of prepress automation, including fully automated step&repeat.
The HD Flexo plates used to print the label on the Nilpeter press were imaged on an EskoArtwork CDI by Phototype, a Cincinnati (OH) based brand building company.

MIS WORKFLOW

MIS workflow was handled by three system suppliers: Tailored Solutions, CERM and EFI/Radius.
Each MIS operates in a similar way. On the Label Traxx MIS, for example, an estimate for the label is created, the estimate converted over to an order which is sent via JDF to EskoArtwork's Automation Engine 10 along with all production parameters. The artwork is then sent from the MIS to AE10. The workflow is then started in AE10 to process the art files using the specs communicated by the MIS. Status information is sent back to the MIS as it progresses through different stages.
AE10 creates a proof PDF for approval. Once approved, the art is stepped to match the press and sent to the DFE.
In the case of the HP WS6000, the approved PDF files were processed via the HP SmartStream IN100 Labels and Packaging Print Server. Powered by EskoArtwork. For the EFI/Jetrion, artwork provided by EskoArtwork was processed by the EFI Fiery XF RIP.



manufacturers sped up their presses to impress the crowd. Maybe the color controls were not quite in place at the events. But there is just so much reality that can be expected during a 60-minute demo. Yet, very few attendees took their samples and visited the reception desk to compare the target proofs to the printed results.

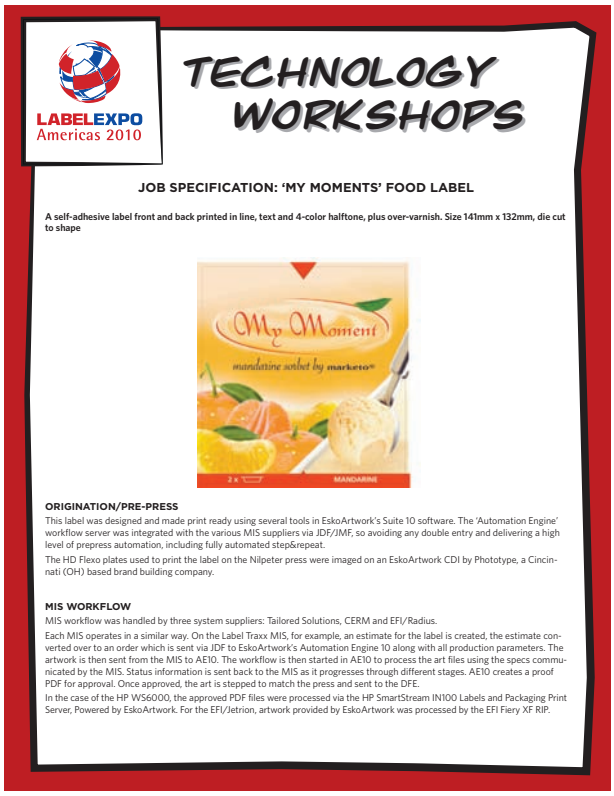
Mike Fairley concluded, 'With all of the variables, and the rush to prepare the Workshops, the printed pieces still looked pretty close. Clearly, we could have worked longer. However, we were constantly coming up against issues. We were working not with one company, but ten. Given the real challenge, it was a success.'

HD FLEXO: MATCHING FLEXO TO DIGITAL

As an EskoArtwork representative, I would be remiss if I did not add a few comments about the use of our HD Flexo plates, produced very nicely by Phototype, on the Nilpeter press and how the press performed compared to the digital presses.

'HD was somewhat unique to compare with digital. Nilpeter wanted to be involved, and EskoArtwork was happy to provide HD Flexo plates,' explains Fairley. 'The only real challenge of HD Flexo was that for each demonstration, the flexo press had to get up to speed. However, the results were quite impressive. They looked very similar to the untrained eye. It was only when you looked under a glass that you saw the weaknesses and challenges of each.'

We did not create any of the label designs to compensate for flexo inadequacies. On the contrary, HD Flexo was able to match any of the digital presses. The tonal range was most interesting. The actual file and printed job had the same 0-100 range. With the same tonal range of digital presses, flexo color matching was similar. There were no highlight blowouts, and the shadows, with Microcell screening technology, provided solid ink density in the shadows. This means that for brand owners, both digital and flexo are able



to deliver the shelf impact they require, with bright solids, and a complete 256-level tonal range.

Thus, the question is not which process is better but, rather, comes down to understanding the differences of each process, and when and how each one is used. It also allows an MIS system to make a judgment as to which press to send a job based upon business requirements; not quality differences. There is no tonal conversion or other color process that might limit press decisions.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

If nothing else, the Labelexpo Technology Workshop was an interesting learning exercise. 'All the press, pre-press and MIS vendors, not to mention the substrate manufacturers, have all learned something from the project. And, from the packed out attendance, even at the last demo, the converters and printers seemed to benefit,' observes Fairley. 'We all broadened our knowledge of a standardized process as compared to offset or flexo. We are looking at the possibility of repeating the experiment at Brussels next year. Lessons from the Chicago Workshop will make the next Workshop even better.'

Given the rush to establish links to the pre-press system and the presses – as short as three weeks for one MIS vendor – it is quite extraordinary how much was done.

What might we do next time? We set a limit of five minutes for the presentations before each of the presses were demonstrated. Unfortunately, that is too little time to get serious about discussing MIS/pre-press integration. Ten minutes might still be short, but provides an opportunity to cover more ground. In particular, we believe that the process, starting with a web-to-print demonstration, might be interesting. It would be helpful to see how a job progresses from a web site, uploading a file and data, conducting preflighting and pre-press, and sending the job to the press.

From a label design perspective, the Technology Workshop will likely continue to stick to process inks or re-separate spot colors, yet color matching should be put more in the spotlight. Some digital presses may be limited to CMYK, and we do not want to give other presses an unfair advantage. It is smart to stay with process CMYK designs because most printing companies prefer to keep the differences between files and presses to a minimum. Designs were developed for the lowest common denominator – a real world consideration when you're trying to match presses.

Stay tuned for the next Technology Workshop. This is an ambitious project, reflecting real world challenges, and it will only get better.

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LED - the future of UV technology?

PETRA BURGER, application engineer at UV systems specialist Hönle Group, outlines the uses for UV-LED curing technology and its future potential

For many years UV technology has been a reliable method for the curing of photo-reactive chemicals. In response to increasing production speeds and new applications, – for example in the field of 3D – UV lamp technology has also developed. Today, a great variety of different systems are available, each specific to the particular application. Users and providers of chemistry are constantly developing new applications for UV curing. Their innovative ideas often mean increasing demands on UV curing devices – where sometimes conventional UV technology has reached its technical limits. Thus, within recent years, a completely new branch of UV technology has been developed: UV LEDs.

This report provides the reader with an objective comparison between both technologies, UV and UV LED. It should help the user determine to what extent LEDs can provide an alternative to conventional UV solutions.

COMPARISON OF TECHNOLOGIES

The operating technology of conventional UV lamps is based on plasma physics and optics, whereas UV LEDs are based on semiconductor technology and optics. These differences lead to the following characteristics:

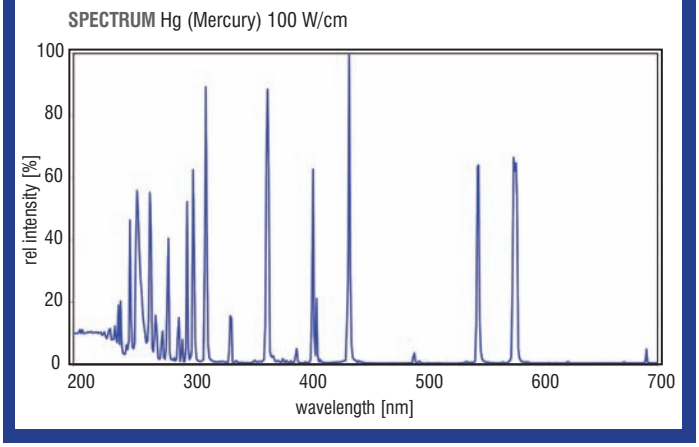
CHEMISTRY

In conjunction with UV lamp technology, coating formulations have been optimized and adapted to the requirements of conventional UV technology over the past decades. This led to a wide variety of coatings, including low-migration varnishes and inks. So far there are only a small number of optimized systems available for UV LED applications. One reason is the lack of suitable raw materials and photo-initiators. Because the main emission wavelength of UV LEDs is in the UVA range, only long wavelength sensitive photo-initiators can be used. This can result in insufficient surface curing.

In order to replicate the curing effectiveness of conventional UV systems, a higher concentration of photo-initiators is frequently needed. But such systems can have disadvantages, including yellowing, intense odor or lower production speeds. In addition to this, UV LED formulations are more expensive than conventional UV coatings. The chemical industry, including raw-material suppliers, can help to optimize the system, and cooperation between equipment, raw-material and coating suppliers is of paramount importance. Suppliers of UV LED curing devices can play a significant role in supporting the chemistry in the following areas:

- technological R&D training for employees
- providing optimized curing devices
- joint projects with end users
- support for raw material suppliers
- continuous improvement of existing technologies.

UV print unit for web materials



FIELDS OF APPLICATIONS

LED technology is already well established in several areas, where chemistries have been tuned to the specific wave-lengths emitted by LED sources. An example can be found in the adhesives business.

Adhesives are often applied at higher coating weights, or the irradiation needs to occur through an absorbing substrate. Therefore the reactivity of these systems traditionally lies in the UVA and UV visible region. Furthermore, the adhesives do not contain pigments that may influence the curing process. These are the main reasons why the modification of the chemistry to the narrow, longer-wavelength emission band of LED's has proved successful in this area.

Another advantage that makes adhesives suitable for LED curing, is the relatively slow process speed compared to print applications. The system technology also offers several benefits compared to conventional UV curing:

- compact assembly size
- no thermal load of substrates (can have a negative influence on chemistry)
- easy handling in cyclical operation
- effective production due to long lifetime of LED devices
- effective light shielding to avoid premature curing in the
- application system

The combination of chemistry and UV LED curing devices is so successful that this application can be seen as a real driver behind the development of LED curing technology as a whole.

Based on the positive experiences gained from this application, LED technology has been continuously optimized, developed and transferred into other areas. LED point and spot curing devices are mainly used for adhesives or conformal coatings.

UV-LED CURING FOR INKJET PRINTING

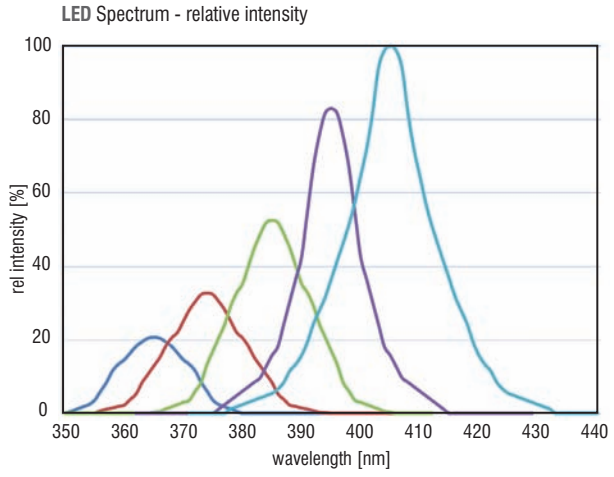
Some inkjet applications are already profiting from the advantages offered by LEDs. There are already applications running in the small format area, which benefit from the advantages of smaller dimensions and the cyclic operation mode of LEDs. However the power of LEDs is still not sufficient to achieve the high production rates required for large format printers. Coating suppliers are already developing optimized ink systems to solve this problem. LED curing devices are being developed further too: on the one hand increasing LED output, on the other hand designing longer LED assemblies for larger printing formats.

Initial success can already be seen. For instance, Dr. Hönle AG has adapted its LED Powerline – a successful high-performance array for 'pinning' and final curing – for much larger applications. The curing window (76 x 10mm) has been increased, in steps of 40mm, up to a length of over 1 meter.

CONCLUSION

Compared to conventional UV irradiators, LEDs can offer many advantages in a variety of coating applications. However, there are restrictions governing or preventing the use of LEDs. The benefits of LED curing should be carefully considered, case by case.

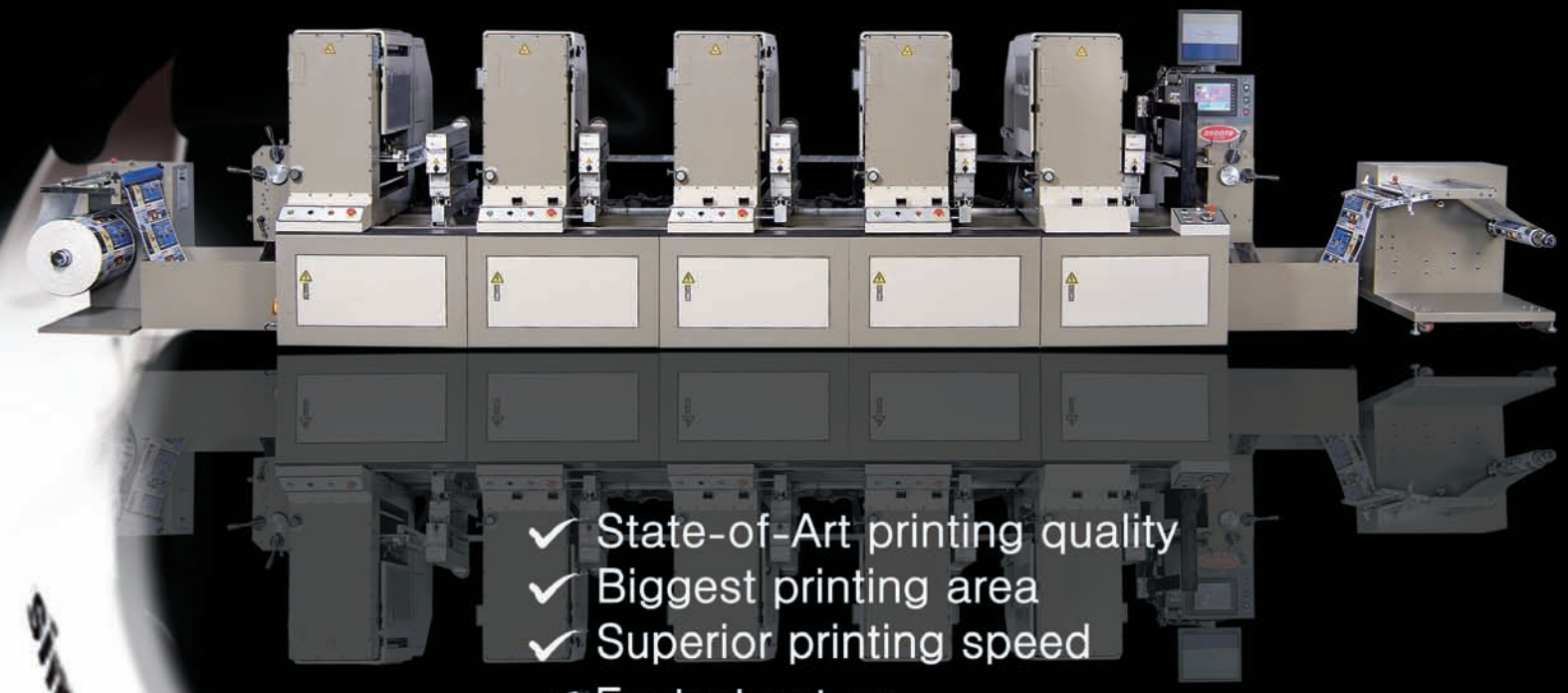
As a specialist in industrial UV technology, Dr. Hönle has many years experience in the successful development and production of UV LED curing devices. We have now utilized our significant experience and applied it to the coating market, through training courses, discussions with the equipment suppliers and by supporting chemical industry and end users.



LED array

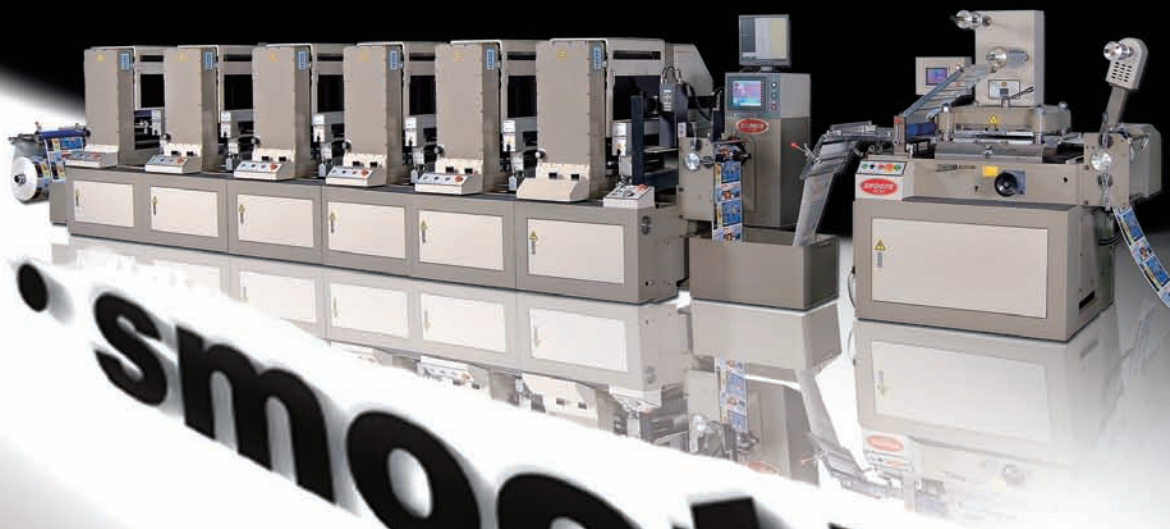
Smooth investment for exceptional

SPM-450OR Shaftless Offset Intermittent Rotary Printing Machine



- ✓ State-of-Art printing quality
- ✓ Biggest printing area
- ✓ Superior printing speed
- ✓ Fastest set up
- ✓ Lowest investment

simple • smart • smooth



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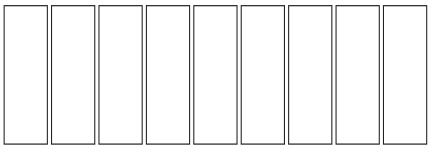
Optical codes on demand

IN THE SECOND OF TWO ARTICLES, Wilfried Weigelt at REA Elektronik explains how to achieve high quality optical codes on thermal, laser and inkjet on-demand print systems

In this edition of L&L we consider the optimum optical code workflow for on-demand printers. These include laser or inkjet printers for office or home use; label printers for industrial applications using direct thermal or thermal transfer print; and in-line inkjet systems used in industrial applications. It also includes digital printers using offset printing techniques where the print platen is replaced by an imaging system similar to a laser printer.

ILLUSTRATION 1: Schematic drawing of a part of a thermal print head



In the case of direct thermal or thermal transfer printers, the print head construction allows high accuracy printing of optical codes. The print head consists of many small heating elements. Print head width varies between (about) 25mm and 210mm. The size of one heating element defines printer resolution.

The construction of the thermal print head does not require any dot overlapping. The square- shaped heat elements are at a fixed position in the print head. Each heat element can be controlled individually. If one element is switched on, a line the width of one heat element is created in the print direction. If two neighboring heat elements are switched on, the line is doubled in width and if three are switched on the printed line is three times as wide as one heat element. The square shape of the heat elements creates very clear edges.

The drawings in illustrations 1 and 2 show a part of a print head. The red elements are switched on and the white elements are switched off. The print result is shown below the head as black lines.

Heat elements can either be 'on' or 'off' but cannot be partially on. Therefore any print design which requires only parts of a heat element will cause the printer to alter the graphics, creating distortion.

The first row in Illustration 3 shows the graphics to be printed. The middle row shows, again schematically, a thermal print head. Gray boxes indicate active heat elements whilst switched-off heat elements are show by a white line. The print result appears below the print head. Comparing the original graphic with the print result it is clear that both are not identical. Accurate prints require the original design to use the same format as the printer's heat elements. Which heat elements are used depends on the interpolation algorithm of the printer software, which may not always be faithful reproductions of the original graphics.

In other words, the optical codes have to fit exactly to the printer resolution. Graphics systems which maintain a label format independent of the printer hardware will adjust the layout to make it fit, but this, as we have seen, may give a distorted print result.

There are also a range of other factors to take into account with direct thermal and thermal transfer printers. These include adjustment of head temperature, print speed and pressure, as well as the influence of different label materials and ribbons. These parameters need to adjusted correctly to achieve a good print quality.

If the head temperature is too high (see illustration 4), bars are printed too wide because the higher temperature transfers more ink. The print appears very intense and dark. Typically, users judge this appearance as good print and will therefore adjust print head temperature too high.

If the temperature is too low, the print will appear with a lot of holes and irregularities. The image in illustration 5 overstates the effect to make it clearer. Additionally lines are printed a little too narrow.

A too high print speed has a similar effect to a too low head temperature setting. In the same way, too much head pressure has a similar effect to too high a head temperature.

In general, extreme settings make the printer less reliable and cause a higher wear. Too high temperatures may also cause the ribbon to tear.

In the case of a laser printer, the print image is drawn by a laser beam on a light sensitive rotating drum. The toner sticks on the drum where an image is required. An inkjet printer shoots small ink drops directly onto the print media. Both technologies are different from a thermal printer.

Laser and inkjet printing systems produce a printed dot of similar appearance (see illustration 6). The dots appear as irregular spots while a thermal printer creates well formed square dots.

The irregular dot appearance cause edges to look like stair steps or saw tooths. To avoid the stair step effect, overlapping dots are printed. Overlapping fills the gaps and makes the edges smoother. Dot size and dot

ILLUSTRATION 2: Print result from a thermal printer. The narrow white lines between bars do not exist in reality. They are included to explain clearly which thermal dots create which part of a bar

Schematic thermal print head *(grey elements are heated)*

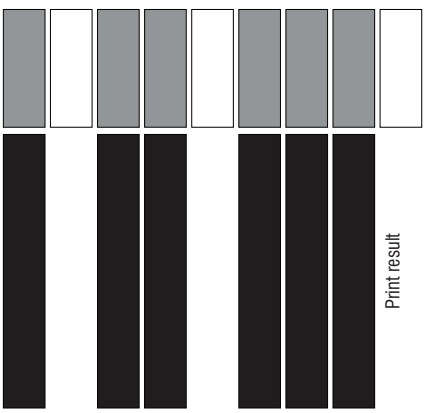


ILLUSTRATION 3: Barcode graphics do not fit to printer properties

Schematic thermal print head *(grey elements are heated)*

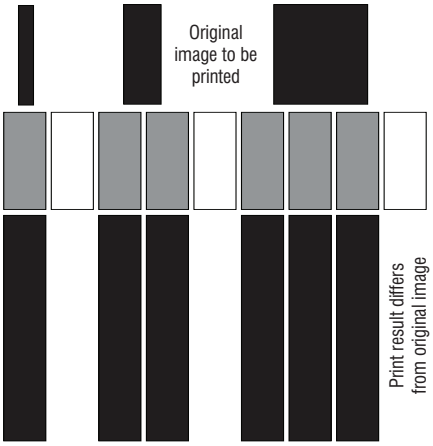
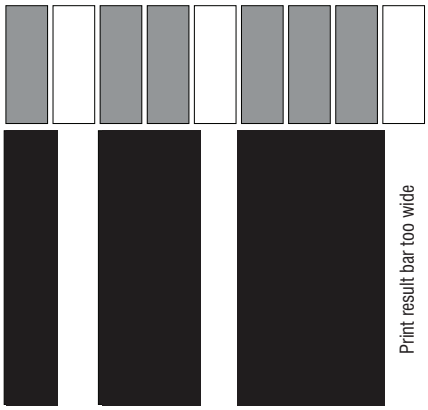
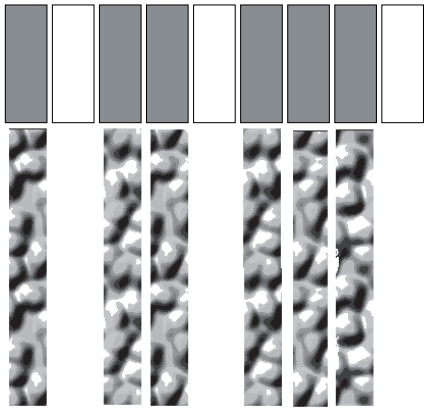


ILLUSTRATION 4: Too high head temperature prints bars wider

Schematic thermal print head *(grey elements are heated)*



ILLUSTRATON 5: Temperature too low



distance are variable, while it is equal for a thermal printer (see illustration 7).

Dot overlapping and dot size must be taken into account if the bars and spaces of an optical code are to fit into the print raster. The effect on the print result is similar to the effect of a graphic not fitting the resolution of a thermal print head.

The optical code generator software therefore needs to make a distinction between these different printer characteristics. Typically, label software is optimized for thermal label printers but not for laser or inkjet printers.

Illustration 8 shows what happens if software is optimized for a thermal printer but does not recognize the dot overlapping of laser or inkjet printers. The red lines represent the switched on heat elements of a thermal printer, and the 1:1 print result is shown directly below. The lower print line shows the distortions which occur with overlapping.

Inkjet printers have to contend with an additional effect – the degree to which the print media absorbs the ink. Stronger absorption increases the dot size, while non- absorbing materials produce smaller dots and have a problem with ink drying (see illustration 9). The risk of smearing the print gets higher. To achieve the highest print accuracy the printer may need to be adjusted in respect of the amount of ink and amount of dots per printed element. The effect is that dot size varies while dot distance is constant.

The effect of absorption appears to be similar to print gain in conventional print systems like flexography. The compensation is also similar. The printer needs to be programmed not to allow printing of dots at bar or matrix edges. This adjustment is called pixel reduction.

Additionally substrates with high absorbency will make print lighter. This needs to be compensated by either using more ink, a faster drying ink or an ink with more pigments.

Different substrates - and even different lots of the same substrate – require the printer to be adjusted to achieve the best print quality.

The international standard ISO/IEC 15419 defines how print systems and their control software are defined in the context of automatic identification.

PRINT QUALITY OF OPTICAL CODES

Print quality requirements for bar codes are specified in the international standard ISO/IEC 15416. For two-dimensional matrix codes the print quality requirements are specified in ISO/IEC 15415. In the case of direct part marking (DPM) using matrix codes the international technical report ISO/IEC TR 29158 is under development.

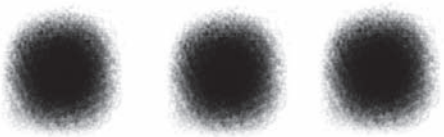
If the guidance above is followed, it is possible to achieve a good or very good print quality according to ISO/IEC 15416 or ISO/IEC 15415.

CONCLUSION

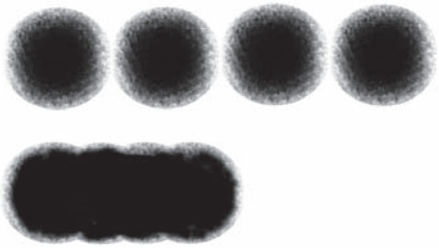
If print system characteristics are known, then good optical codes can be printed with any system discussed in these two articles. As described, graphics formats which store data independently of the print system are at a disadvantage, because the required accuracy for optical codes is lost. True Type fonts for optical codes cannot recognize print system characteristics, for example.

In a perfect world the printer characteristics – resolution, dot distances and dot overlapping – would be provided over the printer driver to the application software. Software based on a constant page layout could then use these printer characteristics to adjust the graphics accordingly. If such an adjustment is made then the layout may change slightly from one printer to another.

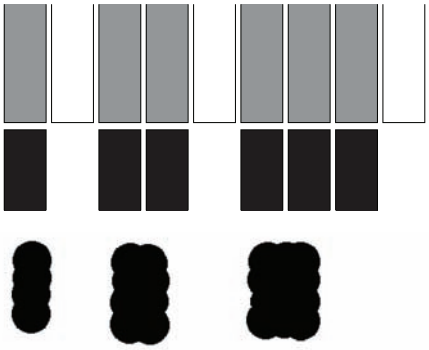
ILLUSTRATON 6: Dot appearance (Laser/Ink-jets)



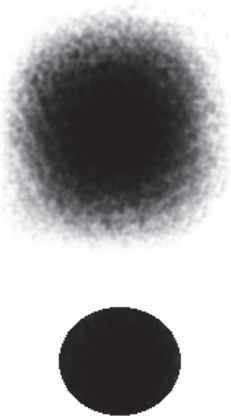
ILLUSTRATON 7: Laser/inkjets dots without overlapping, and below, with overlapping



ILLUSTRATON 8: Comparing laser and thermal print



ILLUSTRATON 9: Dot appearance on absorbing and non-absorbing media.



In conventional mass print systems the complete workflow from design to print platen manufacturing must be under control and all influences must be known. This allows optical codes to be designed and printed without distortions.

The requirement for printing optical codes perfectly comes from their central importance in improving logistics processes. Bad optical codes prevent these systems being improved.

Adding value to California's Wine Industry

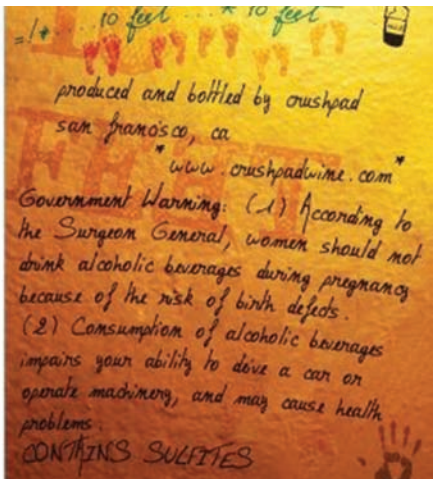
DANIELLE JERSCHEFSKE reports on the flexible printing technology and strong partnerships with clients and designers that allow Tapp Technologies' to bring value to California's wineries

Based in Napa, California, Tapp Technologies entered the wine label market in the early 1990s, investing in Sanjo waterless offset technology. Offset provides a thick ink coating and high quality still in demand by the wine world today.

The wine industry differs from other sectors of the label market because of the unique process of turning grapes into wine. What's inside the bottle holds a piece of the winemaker's heart and the label must express the essence of its contents.

Travis Pollard, digital business manager at Tapp explains, 'People are extremely passionate about wine, which is why label design and print quality are so important in this market.' On-time delivery is critical since bottling, a significant cost in the entire process, cannot be completed until the labels are applied to the bottles; and accuracy in bottling time can affect the outcome of the product, so there is a lot at stake.'

Tapp's diverse portfolio of technology includes flexography and liquid toner digital, which supports a varied customer base and gives the converter a competitive edge. Bill Knopka, senior vice president, explains, 'It's really about flexibility, and being able to tailor our solution to fit customers' projects. With



"When we create a design the client must be able to look at the label and see their story unfold"

a variety of printing platforms we can customize any solution for them.'

Pollard and his team work closely with clients throughout the decision-making process. 'Wineries have an acute variety of needs and typically request highly complex embellishments, requiring the most advanced printing technique available. At Tapp we take a close look at which technology should be used in order to service a customer's needs most appropriately. Run length, label design, and total budget are just some of the things taken into account before an order is scheduled and printed.'

SMALL ORDERS REAP BIG REWARDS

Introduced in the early 2000s, HP Indigo's ws4050 digital technology allowed Tapp to break into the under-served boutique wine industry, strengthening the business. Knopka explains, 'with the investment in digital printing we were the first to introduce a number of solutions to the California wine market. Digital technology allows us to supply wineries with small orders of premium quality labels yet remain cost effective.'

The number of boutique wineries has increased around the world over the last 15 years. The niche market needs labels that reflect the quality of the wines produced. Pollard says, 'we focus on small lots of high-end wine.'

CRUSHPAD WINERY

Crushpad allows anyone to make a signature wine. From grape selection and harvest, crushing and aging through to label design, selection and joyful consumption, the winery assists customers in tailoring their own wine.

The winery's in-house packaging team supports clients in creating exclusive labels which expresses their individual stories. The three designers, Jenny Doll, Hayley Partridge and Kelly Fooy, have a weekly label quota to meet and each turn out 10 – 15 labels a day.

The Crushpad packaging team takes ultimate responsibility for the accuracy of each design and the label's proof. Once a designer signs off on the work internally, the file is loaded to a website and automatically put in the scheduling queue at Tapp.

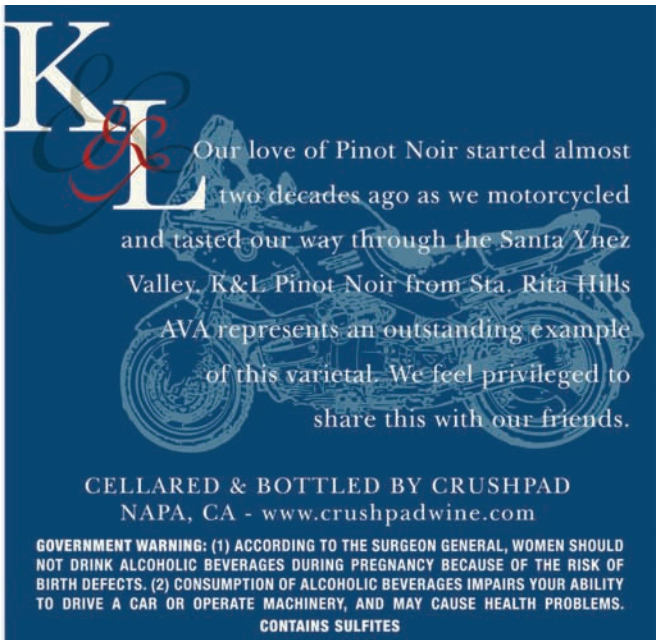
DESIGN

Assisting clients in selecting a label is a very intimate process. Creative director at Crushpad, Jenny Doll says, 'Some clients are very clear about what their needs and wants are. They'll have photos, or an image, past labels - which facilitates the decision. On the other hand, some have no idea what they're looking for; they need a name, a concept, a design. This requires more consultation and guidance by the staff probing about their lives.

'It is a very personal way of crafting composition. We bring our design and interpretation skills to the table, listening to what is wanted and what the story is, to build a meaningful label. When we create a design the client must be able

CALI WINE STATS

California is the world's fourth largest wine producing region by volume. It has increased production each year since 1993, turns out over $61.5B in economic revenue for the state and attracts 20.7M tourists annually. There are over 2,800 wineries in the state, and according to the Wine Institute, California wine has a 61 percent market share in the US.



CRUSHPAD clients picking stems out of grapes

to look at the label and see their story unfold.'

Tapp keeps designers up-to-speed with the latest technology developments in print technology and educates them on printability. Tapp has developed cross-industry relationships up and down the valley. Keeping in regular communication with the design community is integral to the business. Knopka says, 'At the core we are a manufacturer, but if you ask our customers then we are a service provider.'

PARTNERS

'Our partnership is phenomenal,' says Jenny Doll referring to Crushpad's relationship with Tapp. Crushpad offers a selection of regular die shapes and papers for customers to choose from. It prints around 1,000 different labels each year, running about 30-60 different labels every other week. 'Prior to working with Tapp it was a full time job to monitor, track and organize label orders and press checks.'

More automation support from the converter has freed up Crushpad to expand by allowing its designers and winemakers to focus more on customers and less on the technical aspects of producing a timely, well-printed label.

CRAFTING A BRAND

Crushpad has what it calls a 'commerce division' where it consults and supports the incubation of wine brands. Doll says, 'the process is intense and requires us to really become acquainted with our customers. Like the signature wines, often you'll find personal bids within the label, but it is a very different story because with the signature wine, the label is not meant to attract a buyer. Here, the package must provide a story that people will, quite literally, buy in to.'

The label is key to the overall experience of Crushpad's clientele and any wine consumer. Doll says, 'They open and pour, talk about the process, new oak versus old; it is a full experience. That label has to bring back memories to reflect who they are as people. The label is the final footprint and a constant reminder of their experience.'

EXPANSION

With the growth of Tapp's digital business, the company moved to a new building at the close of 2010. The new plant has double the space, allowing more efficient label production and giving the converter room for further growth and capital investment.

Knopka believes the company will continue expanding with digital technology, and is continually investigating and testing new substrates for the Indigo press. An upgrade to the WS6000 is on the horizon, but more R&D must be completed on a range of stocks important to the company's target market before a decision is made.

'Other growth will come organically from our current customer base and we will look into establishing a greater geographic reach,' continues Knopka. The converter is focusing on the California wine market, but looking to translate its success to the rest of North America, where there are currently more than 6,000 wineries. 'The dynamics that we see in those markets are at the same point that the California wine market was previous to the inclusion of digital to our platform.'

Knopka says that overall the effects of the economic recession have been minimal. He attributes this stability to Tapp's customers who produce high value wine, where unit sales actually rose in recent years. The wine market has also seen a trend for greater use of tactile embellishments and other supplier-led innovations.

With a new location, passionate staff and creative ideas, Tapp will continue to match the packaging objectives of both large and small wine brands, focusing on digital and providing unique solutions with unrivaled service.

Packaging Innovation deepens brand penetration

DANIELLE Jerschefske reports on an extended content label developed by Canadian converter All Stick Label which helped a leading seasonings brand build a lasting relationship with its customers

When packaging becomes a significant feature in how a product is positioned, you have a powerful combination that can spice up sales. That's exactly what has happened in Canada for Club House spices and its line of thirteen 'One Step Seasoning' blends.

Club House is positioned as a full line of seasonings and related products that make great meals easier for Canadian families. It is the broadest and most significant product line for McCormick Canada Inc., the largest spice, dry sauce and seasoning, extract, and specialty foods operation in the country. Club House is one of the most respected trade names in Canadian kitchens, with a rich history dating back to 1883, but something was getting lost in translation for the One Step line.

McCormick Canada's group marketing manager Jennifer Dionne said, 'While One Step Seasonings had experienced strong sales growth, overall consumer awareness for the products was still very low. Consumers using the product were finding it challenging to come up with new ways to use the flavor in their cooking. Each flavor had some inherent recipe usages but a lack of consumer knowledge on ways to use the product was limiting the frequency and breadth of use for the range of products.'

The manufacturer needed to increase sales by bringing new users to the franchise and by encouraging consumers to use more of the product.

A series of recipes seemed the natural conclusion—but what was the most effective way to get them into the hands of consumers? Dionne said, 'We provide a lot of recipes for our products via our web site, and support the effort with recipe cards placed with in-store displays. That got us thinking, maybe there was a way to better inform consumers on how to use our One Step spice blends.'

The One Step spice bottles range in size from 111g (3-7/8 oz.) to 180g (6-1/3 oz.) and feature a signature square shape, pedestal structure and round cap. They were originally labeled with a normal pressure-sensitive label, but spice bottles for household use are relatively small and do not have much room for labeling.

Dionne notes that creative execution, already a challenge for such a small footprint, is made even more difficult in Canada where labeling mandates require bilingual copy.

'Everything must be in English and French, and that further limits the amount of space we have available,' she said. 'We also have to include a nutritional fact table that has gotten larger and is now more heavily regulated than ever before. All of these requirements really impact what we can do with a label from a positioning standpoint.'

At the same time, the signature pedestal bottle was a strong identifier for consumers and Club House wanted to keep it

part of the marketing mix despite the limited space it allowed for a label.

For a solution, Club House turned to its converter, All Stick Label.

Working through its Vaughan, Ontario facility, All Stick Label developed several options for McCormick to consider, as national account manager Karen Blumel explains: 'We were really after a solution that would meet all of the sales and branding objectives while at the same time it needed to be consumer friendly.' Peel back labels have been used in pharmaceutical products for years, but are not commonly used in the food category.

The new Club House label has three panels and takes full advantage of the entire spice bottle, which creates a much larger label footprint. The facestock top sheet carries the prime label, nutritional facts, ingredients list, promotional copy and company information. The top panel is peeled back to reveal six recipes in both English and French, with the latter printed on the backside of the top sheet. The pressure sensitive base stock bottom sheet wraps the entire bottle and contains the six recipes in English.

The three-panel label required switching from paper to biaxially oriented polypropylene (BOPP) film. Both the top and bottom sheets are Fasson pressure-sensitive film from the Fasson Roll North America division of Avery Dennison. The backside of the top panel contains a proprietary adhesive from Avery Dennison that allows the label to be resealed after peeling it back.

In constructing the label, a key requirement was to achieve maximum opacity in the facestock to ensure the recipe printed on the backside did not show through and undermine the graphics integrity of the prime label. Both films are white, with the prime label being printed in six colors and the recipes printed in black on the inside panels.

'The Fasson white film offers a truly superior printing surface and also helps provide the smooth peel-back and reseal functionality of the top panel,' Blumel said. 'We printed the labels stochastically. The process really brings the product photography to life and strongly conveys an image of overall ingredient quality.'

The new label was applied using existing equipment and did not require any significant equipment modifications to run. From an efficiency standpoint, the labels are on par with the previous labels.

'This label has to wrap around four corners so you do have a certain amount of stress on the top layer,' Blumel said. 'We spent about six weeks trialing different Fasson products to make sure we had the right combination of materials. The label is extremely functional from a graphics standpoint and for consumers. It compellingly depicts ingredients and is easy for consumers to interact with the extended label.'

Consumer reaction has been exceptional, Dionne said. 'Our Consumer Affairs department has received calls from people saying they love the recipes and want to know if we have any others. But beyond the anecdotal, there are three metrics that tell us the new label is very successful.

'The first is household penetration, which is up a full point and represents about a 120,000 new households. So, more people are in fact buying the One Step Seasoning Blends. The second metric shows that frequency of purchase increased, which means more people are coming back to buy the product. And third, the time between purchases has decreased, so consumers are indeed coming back and replenishing sooner than they had a year ago.'

McCormick has supported the new labeling with magazine advertising campaigns based on the extended content labels. One called 'Dinner's Little Helper' features a food prep area with the product, the label peeled back and a completed dish. The other titled 'Recipe Box' portrays a person pulling a bottle of One Step from a recipe box by the label.

'The recipes are such a strong identifier for the entire line,' Dionne said. 'The two ads reinforce the quality of each spice blend and remind consumers this great line of spices comes with a full series of great recipes.'

Additional marketing support was provided for the Club House website, along with a 'One Step' TV commercial. Dionne noted, 'The extended text label has just been really positive for the Club House brand, not only from a consumer standpoint but we've seen a direct impact on our business. I think consumers have appreciated the One Step recipes because they've been able to do more with the product and in the process found new uses for it. We've seen sales growth, an influx of new users and increased frequency of use. While it's a more expensive label, it has paid-out for us and been a real success.'

THE INSIDER

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

APPLIED DNA SCIENCES SEES TEXTILE BUSINESS GROWTH

Applied DNA Sciences (APDN), a provider of DNA-based anti-counterfeiting and product authentication technology, has announced additional sales and continued growth in its global textile business.

Expanding on its FiberTyping business, APDN is adding new customers and developing existing business, using its proprietary SigNature DNA technologies for marking and authenticating genuine textile and apparel.

Consumers rely on labels to reflect the true content and authenticity of the product. This is especially true considering the cost increase of cotton. Recently, a report from the National Inflation Association announced that the cost of cotton has increased by 54 percent. Having a metric that can verify cotton quality and label compliance is a key benefit of FiberTyping: it enables enforcement by FTC and US Customs, as well as retailers and brand owners, to ensure compliance with textile labeling laws.

FiberTyping is a patent-pending genetic test that enables retailers, yarn manufacturers and even cotton growers to verify whether the original cotton fiber was used to manufacture the cotton product. From raw fiber to yarn to greige fabric and, ultimately, to finished fabrics, FiberTyping DNA testing can identify the exact cotton species (G.barbadense or G. hirsutum) in any cotton labeled product. FiberTyping requests continue to be fulfilled for yarn manufacturers from India, Pakistan, China and Supima, the promotional organization of the American Pima cotton growers. APDN is working within many textile sectors to add strong positioning in the overall supply chain. One large UK company, with over 700 retail outlets, has engaged APDN to test towels and bedding products to determine whether they contain 100 percent pima cotton, as labeled. This is one example of how customers are using FiberTyping to better control their supply chain to ensure 100 percent accountability.

To support continued business development efforts in the UK and Europe, APDN has opened its new DNA textile authentication laboratory and European office at the Textile Centre of Excellence (TCE) in Yorkshire, UK. APDN is partnering with the TCE in a joint effort to expand the DNA taggant marking and product authentication technology in the European market, with a reach to the Pacific Rim.

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Saturne ▲
(Sheeter)

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New packaging enhances Tequila brand

DANIELLE JERSCHEFSKE reports on the new packaging unveiled by Herradura Tequila to enhance its ultra premium spirits brand

At the end of 2010, Herradura Tequila unveiled new packaging to enhance its long-standing heritage as an ultra premium 100 percent agave tequila. Mark Bacon, VP director of Brown-Forman tequilas, North America said, 'Herradura Tequila has been hand harvested, hand crafted, and estate bottled since 1870. We have a long-standing commitment to quality and tradition, making extraordinary tequila that hasn't changed. The new design honors this heritage.'

It was important to the 144-year-old brand that the new packaging conveys the tequila's quality and integrity while maintaining consistency across all its products.

The re-design enhances the brand as a whole, increasing awareness amongst party-goers and lovers of the fine taste of Herradura Tequila. Competing in the ultra premium spirits category, Herradura Silver is aged for 45 days in oak, a point of process that sets it apart from the competition and lends to a light citrusy taste.

Johnny Cardenas, senior art director for Casa Herradura Tequilas, said of the package's defining features: 'the form of the bottle is elegantly tapered, square-shaped and has a strong neck. The authenticity of the traditional glass made in Mexico speaks to the years of tradition, yet finds a functional value while pouring and quality in the feel when it's held.'

The brand's core icon, a horseshoe, and the embossed pressure sensitive ribbon seal for the cap were carried over from the previous package. The icons ensure consistency for consumers and have strengthened with the launch.

The prominent metal horseshoe label emphasizes the brand's sophistication and authenticity. Herradura worked closely with its vendor to achieve the premium look label, which is die cut, embossed and varnished to give the label its tactile, real horseshoe feel. The information label is placed on the side of the bottle to keep it clean.

Packaging is an important part of consumer communication for Herradura. The cost per label has increased with the switch but the simplified appearance was required globally. The package is the primary focus of the advertising campaign and the various marketing materials – POS, print, trade and digital – all originate from the new design.

Cardenas continued, 'Packaging is key across all brands. It is the place where we're able to showcase Herradura's premium presence as world-class tequila. Tequila like this deserves packaging in-line with its deeply rooted heritage.'

Each touch point is incredibly important when it comes to making a connection to tequila buyers. Cardenas said, 'It's better to work holistically, beginning with a core color palette and design concept in mind, then moving that out to other brand communication points. We were careful too to always keep our core customers in mind the entire time.'

Bacon added, 'In Mexico there has been a warm reception of the package. We've been extremely happy with the consumer response. The change has been successfully made – Herradura offers the same first-rate taste, with a fresh, first class look.'

The new contemporary packaging allows consumers to visually establish quality - it reinforces that 'it's not just tequila'. Herradura is working to convince consumers that regularly choose liquors, such as vodka and gin, that tequila also makes a classy cocktail.

Herradura hosted a brand launch party in the Palms Villas Suites at the Palms Las Vegas Resort and Casino, in the fall. Guests were treated to Herradura Reposado, which is rested for 11 months – 9 more than category standards – and the Anejo, oak barreled for two years. They also tasted the Herradura Silver, Patron and Avion Tequilas. Herradura Tequila mojitos and mango punch, with a sweet and spicy rim, were also well received.

FRONT ROW L-R: Sandeep Zaveri, LMAI treasurer; Jigesh Dani, LMAI committee member; Roger Pellow, MD Tarsus Labels Group; RL Deshpande, LMAI secretary; Dr HP Kumar, director, National Small Industries Corporation; Vivek Kapoor, president, LMAI; Veerendra Malik, former president, All India Federation of Master Printers; Mike Fairley, Tarsus strategic consultant; Andy Thomas, editor, Labels & Labeling

Labelexpo India review

THE PROMOTION of the India Label Show to a full Labelexpo saw increased visitor numbers, more working machinery and lively product sales. Andy Thomas reports

Labelexpo India was a great success, welcoming over 6,000 visitors to the Pragati Maidan exhibition center in Delhi last December - 27 percent more than the previous India Label Show.

A government minister was present for the opening ceremony, demonstrating the growing strategic importance of the labels sector in India. Dr HP Kumar, representing the National Small Industries Corporation, announced the availability of credit for capital purchases.

Demonstrating the importance of the label industry to India's booming economy, Global industry suppliers used Labelexpo India to announce major new investments in the country.

Avery Dennison confirmed an expansion of capacity at its Pune coating plant, bringing the company's total investment in India to more than US$50 million. The plant now has the widest and fastest hot melt adhesives coating line in India, along with new roll materials handling and finishing equipment.

The Flint Group announced the building of a new manufacturing site for packaging and narrow web inks in Savli, near Baroda. They will manufacture water-based, toluene based and toluene free solvent-based inks. Flint already has an ISO 9001-2000 certified mother plant for packaging inks in Bangalore and blending units in Baroda, Noida and Savli.

WORKING MACHINERY

This was the first time Indian converters had seen Gallus' ECS 340 'granite' press. One machine was sold to SAI Packaging along with an EM280.

On the Mark Andy stand, a print unit marked the world premier of the new 'baby' of the Performance family, the P3. But it is interesting to note the number of 'mid-range' servo-driven P5 presses in India. Before the show Mark Andy announced sales to Barcom Industries in Maharashtra and Astron Packaging in Ahmedabad.

Nilpeter demonstrated an FB3300 manufactured in India by its partner Proteck. The company has established a strong base of Indian-built FB3300s, with five machines sold in the two years since the JV agreement was signed. These join seven US-built presses.

Omet was working with its new distributor, Weldon Celloplast, which has now made its first flexo press sales in India. The Flexy press on the stand was sold to Arunodaya Paper Products in Hyderabad, while an all-servo X-Flex was sold to Renault Papers in Mumbai.

Rotatek showed a fully specced Brava intermittent/rotary offset press, which was sold by agent Creed Engineers to Veekay Graphics, a division of Printman Offset Private Ltd in Mumbai. This company already runs a Rotatek Combi press and has successfully moved from sheetfed offset to rotary offset label conversion.

UK manufacturer Focus Machinery introduced its Reflex single-color flexo press, and sold the demo machine to Regal Creative. The re-register facility of the Reflex has given it an interesting second life as a finishing machine for digital labels, with the ability to add metallics or solid colors and die cut at full rotary speeds. The versatile system can also be used as a blank label press and a coating system in an HP Indigo workflow.

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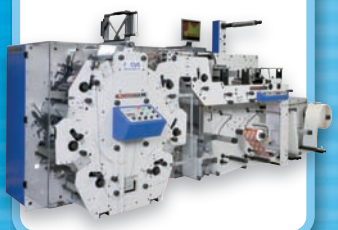

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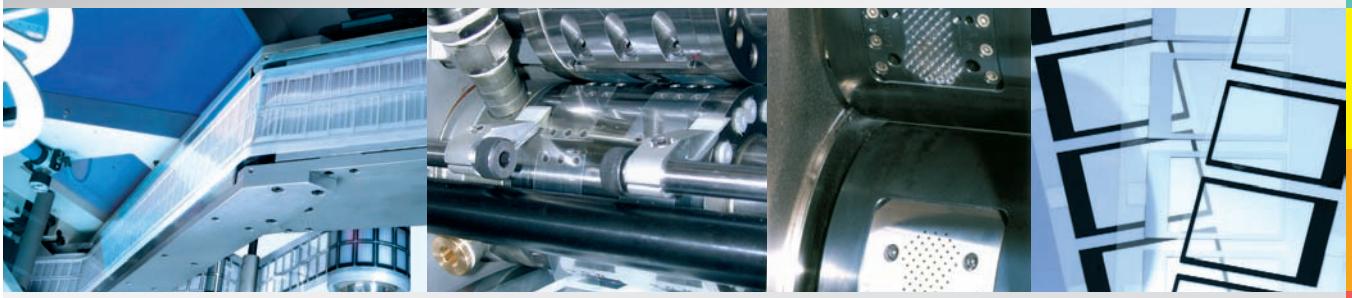

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ROTATEK sold this Brava rotary/intermittent offset press to Veekay Graphics/Printman

MARK Andy P5 press in action. Two presses have been sold so far in India

OMET Flexy press in action – sold to Arunodaya Paper Products in Hyderabad

GALLUS pulls out all the stops for the Indian launch of the ECS 340 'granite' press

Letterpress remains a strong technology in India. Orthotec was showcasing its latest intermittent servo letterpress technology, now incorporating hybrid flexo and letterpress inking print stations, a variable repeat rotary die cutting unit and in-line intermittent rotary hot stamping unit with foil saver. Printing with digital CTP plates, Orthotec was demonstrating some high quality work including offset-like vignettes.

Indian press manufacturers made a significant impact. Jandu Engineers showcased its new 4-colour plus one UV station modular rotary flexo press, and plans to make a full UV 6-colour press in the near future. ApexRototech launched its first fully servo-driven flexo press, configured with IR dryers and UV varnish station. The company manufactures its own high quality rare earth magnetic cylinders, which are currently doing duty converting airline boarding passes – a tough non-slip test for any flexible tooling.

Multitech had its Ecoflex press on the stand. The company reported 20 press sales since the last India Label show and hopes to have a fully servo-driven press ready for Labelexpo Europe in September. Multitech has already sold a press to a German converter and is now looking for local agents as the company makes a major push into Europe.

Multitech is not alone in its European aspirations. Leading Indian coater SMI has developed a world class product which it already exports to many destinations around the Middle East and Africa as well as some European converters.

THE BIRTH OF DIGITAL

Digital printing is taking its first steps in India. HP reports 15 industrial digital presses in India, including four s2000s for specialty applications. The 11 web presses are working in the full range of packaging applications including labels, flexible packaging, folding cartons, tubes and sleeves. The company has seen a five percent increase in impressions in its industrial business, with one of the major drivers being security applications. Reflecting the limited availability of pre-coated materials in India, some 70 percent of HP's local customers coat their own materials.

Xeikon also reported a lot of solid leads from the show, having sold its first two machines in India to Webtech.

On the digital pre-press side, EskoArtwork announced significant sales of full digital platemaking systems. A CDI Spark 4835 for flexo platemaking went to Zircon Industries, and AnyGraphics bought a CDI Spark 2120 to produce its rotary letterpress plates. Esko also supplied a second flexo CtP to the Padma Group in Bangladesh.

ENVIRONMENT AND EFFICIENCY TAKE CENTER STAGE

The Environment is beginning to make a mark on the labels industry in India. Christian Velasquez at Dow Corning told L&L many Indian laminators are requesting help in managing the transition to emulsion-based technologies and away from solvents. Velasquez also believes that filmic release liners could be succeed in India due to their easy recyclability. There are certainly enough Indian film manufacturers to support such a move.

Enhanced efficiency and quality control are becoming key requirements for Indian converters. This was reflected in the wide range of inspection systems displayed. Prati, represented by distributor Reifenhauser India, showcased a Sun TE330 servo slitter inspection rewinder sold to Wintek Flexo Prints, Bangalore – the fourth Prati machine bought by the company in the last 18 months.

BST Sayona showed a Labelspect G4 inspection rewinder fitted with a Shark inspection system. The machine was sold to Naryan Offset in Nagpur.

Creed Engineers announced the installation of an AB Graphic Digicon series 2 at Astron Packaging, while Zircon Technologies India confirmed an order at the show for an RSC inspection slitter-rewinder machine through Rotocontrol's Indian agent Weldon Celloplast.

The emphasis on quality control was also apparent from the success of Teknek at the show, which launched four new web cleaning systems machines suitable for webs from 150mm to 2,500mm wide.

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Labelexpo visitors have their questions answered

Globalization and its opportunities

MIKE FAIRLEY summarizes the Labelexpo India keynote presentation given by Ilkka Ylipoti of UPM Raflatac

There can be little doubt that globalization has brought many opportunities to the label industry. New markets, new solutions, new products, new value drivers – and of course new challenges. At the forefront of many of these new opportunities and challenges is India, where the most recent Labelexpo show was held.

On the first day of the show, Ilkka Ylipoti, senior vice president UPM Raflatac, Asia Pacific, gave a keynote presentation on 'Globalization and opportunities on a growth market'.

'Globalization', said Ylipoti, 'is an ongoing process by which regional economies, societies and cultures become integrated through a globe-spanning network of communication and execution. It opens up the market for foreign competition, with global brands taking market share from domestic ones, but at the same time may slow down local growth in some areas.'

By establishing production units the global players also introduce opportunities for local converters. Know-how and technology transfer take place, which helps the local industry to develop to international standards, 'But mere exploitation of a local cheap cost structure in not globalization.'

Ylipoti observed that the level of globalization varies considerably by industrial sector. 'Tobacco is one of the most global industries, with brand owners owning some 78 percent of foreign assets; for soap manufacturers the figure is 56 percent foreign assets; chemical 51 percent, etc, down to retailing with 26 percent.'

In terms of global per capita labelstock consumption, North America and Europe are the leaders, followed by South America and Asia Pacific, with Africa and India currently showing the lowest levels.

In India, Ylipoti said that out of a total population of 1.2 billion, prime grade pressure-sensitive labelstock volume

ILKKA Ylipoti delivers the keynote presentation

"In India, goods (and particularly food) are sold at “wet markets”, with prices subject to bargaining rather than being labeled with a fixed price. Similarly, poultry is sold alive, with no need today for packaging or labeling"

was around 250 million sq meters – a consumption level per capita of just 0.2 sq m. Even taking the 300 million people in India with western purchasing power, the per capita consumption of this group is still only around 0.8 sq m. That compares with some 14 sq m in North America.

Put simply, it is the structure of the retail business which explains the low levels of labelstock consumption in India – not wealth and purchasing power. ‘In India’, explained Ylipoti, ‘goods (and particularly food) are sold at “wet markets”, with prices subject to bargaining rather than being labeled with a fixed price. Similarly, poultry is sold alive, with no need today for packaging or labeling.’

The introduction of supermarkets is now beginning to change this picture, as they will increasingly require products to be processed, packaged and labeled, as well as requiring labels for logistics and distribution. ‘The major potential for PS label growth in India over the next few years is therefore in food, logistics and transport, and retail,’ said Ylipoti.

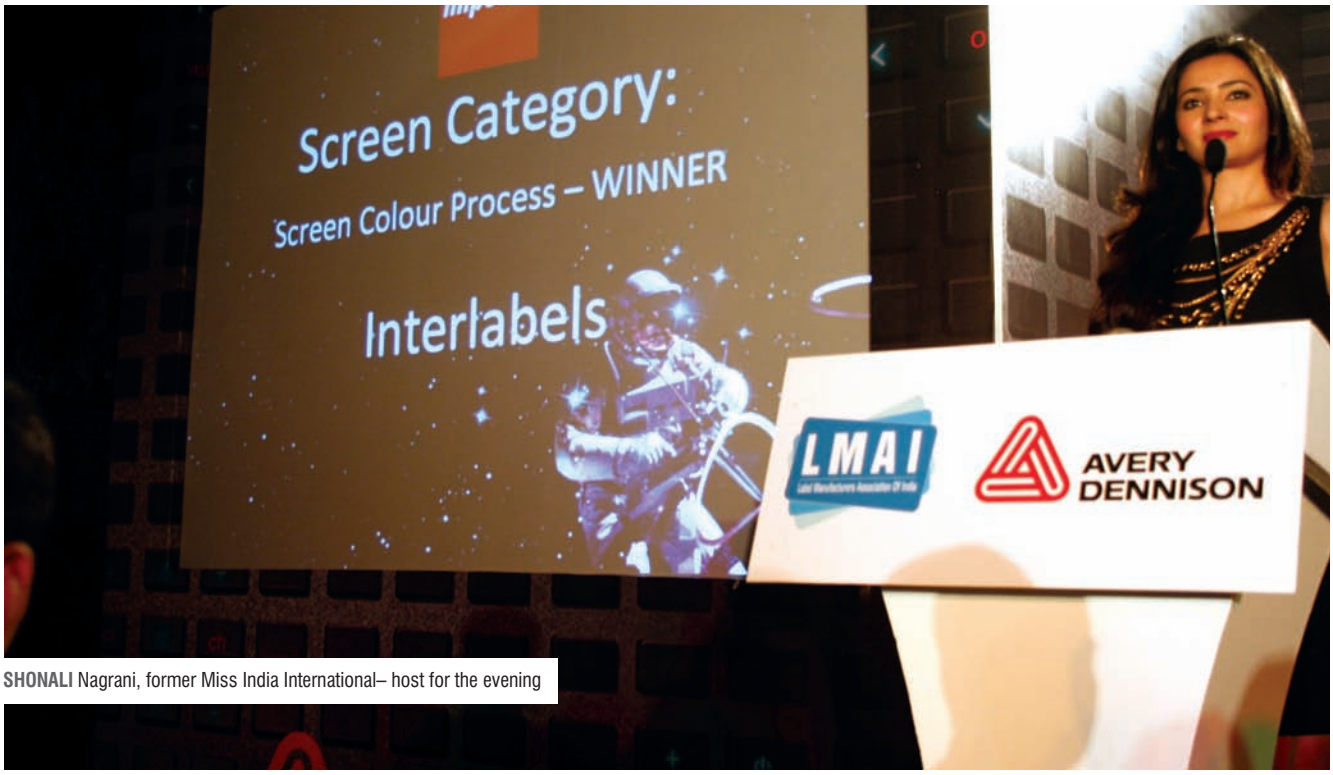
It is revealing to compare current levels of PS label usage per sector between Europe and India. In Europe food accounts for 29 percent of PS label useage against just 2 percent in India; Logistics and Transport account for 14 percent in Europe and 7.5 percent India. Retail accounts for 12.5 percent in Europe, and 13 percent in India.

Filmic labelstock growth in India also looks promising. Currently behind usage in many other markets at around 15 percent market share (compared to twice that in Thailand and Vietnam and around 27 percent in China), growth is expected to come from new applications in health and personal care, automotives, pharma, beverages, oil and chemicals and durable goods labeling – market applications which tend to lead to enhanced profitability for label converters.

UPM Raflatac sees brand owner environmental demands and new requirements for differentiation and branding as the key drivers for the future growth of the labels industry in Asia and India. Certainly major brands such as Unilever, P&G, Marks & Spencer, Johnson & Johnson and Walmart all have their own environmental and sustainability agendas which label and packaging suppliers will have to meet.

‘Environmental factors in the buying and sourcing process are likely to become as important as price in the future, especially in the more globalized businesses’, says Ylipoti. Such factors will include certified products, recyclability and compostability.

Ylipoti concluded by outlining UPM Raflatac’s ‘Think Label’ offering for the India label market. This includes an extensive paper and film labelstock portfolio and a focus on new thin materials, new liners and other innovative products and services.



SHONALI Nagrani, former Miss India International– host for the evening

Awarding excellence

THE CREAM OF INDIAN label converters were recognized by their peers at the Indian Label Awards ceremony. Andy Thomas reports

Organized jointly by the Indian Label Association (LMAI), the Tarsus Labels Group and Avery Dennison, the 2010 Indian Label Awards attracted a record 178 entries. The gala event took place during Labelexpo India in New Delhi in December.

LMAI president Vivek Kapoor introduced the awards, noting the high number of international presses coming into India and the double digit growth in end user label requirements. 'This is truly a take-off point for the Indian labels industry,' said Kapoor.

The independent judging panel consisted of Kiran Prayagi, Rajiv Dhar and Deepak Manchanda. In a widely applauded move, Vivek Kapoor elected not to enter his company's labels into the competition to avoid any suspicion of conflict of interest.

Anil Sharma, Avery Dennison's managing director materials South East Asia, said India is on the way to creating 'one of the world's great label markets', but stressed that end users need to be better educated in the benefits of pressure-sensitive labeling. Sharma highlighted the $50m investment Avery Dennison has made in its materials manufacturing plant at Pune, and announced a new distribution center in Bangalore for 2011.

Sharma finished by calling for the Indian Government to continue its tentative moves towards encouraging foreign direct investment (FDI) in the organized retail sector, saying this would generate 'great growth opportunities.'

During the evening, Mike Fairley was presented with an LMAI Lifetime Achievement award. He then presented World Label awards to AnyGraphics – its third such trophy - and to Wintek Flexo. The 2010 award winners are automatically entered into the next World Label awards competition.

WINNERS OF THE INDIAN LABEL AWARDS 2010

FLEXO CATEGORY

sponsor Omet

FLEXO LINE:
Winner: Pragati Flexo,
Runner up: Letra Graphics

FLEXO LINE & SCREEN TONE:
Winner: Webtech
Runner up: Maharashi Labels

FLEXO COLOR PROCESS:
Winner: Maharashi Labels
Runner up: Mudrika Labels

LETTERPRESS CATEGORY

- sponsors Orthotec/Label Planet

LETTERPRESS LINE:
Winner: AnyGraphics
Runner up: Sicon Packs

LETTERPRESS LINE & SCREEN TONE:
Winner: Kumar Labels
Runner up: Mudrika Labels

LETTERPRESS COLOR PROCESS:
Winner: AnyGraphics
Runner up: Mudrika Labels

SCREEN CATEGORY

sponsor Nilpeter

SCREEN LINE:
Winner: AnyGraphics,
Runner up: Webtech

SCREEN LINE & SCREEN TONE:
Winner: Maharashi Labels
Runner up: AnyGraphics

SCREEN COLOR PROCESS:
Winner: Interlabels:
Runner up: Interlabels

OFFSET CATEGORY

sponsor Rotatek/Creed Engineers

OFFSET LINE:
Winner: Veekay/Printman
Runner up: Ajanta Packaging

OFFSET LINE & SCREEN TONE:
Winner: Veekay/Printman
Runner up: Ajanta Packaging

ANYGRAPHICS wins its third World Label Association award. Label Guru Mike Fairley gives the award to company owner Kuldeep Goel, watched by his family and work colleagues

VIVEK Kapoor, LMAI president announces the awards ceremony

ROGER Pellow, MD Tarus Labels Group at event co-organizer Tarsus

THE LMAI committee celebrates a successful awards evening

HARVEER Sahni of Weldon Celloplast collects an award from Mike Fairley for being India's voice on the World Label Awards judging panel

OFFSET COLOR PROCESS:
Winner: Ajanta Packaging
Runner up: AnyGraphics

WINE/SPIRITS CATEGORY

sponsor Rotometrics

FLEXO WINE/SPIRITS:
Winner: Synergy Packaging
Joint runners up: Prabhakar Print Pack and Pragati Flexo

LETTERPRESS WINE/SPIRITS:
Winner: AnyGraphics
Runner up: Icon Prints

OFFSET FLEXO WINE/SPIRITS:
Winner: Ajanta Packaging

COSMETICS CATEGORY

sponsor UPM Raflatac

FLEXO COSMETICS:
Winner: Pragati Flexo
Runner up: Wintek Flexo

LETTERPRESS COSMETICS:
Winner: AnyGraphics
Runner up: Icon Prints

OFFSET COSMETICS:
Winner: Ajanta Packaging
Runner up: Veekay/Printman

MULTI-PROCESS CATEGORY

sponsor SMI Coated Products

COLOR PROCESS LINE:
Winner: Total Print Solution,
Runner up: Pragati Flexo

COLOR PROCESS LINE/ SCREEN/TONE:
Winner: Pragati Flexo
Runner up Wintek Flexo

COLOR PROCESS:
Winner: AnyGraphics
Runner up: Pragati Flexo

ANY PROCESS CATEGORY

sponsor Avery Dennison

COUPONS/TICKETS:
Winner and runner up: Syndicate Labels

TAGS:
Winner: AnyGraphics
Runner up: Sel-Jagat Printers

NON-PRESSURE SENSITIVE:
Winner: AnyGraphics
Runner up: Kumar Labels

DIGITAL LABELS CATEGORY

sponsor HP Indigo

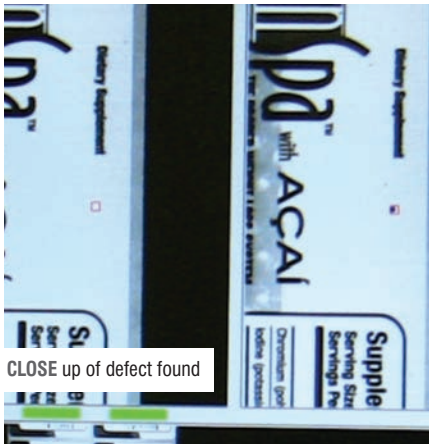
INNOVATION AWARD DEMONSTRATING USE OF IN-LINE PRINTING AND CONVERTING PROCEDURES:
Winner and runner up: Sel Jagat Printers

DIGITAL PRINTING:
Winner: Sgre Labels
Runner up: Interlabels

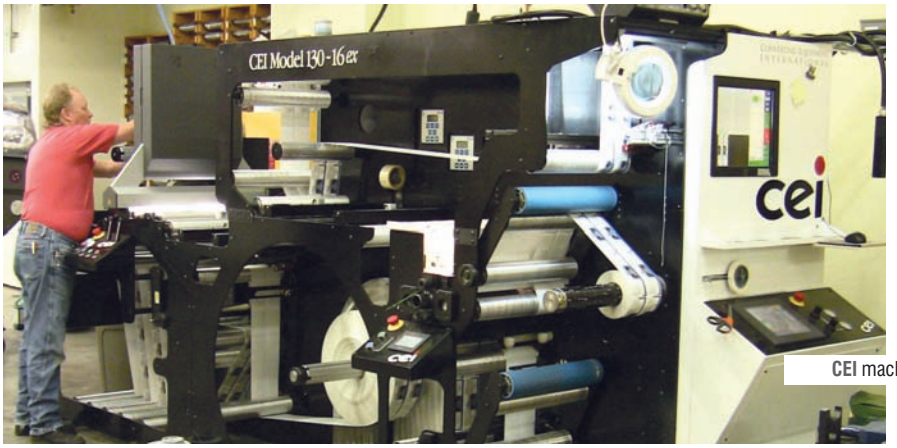
BOOKLETS:
Winner: Syndicate Labels
Runner up: Pragati Flexo

REPLACING a label

FINISHED rolls of labels



CLOSE up of defect found



CEI machine

Expanding into film

OVER 90 YEARS IN BUSINESS, US converter Ross Printing has diversified into film products with an investment in sophisticated inspection and rewinding equipment from CEI and BST

The year was 1917. Europe was at war. In May, the Germans began bombing London. US president Woodrow Wilson vowed to keep the US neutral – until British intelligence exposed a German plot to convince Mexico to go to war against the United States.

Also in 1917, the National Hockey League was formed, the Chicago White Sox baseball team won 100 games, and 'The Babe', Babe Ruth, pitched 35 complete games.... for the Boston Red Sox!

John Fitzgerald Kennedy was born in 1917 and the Dutch dancer Mata Hari, was executed for spying outside of Paris. And 1917 was the year George Ross founded Ross Printing in Spokane, Washington.

HISTORY

Now, 93 years later, his grandson, Alan Ross is the third generation to run this successful printing/label/converting business.

Ross Printing began as a letterpress commercial printer, with a machine they have to this day. In the early days, they produced business papers, newsletters, and gummed labels. George Ross' son, Stan, took over the business after World War II. Grandson Alan joined the firm in the mid 70's and remains general manager today.

When his son, Benjamin, joined the company in the early 1990's – the fourth generation to engage in the family business – Ross Printing was the oldest continuously owned printing enterprise in the state.

Alan Ross, general manager of Ross Printing, is the third of four generations of the Ross family engaged in the 93 year old business.

Ross Printing has never stood still. In the 70's, 80's and 90's they branched into premium commercial lithography, adding a 40" five color + coater Komori, a 20" six color Heidelberg Speedmaster and other finishing equipment, as they branched into legal and financial printing. In the 70's, they moved into flexography, and started producing pharmaceutical labels. Soon after, they added high resolution digital printing to their repertoire. Most recently, they have added film converting to the services they provide their customer base.

TODAY

Ross Printing continues to be proficient in all four printing processes and offers its customers a wide array of products and services, supplemented with die-cutting, embossing and other finishing services. Besides the letterpress and the commercial sheet offset presses, Ross has two HP Indigo roll to sheet digital presses, which produce a variety of custom products, primarily for customers in a radius of just a few hundred miles from Spokane.

The flexo operation is comprised of two Mark Andy presses – an all-UV 10" 2200 six color and a 17" 2200 servo,

ARMOR
MAKING THERMAL TRANSFER EASIER

Judicial publication at ARMOR's request in a court case against TTR EUROWORKS BV

Pursuant an inter partes judgment handed down in the first instance on 19 November 2010, the Third Division, Court Two of the Paris District Court (*Tribunal de Grande Instance*):

- HELD that there were no grounds to rule on the jurisdiction of the Court.

- NOTED that ARMOR has not made any claim with respect to trade mark AWR®470 no. 97695338 of which it is the owner.

- HELD that in using the ARMOR sign in the domain name www.armor-ttr.com as a link to redirect internet users to the site www.ttr.nl that it operates, TTR EUROWORKS BV (TTR) committed acts of infringement against the French ARMOR trade mark no. 1 257 344, the French ARMOR trade mark no. 97695346 and the ARMOR Community trade mark no. 005857917 of which ARMOR is the owner.

- HELD that in so doing, TTR EUROWORKS BV (TTR) also infringed ARMOR's trade name;

Consequently,

- PROHIBITED TTR EUROWORKS BV (TTR) from continuing such actions, under a coercive penalty of EUR 500 per offence recorded as from the notification of the present judgment.

- ORDERED TTR EUROWORKS BV (TTR) to pay ARMOR EUR 15,000 in damages to compensate the prejudice suffered as a result of the acts of infringement committed against it.

- ORDERED TTR EUROWORKS BV (TTR) to pay ARMOR EUR 5,000 in damages to compensate the prejudice suffered as a result of the acts of unfair competition committed against it.

- AUTHORISED the publication of the operative part of the present judgment in two journals or periodicals to be chosen by ARMOR at the expense of TTR EUROWORKS BV (TTR), without the cost of each publication exceeding EUR 3,500 exclusive of tax.

- ORDERED TTR EUROWORKS BV (TTR) to pay ARMOR EUR 3,500 under Article 700 of the French Civil Procedure Code.

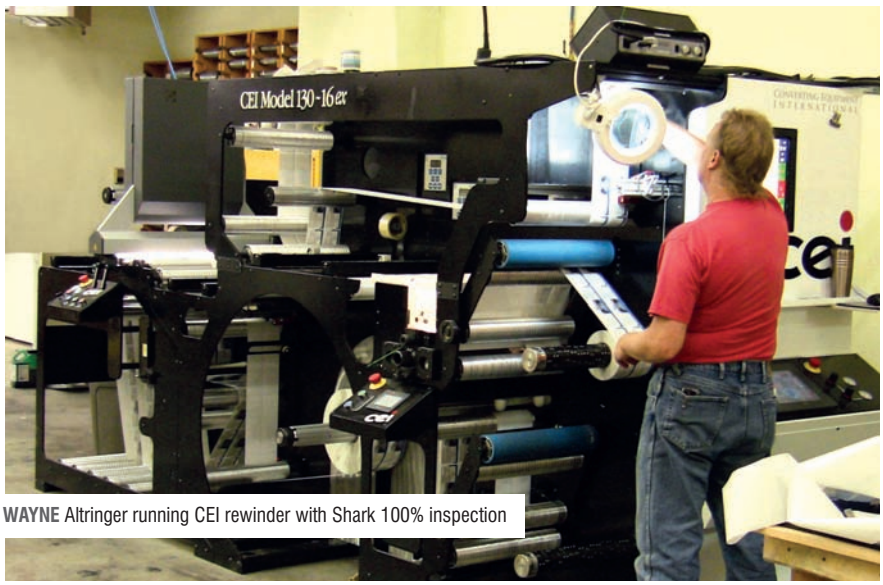
- DISMISSED all further or contrary claims by the parties.

- ORDERED TTR EUROWORKS BV (TTR) to pay the procedural fees, which shall include the costs of the report of 18 March 2009 and shall be collected in accordance with the provisions of Article 699 of the French Civil Procedure Code.

- ORDERED the immediate, provisional enforcement.

ARMOR S.A. FRANCE • 20, RUE CHEVREUL • BP 90508 • 44105 NANTES CEDEX 4 • TEL +33 (0)2 40 38 40 00
FAX +33 (0)2 40 38 40 18 • www.armor-tt.com / e-mail: salesTTR@armor-group.com

ARMOR



WAYNE Altringer running CEI rewinder with Shark 100% inspection

ALAN Ross, general manager

eight color, which is also all UV and water based. The flexo presses produce millions of patient inserts every year, and labels are shipped worldwide, including to Europe.

Over the last five years, Ross Printing has moved into packaging and pharmaceutical film products to meet the evolving needs of its customers and the wider market. The newer press was specifically purchased in 2009, says general manager Alan Ross, 'because we saw nothing but opportunity for a range of converted film products.'

Continued Alan, 'As we entered the film market – pouches, sleeves, shrink film – our goal was and remains, to be the premier supplier of film based packaging in the Northwest, that specializes in shorter runs.' The company is focused on runs of 10,000 to 1,000,000. Even though the overall economic climate for the past couple of years has not been great, Ross Printing has continued to grow as activity in non-traditional substrates emerges.

INSPECTION AND QUALITY

Just as Ross' printing business has changed and evolved over the years, so too have the inspection and quality control systems they use.

BST video systems on their presses are used to inspect the print as the jobs are being produced. Ross Printing says today's customers are more demanding than ever, so they strive to use technology at every possible juncture to keep on the leading edge of productivity and quality.

Along with the new Mark Andy press, Ross purchased a high speed slitter-rewinder from Converting Equipment International (CEI) in Lewiston, California, and a Shark 100% inspection system from BST.

Brian Seimears, flexo department manager at Ross Printing, says 'We did a lot of research before we purchased the CEI machine. We visited their shop and spoke to numerous customers.' Other factors were CEI's after-sales customer service, the overall dependability of their machines, and of course, features.

> "100% inspection is a requirement for Ross' pharmaceutical customers, and was the driving force behind the decision to put a Shark on the re-winder"

'We really like the features of the machine,' Seimears continued. 'It's being 100 percent servo, especially when we are doing film, was the biggest attraction. We run both film and pressure sensitive materials on it.

'Another big feature for us is the running speed. This machine is three times faster than other machines - it goes up to 1800 feet per minute! And because it has a slip differential, film runs without a hitch,' said Seimears. 'A nice tool on the machine lets us put numbers and other information on the back side of the web, which is needed for our pharmaceutical customers.'

During rewinding, the web is inspected with the BST Shark system. 100% inspection is a requirement for Ross' pharmaceutical customers, and was the driving force behind the decision to put a Shark on the re-winder. The Shark inspects 100 percent of the web, 100 percent of the time, and identifies all random and repeating defects, such as missing text, hickeys, register shift, dots or splash, streaks, and improper matrix removal on P/S stock.

Brian and his team spoke to users, visited machines and compared suppliers before selecting the Shark for the new re-winder. According to Seimears, 'Shark was found to be not only more affordable, but with better specs. And it has performed excellent. Our re-winder operator, Wayne Altringer, is extremely happy with the Shark and wouldn't have any other brand.'

'There is no comparison,' says Altringer. 'Shark is so much more user friendly and a lot easer to use. It has features the other system does not and it saves us time and money every day.'

The Shark system works with the CEI rewinder. When a defect is found, the web advances and automatically stops at the splice station for removal and replacement with a good label. Shark has an optional 'Pharma' mode which allows pharmaceutical suppliers to certify the quality and integrity of every label and roll.

Reflecting on the combination of high speed, high performance rewinder and 100% inspection, Alan Ross said 'The Shark on the CEI machine is a very powerful combination that allows us to provide the best possible product for our customers, every day, and I absolutely would recommend them both – for price, value and performance.'

THE FUTURE

As for the future, 'We are writing some big PO's, and I see nothing but the curve going north on film substrates,' said Ross. 'Given the impact of the recession on our more traditional products, we see a strong future in converted film products.' Maybe the expansion into film products will be the foundation to carry Ross to their 100 year anniversary in 2017, and beyond.

Consolidation and innovation drive inks market

ANDY THOMAS rounds up the latest technology and corporate developments in the global narrow web and packaging ink sectors

Last year marked further consolidation in the global narrow web inks market. Ink suppliers wrestled with shortages of key ingredients while meeting the challenges presented by new label materials and production techniques.

One of the biggest global consolidations was Siegwerk acquiring Environmental Inks and Coatings Corporation (EIC). EIC serves the packaging and label manufacturing industries in the US and Canada with water-based and energy curable inks and coatings. The newly formed organization will operate as 'Environmental Inks – a member of the Siegwerk group'.

Acquiring EIC is part of Siegwerk's strategy to boost its North American business in the narrow web sector in water-based flexo ink technology. Ansgar Nonn, president of Siegwerk NAFTA, explained: 'EIC is well positioned to capitalize on excellent growth prospects, particularly in the segment of self-adhesive labels. Taken together with Siegwerk's existing expertise in UV-based inks, the combined businesses will be the market leader in narrow web labels.'

Almost 80 percent of Siegwerk USA's 2009 revenues were realized in the flexible packaging segment, with converters operating wide-web presses using mainly solvent-based ink technology.

Siegwerk CEO Herbert Forker, confirmed: 'Over the past decades, EIC has built a strong reputation for environmentally friendly water-based inks for the growing and demanding narrow-web segment.'

Earlier in the year, Actega, a division of Altana, acquired Water Ink Technologies, forming Actega WIT. Actega WIT will focus on the production of water-based and UV flexo inks and coatings. Its operations will be combined with the Actega radcure division, which specializes in the production of UV specialty coatings and adhesives.

Last year also saw Toyo Ink Group form a new subsidiary, Toyo Ink Technologies, to acquire US group Fluid Ink Technology, which operates in Moorpark, California, and Plainfield, New Jersey. Fluid Ink manufactures flexographic, gravure and UV inks for wide web and narrow web converters of flexible packaging and labels.

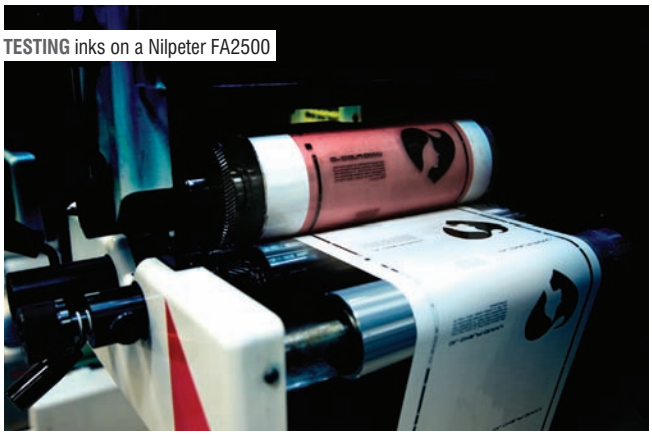
The acquisition strengthens the Toyo Ink Group's position in the US in line with its global expansion plans.

'The combination of the Toyo Ink Group and Fluid Ink Technology brings significant new synergies to the table,' said Jim Newkirk, president of Fluid Ink Technology. 'The strength of our combined product, service and technology portfolio will create tremendous growth opportunities and customer value for years to come. It's a win-win situation for all involved.'

PRICE RISES

These acquisitions have taken place against the background of a seemingly unstoppable rise in the price of ink's key raw materials. Most recently Flint Group announced a 22 percent price increase in Europe for narrow web inks containing the violet PV 23 pigment.

'During the past 12 months we have been fighting dramatic cost increases for this product of up to 70 percent. Further increases are expected,' explained Jens Zimmermann, director of global marketing and business development at Flint Group Packaging and Narrow Web. The main cost driver for Violet 23 is the reduced availability of the key ingredient Carbazole, which is mostly produced in China and India.



TESTING inks on a Nilpeter FA2500

Explaining price rises of up to 12 percent for metallic and pantone-matching inks in the North American market, Tony Renzi, Sun Chemical's VP of product management, liquid inks, North American Inks, said: 'In some cases, such as for TiO2, we have seen the global capacity reduced by as much as 10 percent in three years, demand driven up, and raw materials for manufacturing TiO2 become tight. These factors have resulted in an increase in this raw material pricing of 15 percent in 2010 with another eight percent increase announced (from) January 1, 2011. With the market's continued tightness, TiO2 is forecasted to increase another 6-8 percent quarterly in 2011.'

TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

A strong R&D pipeline has been maintained by suppliers despite these challenges.

Starting with new developments in metallic ink systems, Color-Logic has released a flexographic version of its Process Metallic Printing System. Originally available only for offset lithography, the system enables licensed flexographic printers to produce metallic effects on conventional flexographic presses running pressure sensitive stock, shrink wrap plastic, foils, folding cartons or ordinary paper.

The system has undergone extensive testing by several flexographic label printers and the first converters are now being licensed to use the technology on a fully commercial basis. The flexographic Color-Logic process has been tested on a range of presses including Gallus, Mark Andy, MPS Systems, Nilpeter and Omet. The proprietary software produces separations for use with either metallic ink or metallic substrates. Up to 250 Color-Logic metallic hues can be printed.

Actega WIT has meanwhile introduced a new water-based bright metallic ink designed to have extended shelf life and press stability as well as advanced trapping capabilities.

Low migration inks have been a particular focus for product development. Last month BASF claimed a major breakthrough with its Irgacure 270 cationic photoinitiators for packaging inks, said to combine fast UV curing with 'very low' emissions. BASF says the main applications for Irgacure 270 will be in low emission clear overprint varnishes, flexographic inks, screen inks and inkjet inks for printing food packaging.

Actega WIT recently launched its PharmaFlex Signature Series UV inks to address requirements for low odor and low migration.

Signature Series UV inks can be pumped or used in enclosed doctor blade assemblies and can be easily over-printed.

Sun Chemical has a new series of inks targeted at this sector. Solarflex SL UV Flexo is designed for low odor applications and Suncure FLM is a low migration UV offset ink. Flint Group Narrow Web launched its Flexocure Anchora low migration UV flexo ink at Labelexpo Americas, designed to meet stringent Swiss migration standards.

SUN Chemical inks in action

PACKAGING DIVERSITY

There is an increasing crossover between labels and packaging film converting, and suppliers have developed technologies for both sectors.

HyStar SpH is INX International's latest ink technology for package printing and is available in conventional and low

COLOR MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP

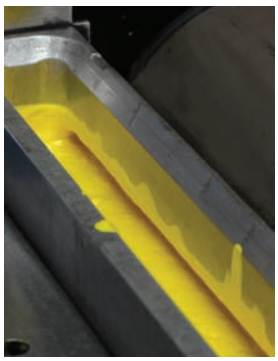
Following on from an announcement at Labelexpo Americas, EskoArtwork, Sun Chemical and GMG have rolled out a color management partnership which will allow accurate brand colors to be achieved without the expense of spot color press trials.

Under the system, EskoArtwork's Color Engine connects to Sun Chemical's SmartColour ink database and uses the spectral ink profile data to calculate spot color overprints. GMG will integrate the EskoArtwork technology to connect its ColorProof proofing solution to the SmartColour Engine (see illustration top p.72).

At any stage of the packaging pre-production process, from design to print, SmartColour ink profiles can be used to communicate color information more efficiently, preview spot inks on screen and produce color-accurate inkjet proofs.

SmartColour spot ink definitions assigned in a packaging job, including brand owner color definitions, will be automatically recognized by the GMG proofing solution. Production jobs stored electronically contain a reference to SmartColour data meaning that recurring jobs are processed quickly and consistently.

ONCE downloaded to the Color Engine inkbook, SmartColour inks are mapped on the designer inks to create a realistic preview of the job as it will appear printed on the chosen substrate



copper formulations. INX reports that as packaging converters have moved from 'workhorse' 165- and 180- lpi anilox rolls to a line screen in excess of 200 lpi, they have moved from INX's 'entry level' StarFlex to the new HyStar inks.

The Flint Group's Packaging and Narrow Web division reports a successful launch of its VarioLam AB solvent-based ink series for the packaging market. The product range is based on a nitrocellulose and chlorine-free polyurethane/acrylic binder system and is designed to meet the requirements of a broad range of high performance lamination applications.

'We were looking for an ink that maintained good bond strengths after vigorous boiling in hot water for 20 minutes,' explained Dave Wilson, production manager at Rockwell, Dundee, Scotland, one of Flint Group's first European customers to use VarioLam AB. 'We were particularly impressed by the excellent bond strengths they provided while showing good color strength and printability at the same time. In the past we were using PVB-based inks which whilst indeed giving good bond strengths, they also gave the normal associated flexo printing problems of poor color strength, poor printability and difficult wash-ups after use. The VarioLam inks seem to have overcome these issues.'

Variolam AB inks are also suitable for retort applications when used with matching pigments, lamination structures and adhesives. Trials have also been run replacing vinyl-based inks with VarioLam AB in triplex lamination work.

NILPETER FA2500 at FujiFilm-Sericol

INK NEWS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST INK TECHNOLOGY STORIES

GREEN GODDESS

As pressure grows on label converters to demonstrate their 'green' credentials, ink manufacturers are developing a range of 'sustainable' products. Flint Group's BioCure line of inks made of ten percent 'renewable ingredients', is the latest. Nazdar is developing water-based inks for re-useable bottles; the inks wash out in a caustic solution without harming the integrity of the paper label waste stream.

FEEL THE FORCE

Flint Group's Labelexpo announcements included the new Flexocure Force line of UV inks, which offer a lower viscosity and the ability to transfer more ink from anilox to plate. Flint has optimized the ink to work effectively with the HD (High Definition) flexo printing system, delivering high print densities, advanced pigment technology, with little foaming.

FUJIFILM'S NEW RANGE

Fujifilm Sericol has developed a UV flexo ink series for narrow web applications. The new line includes the 'ultra opaque' SuperNova White, a shrink sleeve ink, lightfast flexo ink, and a wide range of topcoats and new metallic and fluorescent inks.

SCREEN INK MATCHING

Sun Chemical has launched its NTC Vioroll Colours and whites series for rotary screen printers. Vioroll NTC SunMatch Blending Colors consist of nine mono-pigmented shades, together with blending white, black and mixing clear. Sun Chemical says this allows simulations of all Pantone colors. Vioroll NTC SunMatch Blending Colors can be applied directly onto roll label substrates, but are more commonly printed over the top of a first-down layer of NTC-W70 opaque white.

EXTENDED GAMUT FLEXO

Nazdar is focusing heavily on the color side of G7 (extended color gamut) printing, which is growing in popularity in the narrow web flexo world. It was recently added to the Flexographic Trade Association's FIRST program for standardization of the flexo printing process.

CAST & CURE

The Flint Group's partnership with Breit Technologies has brought cast and cure coatings into the company's portfolio. Cast & Cure is a decorative coating process that creates holographic, ultra high gloss, or matte finishes on select areas of a printed piece and is suitable for a wide variety of substrates.

SUN SHINES

Sun Chemical launched a wide range of new products at Labelexpo Americas which are now commercially available. These include Sunbeam ELM for converters moving to electron beam curing on offset presses; high opacity Plantinum White UV flexo ink; Suncure TPo UV offset and letterpress inks - particularly suited to converters using combination presses; and SunSpectro inks for flexo and water-based offset surface printing of shrink materials.

Film developments

ANDY THOMAS rounds up new products in the specialist films sector in the first part of an ongoing series on new substrate developments

AET Films has announced that it is now technically feasible and commercially viable to produce label films containing 10-20 percent recycled content utilizing post consumer waste. AET Films initiated its Recycled Source Program in 2006 to investigate how to incorporate recycled content into OPP film.

'RE PCR content films will reduce virgin polymer consumption, reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, promote social and environmental objectives and increase demand for consumer recycling,' says Nick Levandusky at AET. 'It also distinguishes a company and its brands from competitors and satisfies consumer interest in "environmentally friendly" products.'

Turning to the specialist aerospace, electrical and electronics markets, Polyonics has developed a new line of flame retardant label materials called Flameguard. XF-603 is a 1 mil; flame retardant polyimide material - XF-609 is the 2 mil version - designed to meet the UL94 VTM-0 flame retardant standard. The film uses Polyonics' halogen free, flame retardant technology that provides significant 'self-extinguishing' performance. XF-604 is a 2 mil, flame retardant polyester material designed to meet the UL94 VTM-1 flame retardant standard.

'Electronic device manufacturers are being asked by their customers to design new products with materials that will not propagate a flame in the case of a fire,' notes Tom Rogers, marketing director at Polyonics. 'This unique label material is designed to support this initiative.'

Polyonics has also enhanced the static dissipative properties of its Tribogard materials.

Security films are a fast growing market, and Spinnaker Coating has now announced new tamper evident grades. SafeTE is a polyolefin film which offers immediate delamination when paired with an aggressive adhesive. Roll product manager, Julie Billing comments 'It is considerably more cost effective than destructible vinyl, does not require tamper slits, and provides excellent flexo, letterpress, and thermal transfer printing for bar coding, seals, and other security features.' The closely related SafeTE Cover-up TC Film can additionally be used to cover-up errors, or just to increase opacity.

For promotional labeling applications, NAStar Inc has introduced three new products. SnapOFFer is a creative way for converters to create on-pack coupons and promotions. The SnapOFFer can be used as a repositionable note, or be snapped at the perforation to use as a cash- register friendly coupon, game piece, or membership card. The construction is designed to allow converters to laminate and perforate the label at the one inch pattern coated adhesive strip. The promotion can be auto-applied to a publication or product and removed cleanly after a promotion ends.

NAStar has also developed a new way to create hinge labels, extended content labels, or label-on-label products. Converters simply apply NAStar's water-based bonding solution to any base material and laminate linerless temporary adhesive pressure sensitive material on top to double or triple the information on a label without increasing its size.

NAStar's ValuOFFER, is a new label-on-label construction to be used as a coupon, on pack promotion, or repositionable note. The linerless top ply is designed to have die cut, mini-coupon stickers for use as a coupon or reminder. The bottom ply is a repositionable label that can be removed and reapplied as a ready reference.

Treofan has introduced a new wrap-around label (WAL) film, Décor LFD. In terms of optics and print performance this is an improved version of the established transparent wraparound label grade LTD. Significant improvements of haze and gloss have been achieved, says the company, and the new surface characteristics will allow customers to achieve higher print speeds whilst retaining the current quality of graphics and print.

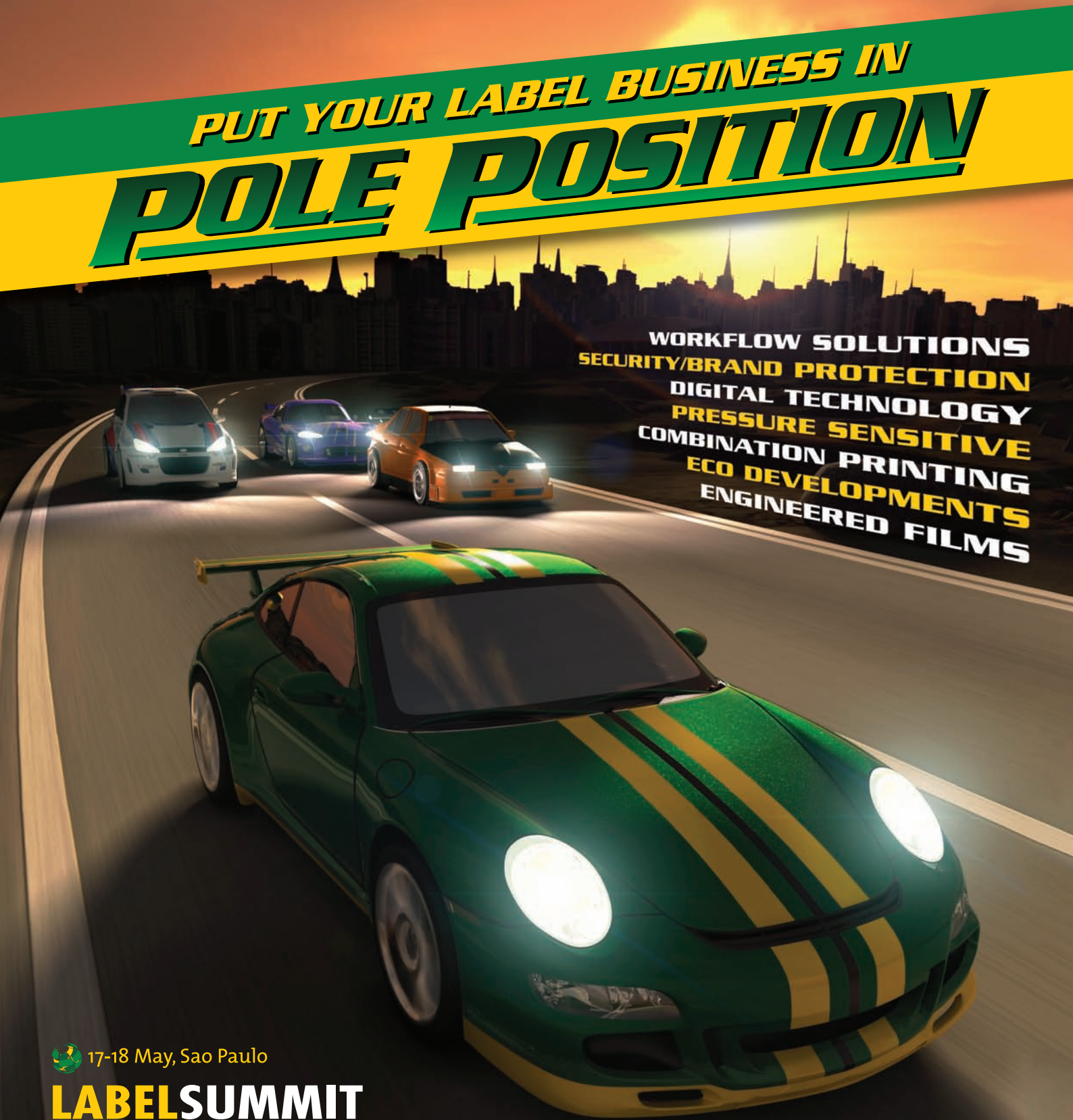
With initial trials on specific ink and print processes it was possible to obtain increases in print speed by more then 40 percent, says Treofan.

To further improve conversion efficiency, Treofan can supply this film on rolls with outer diameters up to 1000 mm, reducing changeover wastage and optimising film usage.

Valeron Strength Films is reporting a migration from complex laminations and even aluminum tags to its high strength Valeron films. Key application areas include labels and tags for healthcare, transportation, industrial and construction-related applications.

The Valeron material's high initiated tear resistance is achieved through a cross lamination process and a 6.5 mil Valeron film typically has better tear resistance and overall strength than a 9 mil commodity PE film. The films are claimed stronger than spun bonded products of equal caliper and provide the additional benefit of a smooth print surface.

PUT YOUR LABEL BUSINESS IN POLE POSITION



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L-R: Gonzalo Alvardo, Promotora y Comercial San Vicente; Joao Adao, Avery Dennison; Pia Barriga, Promotora y Comercial San Vicente; and Alexander Mercon, HP Indigo

Avery Dennison hosts wine label workshops

AVERY DENNISON recently hosted wine label workshops for converters, designers and wineries in Mendoza, Argentina, and Santiago, Chile. James Quirk reports

Avery Dennison recently hosted a series of workshops in Mendoza, Argentina, and Santiago, Chile, dedicated to global trends and innovation in wine labeling.

The events held separate sessions for label converters and for wineries and designers. The workshop in Mendoza, Argentina's leading wine producing region, welcomed 69 end users and graphic designers and 26 label printers; in Santiago, the capital of Chile, 24 vineyards and designers and 24 converters were in attendance.

The events in both countries were opened by presentations about global wine label trends from Monica Gross and Fabien Bourgies of Avery Dennison Europe.

Veronica Jardel, business development manager, wines, for Avery Dennison South America, outlined the company's sustainability objectives, which include reducing waste sent to landfill and converting it into prime material used in the construction, paper and packaging industries. The company has already reduced the amount of its waste sent to landfill by 340 tons a month.

In Mendoza, Fernando Diaz, safety coordinator at Avery Dennison's Argentine manufacturing facility in San Luis, spoke about the plant's liner recycling program alongside Luis Pestchanker of Ecochem, a specialist in waste treatment and recuperation. The pilot project, which sees Avery Dennison recycle its customers' matrix waste, was launched for wineries towards the end of 2010; it will be opened to converters in March of this year.

Sergio Lucero, quality manager at winery Bodega Norton, spoke about integrated label converting requirements. Alexander Mercon of HP Indigo then gave a presentation about the versatility of digital printing technology. Wine packaging studies conducted by graphic design consultancies Boldrini & Ficcardi and Zemma & Moreno were also presented.

In Santiago, Chile, Jorge Sandoval, development sub-manager at vineyard Viña San Pedro Tarapacá, spoke about the supply chain and the journey from material to wine label. A session on FSC certification was presided over by Juan Linares, regional quality manager, and Marisol Jorquera, technical sales support, both of Avery Dennison Chile.

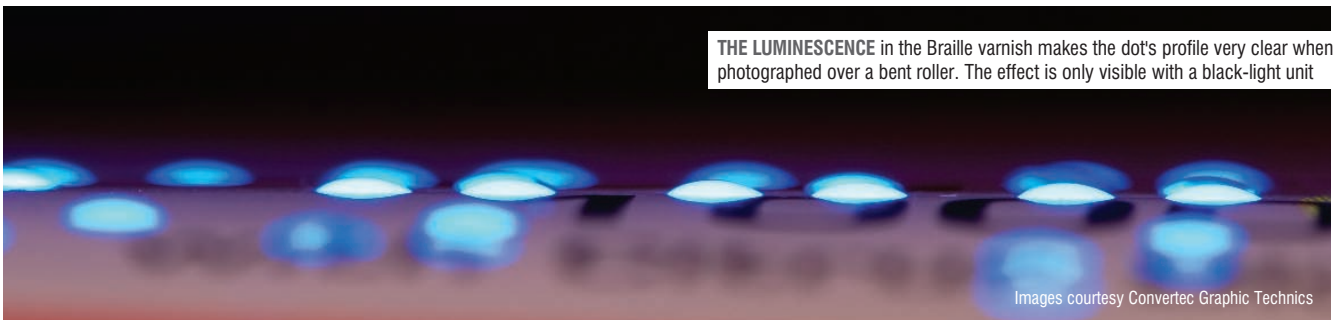
Juan Enrique Gonzalez of Krones Surtalina and Alexander Mercon of HP provided technical presentations on label applicators and digital printing respectively.

One attendee said of the event: 'As a designer, it is always good to receive news and demonstrations about new lines of materials for wine labeling.'

'The wine segment is one of the most important to Avery Dennison around the world,' said Joao Adao, general manager for Avery Dennison, Roll Materials in Spanish-speaking South America. 'We are constantly seeking to share information between different regions to identify new trends and to bring innovative materials to the market.'

THE EVENTS included separate sessions for label converters and for wineries and designers

Raising the



THE LUMINESCENCE in the Braille varnish makes the dot's profile very clear when photographed over a bent roller. The effect is only visible with a black-light unit

Images courtesy Convertec Graphic Technics

image

BARRY HUNT suggests changes in Braille usage for pharmaceutical products may have wider consequences

Converters supplying the pharmaceutical and healthcare industries are used to working within legally binding guidelines. Sometimes changes or extensions to existing legislation may involve a revamp of production methods. In a few instances they may have implications for the industry beyond the initial application. This could be the case with the recent changes to the European Union's legislation in respect of using printed or embossed Braille to allow blind or partially-sighted people to identify medicine names and dosages. Changes effective from October 2010 now include a uniform representation of Braille alphabetical characters, including a standard height. They apply to small folded cartons, labels, leaflets, extended text labels and booklet labels for pharmaceutical products.

The EU amendments had been flagged up well in advance, and encouraged some specialist suppliers to adopt new approaches to Braille printing. Other companies have introduced new types of off-line inspection technologies, as well as electronic proof-reading software and Braille verification tools for use by pharmaceutical companies. The influence of the EU's pharmaceutical legislation is not necessarily restricted to the European member states. In North America, for example, the voluntary Can-Am Braille set of guidelines and recommendations resemble those used in Europe.

Of course, this type of technology is also used for producing labels or packaging that warn blind people about potential hazards, such as household bleaches. Similar tactile labels are also found on certain grocery products to mark 'best-before' dates, and are used to signify alcoholic strength on labels for wines and spirits. One area of potential growth is the Braille labeling of veterinarian products.

MARKING TECHNIQUES

Braille embossing using male and female dies remains the prime method of identifying folding cartons, usually combined with cutting and creasing as part of a sheet-fed process. Developments include the AccuBraille embosser from Bobst for high volume applications, which moves the process further down the production line to the folder-gluer. Similarly, Cava UK offers the servo-driven RotoBraille system, which positions the embossing plates accurately across the carton blank. It can apply Braille embossing on one to four panels, as required, with precise control over the dot height at full folder-gluer speed. Available as an OEM or retrofit, Cava says the system offers a cost effective alternative to buying new converting equipment.

Carton printers often use micrometer calipers to measure the tactile quality of embossed Braille dots. Machine-vision inspection systems potentially offer greater accuracy and take less time. An example is the DotScan from in-situ, a Munich-based firm, which uses a 'shape-from-shading' technique to evaluate Braille dot patterns. The formation of each Braille dot is measured by analyzing gradual shading variations across captured gray-level images. Four blue LED lamps illuminate the flattened sample sheets in the DotScan unit from four directions to create 3-D shapes of a raised dot. In-situ also supplies a PDF reader to ensure the accuracy of Braille content at the pre-press stage.

When it comes to printed Braille, the usual method is to use rotary screen printing as a narrow web combination process. Screen is ideal for laying down thick layers of ink or a colorless varnish in a single pass to form the raised dots within precise limits, before 'fixing' them with UV curing. One well proven application is for tactile warning labels printed on a clear filmic labelstock for free positioning on a pre-printed primary label, booklet or pack. This method does not impair the readability of the underlying graphics or text by sighted people. The two principal rotary screen suppliers offer media grades intended for printing Braille: Stork Prints with its RSI print units and RotaMesh nickel screens, and Gallus's Rotascreen units and Screeny plates. A small-run alternative is flat screen printing on slower stop-start web-fed presses.

THE INKJET EFFECT

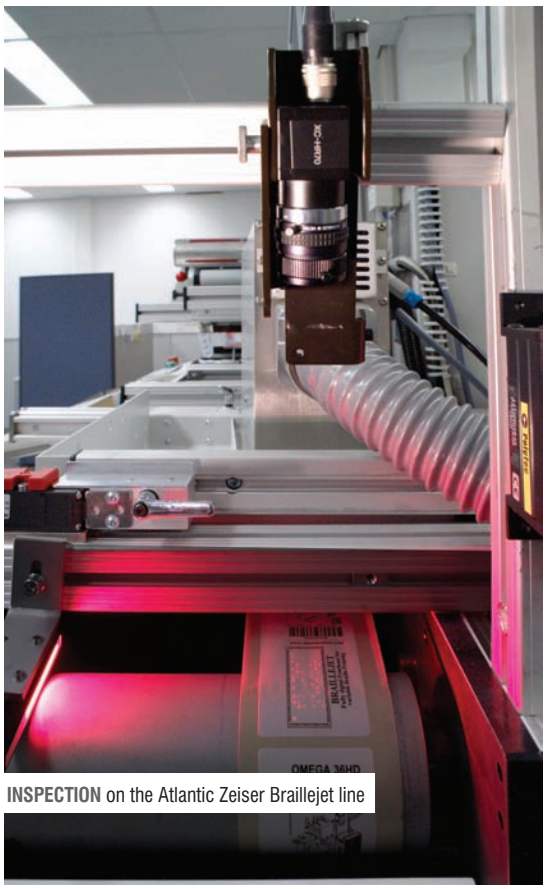
The development of digital inkjet as a Braille printing technique is a direct effect of the legislation mentioned earlier. The pharmaceutical industry already uses this non-impact process as

CLOSE UP of the digital Braille printed dots. Height is 0.2mm as required by European standards

part of its manufacturing logistics. In a wider context, converters are becoming more familiar with the technology's finer points within the short-run digital printing scene. Flexibility is a major benefit since inkjet integrates well with most web-fed presses or off-line platforms, including booklet label lines and overprint/inspection machines.

This applies to the current examples of Braille inkjet, although the printheads and software-based controllers differ from inkjet's conventional drop-on-demand, piezoelectric techniques. Printing raised dots with a clear varnish introduces several issues in respect of viscosity and surface tension levels. This in turn affects ink flow from the nozzles, which must deposit the right drop sizes at a realistic printing speed. One answer is to generate drops of pressurized ink using a form of microvalve or mechanical valve technology of the type used for low resolution, low frequency carton printing.

For example, the printheads for Atlantic Zeiser's Braillejet system use microvalve technology developed by its technology partner Gyger. They print two lines of Braille characters simultaneously at up to 36 m/min (118 ft min). Up to eight Braillejet modules (or any conventional printheads) are automatically controlled and monitored using an Alis-Jet Controller from Nikka Research. On-screen simulation of printer fonts includes Braille dot spacing in different orientations. UV curing is via an air-cooled Sensecure UV curing module. Braillejet can also include BrailleVision, an in-line camera control system which incorporates specially calibrated optical camera filters and adjustable illumination. A monitor displays the camera's software settings and Braille characters. Both units can form part of third-party roll-fed or sheet-fed modular platforms, as recently demonstrated by Prati.



INSPECTION on the Atlantic Zeiser Braillejet line

Packages could also include AZ's Omega 36 HD inkjet encoding units. Interestingly, they were among the first to employ LED-based curing in the form of the company's Smartcure ink curing system. Low energy and long life LED lamps are available on a few single-pass inkjet platforms, but the present level of curing performance is generally considered unsuitable for printed Braille. An exception is Roland DG's VersaUV LEC-330. The 29-inch wide (762mm) roll-fed inkjet printer and cutter lays down clear and white ink, as well as CMYK, using LED-cured ECO-UV coatings. The range of textured finishes and special effects includes Braille, obtained with multiple passes.

An interesting example of dedicated inkjet technology is the BrailleMaker One from Convertec Graphic Technics in Sweden. It first appeared at Labelexpo in 2007 billed as a stand-alone digital Braille printer for pharma labels, leaflets and booklets. The latest Version 4 has upgraded software that meets the new EU directive. It prints at up to 35 m/min and comes in widths of 150mm and 335mm.

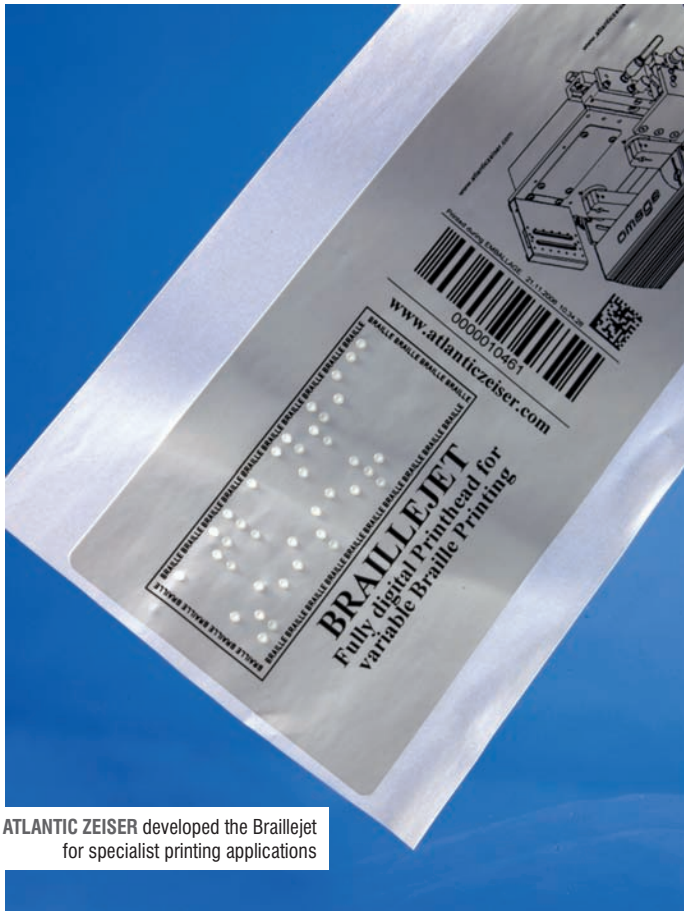
WHAT IS A BRAILLE CHARACTER SET?

Louis Braille, a blind Frenchman, devised the Braille system in 1821. Embossed or printed raised dots are arranged in a basic grid of two columns of three dots each to form character sets for reading and writing. This simple but effective form of digital writing makes it possible to represent up to 64 alphanumeric characters and other symbols. Some parts of character sets are common between countries, whereas other parts differ; for example between Latin Braille alphabets and accented letters and the versions used in Japan, China and other Asian countries.

The guidelines on Braille requirements for pharmaceutical labeling and packaging recommend using an alphabet system conforming to the Marburg Medium font. Designers must ensure the chosen Braille character set is appropriate for the country concerned and packaging suppliers must check all Braille artwork for accuracy and relevance to comply with the procedures of international drugs authorization bodies. With multilingual packs, the correct character sets should be included and clearly identified in the artwork.

The company says it has 20-plus installations in Europe and Canada including the pharma label divisions of CCL, Reynders Etiketten, Chesapeake, New Era, and Schfer-etiketten. Peter Nobelius, managing director, said interest is coming from other sectors: 'We talked recently at a trade show with a label producer in Kenya who actually had a demand to produce Braille on labels for canned green beans. So the interest is increasing from all kinds of areas and the legislation will eventually affect us all in the label world.'

Off-line operation increases the machine's flexibility and set-up, says Nobelius. 'Braille printing requires a constant machine speed to ensure uniform-sized dots. Constant web tension is also vital to avoid web stretching and displaced dots. In-line modular presses tend to require 12 printheads or more on



ATLANTIC ZEISER developed the Braillejet for specialist printing applications

LUMINESCENCE pigmented varnish for increased visibility

a 335mm wide press with four labels across, whereas six to eight printheads are normal on a corresponding off-line unit.' He adds that users can mix luminescence pigments into the clear varnish to help with inspection.

The latest development incorporates a BrailleMaker One into an automatic label line. This was developed for a Danish pharmaceutical label printer to process large volumes of short-run jobs with overnight turnarounds. The line includes an EFI Jetrion 4830 CMYK inkjet press, working in tandem with a Spartanics dual-beam laser cutter with multiple unwinds and rewinds. A customized FleyeVision camera-based system from ABG International verifies the Braille printing. A barcode scanner is included to differentiate individual jobs produced as a single master roll. (A full description of this installation will appear in the next edition of L&L).

Convertec offers a cost calculation spreadsheet that compares an off-line BrailleMaker One with a Stork Prints RSI rotary screen module mounted on a flexo press. It involves 25 data points covering machine operation costs, job/run lengths, set-up and changeover times. An order for 25,000 labels, printed three across the web at a top speed of 32 m/minute, or 104 ft/min, would cost 295 euros (US$390) using a BrailleMaker One unit and 1,006 euros (US$ 1,329) for screen-printed Braille, according to Convertec's calculations.

FAULT-FREE PRODUCTION

Achieving zero-defect production through 100 percent web inspection is a vital component of pharmaceutical label production. These systems usually employ three-chip color line cameras to scan a web's entire width line by line, rather than area scanning to 'sample' images as with conventional video web viewing. Inspecting raised dots formed by transparent varnishes in real time demands a different approach. The main criteria is verifying dot positions and determining accurate relief height. Nikka Research recently introduced a dedicated Braille module for its Alis-L2 system to decode, verify and check the quality of raised images. It supplements Nikka's existing luminescent-based system for decoding and inspecting screen-printed Braille in multiple rows. AVT also offers a Braille inspection module as part of the PrintVision/ Helios UV series.

ABG sales director Tony Bell says the company has tried several inspection methods to check the correct positioning of Braille dots on its FleyeVision: 'They all have worked to varying degrees of satisfaction, but the chosen method involves using white light illumination. Basically, each dot forms a shadow. Someone has likened the effect to a person standing up in a cinema and seeing their head on the screen.' Comparing inkjet to rotary screen for relief printing, Bell notes that screen can introduce air bubbles in the dot because of the agitation of the ink in the rotary screen head. Static may also cause mis-shaped dots.

"Besides warning labels, anti-counterfeiting and other security-related applications are technically feasible given the long-standing availability of security inks and coatings. We can also expect further improvements to Braille printing software, perhaps with a variable data input"

EyeC from Hamburg offers a Braille inspection option for its off-line Proofiler, which gives pre-press file-to-file comparisons for converters and their customers. Tactile height, contents errors and other flaws on embossed or printed cartons and labels are inspected from the front side, rather than the back. The Braille characters are also decoded and displayed on a monitor.

In conclusion, it is unlikely we will see the demise of rotary screen printing for Braille and similar tactile printing. The use of embossing will also remain a mainstay of carton production, while further developments for printed matter is entirely possible. The progress being made with inkjet printing of Braille dots and other raised images does, however, represent a significant technical step. Besides warning labels, anti-counterfeiting and other security-related applications are technically feasible given the long-standing availability of security inks and coatings. We can expect further improvements to Braille printing software, perhaps with a variable data input. The leading suppliers of drop-on-demand inkjet technology have yet to become seriously involved, but anything is possible in this fast-moving world.

L-R: Gonzalo Tagliabue and Sergio Perez Camps of UpSoftware Argentina

Software success in South America

UPSOFTWARE Argentina is experiencing an increase in sales amidst changing attitudes towards workflow software in Latin America. James Quirk reports

In a region where workflow software historically has had little presence, UpSoftware Argentina is experiencing increasing success with a system that appeals to multinational enterprises and smaller family-run print shops alike.

The Buenos Aires-based company has installed over 50 of its SisPro workflow systems in eight countries around Latin America since its foundation in 2006. The bulk of its clients are in its local market of Argentina, with other customers in Mexico, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay and Brazil.

If workflow systems from the industry's leading international suppliers are increasingly all-encompassing and complex, UpSoftware Argentina's SisPro returns to the core principles of the idea – collection of useful data, simple presentation and effective analysis.

The effectiveness of the system with regards to these core competencies is reflected in an impressive installation base. It counts many of Argentina's leading label printers among its customers, including Artes Gráficas Modernas, one of the region's largest integrated converters, and Autopack, an advanced self-adhesive label printer serving high-end brands in the food, cosmetics and pharmaceutical industries. Multilabel has the system installed in its facilities in Argentina and Brazil, while Impresores, a sheetfed offset converter which prints the labels for Quilmes, the country's most popular beer brand, is another user. Among its international clients is a leading Mexican converter which has the system linked to some 20 machines.

UpSoftware Argentina also counts many smaller print shops among its customers, and sales director Gonzalo Tagliabue believes previously sceptical attitudes towards software are changing. 'Historically, there has been little use of software in Latin America. There's a view that it is an expense as opposed to an investment. But as the generations change, so do attitudes. Often it is much easier to sell to the son than the father.'

INFORMATION EXCHANGE

UpSoftware Argentina's system contains two applications, one of which facilitates the programming of production (SisPro) and the other which controls production (SisPro Terminal). The two systems are linked, allowing information exchange between them. SisPro also connects directly to a company's existing database and can automatically extract data from the scheduled jobs and portray tasks in the form of bars in a Gantt chart.

SISPRO window

SisPro allows the user to track visually the use of different resources, such as machines and labor, in order to maximize efficiency when planning work schedules. The user can follow the progress of each task in real time and determine exactly how long each job will take. The system allows the user to visualize several days or even months of production; modify the printing schedule quickly and easily; and share information between different departments, such as sales, production and logistics.

Data entered into the system is processed and transformed into useful information displayed in reports that can be printed, emailed or exported in different formats. Data can be filtered in different ways (by sector, task, job number etc) in order to obtain the desired information.

For added security, SisPro and SisPro Terminal have levels of access that can be customized for each user. In addition to limiting access to menus and functions, the system can restrict access to specific tasks, sectors and functions within production. A mobile phone application and wireless network allows access by authorized users when outside of the factory.

'It's a very visual system which brings everything and everyone in production together,' says Tagliabue. 'Graphics clearly show how long a machine is busy for, and when it is free for another job. It is also highly flexible: it can be tailored to each machine or cover them all.

'The system shows you when decisions need to be made. The figures and analysis can justify an investment that might not have been thought necessary. After a few months of use, very often a client will be shown where efficiencies can be made. For a company that uses the system well, it is a gift. It basically becomes free after a short time of use.'

Tagliabue cites the example of Buenos Aires-based Impresores. 'It's an enormous company, with fleets of Heidelberg sheetfed presses. They had a problem with paper sometimes being delayed in getting to a machine. The SisPro system saves them around half an hour each day in this area, and if you times that by weeks and months, serious time and cost savings can be achieved.'

THE SISPRO MOBILE PHONE APP allows monitoring when away from the plant

INCREASING REACH

In 1998, Sergio Perez Camps, co-founder of UpSoftware Argentina and Tagliabue's business partner, was approached by a local printer which was seeking automation for processes such as budgets and billing. He began development and within three years had secured orders from Artes Gráficas Modernas and Impresores. In 2005, Gonzalo Tagliabue joined and the pair officially founded the company shortly afterwards.

The system is updated every 3-4 months, often with suggestions from clients. One customer wanted jobs that had missed their delivery date to be flagged up, a feature that has now been incorporated. A new touch screen interface is currently under development, which will offer additional information and ease of use to the operator.

Tagliabue says that the company is now actively seeking distributors in different parts of the world. Negotiations are currently under way with a company in Spain, which will provide first entry into the European market. Mexico, which outside Argentina has the highest number of SisPro users, is a key focus. Good leads were established in the country when UpSoftware made its Labelexpo debut in Chicago last year. The company focused purely on the event's high number of visitors from Mexico and the rest of Latin America.

Proimplas, an Argentina-based supplier of consumables for the plastics industry, has already been appointed as a distributor and has helped the system reach a new market. Currently available in Spanish, English, Portuguese and Italian, the system's language file can be extracted and translated and can therefore be used in any part of the world.

HAPPY CUSTOMERS

Two leading Argentine converters which use UpSoftware's SisPro system are Autopack and Multilabel.

Autopack, a self-adhesive label printer serving the food, cosmetics and pharmaceutical industries, installed the system in 2007 and has it connected to four printing presses. Production manager Jorge Almaric cites control of production as the key benefit brought by the system. 'We have been able identify the problems causing a machine to stop, whether they be mechanical idiosyncrasies or issues with the press,' he says. 'By then acting on this information and resolving the problems, we have improved our productivity.'

Multilabel installed the SisPro system five years ago in its plants in Buenos Aires and Brazil. Company president Luis Maria Garcia says that the system has been integrated into all areas of Multilabel's business, including budgeting, sales and job programming. 'All printing machines are connected to the system, as are the sales and pre-press departments, which feed into the system information about job preparation and material purchasing,' he says.

'It has helped us with our job programming by allowing us to make urgent changes without having to start from scratch. It allows us to know the actual state of a given job at a given time. The graphics help us to make crucial decisions about how to get the most out of machines and reduce downtime. It allows us to know exactly the production cost of each order, in terms of the amount of machine time it requires, the speeds of the presses, changeover times, and a great deal of data that was previously estimated or registered manually.

'Thanks to all production being digitalized and controlled, we have been able to detect weaknesses and failings in our processes which were making us less competitive. By making adjustments and resolving these issues, we have received benefits that effectively mean the system pays for itself.

'SisPro also has the flexibility to be able to attach itself to or integrate itself with the company's other management systems, which makes it an important work tool. We are very happy, not only with the system itself, but also with the post-sales service with which we are provided.'

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Brazil Summit to debut live technology demos

L&L'S Latin America editor James Quirk previews the Brazil Label Summit conference program and new features on the show floor

Label Summit Latin America returns to Sao Paulo, Brazil, on May 17-18 2011 at the Hotel Transamerica, with a new format that will see live machinery demonstrations take place for the first time.

Visitors to the two-day conference and table-top exhibition, the fourth summit organized by the Labelexpo Global Series in Brazil, will be treated to live demos of advanced printing and converting equipment in the exhibition hall. The event's conference program will host leading converters, suppliers and associations from throughout Latin America, as well as Europe and the USA.

The first day of the event will be opened with an overview of current label trends in Brazil and the wider global industry. Technical sessions dedicated to labeling materials, inks and workflow will bring together panels of leading industry suppliers, while a further session will discuss security and brand protection.

A business management stream will see presentations on partnerships and knowledge sharing in the global industry followed by improving efficiency and reducing waste. A technology stream will cover intelligent and interactive labels and digital printing.

Day two opens with a panel of brand owners discussing end-user requirements, followed by a session dedicated to environmental sustainability. A panel session will then bring together a selection of leading converters from throughout Latin America and Europe, who will discuss management and investment strategies.

The business management stream will focus on opportunities in the growing market of flexible packaging, while the technology stream will take an in-depth look at management information systems (MIS). The day will end with a panel session made up of editors from the industry's trade press, reviewing key technology developments and offering a preview of Labelexpo Europe 2011.

A number of leading associations have confirmed their participation in the summit's conference program, including Abiea (Brazil), Conlatingraf (Latin America), TLMI (USA) and Finat (Europe). Brazilian label converters Baumgarten, Mack Color and Novelprint and Peru-based Kuresa are also among those taking part, as well as Spanish converter and Finat-member Germark, whose CEO Iban Cid was a previous president of the association. Brazilian consultancy Asterisco will be present, while the event's technical sessions will count on the participation of leading industry suppliers for each technology area, including Agfa, Ahlstrom, AVT, Colacril, EFI, EFI Radius, EskoArtwork, HP Indigo, Kodak, Martin Automatic, Nilpeter, Ritrama, UPM Raflatac and Xeikon.

The previous edition of Label Summit Latin America, held last year in Mexico City, hosted 708 visitors, the highest number of attendees in the event's history. Its previous outing in Brazil, in 2007, welcomed 532 visitors.

For more information about Label Summit Latin America, including conference speakers and exhibitors, visit *http://www.labelsummit.com/brazil.*

LABELS for SABMiller's Poker brand

Culture shift in Colombia

RECENT INVESTMENT and a culture shift brought on by new ownership has helped Impresora del Sur, SABMiller's dedicated label converting operation, achieve remarkable levels of productivity. James Quirk reports

In 2005 SABMiller acquired Colombia-based Grupo Bavaria, the second largest brewery in South America. The deal, at the time cited as the biggest merger in Colombian history, brought the multinational brewer a leading market share in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Panama. As a part of the transaction, SABMiller also inherited Impresora del Sur, a label printing operation based in Santiago de Cali in the west of the country, which had been acquired by Grupo Bavaria in 1985.

Since the acquisition, SABMiller has streamlined operations, rebranded existing products and launched new beer lines. Impresora del Sur has played an important role in these processes, with recent investment in finishing equipment and an increased focus on efficiency helping it produce 120 million square meters of labels a year on just three presses.

'Strategically, the label printing operation is a very important part of the group because we give the face to the brands,' says Camilo Perez, general director of Impresora del Sur.

FROM ONE LABEL TO THREE

In 2007, SABMiller undertook an ambitious rebranding of its products: premium beer Club Colombia; Poker, its most popular brand; as well as Aguila, Aguila Light, Pilsen and Costeña beers and a non-alcoholic soft drink called Pony.

It also launched two new lines: Redds, specifically aimed at women, and Barena.

The rebranding brought new levels of complexity to the products printed by Impresora del Sur, with standard rectangular labels being replaced by more irregular shapes and the introduction of varnishes and metalized paper for the premium brands. There was also a considerable increase in the total volume of labels being produced – where previously the beers had sported just one label, now there were to be three, on the front, back and neck of the bottle.

To facilitate this increase in production, extra shifts were introduced and new machine operators brought in. The company invested in new die-cutting and slitting equipment to cope with the extra production. That year, Impresora del Sur printed 11.432 million labels – a 41 percent increase on 2006.

'SABMiller attaches great importance to the brand and to marketing,' says Perez. 'There has been a shift in culture. In Colombia,

IMPRESORA del Sur operates three sheetfed offset presses from Heidelberg

CAMILO Perez, general director of Impresora del Sur. Aguila and Poker are two of SABMiller's leading beer brands in Colombia

the consumer tends to tear the label off the bottle before drinking a beer, so there was not a great deal of importance attached to the label. But this has changed: we know that the label is the first thing that the consumer looks at. We now measure absolutely everything; the product must be perfect.'

TECHNOLOGY REVAMP

The labels are printed on sheet-fed offset presses from Heidelberg: two Speedmasters and a Speedmaster CD. The machines are of 4-, 5- and 6-colors plus varnish and have a web width of 70cm. Converting and finishing equipment includes five slitters from Polar, two Blumer die-cutters from Atlas, a Lombardi die-cutting machine and two from PMC. An embossing machine from Bobst was installed in 2008 and an Apollo sheeter from MarquipWardUnited, part of the Barry-Wehmiller group, was purchased in 2009. Platemaking takes place in-house.

'We are in the middle of a technology revamp at the moment,' says Perez. 'First came investment in finishing equipment, and then converting machines. The printing equipment will also be upgraded in the near future, still with Heidelberg machines.'

FOCUS ON PRODUCTIVITY

The investment in finishing equipment and streamlining of processes allows Impresora del Sur to print a staggering 1,900 million labels a month, around 120 million square meters a year. Machines run for 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, with just eight hours of downtime a week for maintenance.

'There has been a real focus on efficiency to reach the level of production that we do,' says Perez. 'Set-up and job changeover times have been reduced. Once, a director of worldwide service for Heidelberg came from Germany to visit the site. He could not believe the level of productivity we were achieving and had never before seen that level of speed.'

Crucial to these impressive levels of productivity is Impresora del Sur's ability to focus purely on printing and converting. Of the company's 156 employees, 130 are machine operators. While most label converting operations must also focus on marketing and accounts, for example, Impresora del Sur can count on SABMiller's in-house teams.

'It's a great advantage that we can rely on SABMiller for these things,' says Perez. 'We are a part of SABMiller, but that is not to say we do not have to compete with other printers in the market. SABMiller pays close attention to printing costs each year and compares them to other companies. Costs are strictly managed – every year for the last five we have reduced the price of the labels we produce.'

LABELS for SABMiller's Aguila Light brand

Impresora del Sur was founded in 1974 and began label printing four years later. Its 5,400 square meter site is located in Santiago de Cali in the west of the country. Colombian law requires there to be open spaces between building and street in industrial zones, so 3,000 square meters of Impresora del Sur's site is currently being used. But even allowing for this, there is room for expansion of around 10 percent, which Perez says will be used when the printing equipment is upgraded.

With a population of 2.2 million, Cali is the third largest city in Colombia. It is a strategic location, similar in distance to both the Ecuadorian and Panamanian borders and 300 kilometers from the county's capital, Bogota.

According to Perez, export to Ecuador and Panama is a possibility in the future and is the subject of an internal study.

AT work on a slitting machine from Polar

CONSUMER HABITS

When SABMiller acquired Grupo Bavaria in 2005, it inherited a 99 percent share of the Colombian beer market. The rebranding undertaken by the company has therefore not been aimed so much at increasing market share, but at changing the consumer habits in a country where per capita beer consumption is significantly lower than in other parts of the world. Colombians drink 42 liters of beer per person per year, compared to 124 liters in Argentina and 160 liters in Germany.

'We are looking to change consumer habits,' says Juan Diego Buenaventura, procurement director, CRC and packaging materials for SABMiller Latin America, based at the company's regional headquarters in Bogota. 'At the moment there is low beer consumption but with high intensity. We want to change the frequency of consumption, in a responsible way, of course, and have launched marketing campaigns directed at this.

'We looked to change the image of our beer brands and worked with specialist design agencies to create new bottles and new labels. The label on the back of the bottle, for example, was completely new in the Colombian market and raises the whole aspect of the overall package.'

SABMiller has also introduced regular promotional campaigns for its seven main brands. Usually, just the back label will change; the front label remains consistent as a crucial part of the brand. Occasionally, during the soccer World Cup, for example, all the labels will change as part of the promotion.

The local preference for tearing off the label prior to consumption has led the company to explore the possibility of using the reverse side of the label for promotions. Testing has been undertaken with special varnishes.

In recent years, some of the world's leading beer brands have moved from wet-glue to self-adhesive labels. In Colombia, however, Buenaventura says that the move would not be justified because of both financial and cultural reasons. 'The trend towards self-adhesive labels is mainly found in premium brands. In developing markets, the costs are often not justified – it would be extremely expensive to change the processes in order to produce self-adhesive labels. Also, this mainly works if the bottle is not returnable. In Colombia, the vast majority of beer is consumed from returnable bottles.'

This culture of returnable bottles is prevalent throughout much of South America. In Colombia, some 95 percent of beer is consumed in local bars, cafes and restaurants. The bottles are returned, washed and reused, so must have materials and adhesives that can be removed easily.

SABMiller's focus on lowering its costs has also lead to the reduction of its environmental impact. Rising material costs encouraged the company to reduce the base weight of the paper used in its labels, which also brings environmental benefits. 'We are looking to reduce our environmental impact,' says Roberto Garcia, packaging materials director. 'As well as lowering the base weight of the paper, we have switched from Casein to synthetic glue, which has more stability and requires less consumption. We also work with water-based inks and have stopped using solvents. These initiatives have lowered costs and have had environmental benefits.'

Materials are imported, and SABMiller buys in bulk and supplies its printing operations directly in order to reduce costs. 'All our labels are applied with glue and material that can withstand ice and water, which is a technical requirement from a consumption point of view,' says Garcia. In a recent development, waste material is now reprocessed and can be reused in egg cartons and book covers.

SABMiller is made up of five companies in Colombia – three breweries, two malt houses and its printing operation, Impresora del Sur. The acquisition of Grupo Bavaria also brought plants in Panama, Ecuador and Peru, and the structure of the company, as well as the beer brands, remains local in each country.

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INBOX

LinkedIn digest

Label converters and suppliers from the US and Europe responded to one of the most popular discussions on the TLMI's LinkedIn group: Building an environmentally friendly label – what is the best way to achieve this?

As one converter posted, the first issue to address is understanding and defining the customer's definition for an environmentally friendly label. While many are looking for a recycled content paper, others are more interested in a recyclable label.

Another comment made refers to the issue of adhesives gumming-up recycling systems. This is not an easy issue to get around but converters are making advancements; it's only a matter of time before major suppliers introduce adhesives that meet performance standards and recyclability requirements. Spear USA already offers its SpearPET, a BOPP film facestock with a proprietary adhesive that releases from the PET flake in the recycling process without gumming up the system. Separating the BOPP from the PET maintains the material's clarity and deems it reusable.

Linerless labels offer an environmentally friendly label solution. Removing the liner from the pressure sensitive equation eliminates a high percentage of waste to landfill, another way to claim sustainability of a label. The capital investment and slower application speeds for new application lines is a tough barrier to overcome but improvements are on the horizon.

One comment highlighted the importance of informing customers about efforts being made behind the scenes to positively impact on the environment – waste reduction, energy and water consumption monitoring, strategic shipping etc. Converters need to maintain communication to aid brand owners understanding of such steps.

Some of the hottest discussions buzzing on Twitter

RECENT discussions from the world of social networking

@packagingdiva Eco Packaging Tweet Of The Day: USDA Introduces Renewable Packaging Label @ http://t.co/qIgW7P1 And yet another #packaging icon

@BrandSquare: What do U think of IBWA's response Water wars: Industry association defends bottled water - http://is.gd/O2Eei2 #packaging

@DanielleJersche: Only 1/3 of P&G's sales are from developing nations. 50% of #Unilever sales from developing. Growth = sm.packaging 4 cheap products

@DanielleJersche: W/ digital print private labels look great; b4 too $$$ RT @packfutur Consumer approval of private brands http://bit.ly/g3dvai #packaging

@DanielleJersche: "Killer Paper" Preserves Food With Silver Nanoparticles | Fast Company http://lnkd.in/a4NmiA

@DanielleJersche: BIG news 4 #labels #packaging #sustainability RT @DaniDawnJ RT @TIME Wal-Mart coming 2 Africa http://su.pr/1jz4XW

@packagingdiva RT @DogwoodAlliance: Made @greenbiz 's Top 20 stories of year @ http://reut.rs/eRV8ZE #packaging @kfc_colonel #ecomonday

@DogwoodAlliance: Fm @change.org welcoming #KFC 's new Chief Sustainability Officer asking 2 do better @ http://bit.ly/dNjlwB #packaging

@DanielleJersche: P&G's 1st NA plant 2 achieve zero waste @ http://bit.ly/eTJwa7 #packaging #sustainability #ecomonday

@packfutur Packaging: Growth Leader in 2011 @ http://bit.ly/hOswlb #packaging

@DanielleJersche: How bout this on #labels #packaging: RT @mashable Word Lens: Translation Augmented Reality.. http://on.mash.to/exSPDc

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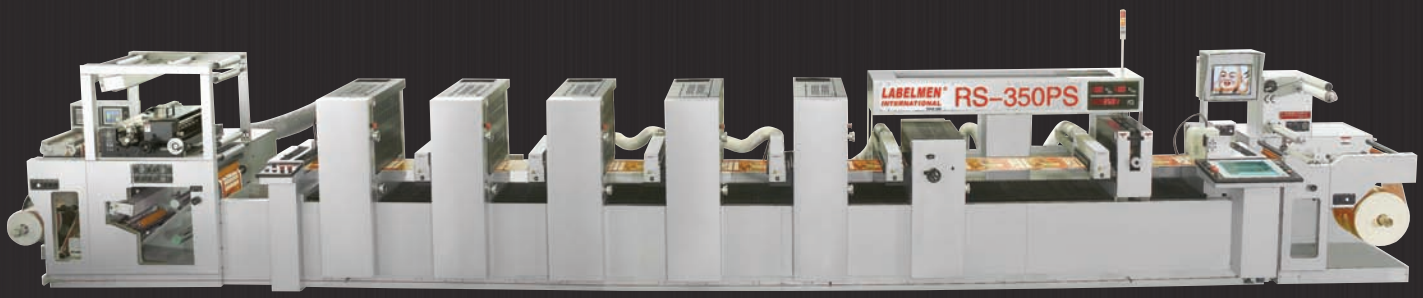

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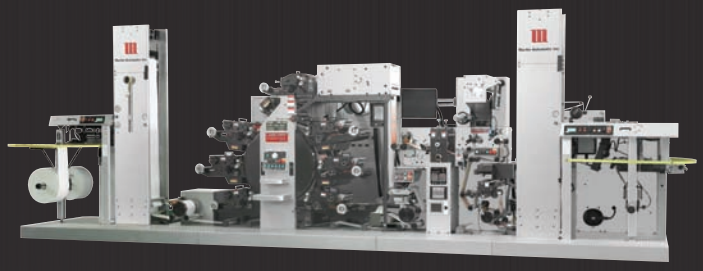

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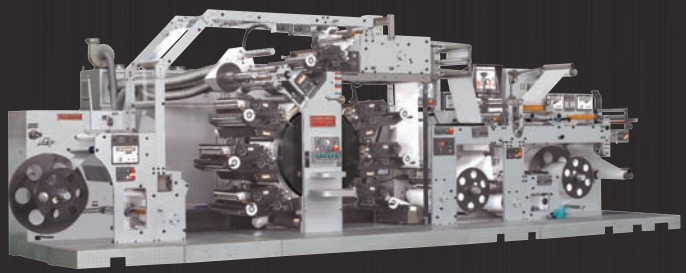

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Special design for In-Mold Label (IML) and Special Shampoo Label printing as well as Self-Adhesive Label and Single Layer Non-Supported Films, such as BOPP, PET, and PVC, etc.

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