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THIN LINER CHALLENGE

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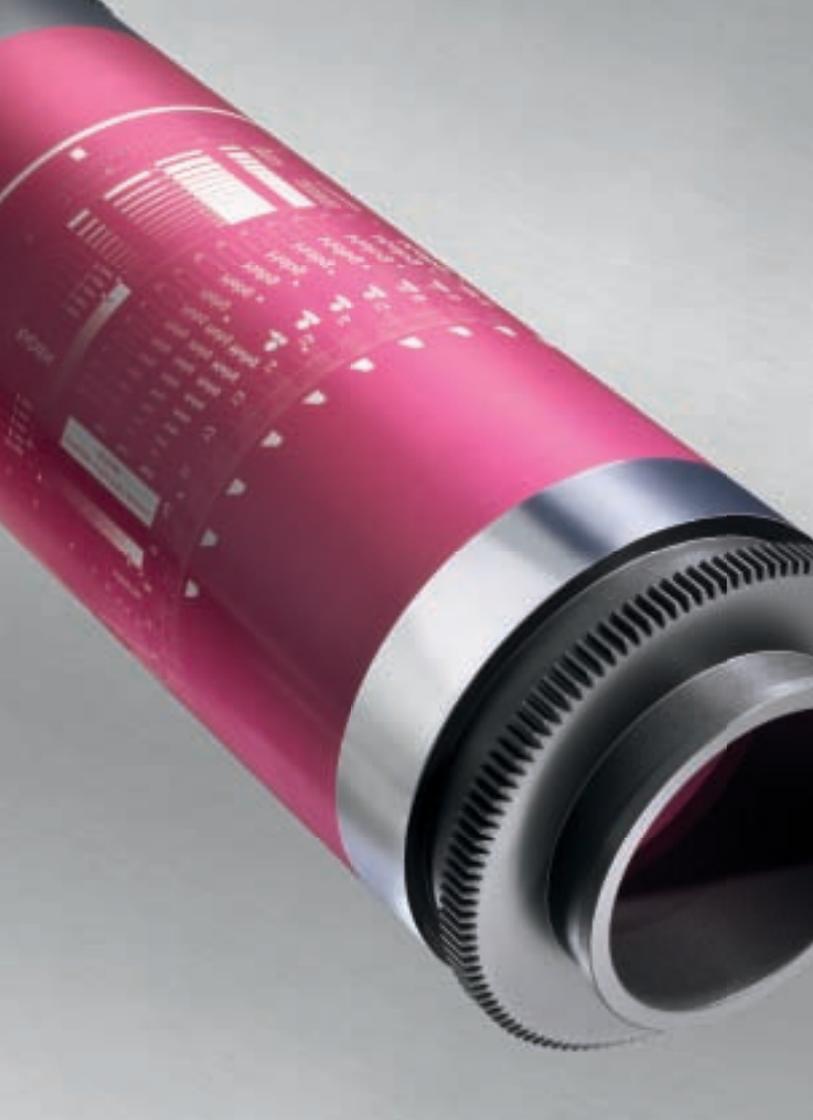
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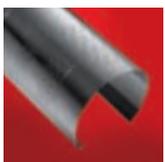
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GLOBAL RETAILERS FINALLY GET GREEN LIGHT FROM INDIA

With the announcement by the Indian government that retail foreign direct investment (FDI) will finally be allowed in the country, the doors might soon open to the last great consumer market in the world still closed to the major global retailer groups. Currently in India these companies can only sell their own private label products and cannot sell the global brands they stock in every other major consumer market in the world. This has had the effect of closing off avenues of choice to consumers and limits the penetration of the global fmcg brands. It is no coincidence that the major European and North American-based label and packaging converting groups – CCL, Rako and Chesapeake, for example – have invested in China rather than India, and for this simple reason: in China the government has actively encouraged Walmart, Carrefours and the rest to invest in the country with wholly-owned operations. And they have bought with them their entire global supply chain. The major converting groups have come in on the back of supporting products from P&G, Unilever, L'Oreal and so on, where the run lengths are generally longer and the quality of materials used and complexity of converting techniques are up to global standards.

The second effect of the global retailers entering China has been that local brands have been forced to respond with new product formulations and packaging, including labels, which reflects a more upmarket positioning. This in turn is creating value throughout the supply chain. I write this leader column from Labelexpo Asia in Shanghai, and it is clear that this is now being reflected in Chinese converters buying new kit and new quality control equipment for their presses and rewinders.

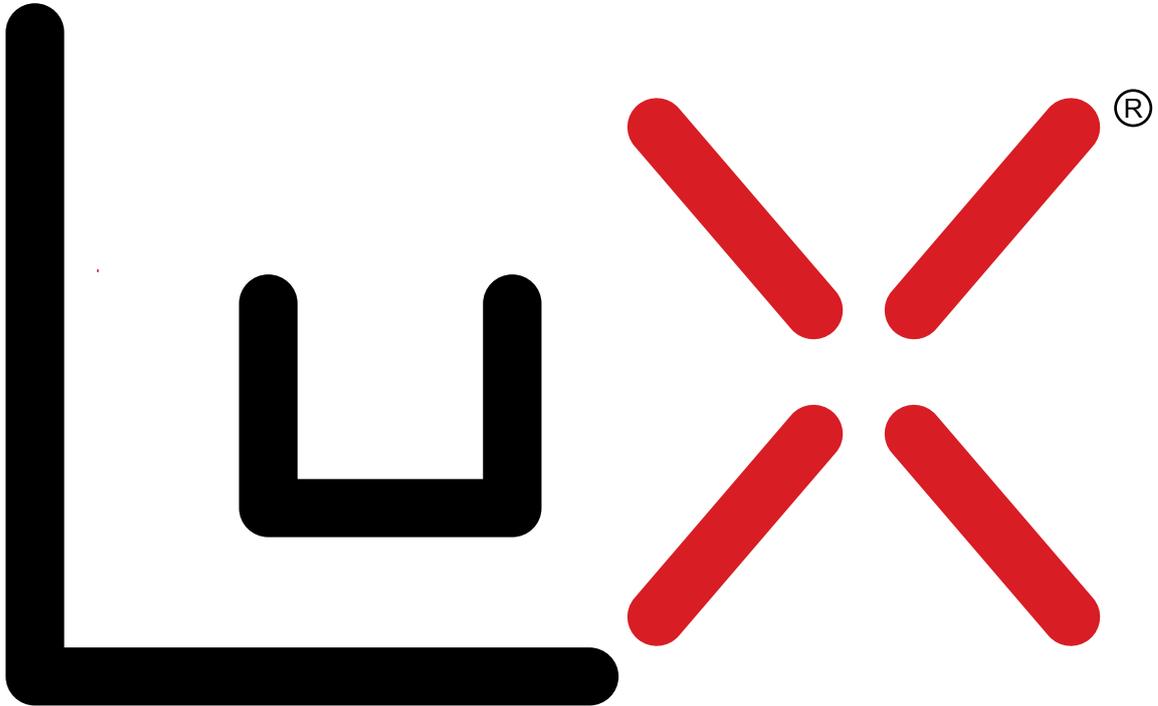
It is not only Western converting groups which have entered China on the back on this value chain. A small, elite group of converters, companies like the mighty Starlight, are now buying right at the top of the Western press market and servicing the multi-nationals to the same quality standards as their Western competitors.

So if retail FDI does go through in India, I predict we will see a similar, rapid uplift in the value throughout the retail and supply chain, feeding through to the label converting industry.

ANDY THOMAS

GROUP MANAGING EDITOR
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INBOX

LABELXPO VISITOR ANALYSIS

Labelexpo Europe 2011 showed the event's global reach like never before, with a record-breaking 28,636 visitors attending this year's show in Brussels.

An analysis of the visitor data, and a comparison with the numbers from previous exhibitions, paints an interesting picture of the industry's ebb and flow. A rise in visitors from a developing country or region can reasonably be taken as a positive endorsement of the state of the local industry – with increasing numbers of converters keen to stay abreast of technological developments and invest in new equipment.

Visitor numbers at the shows in 2009 and 2007 were similar – 24,169 and 24,752 respectively – but 2011 saw a significant rise to 28,636. So where are the new attendees coming from? And how has economic development – or lack of – in different parts of the world affected visitor numbers? 2011's rise in visitors – despite continuing economic problems around the world – can be seen as proof of the adage that the label industry exists in something of a bubble. Despite the economic problems in Europe, for example, visitor numbers from the region remained strong, even rising by 1.4 percent.

While most of the region's western markets sent slightly greater numbers compared to 2009, the significant growth from the region came from Eastern Europe. Visitors from Russia and Poland rose by 62 percent and 43 percent respectively, while Belarus, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia were all better represented compared to 2009. Turkey, meanwhile, saw a 25 percent increase.

Visitor data from the Americas tell a similar story of the increasing power of developing markets. A reduction in numbers from the US and Canada was offset by a 14 percent rise in visitors from South America. There were 37 percent more attendees from Brazil compared to 2009, while Chile, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela all saw slight rises. In 2009, Argentina and Mexico sent almost exactly the same number of visitors; this year, the Argentine figure rose by 19 percent and the numbers from Mexico leapt by 96 percent.

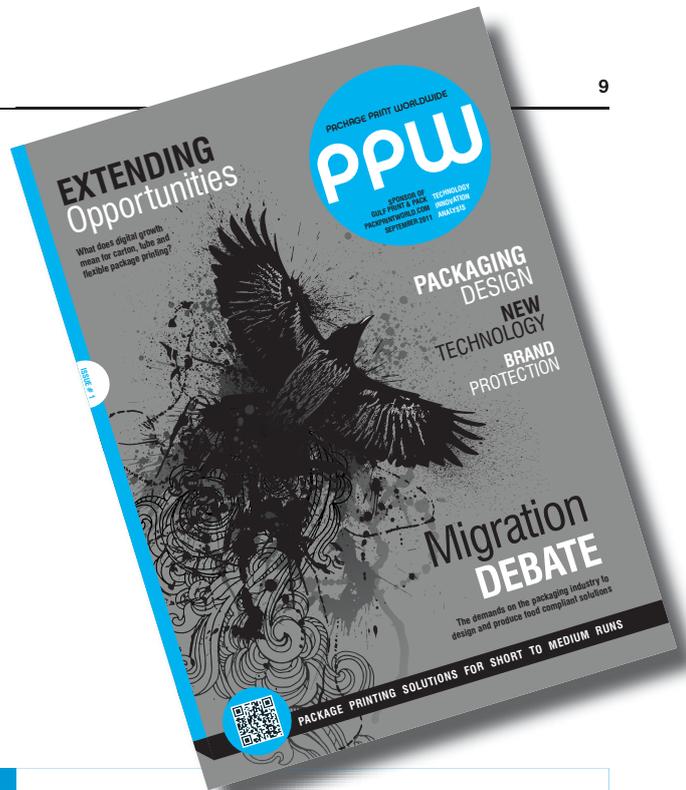
Visitor numbers from Asia were consistent overall with 2009, with fewer attendees from Japan and Taiwan offset by an impressive surge from India – with a 78 percent increase. China registered 17 percent more visitors.

Attendees from Middle East and North Africa rose by 38 percent. With comparatively fewer visitors, Sub-Saharan Africa (55 percent), Central America and the Caribbean (64 percent) and Australia and Oceania (21 percent) also showed significant jumps in visitor numbers. South Africa, the largest African market, sent 39 percent more visitors.

In a further example of the event's global reach, a number of countries were represented in 2011 that had not been two years previously – including Angola, Barbados, Ethiopia, Oman, Palestine, Puerto Rico, Réunion, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, Uganda and Zambia.

Labelexpo Europe 2011, therefore, demonstrated the truly international nature of the exhibition. The visitor data is further proof of the increasing development of countries such as India, Brazil, Russia and Mexico, and shows that label market growth in regions like South America, Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Africa is cause for optimism.

James Quirk, L&L



PPW SET FOR 2012 GROWTH

PACKAGE PRINT WORLDWIDE (PPW), the sister magazine to Labels & Labeling, is to continue its growth in 2012 after a successful launch at Labelexpo Europe 2011

PPW will publish four issues in 2012, starting with a January edition including news and features addressing industry topics such as security features in flexible packaging, the automation of workflow and management information systems, UV ink developments, die cutting innovation and new business opportunities in folding carton printing. The January issue will also include an early preview of Drupa 2012, featuring an exclusive interview with show director Manuel Mataré, and a look at the European Carton Makers Association's new GMP Guide for cartonboard-based food packaging.

Events will play a key role in the development of PPW through 2012, with the April issue providing a more in-depth profile of Drupa exhibitors, the August issue looking ahead to package printing's role at September's Labelexpo Americas and the October issue previewing the PackPrint Summit Dubai scheduled in November, the first event of its kind for the Middle East focusing purely on package printing. The PPW editorial team will be present at Drupa and Labelexpo Americas to support and report back on key developments, as well as staging educational conferences such as PackPrint Summit Dubai and a PackPrint Summit dedicated to digital technology to provide a platform for focused package printing markets to meet, hear market updates, discuss key trends and do business.

The PPW brand is a unique source of information for industry suppliers, designers, technology manufacturers, printers and converters, brand owners, and end users involved with the printing of all forms of consumer packaging, especially folding cartons and flexible packaging. As well as the printed journal, PPW has a web portal updated daily with news, features and blogs, as well as a thriving community of users through social media, including LinkedIn, Twitter and, now, Facebook.

Subscribers to PPW range from engineers and consultants to CEOs and presidents. Some 40 percent of readers are final decision makers, with a further 30 percent having a major influence on purchasing decisions.

For more, visit www.packprintworld.com

NEWS

THE INSIDER

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST
GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

KOPCO GRAPHICS ACQUIRES FLEXIBLE PACKAGING MANUFACTURER

US converter Kopco Graphics has acquired Techpak, located in Franklin, Ohio. Techpak is a converter of flexible packaging, specializing in mid-web flexographic printing, hot melt/heat sealed coatings and laminations. Techpak will now be the flexible packaging division of Kopco Graphics.

Kopco Graphics is a pressure sensitive label manufacturer with locations in Fairfield, Ohio, and Bradenton, Florida. Kopco Graphics is a three-time award winner of the Eugene Singer Award for being one of the best managed printing companies according to North American trade association TLMI.

Techpak's product line includes food pouches, candy wraps, pharmaceutical applications, spiral labels, chewing gum packaging, film laminations, bar soap wrappers, and tissue and foil laminations for the soap industry.

Doug Kopp, Kopco chairman and founder, said: 'Having known Jerry Parish for over 20 years and having worked with Techpak on various projects during that time, I am very excited that Kopco is able to offer the converting and management expertise of both companies to our current and future customers.'

Since 1984 Techpak has provided a high level of unique, quality flexible packaging products. We are pleased to be able to offer our customers a broader range of products for their packaging requirements through this acquisition.'

Jerry Parish, president of Techpak, said: 'We're pleased with this acquisition as the additional purchasing and sales power will allow us to expand our marketing agenda both domestically and internationally.'

The same Techpak management and production team will continue to operate out of the Franklin, Ohio location.

OMET MOURNS FOUNDER

Omet has announced Angelo Bartesaghi, who founded the company in 1963, passed away on November 29. Employees and associates of the group will remember; 'a great man, leader inimitable and brilliant innovator.'

DR THOMAS BAUMGÄRTNER, Herma's managing director and head of the adhesive materials division



HERMA INVESTS IN NEW ROLL WRAPPING PLANT

TEN MILLION EURO investment completes second phase of new facility

Herma has commissioned a new fully automatic wrapping plant at its headquarters in Filderstadt, Germany. The 10 million euro investment completes the second phase of the modern coating plant II, which opened for production in 2008.

'Having commissioned the new packing facility, we are now operating two entirely separate coating plants on the same site,' said Dr Thomas Baumgärtner, Herma's managing director and head of the self-adhesive materials division.

In recent years Herma has also completely refurbished coating plant I, which includes both slitting and wrapping operations. Dr Baumgärtner continued: 'These dual systems enable us to offer customers maximum security of supply and punctual deliveries, which together represent a critical advantage in a hotly contested market.'

Fellow managing director Sven Schneller commented: 'We have demonstrated our serious commitment to doing business in Europe. I am exceptionally pleased that our strategy of reinforcing production in Filderstadt, despite the current climate of global upheaval, is already bearing fruit.'

Depending on capacity utilization,

coating plant II, together with the slitting and wrapping operations, is creating up to 70 new jobs.

The building that accommodates the new wrapping plant is 61 meters long, 21 meters wide and five meters tall. It is attached to the existing machinery building, which has a prominent curved roof, and was erected within 10 months. Among the highlights of the wrapping plant is the computerized picking facility. This is where the different rolls of adhesive material belonging to an order are automatically assembled in stacks up to two meters tall, which can weigh as much as two metric tons. Sixty individual stacks an hour can be wrapped in shrink film on pallets and forwarded for shipping.

Besides the wrapping facility, the investment for this development phase also encompasses two new slitters, plus a further two that are to be purchased in the next few years.

'Our available production capacities put us in a very strong position to continue growing faster than the market,' said Dr Baumgärtner. 'In particular, we expect the launch of adhesive materials with innovative multi-layer technology, which Herma has been pioneering since 2010, to stimulate fresh growth.'



INNOVIA AND PRAGMATIC DEVELOP ELECTRONIC LABELS

'HIGHLY SIGNIFICANT step for BOPP,' says Innovia

Innovia Films, a manufacturer of specialty films, and PragmatIC Printing, a manufacturer of imprinted logic circuits, have successfully integrated printed electronic functionality onto Innovia Films' BOPP label substrates.

The first prototypes are interactive bottle labels that activate a sequence of flashing lights when the bottle is held. This is only one example, from numerous possibilities, of how active packaging can be used to attract, inform or interact with the consumer.

Innovia Films exhibited the prototype electronic labels on its stand at the recent Packaging Innovations show held in London.

Scott White, CEO of PragmatIC

Printing, said: 'Our collaboration with Innovia Films has demonstrated that our unique imprinted electronics can be integrated successfully onto label and packaging films. We now aim to progress these concepts together towards volume production and commercial deployment.'

Steve Langstaff, OPP product manager at Innovia Films, enthused: 'This is a highly significant step for BOPP. Innovia Films is well known within the packaging and labels arena as a proactive developer of specialist surfaces on BOPP films. This exciting development is only a small part of a larger project getting printable electronics into volume packaging markets.'

PGM LAUNCHES NEW BUSINESS LINE FOR M&A

PGM Graphics Solutions has created a new division – PGM Business Agents – which offers clients a dedicated contact and connecting platform for potential sellers and buyers of label printing businesses. The company says that during the recent Labelexpo Europe show in Brussels, it received a great deal of interest from companies in different parts of the world for this kind of specialized service.

PGM Business Agents specializes in identifying and registering acquisition and sales opportunities of companies in the narrow web label and packaging industry. 'With this as a foundation, we offer our clients great opportunities for finding the right solution, whether seeking to buy or sell – or merge,' said a spokesperson for the company. 'We offer full confidentiality and discrete service at all stages with the highest level of business ethics.'

HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES



STORK PRINTS OPENS DIGITAL INKS FACTORY

Stork Prints has opened a new factory for digital inks in Boxmeer, the Netherlands, citing increased demand from customers as the reason for the move. 'With the new digital inks factory we are more than ready for the future,' said Jos Notermans, business unit manager.

According to the company, the success of Stork Prints' digital inks can be attributed to the introduction of the new digital textile printer Sphene, and the recent partnership with Italy's main printer manufacturer, MS.

Stork Prints has been developing and producing digital inks for both textile and graphics printing for 22 and four years respectively. All ink development, formulation and production happens in-house.

For digital textile printing, Stork Prints has introduced a new series of inks called Nebula (for Kyocera printheads) and Flare (for Epson printheads). Stork Prints inks can also run on the Reggiani Renoir, MS JP, MS JPK-series, La Meccanica Qualijet K8 and K16 printers.

Stork Prints' Flare reactive, acid, disperse and sublimation inks are not only suitable for all Mimaki, Roland, MS, La Meccanica and Mutoh digital textile printers with Epson heads, but Stork Prints also provides these inks in packages suitable for Robustelli Monna Lisa printers.

For the DSI digital label printer, Stork Prints offers inks and applications for all 10 print positions: CMYK, digital white, digital primer, Orange, Violet and Green (OVG) and digital varnish.

Above picture: CEO Dick Joustra and business unit manager Jos Notermans open the new digital inks factory in Boxmeer

AVERY DENNISON MOURNS DEATH OF CHARLES 'CHUCK' MILLER

LONG SERVING CEO responsible for globalizing Avery operations

The labels industry has lost another key figure with the announcement of the death of Charles D. Miller at the age of 83. 'Chuck' Miller was chairman and chief executive officer of Avery Dennison Corporation from 1977 to 1998 and was instrumental in transforming the company from a US-based manufacturer into a global Fortune 500 market leader in pressure-sensitive labeling materials and office products.

'Chuck Miller's impact on Avery Dennison was immeasurable,' said Dean A. Scarborough, Avery Dennison chairman, president and chief executive officer. 'Every aspect of our business, from vision to strategy to execution to culture, has been shaped for the better by his passion and imagination. Numerous organizations in Southern California benefited from his tireless and wide-ranging philanthropic leadership over the past four decades. I will miss him as a leader, a mentor and a friend.'

Under Miller's leadership, Avery Dennison grew dramatically, with annual net sales increasing during his tenure as CEO from \$423 million to \$3.3 billion in 1998. Miller also led the company into other lines of business, the most prominent of which was office products.

Recognizing the opportunities outside the United States – among his earliest actions as CEO was renaming the company Avery International – Miller led a vigorous global expansion effort. Throughout his tenure as CEO, he expanded operations and sales in Europe, South America and Asia. He established the company's first manufacturing operations in China in 1994 and, to ensure growth in the use of pressure-sensitive materials, he founded the



Avery Dennison Label Converting College near Shanghai to train local commercial printers in their use.

Miller was a tireless leader of civic causes including poverty relief funds in Los Angeles and Operation Walk, an international organization that provides total hip and knee replacements for impoverished children and adults in underdeveloped countries. Miller was also one of the first members of the organizing committee that brought the 1984 Olympic Games to Los Angeles and served as a trustee and presidential counselor at Johns Hopkins University, where in 2004 he endowed the Charles D. Miller Professorship in the humanities.

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- > U.V & IR drying options
- > High speed production
- > Full range of options
- > Compact converting press
- > 250mm or 330mm web widths

CENTRAFLEX

Centraflex 'UV' Series

- > New Press design 5+ 1 or 6 +1 Colour options
- > 1000mm CI Central Impression Drum option
- > Full IR or UV optional drying systems
- > Chilled Central Drum option
- > Wide range of Accessories
- > Superior printing platform for unsupported materials
- > 250 & 330mm web widths



WEBFLEX

Webflex 'S' Series

- > Servo Drive line
- > Touch screen control
- > Preset Parameters for all substrate types
- > Job information storage & retrieval
- > Auto register control option
- > IR & UV Drying systems
- > Chill Roll option
- > 330 & 430mm web widths

VETAPHONE LAUNCHES CORONA RETROFIT MODULE

VETAPHONE has launched a 'plug and play' retrofit corona module, allowing older generations of narrow web presses to print on film



'Our engineers spend a lot of time on the factory floors of our clients,' said Jan Eisby, marketing director at Vetaphone. 'For quite some time it was obvious for them that a lot of the narrow web presses out there are becoming obsolete, due to the demand for plastic-based labels. This is a shame, as most of them are not at all close to being worn out. So we decided to come up with a solution.'

Vetaphone says the in-line module takes up 'virtually no space' and requires only a few cables and an ozone extraction hose. 'We succeeded in fitting everything in one compact module,' continued Eisby. 'Even the generator, which is usually placed elsewhere, is seamlessly integrated. It was quite a challenge at first, but we believe the potential is substantial and worth the effort.' The retrofit module comes with Vetaphone's Quick Change cartridge which allows quick and easy cleaning of the electrodes and makes it possible to print on materials of different thicknesses. The module can be designed to fit almost any narrow web press, and units are already available for the Nilpeter FA 2400, FA 2500, FA 3000 and FA 3300.

See video on Label TV at www.labelsandlabeling.com

HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

EFI RECEIVES IDEALLIANCE CERTIFICATIONS

EFI has achieved four digital press certifications from IDEAlliance for Fiery servers driving engines from Canon, Konica Minolta, Ricoh and Xerox.

ASHLAND EXPANDS GLOBAL HEC PRODUCTION

Ashland is responding to strong demand for Natrosol hydroxyethylcellulose (HEC) by expanding its production across its global network through capacity additions at its facilities in Nanjing, China, and Zwijndrecht, the Netherlands. The company is adding 7,000 metric tons of new capacity. In addition, Ashland is increasing production of its Natrosol Plus hydrophobically modified HEC product line at its Parlin, New Jersey, plant.

COLOR-LOGIC MAKES METALLIC IMAGES AVAILABLE

Color-Logic, developer of the Process Metallic Color System, has made a wide variety of royalty-free metallic images available to graphic designers and printers who have licensed the Color Logic process. Images may be reviewed and downloaded at www.imagestore.color-logic.com.

Good Reflections

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NISSHA SIGNS EXCLUSIVE AGREEMENT WITH APPLIED DNA

Nissha Printing, a label and packaging printer and a half-billion-dollar company based in Japan, will use APDN technology in a project to protect the brands of highly valued fish and other products, recently victims of rampant counterfeiting. The new printing system uses 'DNA ink', derived from plant DNA, to mark and authenticate labels on high-value fish and other food products.

The company signed an exclusive agreement with APDN on October 31, becoming the sole provider of DNA ink products in publications and foods (fish and fruit) in Asia. This agreement complements the existing deal between Nissha and APDN and further strengthens the relationship between the two companies.

Using the new printing system, foods can be instantly verified as genuine in the field, using a special handheld detector to identify the anti-counterfeiting ink. This could happen at the point of sale, or at any point along the supply chain. As is typical of APDN DNA markers, a second, forensic level of authentication is also available by sending the suspect product to a secure lab. The system is safe and non-invasive; foods are not altered.

Branded foods from particular and often well-known waters off Japan, and sometimes preserved with traditional, labor-intensive methods, are becoming popular, profitable and necessary in Asia. For example, sushi bars have become ever more discriminating, while ocean contamination and other issues beset the fishing industry.

Counterfeiters and diverters have moved in with force, selling common foods as the high-value brand, destroying markets and reputation of the real item.

'No product is safe from the threat of counterfeiting, and this threatens public health and safety, especially in relation to food and other consumer products,' commented Takao Hashimoto, director and chief technology officer of Nissha.

The new system, developed by Nissha in conjunction with APDN, can also package a wide variety of products with its forgery-proof, high security layer. The anti-counterfeiting DNA ink on labels can be delivered by various printing technologies, such as offset, gravure and inkjet printing.

Headquartered in Kyoto, Japan, Nissha has more than 4,000 employees, 11 locations in Japan and 27 bases located throughout Asia, North America and Europe.



GEW HITS UV LANDMARK

UV supplier delivers 10,000th system

Production at the AB Graphic International factory in Bridlington, East Yorkshire was temporarily suspended to celebrate the arrival of the 10,000th UV curing system manufactured by UV supplier GEW (EC).

The arrival of the 10,000th UV curing system in November marked a milestone in the business relationship between the two companies with 140 AB Graphic International employees gathered in attendance as GEW managing director, Malcolm Rae made the official announcement and hand over. 'Over the years our two companies have worked together on many projects that required a UV solution,' said Rae. 'This delivery is especially significant for us'.

GEW started production in 1991 and AB Graphic International was our first customer. We supplied them with our first UV system for installation on a Kopak 170 rotary letterpress printing machine and since that time we have sold them over 600 units for digital printing applications and in excess of 100 for the flexo, semi-rotary and rotary letterpress processes'.

Commenting on the reasons for the first purchase, Tony Bell, sales director at AB Graphic International explained, 'We decided on the GEW UV system because we recognized the benefits of

using an air cooled design and GEW were pioneers in developing this type of technology. Most other companies at that time supplied only water cooled systems which are high maintenance. The air cooled system from GEW was unrivalled and not only minimized installation, but also lowered investment costs.'

GEW presented a commemorative plaque and provided celebratory wine for all AB Graphic International personnel and in thanking them for their business, Rae commented, 'What stands out is that both GEW and AB Graphic International have grown and developed products that have enabled our businesses and the label industry to expand. This could not have happened without good management and people. Without the right people and work ethic there would be no business, no suppliers and no industry.' Mike Burton, managing director of AB Graphic International endorsed this ethos and took the opportunity to thank his employees for their efforts in bringing new products to market in time for launch at the recent Labelexpo Europe show.

Dave Kirkham, director, AB Graphic International confirmed the new UV system will be fitted on an Omega Digicon label converting line destined for its Brazilian customer, Mack Color.

FLINT LAUNCHES NEXT UV EXPOSURE SYSTEM

SYSTEM produces precisely defined surfaces on flat top dots'

Customer events in November signaled the market launch of Flint Group Flexographic Products' nyloflex Next UV exposure technology.

nyloflex Next produces precisely defined surfaces on flat top dots. It also provides a precise image reproduction to ensure the highest print quality with excellent ink laydown, even with long print runs, says the company. Printing plates are exposed with high-intensity UV-LEDs (> 800 mW/cm²), which are claimed to allow a consistent UV emission and the

reproduction of even the finest detail. nyloflex Next is suitable for all digital plates regardless of type, thickness and format and can easily be implemented into existing digital workflows. No additional consumables are needed.

Two types of nyloflex Next exposure units are now available: nyloflex Next Exposure F III, the mid-size exposure unit with format 920 x 1200 mm (36 x 47 in); nyloflex Next Exposure F V, the large exposure unit with format 1320 x 2032 mm (52 x 80 in).



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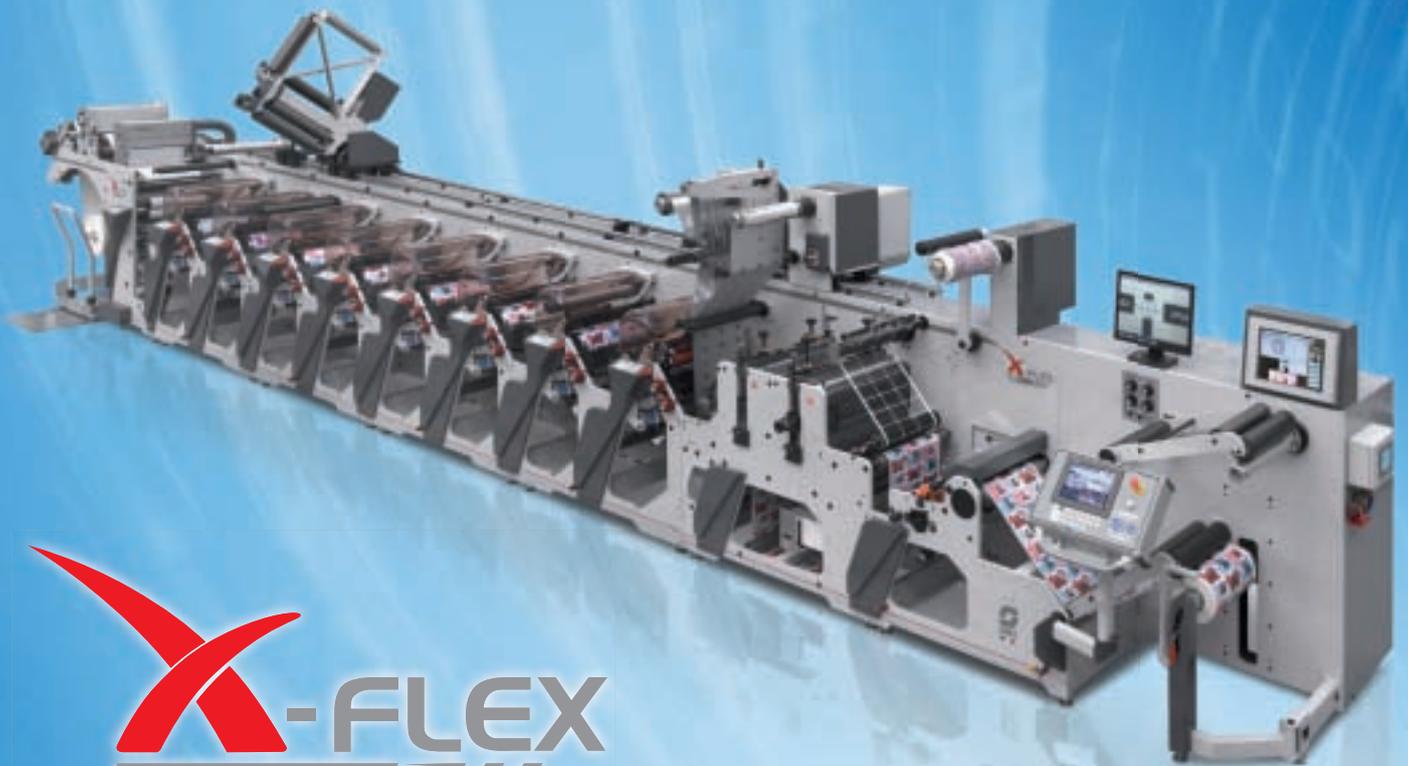
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GLOBAL LABEL DEMAND 'TO REACH 51.6 BILLION SQM BY 2015'

ANALYST PREDICTS over five percent growth per year

World demand for labels is expected to rise by over five percent per year to 51.6 billion square meters in 2015, valued at 110 billion dollars, according to a new study from Cleveland-based industry research firm, The Freedonia Group. 'World Labels' presents the following trends:

Advances will be driven by gains in manufacturing activity, which will increase from a low 2010 base. Pressure sensitive labels will remain the largest product type and continue to take market share from glue-applied products in major packaging applications. Above-average demand growth is also expected in other label segments such as stretch sleeve, heat-shrink and in-mold labels, though gains in these relatively newer label technologies will stem from small bases.

In 2010, pressure sensitive labels accounted for 52 percent of the global label market – in terms of volume – a share expected to increase even further in the coming years. Demand for glue-applied labels will see below-average growth but the segment will remain the second largest overall, accounting for more than 30 percent of global label market volume through 2015. Smaller label segments such as

stretch sleeve, heat-shrink and in-mold labels will see some of the fastest growth through the forecast period.

The Asia/Pacific region will see the quickest gains and remain the largest regional market in the world, due to its large manufacturing industries. Central and South America, Eastern Europe, and the Africa/Mideast region will also experience above-average growth. Overall, the fastest growth will occur in Asia, specifically in India, China and Indonesia. China alone will account for 31 percent of global label market volume gains between 2010 and 2015.

In contrast, advances will generally be below average in the more established markets of North America and Western Europe. The US – which accounted for 18 percent of global sales volume in 2010 – is the largest national label market in the world. Other large, but generally mature markets include Japan and Germany. Japan will remain one of the largest national markets in the world but it is expected the country will see the slowest growth rate through 2015. Nonetheless, says the report, there will be good opportunities in developed countries, especially for digitally printed labels that capitalize on trends favoring shorter label runs and mass customization.

HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

LOPAREX TO BUILD PLANT IN THAILAND

Loparex Group has announced plans to build a 35,400 square meter (380,000 sq ft) greenfield facility for the production of siliconized paper and polymer films (release liners) on the recently purchased 5.7 hectare property at the Hemaraj Eastern Seaboard Industrial Estate (HESIE) of Thailand.

Jan Hilbrink, the current managing director for Europe, will lead the construction and start-up of the new plant. The new plant in Thailand is scheduled to begin production by the end of 2012 and will feature solvent and solvent-free products, poly-coated liners, as well as printing and slitting capability.

'Much of Loparex's success has been based on our strong commitment to our customers,' said Michael Apperson, CEO of the Loparex Group. 'Our customers demand world-class product development and a diverse portfolio of products to meet their unique application needs. This major investment not only reinforces our already strong position in the Asian market, but will also meet the demands of our customers who are planning for accelerated growth in the fast growing ASEAN region.'

In 2011 Loparex doubled capacity at its Guangzhou, China plant. In 2009 an investment in Loparex's Silvassa, India, facility tripled that plant's output. (Kaygee-Loparex India Pvt. Ltd is a 50/50 joint venture between Loparex and the Godha family). 'The new facility in Thailand will truly complement the facilities we have in Guangzhou and Silvassa with additional technical capabilities and of course, enhanced service potential not only for the ASEAN region, but also for our customers throughout all of Asia and the Middle East,' said Andie Ho, managing director of Loparex, Asia Pacific.

'The Thailand facility will serve as an additional service hub for Loparex to expand our sales and technical service resources to our customer base, in addition to offering an expanded product portfolio,' said Tapani Laakso, sales and marketing director for Loparex, Asia Pacific.

The new plant will be designed with lean manufacturing principles and have the ability for rapid and substantial expansion to meet future market demands. Jack Taylor, Loparex Americas COO, said: 'We have the unique opportunity to employ the best practices of lean manufacturing and Six Sigma from our operations in the US, Europe, China and India to create a truly world-class, flexible and efficient plant from the ground up.'

NEWS

HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST
GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

MARTIN APPOINTS DISTRIBUTOR FOR MENA

Martin Automatic has signed a cooperation agreement with XOL Automation to distribute Martin's automatic splicing, rewinding and tension control equipment throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Based in Beirut, Lebanon, XOL Automation serves the converting and web handling industry in the MENA region.

TECHKON USA EXPANDS TO NEW FACILITY

Techkon USA, a manufacturer of densitometers, spectrophotometers and software for the print and packaging industry, is moving to a larger facility. The additional space will better accommodate the growth experienced since the establishment of Techkon USA in 2007.

The larger facility – at 300 Rosewood Drive in Danvers, Massachusetts – effectively triples the size of its previous location.

UK CONVERTER REACHES VARIABLE BARCODE LABEL MILESTONE

AC Labels, a UK-based variable barcode label printer, has manufactured its 200 millionth unique barcode label since reforming in April 2010 as part of the Mercian Labels Group.

POLYMAG TEK APPOINTS EUROPEAN DISTRIBUTOR

Germany-based PrintConcept Grafische Maschinen and US company Polymag Tek have signed a distribution agreement that sees PrintConcept have the exclusive sales rights for the European market for Polymag Tek's range of contact web cleaning systems.

SMARTRAC ENLARGES PATENT PORTFOLIO

Smartrac, a manufacturer of RFID transponders, has enlarged its patent portfolio in the course of 2011 to more than 330 patents and patent applications. The newly issued patents expand and complement the company's intellectual property (IP) surrounding the existing patents for technology, equipment and the production of RFID components and related processes.



MARK Andy receives HD Flexo Certification at Labelexpo 2011. Scan the QR code to watch the P7 press in action

MARK ANDY P7 RECEIVES HD FLEXO CERTIFICATION

FIRST IN-LINE flexo press manufacturer to receive accolade

At Labelexpo Europe, Mark Andy became the first in-line flexo press manufacturer to receive full HD Flexo certification from EskoArtwork.

Alexander Schmidt, print demonstrator for Mark Andy Europe, successfully completed the requirements for HD Flexo certification of the P7 in late August. He and Mark Andy were presented the credential during the exhibition by Jan Buchwietz, senior product manager digital

flexo, from EskoArtwork.

'Mark Andy is excited to have completed the HD Flexo certification program,' said Greg Palm, VP of sales and marketing. 'We are even more proud to be the first of the flexo machine makers to qualify as well. The new Performance Series P7 was designed specifically for high quality printing, coupled with extreme productivity and efficiency. The future of flexo is bright for this machine.'

ACPO BUILDS NEW LABORATORY

NEW LAB serves as product testing center

acpo, a manufacturer of linerless polypropylene and polyester overlaminates, has completed the construction of a new laboratory inside its 125,000 square foot facility. The newly built lab was designed to accommodate continued customer growth and support new equipment, personnel and storage requirements.

Nathan Storfer-Isser, technical director of acpo, said: 'We are growing and needed additional work space and a location within the plant to facilitate our testing and quality procedures. We designed the laboratory to optimize

work flow and improve efficiency. We are now conveniently located in a centralized work space easily accessible to plant operations, our production teams, equipment, raw materials and end product.'

The new laboratory serves as a testing center for product performance. Additionally, the lab is equipped to support new product development, containing a laminator, several ovens, fume hood and mixing and blending capabilities for creating and modifying new formulations.



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— **David Webster**,
Managing director,
The Label Makers Ltd., Leeds, UK.

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INSTALLATIONS



TONY LAW of Rotary Technology Partnership

EDALE ALPHA FLEXO PRESS EVA ENTERPRISE (THAILAND)

Edale, a UK-based manufacturer of narrow web printing presses and converting equipment, has appointed Rotary Technology Partnership as its distributor in Thailand.

Rotary Technology sealed the partnership with a sale of a 5-color Edale Alpha compact flexo press with UV drying, cold foil and video inspection – said to be the fastest ever sale by an Edale distributor. The press was sold to EVA Enterprise in Bangkok, which will use it to produce a variety of products including cosmetic and pharmaceutical labels.

Rotary Technology represented Edale at the recent Print Pack International Show held in Bangkok. Tony Law, sales manager of Rotary Technology, said: 'The Print Pack show was a great platform to promote Edale and we received a large number of enquiries; in particular for the Gamma printing and converting line – which is ideal for cartons and other types of packaging with substrates up to 600 micron.'

Jeremy Westcott, Edale's head of sales and marketing, commented: 'Edale are thrilled to have signed Rotary Technology Partnership to cover Thailand and this was confirmed with the recent sale of the Alpha. I have no doubt that they will continue on this path of promoting Edale successfully within the Far East.'

NEWFOIL FINISHING MACHINE CARIBBEAN LABEL CRAFTS (BARBADOS)

Barbados-based converter Caribbean Label Crafts has installed the country's first Newfoil finishing machine. The company purchased a Newfoil 5500 hot stamping converting machine with a 250mm web width, with its electronic web re-register system working alongside an EFI Jetrion inkjet system.

Established in 1986, Caribbean Label Crafts produces premium quality labels for the region's rum and distilled spirits industry. Martin de Reus, operations manager, said: 'We have spent quite some time looking at the options available in the digital converting market and feel that the Newfoil fits our operations perfectly. This investment in our digital/short run department is in line with our continued development strategy for self-adhesive labels, allowing us to provide cutting-edge solutions to the challenges that our Caribbean and Latin American customers meet as they compete in a global environment.'



THE UK-based converter has opted for digital after ten years of flexo printing

XEIKON 3030 DIGITAL PRESS LABEL SOLUTIONS (UK)

Label Solutions, a label converter based in Essex, UK, has purchased a Xeikon 3030 digital press. The Xeikon machine represents the company's first digital investment following 10 years of flexographic printing.

Leslie Burden, managing director of Label Solutions, said: 'We have been examining the digital market for the last year, along with the printing solutions available to us. Undoubtedly digital has been exhibiting extremely fast growth in the label sector in recent years, and we believe that the time is right for us to offer our own solution for customers in this sector of the market.'

'Despite the current economic uncertainty, we have just had our busiest year with regard to flexo-based production, so we believe that now is an ideal time for us to invest in the next stage of our business growth. Digital will enable us to offer something different to our existing customers, and also provide us with the tools to enter new markets. Certainly one area that we are keen to be involved in is to provide a trade label printing service to other producers without their own digital facility at the moment.'

With regard to the choice of digital printing equipment, Burden continued: 'Whilst inkjet machines have made some advances during the last year, it was apparent to us that the two leading machines in the market represented the only real choices. Xeikon won through for us on two very important areas: no click charge involved and no pre-coating of stock needed for standard label substrates. We were also impressed by the print quality offered by the Xeikon technology, as well as the feedback regarding productivity that we had from existing users of the product.'

The Xeikon 3030 web-based press has a top speed of 31.5 feet of label production per minute. The 5-color engine provides for the four standard process colors plus a choice of spot color, special security toner for anti-counterfeiting applications, or a one-pass opaque white for the 'no label' look on transparent material.

The press is capable of handling a wide range of substrates including self-adhesive labelstock, paper, transparent and opaque foils and paperboard. The press handles a substrate width of 330mm and provides for an imaging width of 322mm. The environmentally friendly dry toner electrophotography imaging process enables the use of conventional substrates

without the need for coating or pre-treatment. Additionally the toner is compliant with FDA regulations related to indirect food contact and direct food contact, dry food environment.

For job preparation, the Xeikon press is equipped with an open, scalable and modular X-800 Digital Front-End (DFE), combining extensive pre-press functionality including a high-speed RIP with impressive variable data printing processing.

AVERY DENNISON CURVE APPEAL SYSTEM SILGAN PLASTICS (USA)

Avery Dennison Label and Packaging Materials and Silgan Plastics are working together to install the first Avery Dennison Curve Appeal system in North America at the Silgan plant in Ligonier, Indiana. The Avery Dennison Curve Appeal technology, coupled with Fasson Curvy pressure-sensitive film, allows home and personal care brand owners to label complex curved container shapes with attention-grabbing graphics.

Avery Dennison Curve Appeal technology allows brand managers and packaging engineers to expand the label footprint around the curves of a bottle. It is claimed to create up to 100 percent more labeling area and reduces the need for two-ply label constructions because it enables larger back panels to carry more product or multi-language information. This innovative labeling system combines a 360-degree look on a container with the bold graphics pressure-sensitive delivers.

'Our agreement with Silgan Plastics opens up a new visual platform for brand owners,' said Jay Gouliard, vice president segment innovation, Avery Dennison. 'Package shape is a key driver for creating differentiation at the store shelf. Avery Dennison Curve Appeal provides brand owners with an exciting new opportunity to enhance the image of their brands by combining the power of eye-catching labels with iconic three-dimensional packaging geometry-delivering the best brand experience for their consumers.'

The Avery Dennison Curve Appeal labeling system available through Silgan Plastics uses a proprietary pressure-sensitive film material in both white and clear that can be supplied through the traditional label converter channel. The linear label application equipment is manufactured under license to Harland Machine Systems, a leader in the design and manufacture of pressure-sensitive labeling machines.

Pictured: Avery Dennison Curve Appeal technology allows brand managers and packaging engineers to expand the label footprint around the curves of a bottle

SISTRADÉ WORKFLOW SYSTEM PROEMPAQUES (COLOMBIA)

Proempaqués, a Bogota, Colombia-based converter of flexible packaging and self-adhesive labels, has installed an integrated business management system from Portuguese supplier Sistradé.

The Sistradé Print MIS automates all existing processes, allowing Proempaqués to centralize management and control of its business and production.

Proempaqués, which has more than 35 years of experience in the sector, specializes in self-adhesive labels and flexible packaging for the food, cosmetics, agrochemical and pharmaceutical industries.

MARTIN AUTOMATIC SPLICER ACUCOTE (USA)

Acucote, a custom coating and laminating converter based in Graham, North Carolina, USA, has installed a Martin Automatic ECPF splicer and is on course for an 18-month payback on the investment.

The company, which was founded in 1987 to supply commodity work, has more recently specialized in providing custom applications that do not fit other suppliers' stock lists. Working a triple shift pattern for five or six days a week, Acucote

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ACUCOTE'S Martin Automatic ECPF splicer is on course for an 18-month payback on investment

claims its lines run best non-stop, because this removes the need for manual splicing that can be unreliable, and always wastes time and substrate.

Paul Sanborn, VP of manufacturing at Acucote, said: 'We tried to develop our own solution for an unwinder, but it didn't give us the desired results and ended up being very problematical.' Acucote approached Martin Automatic for a non-stop splicer, initially without giving the manufacturer a full brief.

'The first splicer and infeed we bought, 14 years ago, was a fine piece of equipment, but didn't perform quite as we expected because we hadn't been completely honest with the brief.' Acucote learned its lesson, according to Sanborn, and now gives a full brief to the Martin team. 'The questions they ask are the reasons their equipment is so well-engineered,' he added.

Working with Martin engineers and technical sales, Acucote equipped its adhesive coating lines with Martin splicers for both the wet and dry unwinds, and with Martin automatic transfer rewinders.

As part of its mission to provide technically complex, high value self-adhesive products, the company runs a wide variety of substrates, including paper, paperboard, film and fabric. With many jobs averaging only about 5,000 feet, frequent material changes are necessary.

'When we are adding adhesive to this range of substrates, changing jobs from one to the next can be challenging, but the Martin splicers and rewinders have no problem accommodating the diversity of substrates and handling roll changes without stopping,' he stated.

K2 FLEXO PRESS

UNIPARCO (SENEGAL)

Press manufacturer K2 Flexo exhibited a 440mm wide FastAction flexographic printing press, fully specified for label and film production, at Labelexpo Europe. The press featured full UV curing and IR drying at each printing station and was demonstrated running a 6-color, 40 micron shrink film job for beverages.

'We are pleased to announce that this fully servo-driven press was sold to Uniparco, one of the biggest, privately owned cosmetics companies in Senegal,' said managing director Russell Oddy. 'The company has significant manufacturing capabilities and the press will be used for packaging its own products in-house.'

Designed for high speed operation, the FastAction press with chill drums and fully automatic register controls permits a wide range of films to be processed and is optimized to meet the requirements of the cosmetics industry. A full specification included die station with side adjustment, rotary crush cut slitters, print cylinders driven by helical gears, inks pumps, de-laminating and re-laminating with turn bar, video web inspection and corona treater.



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Label printing in India

ON A RECENT VISIT TO INDIA, L&L publisher Roger Pellow visited some of the country's biggest printers for a Q&A session

WEBTECH – AMAR CHHAJED

RP: Describe your company.

AC: We are a family owned company with turnover of around €10m, focused on self-adhesive labels and growing at around 20 percent a year. Our first press, a Mark Andy, was installed in 1998. 60 percent of the company's business is from the pharma and healthcare industry, and the balance consists of Industrial, cosmetic and other sectors. We have recently started focussing on the FMCG and Food sectors. We have 15 presses at our main location in Navi Mumbai and two at our factory North of Delhi.

RP: You recently installed two Xeikon presses. Why did you go digital?

AC: We have talked about it for a long time. We do so many types of jobs that it held the possibility for digital, so we are not building digital from scratch. Digital opens new opportunities, and we have trained a whole new sales team to sell digital. We are using people who are used to marketing products, not selling packaging. It is all about imagination and what can be made possible because of digital. We are offering marketing solutions to clients, not just printing labels.

RP: What is needed for the Indian label industry to continue its growth?

AC: The biggest need for the Indian label industry is to focus on innovation and high quality. The other major area to work upon in India is training for the employees. It's not about one printer taking the lead, it's about the whole industry. Around half the students we employ from printing colleges don't stay in the longer run. Indian printers need to push for a training academy focussed for the narrow web industry and equipment.. so that high quality trained personnel can be available for the industry.

RP: How do you see the prospects for the Indian economy?

AC: In India packaging will have a lot of new things coming up in next five years that don't just depend on GDP growth rate. Even today lots of things are not packaged at all in India especially in the food sector. Packaging overall has lots of scope for upgradation and thereby leaving lot of room for growth. With the imminent entry of organized retail chains in India it will be very positive for the consumer as well

as the packaging industry. For the local industry too.. I feel this will be an opportunity in disguise.. since it will have to raise its standards of quality to international levels. And ofcourse, if you are not willing to change you won't survive.

RP: How did you develop a successful work culture?

AC: We have a culture of 'TeamWork'. From day one employees have helped to build the business – and everyone has a sense of belonging. All of them including us are working for the company and also for each other – the faster and better we work the more we get back. We also take a lot of efforts in identifying and finding solutions to the basic needs and problems of our employees. For example we provide free housing to a lot of employees who are unable to afford housing in Mumbai. To feel secure a person needs a place to live and food to eat; their basic needs must be taken care of, otherwise it is unfair. Accommodation is the most difficult part of working in Mumbai. Afterall, we truly believe that 'these are the people who drive the company.'

RP: How do you handle cost objections?

AC: Material costs are affecting us - up already by 15 percent, and all commodities are going up. It is most difficult to get a price rise from a customer specially since many new suppliers are willing to cut corners and offer lower prices. But if the price per label is not reasonable enough we would always willingly turn business away – you must be able to say no. Ultimately we have experienced that all customers understand the value proposition of working with us and are willing to pay for the same.

RP: How important is information management at Webtech?

AC: We were the first to install an MIS (management information system) from Shuttleworth in India. MIS means we can look at lean manufacturing, which is the main challenge as the business gets bigger and we are running three shifts, 24/6. We currently hold raw material stocks for up to 30 days, because we like to have the flexibility. If the customer places an order today we don't want to have to think about raw material, and we don't want to depend on the supplier. We used



(L-R) Jitesh and Amar Chhajed with Webtech's Xeikon 3000 digital press



RAJESH and Aditya Chadha with their Rotatek Brava 440 press

to hold 40-50 days, but have been cutting it down.

RP: How do you handle label finishing?

AC: We were the first narrow web company in India to install AVT (100% defect detection systems) and every label produced at Webtech will always undergo 100% auto inspection. We also have some presses with online 100% Inspection systems. For final finishing we have a few Rotoflex and Prati machines. We dispatch more than 300 different items every single day and have very strict protocols to make sure jobs are not mixed up. Of course, we also make our own labels for use in packaging and dispatch.

RP: Do you make your own plates?

AC: We brought platemaking in house since nearly two years now and it's certainly made a big difference. We don't depend on outsourcing our pre-press needs.. and also don't need to share customer details with anyone else.

RP: What are your future plans?

AC: For the immediate future, there is a lot to do just in labels. Core for us is to set up more factories across India. We will also set up a new factory in the same location as currently, and this will be much bigger than the size of the current building.

In terms of new hardware we intend to upgrade our printing equipment in a phased manner.. also might try out rotary offset for folding cartons as well as mid-web flexo for unsupported films. Things are not just about printing labels anymore – you need a complete packaging solution, a one-stop shop.

Ultimately, we would love to venture into the developed markets like Europe and USA. We are confident of repeating

our success in those markets too with our focus on continuous innovation and high quality.

UPDATE PRINTS – RAJESH CHADHA

RP: Describe your business?

RC: We are a family business employing 70 people. Our main market is FMCG, and our highest margin is on cosmetics and personal care, although we also get a good margin on pharma. We work on two shifts. We normally have just completed a new 10,000sq yard manufacturing plant with five acres of land. Our idea eventually is to have everything under one roof.

RP: What has been your most recent technology investment?

RC: We most recently acquired a Rotatek Brava 440 with an in-line combination of silk screen and hot foil stamping along with the ability to do offset and flexo printing, embossing, cold foil stamping and lamination. The Rotatak is a good offset press, solid. Its semi- and full rotary modes both have advantages, and it runs at a good speed.

This is a 90ft machine, so we installed automated BST inspection in-line, which is particularly important for pharma, along with barcode scanning and color monitoring. When printing labels it is better to resolve any problems there and then, rather than looking once printed. It saves money.

MIS is high on our agenda, and we are working towards it. We are already lean in that we only keep seven days stock, as overstocking ties up money. Our suppliers are good at planning, inventory and maintain adequate stocks at their end.

RP: What are the major issues facing Indian converters?

RC: The biggest issue is it's hard to get good operators, and staff training as a whole is an issue. It is difficult to retain people and 20 percent wage inflation is demanded a year – even up to 50 percent for good staff.

RP: How do you train and motivate your sales team?

RC: Not many Indian printers run dual incentive schemes, but we do have one for repeat orders and a higher one for new business. Because we know most of our customers personally, sales people have a different role here – more as client service managers.

RP: Are you happy with current developments at the LMAI?

RC: The LMAI has certainly improved over the last four to five years, and is doing good work, especially at the recent congress. It is good to have our name on the global stage.

RP: Where do you see future opportunities?

RC: We are looking into package printing and in the near future may start a new offset press which can handle multi substrates. Runs are coming down in the carton and card markets – carton has the same issues as labels so the opportunity is there for the label converter.

Security also needs looking at, as there are lots of opportunities for anti-counterfeiting and brand protection, and this is all added value work.

In the beverage sector it is mainly whisky, rum and beer, although vodka has been picking up recently. Whisky is a big market but still the labels have a lot of scope for improvement ! On beer it is still mainly wet glue and PS has only a small penetration. For whisky PS is only 20 percent, so there is a huge potential.

RP: What is your view on digital printing?

RC: Digital is a complimentary technology and not stand alone. Inkjet is cheaper, but still a big decision considering the investment – and what are the opportunity prospects? We will look for complete combination printing, but digital is too slow at the moment. It will be the right thing when the investment is slightly less.

RP: What are the future prospects for the Indian label sector?

RC: We are currently growing every year by around 20 percent, but we expect 100 percent growth five years from now. This is because the big supermarkets are coming into India: Tesco and Walmart will come in. They will want local printers – Chinese printers did not adapt so international printers came in to service the multi-nationals.



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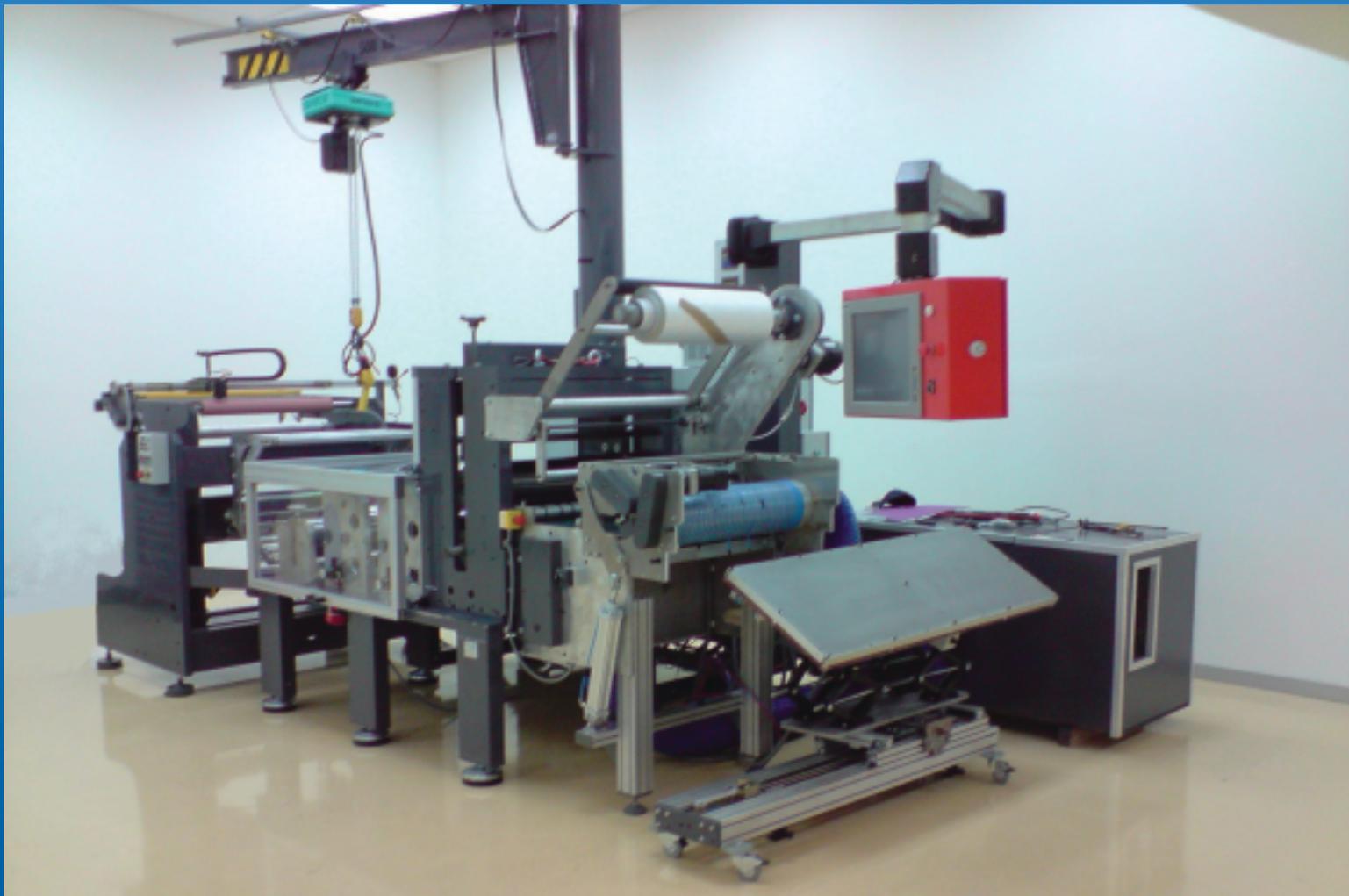
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Etiquetas Anro grows

INNOVATION AND INVESTMENT are the keys to finding long term success in the label industry. In Mexico, Etiquetas Anro believes this is the way writes Danielle Jerschefske

The Silva family purchased its first printing press twenty five years ago, a Mark Andy 810 that is still used today to produce two-color pricing labels as Etiquetas Anro. Since then, the second generation has taken over operations and management to grow the business, reinventing the 'label' by acquiring new technologies and adopting modern production techniques to remain competitive.

Just before the global recession hit three years ago, Etiquetas Anro purchased and installed an 8-color MPS EC3300 (13 inch/330mm) multi-substrate press to further develop business into the prime label market. The MPS machine is fully UV with GEW lamps and is equipped with all the functions. Business in Mexico, like most every market in the world, grinded to a halt, and is still working to fully recover from the massive business hit. Yet, the converter was able to sustain, and even find new clients. Fabian Silva, commercial director says, 'The market really slowed here and the last few years have been super tough. We were worried about the investment honestly.'

Today, thirty percent of the converter's business is prime label production on the MPS EC flexographic press.

Etiquetas Anro produces mostly PS materials for a wide variety of markets including the nation's largest retailers. The machine has helped the converter move into PS film label production for health and beauty products, but business has not moved into unsupported films, which is a possibility for future growth.

A significant share of business is in security printing, producing labels with

covert inks and ultra-fine print fonts that allow for anti-counterfeit tactics and track and trace methods. Many of the security labels are produced on a 6-color Nilpeter FB water-based machine. Etiquetas Anro is one of the only verified suppliers in Mexico for one of the nation's largest retail chains.

Security inks are used to print a black light readable 'Anro' on tags and labels. The retailer can use the products as a tracking device to verify which labels are most suitable for deterring counterfeit sales and stolen items. In some cases the converter works directly with retailer's suppliers because saleable items need be labeled before entering the stores. The new MPS machine allows the converter's press operators to produce labels with extremely fine point font allowing even more secure, covert label production to deter counterfeit issues.

EFFICIENCY & FLOW

Fabian Silva runs the business as commercial director. Nidia Silva, his sister, works as the human resources manager, and Amin Silva, his brother, helped develop the company into what it now is the operations manager until last year when he parted ways to begin a career outside of the country. Together the siblings understand the importance of cost control, running speeds and productivity and waste.

Fabian Silva explains, 'Each machine, finishing or a press, is considered a 'CC' or Cost Center including the operator's wage, facility rent, and other costs that must be factored into production and sales. Each operator knows the ideal production speeds and are trained to run

the machinery as efficiently as possible. With this system, profitability is effectively measured across these marks.' The system helps management gain a better understanding of true cost and helps to find areas for improvement whether it is operator training or capital investment.

An investment was made in a core cutter to find efficiencies in the operation. The business only requires a small inventory and it's easier to store large tubes and cut them down to size when needed.

A conveyor belt has been used for a number of years to help move finished products into the packaging department to speed preparation for shipment. Silva explains that the company has done a lot of work to improve the flow of the current plant, which has been in use for four years and still has room for growth. Operations choose flexible dies 98 percent of the time because of the reduced cost and improved changeover speeds found with the technology.

Like many converters in the last couple years, Etiquetas Anro has increased its focus on inventory control by closely working with material suppliers Avery Dennison, 3M, Green Bay Packaging and UPM Raflatac to improve lead times and accurate ordering. In Mexico, converters have a 24 hour lead time with Avery and Raflatac. It has also expanded its storage area to hold products for customers until they're ready for application. Sixty employees run two shifts. Assistants help with the set-up of the more complex presses using the 'pits' project methodology. Silva says, 'We strongly believe in growing our people with the company.'

The converter has created a systematic training program to ensure each individual is provided with the proper training and skill set to move forward. New employees typically start with finishing and then move into a basic rewind station and so on. Marisella is the lead operator on the MPS EC machine, a female that has scaled the ranks within the facility, quickly taking her skill set from less automated presses and translating her knowledge to perform extremely well on the advanced press.

SOLUCIONES INTELIGENTES

The converter has been working away in its R&D department to design labels that create differentiation and add-value, both to a brand and to the consumer. In order to promote its capabilities it has printed complex samples with odorous coatings and multiple layers to show clients what its



MARISELLA with Silva next to the MPS machine

Etiquetas Anro grows

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The Silva family purchased its first printing press 25 years ago – a Mark Andy 810 that is still used today to produce two-color pricing labels as Etiquetas Anro. Now the second generation has taken over, reinventing the business by acquiring new technologies and adopting modern production techniques.

Just before the global recession hit three years ago, Etiquetas Anro purchased and installed an 8-color MPS EC3300 (13 inch/330mm) multi-substrate press to shift the business into the prime label market. The MPS machine is fully UV with GEW lamps and is fully loaded with turn bar, corona treaters, screen, lamination and cold foil capability in partnership with Kurz.

During the recession, Mexico ground to a halt, and the economy is still working to fully recover. Yet Etiquetas Anro was able not only to sustain its level of business, but to find new clients. 'The market really slowed here and the last few years have been super tough,' says Fabian Silva, general manager. 'Honestly, we were worried about our investment.'

Today, 30 percent of the converter's business is prime label production on the MPS EC flexographic press. Etiquetas Anro produces mostly PS materials for a wide variety of markets including the nation's largest retailers. The machine has helped the converter move into PS film label production for health and beauty products, but business has not moved into unsupported films, which is a possibility for future growth.

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covert inks and ultra-fine print fonts that allow for anti-counterfeit and track and trace labels. Many of these security labels are produced on a 6-color Nilpeter FB water-based machine.

Etiquetas Anro is one of the only suppliers in Mexico to be security print certified by Liverpool, one of the country's oldest and largest retail chains with over 70 locations. Security inks are used to print a black light readable 'Anro' on tags and labels. The retailer can use the products as a tracking device to verify which labels are most suitable for deterring counterfeit sales and stolen items. In some cases the converter works directly with Liverpool's suppliers because saleable items need to be labeled before entering the stores.

The new MPS machine allows the converter's press operators to produce labels with extremely fine text, which itself can act as a deterrent to counterfeit attempts.

FAMILY CONCERN

Fabian Silva runs the business as general manager and his sister Nidia Silva works as human resources manager. Amin Silva, his brother, helped develop the company into what it is now as operations manager, until last year when he parted ways to begin a career with Kocher & Beck in Latin America. Together the siblings understand the importance of cost control, productivity and waste.

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production speeds and is trained to run the machinery as efficiently as possible. With this system, profitability is effectively measured across these marks.' The system helps management gain a better understanding of true cost and helps to find areas for improvement whether it is operator training or capital investment.

Just one example was an investment in a core cutter. 'The business only requires a small inventory and it's easier to store large tubes and cut them down to size when needed.'

A conveyor belt has been used for a number of years to help move finished products into the packaging department to speed preparation for shipment. Silva explains that the company has done a lot of work to improve the flow of the current plant, which has been in use for seven years and still has room for growth. Flexible dies are chosen 98 percent of the time because of the reduced cost and improved changeover speeds found with this technology.

Like many converters in the last couple years, Etiquetas Anro has increased its focus on inventory control by working closely with its material suppliers – which include Avery Dennison, 3M, Green Bay Packaging and UPM Raflatac – to improve lead times and accurate ordering. In Mexico, converters have a 24 hour lead time with Avery and Raflatac. Anro has also expanded its storage area to hold products for customers.

Two shifts are run, with 60 employees. Assistants help with the set-up of the more complex presses using the 'pitstop' project methodology. Silva says, 'We strongly believe in growing our people with the company.'

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ORGANIZED flow within the Anro plant

capable of. With the current machines it can run a roll of material through to be printed, and then re-registered the same roll and run it through the press again to create a top layer, peel-away film.

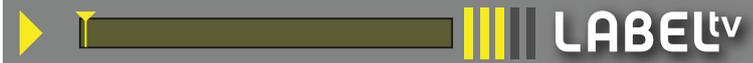
It has created what Silva calls the 'Magicuento' or 'Magic Book', which is a sheet of material with multiple scenes and stickers with removable adhesive. 'It gives the kids something to do while mom is still shopping around the store,' explains Silva. 'We're in the process of obtaining a Trademark for the idea because we think there's great opportunity to apply the complex interactive labels to flexible packaging. It can be combined with a promotional coupon or recipes – anything can be printed to provide the consumer more value by selected a product with Anro specialty labels.'

'Tarjetas Magicas' or 'Magic Cards' is another Etiquetas Anro development. The Magic Cards are coated with a proprietary water-soluble coating that disappears to reveal an image. Here the cards can be used for kiddie fun or serious security with foiling and other covert applications combined. Again, this type of label can be used in conjunction with promotional tickets and with scratch-off coatings to enhance the consumer experience in the store and at home while the product is in use.

Silva says, 'We really try to understand the need of customers and apply this knowledge with our technicians and managers to develop new applications to solve problems they never knew they had.'

Moving forward the converter might move into shrink sleeve production. But its next investment will most likely be in plate making equipment, mostly because of the speed to production; also, since ninety percent of platemakers in Mexico are in-house shops, bringing plate production into Etiquetas Anro will improve plant security and its ability to service clients with confidential services. Operations management is currently reviewing the Kodak and DuPont equipment.

Silva concludes, 'We produce add-value products that can cost a bit more, but believe that our clients will pay because they want what Anro has to offer.'



SEE the magic card video at www.labelsandlabeling.com/label-tv

THE INSIDER

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES



THE Nanocleaner parts washing system

NANOVIS LAUNCHES SUSTAINABLE CLEANING SOLUTION

Swiss company Nanovis GmbH launched at Labelexpo Europe its Nanocleaner inking parts cleaning machine, which features an integrated 'infinite' recycling system for the solvent-free cleaning agent. The Nanocleaner works by constantly separating the cleaning agent from the printing inks, leaving only a small residue of solid ink waste to be disposed of. The cleaning agent is then made available for reuse.

'This beats the conventional cleaning process in the consumption of consumables and disposal costs,' comments Christoph Schönenberger, sales manager at Nanovis. 'It is not only more efficient and less costly, but more considerate towards environmental concerns and worker safety.' Schönenberger says the unit will help converters looking to achieve environmental protection certifications such as ISO14001, and the system has already won Swiss and European sustainability awards.

The Nanocleaner is also an efficient cleaning system, taking just five minutes to clean ink-contaminated doctor blades, chambered blades, ink trays and other inking system parts. Low migration inks present no problems for the system, says the manufacturer.

The unit does not discharge harmful vapors or odors and is silent in operation, meaning it can be placed next to the printing presses without additional investment in ventilation devices or separated cleaning rooms. 'Combined with its low consumption of consumables the system pays for itself within a short time,' says Schönenberger.

Nanovis is now looking to develop a worldwide sales network for the Nanocleaner.

PAMARCO TO EXPAND MANUFACTURING CAPABILITIES

Anilox supplier Pamarco Global Graphics has acquired the base roll manufacturing assets of the former CNW in Cincinnati, Ohio. All equipment will be relocated to a new facility in Walton, Kentucky, located approximately twenty miles south of Cincinnati.

'This strategic acquisition of base roll manufacturing capability complements the small roll manufacturing capability of the offset division, positioning Pamarco as the only vertically integrated anilox roll producer in the United States,' said the company in a statement.

Featuring a large library of blueprints, and capacity from 10in to 23in face length, Pamarco will now have the ability to manufacture custom single roll orders as well as large multiple cylinder gravure, anilox, emboss and air mandrels.

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printed complex samples with scented coatings and multiple layers. With the MPS EC machine, for example, it can re-register a printed roll to add a top layer, peel-away film.

Another interesting product is what Silva calls the 'Magicuento' or 'Magic Book', which is a sheet of material with multiple scenes and stickers manufactured with removable adhesive. 'It gives the kids something to do while mom is still shopping around the store,' explains Silva. 'We're looking to trademark the idea because we think there's great opportunity to apply the complex interactive labels to flexible packaging. It can be combined with a promotional coupon or recipes – anything can be printed to provide the consumer more value.'

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Moving forward the converter might move into shrink sleeve label production. But its next investment will most likely be in plate making equipment, to increase speed to production. Bringing plate production into Etiquetas Anro will also improve plant security where customers require complete confidentiality. Management is currently reviewing both Kodak and DuPont equipment.

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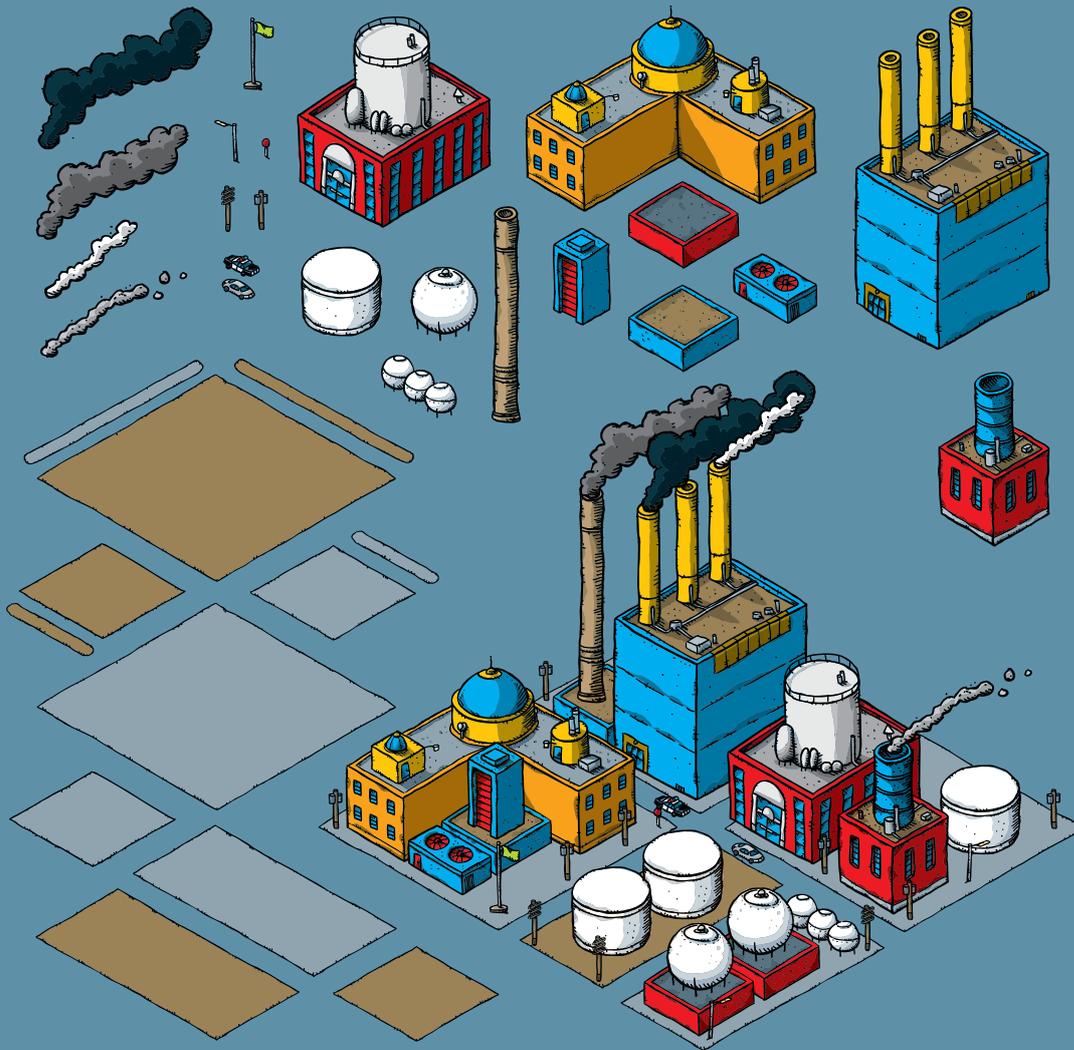
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Building the Ideal Company

BY BOB CRONIN, The Open Approach

If you're considering an acquisition, there are plenty of great deals out there. You may already be talking to a struggling neighbor or considering a transaction that has been pitched by a colleague or consulting firm. But a 'great deal' doesn't necessarily translate into great business. I can readily think of a dozen companies that have jumped at the chance to scoop up cheap buys, only to end up with a Frankenstein sort of enterprise no better than the original.

Now, more than ever, any move must be weighed with extra caution. It's not simply about scrutinizing a candidate's balance sheet and client lineup. It's not about using the opportunity to acquire new equipment at a fraction of what your manufacturer's rep wants to charge you. And it's certainly not about scoring a property at a price ludicrously lower than its market value.

The motive behind M&A now should be to create the ideal company for our current and, more important, anticipated market place. Surely we cannot know exactly where it will be in five years—or two for that matter. Things change too quickly. But we can make some intelligent predictions based on the market's patterns and trajectory.

When you look to the future, some issues never change. Your core concerns are likely: How can I grow my business? What capabilities do I need now and in the long term? What would be the one addition that would help me sign my top prospect – on

contract? How am I communicating my position (value) to the marketplace? How is my company perceived?

You may have noticed, all these issues revolve around the customer. The ever-changing, ever-challenging, ever-unnerving, ever-negotiating... yet ever-important customer. Truly, their concerns must be your concerns.

But even as our industry continues to change, and demand drivers appear to fluctuate daily, customers' key issues remain the same. They are just more difficult to see in today's madness. What customers want – and need – are: service, quality, capabilities, flexibility, and of course, competitive pricing. Let's take a look at these five and consider assembling an enterprise to answer the call.

1. SERVICE

Take a look at your competitors' websites. Every single one of them will tell you they offer service your clients have only dreamed about. Customers' 80-dollar, 50-piece digital job will be turned around in hours, handled with kid gloves, and be delivered to their doorstep... by George Clooney.

Now look at your own site. You are likely promising the same thing (with or without Clooney). Clearly, we know that service trumps all. Price contentions aside, most people decide whom to buy from based on service. Do you deliver as expected? On time? In fact? Do you provide for the peace of mind that they

will get exactly what they need when they need it? Moreover, how do you address mistakes or discrepancies? Clients may not like when something goes wrong, but more clients are lost in the aftermath of a mistake than the actual event itself.

Despite its undeniable value, service is more difficult to evaluate than a company's financial statements. During the review process, most companies or M&A firms restrict a potential acquirer from contacting customers, suppliers, or prospects. Yet acquiring a company with poor service levels can be disastrous to your current company.

As you consider candidates for acquisition, check out length of customer relationships. Then check out size of client and vertical markets. Larger companies tend to have more purchasing leverage and can hold their suppliers to higher standards. Vertical presence will tell you about what pressures they face. Does the potential acquisition work with large, demanding organizations or mom-and-pop shops? Do they handle time-sensitive business – for example, date-stamped fresh food packaging – or labels on paint cans? It's nice to bring additional vertical markets into the fold, but make sure the style of the marketplace synchs up with the service levels you provide (or are striving to). You should also check online reviews and social media sites for customer feedback and interaction. You'd be surprised how many acquirers neglect this goldmine of information.

2. QUALITY

Does anybody say they offer anything other than 'high quality' work? Again, the key here in considering a transaction is aligning quality levels with what your customers expect and where you need to be in the future. Will the acquisition help elevate your status? Will their equipment and intellectual resources help you produce higher quality materials that will be better received by your clients? Will it put you in position to compete for more profitable customers and work?

There are many commodity shops out there – most of which are highly profitable. But if their quality levels are a mismatch, take a pass. In no instance does it make sense to acquire a company with quality levels inferior to yours. Customer perceptions will drop regardless of whether the work done at your current shop is still on par. We know most customers demand quality, or everybody wouldn't be promising it. Choose an acquisition that can take you to a higher level, not one that will drag you down.

3. CAPABILITIES

Label companies must be focused on depth, diversity, and duration. Your biggest boost will come from a partner that doesn't simply fill in gaps, but extends your products and services into larger, more lucrative territories.

Don't buy a company simply because it gives you more equipment. More equipment means more overhead and more capacity you have to fill. In today's market, focus on enabling technologies, Internet savvy, intellectual resources, patents, and other attractive features that give you more depth in crafting solutions or help you capture better business for the long term.

If you add a digital press, great. Your customers may throw you a short-run project or two. But if it's not backed up with depth (in-house finishing, conversion, etc.), it won't make a dent in your revenue goals. Your customers not only want to know you are making the necessary investments to build your organization, they want you to be making them to build theirs. As you evaluate an acquisition's abilities to extend your service line, realize that future needs hinge on late-breaking technologies. But be judicious. An estimated 75 percent of novel developments in the graphic arts industry fall flat. Think of high-fidelity color or stochastic screening. Did either of these truly address a true client need?

Your clients want solutions for their pain – better project management, product tracking, ROI measurement, monitoring, and delivery mechanisms, for example. What you provide for them shows how well you are listening to their needs and goals.

More robust capabilities should always be a decision factor behind an M&A move. But be careful not to lay your stakes on a promise of the next great industry transformation. Client needs can change quickly. Which brings us to our next consideration.

4. FLEXIBILITY

The label industry is very similar to the animal kingdom; you must adapt to survive. Think wildebeest amongst a herd of gazelles. Is your current organization able to change?

Many large companies fail to understand how much flexibility (or lack thereof) really affects their business. If you have legacy systems, a half-retired 'veteran' sales force (you know what I mean), or stodgy CSR pool, you are locking yourself out of tomorrow's opportunities.

Companies in this predicament can drastically change their position and perception with fresh new blood, ideas, and possibilities. The label industry at large struggles with change, perhaps because it's more ingrained in our psyche than our graphic arts cousins.

There will always be a need for pressure-sensitive, cut-and-stack, and other types of labels. Businesses will be buying these products for many years to come.

But for most of us, the ability to stay nimble is the key to longevity. Quit following the herd. Adapt. Change. Get better with service. Improve your quality. Verifiably grow your in-demand capabilities. And do it now to prepare for the future.

We have to be nimble in today's dynamic marketplace. A favorable impression is hard to create, but a negative one can be solidified quickly. Nothing speaks more about a company than its willingness to grow, add, adapt, and change – as long as it does so around the customer's needs.

5. COMPETITIVE PRICING

Alas, the inescapable discussion about pricing. People are negotiating today not simply because they need to save costs. It's just the thing to do. Everybody is asking for discounts at every given turn. In light of this, you must be competitive, but do not cave. It simply doesn't make sense to bring projects in that you do at cost or lower. Let your competitors take these on and put themselves out of business. Believe me, at the current pace of things, they will.

Labels have the advantage of being more valuable – and more valued – than other products in the graphic arts. While price will continue to be an issue in 2012, it is just a placemaker on which opportunities ride. Seeing pricing from the consulting side, I have the distinct advantage on knowing what companies are doing and why. If you add another entity that will enable you to provide a high-volume, in-demand service more cost-effectively and profitably than the competition, by all means do it. But doing projects simply off a price point won't work to your building the ideal company.



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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The top 10

L&L asked MACtac technical guru David Ohnmeiss what were the ten questions most commonly asked by converters

Pressure-sensitive adhesives have been used for years in the labeling industry as a clean, unobtrusive means of adhering labels to various substrates. While highly customizable to fit a wide range of applications, many converters, manufacturers and printers find it difficult to grasp which pressure-sensitive adhesive chemistries will best fit their needs, what printing methods will work best and how to ensure that all regulatory requirements are met. To help address some of these concerns, we've compiled a list of the top 10 technical questions that pressure sensitive adhesive manufacturers typically field and have enlisted the help of veteran industry experts to provide straightforward answers.

No1. WHAT TYPE OF ADHESIVE IS RECOMMENDED FOR HARD-TO ADHERE-TO SUBSTRATES, SUCH AS WAXY CORRUGATED, AND ROUGH OR POROUS SURFACES?

When dealing with abnormal, difficult surfaces, it is important to use adhesives that are designed for use with these particular substrates. In general, soft, cold-flow, high-tack adhesives with a higher-than-average coat weight are desirable for these applications.

Testing is very important when dealing with hard-to-adhere-to substrate, especially those with limited-contact surface area and rough-textured surfaces. Because of their distinct properties, it is difficult to anticipate how these surfaces will respond to various adhesives, making rigorous testing the best way to ensure that a given adhesive will work for your application. Also be sure to consider environmental factors that will affect a substrate, such as temperature, moisture, and surface contamination as these factors can have a significant effect on adhesive performance.

No2. SHOULD I USE AN ACRYLIC OR RUBBER-BASED ADHESIVE?

Rubber- and acrylic-based adhesives each have their strengths and weaknesses, and should be carefully selected for each application to take advantage of those strengths. Permanent rubber-based adhesives generally exhibit high tack and peel, providing quick tack and strong bonds to low surface energy substrates. They also typically offer higher humidity and moisture-resistance, but are typically more susceptible to high temperatures, oxidation, UV degradation, plasticizers and chemicals.

Acrylic adhesives, on the other hand, typically provide moderate initial tack eventually building to their ultimate adhesion over time. Some acrylic adhesives perform exceptionally well on small-diameter cylinders like medical vials and in outdoor applications. They also typically offer better resistance to high temperature, UV degradation, chemicals, oxidation and plasticizers when compared to rubber-based alternatives.

No3. WHEN SHOULD I SELECT AN ALL-TEMPERATURE ADHESIVE VERSUS A GENERAL-PURPOSE PERMANENT (GPP) ADHESIVE?

When selecting an adhesive, the environment in which the adhesive will be applied should determine which type of adhesive will best suit the needs of the application. All-temperature adhesives should be selected if the label will be applied to the substrate in a cold temperature environment. They are not necessarily needed if applied at room temperature then subjected to cold temperatures. All-temp adhesives are softer and offer better cold flow to allow for labeling in cold temperature environments. GPP adhesives are designed to be more aggressive at room temperature, yet they can be exposed to cold temperature environments after adequate residence time. While both all-temperature and GPP adhesives will perform adequately under a range of temperatures, each type is optimized for an intended application environment.

No4. WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REMOVABILITY, OPEN TIME, AND REPOSITIONABILITY?

While similar terms, it is important to know the difference between removability, open time, and repositionability when selecting the best adhesive for an application where clean label removal is essential. First, removability describes how cleanly and easily a label can be pulled from a substrate without damaging the substrate and without leaving residue or ghosting. Removability is highly dependent upon the substrate's surface energy, environmental conditions, dwell time on the substrate, face strength, and adhesive formulation. Open time is a relative measure of removability. It describes the length of time one has to remove a label before its bond becomes permanent. Open time is important to consider when determining ease of removal of misapplied or misaligned labels. The term repositionability refers to a label's removability in addition to the ability to reapply the same label to the same or a different substrate, sometimes multiple times.

While clean removability and adequate open time to correct placement errors are common labeling needs, repositionability generally comes into play for unique applications where it is important to reapply a specific label. These applications are generally more challenging, and as with all product selections, should be accompanied by practical testing to confirm fitness for use.

No5. WHAT REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS SHOULD I BE AWARE OF WHEN SELECTING A PRESSURE SENSITIVE ADHESIVE?

When selecting an adhesive, it is important to remember that regulatory requirements change frequently and are highly application-dependant. It is a good idea to request that your customer provide you with all requirements for their

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specific application so that you can work with a supplier to provide a recommendation that meets all of those needs. Take into account that suppliers will need exact regulatory requirement numbers to make an informed recommendation. As always, it is important to test adhesive options within the specific application to ensure regulations are met.

No6. HOW LONG WILL A LABEL LAST?

Label life expectancy can be broken into two categories, shelf life and durability. Shelf life refers to the amount of time a label maintains its quality and performance level in an unapplied state. To maximize shelf life, raw material label stock and finished labels should be stored in conditions as close to 72 F and 50 percent RH as possible. Durability relates to how long a label will perform on a substrate in its end-use application. Label durability depends on label construction, print technology and environmental conditions. Understanding the durability needs for an application is key to designing a cost-effective and successful label solution.

No7. WHEN DO I NEED A DIRECT VS. INDIRECT FOOD CONTACT ADHESIVE FOR MY APPLICATION?

The main factor that determines whether food contact labeling is considered direct or indirect revolves around whether there's a functional barrier between the food that is being labeled and the adhesive. For more specific information, please refer to the Food and Drug Administration's mandates on the topic: FDA spec 21 CFR 175.105 for regulations on indirect food contact adhesives and FDA spec 21 CFR 175.125 for direct food contact adhesives. Also remember that with food labeling there can be additional regulations that relate to the label facestock, inks, varnishes, etc, further highlighting the importance of working with knowledgeable suppliers.

No8. WHAT FILM FACESTOCK SHOULD I USE?

There are numerous types of film facestocks to choose from that could fit the needs of labeling applications, and all have their own unique characteristics that may help or hinder performance. Knowing these performance characteristics are only part of the equation, however, as you'll also need to know the facestock's converting characteristics, such as usefulness for printing, die cutting and so on. The most popular film facestocks used in prime labeling are biaxially-oriented polypropylene (BOPP/PP) or polyolefin (PO), polystyrene (PS), and polyethylene (PE). For more durable labeling requirements, polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) are often used. For those customers that would like a more environmentally friendly facestock, polylactic acid (PLA) has become quite popular. The usual rules apply when it comes to selecting a film facestock: know your application needs and select a face stock accordingly.

No9. WHAT ADVICE CAN YOU GIVE REGARDING DIGITAL PRINTING ON PRESSURE SENSITIVE LAMINATES?

When planning the best method for digitally printing labels, research what products are recommended for your digital press or printer model for optimal results. Knowing what model you or your customer is using, required properties of printing materials (such as basis weight and caliper range), the printer or press's media handling capabilities (whether it can handle pressure-sensitive label media), and whether the printer requires ink-specific stock (ink jet, toner, thermal transfer, Indigo, etc.) is very helpful when making printing decisions. For any pre-print requirements, check with your ink manufacturer to find out whether a given ink will work well on certain substrates and be functional and safe for use in that digital press or printer. As a result, it is safest to steer toward products made specifically for digital printers.

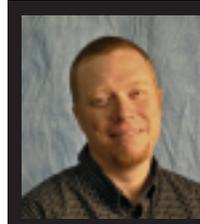
When working with thermal transfer printers, finding the right ribbon to use is imperative. In general, wax-resin ribbon should be trialed on substrates not originally designed for thermal printing. Testing all aspects of the printing and end-use for a product is the only way to be sure that your label construction and design will effectively meet your customer's expectations.

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE FOR FILM PROPERTIES

PROPERTIES	BOPP	PE	PWC	PET	PS
Clarity	Good	Poor	Fair	Good	Good
Thickness	Low	High	High	Low	Low
Tear Strength	High	Medium	Medium	High	Low
Elongation/Stretch	Medium Low	High	Medium	Low	Low
UV Resistance	Low	Low	Medium	High	Low
Surface Energy	Low	Low	Medium	High	Medium Low
UV Resistance	Fair	Poor	Good	Good	Poor
Heat Resistance	Medium	Low	Medium	High	Low
Cold Resistance	Good	Good	Good	Fair	Low
Stiffness	Medium	Low	Low	High	High
Squeezability	Good	Great	Good	Poor	Poor
Environmental	Good	Great	Poor	Fair	Fair
Cost	Medium	Low	High	High	Low

No10. WHAT GENERAL ADVICE CAN YOU OFFER SOMEONE SELECTING A PRESSURE-SENSITIVE LAMINATE?

As has been stated numerous times before, it is important to test products sufficiently in any application. The more circumstances and conditions you account for in testing, the more likely you are to select the correct pressure-sensitive laminate. Do not hesitate to talk to your supplier, they can help you ask the right questions and can recommend products designed for your specific application. Attaining the needed performance, price and aesthetics is critical, so communication is key to working with your customer and your PSA supplier to find the best product to meet you and your customer's wants and needs.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DAVID OHNMEISS,

Technical quality assurance manager, Mactac Specialty Products

Ohnmeiss has served Mactac Specialty Products for more than 15 years, serving in a wide range of research and development, product design, quality management and technical customer support roles. Ohnmeiss is responsible for managing the implementation, management and improvement of technical quality service systems and procedures for Mactac, and oversees the claim and technical service support groups. He is an expert in quality management systems, ISO9000 certifications, pressure-sensitive product design, technical service and troubleshooting.

Prior to joining Mactac, Ohnmeiss served as a biochemical researcher at the University of Buffalo. He is a graduate of New York State University at Fredonia where he received a bachelor of science degree in biology.



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Sustainability dominates paper debate

BRIGL AND BERGMEISTER hosted its ninth Label Conference in October. Carol Houghton highlights some of the key discussions

Sustainability was on everyone's mind at Brigl and Bergmeister's ninth annual Label conference, held in Bad Hofgastein, Austria. The event attracted 180 printers and industry suppliers from 27 countries.

In his keynote, Brigl and Bergmeister CEO Michael Sabltanig said it is essential to make companies more sustainable in a time of global economic instability and tumbling stock markets. But there are positives – the purchasing power of the middle classes in emerging markets is growing. In developed markets, meanwhile, changing consumer behaviour is presenting its own challenges – particularly as environmental awareness impacts on packaging requirements.

But Sabltanig noted that sustainability must have an economic base, and this means the converting industry needs to improve its cost base needs and its management of raw materials, energy and transport costs, all of which require cooperation throughout the supply chain.

Sabltanig called on the industry to better communicate the benefits of paper. 'Oil based materials are not sustainable, with some experts predicting the age of oil is past its peak, and in Europe, wood-based materials volumes are growing once again.' Paper consists of 95 percent renewable raw materials,

mainly pulp, so is well positioned in environmental terms.

David Ravnjak, F&E Papirnica Vevce, Brigl and Bergmeister, looked at the development of 'smart' printed features on paper – biosensors/activators and interactive labels.

Ravnjak also emphasized the technical performance characteristics of paper. For example an 80gsm label paper can withstand up to 200kpa (kilo/pascals) pressure and in terms of stiffness, can support up to three kg weight. As wet strength, papers can also incorporate properties such as flame retardance and can act as a barrier for oxygen, vapor, liquids and grease. These properties can be built in through coating design, through base paper design – choice of fiber type, additives and paper recipe – and the design of processing steps including conditioning and coating.

It is also easy to forget how adaptable paper is in terms of surface design, said Ravnjak. 'It is flexible and adapts to the shape of the canister.'

Sebastian Schwarz, Heidelberger Druckmaschinen, used his presentation to explain how sustainable manufacturing can deliver to printers operational and economic and well as ecological benefits, while Douglas Hutt from SAB Miller, the world's second largest brewer, gave an end users' perspective



IN South Korea, shoppers scan QR codes to order products while waiting for a train

on sustainability as consumers become better educated and more informed.

POST PRESS TECHNOLOGY

Georges Bachtold, CEO of label finishing specialist Blumer, assessed the technical trends in post-press wet glue label production.

In 2010, the total world demand for labels was 43 billion square meters, at a growth rate of five and half percent. The Asia Pacific market took the biggest share at 33 percent, with Europe taking 31 percent and North America, 24 percent.

In terms of label technology, in the same year 41 percent was glue applied, 40 percent self adhesive, 12 percent sleeving, two percent IML and five percent was accounted for by other technologies. The Chinese and Indian markets were the main drivers for growth.

Bachtold said there remains a lot of potential for glue-applied labels if companies concentrate on optimizing automation in print finishing, production workflow, quality control, logistics and administration. He identified integration of data from prepress and press to the post press operation as a key to future productivity gains. At the same time, wet glue converters must learn to concentrate on profitable segments of the market, becoming proactive in offering innovative designs and substrates to customers.

METALIZED PAPERS

Paul Van Emmerik, CEO, AR Metallizing, said the paper industry should be promoting metalized papers as a sustainable alternative to aluminium foil, with the potential to replace up to 10 percent of the 800,000 tonnes of aluminium foil used every year in Europe. This would significantly reduce CO2 emissions and the material is fully recyclable. He said paper provides better performance than metalized plastics such as BOPP and PET in terms of better ink retentiveness and reduced glue consumption and bottling waste.

The metalized paper industry has seen continuous growth – except for in 2009 –

at a typical annual rate of five percent. It is expected to continue growing at the same rate, thanks to the importance of shelf impact and a rise in disposable income globally, said Van Emmerik. There is also currently a rise in in-mold metalized paper labeling, replacing PET/board laminates and increasing shelf life in some applications by several days.

Although AR Metallizing's core markets are beverage, beer and spirit labels, Van Emmerik identified packaging as a growing market. 'Optimizing packaging can generate economic value and environmental benefits' he said.

ADHESIVES

Marc Van Damme, CEO at CPH Deutschland, discussed the sustainability profile of adhesives. A wide range of environmental factors are taken into account when developing new formulations, including safety, use of renewable resources, CO2 emissions, energy consumption, waste management, biodegradability and total cost of use for inputs such as water and energy. The industry needs to 'consider the cradle to the grave.'

Van Damme said the development of biodegradable adhesives has gone hand in hand with the development of biodegradable plastics, and noted the possible application of hydrolysable (water soluble) adhesives for bottling.

LABELS GET A NEW LOOK

Rowland Heming, director at brand development specialist Design Board, looked at how consumer 'mega trends' impact label design, with the key values being 'convenience, exploration, connection, value, indulgence, authenticity and ethical choices. Packaging provides a way to communicate these values to the consumer.'

Localization will be another key trend as increasing petrol prices

THE PRICE WE'RE WILLING TO PAY

In a Q&A session, Tony Knight, managing director of Brigl and Bergmeister's UK agent Papico, raised the question of how 'green' is to be defined. Although certified forest schemes such as FSC and PEFC have helped, 'the truth is, in our industry nobody can define exactly what is 'green'. To some it is carbon footprint – the measurement of how much carbon dioxide is produced generating the energy used in producing the paper and delivering it. Does the mill take electric power from the national grid or does it generate its own from a hydro or solar system? There is a very big difference in the size of the respective carbon footprints! Brigl and Bergmeister, producing label paper in Austria, has its own hydro electricity plant at its mill in Niklasdorf and its papers therefore have the lowest carbon footprint on the label market.'

But Knight questioned whether end users will pay a premium for sustainability. Papico has just become UK agent for US company DaniMer, for example, which produces bio-degradable hot melt adhesives which will 'totally disappear' in normal paper or carton recycling. 'However, the first comment from most people is, "I will not pay a premium for it, no matter how green it is." The bottom line is, the greenest' mills products must compete at similar price levels to those who pay the minimum attention to the environment.'

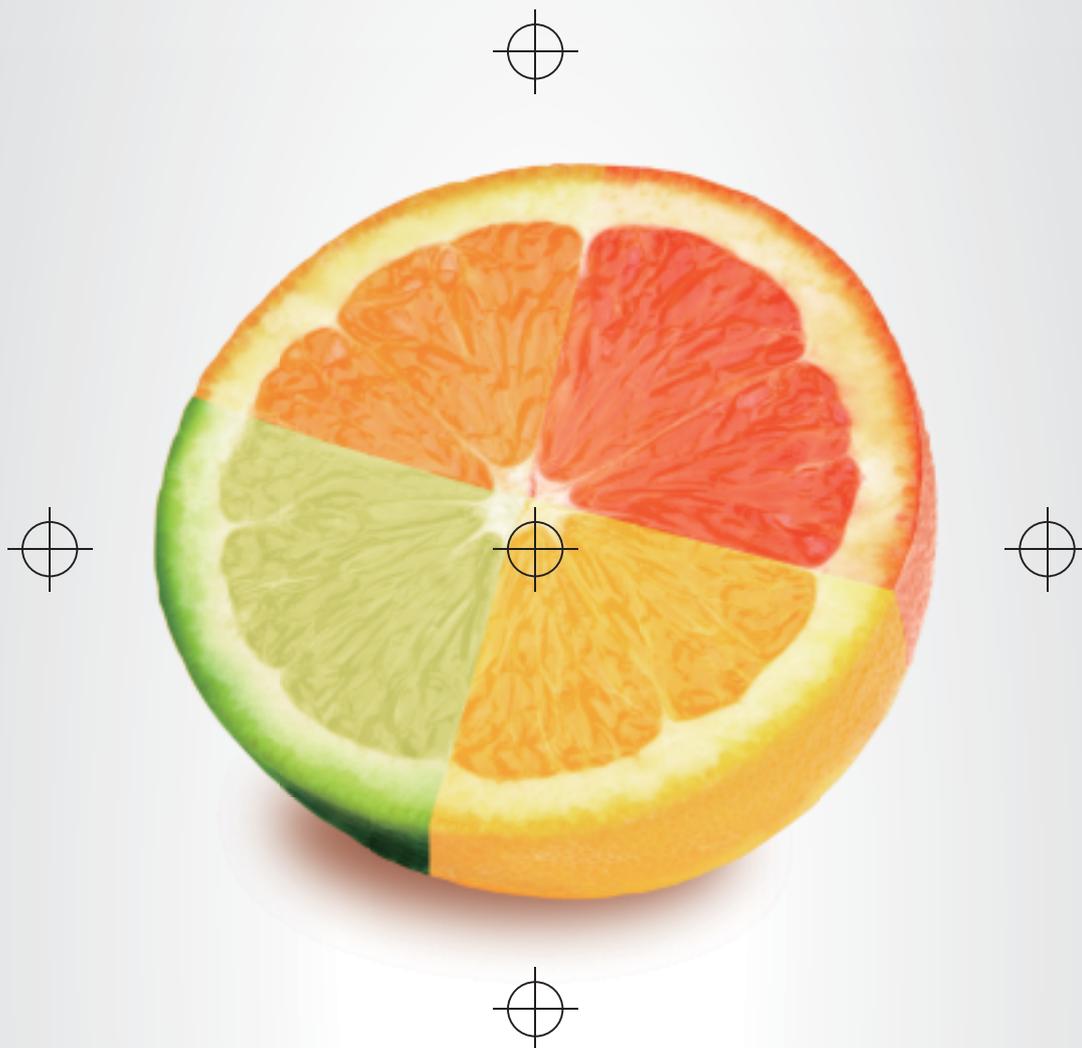
encourage consumers to shop locally. This will encourage shorter print runs of local consumer-focused designs at the expense of globalized products.

The internet has shifted power to the consumer, potentially leaving brands exposed. 'We now have access to what manufacturers don't want us to know.'

Brands will need to react to these trends and to the ability of the consumer to react instantly through social networks. Heming cited an example of interactive packaging from South Korea, where Home Plus, a South Korean/British discount store retail chain – jointly owned by Samsung and Tesco – set up an on-screen virtual store at a train station. Shoppers use their smart phone to scan QR codes of the products they wish to purchase whilst waiting for their train. The idea is to turn waiting time into shopping time, enabling consumers to shop without visiting a physical store.

Heming said he tries hard to persuade his clients of the importance of the pack and label. 'The cost of a label, after all, is a fraction of the cost of a 30 second advert and its impact continues after purchase every time the product is seen in the home. Consumers today are less loyal to a particular brand and more susceptible to bright, eye catching packaging.'

For this reason brands need to make their labels 'more iconic and less descriptive.' Two thirds of purchase decisions are now made in store, said Heming. 'People make choices in store, not in front of the TV. The fact that private label brands are growing proves that a product can thrive with only the packaging and labeling on its side.'



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FINAT



How offset punches above its weight

BARRY Hunt looks at how recent offset developments meet market demands

Offset's place in a flexo-dominated industry has always been somewhat ambivalent. On one hand it has some firm converts, especially among the larger converting groups, while for most converters it remains a closed book. Nevertheless, activity among some narrow/mid-web press manufacturers has increased, as was evident at Labelexpo Europe. As with other processes, the accent is on achieving fast set-up times and quicker job changeovers to handle larger volumes of short-run jobs. These

LABELS&LABELING

carefully refined objectives have changed the dynamics for all production processes, due largely to the remorseless influence of the international brand owners and own-brand retailers.

Of course, print quality is a given, along with consistency. Offset has a head start here because it works with proven, globally-recognized quality standards. Operators can quickly achieve accurate color measurements and precise control over ink settings during set-ups and the print run. The reproduction



of highlight details allows consistent, pin-sharp halftones with minimal dot gain. This produces good flesh tones and vignettes of the type associated with labels for the cosmetics, toiletries, healthcare, spirits and wine sectors. The best of flexo, or indeed high-end digital printing, can approximate these effects, but offset achieves them more easily and more quickly. Furthermore, as its name suggest, offset printing is an indirect process using precision-made rubber blankets to transfer the image to the substrate. This allows a wide choice of printable substrates, ranging from thin unsupported films to textured or uncoated paper grades.

Similar quality criteria apply to short-to-medium run flexible packaging applications. As is happening with flexo, wider and more versatile presses are opening up opportunities for producing shrink sleeves, sachets, pouches, wraparounds, tube laminates, as well as small folding cartons. Production flexibility is essential, which helps explain the increased interest in offset-based combination/platform presses. So while the process colors are offset printed, typical press lines may include one or more UV flexo and rotary screen units for printing large solids, varnishes

and opaque white backgrounds. Other options include gravure units with forced air drying for printing metallic inks, heavy solids and some coatings, as well as hot/cold foiling with embossing, and inkjet for variable data.

Offset units normally have two-cylinder inserts (plate and blanket cylinders), with a fixed impression cylinder, to allow variable size changes without web breaks. Sleeve technology takes this a stage further when changing plates and blankets. The sleeve carriers are easy to handle and store being made from lightweight materials, such as polycarbonates and similar synthetics. Gallus and Nilpeter both use aluminum carriers, which are said to retain their dimensional stability over a machine's service life and are ideal in situations requiring heavy impression pressures. The actual wrap-around offset plates are conventional metal types offering good offset quality with minimal dot gain. Working practices must take into account a non-printing gap, usually of two to three millimeters, which rules out wallpaper-type designs. Blankets sleeves can improve the inking/damping performance even at high press speeds.

Even when sleeve cylinders replace costly conventional cylinder cassettes, offset combination/platform presses still cost about half as much again as comparable UV flexo presses. Offset requires more complex inking trains with several forme rollers to transfer the higher viscosity inks to the blanket and, except with waterless offset, must include alcohol dampening systems to achieve a good ink/water balance. The counter argument is that over the longer-term, as a quality-driven process, offset is more economic and offers good productivity benefits. Industry-standard color management tools allow users to create certain Pantone colors from the process color set. What may require six units on a flexo press is achievable with four on an offset press. Furthermore, automatic controls over the main functions ensure that operators can quickly achieve good quality and maintain it with minimal attention. Importantly, pre-press costs are far lower than with flexo. The plates are not only cheaper, they are durable over long runs and take less time to make using in-house computer-to-plate systems. Benefits like these appeal to printers of wet-glue and in-mold labels wishing to augment their sheet-fed offset presses with variable size offset presses. Where feasible, this introduces the efficiencies of reel-to-reel or reel-to-sheet

printing and converting, backed by existing pre-press facilities.

TECHNOLOGY HIGHLIGHTS

Offset combination technology began with Nilpeter, when in 1994 it introduced the 330-mm wide M-3300 with the help of OEM suppliers. Despite initial skepticism, the company has since sold hundreds of offset-based presses all over the world. The current fourth-generation MO-4 platform press appeared in 2007. Designed for short-to-long runs, it uses aluminum-based sleeve technology and has a web width of 406mm. At Labelexpo, Nilpeter introduced the Press Management Center (PMC). Its three 17-inch touch screens allow operators to control UV-curing rates, electronic registration and remote inking. Other features include error diagnostics backed by an online service function, job management data and online customer information. The PMC's functions are compatible with the international CIP3 operating standard.

MPS's new EXL 410 Sleeve-Offset combination press has roots in the EO (Effective Offset) series, also from 2007. The patented, bearer-less sleeves for the plate and blanket cylinders give variable repeat sizes of 18-25 inches. An overhead rail allows the free positioning of a compact flexo unit. Short runs are facilitated by MPS's Automatic Print Control (APC) system. It covers the inter-related settings governing forme rollers, plate sleeve, blanket sleeve and impression cylinder, including print gap control, for storage and retrieval from the job memory function. The EXL-Packaging is a UV flexo version with webs up to 660mm wide and a top print speed of 300 m/min.

As an OEM supplier, Goebel manufactures the ink/water system for the EXL 410. The Darmstadt-based group also has links with DG press ServiceS (sic), which in 2009 emerged from the wreckage of Drent-Goebel as a spares and service provider. Drent-Goebel's Vision series of web-offset presses featured the VSOP (Variable Sleeve Offset Printing) system, developed by rotec Hülsensysteme (now with the Flint Group). DG press ServiceS recently launched the Vision SP, based on the 520-mm wide Vision, with interchangeable plate and blanket sleeve cylinders. The servo-driven impression cylinders are separately driven from the plate and blanket cylinders, while the web tension system is arranged in such a way to print thin aluminum foils in perfect register, as



GIDUE'S Xpannd offset unit can be exchanged with flexo units on the M7 press

well as unsupported films and carton board, in relatively small print runs. Vision SP is available as an upgrade package for existing Vision presses to allow flexible packaging applications.

DG's renewed VSOP connection followed the ending of an agreement in September with Muller Martini. It acquired the VSOP patents after Drent-Goebel's demise to incorporate the plate and blanket sleeves in its VSOP-badged presses. They come in widths of 520mm and 850mm and run at up to 365 m/

min and were developed from the Alpina 52V and 74V offset/flexo combination presses for labels and packaging. (At Labelexpo the company promoted the use of electron-beam curing to produce safe foodstuff packaging printed with low-odor and low-migration EB inks.)

The Gallus RCS 330/430 modular platform presses can support up to eight offset units and a further four from a choice of flexo, rotary screen, UV gravure or hot foil processes. The servo-driven units are freely interchangeable without

the need to separate the web. The offset units use Heidelberg's Alcolor dampening system, originally developed for sheet-fed presses, coupled with an automated start-up method with a low idling speed to reduce material waste. The company's Flying Imprint feature allows the changing of flexo-printed text and logos without stopping the press.

Gidue's Xpannd M7 platform press comes in widths from 370mm to 630mm. It allows quick changes between Gidue's existing Xpannd offset towers and its 'Flower' flexo print units. The platform supports rotary screen, gravure, hot foiling, embossing and die cutting, allowing different configurations for day-to-day needs. New features include the Offset Cube, a compact unit with easy accessibility to remove and store in front of the press on the Organizer. The unit uses the Xpannd inking system, integrated with the new camera-based Digital Offset technology for automated control over inking and register. Also new is the Mini-Cassette, said to offer comparable costs to offset print sleeves, and also removable for storage on the free-standing Organizer.

Omet has developed a quick-change offset unit for integration within the X-Flex X6. Variations can also integrate with the gearless VaryFlex F1 340, 430 and 520 platforms, along with a choice of gravure, screen, cold and hot-foil, as well

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as UV flexo. An independent drive allows very slow set-up speeds to minimize waste, which is essential when processing unsupported films.

Rotatek's press range includes the 520-mm wide Universal. The multi-substrate offset press is targeted at flexible packaging printers. It uses quick-change sleeve technology for the offset and flexo units. The sleeve carriers are fitted with ring bearers to allow high printing pressures.

STOP-GO, STOP-GO

Semi-rotary UV offset presses – also letterpress – obtain variable repeat lengths through their intermittent, or translative, web movements. Top speeds are only 70m/min or less, but fast set-ups and job changeovers make them economical for handling short-to-medium label runs with minimum wastage. Aided by localized distribution patterns, this helps explain why many family-owned label printers in Asian and Pacific Rim countries remain big users of such presses. Asian manufacturers also tend to supply rotary and flatbed screen, hot foiling and rotary and flatbed die cutters as part of package deals.

Outside of Asia, the main users tend to be converters serving the wine, healthcare and cosmetics sectors. Some companies are known to install these presses as economic alternatives to high-end digital



MPS EXL Packaging unit with LeanLinking

label presses, especially since they offer the flexibility of combination printing and come complete with in-line finishing. A maximum width of 330mm is the norm. The fact that there are no format-dependent accessories to slow down job changeovers is a further bonus.

Major Japanese manufacturers include Miyakoshi, once widely known for its continuous forms presses. It manufactures the MLP Series in three widths for label printing. The modular presses typically run with five UV semi-rotary offset units, a UV

flexo unit, hot foiling with embossing, and two die cutters. Shiki Machine Supply Corporation supplies the FX Series in web widths of 270mm and 400mm, usually with six offset units. The servo-driven Sanki SOF-330 from the Lintec Corporation is similarly configured, with optional flat-bed die cutting and hot foiling in a stand-alone unit with re-registration. The rollers keep revolving during stoppages to avoid roller marks on start-up, while a single blanket is used for all repeats to reduce downtime. Iwasaki's highly automated,



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servo-driven TR 2 press includes a roll lift on the unwind, vacuum loop box to avoid scratches behind the label web, pre-set temperature control for the recirculating water system, and video web monitor to check registration and any faults. Options include rotary die cutter, flexo varnish unit, and reverse-side printer.

Taiwan is another major center for such presses. The RS-350PS from Labelmen International combines full rotary and semi-rotary printing. It features the CNC One Touch make-ready system, the Ani-Print inking system for consistent inking with fast set-ups and fine tuning of the ink/water balance. Orthotec's upgraded CFT 3536 press includes a chilled water circulation system as part of the four-segment, servo-controlled inking system to maintain consistent ink viscosity. Register is adjusted through a touch screen register and the blanket cylinder is now engaged/disengaged automatically. The press also incorporates a second pass scanner/dampening system, as well as a plate dirt removal function. Smooth Machinery offers the shaftless SPM 450-OR with multiple servo drives for the main functions.

Several Chinese manufacturers of flexo presses and finishing equipment now offer intermittent offset presses. They include Zhejiang Weigang which recently introduced the six-unit ZX-320. Zhongtian Machinery Works' ZTJ-330 has individual servo drives on each print unit. Three-way adjustment of the print cylinder for on-the-fly register adjustments, a sliding touch screen control unit, and high levels of automation point to a fairly sophisticated specification.

A long-standing European example is the TCS 250 from Gallus. Its modular design, with expansion up to 12 units, allows a choice of printing and finishing options, including Gallus's Rotascreen



system. The 265-mm wide press carries a high level of automation, with touch-screen control from a central panel. Users can combine the flatbed die cutter with a flatbed relief embossing unit.

Rotatek targets the semi-rotary market with the Brava S 330, a shaftless combination press employing semi-rotary offset, flexo and screen units. It was derived from the wider Brava 420, which unusually combines both rotary and semi-rotary offset modes. New features include an embossing system with gap master regulation and an inline screen printing unit.

Codimag is unique among European narrow web manufacturers in offering waterless offset, which eliminates the conventional water or dampening system. Based on Toray's platemaking technology, the system uses silicone-coated plates and highly viscous inks with an integrated temperature control system. Four years ago Codimag developed Aniflo, a keyless anilox offset technology, for the Viva 420. Aniflo replaces the conventional inking train with four cylinders of equal diameters. An anilox roller delivers a constant ink film to a forme rubber roller, which transfers ink to the plate, with silicone layers for non-image areas, and then to the blanket. Esko color management software gives an extended gamut printing. At Labelexpo it launched a new version of the Viva 340, also fitted with Aniflo, again aimed at printers of short-run premium labels.

Notwithstanding its dominance of commercial printing, UV-cured offset is now firmly rooted within certain levels of labels and packaging production. Rotary offset is no longer confined solely to long-run applications. Its many quality and production-led benefits allow it to compete with UV flexo at the top, value-added end of the market. Several developments from leading press manufacturers bear this out. As mentioned, the strength of semi-rotary is largely determined by regional market demands and global trading patterns, while simultaneously carving out niche, high-end applications all over the world. Both formats, it could be assumed, punch above their weight.

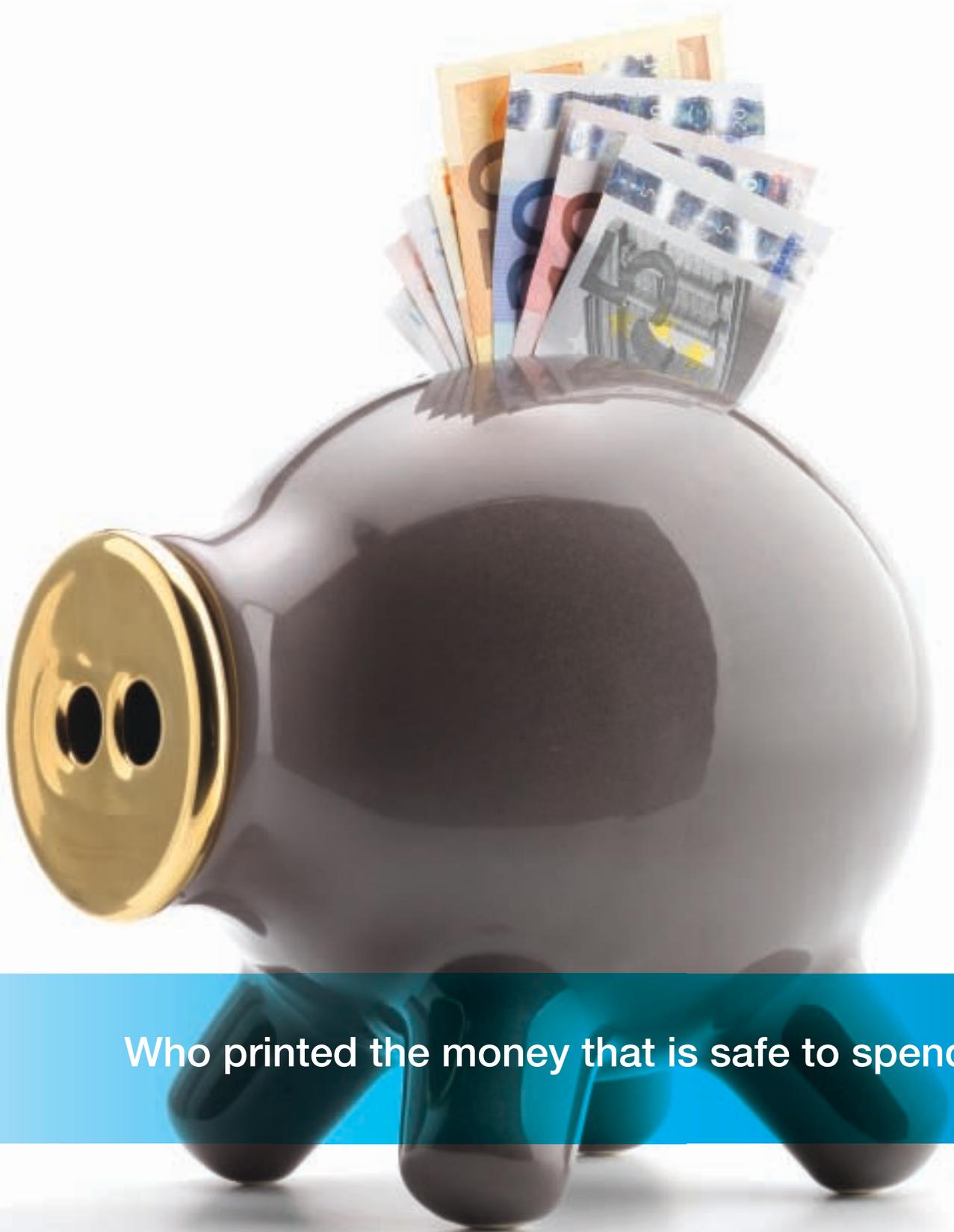




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The origin of success

Toying with the label

LEADING SPANISH CONVERTER Germark has worked hard with its industry partners to help a shampoo manufacturer recapture lost market share. Carol Houghton reports

In tough economic times, brand owners' natural reflex is to try and cut their labeling costs. But Barcelona based label converter Germark prefers to offer them another, more creative route to profitability. Germark began to speak to facestock suppliers four years ago, when it invested in a production line to both manufacture and print its own pressure-sensitive labels. This is where its relationship with film specialist ExxonMobil Chemical, began.

Coinciding with the start of the global financial crisis in 2009, one of Germark's biggest customers, Denenes, reported it was struggling with its sales of health and beauty products. It approached Germark looking for a way to reduce labeling costs. Iban Cid, president, Germark says, 'this was not the answer.' He believed that label price was not the issue and instead proposed an innovative promotional project which would allow the company to increase its market share.

Cid outlines two routes for bringing innovation to the market. Firstly, by responding to a customer's idea – for example one customer required development of an edible pressure sensitive label (eventually abandoned because of cost). The other option is to use in-house R&D to bring new products to the market, an excellent example is the Peel Stick and Play (PSP) promotional labeling system. 'We are pushing R&D to create new solutions in the recession to help our customers,' adds Cid.

In the case of Denenes, Germark worked with ExxonMobil to develop an innovative promotional label for the HDPE (high density polyethylene) bottle Denenes used for its children's shampoo. The labels feature a three layer construction, which can all be separated during use. The first layer is peeled off to reveal a middle layer of die-cut stickers which can be removed and replaced whilst the primary brand label remains completely intact. Cid says 'ExxonMobil's Label-Lyte

OPP Films for PSL enabled us to convert the bottle of shampoo into a toy.' The mechanical strength and tear properties mean the die-cut stickers can be simply and cleanly separated and reapplied many times, providing hours of entertainment for children.

The construction provides the brand with a key differentiator from its competitors in a crowded market. and, importantly for its target audience, is fun. Cid says, 'With very little cost increase, there is a lot of value added across the value chain.' Denenes reported that the PSP label application increased sales of its shampoo by a staggering 12 percent.

THE TECHNOLOGY

The labels are printed in two steps; firstly the three layers are printed on an MPS EP-410 UV flexo press. The base layer is a 5-color job plus release varnish, the stickers are printed with three colors and the cover is printed with five colors plus pattern adhesive at 40 meters per minute. Construction and converting of the complex laminate is done offline on an ETI Cohesio machine. Both ETI and MPS machines have print widths up to 410mm. The label is applied at the brand's packaging facilities with a regular self-adhesive label applicator made by Germark.

In terms of conversion properties, Iban Cid reports that Label-Lyte provides excellent printability and adhesive receptivity, stiffness and flex resistance, very good moisture resistance and good overall converting, die-cutting and dispensing properties. The high opacity of the film allows printing on multiple layers, preserving the quality of the primary label and hiding the stickers of the second layer. The film also provides good stiffness for easy dispensing, separating and handling of labels and stickers. Cid adds, 'Stiffness was a key element of the product which is why using OPP was so important.'

Sustainability is also an element of the design, as Germark converts its PS material with a PET liner, which is fully recyclable and allows 25 percent more labels to be printed per roll.



(L-R) Kevin Frydryk, global market development manager, labels, ExxonMobil Chemical OPP films business, Michele Fiori, southern Europe manager, labels, ExxonMobil Chemical Iberia S.L. OPP films business and Iban Cid, managing director, Germark



Innovation, education to move US labels forward

THE TLMI'S ANNUAL and Technical Meetings focused on integrating social media and sustainability into label converters' business models to help brands communicate with a new generation of consumers.

Danielle Jerschefske reports on new routes to profitability

TLMI's 2011 Technical Conference held in Chicago, Illinois, and its Annual Meeting held in Phoenix, Arizona, both this fall, were refreshing, well-attended events for the near 80 year old trade association. Both meetings sold-out and enjoyed a heartening balance of converter and supplier participants.

LABELS&LABELING

The Technical Meeting offered a business track for the first time which included in-depth discussion around Lean manufacturing and a strong panel session with leading industry players on aligning sales and operations through strategic planning.

did a fantastic job of stringing through the important relationship between innovation, social media, sustainability and labels and packaging. For the first time in Phoenix, attendees listened to a designer and brand owner panel discussion on Future Product Technology and Design: Opportunities for Converting Solutions.

After participating in both conferences, it is evident that long-term success in the converting world will require a comprehensive understanding of social media channels, their use and value to consumers and brands, and the ability to link labels with the modern marketing tactics required to reach the new generation of shoppers.

GerayIn Curtis of The Chesapeake Group, a package design firm that 'Builds Brands By Design', talked about the 'tsunami of consumer change' with the onslaught of new wave young adult buyers and the rapid adoption of smart phones globally.

Apple launched its newest iPhone 4S on the Saturday of the Annual Meeting, selling four million in four days to the US market by the Tuesday morning of this new panel session. According to CTIA, the Wireless Association, there are 96 million smart phones in use in the United States as of mid-October 2011. Note too that 90 percent of the globe lives in places where they now have access to a mobile network.

Brands and their suppliers must ensure it's their products that get put into the Millennials' shopping cart, virtual or literal, Curtis explained: 'The purchasing power of these young people is expected to surpass baby boomers.

'It's all about customization and choice, being interactive with these people and communicating with them through their channels. They're not interested in 'me too' products. They're interested in connectivity and sharing, exploration, so they're willing to try new tastes and flavors. Design has a heavy influence on their purchasing decisions nine out of ten times. 'Any brand that can truly reach the Millennials establishes an even playing field for the big and small brands.'

Kenneth Hirst of Hirst Pacific, a strategic design and global branding firm, echoed Hirst's message on the importance for brands to be able to effectively communicate with modern consumers, saying, 'Packaging is the primary vehicle for communicating a brand and a brand's value. Holistic design of the package, including the label, influences consumer perception and must meet their expectations, hopefully by creating a meaningful experience.'

Modern converters must harmonize a brand's various elements, which is why the US market has seen many label converters adopting new technologies in



an effort to become a one-stop solution for clients. This includes the evolving digital world and the embrace of new channels of communication.

The message is clear: labels and packaging are the ideal ticket for brands to link the physical and virtual world together for today's consumers.

Hirst encouraged the audience to take ideas to clients, showing them new materials, processes and technologies that will help brands tackle this new-age phenomenon. The packaging that brings new functionality and interactivity to the retail space will win the business.

Greg Sandusky, senior graphic and packaging developer for new products at Bacardi, talked about a number of trends that he sees in the beverage market, including customized and 'collaborative' graphics, up-dated bottle shapes and a new emphasis on sustainability. He said the company fully understands the potential for digital print technology to produce small lots of customized labels to bring new value propositions to the market via co-marketing and partnerships.

When talking about closures and innovation, Sandusky rhetorically asked, 'How can we target the consumer at home? Closures are all about the handling, opening and pouring experience.' He showed a few clips of bottle cap neck decorations and noted the aesthetic they can bring to the appearance of the packaging as a whole.

Encouraging listeners to take ideas to their customers, Sandusky said, 'There's a lot of creativity on the printer and converter end. And you're the experts. We want to hear from you.'

He touched on shrink sleeves with their ability to decorate the entire container. He also talked about the value less commonly used label innovations can bring to a brand, such as thermochromatic inks, which have positively helped adopting brands increase market share.

'Labels of the future' were listed as programmable LEDs, electroluminescent conductive inks with a small power source, and the rising use of QR codes in its wide variety of forms.

The panelists acknowledged that innovation has a cost, but felt brands are willing to pay the premium in order to differentiate.

DEMYSTIFYING TWITTER

It was wonderful for TLMi to invite John Foley Jr. of InterlinkOne and Grow Socially to host a networking luncheon immediately following the design and brand owner panel. Foley is an avid Twitter user with over 8,500 followers whose two companies specialize in building new social-network-based marketing solutions. This enabled TLMi members to continue putting the pieces together. Foley took the mystery out of new communication channels like Twitter and YouTube, explaining how each can be integrated into modern business marketing and a company's website. Foley said, 'How do you humanize the brand? You expose the personal side of business.'

One critical point raised by Foley is that an audience is not going to be accessible on every channel. 'You need to communicate back in the same channel that they use,' said Foley. 'The keys to managing a social media campaign within a modern printing business are the same for any other type of business. Build. Engage. Be relevant. Be consistent. Track/analyze.'

EXTENDED PACKAGING

At TLMi's Technical Conference, Steve Simske, an HP fellow and director of the company's security printing and imaging division, gave his perspective on the functional future of labels in his presentation What is Electronic Paper – and why Should I be worried?

Since a lot of valuable details cannot be



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TESCO virtual market

printed directly onto a label or packaging, 'extended packaging' allows brands to leverage the online world to deliver this information. GS1 defines extended packaging as 'giving consumers access to additional information or services about products through their mobile phone'.

Modern mobile commerce solutions such as QR codes and 2D barcodes make linking between physical and virtual much simpler. In its Extended Packaging Pilot Handbook, GS1 says that as well as providing consumers access to additional information, extended packaging also has applications in track and trace.

Whitlam Label's VP of sales and marketing, Alex Elezaj, agreed that labels are no longer merely for decoration. He explained that the 2D barcode is able to carry information in both directions, consumer to brand and brand to consumer, and can hold several hundred times more information than a typical barcode. Elezaj said, 'These codes turn faceless visitors into identifiable profiles and allows brands to speak to respondents on a personal level.'

THIS IS THE WAY FORWARD

Smart codes are already widely used in the Japanese market alongside NFC (Near-Field Communication) chips and adoption is spreading from Asia, through Europe into the US. Tesco launched its first 'virtual store' in South Korea subways where consumers can scan the 2D code on a wide variety of backlit virtual products such as instant noodles and bottled water. Once the order is placed, the goods are delivered direct to the buyer's home within hours. Not only did the project help connect to the nation's workforce – which is said to work more hours than any other country in the world; it helped the retailer break into a new market.

Yihaodian, an online supermarket in China, embraced the notion quickly after Tesco's success and installed 15 virtual markets in Shanghai subway stations. Users need only download the store's application to scan items and place them into their shopping cart for purchase. Procter & Gamble has jumped on the bandwagon, opening virtual markets with MALL.cz, the biggest online store in the Czech Republic.

Thomas Dahbura of Hub Labels encouraged the session's audience to step into the shoes of a brand manager,

asking, 'What does the brand manager want the label to do? Be pretty? Play a game. Inform and educate the consumer. Protect the consumer?' His examples of innovative labels included luggage tags, Oreo's re-sealable package and label, and the growing interest and adoption of linerless labels for sustainability improvement.

Dahbura probed at questions converters must ask themselves before moving into the production of more innovative labels. Most notably: does this fit into my business? Are my quality systems in place to support this initiative? Will it (the code, the RFID tag, etc) work consistently?

SUSTAINABILITY AND SARA LEE

At the TLMI Technical Meeting, Steve Carter of Sara Lee talked about what the large packaged foods company is doing to be more sustainable. Carter said, 'We are partnering with our suppliers to find continual improvement, long-term success and stability when it comes to the environment and packaging.'

The company has made the shift from bleached white stock pressure sensitive release liner in its label constructions to brown kraft stock, which offers a number of benefits by reducing total energy used during manufacturing, wastewater output, greenhouse gasses released and wood used, to name a few. Additionally, the kraft liner can be seamlessly integrated into corrugated box recycling streams. Carter explained that the company is closely evaluating packaging options that are scientifically proven to have less harmful impacts on the environment. One example is a move to mineral-based rigid packaging for a product, away from flexible packaging, to reduce the overall weight by 30 percent. The cost savings realized from this shift and others, like re-packaging pallets to fit more products, was 1.6 million dollars.

'We are leveraging tools for improved decision making around Green,' Carter explained. 'If you want to be one of our suppliers and you don't have a sustainability program, then, moving forward, you will not be considered.'

Sara Lee is in the process of creating its own packaging specification system and is looking to link-up with the Sustainable Packaging Coalition's Compass software, developed in conjunction with EskoArtwork, that allows designers to rapidly prototype materials for a package and calculate impacts based on real product life-cycle data. The brand's sustainable packaging specification system will break down each material by type and weight and software will be able to offer carbon footprint data.

THE ECONOMY

Todd Buchholz, a former advisor to the White House on economic policy and current award-winning economics professor at Harvard University, talked to attendees at the TLMI Annual Meeting about the current state of global trade. He explained that he felt the US market was not headed for a double dip recession because consumers are tired of not spending and are eager to get shopping again – even though they have started saving more.

He advised the crowd to ignore all the hype that China is taking over the world, 'because they're not. The main reason is their demographics. They have too many young, single males and a large aging population. This is the Great Brick Wall of China that the nation will hit soon.'

However, he described education as the Achilles tendon of the US. A shame really, considering the thousands of outstanding universities we have in the country. 'Education is the most important long term challenge for our country. We're like the Jamaican bobsled team of education. The countries that harbor intelligence will prosper.' There are a number of highly regarded universities with strong packaging and graphic communications programs, but most of these graduates move outside the industry. The North American label market needs to do a better job of reaching out to these young people, encouraging them to enter the narrower side of the packaging world. TLMI has its Young Leaders Organization, but it's not doing enough to interact with universities, professors and the students, said Buchholz.

CONFERENCE LESSONS

The main takeaways from the TLMI's two big meetings this year are:

- Innovation is the true way to find sustainable success in label production
- Label converters must assist brand owners/retailers with linking interactive communication channels to labels in order to reach consumers
- Demise is imminent if progression is sought through price decreasing. Commodity is not the way to go
- Sustainability, innovation, packaging/labels and social media are woven tightly together
- To realize true innovation, label converters must understand the relationship between it and the above topics
- The industry must take better advantage of educational systems and encourage more talented young people to enter the business
- Label converters and their suppliers need to work more closely together to bring innovative solutions to end users



SCOTT Pillsbury, Yoseni Dunphy, Sherrill Corbitt, Rose Che



BRIAN and Cindy Bishop



TOM Tolleson and Cindy White



JANICE and Craig Moreland and Brian Hurst

TLMI hosts Meeting Gala

TLMI'S 2011 Annual Meeting held in Phoenix, Arizona

Converter and supplier TLMI members enjoyed the terrific awards night at the Annual Meeting in Phoenix, Arizona. The group celebrated the renewal of the association's partnership with Labelexpo, the announcement of the Supplier of the Year award given to Pat Hague, best known for his time with Water Ink Technologies, and the Converter of Year honor awarded to Ken Kidd from WS Packaging.

The winners of the Environmental Leadership Awards – Avery Dennison and Label World – also celebrated with

LABELS&LABELING

fellow members. Calvin Frost, CEO of Channeled Resources Group and TLMI Environmental Committee Chair, commented, 'This is our ninth year in presenting these awards and recognizing leaders of environmental awareness in our industry. Without a doubt, this activity further reinforces TLMI's position on sustainability. We will continue to change the culture of our industry, and this year's winners should be honored. Thirteen companies submitted entries and from this group just two were chosen.'

The TLMI Board of Directors welcomed

a few new faces to the boardroom with the inclusion of Michelle Garza, vice president of RBCOR a supplier of various pre-press materials for a number of print technologies; Dan Muenzer, vice president global marketing at Spear a converter with locations in the US, Europe and South Africa specializing in pressure-sensitive labels for the beverage markets.; and Doug Kopp, the founder and current chairman of Kopco Graphics a three time winner of the coveted Eugene Singer Award for best managed companies.



ROGER Pellow, Kurt Walker, Bibiana Rodriguez, John Hickey



BRIAN Potter, Heather and Steve Schulte



DONNELL and Mike Buystedt, Karen Ruesch



MINDY and Jim Kissner



BEVERLY Chavez, Michelle Garza, Christina and Julie Chavez



GERI and Randy Wise, John McDermott



DAVE and Alissa Dickerson



JULIE Sablone, Gary and Colleen Cooper, Karen Moreland



JAKOB Landberg and Michael Bryant



SCOTT Fisher and Darryl Hughes



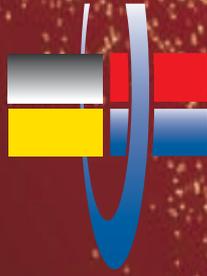
DAVE and Elaine McDowell, Terry Fulwiler, Ken and Kim Kidd



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JEFF Dunphy and Mike Dowling



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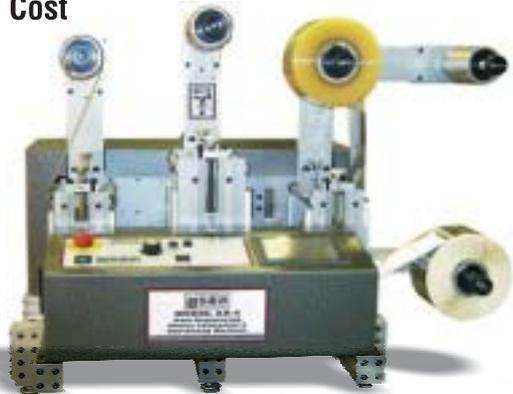
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More than just labels

A MEXICAN CONVERTER finds growth in service diversification, writes Danielle Jerschefske

Located in Mexico City and founded by Carlos Becerra Espinosa and Patricia Rangel Iriarte 26 years ago, Lobo Impresores is finding success in the competitive Mexican label market by diversifying its business and services. Commercial director and daughter of the founders, Keren Becerra says, 'We are doing whatever we need to do internally to bring more value to the service we provide our customers.'

The converter operates in three main markets: prime and process color label production; GS1 certified work for supply chain management labeling; and data management. Lobo Impresores produces the majority of its process color labels for the food and beverage, health and beauty markets, industrial products, and large international pharmaceutical firms using a 7-color 14 inch Nilpeter FB press or a Mark Andy Comco.

Lobo Impresores also specializes in security label applications using advanced ink authentication solutions and produces some security labels for the country's postal service. Other markets include computer label packages for home and office use.

Currently the converter outsources some prime film label work. Becerra says, 'We'd like to invest in shrink sleeve capability and we've been reviewing digital printing options for some time.' Like most Mexico label operations, the printing plates are outsourced.

DATA MANAGEMENT

As the need for document printing services diminished quickly from the late 90s, Lobo Impresores realized that it needed to adjust its capabilities in order to better service its clients –

SUSTAINABILITY LEADER

Lobo Impresores was the winner of Empresa Sostenible 2010 award jointly given by the government group SEMARNAT (Secretaria de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales) and the trade group AMEE (La Asociacion Mexicana de Envase y Embalaje). The most important part of winning the award was the converter's move to reduce the gap between the labels it produces. Less material used means more labels per roll and reduced overall wastage. The converter is looking into ISO 14001 certification.

Lobo Impresores now regularly extends its customer consultations to include label size and layout and all the other ways in which label waste can be reduced.

including one big one, government institutions – in a modern digitized world. Therefore, Lobo made the risky decision to make a significant investment in data management software. This has now become a highly successful alternative revenue stream. The information collected and sorted by the system can be delivered back to the customer on a simple disc, or Lobo can print labels with verified data to be used for internal inventory management and other tracking systems to improve the customer's process control.

GS1

Lobo Impresores' GS1 certification allows it to assist its customers with the design and management of barcodes that meet GS1 requirements. Becerra explains, 'So many of our customers don't know what they have to do when it comes to creating scannable UPC. Being GS1 certified extends our service beyond label production, acting more as a business consultant for small businesses, and we're prepared to advise on topics of marketing, helping to make changes to their designs, images and labels for their products to make them more effective to the consumer at the shelf.'

The company is one of only two label converters in Mexico that are GS1 certified. It was part of the set-up of the GS1 Knowledge Center that opened in Mexico in March 2011 to help local product producers and growers, packaging manufacturers and exporters understand the benefits of standardiza-

tion and best practices within the market. There are a number of companies involved in the training programs available at the center, including Motorola, Honeywell and Zebra Technologies, as well as some of the market's leading retailers and international brands like Grupo Bimbo, L'Oreal Mexico, Santa Cecilia and Unilever.

The GS1 Mexico facility focuses on training and educating businesses on data quality and management, payment and invoicing, traceability, visibility, RFID and EPC standards, technology and applications, and distribution center best processes. The facility has special systems to meet the FDA information standards required by GS1 and by other markets too.

'Certification was a long process,' says Becerra. 'We had to prove our ability to print all types of labels and code bars with quality and consistency. But we feel this gives us competitive edge.' Lobo Impresores has created a team internally to maintain quality control of its GS1 products.

The company's database management and automated information collection software helps its customers manage this critical part of their business. Lobo has found its ability to transform information into usable industrial labels to be a further strength and a growing source of business. Says Becerra, 'We're working for more growth and market participation in these areas and are willing to differentiate ourselves to provide companies with whatever services that they may need.'



L-R Keren Becerra, Patricia Rangel Iriarte, Carlos Becerra Espinosa



Success and security for the labelprinter



YU DAYANG, general manager of Beijing Deji Adhesive Labels & Prints

Innovation and doing business in China

LEADING CHINESE CONVERTER Beijing Deji Adhesive Labels is focused on selling service, innovation and value – and expects the same from its suppliers. L&L China editor Kevin Liu reports

In the Daxing district of south Beijing, you will find the China Printing Museum, an official museum dedicated to the history of printing, while in the Changping district of north Beijing, you will find a labeling museum owned by a private company which is fully engaged in label production.

In an exclusive interview with Labels & Labeling China, Yu Dayang, the general manager of Beijing Deji Adhesive Labels & Prints ('Beijing Deji'), said his company is very much like a museum.

'Almost any kind of label printing machines, including letterpress, offset printing, flexo, digital printing or machines with an online post-press system, you can find in our museum. Any information you want to know about current label printing machines, just come here.'

Dayang compares himself to a museum curator – but a curator who needs to pay attention to the development of his business.

NO GIANTS HERE

Beijing, of course, is the national political and cultural center, and its enterprises

are focused on hi-tech and cultural production, especially in the Changping Hi-Tech Industrial Park. Almost half of China's Growth Enterprise Market (GEM)-listed enterprises are located in this district.

Salaries here are highly competitive, which is not an issue for most GEM companies, where salary is a small proportion of the total enterprise cost. But the label printing industry remains a traditional one, where salary takes up a large part of the cost.

'There is no way for us to compete with them,' says Dayang. 'As a label manufacturer looking for further development, we will establish factories in the urban area between Beijing and Tianjin where all costs are comparatively lower than in Beijing. However, I myself love Changping and our employees also have families here. So we recognized we needed to find a way to handle our company's development in the competitive economic conditions found in Beijing.'

The way forward for Dayang is for Beijing Deji to become a 'creative quality' enterprise.

'We expect to make full use of our design capability and our experience in different label print technologies to provide a unique service for our customers. Our salesmen are also consultants who will introduce customers to the whole process and range of options available to them.'

Dayang does not want to go after small profits through a quick turnover of clients and will never join in a price war.

'The business we are pursuing is to provide a valuable service to thoughtful customers. When one customer doesn't need mass-market labels, when he pursues some special effects, when he expects original thinking to be applied to his labels, that is the time we use our expertise.'

CREATIVE ENTERPRISE

Beijing Deji expects a win-win co-operation with its customers: customers get their unique labels and Beijing Deji gets reasonable profits. This is the only way a label converter can sustain a prosperous business.

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support. Beijing Deji houses an excellent label design team which is generously supported by Dayang in terms of software and hardware investment. To realize each design as a converted label requires 'smart' combination printing and converting, and the establishment of the 'Labeling Equipment Museum' is an important step in the realization of this vision at Beijing Deji.

The company owns two Labelmen satellite-type letterpress machines, one Weigang offset machine and one Nipson digital printing press; more recently, it purchased one Hontec 9-color satellite type letterpress from Dongguan and one Beiren Fuji flexo machine. In addition, Beijing Deji has an extensive ability to post-print labels.

'Except for those obsolete intermittent label printing machines, our current equipment covers all the current main print technologies,' said Dayang. 'We use different processes to produce different types of label products and we try to realize some special process effects with using combinations of print processes.'

Following Dayang's initiatives, the offset presses are now engaged in converting wine labels; digital print systems are used mainly for the business forms and logistics management labels; letterpress mainly for middle/long-run printing; and flexo presses mainly for long-run printing.

'Take the satellite type 9-color letterpress for example. Our workers operate it quite expertly and the speed of exchanging printing plates is also very fast. Therefore we can use the satellite type letterpress for short-run printing. When we introduced the Hontec letterpress from Dongguan we modified this new equipment by adding online die-cutting, hot foiling and screen. We do not simply install equipment – we also try to extend its functionality and enhance automation.'

Labels converting covers such an extensive field that nobody can know everything. Therefore, experience, creativity and a choice of process methods are always necessary. 'Our solutions are not simply copies but products with intelligence inside,' says Dayang.

Standard equipment is far from meeting Dayang's requirements and he expects his facilities to offer unique technology solutions. In 2011, Beijing Deji concluded a cooperation agreement with Beiren Fuji, which gave Dayang the space to implement his ideas.

'We bought the Beiren flexo machine as a kind of cooperative R&D project rather than a simple purchase. It is the first such machine being launched by Beiren on the Chinese market for the label industry.

'Beiren is an excellent joint venture partner which has won many prizes, which indicates that this is a strong technology enterprise. Yet in our opinion, they also have a lot to improve in the field of flexo printing and should focus more on their customers' special requirements. Our chief engineer worked for United Printing (the agent of Mark Andy in China) beforehand and he is quite familiar with the detailed technology of flexo printing

manufacturers. Following his suggestion, we decided to work with Beiren.

'In this cooperation, we provided many exact opinions for Beiren Fuji including the process combination, color match tests for the machines and some detailed improvement points. They in turn feel pleased about this cooperation because they can develop products closely matched to market requirements and they start to understand what the market really needs.

'If we had cooperated with some internationally famous corporations, the customized machine would be quite expensive, which is difficult for our private enterprise in the short term. But for now, it makes us happy to realize our creativity in this machine based on our experience.'

As a benchmarking exercise, the cooperation between Beijing Deji and Beiren Fuji attracted widespread attention among printing enterprises in the Beijing area. Not long after this flexo press was commissioned by Beijing Deji, other converters looked to Beiren Fuji for a machine with the same configuration.

Dayang gave these companies pertinent advice based on his experience: 'Do make a cautious consideration of your business and process control before the purchase, otherwise, there may be process conflicts which will lower the production efficiency and you will be unable to show the real efficacy of this machine.'

Dayang believes that label converters in China need to address questions of efficiency if they are to remain profitable. 'Compared with the extravagant profits at the beginning of the (PS label) era, the profitability of the labeling industry is indeed getting reduced – although compared with the general printing and newspaper industry, to some extent label printing is returning to a reasonable level. Only if an enterprise has its own specialty can label printing still be quite profitable.'

The motto summarizing the corporate culture of Beijing Deji is: 'Specialized in technique, Honesty in my heart'. 'We seek to combine intelligence and ability, honesty and thoughtfulness. As long as our product is close to this target, we believe customers will also like to pay for your product's quality and design, for the special value therein. In a word, the label industry is still prosperous,' says Dayang. Looking towards the future, what is Dayang's take on digital printing? 'We believe printing will be digitalized finally though we are not sure about the time frame. Like a craftsman, we will follow the digital journey but based on our traditional experience, which is my favorite role.'

Today, Beijing Deji has become a beacon in the Chinese labels and labeling industry, offering an example which combines perfect culture, creativity and technology. If you are at a loss how to reach the development target of your company, maybe you can have a talk with Dayang, the curator of this 'labeling equipment museum', who may well be able to enlighten you.

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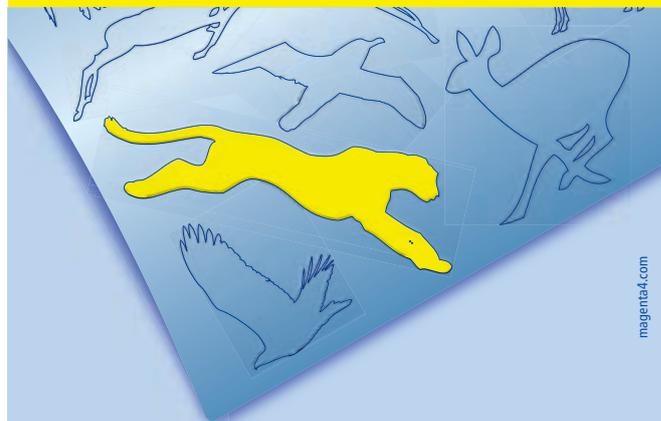
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JINHAI Paper Machine

China invests to meet booming paper demand

CHINA'S enormous hunger for paper, including packaging and label papers, is driving the country to raise domestic production. Danielle Jerschevske reports

Paper was invented in China during the Han Dynasty in 105 AD and in 740 AD the first newspaper was printed there. Through trade and war the skill made its way through the Middle East and into Europe where Johann Guttenberg invented the printing press in 1453. Now the material is everywhere.

Current global consumption of paper stands at 345 million tons, up from 300 million tons at the end of last year. In China, a country that is experiencing rapid growth in all areas – the label sector alone is growing at eight to 10 percent per annum – it is difficult to meet the demand for paper from domestic resources alone.

The nation's domestic consumption of paper has risen 121 percent since 2000 and national demand probably surpassed 100 million tons in 2010. With the economy growing at 10 percent per year, it has been hard for the domestic Chinese forestry industry to keep up with demand, and pulp imports increased by over 43 percent between 2008-2009. By 2015 the country's timber consumption is expected to reach 340 million square meters, over twice China's annual production.

The Chinese government reacted with its Forest Industry Development Plan (2010-2012), which aims to increase domestic production of wood fiber by 12 percent each year, supporting, through subsidies and favorable state loans, the development of integrated plantation-pulp-

paper systems. One of the companies which has benefited is Asia Pulp and Paper (APP) China.

APP is a subsidiary of the Sinar Mas Group conglomerate headquartered in Singapore, founded in Indonesia in 1972 by one of Indonesia's wealthiest men, Eka Tjipta Widjaja. In 1978 it was producing a mere 12,000 tons of paper a year.

The company first entered the Chinese market in 1992 and now manages 20 pulp and paper mills as subsidiaries or joint ventures. The company employs over 38,900 people and has total assets of RMB 96.3 billion (14.8 billion dollars) and annual sales over RMB 37.9 billion (5.8 billion dollars) in 2010. APP China's vision is to become the world's premier

fully integrated 'green-cycle forestry', pulp and paper company.

APP China Forestry (ACF) was established in 1995 on the island of Hainan, a vacation destination considered to be the Hawaii of China. It manages more than 303,000 hectares (one hectare = 2.3 acres) of plantations in eight Chinese provinces all certified to ISO 14001 standards. But these plantations are not always laid out in the fashion that one would imagine. Rather than planting groomed rows and rows of harvestable trees, the ACF plantations are often scattered throughout the landscape, integrated into the local communities amongst local farming land suitable for various crops like pineapple and peppers.



GEP engineer at paper machine



With advanced scientific research and development, ACF has decreased the Eucalyptus plantation cycle to six years on the first planting rotation, and has developed nurturing techniques to grow harvestable trees in as few as four years in a subsequent rotation using coppicing, a traditional form of forest management whereby new trees are grown from the remaining trunk of a cut down tree. In total, ACF has the capacity to produce five million tons of wood annually.

The Hainan Central Nursery is where the magic happens. Scientists closely monitor the development of cross pollinated tissues and seeds, led by Dr Wending Huang, deputy CEO of APP China Forestry, who holds a degree from China's Nanjing Forestry University and a PhD in forestry ecology from the University of Helsinki. Employees can be seen analyzing the tissue cultures, growing them into cuttings ready to go for planting in the nursery's 70 hectares of land. This location is capable of producing 100 million cuttings each year, and a smaller ACF nursery, Guangxi Central Nursery, can produce 90 million cuttings annually on 65 hectares. ACF cultivates mostly Eucalyptus trees and also Acacia, Pinus and Poplar.

The company explains that the lands the government approves for timber growth are typically undesirable for other agricultural use, like sandy areas and low rainfall regions. The firm must then go through a multi-step process of engaging the landowners, producing a land audit and submitting a request for approval (that can be rejected). If the government agrees to the proposal, and believes that the locals will also benefit, a land tenure contract is signed between the government and ACF.

All land in China is owned by the State, or what it calls rural collectives, and plantations are managed either by renting land from the

collectives in a profit sharing scheme, or through a joint venture with the landowners.

The organization and planning for the development of these plantations is highly complex. SAP software creates profiles of each planting zone to ensure proper raw materials management, planting, harvesting, road construction and maintenance, and to assist the company in better understanding the terrain so the best saplings with the right resistance are planted in the most beneficial areas.

This software has allowed ACF to establish its own chain of custody system to ensure only its bio-engineered trees are harvested and delivered to the mills. Tracking systems map out best delivery routes. Pre-harvest inventory measurements are taken and trees are stacked and locked on trucks for verifiable delivery. Once delivered to the mill, the weight is crosschecked with site records and the delivery mileage is verified.

ACF regularly performs internal and external audits of its systems, such as runoff and land mineral measurements, to ensure conformance to national environment regulations, which, contrary to popular belief, are comparable to European standards.

This plantation-based fiber supply is critical to the sustainable evolution of China's domestic paper market. Yet the amount of fiber currently produced by ACF does not meet the capacity requirements of APP's large pulping

facilities. And this well-managed timber resource comes at a higher cost than international averages.

HAINAN JINHAI PULP AND PAPER PLANT

The vast Hainan Jinhai Pulp and Paper plant, located in the Yangpu Economic Development Zone, is a key part of APP China's integrated pulp and paper production strategy. This facility is also located on Hainan Island off the southwest tip of China, spreading a whopping 400 hectares, or 8,000 acres. Six thousand employees run the nation's largest pulp line and a paper line which produce 1.2 million tons of pulp and 900,000 tons of paper each year. The first phase of development saw APP invest 10.5 billion RMB in 2005 to build a bleached eucalyptus kraft pulp line with an annual capacity of one million tons. The line requires both short fiber wood – like the hard wood Eucalyptus and Acacia trees found domestically – and long fibers only found outside the country, which means making the plant remains dependent on overseas pulp producers in Canada and Brazil to make quality fine paper.

Last September, the company commissioned a 13.6 billion RMB Voith fine paper machine with an annual production capacity of 1.6 million tons. The behemoth is the largest in the world, 428.18 meters long (half a kilometer), 10.96 m wide and housed in a building 660m long. It takes 20 minutes to walk



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GOLD EAST PAPER

APP China's Gold East Paper mill was founded in May 1997 with a 2.12 billion dollar investment. It is the single largest coated paper mill in the world with an annual production volume of two million tons. Here APP China produces art paper, wine label material and paper for cigarette packaging. It is the biggest supplier for soft pack cigarettes in China, a very large market that has superbly decorated cartons.

Paper lines one and two are Voith machines that run at 1,500 m/min. Line three, again a Voith, is capable of in-line coating and can run at 1,800 /min, claimed to be the fastest in the world. It produces 3,300 tons of paper a day. Management has implemented strict Lean 6 Sigma guidelines throughout the facility, using SAP's ERP software to manage production. The plant is ISO 14001 certified. Gold East Paper believes in employee development and training. It works hard to find the right people and claims to pay twice the salary of other local factories. It is a strong supporter of the Nanjing Forestry University and allots a significant percentage of revenue into R&D each year, partnering with printers and ink suppliers to bring the highest quality material to market.

SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT IN CHINA

The paper industry has long been targeted by environmental activists for its 'destructive' use of resources and toxic emissions from the pulp and paper production process. By the close of 2010, APP China had invested more than five and a half billion RMB in environmental protection measures. In June 2008, the company launched its Paper Contract with China (PCwC) manifesto which laid out a sustainable development policy. Key indicators include monitoring water consumption per ton of pulp/paper; wastewater discharge per ton of pulp/paper; and CO2 emissions per ton of pulp/paper, all of which



GEP Environmental Park

LABELS&LABELING



THE Golden East Dock

are reported to be well below the EU Environmental Protection Guidelines for the Pulp and Paper Industry (IPCC 2001). In 2011, for the third consecutive year, APP China was awarded the 'China CSR Good Enterprise Award' at the China Corporate Social Responsibility Annual Conference.

The Jinhai facility has invested 2.7 billion RMB in environmental protection measures including a recovery plant that stops black liquor – the substance remaining after the cellulose fibers are extracted from the pulpwood – from being released into local water supplies, unlike many of the thousands of smaller Chinese paper mills. Recovered energy from the boiler is used to fuel the entire plant.

The advanced pulping system keeps water usage to a minimum and recycles its processed water in a closed loop. Alkaline and acidic emissions are processed in the same system, keeping released pollutants below national guideline limits.

Solid waste is kept to a minimum and residual bark, wood dust and sludge are incinerated. In 2009 304,609 tons of sludge were diverted from landfill. 'Green liquor' waste is sent for use in cement manufacture.

Gold East Paper and APP's other key mills have invested in wastewater treatment systems so water can be released harmlessly into the environment. The purity of the water can be seen first hand at the facilities' 'harmonious' gardens where thousands of coy fish and ducks thrive. This water is also used to irrigate small farms on some of the mills' lands to produce vegetables which feed employees living on-site.

Gold East Paper was recognized with an Environmentally Friendly Enterprise company award from the Chinese government's Ministry of Environmental Protection in 2004, along with UPM Kymmene, the parent company of UPM Raflatac in Jiangsu Province. Less than 40 companies nationwide were given this honor.

GREEN WARS

Outside of China, APP has fought a long running battle with Greenpeace over what the environmental group claims is use of packaging materials sourced illegally from Indonesian rainforests. In 2011 Greenpeace persuaded global brands Lego, Hasbro, Mattel and Disney to stop sourcing their packaging material from APP after third party research found mixed tropical wood fibers in APP sourced pulp materials.

Although APP disputes Greenpeace's interpretation of the data, claiming it is impossible to link the fibers to any one country, Lego and Mattel have announced they will cease business with any company that supplies materials using APP pulp. Lego says that whenever possible it will use recycled content or materials certified by FSC, the sustainable forestry body. FSC dissociated itself from APP back in 2007.

On the other hand, the European Commission recently ruled that a number of APP's key products meet the criteria required for the EU Ecolabel.

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JUAN CARLOS ZAMORANO outside Flexo Print's factory in Cochabamba, Bolivia

Reversing the trend

BOLIVIAN end users are used to importing their labels from abroad. Now, the country's first narrow web converter is taking advantage of the gap in the market. James Quirk reports

The foundation of Bolivia's first dedicated narrow web label converter – and its subsequent investment in machinery from Gallus, Nilpeter, Rotoflex and Karlville – is a story representative of three major trends in some of Latin America's lesser developed label markets: the creation of local label converting operations to serve brands owners accustomed to importing labels from abroad; the increasing installations of top quality machinery; and the desire to export.

Brazil, Mexico, Argentina and Chile may dominate the headlines – all four boast local label converting operations that compare favorably in technology and quality with Europe and the USA's finest. But the smaller markets of Bolivia and Peru – even Ecuador and Paraguay – are increasingly attracting high quality machinery as local companies seek to reverse the trend of end users importing labels from abroad.

In Peru, Kuresa, the country's leading producer of prime labels and adhesive tapes, has just invested USD \$23 million in a new facility. Grupo Fibrafil, a manufacturer of agricultural netting and twine in the same country, will shortly open a dedicated label division housing two new Nilpeter FB presses. In Bolivia, packaging supplier Industrias Ravi is on the point of establishing a local label converting operation in cooperation with Argentine printer Artes Gráficas Raal. You can read about all three of these stories in upcoming issues of L&L.

These smaller Latin American markets have traditionally

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imported the majority of the labels used on locally sold goods. But now, companies in these countries are increasingly taking advantage of the gap in their local markets.

Bolivian brands historically import their labels from more developed industries such as Argentina and Colombia, and before just four years ago, there was no dedicated narrow web converting operation in the country.

This changed with the foundation in 2007 of Flexo Print, a Cochabamba-based offshoot of offset printer Sagitario, located in La Paz. In its short lifespan, the company has reaped the benefits of investment in advanced technology that has made it unique in its local market.

UNIQUE OFFERING

'Bolivia is something of a virgin country when it comes to the label industry,' says Juan Carlos Zamorano, general manager of Flexo Print, which employs 29 people. It was six years ago that Zamorano's father and namesake, who founded Sagitario's in 1986, decided to move into narrow web printing, encouraged both by the end users served by Sagitario's offset operation, and by the presence among the company's staff of a former press operator from German label converter Pago.

Through this link, as well as the local presence of Heidelberg in Bolivia, the company began conversations with Gallus and purchased an 8-color EM 280 press with hot stamping and two



FLEXO Print began its operations with an 8-color Gallus EM 280 press

silkscreen units in 2007 to inaugurate its dedicated label division, Flexo Print. The machine was initially destined for La Paz, but concerns over the city's altitude – at 3,650m it is the highest administrative capital in the world – meant the operation was set up in Cochabamba, a centrally located city where Sagitario already ran a sales office.

Investment has continued in the last 12 months with the company achieving impressive growth of 40 percent. An 8-color Nilpeter FA-4 press for shrink sleeve and wraparound label production was installed at the beginning of the year, along with two Karlville shrink sleeve converting machines and a second Rotoflex finishing machine – a VLI 440E – which joined a Rotoflex VSI 330E installed in 2009.

Other recent installations include a Karlville heat shrinking machine for the production of proofs, plate mounting equipment from Systec Converting and a Toyobo Cosmolight plate making system which was installed by Argentina-based Leftech, the Japanese company's Latin America distributor.

Cochabamba's 2,500m altitude can still pose challenges. Plates can sometimes bubble, so Flexo Print has worked with Toyobo to pass all plates through an altitude simulation to ensure there are no problems.

The equipment is housed in Flexo Print's modern facility in Cochabamba, with a sales office for Sagitario also located onsite. The synergy between the separate operations is clear, with a number of Sagitario's packaging clients also now being supplied with labels by Flexo Print.

According to Juan Carlos Zamorano, Flexo Print's reputation for quality in the local market has led its brand owner customers to call for the company to

further diversify into flexible packaging production, which he cites as an opportunity for the near future.

'We are known in the market for our quality,' he says. 'The installation base of wide web machines in Bolivia is quite old, and we are the first narrow web converter in the country, so our clients are looking for us to be a one-stop shop for all their packaging needs.'

The company's investment in advanced printing and converting equipment has been crucial to its success. In Bolivia, says Zamorano, local companies are often reluctant to invest, and Flexo Print 'has reaped the benefits of taking the plunge'. 'It's a great strategic advantage to be able to offer added-value technology such as silkscreen and hot stamping, for example. Bolivian infrastructure can make it difficult and costly to import, so to be able to supply brands locally – with lower manufacturing costs and closer service – is a big advantage.'

Bolivia, says Zamorano, bore no impact of the global recession, with internal growth remaining strong. 'In the last five years, never have taxes been so cheap and credit so readily available in Bolivia, so the timing of the investment has been ideal. Everything has come together perfectly.'

SHRINK GROWTH

At the time of L&L's visit, Flexo Print was 100 percent dedicated to self-adhesive label production, with shrink sleeves and wraparound label production just beginning. Zamorano believes that shrink sleeves, particularly, represent an excellent opportunity for growth and could end up accounting for 50 percent of production in the future.

Local end users have shown a great deal of interest, he says, and the use of the Karlville machine for proof production has provided further encouragement.

Edgar Tejada, Flexo Print's regional manager who takes charge of day-to-day operations at the Cochabamba site, cites the example of Coca-Cola, which approached Flexo Print with examples of shrink sleeve labels imported from Peru for its new energy drink, Burn, and offered the company the chance to compete for the work. Flexo Print produced proofs and, on the day of L&L's visit, these had been sent back to Coca-Cola. With the labels' notable improvement in color quality and contrast, Tejada and Zamorano were confident of encouraging the brand to opt for local service.

Household goods, pharmaceutical, personal care and beverage are the company's major end user sectors, with Flexo Print seeing particular potential for shrink sleeve production for household goods and beverages. There also remains strong potential in the beverage sector for self-adhesive labels, with boutique wines and



L-R: Francisco Soto, Rotoflex's Latin America sales manager, and Juan Carlos Zamorano, general manager of Flexo Print



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EDGAR TEJADA, Flexo Print's regional manager, oversees the Cochabamba site



AN 8-COLOR Nilpeter FA-4 press for shrink sleeve and wraparound label production was installed at the beginning of 2011

promotional campaigns on beer bottles both seeing increased self-adhesive label consumption.

The pre-press department, described by Edgar Tejada as 'the company's heart', plays its own part in educating brand owners about what can be achieved with flexo printing technology, meaning that some design work also takes place in-house. An internal workflow system based on SAP, meanwhile, is currently being developed and will be installed by the end of the year.

Tejada emphasizes the importance of charismatic leadership and credibility in the market, philosophies he has worked hard to implement in the company. 'In last two years, we have absorbed 90 percent of our competitors' work,' he says. 'Cutting-edge technology has been the key. Combine credibility with good quality and a good price, and you can't lose.'

FUTURE PLANS

Flexo Print takes seriously the training of its staff. The company's rising profile in the Latin American marketplace has led to it receiving multiple visits from leading industry suppliers with bases in the region. Flexo Print takes advantage of this flow of expertise, requiring them to give presentations to staff as part of the education process. Employees have also been sent to Denmark for workshops in staff care and environmental sustainability thanks to a B2B program organized by the Danish embassy in Bolivia.

The company is also preparing itself for future environmental sustainability legislation, which it says is likely in Bolivia in the future. The environmental credentials of the Toyobo Cosmolight system, which uses no solvents, was cited as an important factor behind the purchasing decision. Water is filtered and reused, consumables are recycled where possible and employees have also been sent on sustainability education courses run by Fundes Bolivia, an organization that assists with training

and implementation of sustainability programs. ISO certification is also currently underway, also in cooperation with Fundes Bolivia, while Flexo Print is in talks with two local companies who are interested in using its liner waste in dry walls.

Flexible packaging is named as a potential area for future growth, but Zamorano says that the company won't try to compete with long run work handled by wide web companies, rather target the short run flexible packaging market.

Security products are also an area of interest; Flexo Print currently imports certain security products but does not yet manufacture them in-house. Landlocked Bolivia has extensive borders with Peru, Chile, Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil, and contraband represents a big problem in the country. Counterfeit goods and illegal imports often line

supermarket shelves, says Zamorano, making it hard for local companies who are adhering to the law.

To border so many countries brings its own advantages, however. Bolivia's central location and large number of neighboring markets, combined with the fact that it is one of the cheapest nations in the region, provides great potential for export. Edgar Tejada cites northern Chile and southern Peru – both far from their respective capitals and industrial bases – as regions which Flexo Print intends to target.

Flexo Print's impressive growth since its foundation shows that in Bolivia, the trend of end users importing their labels is changing. The company is not only clawing back its local market – bringing its customers a level of quality previously only available abroad – but will soon reverse the trend and win work from markets that used to serve its own.

ROTOFLEX SEES INCREASING QUALITY DEMANDS

Flexo Print's investment this year in a second Rotoflex finishing machine is a positive endorsement of the company's willingness to invest in top quality technology. For Rotoflex's Latin America sales manager, Francisco Soto, it is further proof of the increasing buying power of the region's converters and demands for higher quality from end users.

Soto estimates the total installation base of Rotoflex machines in Latin America to be more than 650, with sales consistently strong over the last two years and particular interest in the company's V series of equipment, which includes the VSI and VLI finishing machines.

'I have seen a vast improvement in the technological requirements in the region,' he says. 'It has been very rewarding to sell high quality machines into a market that remains price-sensitive and where political and cultural challenges are present on a daily basis. Our customers in the region have really embraced the technology, understanding that it can help them to gain a competitive edge. Rotoflex represents superior technology and workmanship that will ultimately reflect in the quality of the finished product, which helps them to expand and grow their businesses.'

Countries such as Brazil and Mexico have traditionally been strong, but Soto sees a trend towards companies from the region's smaller markets increasingly investing in advanced technology. 'There has been a great deal of growth in countries such as Peru and Venezuela, while the fact that we now have two Rotoflex machines in Bolivia also shows that these smaller markets are making significant progress.'

According to Flexo Print's Juan Carlos Zamorano, the decision to invest in a second Rotoflex finishing machine was not a difficult one. 'We'd already had a good experience with the first machine, and the local support offered by the company – crucially, in Spanish – as well as the machine's easy maintenance, made it an easy decision,' he says. 'Technical support is crucial in the investment decision.'



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A digital world

CAROL HOUGHTON reports from a BPIF labels seminar which compared competing digital technologies

BPIF Labels, the UK's label association, held its Autumn Technical Seminar in November. 'Digital label printing – current state of play' reviewed the growth of digital label printing and the role of origination, design and color management.

After the seminar was opened by BPIF Labels' John Bambery, Mike Fairley gave an overview of the digital label printing sector. 'Of all new presses installed worldwide this year, 19 percent have been digital,' said Fairley, who estimated one third of press sales at Labelexpo Europe were digital. He drew attention to a tweet sent by Spanish journalist Juan Diaz Diaz: 'At #labelexpo 2009 digital competed with flexo. This year it's all change; flexo is trying to compete with digital.'

Fairley said HP Indigo and Xeikon were the first to make industrial-scale digital printing possible at the same time as brands started looking for reduced run lengths and more product variations. Wine labels have been a strong digital growth segment, well suited to high value and

short runs. Other successful applications have included food and beverage, cosmetics, health and beauty, as well as pharmaceutical – particularly nutritional supplements.

EscoArtwork's software was described by Paul Bates, the company's UK business manager, as 'the glue between conventional and digital.' Bates believes the two technologies will sit side by side for the next 10-15 years 'before digital takes over.'

Bates said digital print requires a different mindset, and needs to be driven efficiently to get the best out of it. 'Workflow is paramount. Presses need to be fed with the correct jobs and kept running all the time.' Short runs and small orders create more prepress work, and the key is in automation, said Bates. 'The printer has no time to get it wrong now.' Mike Fairley added that outsourcing prepress is not an option: 'the converter must be in control.' Bates pointed out that an average of seven percent of uptime on

digital presses is spent printing proofs. 'Digital printers should be printing, not proofing.' Bates looked at alternative on-line proofing methods, including 3D virtual representations of the label wrapped around the container.

INKJET VS TONER

Delegates heard presentations from representatives of the toner and inkjet technologies which are now competing in the digital labels market.

Paul Briggs of Xeikon, explained the dry toner process which allows Xeikon presses to print at 1200dpi. Recent developments have included a highly opaque white which can be printed in one pass with CMYK. Briggs said dry toner has better light fastness than liquid toner and UV inkjet and explained that Xeikon toners are FDA compliant for food contact, have no odor, and no VOC emissions.

Steve Lakin of HP Indigo looked at liquid toner technology, where finely ground pigment particles are suspended



THE event closed with a panel session with all the speakers

in a liquid, simulating offset inks. The 'one-shot' print process, where colors are built up on the blanket before transferring the complete image to the substrate, provides perfect register, said Lakin. 'It can produce the same look and feel as conventional offset and has the ability to print seven colors. Customers can mix their own spot colors onsite.'

In terms of new ink developments, HP Indigo recently launched an invisible red ink, now being used on a WS4000-series machine in the Indian pharmaceutical market to help fight counterfeiting.

Although it has the technology, Lakin explained HP has not used inkjet heads for its label presses because they can't (yet) produce high enough quality. 'And inkjet is a classic example of a print process that must be pristine to ensure it prints well.'

Domino's Vlad Slijapic headed the argument for inkjet; 'its reliability, simple design and construction brings scalability. Inkjet can be made wider and faster, has application versatility in and off-line, prints color and black and white and spot varnish and digital foiling.' The non-contact system makes it possible to print on heat sensitive, textured and pre die cut materials, said Slijapic. 'The number of colors is unrelated to speed and there is no practical imposition limit, so waste and cost can be minimized, especially on low ink coverage jobs.'

Slijapic sought to clear up some 'misperceptions' around inkjet. 'Although inkjet can print on uncoated surfaces, coated substrates are recommended for the best print quality.'

Adrian Steele, Mercian Labels, said inkjet is restricted by a 'lack of confidence' in the industry. 'It is still a niche market and the user needs technology to cover all markets to make it worth their while.'

Soren Ringbo, who manages Nilpeter's digital press operations, believes a combination of UV inkjet and conventional print is the future: 'Inkjet is simpler than the electrophotographic process, and scaleable. In addition, non-contact printing means the thickness of the substrate is

not so critical and it is possible to print on rough surfaces.' Neil Holiday, UPM Raflatac discussed material selection for each digital printing process. 'What's needed is the same range of label stock, good ink transfer and adhesion between ink and substrate.'

FINISHING

Whether digital print should be finished on- or off-line has been an ongoing discussion. Delegates heard that some 78 percent of current digital installations have off-line systems. Finishing systems are overwhelmingly used for die cutting, and 78 percent varnish inline. Some key vendors, however, believe the future is in-line converting. Vlad Slijapic of Domino, for example, told delegates finishing in-line is a growing trend. Slijapic also believes that digital varnishing with inkjet has a good future.

ABG's Mike Burton said in-line finishing reduces labor costs and has higher productivity, whereas off-line finishing can be maximized where multiple decorating processes are required. At Labelexpo the company showed both in-line and off-line variants of its Omega Digicon 2 digital label converters with semi-automatic turret rewinds.

Burton said laser technology has advanced rapidly, offering a non-stop finishing line with no downtime. Although laser has limitations with some substrates, it can cut most papers, and PET and PP if laminated/varnished. When questioned about the high cost, Burton explained; 'You need to consider how much is spent a year on dies; in terms of time, money, logistics, transport and operator error. It can be used as a sales tool to win new business.' A low cost 'entry level' system will be launched at Drupa using one rather than two lasers.

MIS

Andrew Mckerlie of LabelTraxx explained that a good MIS system is critical for an efficient digital label printing operation. 'Can your MIS cope with three times the number of current orders? Because that is what happens with digital.'

QUICK FACTS

- Mike Fairley predicts that by next year one quarter of all new roll label presses installed worldwide will be digital, rising to 40 percent by 2020. The current figure is 15 percent.
- 57 percent of conventional jobs are under 25,000m run length and 71 percent under 50,000m. 65 percent of digital full color jobs are under 10,000m and 95 percent full color under 50,000m.
- Inkjet growth forecast is 30 percent from 2010 to 2014.

His colleague Katie Nightingale gave a live demonstration of the system; showing how the customer logs in online, receives a quote through E-traxx, can choose tooling, laminate, main stock, finish, even labels per roll and can upload artwork. LabelTraxx accesses all this information to process the job and send to the automated prepress system.

Later, in the panel session chaired by Mike Fairley, a popular topic for discussion was the willingness of customers to adapt to online ordering, for which they have to take responsibility for the quality of digital artwork.

CONVERTER EXPERIENCE

Trevor Smith from Amberley Labels told delegates about his company's experience with digital printing since installing the UK's first HP Indigo press, a WS4000, back in 2002-3. 'The brand owner gets differentiation, order flexibility and a high quality digital solution with specific color matches, metallic material and cost effective proofing. The result is a consistent, high quality brand image, ability to order to requirement, increased sales and new customers.'

For Amberley Labels the future challenges include business automation, multi-layer requirements, finding cost effective ultra short runs and continuing to sell on added value, not price. In addition, Smith said, 'there is a wider range of competing technologies. We are now competing in a digital environment instead of a conventional one.'

Xeikon press user Adrian Steele from Mercian Labels said digital print has rapidly become commoditized. 'Make sure you're prepared to invest four years and find niche markets as it is a very competitive world.' Steele noted that variable data has yet to emerge as a significant application, and 'same day delivery' is also something of a myth. The company delivers 90 percent of jobs in five days. Looking at materials useage, Steele reported just over half is paper, 37 percent white PP and 12 percent clear. 'Digital is a new culture, its requires annualized hours and there is wastage.' Steele advised.

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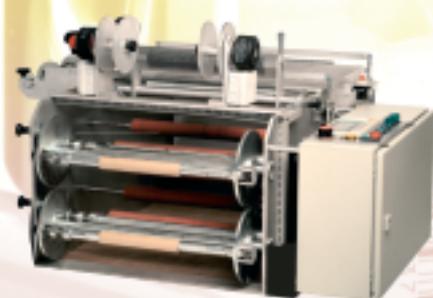
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SMAG took five I-Cut orders during Labelexpo

Finishing and converting equipment at labelexpo

INTEGRATION of 100 percent inspection, increased modularity and finishing of digitally printed labels were areas of focus among a raft of developments in finishing and converting equipment at Labelexpo Europe. James Quirk rounds up some of the technology on display

On the **AB Graphic International** stand two versions of the company's Omega Digicon 2 label converting lines ran live demonstrations featuring one-stop operation with semi-automatic turret rewinders. One model was demonstrated with off-line turret rewriter to allow machine slow down when the finished roll terminates and the second operated non-stop at full speed and included Nordson automatic gluing.

The new Omega ATR inspection rewriter was also featured. The model is equipped with turret rewriter to allow the operator to inspect the web visually while maintaining non-stop finishing.

Featuring new software upgrades, the Digicon Sabre Xtreme laser cutter was demonstrated running three jobs with non-stop digital die change-over and variable data capability. The system featured digital cold foil application through inkjet technology to apply the adhesive without the use of printing plates and Tidland automatic slit change pattern system for non-stop operation.

Allen Datagraph Systems Inc (ADSI) launched its iTech Centra HS digital finishing system, which is said to be up to four times faster than the original Centra system. The event also marked the European introduction of the iTech Axxis SR digital label system for proofing and prototyping of labels. Allen

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Datagraph also showcased the iTech Axxis digital label system for printing and finishing short-run labels on a wide variety of substrates.

The iTech Centra HS is a high-speed roll-to-roll digital converting system that allows users to laminate, die-less cut, strip the waste matrix and slit custom labels in one production pass. The iTech Centra HS can convert printed materials from any digital or analog print platform, including inkjet and thermal printers or a conventional flexo press in roll lengths up to 1,250 feet (381m) and up to 14 inches wide (356mm).

Print to cut registration is accomplished via the SmartMark optical registration system. Multiple registration marks can be scanned to automatically adjust the cut file, compensating for any skew or scale issues that may have been caused by the output device or the material. The computer-driven cutting technology is capable of cutting multiple depths within the same cut file allowing for perforations or multi-layer applications. The iTech Centra HS also has a new touch screen interface that makes it easy to set up and operate.

The iTech Axxis SR digital label system allows converters to proof or prototype labels of any shape on-demand, and is also suitable for end users who have short run label requirements.

The system, using an Epson B-500DN inkjet print engine,

prints labels at 720 x 720 dpi. With a wide variety of available substrates – paper, polyester and polypropylene – the system can print in widths from four inches (102mm) to eight and a half inches (216mm) in rolls with a maximum outside diameter of 11 inches (280mm).

Ashe Converting Equipment demonstrated an Opal slitter rewinder equipped with a 100 percent inspection system from German company Eye-C, thanks to a new reciprocal partnership between the companies which also saw Eye-C run an Ashe rewinder on its own stand. The machine can process any substrate up to widths of 600mm.

Also on display was a servo-driven Opal 330 with die station for blank and pre-printed labels, as well as a Solitaire filmic slitter which can handle web widths of 400-800mm.

Aztech Converting showed an ISR slitter rewinder with 100 percent inspection from Erhardt + Leimer, and a BSR dual spindle slitter rewinder, which can handle all substrates including unsupported film.

The ISR range has a maximum speed of 243 m/min and the BSR of 228 m/min.

Bar Graphic Machinery showed its latest digital finishing converting line, the BGM Elite FDTR Flexo Die Cut. Standard features are being able to print to re-register, die-cut to print re-register and print to print re-register; the servo-driven print stations are equipped with self-positioning print cylinders enabling automatic print registration set up. The machine is fitted with interchangeable UV and IR curing cassettes, while dual servo-driven die stations with removable anvils enable all converting options to be achieved.

Other models exhibited from the Elite Range were a filmic inspection slitter rewinder, inspection slitter rewinder, rotary die-cutting rewinder and die-cut to register slitter rewinder. By mid-way through day two of the show, the company reported two sales off the booth to L&L.

Cartes launched a new version of its Laser 350 RF laser die-cutting machine. Also on display was Cartes' HS Combi-Laser Series, where laser technology is combined with printing units to create modular machines for label production which can reach speeds of up to 15,000 cycles per hour. The HS CombiLaser Series features different applications such as converting and die-cutting by traditional flat die or laser, UV varnishing, corona and primer pre-treatments, silk-screen printing, hot stamping, embossing, lamination and hologram application.

Cartes reported numerous sales during the show. Belgium-based Femaprint purchased a Laser 350 Dual RF; Lenzlinger of Switzerland bought a Laser 350 Dual; French converter Neo-Color ordered a TFE 350 electronic sheeter; Brazil-based Indústria de Etiquetas Romano opted for a HS203SHH label converting line with

hot stamping, embossing and flat-bed die-cutting; and Mexican converter Etiquetas Modernas purchased a HS352SS system which allows fine silkscreen decoration, Braille embossed effects and complete or spot varnishing.

Colordyne demonstrated its new CDT-1600PC (production class) roll-to-roll press dedicated to the prime and secondary pressure sensitive label markets, narrow web packaging and tags.

Show attendees saw for the first time Colordyne's inkjet system using Memjet color printing technology mounted on a specially engineered web handling system in cooperation with AzTech Converting.

The 1600PC is a 5-color fixed head system equipped with CMYK water-based dye ink, plus a water-based dye pantone spot color capable of running at 32 in/sec, or 160 ft/min on both continuous and pre-die cut materials. Memjet's printheads utilize nanotechnology that can print at 1600 x 1200 dpi on this system. Memjet-powered printers use Memjet printheads, controller chips and ink. The Memjet printhead is 8.77 inches wide and has 70,400 nozzles that can fire more than 700 million drops of ink per second. With its five printheads, the CDT-1600PC can fire more than three and a half billion drops of ink per second.

This digital inkjet system is poised to tackle two separate pieces of market share. Firstly, the Colordyne system can offer a turnkey solution to brand owners of all sizes that help improve turnover times, reduce inventories and waste and provide a production avenue for more cost-effective full color labels. Since the system is capable of printing pre-die cut materials, the complex conversion step is removed from on-demand label production, thereby streamlining the process.

The Colordyne 1600PC has been designed with flexibility in mind and with the AzTech Converting partnership, label converters too can find the system to be a simplified process, but can additionally customize the converting line by adding stations to the front and back of the digital heads with options to coat, laminate, integrate foiling, stamping and/or die stations to produce more short runs of high-value labels cost effectively.

The way in which the Colordyne system has been designed around low capital, consumable costs and profitability is different from others in the market. Inks, materials and the inkjet head are considered consumables and are factored in as such within the cost model. The Memjet heads in the Colordyne system can be replaced for a minimal cost, which lowers the cost per print.

Convertec unveiled its new modular unit for digital Braille printing for labels. The unit, called DigiBraille, has a modular design that can be retrofitted to any

printing press or converting line for either in-line or off-line Braille production. The central impression design allows booklets and labels to be printed with greater accuracy while also inspection is done on the same drum.

The CI unit was possible to make due to an innovative printing head design. The smaller printing head also allows for increased speed and tighter tolerances. The basic software for the new DigiBraille module can handle up to 12 labels across the web, printing up to 24 text lines of Braille simultaneously. The extended software can handle upload of PDF's and XML data to avoid operator programming errors.

A separate camera inspection system is available that can cross-check the printed Braille text image against a master image. If any errors occur, they can be marked and taken out further down the process.

Daco Solutions launched the Spectrum servo-driven single color flexo press with re-register capabilities. The Spectrum can take digital print from a variety of digital presses, apply a varnish or overlaminate and die-cut to register. It is also capable of producing single color flexo labels and die-cut or using the re-register system add further colors, or just simply die-cut plain labels.

The company's DTD250 table-top finishing machine has had various upgrades, with an air mandrel for the unwind, a new draw/nip roller configuration, guarding modification enabling RotoMetrics Hydra Jacks to be fitted at a later date by the client and a Daco designed back scoring system. A PLD250 semi-automatic turret rewinder was also on display with upgraded software.

Daco signed an order with Sapir Sprint, Israel, for a Daco DTD250 within 30 minutes of the doors opening at Labelexpo Europe.

Sapir Sprint produces thermal transfer labels for a range of desktop and industrial printers. Sapir Sprint's Ronen Gidony said: 'We bought one of the first Daco DTD250 machines back in 2003 when the machine was first introduced to the



SOMA Engineering's Bulldog offline die-cutter



ROTOCONTROL received 18 machine orders at Labelexpo

market. The machine was and still is one of the workhorses of our production facility and we ordered a further DTD250 in the summer of 2011.'

Mark Laurence, sales manager at Daco Solutions, said: 'Ronen has been a long-standing customer of ours and has grown his business successfully over the last eight years utilizing Daco equipment. I can remember the initial conversation with him where he was worried about technical support with being so far away; it is something we laugh about now: he reminds me that he has never bought one spare part from us or had the need for a service call in eight years.'

DCM Usimeca displayed a non-stop sleeve seaming machine and a quality control machine, alongside a Serval narrow web slitter rewinder and a sleeve perforating and sheeting machine, SleeveCut.

Delta Industrial ran live demonstrations of an integrated web converting and packaging line. The system showed a variety of processes such as island placement, tight tolerance die-cutting, vision inspection and heat seal pouching. The Delta Mod-Tech can incorporate many additional features, allowing the user to create a custom manufacturing and/or packaging system.

Emis showed its Flexor line of inspection slitters, rewinders and die-cutting machines. Flexor STACRW4-12 is a fully servo four spindle turret rewinder with a width of 410mm. Flexor 440IS is a 440mm wide inspection machine equipped with the latest Nikka D1 camera system. Flexor 380 2C+ is a 380mm wide machine equipped with a double die-cutting unit and a re-register module to die cut pre-printed labelstock. Flexor Lexjet 350 is an industrial inkjet machine for printing low volume jobs or variable data, equipped with the latest Konica Minolta KM1024 heads and GEW UV curing.

Emmendinger Maschinenbau (EMB) showed its high speed punching and embossing machine. The company said the machine is being used by customers in the packaging, dairy and beverage industries. It punches small shapes out of unprinted and printed aluminum, paper and plastic foils directly from reels, which may then be used as sealing lids or labels. Applications include sealing lids for yoghurt and pro-biotic drinks and beer bottle neck labels. The machine brings capabilities for embossing, perforating, pin-perforating and doming, and quick changeovers between tools enable easy handling and increased production. The company has developed a shredder, which can be optionally added to the machine, for crushing waste foil into small pieces, allowing for easier suction and collection of the waste.

Errepi demonstrated its automatic cores cutter machine, Vittoria, suitable for plastic or cardboard cores of various diame-

ters and lengths; and its Leonardo 350mm automatic non-stop turret rewinder. The company launched a flexo printing unit, Flexoturbo, which was shown on a 2-color modular machine.

ETI Converting Equipment introduced its emulsion acrylic Cohesio technology, which brings label printers the flexibility of emulsion and solvent acrylic adhesives, as well as hot melt and UV hot melt adhesives, in one Cohesio multifunctional inline coating and printing system. The self-computerized multifunctional printing and coating equipment provides users with the benefits and cost savings of converting pressure sensitive material and/or printing pressure sensitive labels all in one pass.

The company also showed the new Miniliner, an ultra-thin clear PET or BOPP liner of 12 microns which is said to substantially reduce waste and increase productivity. The Miniliner can be die-cut at speeds up to 150 meters a minute and is adaptable to ETI's COHESIO technologies.

ETI promoted the linerless capabilities of its Cohesio printing and converting equipment that can reach speeds of 150m/min. Linerless technology brings converters direct monetary savings, allows for simple front and back printing, and is a more sustainable option for pressure sensitive label decoration since more labels fit per roll, reducing transportation emissions, and there is no liner waste to be disposed of.

Graficon Maschinenbau showed the new Graficon RPS 220 booklet and processing machine, demonstrating the inline production of booklet labels. A new feature on the machine is the merging of three different pre-printed materials in register. Also on display was the sheeting machine, Graficon BSM 340, for processing from roll to sheet, with new options and extension possibilities such as intermediate cut, waste shift and stacking options.

Grafisk Maskinfabrik showed its new Digital Converting Line 500 (DC500), which can handle web widths from 100mm up to 515mm. The die-cut station is fitted with optional GapMaster by Kocher+Beck. The DC500 comes with UV flexo-varnish station with registration and super-gloss varnish capabilities. It is also fitted with the optional semi-rotary hot foil station with GapMaster that will be demonstrating high quality gold- and silver-printing during the show. GM will also be running various jobs on its smaller digital converters, the DC330, fitted with Zenna laser die-cutter, and the DC330-mini. The entire range of GM digital converters as well as other finishing machinery – re-/unwinders, core cutters, roll lifters/turners, sheeters and waste management machines – were available for testing at the show.

Grafotronic launched its 440HI slitting machine with a 100 percent inspection system from Nikka. The 440HI is a high-speed fully servo-driven machine with new features such as an

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DELTA ran demonstrations of an integrated web converting and packaging line

integrated roll lift, slide control panel and a quick-change knife package.

The company also showed its new Converting Line 380 CL in a modular design that included two flexo units, die-cutting and a new automatic turret rewinder. Each module is servo driven and works independently. Extra units, such as lamination, inkjet, labeling, 100 percent inspection, hotfoil and varnishing, can be added.

HKM showed its 380 and 280 ranges of rewinders. An additional rotary die-cutting station on the HKM 380 inspection rewinder enables production of clean and printed labels, while modular construction offers a wide range of options. The HKM 280 rewinder can automatically stop after counting down a defined number of labels regardless of the machine's speed, a function which increases speed and productivity.

Impression Technology Europe showed the Rapid Label Printing Systems, as well as launching a new Rapid finishing line. Built around the Memjet printhead, the table-top X1 and the floor-standing X2 printers both produce full color labels at a rate of 18m/min. As the machines run from a standard PC, each label can be unique, making them suitable for applications such as tracking or stock control. With virtually no set-up cost, the unit production cost per label remains the same whether printing one or 1,000 labels. The new Rapid finishing line is expected to include a varnishing and semi rotary re-registering system.

Karlville Development demonstrated its SteamBox portable steam tunnel for shrink sleeve prototyping. The SteamBox simulates the shrink tunnel process by using a progressive steam pulverization system along the container in a transversal movement. The portable unit works for full body applications, half body applications, tamper-evident applications and multipacks, and can be adapted to different sizes of containers. Also on display was the company's K3-Seaming Machine.

Kongskilde showed its pneumatic trim and waste removal systems for the labeling industry. The company, whose background is in the paper and plastic industries, has developed a system with non-stick



SECURE SOLUTIONS

DANIELLE JERSCHEFSKE looks at a dedicated division launched by Kodak at the show

Kodak launched its Security Solutions to converters interested in providing customers unique brand security and anti-counterfeit systems. The firm provides consulting services to develop a Brand Protection Strategy, supplies proprietary and third-party security products, and assists with implementation that can include monitoring and enforcing services worldwide. The strategy can be customized to service the precise needs of each client.

The company supports its consulting services with complete overt, covert and ultra-covert traceable products such as ultra low-level markers that can be used as a 'drop-in' application for existing processes. These markers provide a form of chemical encryption and are typically added to the inks used to print labels and packaging, but can also be used in varnish overcoat, as well as being extruded into plastics and threads. Thaddeus Bowen, senior managing consultant for business, says, 'the markers are impossible to detect or reverse engineer, and are non-disruptive to host materials or the printing and label production processes.'

It launched the new Traceless Anti-Diversion (AD) invisible inkjet ink and detection system to provide end-of-line marking and / or serialization to your documents at Labelexpo. The invisible ink provides security through serialization in the form of patterns, alphanumeric, and 2D barcodes. The ink does not respond to UV or visible light.

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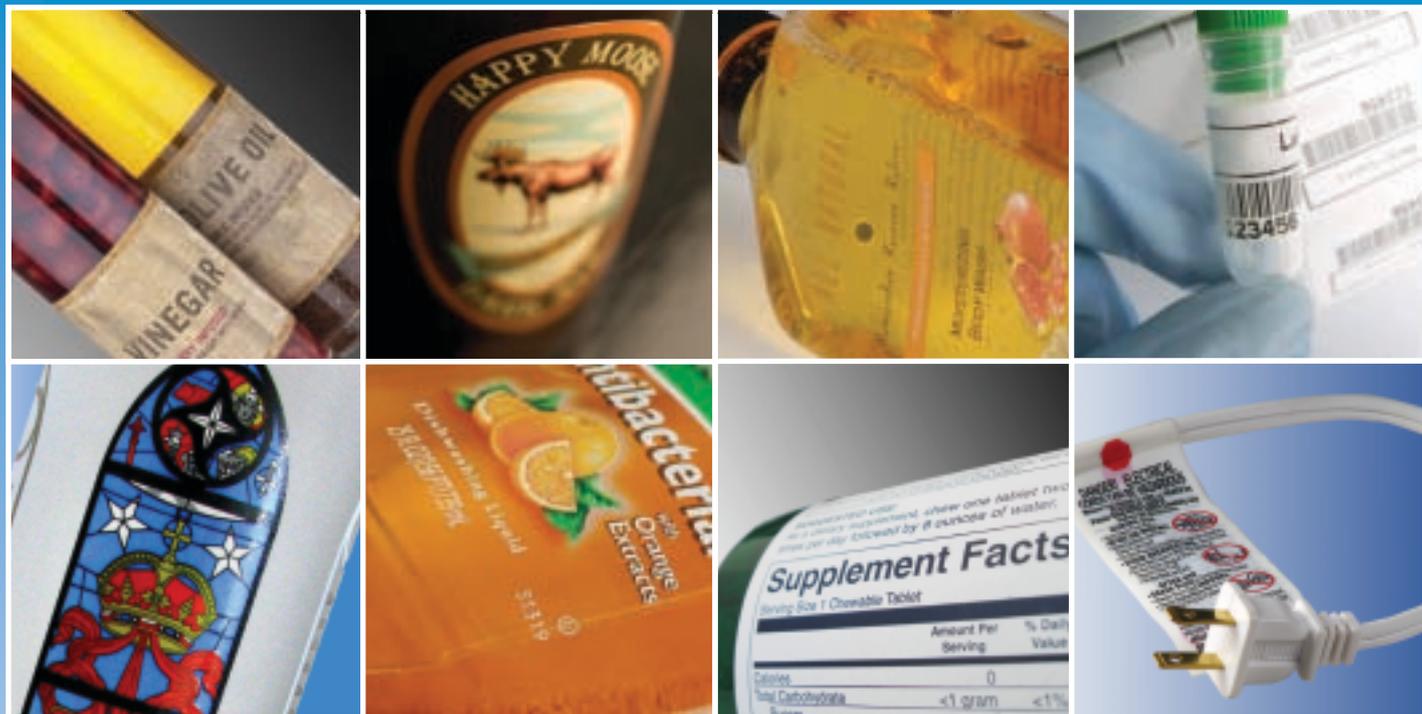
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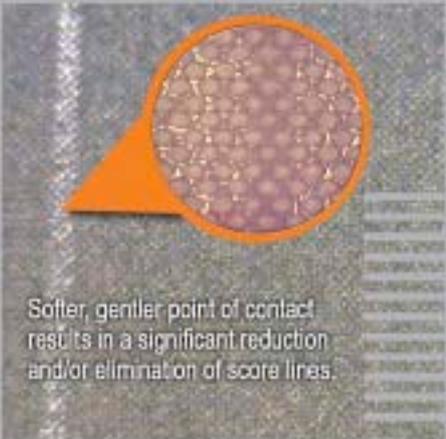
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ROLAND DG showed a range of combined printer cutters

components and simple design which is targeted specifically at the label sector.

Kugler-Womako presented new developments for the cutting of plastic labels as well as a concept for efficient label matrix removal for pressure sensitive labels. The company's existing LabelCut 102, launched 10 years ago, enables customers to professionally convert wet glue labels from reels into strip piles. Its new development, a cutting capability for plastic labels, is targeted to the stringent requirements of this demanding niche market.

The LabelCut cuts plastic labels with a thickness of 50 μm to 105 μm at a speed of 2,000 cuts/min or 200 m/min. Even at the highest speed, the cutting accuracy is +/- 0.1 mm, both longitudinally as well as transversely. The company developed a collating area that makes it possible to collect sensitive plastic labels in strips smoothly and precisely. Even during operation, the collating area can be adjusted from outside to millimeter accuracy.

Another innovation focuses on efficient label matrix removal for pressure sensitive labels. Kugler-Womako's system for the converting of thinner label webs reaches a speed of 200 m/min and a width of 650 mm, without damaging the substrate.

LeoMat showed the latest model of its digital finishing machine, Digitakt 330 SFR. The Digitakt 330 SFR has a matrix rewind, printing unit, semi-rotary die-cutting unit, an AVT camera inspection system, cutting unit and rewinding unit. The machine is assembled modularly and allows the simple subsequent integration of additional modules like hot and cold stamping, screen printing, additional die-cutting, in-mold delivery system, label dispensing systems etc.

LeoMat also demonstrated its Practice 430 I inspection machine with a new concept on the AVT booth. The Practice 430 I has a matrix rewind, AVT camera inspection, inspection table, cutting unit, two rewind stations and two web advance devices (also suitable for thin and sensitive materials).

Lombardi unveiled two new machines: the modular Screenline finishing

machine with silkscreen, hot foil and die-cutting capabilities, and the Synchronline flexo press. Both units featured Lombardi's new patented doctor blade, the Air Blade System (ABS).

The quick change ABS incorporates what Lombardi calls Hi-DynamiX, a pneumatics-based locking mechanism which automatically and dynamically adjusts pressure against the anilox. The benefits include better ink distribution and more even setting of the blade across the anilox, helping prolong anilox life.

The Synchronline press has a servo driven tension control system which can handle a wide range of substrates, from 12 micron film up to 400 gram board. New features include a pre-registration system for both printing and die cutting units and an innovative register control with an automated 'gain' setting which sets the percentage by which registration errors are corrected (how 'aggressive' the correction is) depending on the substrate characteristics. The system reads and analyzes error statistics in real-time and automatically finds the 'best fit' system parameters. Different settings may be required, for example, at the start and end of the reel.

Martin Automatic showed an MBSC butt splicer for the first time at Labelexpo Europe, on the Labelmen stand.

Gavin Rittmeyer, vice president of sales and marketing, said: 'The MBSC is the most economical narrow web, short- and long-run splicer on the market,

combining an affordable price with high performance and offering great value to converters. We are demonstrating the MBSC working with our STR turret rewinder. Together, they deliver extraordinary waste savings, productivity increases and print quality improvements through non-stop press operation. Significantly, the MBSC splicer and STR turret rewinder at the Brussels show reflect our international presence and global commitment – under a licensing agreement, Labelmen Machinery Company, based in Taiwan, builds Martin splicers and rewinders to sell with their Labelmen presses worldwide.'

Martin Automatic also showed a STS automatic unwind/splicer, complemented by an STR turret rewinder at the delivery end of the press. Both of these units were built by Labelmen, under license.

Visitors to the company's stand saw demonstrations of an MBS butt splicer and LRD rewinder. The MBS provides non-stop splicing in narrow and mid-web processes of a variety of substrates from labels to flexible packaging and carton board. Fitted with a built-in roll loading device – no carts or hoists required – the MBS at the show was equipped with Martin's Waste Reduction System (WRS) to enable converters to run the maximum amount of material from a roll of stock.

The LRD rewinder features a moving cantilevered spindle arrangement for rewinding and automatic unloading of finished rolls. The AC vector drive package, with dancer tension control, adds accuracy and flexibility. The LRD at the show was equipped with a web guide, integrated shear-cut slitting and ribbon separation for winding multiple streams of printed product.

Following the show, the MBS splicer and LRD rewinder will be installed at Albea – formerly Betts UK – in Colchester, England, for the production of laminated tubes.

Newfoil showed the latest addition to its range of label converting and finishing machines: the Newfoil SF330 servo-driven flexographic varnishing unit. Designed for varnishing digitally printed webs, the machine will spot varnish in



ETI unveiled its emulsion acrylic Cohesio technology.



STRATUS SENDS 100 OPERATORS TO EXPO

Leading French-based converting group Stratus Packaging must surely claim the record for the biggest number of operators to visit Labelexpo Brussels, sending no less than 100 staff from its three sites to the show.

'The aim of Stratus was to reward and unite our staff by allowing them to increase their technical knowledge and discover the industry's future,' said company CEO Isidore Leiser.

'We put on an attractive program for our staff: a big party organized for them on Friday 30 September in Lille, followed by the visit to the show on Saturday 1 October. The trip ended with a visit to Brussels.'

In addition, four Stratus staff won prizes including iPads in a prize draw held on the last day of the show. Pictured is Chloé Plancke, who is a rewinder operator at Stratus Packaging Lille, and the other three winners work at Stratus Packaging SEEC in Bourg en Bresse.

register or flood coat webs up to 350mm wide. It has optional unwind and rewind units for stand-alone operation or can be interfaced with Newfoil hot foil, embossing and die-cutting machines for inline use. Dual UV and IR drying units are incorporated as a standard feature of the machine, thereby increasing the potential use of the system.

Pantec GS Systems reported increased interest from visitors in its inline hotfoiling technology, which the company says results in lower cost per label and shorter lead times. The company showed its Rhino inline flatbed hotfoil embossing system.

Peter Frei, CEO of Pantec GS Systems, said: 'We had well-known, experienced printers on our booth who could not believe that our stamping process can really achieve outstanding results on open, structured paper at 120 m/min with perfect register and microembossing structures.'

'High speed with foil saving for large volumes not only allows higher press usage, but economizes foil massively. It is also the basis to go in-line to printing presses for premium wine labels, as Rhino's revolvable head allows multistroke for single pass manufacturing of ambitious designs, with combinations of foil and blind embossing, still running at a speed of 40-60 m/min. Flatbed hotfoiling allows use of cheaper foils and tool costs are a fraction compared to rotary.'

Perfecto showed its G3 and G4 series of label inspection slitter rewinder machines using brushless servo-driven technology. G4, the newest series, offers maximum slitting speeds of 300m/min and 100 percent inspection at 150m/min. Perfecto LabelSpect (G3 and G4) label inspection slitter rewinder machines complement the 100 percent defect detection system from BST International. Integration of both systems,

says the company, results in precise and synchronized stopping of labels on the splicing table and provides ease of operation for the user.

Labelexpo Europe proved to be a successful show for **Prati** with 21 sales agreed and a raft of new leads generated. The sales went to Italy, Austria, Germany, France, Tunisia, Middle East, India, South Africa and the US.

The main attraction was the servo slitter inspection rewinder Saturn, also in the Booklet version, capable of finishing booklet labels, and the modular Vegaplus converting line, available in 330, 450 and 530 web widths, that provides a platform for rewinding, slitting, die-cutting, overprinting/coating, inspecting operations.

'If Saturn and Vegaplus were the sales queen, from leads and negotiations we can say that PharmaCheck consolidated its position of unique 100 percent label inspection system that meets the strict requests of the pharma industry, while the new Digitplus proved to be a reliable solution for finishing and laser die-cutting of digitally printed labels,' said Chiara Prati, sales director at the family-run company.

Labelexpo provided Prati with the opportunity to introduce the new Saturn Linerless. The sustainable version of the slitter inspection rewinder features two interchangeable rewinder shafts to rewind the lanes in an alternate mode, to avoid rolls sticking. This enables it to manage the production of linerless label webs.

Label converters specializing in the beverage market were interested in the demonstration at Labelexpo of the Jupiter equipped with Proxima, the advanced detecting system. It delivers improved operator usability with clear labels, even at the maximum machine speed.

Roland DG presented a range of combined printers/cutters. All these machines allow proofing, prototype printing

and printing of small label runs.

Roland DG showed its UV machines that, thanks to LED-UV technology, print on all standard label materials. The lamps don't produce heat so printing on heat-sensitive materials is possible. The UV printers are available in widths from 76 up to 163cm and feature up to six colors: CMYK, white and transparent. This transparent ink creates matte, glossy and relief effects such as Braille and structures.

The company also demonstrated its printers/cutters with metallic silver ink. The VersaCamm VS series is available in widths from 76 to 163cm and the new VersaStudio BN-20 is 52cm wide. All these machines are able to print hundreds of metallic colors. The VS machines use CMYK, metallic and white ink, while the BN-20 only uses CMYK and metallic ink.

Rotocontrol received 18 orders for its slitter rewinders during Labelexpo Europe. The company says the orders were a mixture of repeat and new business from converters in countries including the UK, Germany, Turkey, South Africa and Jordan.



Rotocontrol launched the EPOS option (electronic knife positioning system) at the show, which fully automates the slitting set-up reducing job change time to less than a minute, even with shear systems using upper and lower blades.

The company also showed its RSC vertical inspection slitter rewinder, RSD die-cutting, RSP single pass 100 percent overprinting inspection and the EDM200 overprinting press. Servo drives from Bosch Rexroth assure precise, automatic tension control and high speed.

The company launched its SVS (Sensing and Verification System) option, which features powerful algorithms to detect repeated printed images on most material types including clear on clear, IML and butt-cut labels to provide missing label and matrix detection feedback to the machine.

Also featured was the Vacuum Splice Table option enhancing operator efficiency by automatically placing mill-splice/flags, matrix/missing labels and vision detected defects right on the vertical inspection plate for reworking.

Rotoflex displayed its most popular finishing models at Labelexpo Europe. The stand featured a VLI 440, two VSI 330s and a DSI 330, allowing attendees to see a wide variety of inspection, slitting, rewinding and die-cutting capabilities.

For the first time in Europe, each of the machines had an operator-friendly Genesis advanced control system. Created and developed exclusively by Rotoflex, Genesis is available on all Rotoflex inspection rewind machines. With a simple HMI, operators can monitor all functions and clearly identify faults and issues from a single screen. Integration of the system into multiple machines on the production floor allows operators to easily transfer from one machine to another without relearning the complexity of a new control system.

The advanced system can detect missing labels in multiple lanes as well as detect the presence of a matrix. With multi-lane counting, the converter gets accurate label counts for each roll. The capability to count and inspect a variety of label shapes – not just squares or rectangles – results in an accurate count of labels per lane, regardless of varying label shapes or lengths.

Live machine demos were held daily with rewinding experts demonstrating how converters can take control of their workflow by incorporating Rotoflex technology.

Schober unveiled an addition to its RSM line of rotary die-cutting machines, the

Spider, a high-speed automated stacking and counting system for stacking large IML products at a web speed of up to 50m/min. The equipment can handle different types of products with exchangeable, product-specific pick-up plates, taking up products with synchronized speed and stacking them non-stop into a dual piling cassette system. A 100 percent product inspection system with discharge facility of bad products is also available.

Serlem demonstrated the CFB 550, an offline machine designed for the production of labels from reel to stack of various shapes and thickness. From the printed reel, it can cut materials such as OPP, PVC or paper. The machine is particularly suitable for IML production.

Smag reports that it received five orders for its I-Cut 330 digital converting machine during Labelexpo Europe. The machine was launched at the show.

The I-Cut 330 is designed to be used offline and offers high speed varnishing and die-cutting. The company says that the machine is attracting interest from digital label converters because of its accessibility and high speed changeovers – claimed to be just three minutes and thus making the system a viable option for printers who have many short run jobs. One new customer will be Lenzlinger Etiquettes, based in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, which claims to make 30-50 job changes a day. The company will be using the I-Cut 330 to support its four HP and Xeikon presses.

Soma Engineering featured demonstrations of its Pluto II slitter rewinder and Bulldog offline die-cutter. The new 1350mm wide Pluto II slitter rewinder is designed to reduce waste and down times. With its larger unwind and rewind diameters and simplified job changeovers, Pluto II is a high performance machine for long runs with in-built features for operator comfort. These include automated slit edge removal, 'knife positioning assistant', shaft-less unwind system with integrated loading and programmable rewind core positioning.

The Bulldog die-cutter is a roll to stack, off-line machine optimized for producing aluminum and plastic foils

and laminate lids for in-mold labels, beverage labels, yoghurt cartons and similar applications. Print to die registration ensures high precision cuts with optimum edge quality. The flatbed die-cutting system consists of multiple long-life dies that also permit punching of different configurations at the same time. Depending on the shape of the lid and the number of die tools in use, typically up to 75,000 lids per hour can be produced and delivered to the stacker.

Spilker showed high-precision cutting and stamping tools as well as special purpose machinery for rotary unweaving and converting. The company unveiled its newly developed converting machine series S-Con Vert, which offers digital adjustment of the longitudinal cutter for a comfortable adjusting of the machine and a significant reduction of material waste.

An integrated new roll-handling-system enables it to perform the role change without lifting the material. The S-Con Vert 550 has a simple manual inspection and optional 100 percent inspection system. Spilker also showed its modular S-Con Starline 550, which allows various cutting, embossing and laminating processes to be combined.

Starfoil, a Netherlands-based manufacturer of finishing equipment, demonstrated the ValueLine 1300 spooling-slitting machine and an efficient foil cutting machine, as well as a new cantilevered CLC-400 machine, designed to spool or slit three inch hot-stamping rolls to one inch or three inch rolls by means of shear slitting.

Systec Converting showed its complete range of plate mounting machines, including a plate mounting machine for printing cylinder technology equipped with auto-focus color cameras and a zoom factor up to 270 times, and a plate mounting machine for sleeves equipped with high definition cameras.

The company introduced a new machine with four cameras, tape dispenser and nip roll – which avoids air bubbles between tape and support – equipped with Systec's REP suite software. It allows the importing of the repro file for mounting and for virtual proofing with no inks.



DANTEX displayed a range of high resolution water wash plate technologies

Labelexpo pre-press review

DEVELOPMENTS in direct plate imaging and workflow automation were among key pre-press advancements at Labelexpo Europe, as Andy Thomas reports

DIRECT IMAGING

Direct imaging of flexo plates holds the potential to reduce the number of processing steps in plate production – simply imaging followed by rinse and dry – and to give unprecedented control over dot size and shape on different areas of the plate. This Labelexpo saw the introduction by Kodak to the packaging market of its Flexcel Direct laser plate engraving system. This consists of imager, plate material – suitable for both solvent and water-based inks – and 3-D workflow software. The system can be used to image continuous sleeve, plate-on-sleeve or flat plates, and will also image LAMS plates and sleeves.

The imaging unit utilizes Kodak's proven multi-channel laser diode array, claimed by Kodak 4-6 times more energy efficient than traditional lasers with one third the chilling requirements.

Autofocus optics tracks media surface during engraving to maximize engraving consistency and there is an integrated evacuation system for elastomer debris collection.

Cantilever sleeve loading allows for fast and easy sleeve exchange and users can

change between mandrel and vacuum drum without the need of an overhead crane.

Maximum imaging width is 1.6 m and maximum repeat 1067 mm.

Fujifilm was discussing the latest developments in its Flenex DLE flexo plate engraving technology, first covered by L&L at Labelexpo Americas. The Flenex DLE system incorporates Fujifilm's multi-channel FC laser array platesetter and the company's own polymer plate material.

According to the company's John Davies, business strategy manager at FujiFilm Europe, the DLE system should be commercialized some time in the first half of next year. 'Our starting point is to image a B2 sheet in around 50 minutes, meaning a plate for a Gallus EM280 would take one third of that time. And we expect these times to come down as we move forwards.'

Stork is a supplier with a long history direct engraving system development and was showcasing its rotaLEN engraver for in-the-round processing of RotaMesh and RotaPlate screens and compact rotaLEX, a compact and inexpensive desk-top unit

which uses laser exposure to engrave RotaPlate screens held in position on a magnetic drum. Another established player in the direct engraving market is Flexolaser, which was demonstrating its established Nano and Piccolino systems. With plate sizes of 508 x 420 mm and 635 x 500 mm respectively, these are targeted squarely at the label and narrow web printer. The front end Multiplate software allows easy and intuitive job setup and the vacuum slider and mechanical clamping system help speed up plate mounting.

LÜSCHER ADDS SCREEN AND FOIL PLATES TO CTP

Of great interest from Lüscher was the Multi DX CTP system. The company's X!Pose system can already expose flexo, offset, letterpress and flexible rotary screen plates. The Multi DX adds the ability to expose all rigid rotary screen print plates and plates with photoresist designed for hot foil, embossing and die cutting applications. The unit has a resolution up to 10,000 dpi and incorporates Lüscher's 'Continuous Calibration' technology to deliver a higher level of process stability.

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LABELS AND FLEXPACK



DIGIFLEX sells its inkjet CTP system to Grape Labels

Lüscher meanwhile launched its new X!Direct system for the direct exposure of letterpress plates without an ablation layer.

INKJET CTP

An interesting challenge to established CTP technologies came from Israeli company DigiFlex. DigiFlex laid down a challenge to existing CTP technologies with the launch of its FlexoJet 1724 plate imager. The FlexoJet consists of a high precision flatbed inkjet printer, patented Bi-component ink and the software to create an opaque mask on top of the plate.

After the image has been printed onto the plate, the rest of the plate-making process remains unchanged from standard water or solvent wash processes. DigiFlex says the FlexoJet gives better results than low-quality negative films, and offers an alternative to black mask ablation CTP devices. The resolution of the printer is 2880 x 1440 dpi and it will produce plates up to a 180 LPI line screen.

'This is a revolutionary CtP solution, transforming the quality of analog photopolymeric plates for the flexographic, letterpress and dry-offset printing technologies, to the digital era,' said Adir Ariel, DigiFlex' director of sales

and marketing Europe,

Maximum plate size is 440mm x 640mm and imaging speed for a full plate is 22 minutes, or 6.5 minutes for an A4 size.

Just before the show, DigiFlex announced a distribution agreement with Jet Europe, whose md Harry Heesen commented: 'This FlexoJet 1724 Computer-to-Plate system serves as a great motivation to replace the low quality film solution and will bring the CtP world to everyone.'

WORKFLOW AUTOMATION

As the labels industry becomes more automated and industrialized, automation of workflow and the connecting label converters to the wider world of design and end user approval cycles becomes ever more important.

EscoArtwork has led the way in many of these developments, and this show saw the company consolidating across its full suite of plate preparation and workflow software.

Fresh from winning the Global Label Award for New Innovation for its HD Flexo 2 suite, the company demonstrated the software's improved screening algorithms - particularly impressive in combination with the new flat top

SCREEN BROADENS THERMAL FLEJO PLATESETTER RANGE

Although not exhibiting at Labelexpo Europe this year, Screen looks to be increasing its focus on the packaging arena. Its latest development is a new thermal platesetter for the flexo market. The PlateRite FX1200 features Screen's proven thermal imaging technology and enables output up to 4800 dpi for high quality production of flexible packaging, labels and cartons.

The third model in Screen's flexo and letterpress range, the PlateRite FX1200 complements the FX870II and FX1524 models and supports all leading makes of plate at sizes from 100 x 100 mm up to 1200 x 1067 mm (47.2 x 42 inches). It can also be upgraded on-site to the larger FX1524 specification of 1524 x 1067 mm (60 x 42 inches), providing a growth path into larger format work.

The FX1200 features high productivity of up to 4 sq m/hour for flexo (3.3 sq m/hr at 4800 dpi) and 6.3 sq m/hr for letterpress plate imaging.

The 4800 dpi output and screen rulings up to 200 lpi are achieved via a newly-developed imaging head and associated optics, using 64 high-power, long-life laser diodes, with a backup mode for continued production in the event of laser failure. Screen's FlexoDot screening technology offers a choice of minimum halftone dot size and shapes, enabling better tonal control and crisper imaging in printed highlights.

The PlateRite FX1200 features an easy-to-operate clamp system for holding the leading and trailing edges of maximum-size plates to make loading more simple and efficient. Smaller plates can be loaded without having to mask the rest of the drum.

The PlateRite FX1200 can be driven from any of Screen's workflows and also accepts 1-bit TIFF input from any other source.

dot, and significantly improving print definition. The new inline UV exposure unit for Cyrel Digital Imagers offers flexo printers the flexibility to select the type of print dot - either round-top or flat-top - according to the specific job requirement.

EscoArtwork continues to refine its System 10 tool set. One of the standout demonstrations was the Studio Toolkit

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ESKOARTWORK demonstrated its Digital Flexo platemaking suite and HD Flexo 2

for Labels, which allows artworkers to prototype designs in a 3D environment. The latest development is Store Visualizer which allows users to envision realistic store shelves simulations, based on the same designs produced in Studio and Visualizer.

In a related development, the latest release of WebCenter (10.1) now includes a 3D viewer which enables users to upload, view and perform the full document approval cycle on 3D files (Collada and Zipped Collada files). Label converters will now be able use WebCenter as an online medium to share 3D mockups with their clients, make changes to the artwork immediately and gain approval quickly and efficiently.

WebCenter 10.1 also supports an iPad App which allows users to view, annotate and approve packaging designs through a simple and intuitive interface. The App gives users access to advanced tools such as separation views, ink details, and CAD overlays; dimensions can be measured and document history consulted. Differences in multiple versions can be highlighted with a compare tool.

In an announcement of interest to Nexus users, EskoArtwork confirmed that System 10's Automation Engine now also fully integrates with its legacy label pre-production workflow, which should allow seamless transition to the new system.

EskoArtwork was also demonstrating the latest CDI device on its stand, and in a related development, DuPont Graphics made some interesting comments on the future of in-the-round thermal processing of sleeves, which we cover in more detail in the next edition of L&L.

It's fair to say that Kodak somewhat lost its way with the labels and the narrow web packaging audience after its acquisition of Creo, which had always been a strong player in this segment. However, all that has clearly changed, and Kodak came to this show with all guns blazing and a clear sense of commitment to the narrow web packaging industry.

Firstly the company ran a series of engaging 'K-Zone' educational seminars on stand which drove home the theme of 'Concept to Consumer' through a mixture of moderated customer roundtables and technical discussions.

For brand owners Kodak was showing its DESIGN2LAUNCH package for improving efficiency and reducing costs and its Brand Protection Solutions suite of products to protect, track and secure high value products in the field. This sensitive area is a growing business for Kodak, according to David Croft, Kodak's packaging segment manager.

For converters, Kodak demonstrated its full range of plates and platemaking technologies (see Engraving section above), including the established Flexcel NX, Miraclon letterpress and offset plates, as well as the latest version of Prinergy Powerpack workflow and packaging



TORAY AND CODIMAG HOOK UP FOR WATERLESS PARTNERSHIP

Waterless platemaking specialist Toray Industries and intermittent feed presses manufacturer Codimag combined their expertise at Labelexpo to showcase the state of the art in waterless offset printing. Equipped with Toray plate processing capabilities Codimag's VIVA 340 ran four jobs a day to highlight live changes, proof-matching and day-to-day reproducibility while the VIVA420 ran one job per day in combination with hot-foil. Both presses featured the innovative Aniflo unit keyless anilox offset unit that offers a predictable and repeatable print system.

Pascal Duchêne, managing director of Codimag, commented: 'As a press manufacturer, Codimag has been active in waterless offset technology for label printing since 1999. We are convinced that this technology brings many advantages to our customers. We were very pleased to work in partnership with Toray and show how the waterless world is much broader than label printing, with high quality newspaper, plastic card or commercial printing also achievable.'

layout automation software. Kodak Insite was demonstrated providing secure web access for remote job submission, progress tracking and approval.

A particularly interesting development was the extension of Kodak's Spotless technology to the flexographic process. Spotless allows printers to replace spot colors with recipes for four color process printing, reducing press downtime from cleaning up solid color units and allowing designers and print buyers to specify a greater variety of spot colors at no additional cost. The ability to deliver spot color value with extended process color builds also allows printers to combine jobs that traditionally required separate print runs.

Expect to see these developments covered in more detail in next year's edition of L&L.

Flexible dies face thin liner challenge

AS FILMIC LINERS get thinner, die-cutting becomes a bigger challenge, as Herbert Knott at flexible die specialist Electro Optic explains

Under intense cost pressure, glassine liner material has been increasingly reduced in thickness, most recently from 0.065 mm to 0.045 mm. At the same time, speeds in the label processing chain are getting higher, both on press and the applicator line, leading to higher stress on the liner. Consequently the need for an intact liner has never been more important.

Problems have arisen where liner weight has been reduced while maintaining the dimension. The result is a higher compressibility of the liner which raises substantial problems when cutting plastic materials. Furthermore, glassine liners show height differences of 10 μ and more, so cutting problems seem inevitable.

Therefore film liners with tolerances of just a few microns, mostly PET/PP, are increasingly being used, especially for film label materials.

But improved stability during the application process is often bought at a high price. Here also, the drive for cost efficiency has meant a reduction in the thickness of the liner (and often the face material), which reduces cost and means more labels on the roll. As a consequence, PET liner thickness has been reduced from 50-55 μ m to only 30-31 μ m. Another trend sees liners going to 23 μ -20, and there are currently tests with 17 μ and 12 μ liners. Cost saving, yes! But often at the cost of ignoring the basics of die cutting technology.

HOW DIE CUTTING WORKS

Die cutting in label printing is not cutting in a traditional sense. This is a 'pressure cut', which means separating the material by compressing it until it bursts, or is divided. Hard materials, such as polyester, polypropylene or paper, burst. A compression rate through the pressure of the die-cut line of up to 65-70 percent of the material volume leads to a relatively sudden fracture of the substrate.

With soft and soft-tough materials such as PE and PVC, the cutting process is significantly different. Under pressure from the cutting line, the material parts to the side, so a clear compaction process as with paper does not take place. The result: the die line needs to penetrate the liner material much further to achieve the separation of the upper material. The die manufacturer, therefore needs to raise the cutting line a little bit, adapting the cutting angle and the mirror width of the cutting line until it works fine with these requirements. But now the very thin PET liner with a thickness of 30 μ m or 23 μ m, comes into play.

WHERE IS THE PROBLEM?

One could argue that with the flexible die manufactured slightly higher, or where a variable anvil cylinder can be slightly adjusted, the cutting result is as good as with a 'normal' PET liner.

Unfortunately, not always. Nothing can be manufactured without tolerances, and there are many variables involved in the

die cutting process: upper and lower material, magnetic cylinders, flexible die, anvil cylinder, possibly substructure of the anvil cylinder and the draw rolls. Additionally, the bearings of the magnetic cylinders, the anvil cylinder and their substructure as well as the general stability and stiffness of the cutting unit, are all things to take account of.

And in practice, not only brand-new components are in use. Magnetic cylinder concentricity of 10 μ m is not uncommon, and out-of-roundness or worn anvil cylinders alter significantly the magnetic cylinder gap of 0.480 mm. If the flexible die then shows height differences between five to 10 μ m, there is a problem. The reduced dimensions of the 23 μ m and 18 μ m PET liner do not 'forgive' such deviations like a 30 μ m liner does.

TAILOR MADE

Basic requirements for label production on thin PET liners are magnetic cylinder and anvil cylinders with 3 μ m run out accuracy. An anvil cylinder without support rollers also minimizes a build up of errors. Adjustable units must be in absolute mint condition to keep the tolerances. When dimensioning, the 1:1 rule should be respected: The circumference of the magnetic cylinder as well as the anvil cylinder must reach at least the maximum working width of the press. The die lines must be sharpened with a flank angle of 40-75 degrees and tailor-made to the softness, lamination or lay-up properties of the material being cut. They need to be manufactured with the best possible cutting ability at the top of the blade. In addition, a die height tolerance of $\pm 2\mu$ is a must.

There will be success for the label printer in the use of thin PET liners only when all these die-cut preconditions are optimized.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Herbert Knott is sales and service manager at Electro Optic. The company's Gold Line Special Quality dies are machined using the back grinding process to meet the challenge of ultra-thin liners, while the Dura Line Special-C has a resistant back ion coating DLS-C for long life requirements



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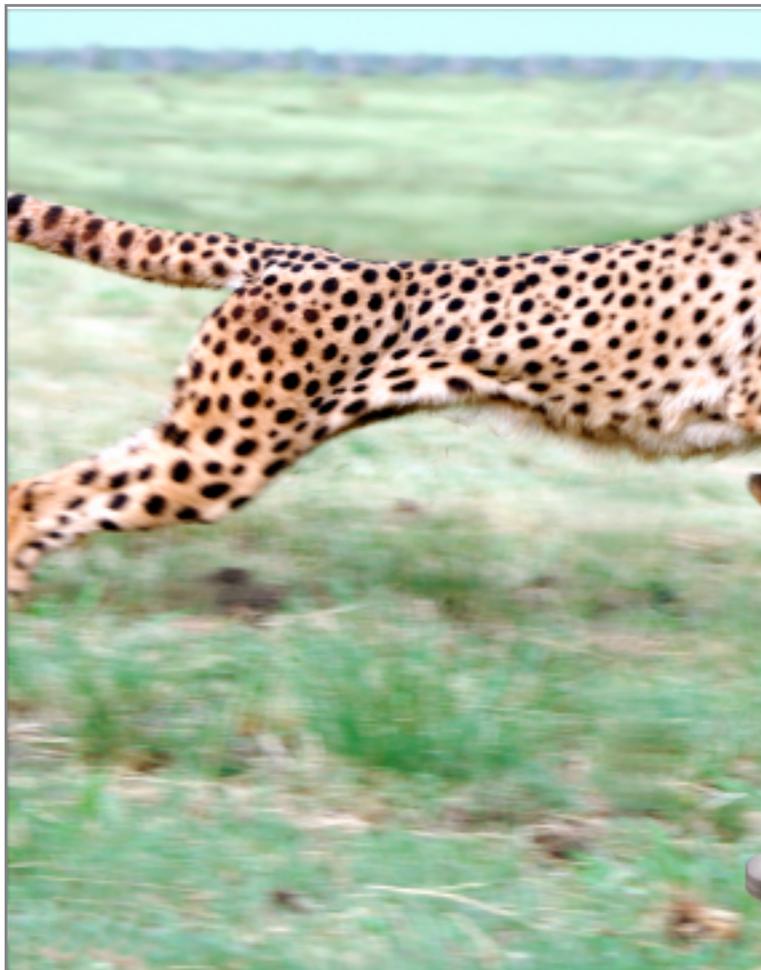
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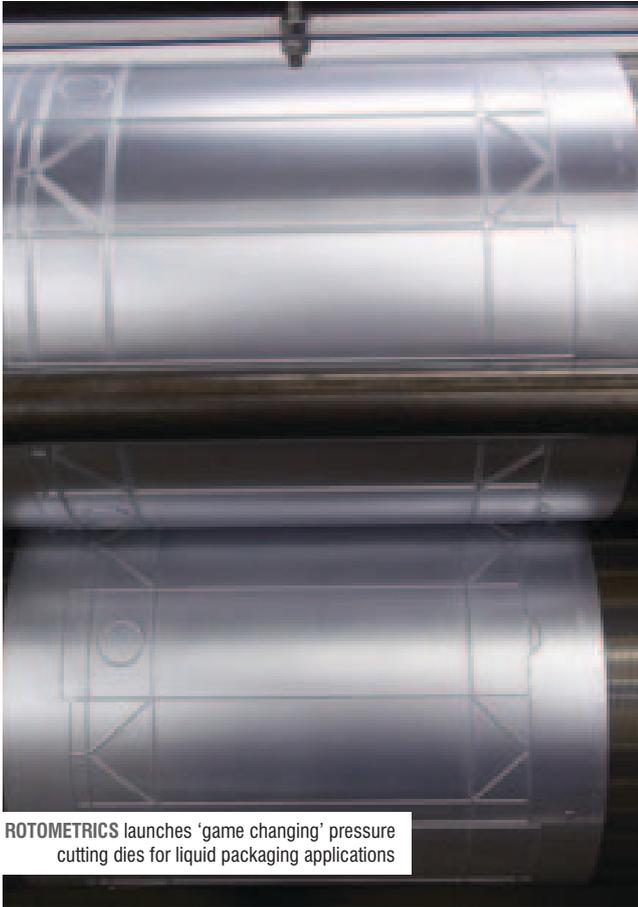
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DIE NEWS



ROTOMETRICS launches 'game changing' pressure cutting dies for liquid packaging applications

FLEXIBLE DIE INTRODUCED FOR LIQUID PACKAGING

RotoMetrics is giving converters a new option for narrow to mid-web processing of liquid packaging cartons. According to the company, its Rotary Pressure Cutting (RPC) flexible dies allow much faster job set up and deliver 'industry-leading cost per revolution efficiencies'.

Optimized for PolyCoated 2-side board and foil board for liquid packaging such as milk and juice cartons, the RPC dies offer significant tooling cost savings and are offered with on-press or off-press mounting for improved work flow. RotoMetrics also offers dedicated RP die cutting stations with magnetic cylinder cartridge for quick and easy job changeover.

SURON LAUNCHES FLEXIBLE CARTON DIE

As the carton market moves towards shorter runs, Suron has introduced a 'mount and cut' flexible die dedicated to the folding carton market. The company says set-up and registration are as easy as mounting a standard flex die, with no cranes for lifting heavy cylinders and no long set-up of male / female solid tools. The flexible die is designed to work on standard rotary cutting units.

Suron's carton dies are made from flexible hard steel with high magnetization, are resistant to erosion and corrosion and give full control over carton folding lines.

LABELS&LABELING



FOR FREEFORM Micro-perf shapes the tool follows the CAD-CAM profile

ANDERSON ADDS MICROPERF TO GVM

The Anderson Group has developed a MicroPerf add-on for its market leading GVM Engraving Machine, developed for the production of flexible dies for the rotary printing and cutting industry.

'The requirements of the production of flexible dies constantly rises, and one topic is the processing of perforations and individual small undercuts on the cutting edge,' explained Alfred Könemann, sales and development manager at Anderson Group subsidiary Anderson Europe, located in Detmold, Germany.

According to Könemann, the standard way of manufacturing these dies was limited in a number of ways: to the minimum width of the undercut, with the smallest cut 0.3 mm; by the contour of the cutting edges, so just straight lines were possible; to the height of the flexible dies, with the deepest undercut 0.5 mm; and by the contour of the undercut, known as a 'V' cut.

'These overall limitations made it to a tough job for the flexible die manufacturer to support the requirements of the market,' said Könemann.

Anderson Europe has therefore developed a specific system to produce micro-perforations and/or small undercuts on the cutting edge. By using the MicroPerf add-on on the GVM engraving machine, the user can now produce perforations and individual undercuts in one step after the engraving job.

The MicroPerf Advanced add-on version allows these perforations and undercuts to be performed both on straight lines or freeform geometries – the machine will follow the contour as specified by the CAD/CAM system.

The MicroPerf system is fully integrated into the GVM machine's CNC system and brings a wide range of capabilities to die manufacturers. The smallest undercut is now 0.12 mm – and these are straight undercut contours, not 'V' cuts. The system has automatic contactless tool measuring and compensation and can use different tool sizes, while individual undercut widths can use the same tool.

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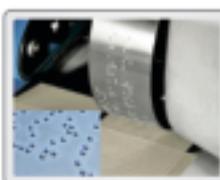
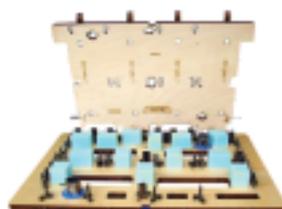
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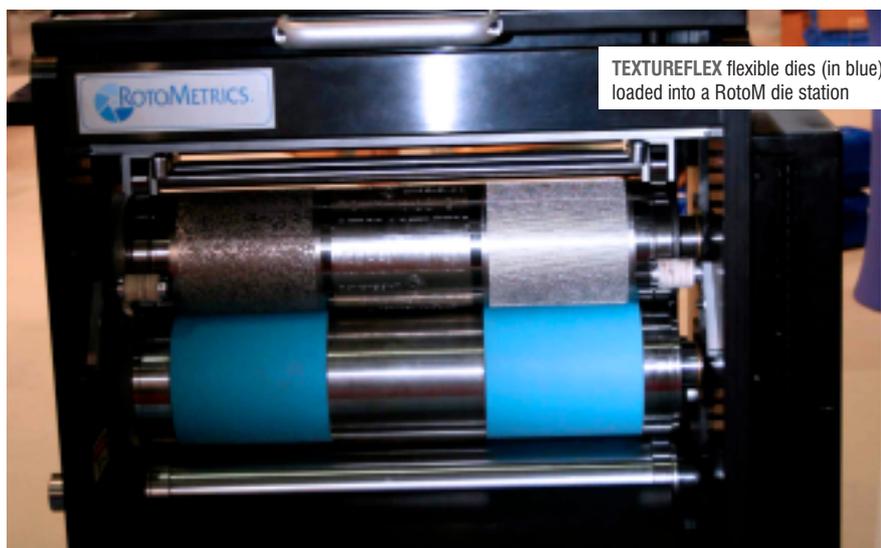


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ROTOMETRICS, GERHARDT LAUNCH DIE TECHNOLOGY

RotoMetrics and Gerhardt exhibited as one global company for the first time, launching the AccuStar flexible die cutting system which combines the technologies of RotoMetrics' Accuflex and Gerhardt's 357 Star lines. AccuStar is a premium laser hardened die system designed to cut through thin materials down to ever thinner liner films and can be specially coated to suit the thermal transfer market. The Accustar line is currently manufactured at both the RotoMetrics flexible die facility in the US and its facility in Aldridge, UK. By the end of the year production will be undertaken in Australia and Thailand.

The new RotoMetrics/Gerhardt team also launched the AccuStrike adjustable anvil which allows operators to adjust blade clearance on press by moving the bearers independently or together to avoid liner strikes. Live demos were shown at the Mark Andy booth on its P-7 press and on Nilpeter's FB-3300 in conjunction with the press manufacturer's New Innovation Award-nominated SMED-based die system. You can see a video of this combination in action at <http://www.labelsandlabeling.com/label-tv/technology/nilpeter-revolver-die-unit>

Also featured was the TextureFlex, a dual purpose die that allows for texturing and die cutting of pre-printed label material, adding value and reducing cost. It is available for hard de-boss and soft emboss applications.

WINK SHIFTS DIE PATTERNS

German die-cut tool manufacturer wink introduced several new products at this year's Labelexpo in Brussels, including ProShift flexible dies and the ProMount mobile mounting tool.

The newly developed wink ProShift flexible dies have a staggered shape which minimizes the length of simultaneously cutting crosslines. 'Shifted' dies allow a significant reduction in die-cut pressure, which in turn results in higher production speeds and longer lifetime for all die-cut components, says wink. Further advantages are less damage to the liner for kiss-cut applications, better processing of very thin liners, easier matrix stripping and reduced noise exposure. ProShift dies can be combined with all Wink finishings like laser hardening, MC coating and non-stick coating. For shifted die-cut of printed labels the label manufacturer needs flexo printing plates with a corresponding design. Wink is currently co-operating with a market-leading supplier of pre-production software to facilitate the production process of shifted printing plates.

ProMount is a compact mobile device for mounting flexible dies, allowing label printers to position the dies accurately at the first attempt without removing the magnetic cylinder from the machine. 'The device is automatically aligned on the surface of the magnetic cylinder, assuring perfect fitting accuracy of flexible dies and thus high-precision die-cut of labels,' said wink. The ProMount tool works with special positioning holes, which can be applied to all flexible dies from Wink on request. ProShift dies are equipped with these holes by default. The ProMount tool is available in different sizes for all common machines.

LABELS&LABELING

HOT STAMPING NEWS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST HOT STAMPING NEWS

TELSTAR RE-ENGINEERS STAMPING UNIT

Custom retrofit specialist Telstar has re-engineered its hot stamp unit with new features designed to improve control and deliver higher press performance.

A new digital control system features a large color touch screen display in a compact unit, showing tool recipes for brass, steel, and aluminum body magnetic cylinders and giving detailed alarm messages and diagnostics. The control system can be engineered to work with new as well as existing Telstar units and can even be fitted to many older I-KELA Hot Stamp units. It is multi-lingual and CE/UL approved.

Mechanical upgrades to the hot stamp unit include a tool-free easy-mount/adjust IR sensor, quick-disconnect pneumatic fittings for faster changeover, a newly designed rotary union with quick-disconnect cable, hardened pressure screws and attachment nuts, and improved machining tolerances.

Like most Telstar retrofits this hot stamp unit can be engineered for portability from station-to-station on the press as well as to other press types.

OPTIMIZED FOILS TODAY

Todaytec, a leading Chinese manufacturer of thermal transfer ribbons (TTR) is introducing two hot stamping foils.

DMP800 is optimized for synthetic substrates such as PET, PVC, PE, PP and aluminum foil with a high abrasion resistance. DMP900 has been specially designed for paper substrates, and is claimed particularly effective for medical packaging with a high darkness value.

TROUBLE SHOOTING FOIL

Univacco launched a new hot stamping foil TS-01 (Trouble-shooting foil) at IGAS Japan in September. 'Knowing the graphic industry has been looking for one super foil to satisfy all stamping demands at the same time, TS-01 appears as a multi-faceted solution provider on all stamping jobs and machines,' says the company. The new foil has been tested with a wide range of substrates, including UV varnished paper, OPP laminated paper, PP synthetic paper, PVC and PE/PP.

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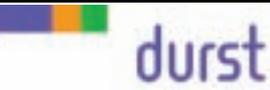
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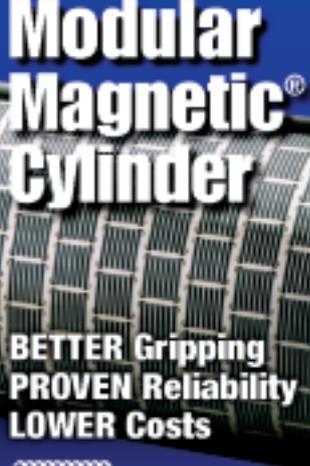
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CORPORATE CULTURE



Sustainable management

MANAGING the environment has become critical, writes Mike Fairley

Despite all the environmental information resources now available, all too frequently the message from the label producer seems to be either that their customers are not demanding a sustainability program, or it is too expensive to comply with the many and changing environmental performance requirements coming through from governments, retailers and branded goods companies. Well, that is all now changing rapidly. The 'Environment and Sustainability' issue is now fast rising to the very top of the converter's agenda.

Brand owners and label buyers are building in the use of sustainable materials as part of their buying process. Many are making zero waste to landfill part of their 5-year or 10-year strategies. Others are looking to include topics such as carbon footprint and lifecycle analysis into their buying plans.

Put together and done well the majority of target aims for a label converting business to become more environment and sustainably conscious in the way it works and operates, are almost identical to its targets aims of becoming more profitable. That is, to reduce energy, reduce waste, reduce production costs, minimise set-up time, reduce water consumption, reduce fuel and vehicle costs.

If they can also reduce their waste-to-landfill disposal costs, obtain

money from sending filmic materials for recycling, generate energy from solar panels, return or re-use incoming packaging, recycle left-over ink, etc, then that is an added bonus. In simple terms, being an environmentally conscious label converter is a means to being a profitable label converter. Surely that's what everyone aims to be?

Let's take label materials selection and usage as just one area where implementation of an environmental management policy can pay particular dividends. This label substrate is one of the key elements that the end user pays for and, not unnaturally with today's global environmental pressures, has also been coming under increasing pressure to be seen as 'greener', more sustainable and easier to dispose of.

Today, major label user organizations – the brand owners, retail groups, consumer products manufacturers, etc – are increasingly presenting their label suppliers with environment or sustainability assessment documents, with requirements for materials efficiency, for the use of responsibly sourced raw materials (made in an efficient, ethical and environmentally responsible way), for third-party certified (CoC) materials supply chains, transparency about where and how materials have been produced and on the handling and disposal of materials waste.

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