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COLOR CONTROL

Inline spectral color measurement is moving from wide to narrow web presses

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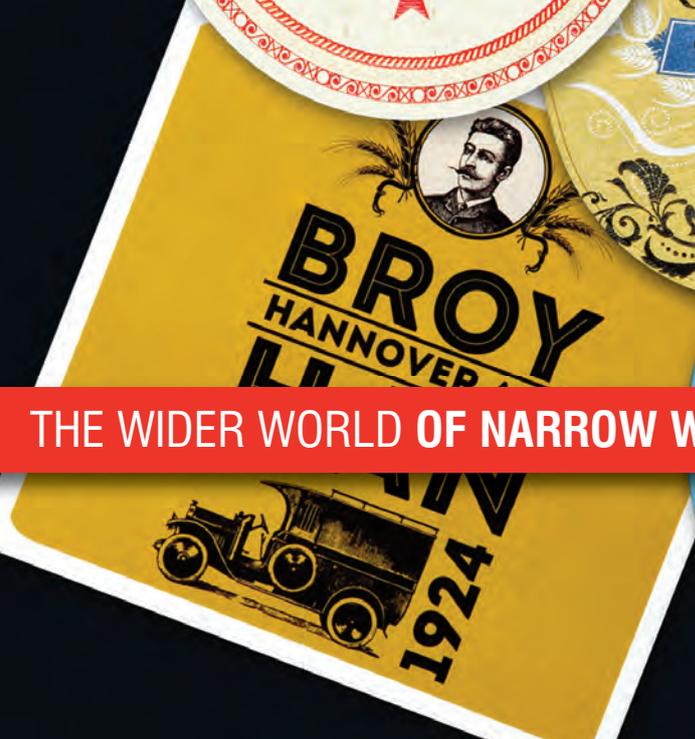
L&L



LABLEXPO AMERICAS

L&L looks at the new technology launched at 2012's biggest dedicated label and package print converting show

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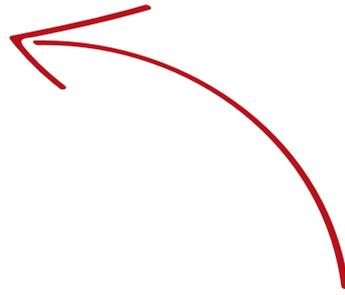
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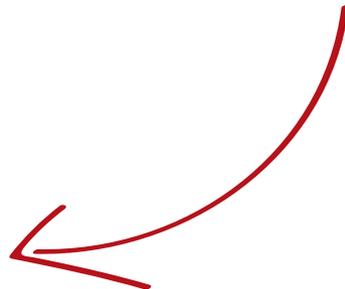
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Rose City Label

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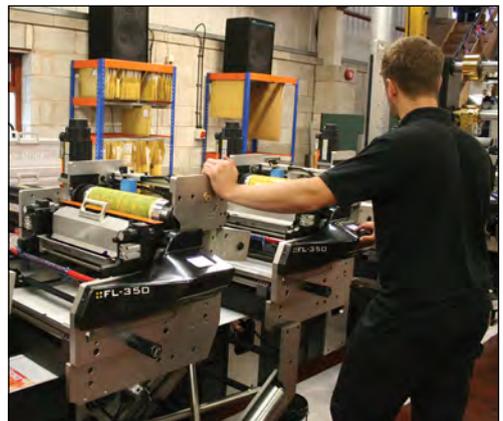
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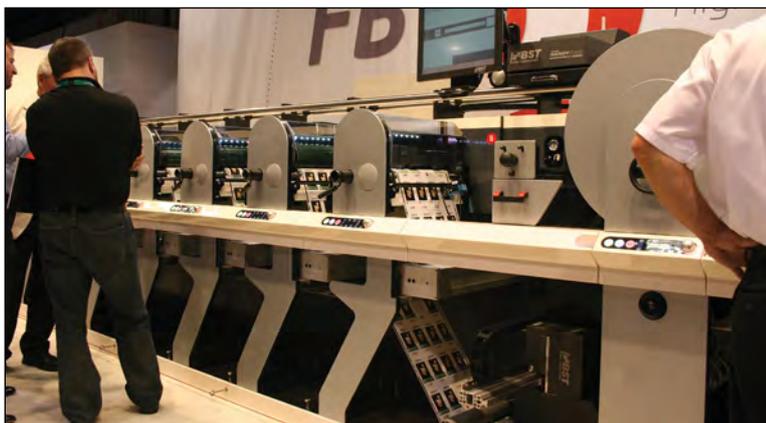
Colombian converter invests to handle higher quality work

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Manter has introduced a new fine paper range for craft beers and a new design tool for premium beverages



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PROCESS CONTROL – AN EASY WIN?

Each Labelexpo sends its own message about the state of the industry and future directions. The recent show in Chicago was all about automation and efficiency – key ways in which label converters can transform their businesses.

Process automation has two aspects – getting jobs efficiently onto and off the press; and controlling the press during makeready and print run.

Gallus probably went furthest in showing a fully integrated print shop on its stand – a task made easier by the Heidelberg connection (since Heidelberg now owns narrow web MIS specialist Cerm and CSAT's inkjet technology, as well as having its own Prinect press automation system). But the elements are available to all label converters from a range of suppliers.

An automated workflow onto the press uses the information stored in the master PDF and its associated metadata to decide which route the job should take: conventional or digital? Which press width? Which finishing route? What materials, ink mixes, plates and dies are required?

This information is communicated through every department using JMF and JDF protocols and the information returned to the planning system.

On-press automation and process control now includes the possibility of measuring color (as well as density) inline, and as L&L's technical editor Barry Hunt points out in an excellent article in this issue, this allows 'printing by numbers', following the exact deltaE color specification given by the end user.

At the same time, servo drives on the press now allow jobs to be pre-set using a wide range of factors, including tension characteristics of the material to be printed, significantly cutting waste and makeready times.

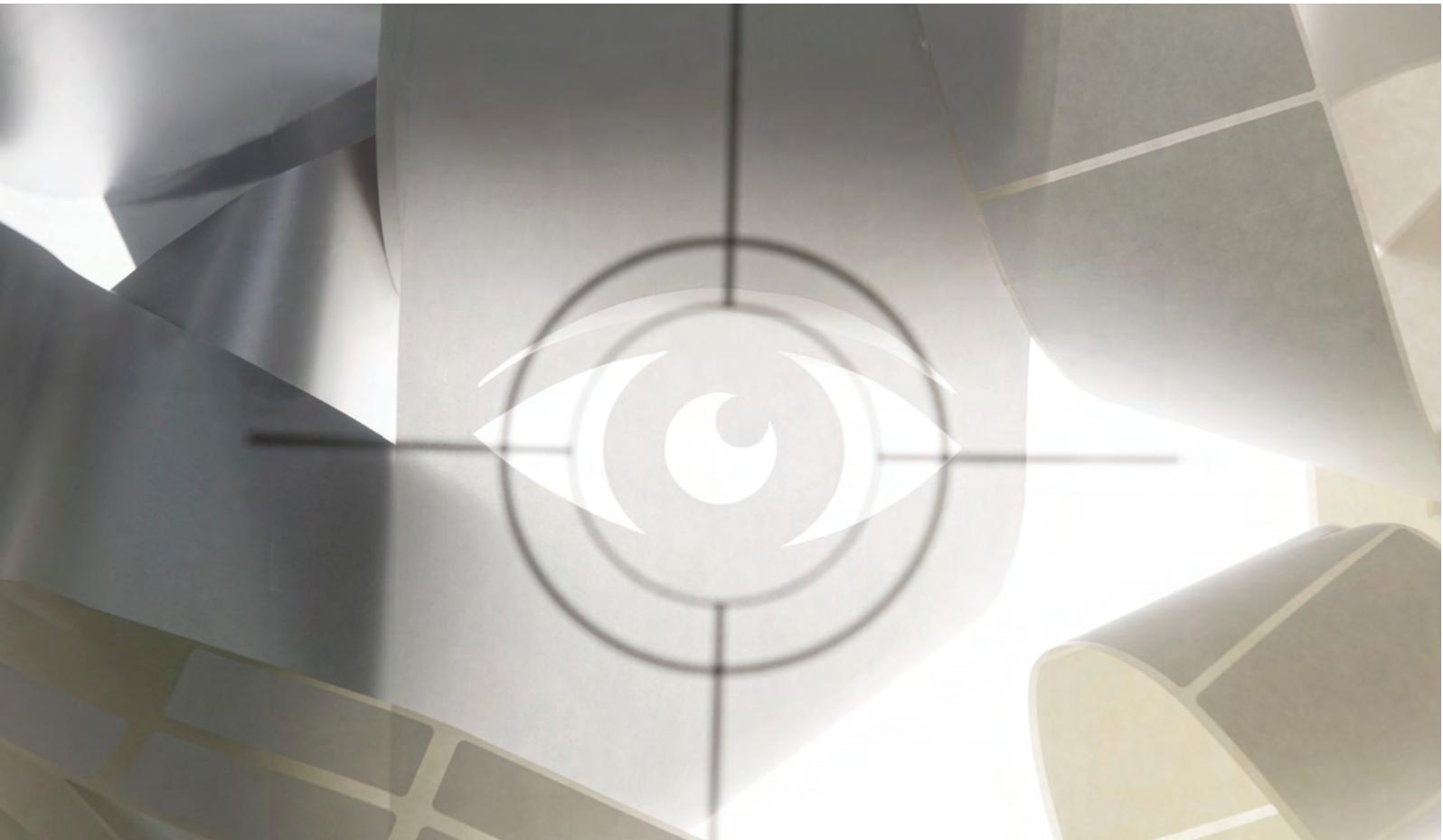
But to take full advantage of these new tools, converters need to transform their company culture, as regular L&L columnist Alex James points out in a landmark article on page 91. This may be the toughest challenge for an industry which often appears reluctant to move from 'craft' to 'process' driven.

ANDY THOMAS

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INBOX

Industry overview

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Danielle Jerschefske, North America editor, L&L:

Packaging hoax might point the way

Social media channels were buzzing recently thanks to a YouTube video purporting to announce Coca-Cola's launch of a biodegradable plastic bag to house the soft drink.

The idea was reported to have originated in the Central American country of El Salvador, where consumers were said to be buying Coca-Cola in plastic bags to avoid paying a deposit on returnable bottles. A YouTube video – in which the company said it had launched a cheap, branded plastic bag shaped like the brand's iconic bottle – was picked up by a number of news websites.

After perusing various websites and not finding any substantiated claim for the new packaging, I contacted Coca-Cola's headquarters. In the meantime, packaging folk began reporting on social networking sites that the company had dismissed the notion.

That afternoon, I received a response from the international beverage company's PR manager for Central America, Gustavo Guillén, making it clear that Coca-Cola had nothing to do with the video and that no such product was being used in Central America.

The core idea behind the hoax, though, was a good one. There is no doubt that a real version of this 'biodegradable bag' could be of great benefit to any underdeveloped market. I have seen the use of plastic 'pouches' for water in Senegal in Western Africa, for example, where many people can't afford to buy water in much quantity. This small innovation overcomes a problem for consumers in an affordable way.

These smaller markets – without recycling infrastructure and where purchasing in tiny quantities is the norm – yearn for viable solutions from international brands. Of course, it must allow locals to enjoy their favorite product, safely, once it has successfully made it through the rigors of the supply chain. Could this be a packaging innovation in the pipeline? Every market holds opportunity for those companies willing to understand the consumers and innovate to meet their needs.

Carol Houghton, journalist, L&L:

Measuring food freshness

The label industry is currently involved in a sustainability battle; finding 'greener' alternatives and reducing carbon footprint. But this concern reaches beyond the package and to another culprit for large quantities of waste – the product itself. A UK converter is launching a 'revolutionary' time temperature label constructed on a specially adapted Mark Andy press (see L&L issue 4, 2012). At the other end of the supply chain, British supermarket chain Asda has announced it will launch new packaging to indicate freshness of its avocados.

Both technologies mentioned above use a universally recognizable 'traffic light system' to tell consumers of the produce's freshness. Asda's new packaging will communicate the fruit's ripeness through color, but the key innovation occurs in the production line where two sensors assess the avocado's softness in order to sort and pack it into the relevant colored pack. It is estimated that GBP £12 billion of food is wasted each year in the UK alone. Innovations such as these are designed to alert consumers to take action before produce expires, thus cutting food waste. This recent trend seems to be snowballing and is another example of how labels and packaging can add value to a brand.



Your tweets



Nine million bottles of all versions of 5-hour Energy are sold each week. Every one is wrapped in a vibrant shrink sleeve #label. Portion of sales goes to #Avon foundation to support #breast #cancer. #October #packaging

RT @gamechanger78 @DanielleJersche Digital has risen; converters better understand technology. Brands are globally using digital to grow! <http://bit.ly/SnW1pi>

@packagingdiva Recently gave speech using only #Pinterest in lieu of a #Powerpoint

Yes, @gibsonssteak you rock the #labels world!! RT @GRLLabel: #labelexpo #FF @tlmi @hpgraphicarts @Icaconference Thnx for great #tradeshaw

Global #label mkt is \$76B. #shrinksleeve reps 12%, but recycling PET is a problem. Slow growth? <http://bit.ly/Nk5n10> @LabelsNLabeling

@WS_Packaging acquires 3rd mid-sized converter in 2012 <http://bit.ly/PIIfRk> #labels #packaging #booklets #value #consumers

5 of 6 converters on global converter panel have digital #printing technology, and three have digital laser die cutting <http://bit.ly/NmDYDy> #labelexpo

Digital has risen; converters better understand technology; combination #printing still has a big place <http://bit.ly/SnW1pi> #packaging

Videos galore LIVE from @Labelexpo Americas <http://bit.ly/Q9V0Sp> @LabelsNLabeling #technology #trends #packaging #labels

NEWS

THE INSIDER

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES



MARKUS MARFURT, president of Electro Optic US, and Erwin Lindl, CEO of the parent company in Germany, open a new flexible die manufacturing plant in the USA

ELECTRO OPTIC INAUGURATES FLEXIBLE DIE PLANT FOR THE US

Flexible die specialist Electro Optic has opened a second production plant in Alpharetta, Georgia, USA. This joins existing production sites in Großmehring, Germany and Mumbai, India.

Electro Optic's American subsidiary Electro Optic US has been a big success since its launch in 2003, posting consistent year-on-year growth.

'The huge demand for high quality flexible dies required to satisfy the demands of the leading label manufacturers has seen a continuous growth in business volume,' says Markus Marfurt, president of Electro Optic US. 'Shorter distances and shipment times along with Electro Optic's superior customer support are playing an important role in this growth. The consequent focus on the best possible die qualities, optimum technical consultation and customer care have all shown a positive effect on the American market.'

Marfurt puts much of Electro Optic's success down to its ability to meet requirements for cutting more abrasive materials – like thermal paper, recycled papers and cardboard – and thin PET and PP liners with thicknesses of 20µ and less.

The new plant includes fully automated, CNC-controlled die sharpening as well as Electro Optic's patented back grinding process for flexible die production. The full line of flexible dies will be manufactured, including Gold Line, Gold Line Special and Dura Line Special.

Customer support services at the site include advice on all matters relating to die-cutting as well as product training courses.



THE INAUGURATION of the Avery Dennison Knowledge Center

AVERY DENNISON OPENS KNOWLEDGE CENTER IN INDIA

SITE will demonstrate entire labeling process

Avery Dennison has opened its first label printing Knowledge Center in South Asia. Located at the company's premises in Bangalore, India, the new facility was inaugurated in a ceremony held on 18 August 2012.

With a number of partners – including Gallus, Esko, DuPont, Flint, Alphasonics, RotoMetrics, Targ Yun and Zecher – the center will demonstrate the entire labeling process, beginning with pre-press, printing and converting, through to label application. It will also showcase the latest trends and innovations in the pressure sensitive label industry, as well as holding training sessions.

Anil Sharma, managing director, Avery Dennison materials group South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, said: 'Avery Dennison is committed to supporting the ongoing development of the South Asia

labeling industry. This new Bangalore Knowledge Center will ensure that industry stakeholders in the region have all the information they need to extract the full benefit from pressure-sensitive materials and realize the great opportunities for growth in our developing economy.

'With the launch of the Knowledge Center, Avery Dennison has again affirmed its commitment to the India packaging industry. This unique facility will enable the adoption of pressure-sensitive labeling in India to occur faster, taking packaging to a whole new growth phase. Avery Dennison has provided a platform for stakeholders from the packaging and marketing domain to better understand the benefits of pressure-sensitive labeling.'

This is company's second such site, the first being in China.

CREED AND LOMBARDI PARTNER IN INDIA

Creed Engineers has partnered with Italy-based Lombardi Converting Machinery, a manufacturer of servo-driven flexographic presses, to launch a range of flexo presses and converting machines in India.

Creed Engineers has initially introduced two models in the Indian market, the

Lombardi Synchroline and Lombardi Screenline. Lombardi Synchroline enables the printer to print on a wide range of different materials, from adhesive paper to extensible materials used in the packaging industry; Lombardi Screenline is a modular machine for the production of silkscreen printed labels.



(L-R) Satoshi Komiyama, executive director of MSP Inc. (and son of Mitsuo); Mitsuo Komiyama with Lifetime Achievement special award; Sayako Komiyama; John Davy, Labelexpo; Andy Thomas, L&L

MITSUO KOMIYAMA HONORED

Mitsuo Komiyama, chairman of the Japan Federation of Label Printing Industries (JFLP) and CEO of leading Japanese label converter MPS, received his Label Industry Lifetime Special Recognition Award from L&L editor Andy Thomas at the Japan Label Forum event in Tokyo in July.

The special award was bestowed by the judging panel for the Label Industry Global Awards 2012, chaired by Mike Fairley and consisting of the leaders of Finat and the TLMI and representatives from leading industry magazines.

Mr Komiyama established Mimasu Seal Printing (Nakano-ku, Tokyo) in

1985, which became MSP Incorporated (Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo) in 2005. Focusing on the industrial label market, the company has three factories close to Tokyo in the Yamanashi Prefecture and operations in Thailand and the Philippines.

Presenting the award, Andy Thomas said: 'This is a well deserved award for a major personality in the global label industry. Mr Komiyama not only founded a pioneering and innovative label company, he was also a founder and remains an active member of the global organization of industry associations, the L-9, which has its next meeting in Tokyo.'

KODAK TO FOCUS ON PACKAGE PRINTING

Eastman Kodak Company has outlined its next steps towards emerging from Chapter 11 reorganization as a company primarily focused on commercial, packaging and functional printing technology and enterprise services. Accordingly, the company has initiated sale processes for its personalized imaging and document imaging businesses.

Kodak believes that the sale of these assets, as well as continued cost-reduction initiatives, curtailment of its legacy liabilities, and the monetization of the company's digital imaging patent portfolio, will be significant milestones toward completing the company's reorganization and emergence from Chapter 11 during 2013.

'The initiation of a process to sell the personalized imaging and document imaging businesses is an important step in our company's reorganization to focus our business on the commercial markets and enable Kodak to accelerate its momentum toward emergence,' said Antonio M. Perez, chairman and chief executive officer. 'In addition, we continue our initiatives to reduce our cost structure and streamline our operating models in an effort to return the company to profitability.'

'We are reshaping Kodak. We continue to rebalance our company toward commercial, packaging and functional printing – in which we have the broadest portfolio [of technology] – and enterprise services.'

HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES



TARSUS chairman Neville Buch, second left, receives the AEO Outstanding Contribution to the Industry award

TARSUS CHAIRMAN HONORED AT AEO AWARDS

Neville Buch, chairman of Tarsus Group, organizer of the Labelexpo Global Series of events, has received the Outstanding Contribution to the Industry award at the Association of Event Organisers (AEO) Awards. The presentation was made by former AEO chairman and Tarsus' group managing director Doug Emslie before an audience of 1,000 industry professionals.

Buch started his career in the exhibition industry in 1982 with Lawrie Lewis at Dresswell, which later went on to become Blenheim, a leading international exhibition, publishing and conference company. In 1986 Blenheim was floated on the stock market for six million GB pounds with 25 shows and was the first public UK company to be focused solely on exhibitions. Blenheim was eventually acquired by UBM in 1996 for 600 million pounds.

Keen to replicate Blenheim's success, Buch launched Tarsus in 1998. Starting with the Labelexpo brand, the Tarsus event and publishing portfolio has grown to cover North and South America, Europe and Asia. Focusing on growth from emerging markets such as Dubai, Turkey and China, Tarsus now has over 300 employees and operations all over the world.

TEKNEK LAUNCHES CARE PACKAGE

Teknek has introduced an elastomer roller care system for all contact cleaning rollers. The move follows Teknek's launch of the first oxydegradable clean machine adhesive roll – the EcoFilm range. The Roller Doctor is a rejuvenation pad that is part of a maintenance program for contact cleaning rollers. The cleaning pad contains a proprietary solution, which cleans and refreshes the roller surface. In effect, the pad 'exfoliates' the surface of the roller to ensure it is giving optimal performance.

NEWS

HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES



L-R: Dr Kipp, CEO of Eltromat, and Dr Krebs, CEO of Nyquist Technology

ELTROMAT PARTNERS WITH NYQUIST SYSTEMS

Eltromat and Nyquist Systems have jointly founded the new company Nyquist Technology, which will focus on developing economic alternatives to conventional print monitoring and print inspection systems.

The joint venture combines decades of experience and expertise of two complementary partners: Eltromat, a developer of color measurement and control systems for printing processes, and Nyquist, a technology company that specializes in the conception and development of print inspection systems. The distribution and marketing of the new products will be carried out through the worldwide sales network of Eltromat.

The first cost-effective system for monitoring labels as an alternative to strobes was presented at Labelexpo Americas 2012.

'With the new system, we will close the gap regarding quality control of flexible packaging and adhesive labels,' said Dr Krebs, managing director of Nyquist.

'We are confident that our systems will help the user in the market to significantly raise productivity while meeting quality standards,' added Dr Kipp, managing director of Eltromat.

ROTOCON TO REP MPS

Press manufacturer MPS has appointed Rotocon as its distributor in South Africa. A spin-off company from Rototec, a local manufacturer of precision engraving and tooling equipment, Rotocon will focus exclusively on print and finishing machine applications.

LABEL AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED

The label industry came together on 11 September to celebrate some of the sector's leading companies and individuals at the Label Industry Global Awards 2012. Held as part of Labelexpo Americas 2012, the ceremony took place before an audience of 500 at the Aragon Ballroom in Chicago.

Steve Lee, vice president of technology at RotoMetrics, received a standing ovation as he was announced as the recipient of the R Stanton Avery Lifetime Achievement Award. The Label Industry Award for Continuous Innovation was won by Stork Prints; the

Award for New Innovation went to Advanced Vision Technology (AVT) for its SpectraLab module, while Baumgarten scooped the Converter Award for Sustainability/ Environmental Responsibility.

Avery Dennison took the Green Award in recognition of its company-wide drive to make its products and manufacturing process more environmentally friendly. And a CIPPI special award was presented to W&R Etiketten, CERM, Xeikon and Esko for successful integration of pre-press and enterprise systems.

Full story see p106.

MARK ANDY UNIVERSITY OFFERS TRAINING

The Mark Andy customer support team has introduced Mark Andy University, a resource for training and guidance to the more than 14,000 global owners of Mark Andy, Rotoflex, Comco and Arpeco equipment. Mark Andy University consists of highly qualified trainers with the experience and knowledge unique to an OEM service team.

The initial launch of classes is targeted to users of Mark Andy press models. Participants have the opportunity to attend week-long classes at Mark Andy University in St Louis, Missouri, where certified trainers will provide courses covering press troubleshooting, PLC monitoring, press calibration and ongoing maintenance.

Recommended for maintenance professionals, press operators and anyone else who has day-to-day press room responsibilities, these classes are an opportunity to gain a more complete knowledge of

the equipment and bring a higher level of productivity to their operations. Classes are available for all skill levels.

In addition to providing training on press mechanics, Mark Andy University also offers print training, including tips and techniques to improve the end user's productivity and quality of employees. Print training classes touch on a variety of topics including print station set-up, anilox selection and theory, plate mounting and tension maintenance. The trainer also reviews set up and use of additional components specific to the press. This is an ideal opportunity for converters with new equipment, or those who are interested in expanding their gamut of applications.

If travel to Mark Andy University is not possible, certified trainers are available to provide training on-site at a converter's facility.

KCC CORPORATION OPENS EUROPEAN TECHNICAL CENTER

KCC Corporation, a Korea-based supplier of silicone release coatings and pressure sensitive adhesives, has opened its European Technical Center in the UK.

The new laboratories, located in Abingdon, Oxfordshire, enhance the company's ability to support its customers and develop new business in various silicone end-uses, says KCC.

Ian Watling, managing director of KCC Silicones Europe, said: 'The opening of the new laboratories is an important step forward for KCC Corporation in Europe,

which will allow us to work more effectively with all our customers in the region with the prompt delivery of new technology backed by first class technical support.'

Stephen Armstrong, general manager of KCC silicones pressure sensitive materials business unit, added: 'The opening is a key milestone in KCC's plans to develop business in Europe with its new solventless and emulsion silicone release coating systems, which are now backed by an expert local team of scientists and technicians to assist customers.'

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HOT OFF THE PRESSA ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST
GLOBAL LABEL STORIES**BUNTING MAGNETICS EUROPE
ACQUIRES E-MAGNETS UK**

Bunting Magnetics Europe, a manufacturing and sales operation center based in Berkhamsted, UK, for Bunting Magnetics Company, has announced the acquisition of E-Magnets UK, located in Sheffield, UK.

E-Magnets UK specializes in direct and wholesale supply of magnetic products throughout the UK and the world through its website e-magnetsuk.com. The company was founded in 2005 by Alistair Richardson, whom will continue to oversee the company's everyday operations.

'We are expanding our capabilities in today's rapidly growing e-commerce environment,' said Robert J. Bunting, Bunting Magnetics owner and chief executive officer. 'E-Magnets UK significantly expands Bunting's market presence in the UK and abroad, while at the same time significantly increases our online business presence which, until today, was done through our e-commerce sites magnetuk.com and buymagnets.com. E-Magnets UK has outstanding market recognition for their product assortment and is well known within the European Union.'

**OKI DATA PARTNERS
WITH MARK ANDY****COMPANIES** to collaborate on development of digital printing

OKI Data Americas has partnered with Mark Andy to increase availability of short run digital color label printing systems in the US. As part of this relationship, OKI Data – through its proColor division – will collaborate on the development and distribution of digital color label printers to converters as well as those within the graphic arts and production market.

The partnership draws on Mark Andy's expertise as a global supplier of printing equipment and the company's extensive customer base, as well as OKI Data's expertise in the development and marketing of printing technologies. Both organizations are said to recognize the opportunities in the short-run digital color printing arena, and the alliance between OKI Data and Mark Andy will aid the delivery of such technologies to the marketplace.

Rich Egert, general manager of the Strategic Technology Provider Business Group for OKI Data Americas, said: 'The OKI Data Americas and Mark Andy partnership capitalizes upon both parties' core competencies and represents a tactical approach for the provision of short

run digital color printing solutions to the graphic arts and production market.'

Jeff Feltz, director of new business development for Mark Andy, commented: 'One of Mark Andy's primary goals is to provide the right tools and solutions to converters, offering various functional and value-based options – regardless of printing technology – for label printers to meet their immediate and long-term business goals. OKI Data Americas is the right partner for us, working together to supply effective solutions at every run length.'

SHORT RUNS

For Mark Andy, the digital color label printer is specifically positioned for converters seeking an economical and productive option for short run, high quality labels.

The OKI proColor Series is a line of digital printers powered by embedded EFI Fiery and Pantone support on select models. Different products and configurations offer specialized media flexibility including envelopes, continuous feed and variable data.

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(L-R) Tomasz Galant, director of manroland Polska; Eric Hoendervangers, director of MPS; and Krzysztof Pietrzak, sales manager at manroland Poland

MPS APPOINTS MANROLAND AS EUROPEAN DISTRIBUTOR

DEAL covers Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia

MPS has appointed manroland as its distributor in Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia.

manroland Polska and manroland Czech will represent MPS independently, offering sales and technical support. The deals with the respective manroland

offices were signed during Drupa 2012.

The companies – both press manufacturers – are said to be a good fit; manroland will complement its own product portfolio with MPS's EC/EF Flexo, EXL Offset and EXL Packaging press lines.

HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

NORDVALLS EXPANDS SWEDISH OPERATIONS

Swedish converter Nordvalls has acquired Figosystem, a pressure sensitive labeling business located in Kungälv, north of Gothenburg. The sale was completed on 28 September 2012.

The acquisition increases Nordvalls' turnover to nearly SEK 300 million and broadens the product profile and geographic coverage for the joint business, creating "a leading Swedish and international labeling player".

Magnus Olsson, current CEO at Figosystem and new head of marketing at Nordvalls, said: "We have during the past 25 years developed Figosystem to become one of the leading labeling printing businesses in Sweden and it has been a very exciting journey. We now see Nordvalls as a natural buyer to Figosystem as we stand in front of a new phase in the development. The industry is currently facing a structural change where new labeling printing groups are formed. Nordvalls is today one of the most established and well regarded companies in the industry and we see several similarities between the companies. Nordvalls is a profitable and well invested company and we complement each other very well. I will also personally get the opportunity to actively participate in the operation with new opportunities in Sweden and in northern Europe."

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New **Résiste 185-3.3** was developed specifically for retail weigh-scale applications, producing darker images and barcodes, improved scan rates and increased resistance to mechanical scuffing.

APPLETON

HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST
GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

DIGITAL ROLL RANGE

RITRAMA
self-adhesive materials

HP INDIGO
CERTIFIED SUBSTRATE

also available for other digital printing technologies.

RANGE includes new gloss silver metalized paper

RITRAMA'S DIGITAL RANGE CERTIFIED BY HP INDIGO

Ritrama's Digital Roll Range of materials has been successfully printed on HP Indigo presses and fully certified by HP.

The company's digital materials range includes papers, polypropylenes and polyethylenes featuring a special top coating for digital printing to ensure a high quality color finish. Key markets for this type of materials are said to be wine, beverage, pharmaceutical, health or toiletries and any other application requiring small label volumes. The HP Indigo certifications refer to the following machines: WS4000, WS4500, WS4050, WS4600, WS2000, WS6000 and WS6600.

The range has been also enhanced with a new gloss silver metalized paper, the Specchio DGT AP903 WG74.

FLINT GROUP PARTNERS WITH HEIDELBERG

Flint Group Print Media Europe's operation in Sweden and Denmark has appointed Heidelberg as exclusive distributor its lines of K+E sheetfed offset inks, Varn press room chemicals and dayGraphica blankets.

PULSE APPOINTS ITALY DISTRIBUTOR

UK-based ink manufacturer Pulse Roll Label Products has appointed Grafco as its distributor in Italy.

TEAM HERMA PARTICIPATE IN CHARITY BRUSSELS RIDE

Herma UK has begun training and preparation for its next challenge. In the name of charity, the team will cycle from its UK headquarters in Newbury, Berkshire, to the steps of Labelexpo Europe in Brussels next September.

Seven members of the Herma team will make the grueling journey in the days leading up to the opening of the label industry's big event, covering 300 miles.

Colin Phillips, Herma's UK MD, has set the team the target of raising at least GBP £15,000 for the following charities: Cancer Research, Breast Cancer and Namuwongo children's charity in Africa.

The team has already successfully completed initial test trials and is now focusing on both training and raising

money. Herma would be grateful for any donations towards this journey, especially for shirt sponsorship; contact Helena. jones@herma.co.uk or +44 (0)1635 31331.

The team is offering space on their jerseys for company logo placement in exchange for contributions. The team will soon be setting up a 'Just Giving' page, where regular updates of progress and fundraising can be viewed.

Colin Phillips said: 'I'm sure with the help of the label industry between us all we can easily reach the target amount set of £15,000 and would like to thank all those people who can help in any way they can. See you all in Brussels next year!'

CCL ACQUIRES AUSTRALIAN PHARMA LABEL BUSINESS

Global converting group CCL Industries has acquired the pharmaceutical division of Graphitype Printing Services, a privately owned company located near Sydney, Australia, for AUD seven million dollars (USD \$7.17m), paid in cash.

The acquired business produces labels and patient instructional leaflets for leading pharmaceutical customers in Australia and will complement the existing CCL Label Healthcare operation in Melbourne.

Graphitype's pharmaceutical division sales were AUD 7.3 million dollars for the 12-month period ending June 30, 2012, with EBITDA of approximately AUD two and a half million dollars. Dave and Kath Morris, the founders of Graphitype Printing Services, will continue to operate their commercial printing business as an independent company. Steve Morris, the

business leader of the pharmaceutical division, has signed an employment agreement as part of the transaction and will join the Healthcare and Specialty group of CCL Label North America and Australia led by Jim Sellors, group vice president. The acquired business will immediately change its trading name to CCL Label.

Geoffrey Martin, president and CEO of CCL Industries, said: 'The healthcare sector continues to be attractive for us and we have been very successful with similar acquisitions in this product space in the recent past. The excellent facility in Sydney and the great team assembled by the Morris family while building the business will strengthen our position in Australia with sites now located in both of the key pharmaceutical manufacturing centers in the country.'

UPM RAFLATAC LAUNCHES COAT-TO-ORDER SERVICE

UPM Raflatac has launched its Menu Service for labelstock converters located in the United States, Canada and Mexico. Customers can now assemble several of UPM Raflatac's standard facestocks, adhesives and liners to create over 1,500 different product combinations.

UPM Raflatac's Menu Service enables customers to design custom roll-to-roll

labelstocks for specific applications and end uses, allowing them to meet a greater range of business requirements. Customers can select product components and request sample sheets and price quotes for their orders through UPM Raflatac's sales team. Menu Service products are coated-to-order and ready to ship within 10 business days.



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ALPHASONICS ANNOUNCES PATENT APPLICATIONS

Alphasonics has applied for patents on its latest ultrasonic cleaning technologies. Betasound and Betasound+ have been developed to safely clean the ultra-high screen aniloxes and plates which are increasingly being used in high end flexography. The established Alphasound technology will also continue to be offered by the company.

Betasound+ is a further development of the technology initially launched at drupa 2012 following extensive research and development by electronic engineers at Alphasonics' Liverpool facility. These technologies combine unique ultrasonic frequency pairings and cycles alongside other new features to ensure that cleaning is both effective and safe when used regularly, regardless of screen count.

Exhibiting alongside US partner Conversource, Alphasonics had a good Labelexpo Americas show, with both the Betasound and Melanie benchtop cleaning range well received.

'Without doubt, the recovery of the US market is on track,' said Alphasonics managing director David Jones. As a result of this positive experience, Alphasonics is now setting up a directly linked sales office in the United States to give potential customers easier access to the Alphasonics sales team.

'More printers in America are seeing the benefits in investing in the advanced cleaning technology Alphasonics provide,' said Jones. 'This is a logical step to give greater access to potential customers.'

UPM RAFLATAC QUALIFIES MATERIALS FOR JETTRION

UPM Raflatrac has qualified more than 30 labelstocks for EFI's Jettrion industrial inkjet systems, including the 4000, 4830 and 4900 series of UV inkjet presses.

Label converters who use UPM Raflatrac labelstocks and EFI Jettrion UV inkjet systems gain access to a host of digital benefits, including a diverse range of labelstocks claimed to provide exceptional visual appeal and performance for demanding end-uses. Meanwhile, EFI's presses allow converters to offer short- and medium-run printing capabilities that are ideal for product launches, targeted marketing campaigns and boutique labeling operations. Labelstock converters pay only for the inks they use, thereby reducing their production costs. EFI's presses range from the 4000, which offers an economical entry point into digital label printing, to the 4900, which executes digital printing and

finishing in a single pass.

'UPM Raflatrac is pleased to partner with EFI to offer labelstock converters and their customers a complete digital printing solution,' said Patrick Goss, prime business director, Americas, UPM Raflatrac. 'Printers can leverage UPM Raflatrac labelstocks and EFI Jettrion machines to provide end-users with the broadest range of options for their digital printing needs.'

'EFI and UPM Raflatrac share a commitment to delivering high quality labeling solutions that offer productivity, efficiency and value,' said Sean Skelly, general manager of EFI Jettrion. 'UPM Raflatrac paper and film labelstocks open up a world of printing possibilities for our rapidly growing installed base of label converters who gain business benefits from Jettrion's economic ink-only printing cost and favorable ROI.'

BEMIS PARTNERS WITH THIN FILM ELECTRONICS

Bemis Company, a supplier of flexible packaging and pressure sensitive materials, has signed a joint development agreement with Thin Film Electronics to develop a Bemis Intelligent Packaging Platform.

The agreement will accelerate the commercial development of functional sensor labels manufactured from printed electronic technology made from Thin Film's proprietary read/writable printed memory and program logic.

When used with Bemis packaging, the line of 'intelligent' labels will monitor and record key physical properties and environmental data in packaged perishable products.

'Intelligent packaging is an emerging technology with many potential intersections with Bemis' flexible packaging and pressure sensitive materials business segments,' said Henry Theisen, Bemis company president and chief executive officer.

HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

LABELINK ACQUIRES LABELAD

Labelink, a label converter based in Montreal, Canada, has acquired Ontario-based Labelad. Led by Labelink president Stephen Bouchard, Labelink assumed management of the Labelad operation on August 3.

According to Bouchard, the acquisition and immediate synergies will result in cost savings in the company's manufacturing of PS, shrink sleeve, roll-fed labels and flexible packaging products. Benefiting the combined customer base is manufacturing support from multiple locations in Quebec and Ontario. The deal also brings the introduction of a wider range of new products into both regions, as well as an increase in both flexo and digital print capacity.

'These are truly exciting times for Labelink,' said Bouchard. 'The future has never been brighter with the combination of best-in-class low cost manufacturing expertise and some of the industry's most innovative product offerings making Labelink a true full-service packaging provider.' Joe Campbell, formerly Labelad's VP and general manager, is now Labelink's VP of sales.

BASF EXPANDS ADHESIVE COATINGS CENTER

BASF has expanded its coating center by adding a tailor-made and flexible laboratory coating and laminating facility. The new coater facilitates the development of adhesive systems for flexible packaging, labels, tapes and functional film coatings. It increases the capacity for customer tests and speeds up the development of new products as well as the adaption of existing adhesive formulations to new carrier materials.

'By expanding our coating center, we are able to further strengthen our technical leadership and innovation power when it comes to water-based adhesive systems and UV acrylic hotmelts. Our mission is the long-term success of our customers,' explained Dr Jürgen Pfister, head of dispersions for adhesives and fiber bonding, Europe.

The universal laboratory coater produces exact, reproducible coatings of water-based and UV acrylate hotmelt systems, only requiring a minimum quantity of one kilo of adhesive. The pre-treatment and lamination of a variety of film combinations is also possible.

The center of competence for adhesive coatings is located in Ludwigshafen, Germany, the global headquarters of BASF. The coating expert closely cooperates with all relevant BASF R&D centers for adhesive raw materials and the respective regional business units. The competences and experiences of those who work in technical service, development, research and laboratory are assembled here. The centerpiece of the competence center is the existing pilot coater for dispersions, running at speeds of up to 1,800 meters per minute.

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

KEEP IT GREEN

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST ENVIRONMENTAL LABEL STORIES

SPEAR IN PS FILM DEVELOPMENT

As the recycling industry's concern for the impact of labels on PET bottle recycling rises, Spear, a manufacturer of labels for the global beverage industry, has developed clear and white film pressure sensitive label materials that are compatible with this process.

Working in conjunction with the APR (Association of Post-Consumer Recyclers) testing protocol since 2003, Spear was presented with the group's 'Partners for Change Award' for its cooperative testing activities.

All testing of Spear's pressure sensitive materials and their impact on PET bottle recycling was done through independently certified lab PFE (Plastics Forming Enterprise) of Amherst, New Hampshire, USA. Testing was consistent with APR's protocol and included commercially-printed graphics, in addition to the base materials. Spear's materials show acceptable PET haze and 'b' clarity values up to a 50 percent recycled content load and include the blowing of new PET bottles from the recycled flake with acceptable container haze and clarity levels.

Information specialist Euromonitor reports that PET bottle usage continues to accelerate as global usage approaches 400 billion units. European recycling association Petcore recently announced Europe achieved a 51 percent PET bottle collection rate in 2011, while the Environmental Protection Agency estimates the US' PET bottle recycling rate grew to 29 percent in 2010. On average, production of new bottles from recycled plastic requires 70 percent less energy versus raw materials, along with the impact of land-fill avoidance.

FLEXCON UNVEILS PCW RELEASE LINER

Flexcon has launched its post-consumer waste (PCW) 50 lb kraft roll form release liner, made from up to 30 percent post-consumer waste. Flexcon is offering the PCW liner at the same price as the liner manufactured from virgin pulp.

'Flexcon remains committed to supporting sustainability efforts and delivering quality alternatives for the narrow web label market,' said John Bennett, vice president, product identification, Flexcon. 'We worked closely with a supplier to develop a PCW liner in order to offer converters an environmentally friendly solution at the same price and with the same performance level.'



EVERY DENNISON has introduced new portfolio of wash-off labels for glass and PET bottles

AVERY DENNISON LAUNCHES WASH-OFF LABELS

NEW RANGE maximizes opportunities for material recycling

Avery Dennison has introduced a new portfolio of Fasson Wash-off labels aimed at helping brand owners reduce the environmental impact of their products by maximizing opportunities for material recycling.

The labels offer converters an alternative for any existing wet-glue product. They are suitable for body and neck labeling of both light and dark containers, as well as bottled water in glass and large containers of juices and smoothies in recyclable PET bottles.

Wash-off labels have a multi-layer construction consisting of a polypropylene film, PET liner and a proprietary wash-off adhesive. The adhesive is formulated for the easy removal of labels when washed in industrial brewery washers. They wash off from 65 deg C, allowing for lower washer temperatures than the current average of 80 deg C.

With returnable glass bottles, the two film layers expand at different rates in a hot washer causing the label to curl for

easy removal. The adhesive and inks remain on the label so it washes off without contaminating the water in the washer. No label marks (or 'ghosting') are left on the bottle.

When Wash-off labels are used in combination with PET bottles, the high quality PET is suitable for bottle-to-bottle recycling. After use, PET bottles and their labels are shredded, before the resulting mixture is soaked in a hot alkaline solution. The label material then separates from the PET chips, due to a difference in density. During this part of the recycling process, the washable adhesive stays with the shredded label flakes. This allows 100 percent recycling of the PET material, claims the company.

Developed for 'no-label look' decoration of returnable beer bottles, the wash-off labels are designed to enhance the brand image of premium beers and support complex label shapes. They are said to have excellent performance in tropical and hot environments and are resistant to UV.

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STARBUCKS UNVEILS EARTHSLEEVE

ADHESIVE manufacturer Henkel plays key role in project

Starbucks Coffee Company, LBP Manufacturing and Henkel have announced the availability of EarthSleeve, a new hot-cup sleeve that integrates proprietary technology to enable a reduction in overall material usage while at the same time

increasing the post-consumer content. These adjustments are claimed to correlate to a savings of nearly 100,000 trees.

Manufactured in Cicero, Illinois, USA, by LBP Manufacturing for Starbucks with Henkel adhesive, the new product

decreases raw fiber material by 34 percent and increases post-consumer content by 25 percent, without sacrificing performance or function. With nearly three billion hot cup sleeves produced in the United States in 2011 and Starbucks representing nearly half of the marketplace, the material 'will have a substantial impact on the packaging industry', say the companies.

'At Starbucks we are constantly looking to innovate in ways that make our world a better place,' said Cliff Burrows, president of the Americas for Starbucks. 'This product represents how the integration of our environmental values and collaboration with like-minded organizations can create significant impact.'

The EarthSleeve is currently being introduced into Starbucks locations across the United States and Canada and is being evaluated for global usage.

In addition to substantial decreases in raw material makeup and a new total usage of 85 percent post-consumer fiber content, the EarthSleeve also allows for a case cube and truckload yield improvement of 15 percent, reducing the overall environmental impact of the transportation of the sleeves. The product has also been deemed fully compostable by both ASTM and Cedar Grove requirements, and has recently been approved for repulpability by Western Michigan University.

Introducing the

iTECH
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The next revolution in complete digital label manufacturing has arrived. Announcing the iTech CENTRA HS Digital Label System from Allen Datagraph Systems, Inc. The iTech CENTRA HS Digital Label Printer and the iTech CENTRA HS Digital Label Finisher is truly a "first-in-class" system that enables label converters the ability to efficiently produce labels in any shape without dies and is unmatched in its capabilities and economics for digital label manufacturing.

To learn more about the iTech CENTRA HS Digital Label System please contact Allen Datagraph Systems, Inc. at info@alldatagraph.com or 1-800-258-6360.

The iTech CENTRA HS Digital Label System will be exhibited for the first time at booth 6115 during Labelexpo Americas 2012, September 11-13.



Allen Datagraph Systems, Inc.
56 Kendall Pond Road Derry NH 03038
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email: info@alldatagraph.com
website: www.itechlabel.com

BADGER PLUG OPENS NEW RECYCLING SITE

FOURTH LOCATION added to packaging component recycling program

Badger Plug Company has added a fourth location to its recycling program, which sees it help clients divert and reuse roll packaging components that would otherwise end up in a landfill.

Newport, Indiana, joins the other North American centers where Badger Plug will accept and recycle an array of packaging components previously used for protecting roll products during shipping and storage. Badger Plug first started recycling these products in 1984 at the company's headquarters in Greenville, Wisconsin.

Tom Duffy, national sales manager, said: 'As the program took off, it became necessary for us to add more locations. Wauconda, Illinois, and Henryetta, Oklahoma, became home to our second and third recycling centers.'

Duffy said the program has grown significantly over the years. 'Badger Plug is now recycling over 40 million pounds of packaging components annually. That's a lot of material that would have ended up in landfills.'

Duffy pointed out that many packaging components can currently be recycled. Wooden endboards, pallets, plastic sleeve plugs and interlocking clips/channels are the most popular recycled components. 'One of our goals is to accept quality components that can then be offered for resale at reduced prices,' Duffy said. 'We inspect, or remanufacture if needed, every item before being approved for resale. Those components can then be purchased at a reduced cost, saving our customers money while helping protect the environment.'



KEEP IT GREEN

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST ENVIRONMENTAL LABEL STORIES

COCA-COLA ADOPTS BRC'S RECYCLING LABEL IN UK

Coca-Cola is adopting the British Retail Consortium's On-Pack Recycling Label (OPRL), boosting efforts to reduce the proportion of plastic drinks bottles ending up in landfill.

Coca-Cola Enterprises (CCE) is rolling out the OPRL system which gives consumers standardized information on which packaging materials local authorities collect for recycling. More than 90 percent of councils now collect plastic bottles at the curbside but, despite massive growth over the last few years, consumers are only recycling around half of plastic bottles. The relevant OPRL logo – plastic, widely recycled – is starting to appear initially on 500ml bottles of Coca-Cola, Coke Zero and Diet Coke sold in Great Britain, but will be introduced over time across other products and packs made by CCE. CCE, the bottler of Coca-Cola products in Great Britain, is the country's biggest soft drinks manufacturer – supplying 160,000 outlets with approximately 1.8bn liters of soft drinks a year.

The BRC says that CCE's adoption of the scheme will see a significant increase in the number of bottles and cans which will now carry this clearer recycling advice.

Good Reflections

Nothing on retail shelves matches the exceptional appearance of packages and labels with the unique sheen of Brushfoil. And in today's challenging marketplace, Brushfoil is a brilliant performer – commanding attention, projecting quality and reflecting the value of what's inside every package.

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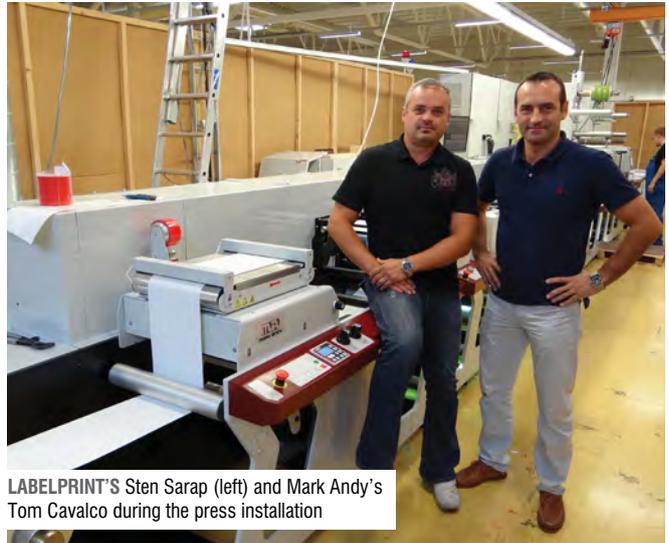
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INSTALLATIONS



THE EFI JETRION 4900 at Colorscan Imaging Products is the first such installation in the UK



LABELPRINT'S Sten Sarap (left) and Mark Andy's Tom Cavalco during the press installation

EFI JETRION 4900

COLORSCAN IMAGING PRODUCTS (UK)

Grafitec Label Presses has announced the UK's first EFI Jetrion 4900 is being installed at Colorscan Imaging Products, based in Burton upon Trent.

Keith Forster, director of Colorscan, said: 'We produce point of sales and other printed products for the real ale brewing industry. We only operate digital equipment, and currently most printing is done on a Xerox IGen which is both fast, and of a high quality. Unfortunately it does not have a white ink capability, and to date no Xerox printer does.'

'The EFI Jetrion white has excellent opacity whilst the CMYK inks retain their translucent appearance on metalized substrates, allowing for effects not available on toner-based printers.'

The press can support a wide variety of substrates and incorporates a dual laser auto die-cutting system and two-spindle semi-automatic turret rewind for finished rolls, as well as integrated corona treater for filmic substrates. A continuous queue label production workflow enables zero waste changeovers.

MARK ANDY PERFORMANCE SERIES P5

LABELPRINT (ESTONIA)

The recent installation of a second Mark Andy Performance Series P5 press at LabelPrint in Tallinn marks a significant milestone for both the Estonian label converter and the American machinery manufacturer. In 11 years from inception, Sten Sarap, the charismatic entrepreneur behind LabelPrint, has pushed monthly turnover through the 500,000 euro barrier, during which time his company has become the leading Mark Andy user in the Baltic states, having installed five of the manufacturer's flexo presses, and three Rotoflex machines with 100 percent inspection capability.

According to Sarap, 2012 will be the most profitable year in the company's short history, with the factory now on triple shift production to meet demand from a growing portfolio of international brand owners in the food, beauty and healthcare markets. With more than 30 percent of output now exported, LabelPrint has specified its two Mark Andy P5 machines to allow it to move into the market for high-value labels that require added-value finishing techniques.

Both of the P5 presses have a 330 mm (13in) web width and

eight UV flexo print stations. In addition, they are fitted with delam/relam, two screen units, hot and cold foil capability, embossing and sheeting. The first was installed when LabelPrint moved into its new purpose-built factory in 2011. Five kilometers from Tallinn airport, it serves national and international customers from its 3,250 square meter unit, which employs 50 staff.

The investment in Mark Andy Performance Series technology (LabelPrint also has three 2200 flexo lines), is a mark of Sten Sarap's belief that companies become more efficient by specializing in market sectors. He explained: 'The performance and screen facility of the P5 has allowed us to move into the high value cosmetics market where the margins are better. With run lengths declining, we needed the capacity to process jobs quickly, while still meeting customers' quality expectations. Offering them added value labels is a bonus, and the P5 is perfect for all that.'

With run lengths typically down to 500 linear meters of substrate, LabelPrint is finding the easy and fast changeover capability of the new Mark Andy presses a major plus point. 'We repeatedly handle 18 different jobs in an eight-hour shift, using six or more colors and other finishing techniques. You simply cannot do that on any other flexo label press – the P Series has changed the game,' he added.

Having invested heavily in pre-press and anilox technology, which gives the company its own HD Flexo plate making capability, LabelPrint claims its Mark Andy presses offer the capability to run substrates from 20-micron PP and PE unsupported film, up to 400-micron board for tags, but realistically sees self-adhesive labels as its major growth potential. Volumes are higher in this area, according to Sarap, and running film is both more specialized and more competitive. He highlighted this by mentioning one recent label job, which was 60,000 meters, printed six-colors and varnish, and run off at 125 meters/minute.

TURKISH CONVERTERS INSTALL SISTRADE MIS

Turkish converters Gul Ambalaj Ofset and Sentez Ambalaj have ordered MIS|ERP Sistrade Print to help integrate their departments, from estimating and accounting to job orders and stock management. Sistrade Print is a business management tool developed by Sistrade, a Portugal-based business specializing in software development and consulting services.



AB GRAPHIC has integrated a Domino inkjet printer in its Flytec 510 rewinder for a German client

AB GRAPHIC FLYTEC REWINDER WITH DOMINO INKJET PRINTER GERMAN MANUFACTURER OF HORTICULTURAL PRODUCTS

AB Graphic International has integrated a Domino K600 i DOD inkjet printer in its bi-directional Flytec 510 rewinder to provide a bespoke line for a manufacturer and distributor of horticultural products in northern Germany. The system is used as a digital label printing line for webs up to 300mm wide to meet the demand for short run jobs with frequent design changes.

The Flytec 510 system supplied includes bi-directional winding and is equipped with label, web length and reel diameter rewind counters. All machine functions are controlled through a centralized operator touch screen control. The bi-directional operation of the Flytec system coupled with the Domino K600 enables continuous printing with reduced material waste. Jobs can be printed, UV cured and rewind back to the printer so that the first label of the next run is immediately ready to print. Servo assisted drive permits a wide range of delicate and perforated substrates to be processed including blank labels, PE, PVC and Tyvek.

The new system has replaced two cold laser systems and has significantly improved production output and print quality without increasing label costs. The machine is used to produce labels for own brand products, external customers and personalized small print runs. PDF files can be sent from the company's pre-press department directly to the inkjet printer where a data file is created. This also contains any variable data to be printed. Labels can then be printed immediately further speeding up production.

Covering 220mm web width, the Domino K600 prints static and variable data, barcodes, graphics and information at a native print resolution between 600 dpi and 1200 dpi with up to four grayscale levels, reaching speeds of up to 150 m/min. The system is equipped with two print heads, UV curing and automatic ink cleaning. The two print heads are seamlessly connected to permit full flexibility in label layout design. The print heads are covered, when not in use and this together with an integrated automatic cleaning function means the printer is always ready to run. Between 40 and 50 print jobs with various repeat lengths can be run daily.



THE five presses will be spread across three facilities in Germany

FIVE HP INDIGO WS6600 PRESSES RAKO ETIKETTEN (GERMANY)

Rako Etiketten has purchased five new HP Indigo WS6600 digital presses. The new machines will be installed across three facilities in Germany.

With headquarters in Witzhave, near Hamburg, Germany, Rako Etiketten is a leading supplier of labels and packaging and Europe's largest producer of printed labels using digital offset reel-to-reel technology.

The HP Indigo WS6600 features the ILP (Inline Priming) option, a custom-developed water-based primer that supports standard, untreated paper substrates. The ILP helps ensure faster turnaround times by eliminating the extra step of off-line substrate preparation, while also increasing flexibility and lowering costs.

'The new HP Indigo WS6600 presses are twice as fast as our existing installed models and easier to use. We can reduce our labor costs per label enormously while doubling our capacity,' said Roger Gehrke, manager of digital printing, Rako. 'The new ability to use standard media as we do in our conventional offset and flexo printing presses is also a huge advantage, reducing inventory costs and overall material costs too.'

According to Rako Etiketten, the new Enhanced Productivity Mode (EPM) functionality of the HP Indigo WS6600 helps achieve higher productivity for faster turnaround time on print jobs. EPM increases press throughput by 33 percent for most color jobs and by 25 percent when adding white ink. 'Using EPM – replacing black ink by simulating it with cyan, magenta and yellow – we will be able to print an extra 10 linear meters per minute,' explained Gehrke.

With a printing speed of up to 60 meters per minute and the new EPM, the HP Indigo WS6600 digital press significantly extends the crossover point of digital versus conventional processes, enabling print service providers to increase flexibility, efficiency and profitability.

'Short runs are like a mantra that almost everyone follows today, and they have become root and branch of our whole operation. We are also seeing more and more variable data printing, especially in the pharmaceuticals industry with unique barcodes and data matrix codes identifying contents and source. It is absolutely essential that we can react in the shortest possible timeframe,' said Gehrke.



L-R: Vinesh Bhimani, Kimoha; Uffe Nielsen, GM; Wolfram Gruening, Kimoha

GM LASER CUTTER

KIMOHA ENTREPRENEURS (DUBAI)

Danish finishing equipment manufacturer Grafisk Maskinfabrik has installed a digital laser cutter to Dubai-based label converter Kimoha Entrepreneurs. It is the first such installation by the company in the region.

Uffe Nielsen, director of GM, said: 'The laser offers a unique solution for short runs and fast turn-around. The GM finisher offers both laser and conventional die-cutting on the same platform. This is a great advantage and provides the client with the benefits of both technologies.'

'The Middle East is a strong growth market and investment was necessary to ensure we could capture opportunities,' added Wolfram Gruening, executive director at Kimoha. 'The addition of digital capabilities will enable us to be more competitive in short to medium runs. We will be able to respond more effectively on quick turnaround jobs – taking the pressure



THE NUOVA GIDUE M5 Digital Flexo 3.0 label press

off our flexo department. But this meant the quality had to match our flexo capabilities. The tools provided by Grafisk Maskinfabrik are a perfect match for the Xeikon digital press.'

Kimoha caters to the food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and other sectors, counting multinational companies like Nestle, Singapore Airlines, Johnson & Johnson and Total among its customers.

NUOVA GIDUE M5

CHESAPEAKE

Global packaging manufacturer Chesapeake has invested in a Nuova Gidue M5 Digital Flexo 3.0 label press which will be installed in one of its UK plants later this year.

Mike Cheetham, Chesapeake's CEO, commented: 'The new Gidue press will support our ambitious growth plans. The capabilities of this press will help to extend the range of labels we produce particularly complex designs requiring a

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high number of colors, three or even five ply formats as well as using multiple substrates for the same label. The Gidue press is also equipped with many quality control features which will help us strengthen the quality and service levels we deliver to our customers.'

The M5 Digital Flexo 3.0 press is equipped with 10 UV flexo print units and incorporates advanced HD camera technology (Print Tutor) on each print unit. This checks each printed label for color consistency and 'self-adjusts' print pressure, density and print register through the use of seven servo-driven motors on each unit. Machine set-up is fully automated, print quality is monitored and adjusted at any manufacturing speed across a full range of substrates.

Federico d'Annunzio, MD of Nuova Gidue, said: 'Chesapeake is a large business with a global vision of the label and packaging industry. A dedicated Gidue support team, in cooperation with GPS, Nuova Gidue's UK sales and service partner, worked together with its management team to target the highest possible quality levels.'

MARK ANDY IN LATIN AMERICA SUCCESS

Mark Andy has reported the successful adoption of its Performance Series press range in Latin America, with 15 presses installed in the region in the last two years.

Recent Performance Series installations include a 17 inch (432mm) P5 for Regispel Bobinas e Etiquetas in Brazil; a 10 inch (250mm) P5 for Jackrom de Venezuela; and the first P3 sold into the region, a 10 inch (250mm) P3 for Color Digital in Mexico.

100TH LUX INSTALLATION

A MacDermid Lux installation at OEC Graphics marks the 100th installation of the Lux platemaking process since its commercial launch. Introduced in 2010, the Lux platemaking process enables the production of flat-top dots on flexo printing plates, creating a smaller printed dot and increased print quality and consistency.

INSTALLATIONS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL INSTALLATION NEWS STORIES

MULTIPLE INSTALLATIONS FOR THE LABEL PRINTERS

The Label Printers, an Illinois, USA-based converter of custom labels and packaging, has purchased four new pieces of manufacturing equipment: an HP Indigo WS6600 digital press, Domino K600i UV inkjet system, AB Graphic Omega HSR1300 inspection slitter rewinder, and DuPont EC/LF 1000 exposure unit. The company says the new equipment will bring increased manufacturing capability, capacity and quality control while also contributing to ongoing efforts to reduce its environmental impact.

TECSCAN IN 100TH INDIAN INSTALLATION

TecScan's India distributor, SA Automation, has installed its 100th TecScan web inspection system. The UK-based manufacturer began to focus on the India market in 2008, with a marketing campaign targeting the country's gravure sector. SA Automation recently opened a new factory in Ahmedabad, where it runs live demonstrations of TecScan products.

DE PRODUCT LABELS INSTALLS HP WS4500

DE Product Labels, based in Lanarkshire, Scotland, has installed a HP Indigo WS4500, upgraded to include the latest technical features – such as virtually limitless substrate and spot color capabilities – to produce better quality labels for high-end products.

The company said it will make use of the HP Indigo press's short-run capability to provide its customers with cost-effective low to medium print volumes. It added: 'The press also nicely complements DE Product Labels' existing flexographic equipment as the quality is consistent across both, enabling the company to utilize both technologies for one job.'



“ What if the real revolution in the graphic industries was not digital printing but digital data management? ”



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Edale reports multiple installations

UK-based press manufacturer Edale has announced a series of recent installations: in the UK, South Africa, Nepal and Belarus.

UK-based converter Craig & Parsons has installed its fourth Edale Beta flexo press. The company, based in Folkestone, Kent, was established in 1945 by Cyril and Win Craig, initially as a wholesale chemist. Their son Nigel set up the labeling division in 1970 to produce labels for the chemist's bottles, and the company continues to be run as a family business.

Stephen Craig, production manager, said: 'We purchased our first Edale in 1999 and this new press will be our fourth Edale Beta 330. This is the first press that we have opted for water-based and UV drying because we are producing more long run printed labels. We have already seen a dramatic increase in our productivity due to the decrease in down time in wash ups and cleaning of plates on the run. We find the Beta a great press because of its ability to be adapted and modified to suit any new enquiries that come in.'

Following the recent installation of a 510mm wide servo-driven Sigma at Afripack Labels based in Pinetown, South Africa, Edale has reported the sale of a second press in the country. Based in Johannesburg, Morvest Mithratech has invested over one million GBP to further expand its production capacity

with the purchase of a 430mm web width servo-driven flexo press. The Edale Gamma makes use of independent servo drives and is capable of printing on a variety of substrates from 12 micron unsupported film up to 600 micron carton board – at speeds up to 200m/min.

Faheem Varachia, managing executive at Morvest Mithratech, said: 'We are very excited about this strategic purchase as it not only brings the latest technology to the Mithratech production operations both for scratch cards as well as for general printing, but also true value and a competitive advantage to our business.'

Sprint Print & Packaging, based in Kathmandu, Nepal, has installed a 7-color Edale combination UV/IR Scratch Card line with a wide range of additional options.

The 510mm wide press is configured with seven UV/IR flexo units, an Edale CR80 card stacker, which takes multiple streams of standard format CR80 cards from a die-cut unit and transports them in a continuous stack in discreet lanes, in sequence, and a complete personalization system including digital variable data printing, data verification, void product logging and tracking.

As well as running the scratch card production, Sprint customized the press with additional special options to enable it to run 'normal' production, and adapt it for the printing and converting of various

kinds of labels and cartons.

The system offers a highly productive single pass telephone card production and this latest installation is based on Edale's Gamma printing and converting line.

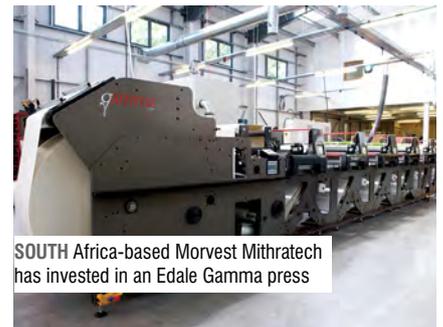
Shishir Nahata, director of Sprint, said: 'We decided on an Edale as we were highly impressed with Edale's engineering skills, and there are no installations in Nepal which can incorporate such a wide range of substrates. This machine seemed infinitely flexible being able to print on 12-600 micron substrate and also add additional options to the press at a later date – this makes our equipment future proof.'

ATB Security Technologies, a label converter based in Minsk, Belarus, has installed a 9-color 330mm width Edale Beta modular flexo press with cold foil, hot foil and a further array of special options. It joins the company's existing 5-color Edale Alpha press.

Vadim Shevko, chief of ATB's security printing department, said: 'There are many benefits to the Edale Beta; we already have an Edale Alpha machine and the easy transfer of processes between the two machines really helped during the transition period.'



(L-R) ATB's Alexander Kresik, head of production; Sergey Zykov, marketing director; and Vadim Shevko, chief of R&D department, stand alongside their new Edale Beta press



SOUTH Africa-based Morvest Mithratech has invested in an Edale Gamma press



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LABEL EXPOSURE

RECENT INNOVATIONS IN LABEL DESIGN



1

1. CAMPBELL CELEBRATES ANDY WARHOL WITH COMMEMORATIVE LABEL

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of Andy Warhol's 1962 famed work, 32 Campbell's Soup Cans, Campbell Soup Company is introducing limited-edition cans of Campbell's Condensed Tomato soup with labels derived from original Warhol artwork. The four specially-designed labels reflect Warhol's pop-art style and use eye-catching color combinations like orange and blue, and pink and teal. 'Campbell's Condensed soup is an iconic brand. And thanks to Andy Warhol's inspired paintings, Campbell's soup will always be linked to the Pop Art movement,' said Ed Carolan, vice president and general manager, Campbell North America. 'This fall, to honor the golden anniversary of his first gallery exhibit, we'll celebrate Warhol and soup by releasing limited-edition Campbell's Tomato soup cans and making Andy's art available in the soup aisle of grocery stores.'



2

2. CCL LABEL LAUNCHES TAMPER-EVIDENT SHRINK SLEEVE

CCL Label has launched an easy-to-open shrink sleeve with a tamper-evident seal. Easy4opening covers the neck/top of bottles and comparable containers for food or cosmetic and hygiene products.

A partially shrunk sleeve combined with a solid flag offers additional space for double-sided printing which can increase the brand profile. Combining offset and rotary print and EB-drying using non-migrating inks means there are no design limitations and the 'attention-drawing' flag can send specific brand or promotional signals to the consumer at the point of sale.

For small-sized items it is said to provide a striking and affordable additional feature – for example, the flag could also carry QR-codes.

The sleeve material consists of a multi-layer shrink film. Depending on product geometry the sleeve is equipped with a horizontal and/or vertical micro-perforation which enables the consumer to open it comfortably and without tools. The complete surface of the flag delivers a good grip and the sleeve can be torn open easily with just two fingers.

The sleeves can be applied by standard machinery. In the case of CCL Label's Austrian operation, where the development took place, sleeves are applied using equipment from Berning Maschinenfabrik.



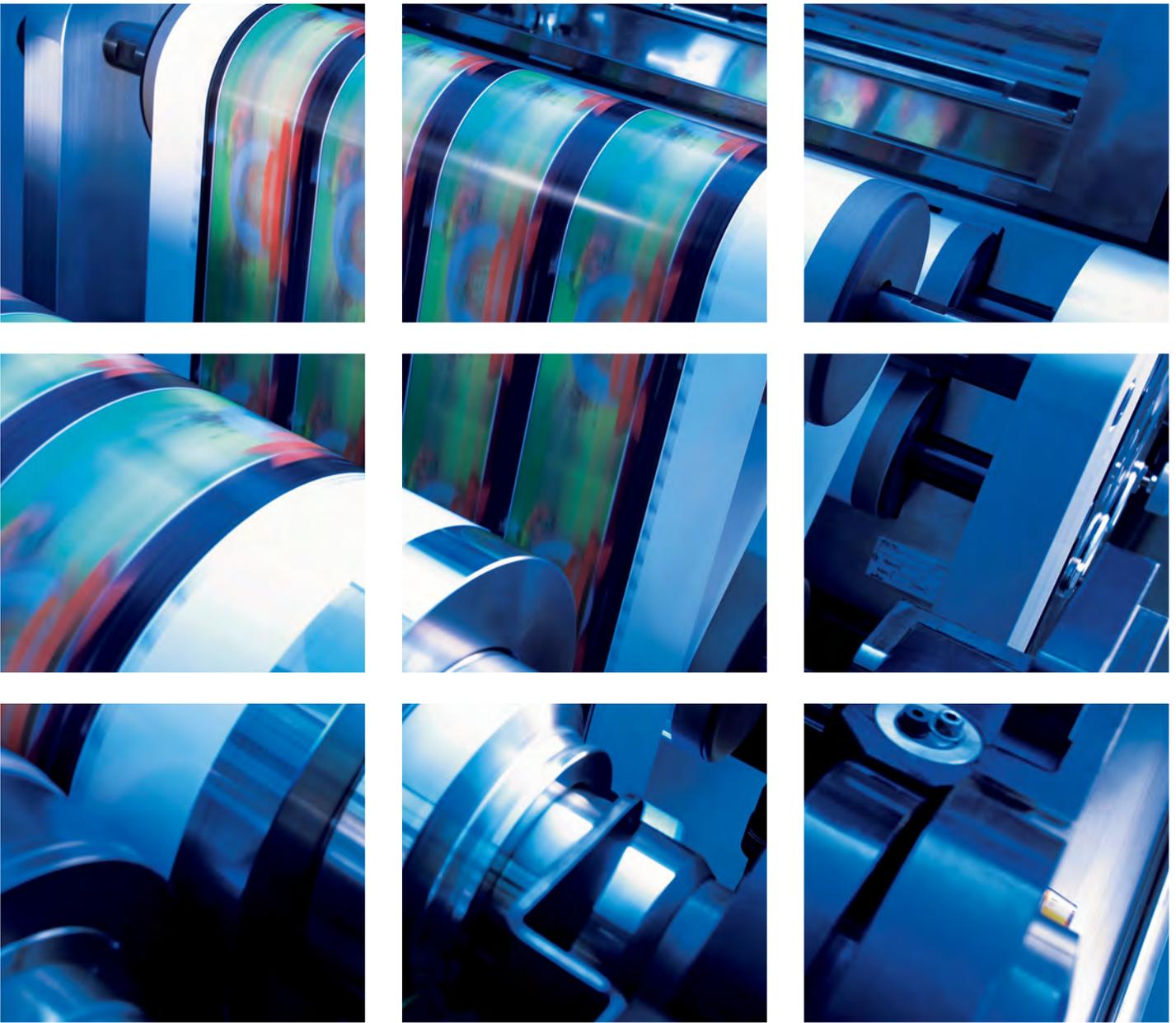
3

3. BERKSHIRE LABELS AIDS UK JUICE REBRAND

UK-based converter Berkshire Labels has completed a successful launch for the new range of premium juices from Frobishers Juices. There were 14 new sets of labels required, encompassing a front, back and neck label.

The labels are printed UV flexo in up to seven colors including both a matt and gloss varnish plus a silkscreen tactile varnish. The screen tactile varnish was selected to add a premium feel to the logo and enhance the Frobishers brand.

Berkshire Labels now provides around 20 million labels a year for Frobishers, which produces a range of juices, smoothies and blended juice drinks. Frobishers celebrated its 20th birthday in 2012 with a full rebrand, and selected Berkshire Labels to supply the new labels.



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M&A: People buy people

PEOPLE are at the crux of any M&A transactions, writes Bob Cronin of The Open Approach

Just about any article or book on the topic of mergers & acquisitions boldly displays an image of people shaking hands or coming to agreement in some other way. And rightfully so. People are at the crux of every transaction. Sure, M&A is about making a proper exit and getting a solid financial return. And sure it's about gaining new power and capabilities. But if those were the most important elements of M&A, wouldn't we see more images of money and muscles? Judging from the magazines at the supermarket checkout, they would seem more appealing.

In my 40 years' (yikes) experience in this industry, I have held positions as CEO and/or executive decision maker of acquirers and selling companies. And over the last nine years, I have served as M&A counsel to hundreds of others. I have seen co-owners' disagreements destroy what could have been highly lucrative transactions. I have watched private equity plans get derailed by management teams who weren't on the same page. And I have seen family and staff considerations go unaddressed, causing deals to die in the final hours. People are perhaps the most underestimated component in the M&A process. Time and again, considerations for them are an afterthought, and sometimes they are brought up only because the deal is starting to unravel.

This isn't because we've grown cold-hearted. Today's financial pressures, investor expectations, lending issues, and changing legislation have taken priority. These influences are now more like obstacles, and entrepreneurs are looking to tackle them first. These have also accelerated the pace of things, as owners try to make deals before new estate taxes or reporting requirements

come into play. The people issue sometimes never gets a chance to be thought out. And that can wreck your M&A plans before they even get started.

Deals die every day because management staff or other key contributors are not on board. Nervous staff can lower the value of a transaction with gossip or 'ship jumping.' Vendors can spill the beans to competitors, who leverage the information to their own advantage. Even once a deal goes through, people can make things go wildly off track.

Attaining M&A success requires that the transaction is understood and embraced by all your people. You, your family, your management, your employees, your investors, your buyers, your bankers... Everyone who has a stake, an interest, a desire in, or a future with your company must be a consideration. With this in mind, I offer you five people-related tips to ensure your best results from any M&A transaction.

1 Consider yourself. Your number-one consideration must be you. Carve your deal out so that it provides for your needs – business, future, financial, personal. Think through needs for yourself, your spouse, your family, and others. Then narrow your focus on what type of transaction will fulfill them.

Leaving a company that you have grown and nurtured can be much more an emotional decision than it is a financial one. Do you want to make a complete exit, or would you like to still participate? What do you envision for the future of your company, and will the deal help see this through? What do you need to do

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to ensure this? If all related parties are leaving a family-branded company, will you allow new ownership to carry on your family name? You are not simply leaving a business; you are leaving a legacy. What do you want yours to be?

2. Assess your culture. Before you start thinking about doing any M&A activity – buying or selling – you need to have a real understanding of your culture. Every organization has its own unique culture, and some simply do not mix well with others.

If you are selling, think how your people will respond to new ownership structures. If you are buying, what key characteristics will be most ‘mergeable’ with your ideals? This could include everything from the sales process, to staff attitudes about work hours/overtime, to customer service chains of command, to empowerment issues. You’ll want to think through your level of professionalism, competitive approach, problem-resolution protocols, and other factors. If you need to make some changes to reframe your culture (people or otherwise), start the process now. If certain aspects of your organization may be detrimental to your transaction, take measures to fix them.

A very successful company once bought another very successful company, but failed to examine key differences in compensation plans. When the two were merged, the acquiring entity’s structure took over, changing reps’ steady paychecks to a less predictable ‘salary plus bonus’. Rather than accepting the unknown, the acquired reps (who were not under non-competes) all left the company, taking their accounts and relationships with them. What could have otherwise been a highly profitable transaction turned out to be a waste of time – all because of a difference in culture.

3. Solidify relationships with bankers, boards, and investors. Sometimes the question isn’t should you do a deal, but rather can you do a deal? Many owners start the process without knowing how their overarching support structures may come into play. Depending on your investor or board agreements and participation level, your options may not be as open as you think.

More important, how strong is your banking relationship? Do you have the credit/leverage to get a deal done? Will you be restricted to an asset-based deal? If you have any history with M&A, how strong is your track record? Have you demonstrated other successes? What does your banker think of your company, and what do they think about labels as an industry? If negative, can you change their opinion, and how long will it take to accomplish?

As you work through people issues in these areas, it may be wise to enlist the assistance of tenured M&A counsel. They may be able to help open you up to new resources and overcome concerns with boards and investors.

Understanding how these people may affect your transaction in advance – and having them on your side now – will save you a lot of time and headache down the road.



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 bobcronin@aol.com, or call +1 630 323 9700.

4. Advise management, and time their involvement appropriately. All too often, entrepreneurs avoid telling their employees about their plans to sell the company. Long-time owners can be concerned about staff fear, or not want customers to know they are up for sale. They might also wish to avoid gossip that could be fodder for suppliers or competitors.

Regardless, it is imperative to have your management team on board with any M&A venture as quickly as possible. Whether you are looking to sell to private equity or start an acquisition strategy, these people will be integral. Your management team must be fully aware of and confident in the value and opportunity of a potential transaction. Their participation in the process will be a critical driver in attaining success.

Moreover, whichever route you take, make sure you have the right people in place to take things to the next level. If you are exiting, any role you perform day-to-day should be transitioned. Your customer contacts should be comfortable with remaining players, and your supervised staff should be the same.

In any M&A deal, there is always the chance that key management or employees are replaced, or that staffed family members take on smaller roles (and smaller salaries). Yet, the negative impact of a surprise once the deal has started will be significantly tougher to deal with than a pre-emptive reality check.

Work with your advisor to determine optimal timing, and then communicate the deal with your operating team and directors. Your CFO will likely be one of the first you consult with. But don’t forget your human resources lead. His/her knowledge and cooperation will be essential throughout the process.

5. Champion your trajectory with staff and key constituencies. The best way to ensure people’s buy-in is to involve them as early as practical with a consistent message. Once you get your key managers and financiers on board, prepare your message to your staff and key constituencies.

Many companies enlist their sales staff to communicate M&A and other moves. Not only does this result in many conflicting – and often erroneous – explanations, but also it obliterates the importance of your staff and their considerations and input. The anger of a customer service rep or an accountant who feels left out can have dramatically greater consequences than the opinion of an average customer.

Being part of the team means knowing its important moves and decisions. No employee wants to learn of a pending ownership change the day before the deal closes. Certainly an acquisition of another entity may seem more positive and easier to communicate. But news of a company sale can be equally exciting and prosperous.

The only way to control your exit is to craft your story and communicate it with your people, in advance, yourself. In my experience, this is the best way to ensure their ongoing commitment, enthusiasm, and hard work. You can enlist the help of your managers, operational leaders, and human resources, as needed. But, don’t fail to champion your trajectory with your general staff, agents, clients, and suppliers. These indeed are the people who make your business happen.

No achievement – for anything – is simple. You will not, cannot, and shouldn’t even think about M&A without considering – and planning for – your people.

Indeed, the ‘people’ component of every deal is the ultimate determinant in whether your deal goes down as a lucrative new opportunity or a colossal failure.

You sell your company only once, so you have exactly one chance to get it right. Finances. Capabilities. Power. Prosperity. And people. People are at the heart of the M&A experience. They can – and will – make a difference.



Managing colors by numbers

BARRY HUNT reports on how spectral analysis and new software tools are radically changing color management for labels and packaging

Color is a complicated and confusing subject. It combines the precision of accurately measuring wavelengths and other spectral data, with the more ambiguous psychology of how humans perceive, feel and respond to color. Of course, when related to packaging and how we recognize branded goods, accuracy and consistency are crucial to printing a brand's spot colors to accepted standards. This form of color management is seeing some notable advances, centered largely on spectral analysis and, in the pressroom, is often allied to the phenomenon of expanded gamut printing in reproducing spot colors. One interesting development is the growing involvement of many major brand owners in the subject.

As David Harris, Esko's UK-based product manager for color and proofing, explains: 'Packaging has many stakeholders so our challenge is to turn some fairly complex scientific knowledge into an easy-to-use system for everyone in the supply chain to use. There is a growing realisation that to be more efficient – that is drive down costs, reduce waste, and gain more speed to market – it is necessary to have in place effective process control and process improvements. These are of course integral to other manufacturing industries, which in the case of color means process control with spectral colorimetry.

'Spectral data allows brand owners to define their colors,' he adds. 'There is an "ideal" brand color reference (which probably never changes) and then there are achievable references based on real print on real substrates. We call them dependent standards. They may evolve over time, for example when new substrates are introduced.'

As we know, artwork studios and prepress departments

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depend heavily on special software tools and monitoring devices to calibrate the individual color profiles, or gamut, of their display screens, scanners, and proofing printers. Proofing itself reflects the limitations of the human eye in defining colors. It is better at matching two or more colors when placed side by side, whether buying paint or matching furnishings. In print production an able-sighted person can usually detect quite small differences in the hue, brightness and saturation of a specific color, whether derived from a CMYK process set, or a Pantone spot color, when comparing run-of-press output with an approved contract color proof, preferably under standardized illumination conforming to a specific ISO standard.

Scanning and hand-held densitometers are ubiquitous, simple-to-use devices when it comes to measuring color densities. Setting a target density value for any combination of printing ink and substrate is essential in package printing, unfortunately density values do not allow us to uniquely define a color. A far more objective method is to use spectral analysis to measure the relative intensity of either transmitted or reflected light as part of the visible spectrum using a spectrophotometer. Typical models take up to 31 measurements in 10 nanometer increments in a range from around 380 to 740nm. This process renders colors into standardized numerical values to allow us to accurately measure and maintain the absolute value of a particular color within a proscribed gamut, or range.

As widely known, CIE L*a*b* values based on the ISO 12647 standard are a key component in obtaining a so-called colorimetric view of what a color will look like. They basically

define the color space measurements for a particular output device. Here, L^* represents luminance, or lightness, while a^* and b^* are respectively the red/blue and yellow/blue axis of the chromaticity depictions. CIE Lab also includes Delta E color values as a standard to show calculated deviations of an image's highlights and shadows.

UP IN THE CLOUDS

The recent arrival of cloud-based technology in respect of brand color management is an interesting development. The most notable example is PantoneLive from X-Rite Pantone. Esko has adopted this subscription-based service as a component of its Suite 12 update, with Color Engine 12 providing an integrated method of accurate color management across the packaging and supply chain. Esko's latest ink model defines color from the PantoneLive cloud. Using spectral analysis, the technology produces an inkjet proof that simulates the printing of spot colors on the press. X-Rite Pantone software tools prepare a job's ink formulations and establish on-press quality control parameters. The workflow also allows printers to integrate the Color Engine with online 100 percent web inspections systems. X-Rite's CxF (Color Exchange Format) holds all the associated color metadata, based on spectral data, for sharing within the supply chain.

PantoneLive is said to eliminate the need to fingerprint possible press combinations to achieve accurate color expectations right from the beginning of the process. Users therefore obtain a 'color by numbers' reference for every available Pantone color – and overprint combination – applicable for widely-used paper or film substrates printed by different print processes. In a related move, X-Rite Pantone introduced the hand-held i1Pro 2 spectrophotometer. Bundled with the new i1Profiler software v1.3, it comprises four different upgradable products. The pressroom version has touch-and-swipe operation allowing press operators to take quick and easy color measurements based on ISO standards. The i1Pro 2 platforms include the X-Rite Graphic Arts Standard (XRGAs) for digital printers. It also allows them to adhere to ISO standards in achieving reliable and repeatable CMYK and spot colors.

X-Rite Pantone sees brand owners as potential users of PantoneLive. As described in Issue 2, pp 49-51, the UK-based subsidiary of H J Heinz was an early adopter. Using digital inkjet proofing it allows the company to assess the characteristics of different substrates, print processes, inks and light viewing conditions, and confidently predict how a Pantone spot color will interact and overprint on the press. As an 'open system' within the color workflow, PantoneLive supports plug-ins that allow brand owners and their designers to use programs like Adobe Creative Suite or Adobe Illustrator to manage their color branding via a database and distribute them to all their partners in the supply chain.

GMG offers a modular cloud-based color management service named CoZone. Collaborate. It is aimed at both large and small companies within the entire packaging/label supply chain. For example, users can track project

"PantoneLive is said to eliminate the need to fingerprint possible press combinations to achieve accurate color expectations right from the beginning of the process"

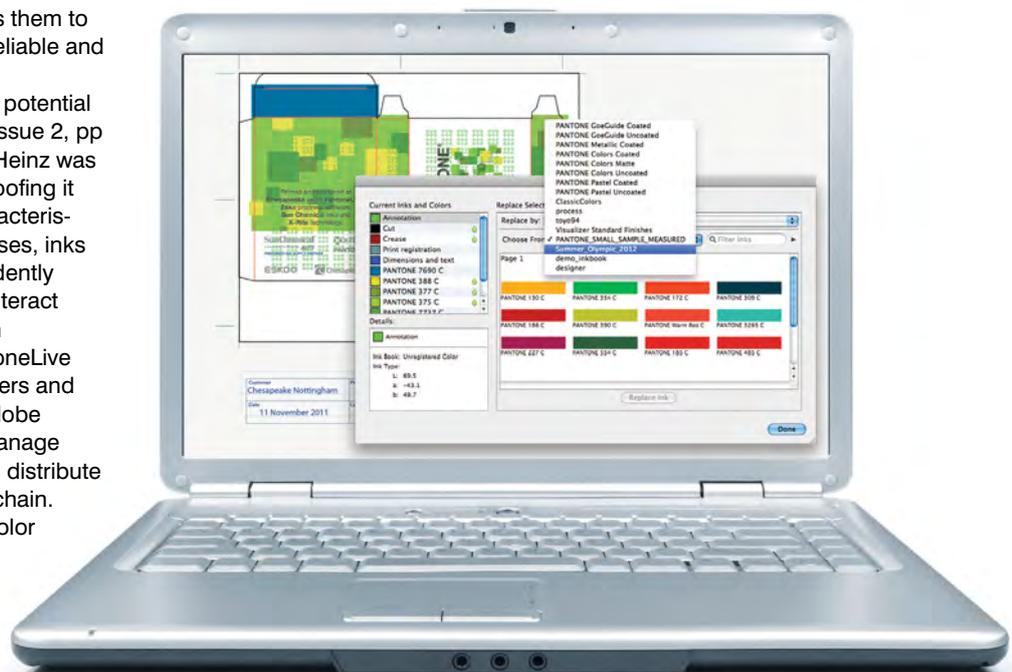
status and efficiently manage the production processes. Currently it supports the approval of PDF or image documents, followed later by support for multimedia and web file formats.

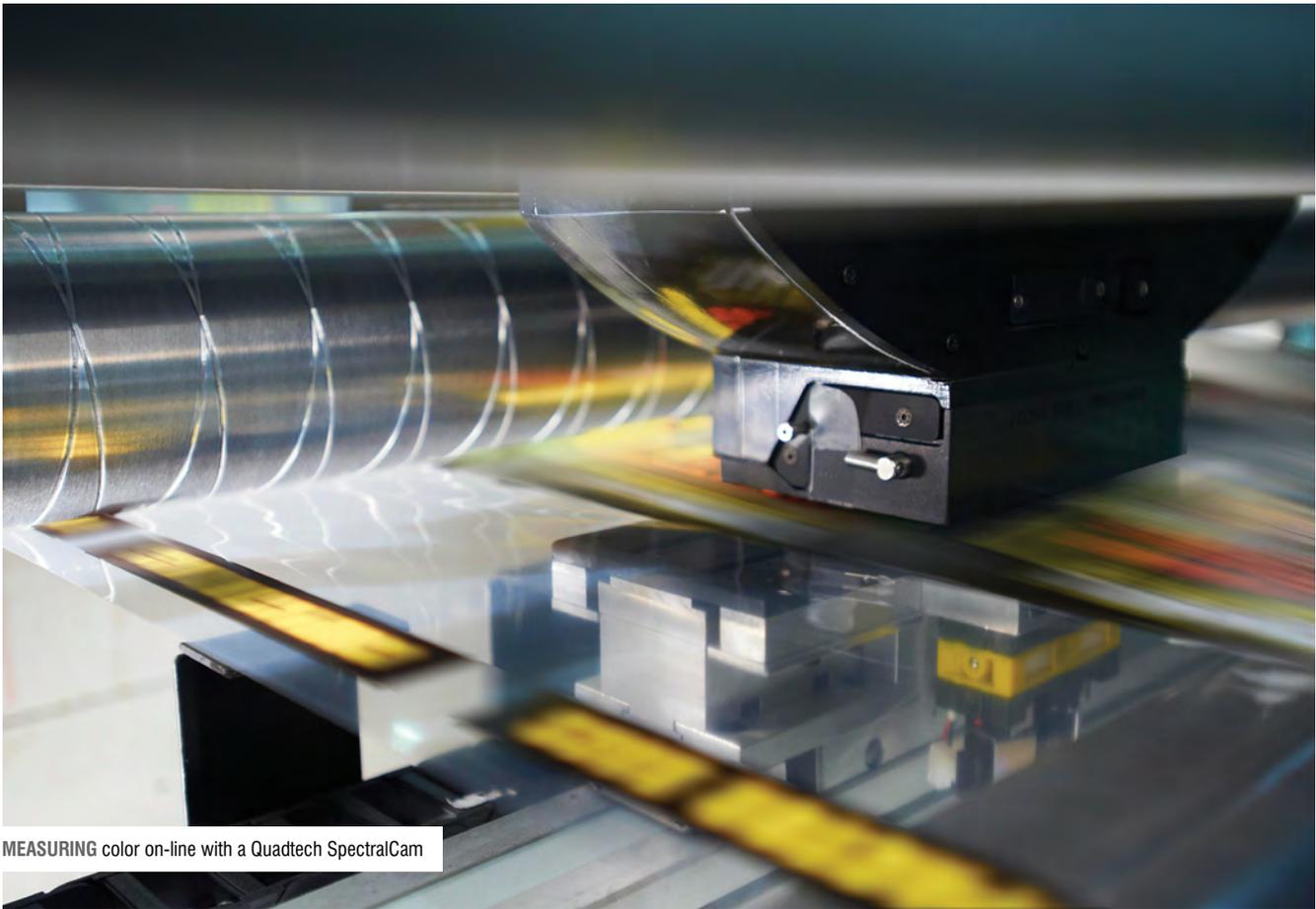
It already supports OpenColor, a new spot color proofing tool for labels and packaging that analyzes each ink color and substrate, and applies them to a specific printing process. The tool adds process-specific information, such as ink rotation and trapping. Adding additional overprint readings increases accuracy. OpenColor supports up to 15 colors and is compatible with Esko's Equinox expanded gamut technology, which like similar hexachrome systems use ICC profiles to calculate Delta E color matches. GMG says that while multicolor printing can reduce the number of press units required for spot colors, an ability to accurately simulate spot color overprints remains a major challenge for label printers.

ColorCert from Nelson Consulting includes ColorCert Master. It uses editing modules to create the initial color and quality requirements, including profiles for inks, spot colors and on-press dot gain adjustments. Pressroom Tools also includes a separate module to control report generation and MIS links. Proofing Tools handles certification in respect to proofer checks and sharing color standards with designers and artwork suppliers.

After generating standardised 'scorecards' users can upload them to a SQL database for retrieval at a web front-end, as a printable file for a corporate FTP server, or as an email attachment. ColorCert's network allows input from brand owners, designers, and artwork suppliers to meet color library requirements, define and maintain quality standards, and create jobs using one or more package printers. They in turn work to the certification standard with job reporting, such as roll or pallets reports, which are included in the Pressroom Tools module.

MeasureColor uses servers to obtain color standards that govern references, spot colors, job reporting and color tolerances. Networks support customized color libraries, proofing certification, MIS/JDF





MEASURING color on-line with a Quadtech SpectralCam

order administration, as well as production standards based on external spectrophotometry. The latest MeasureColor Series 3 Packaging suite for multiple or single users covers digital and conventional printing. The ChromaPlus option allows users to not only analyse a color's spectral behaviour, but also to correct a specific color. It links closely with the company's Printability Test function to obtain an exact color correction for any substrate and ink combination. This includes the precise dry-back values of wet printing inks.

New software options from Cambridge, UK-based FFEI provide comprehensive tools for labeling and packaging print service providers. Its RealPro workflow system includes RealVue 3D Packager for creating visual prototypes of folding cartons. FFEI recently appointed CGS Publishing Technologies International as a global distributor. The company's ORIS color management system – used widely among North American printers – includes Press Matcher for producing accurate, consistent color on digital presses including wide-format printer/cutters.

INSPECTION WITH SPECTRAL ANALYSIS

Spectrophotometric analysis based on CIE $L^*a^*b^*$ values is now an option for 100 percent inline web inspection systems for critical printing operations, including pharmaceutical packaging. Modules that can accurately monitor and report spectral data - originated in studios and prepress departments - greatly enhance converters' real-time quality control operations. Data analysis can take place at multiple locations, both in the running direction or across the web, for early detection of color variations without stopping the press. Depending on the system, operators can take measurements from either sides of a transparent web.

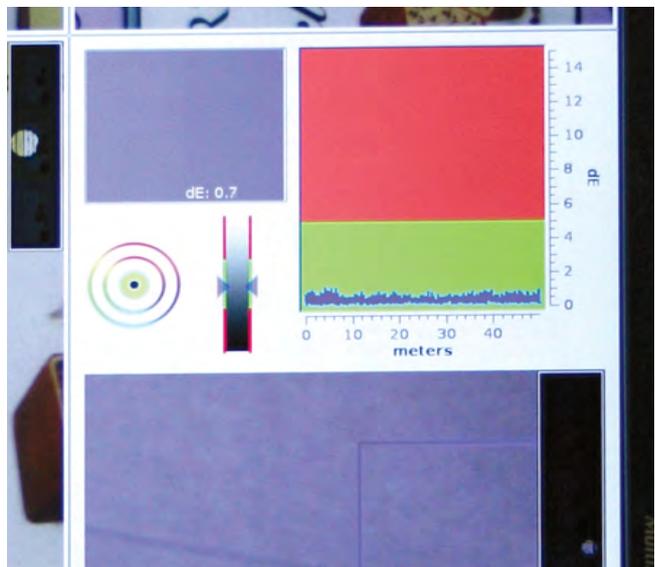
Advanced Vision Technology offers SpectraLab as an add-on spectrophotometer for its Helios II series of inspection systems. It measures and reports absolute color and density values to aid the matching of brand owners' colors at press speeds using selected sampling points from 5mm x 5mm upwards. (At Labelexpo AVT was presented with the Label Industry Award for

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New Innovation for 2012 for SpectraLab.)

Amir Deckel, VP of corporate marketing, says attitudes among brand owners have prompted growing interest in spectral color control and that AVT has made several presentations to QA and print technology teams: 'They are enthusiastic about color management and some now request that their printers make frequent and reportable absolute color measurements. Although they are not willing to pay more for the product, they still demand it. Printers face a tough choice. Should they invest in this technology and enjoy the continued business or let competitors get the business?'

He adds that this pressure to ensure color consistency essentially favors inline operations: 'Gone are the days when brand owners settled for color measurements at the beginning and end of a roll. They require much more frequent color



A NIKKA INLINE color measurement system in action on a Gallus RCS330 at Austrian converter Carini. The deltaE value is shown center-right

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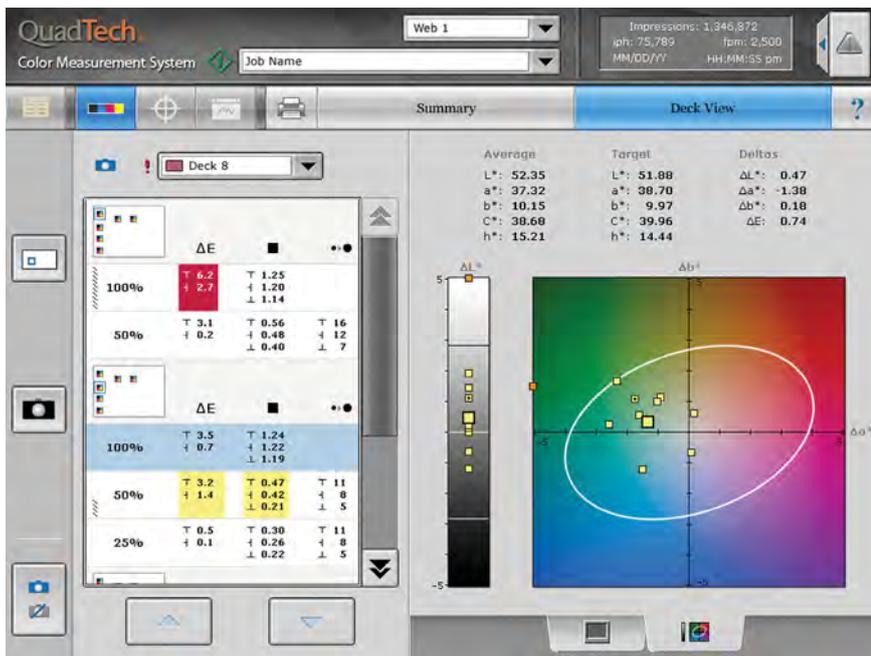
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DEFINING and measuring color on the run with the QuadTech SpectralCam

measurement and that entails, obviously, much closer control of the color by press operators.

BST International developed the modular QCenter.Spectral in partnership with X-Rite Pantone. Aimed at flexo, gravure and narrow web label and packaging printers, it is described as a new approach to press color control that simplifies quality control workflows during production runs. Operators can use both inline spectral measurements and offline hand-held spectrophotometers to deliver comparable results. Operators can integrate multiple cameras, image analysis functions and additional lighting from a central user interface. QCenter automatically chooses the appropriate hardware and software tools depending upon what part of the web the operator needs to examine, and what level of detail. A large high-definition touch-screen monitor allows control over zooming, selecting fields of view, viewing the web width and other quality control tasks.

COLOR TARGETS

X-Rite-Pantone also works with QuadTech, a developer of on-press color control systems mainly for commercial, newspaper and wide-web packaging printers. In partnership with ColorConsulting in Italy, it has introduced a system that uses customer-defined color targets, as supplied from a standard Pantone color library, an X-Rite CxF file, or basic color samples. An X-Rite SpectroEye device manually evaluates these targets offline to obtain a spectral color curve for uploading into X-Rite's InkFormulation software. A color database from the Huber Group provides quality-checked data to a machine's ink

dosing device for preparing the ink for the press.

Operators load the color targets into QuadTech's Color Measurement System using its SpectralCam web inspection module to measure printed color data from either paper or unsupported films at full press speeds. The color target data is obtained simultaneously with live color measurements taken at full press speeds. Any color deviations are automatically captured and reported in ΔE values. A new color CxF file can be sent back to the InkFormulation software.

While several 'big press' technologies have filtered down to narrow/mid-web presses, John Cusack, product manager, says in this case market demand rather than technical limitations is the main issue: 'We can go down to 180mm field of view (FOV) per camera. While 180mm is the smallest FOV we support, optics to allow for narrower FOVs are possible. However, there has been no such need so far. It really comes down to required system resolution. QuadTech's inspection systems cater for the widest packaging web widths. We use a proprietary extruded light design which we are currently supplying in lengths up to 3 meters. We can custom design longer lengths if needed. So, the return on investment and/or performance requirements tend to determine FOV rather than the technological barriers.'

This possibly applies to a wider use for QuadTech's Accucam system which eliminates the need for color bars. Using prepress image files to create $L^*a^*b^*$ target values, a proprietary six-channel spectral sensor measures the printed web and calculates the color values of the entire image. The system brings the printed image to the specified target

"Overall, the potential benefits of using the latest color management tools extend beyond meeting the demands of key accounts – and perhaps keeping them – and go some way toward assimilating the extra expense involved. As a form of accurate process control, such systems should help raise pressroom productivity supported by automated feedback"

values and automatically maintains the color quality throughout the production run.

The widening ubiquity of color management services now includes the specialist repro and platemaking houses serving the packaging industry. Some offer design services for brand owners, while promoting HD flexo platemaking and expanded gamut printing. These extended ink sets are proving a practical way of reducing the number of flexo units when printing spot colors. As an example, the UK firm of Creation Reprographics uses Esko's Equinox expanded gamut software for this purpose, but uniquely combines it with Asahi's new AWP water-washable flexo plate technology. It claims to achieve gravure-like quality with CMYK flexo plates.

Overall, the potential benefits of using the latest color management tools extend beyond meeting the demands of key accounts – and perhaps keeping them – and go some way toward assimilating the extra expense involved. As a form of accurate process control, such systems should help raise pressroom productivity supported by automated feedback. For example, staff can formulate spot color inks and make dot gain adjustments ahead of press start-ups. Also, removing the trial and error of color matching should noticeably reduce start-up waste and make-readies times, while reducing downtime during production. Systems can also support software plug-ins to generate roll reports and aid on-press troubleshooting. So while color can indeed be complicated and confusing, the logic behind 'managing colors by numbers' to help reduce costs appears a far simpler proposition.

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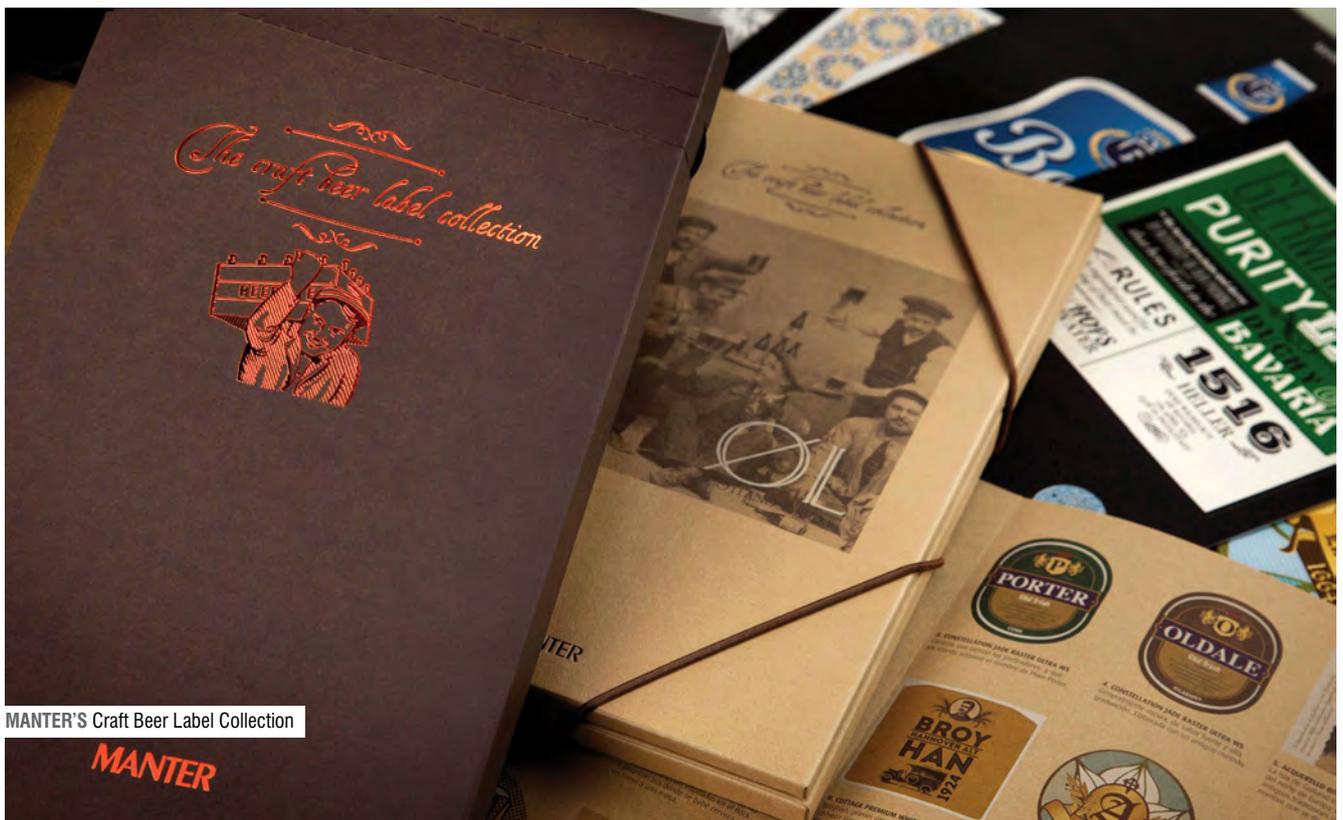
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MANTER'S Craft Beer Label Collection

MANTER

New tools for premium beverages

MANTER has developed a stunning web-based design tool for premium wineries – and is looking to move the concept to the craft beer sector. Andy Thomas reports

Wine label designers can now visualize how different bottle shapes, graphics and decorative finishes will work with premium label papers following the launch of Manter's Labelabbymanter.com virtual design studio.

Label Lab allows designers to choose between 32 colored face papers in Manter's Imaginative Colors series, matching them with seven bottle shapes in three glass colors and four finishing techniques. Decoration options include combinations of hot stamping, embossing, varnishing and silk screen effects. Designers can zoom in to see the relief effects and the texture of the paper.

It is even possible to choose what kind of wine will be in the bottle – white, red or rose – which modifies the options available.

Users can choose between five pre-set label designs to apply to these models, or can import their own designs to a fixed size and format. A wide palette of colors can be selected to model any print

process, with up to six design layers available.

The site has been optimized for all mobile devices including iPad and is available in English, Spanish and French.

'We developed Labelabbymanter.com following a request from a designer who wanted help seeing how our papers look without committing to the expense of printed samples,' says Christian Gali, export area manager and product manager at Manter. 'Label Lab allows designers to try new combinations without any cost.'

Along with the new site, Manter is introducing a minimum order size of 250 sq m to meet the needs of smaller boutique wineries.

For a Labelabbymanter.com demo and walk-through, visit www.manter.es.

ONWARDS TO BEER?

One intriguing possibility is that the site could be expanded to include models for beer bottles and wet strength premium

label papers included in Manter's new 'Craft Beer Label Collection' catalogue.

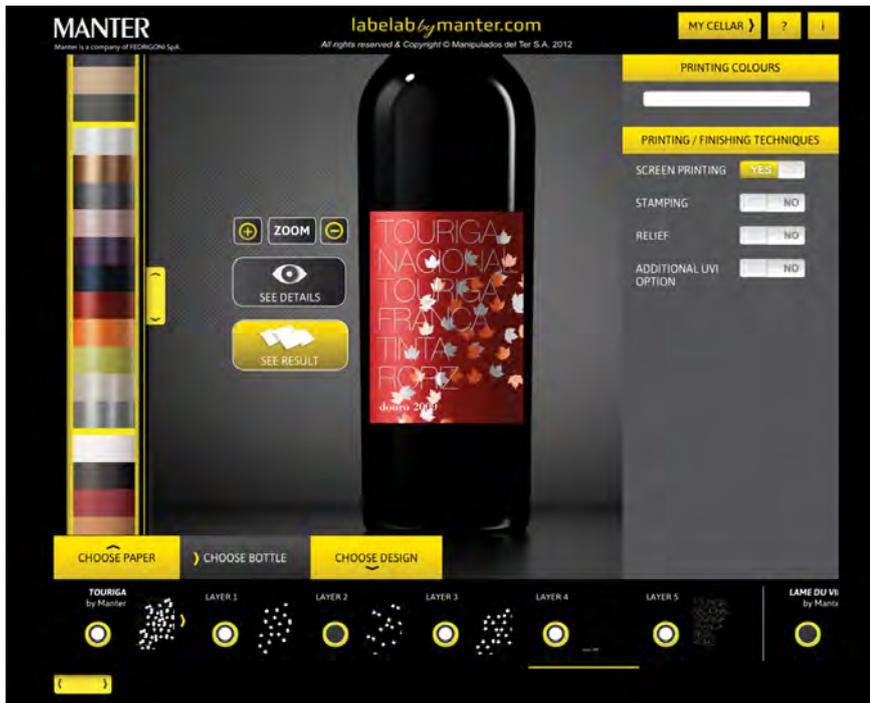
'We believe the beer market will follow the same evolution as wine 20 years ago, with increasing diversification and consumer segmentation,' says Roser Pijuan, marketing and communications at Manter.

Manter is focusing on the fast growing craft beer segment, which last year climbed to 5 percent by volume of the US beer market at a time when the overall beer market remained stagnated.

There are many similarities between the craft beer and specialty wines sectors, both of which are value-added niches requiring short runs and a high level of differentiation.

Indeed, fine wineries are starting to perceive craft beers as direct competition.

'Some consumers are choosing craft beers instead of wine with their meals and more top restaurants are bringing beer menus to the table, particularly



MANTER'S Label Lab software allows designers to select between the company's full range of premium wine label papers on a range of different virtual bottles shapes and colors. Users can select and zoom in on a wide range of finishing effects, including raised screen, embossing and foiling. The texture of the different papers is also simulated.

"While mass market 'industrial' beer brands use combinations of metalized, semi-gloss and PP clear-on-clear labels, Manter is aiming to bring a wide range of specialist papers to craft beer label designers"



during the summer months,' says Pijuan. 'Craft beers are sold not only in supermarkets but also increasingly at specialist wine boutiques.'

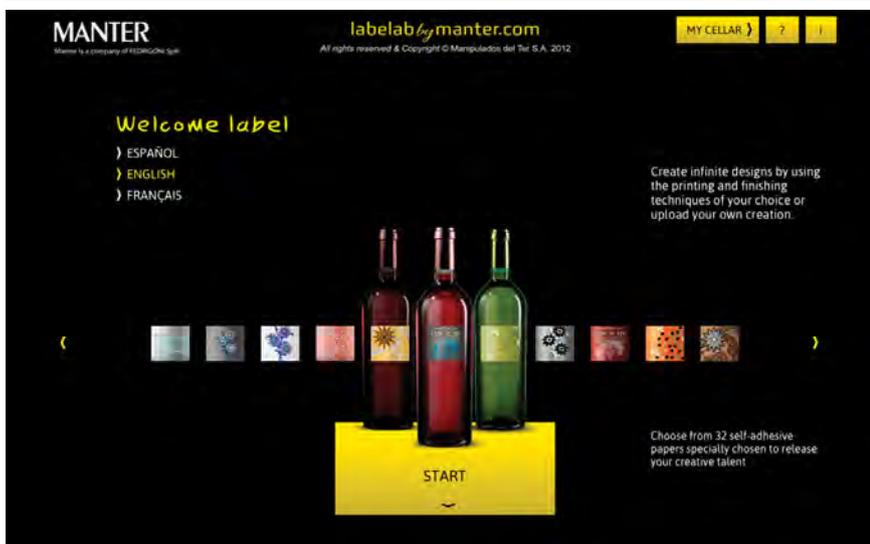
'The craft beer sector has the margins to support our specialist label papers,' says Christian Gali. 'We need to show the smaller breweries that to spend more money on the label is not a waste but an investment.'

While mass market 'industrial' beer brands use combinations of metalized, semi-gloss and PP clear-on-clear labels, Manter is aiming to bring a wide range of specialist papers to craft beer label designers.

'We will bring across the super-water-proof label technology we developed for wines in chill buckets,' says Christian Gali. These papers are coextruded with film to stop the moisture reaching the adhesive.

The craft beer face label range will include cotton papers or papers with a percentage of cotton, embossed, pearlescent, felt-marked, as well as metalized wet strength papers. 'We can realize the same wet resistance performance as PP, while creating a distinct personality,' says Gali.

'In the wine market people already know this, but it is quite new in the beer market. But remember that wine went through the same learning curve.'



INNOVATION

Manter is gaining a reputation for its innovative web-based label design tools. Last year the company showed a site developed to promote its Imaginary Colors label collection, which allowed users to see how complex designs were put together layer by layer.

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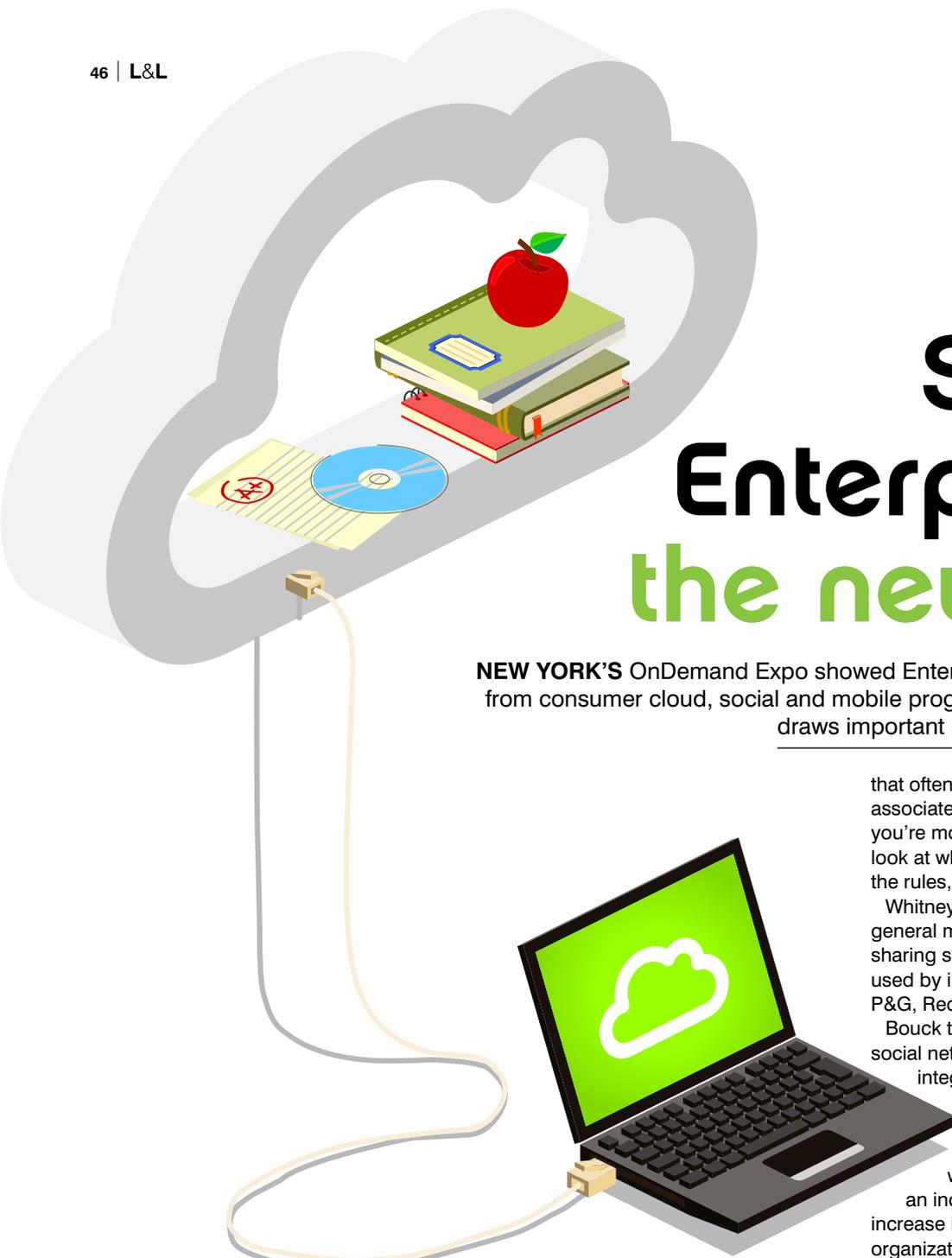
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Social Enterprise - the new ROI

NEW YORK'S OnDemand Expo showed Enterprise software taking a cue from consumer cloud, social and mobile programs. Danielle Jerschefske draws important lessons for label converters

that often limit the capabilities of associates. 'If you want to see where you're most inefficient, then take a closer look at where your people are breaking the rules,' advised Pisoni.

Whitney Tidmarsh Bouck is enterprise general manager at Box, an online file sharing system similar to Dropbox and used by international CPGs including P&G, Red Bull and Kiehl's.

Bouck told delegates that the cloud, social networking and a web of integrated applications are on the verge of creating a far more personalized technology experience for tomorrow's workers, and a world where an increase in data generates an increase in value and knowledge for organizations.

'Social enterprise offers new opportunities to change business. Why should employees not be able to embrace social enterprise at work with clients and peers just like in personal life?' Tidmarsh Bouck describes this as a 'post-PC Era Enterprise period.'

Bouck encouraged IT professionals to reach out beyond the firewall. 'This is the perfect storm. With the consumerization of IT, mobile and security, the old legacy of technology makes it difficult to share information, especially with outside organizations, impeding the transparency we're looking for. It's time to make the change.'

But it seems the IT community is reluctant to change. In a survey presented to delegates, 20 percent of IT professionals questioned were avoiding the cloud. Sixty percent were cautiously optimistic, while only 20 percent were enthusiastic adopters. Label converters

Modern business software that mimics the consumer cloud and social realm, known as Social Enterprise software, is increasingly recognized as a key tool for improving customer service and employee interaction.

Among other advantages, it opens the doors to communication and drives down email volume, as information is being sent only to the people who need it. It improves the generation of ideas and increases employee connections, making your business smarter.

Yammer is one of many growing enterprise software companies bringing the power of secure social networking to the business enterprise, offering tools for improved company collaboration, file sharing, knowledge exchange and team efficiency.

Adam Pisoni, co-founder, CTO for Yammer told delegates to the OnDemand conference that the integration of 'social' tools that employees use regularly in their personal

lives, like Facebook and Twitter, has been proven to enhance internal communication and productivity.

'Employees want to be able to use the newest and latest. It used to be that they'd come to work to use the computers and software that an enterprise offered, but now they find themselves unable to connect via mobile in the middle of the Mobile Revolution.'

If a company is not aware of this situation, employees will find their own solutions, said Pisoni: 'Business must learn how to use social technology to fulfill the mission of the company. Embrace volatility and unpredictability and close the gap with employees and their tools.'

Some businesses have implemented restrictive rules and guidelines around social media and file-sharing websites

ESKO LEADS WAY WITH MOBILE APPS

EskoArtwork introduced exciting mobile applications at a recent User Conference in New Orleans. Studio Viewer allows users on mobile phones and tablets to review 3D objects and spin them around using simple finger movements. Until now, this was only possible using a PC. Studio Viewer is effective for viewing packaging mock-ups designed with Esko's Studio software, allowing brand owners to view realistic renderings of boxes, pouches, cans and bottles, including artwork and some print finishing effects.

will need to be on the cutting edge of this movement as the packaging industry looks to streamline the print approval process using mobile applications (see Esko box above).

GOING MOBILE

Marketers of all sizes are working to transform traditional media into interactive and actionable communications using mobile technologies. Already we're seeing QR codes and augmented reality used regularly in advertising as well as the label and packaging markets.

As this paradigm shift occurs, more converters will diversify their business into online marketing support for brand owners. Key will be the ability to optimize 2D barcodes for reliable mobile scanning and enabling brands to implement content sharing through the use of printed codes.

'There are opportunities to integrate 2D tags into just about anything,' said Matt Rees, senior consultant at InfoTrends.

A recent InfoTrends' study, *Mobile Technology: Making Print Interactive*, found only limited investment in campaigns linking print to digital and mobile media channels, and suggested a huge opportunity going forward. Rees continued, 'Print is a mass communication media channel. Such codes allow marketers to direct users back to mobile, driving them into granular niche targeted offerings. It's about taking them from an offline format to online format. By doing so, a brand or business is better empowered to offer information that is pertinent to that specific user.'

Eddy Hagen, VIGC, for the Flemish Innovation Center for Graphic Communication shared knowledge of best practice for printing QR codes. 'The code cannot be too small and I recommend that you not print the code in 4-color process. You'd need to have less than .5 mm in registration to have readable clarity. On coated stock, process printing might work, but definitely not on a matte or rougher substrate.'

MOBILE MARKETING BEST PRACTICE

Val DiGiacinto, president, Val DiGiacinto & Partners, said businesses need to develop landing pages where information can be easily accessed from mobile devices 'as an alternative to ripping out pages from a magazine in the doctor's waiting room.'

When using QR codes in a promotional campaign, it's important to let users know why should they scan the code, said DiGiacinto. If offered as a service, a converter's marketing team should be able to gather data metrics and communicate this information to the client.

The link should have an action attached – watch a video, play a short game (gamification), participate in a survey – and users should be able to share their experience through Twitter and Facebook. Successful consumer campaigns have directed users on a PC to use their mobile phone through an on-webpage code, effectively keeping the mobile-viral ball rolling. Advances in QR code technology now allow micro-encoded codes to be printed with location details so brands can tell where the code was scanned.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE MODERN ENTERPRISE

John Foley, president and CEO, interlinkONE, offered advice on integrating social media within a converting business: 'Start with a marketing plan, including social media channels. A blog is an excellent way to personalize a business, and when you start a blog, remember that it should be updated regularly and should have a thought-provoking question at the bottom. It should be interactive and engaging. The objective is to increase awareness and drive inquiries.'

Foley, offers the iFlyMobi social enterprise software which allows companies to build a mobile website without being a programmer. The TLM's new website, launched in early 2012, uses this service and is now optimized for mobile interaction.

Donna Vieira, director of marketing and communications at Curley Direct, showed how her company had made use of Facebook - now the second most important social media site for improved SEO – to increase donations for the American Heart Association's annual marathon fundraiser in Hawaii (Facebook.com/TrainTo-EndStroke). She said, 'You must have an action plan, and then align your tactics with goals. In this case, we reviewed the site traffic, monitored downloads of information and "Likes" on the Facebook page. If Twitter is involved, look at if they're "Following us". You must make a commitment of resources and stick to the plan.'

The campaign now has over 8,000 'Likes' on the webpage. Participation in the fundraiser increased by 61 percent and donations far surpassed the non-profit's goal.

Social enterprise software that mimics the consumer cloud and social realm is fast emerging as an invaluable business tool. Such systems allow converters to build a creative workforce and greatly enhance the customer's experience, ultimately adding value and improving margins.

ONDEMAND EXPO SNAP TAKEAWAYS

- 90 percent of SM will fail for lack of targeting and adoption
- Be mindful of generational gaps with social media campaigns
- Size does matter – a QR code should not be too small
- Recommended size for a printed QR code to reliably scan is 1.1 inches, including white space around it
- Do not print a QR code in four color process
- 3 x NFC-capable smart phones currently in US
- 20 percent of IT professionals avoiding cloud, 60 percent cautiously optimistic, 20 percent wildly leading way

DATA HANDLING

Storing the billions of gigabytes of information generated each year is a major issue. The International Data Corporation (IDC) expects that by 2020 IT departments worldwide will need to administer 10 times the number of servers – both virtual and physical – 50 times the amount of data, and 75 times more files. Business infrastructure must be able to handle this scale of data if it is to benefit from analyzing and sharing the information it contains. If your system collapsed and all documentation and specs of clients' label orders was lost, do you have a recovery plan?

HAGEN'S QR CODE BEST PRACTICES

- Put something meaningful in the code, valuable content
- Personalize QR codes that link to personalized mobile pages
- Use shortened URL, not too much information
- Tell people what to do
- Look at complete experience
- Test

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE COMPANIES TO REVIEW

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Social media metrics and evaluation to employ/monitor strong social media campaign

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Online, secure file sharing for enterprise

Jive <http://www.jivesoftware.com/>
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iFlyMobi <http://iflymobi.com/>
Build mobile website without being a programmer

Smart technology

CAROL HOUGHTON looks at the latest uses of smart technology



THE LION CHANGES COLOR when the product is at peak serving for consumers



THE TRUCHECK 2D UV from Webscan

CTI INKS DISPLAY A 'PERFECT CHILL'

Ink manufacturer Chromatic Technologies (CTI) has made a lasting impression on the high-quality liqueur from Tuaca. The bottle's lion, a classic brand image for Tuaca, was redesigned as a thermochromic feature for the label on the limited-edition bottle.

The unique design of the lion shifts from a silver color at room temperature to a vivid blue when chilled to eight degrees Celsius (46.4 degrees Fahrenheit), when the product is at its ideal serving temperature. The 'tattoo' – using the thermochromic inks supplied by CTI – is printed on a label which adorns the bottle.

CTI's thermochromic process uses cold-activated ink technology to convey messaging, be it an indication of cold temperatures or an extension of the product's brand. CTI's technology also provides for the reverse process, where hot beverages will display a signal on the package or label.

The inks are applied in diverse markets such as security and anti-counterfeiting, food and beverage packaging and many other types of consumer packaging. Another CTI capability, photochromic ink (ink color changes due to exposure to UV light from the sun) is largely used in the textile market, but is seeing an increase in demand for consumer packaging.

LABELS&LABELING

WEBCAN LAUNCHES TRUCHECK 2D UV

Webcan, a provider of barcode verification products, has introduced a new system capable of verifying invisible 2D bar codes that are visible only under UV light.

The TruCheck 2D UV is said to be the first commercially available handheld 2D barcode verifier for invisible barcodes used in security applications such as track and trace. It incorporates UV wavelength LEDs and a UV sensitive CCD camera.

Webcan president Glenn Spitz said, 'The TruCheck 2D UV empowers printers to verify the readability of invisible barcodes and diagnose printing issues like never before. From anti-counterfeiting and other security applications, to simply printing a code that does not disturb the graphics on a package, invisible barcodes are gaining more and more interest across several industries.'

The TruCheck 2D UV is operated by Webcan's easy-to-use software interface which can verify 1D (linear) and 2D bar codes. Detailed reports are generated and stored automatically.

BUILDING BRICKS OF REALITY

Lego, the children's model 'brick' makers, has introduced Augmented Reality (AR) technology on some of its ranges.

Potential buyers can view a 3D image of the product inside the box from the outside in select Lego stores in North America. Kiosks with a camera and screen allow customers to see what the final product will look like when it's built. They simply hold the box up to the camera to view the 3D animated model.

AR only requires a recognizable marker and not a specific barcode or QR code, meaning any Lego product packaging – including packaging printed prior to the AR introduction – can be programmed to enable the marker to be recognized by the software.

MOBILE SHOPPING SET FOR GROWTH

A report from Juniper Research has predicted that more than one in four of US and Western European consumers will use NFC-enabled mobile phones to pay for goods in-store by 2017, compared with less than two percent currently.

Mobile retail payment services are

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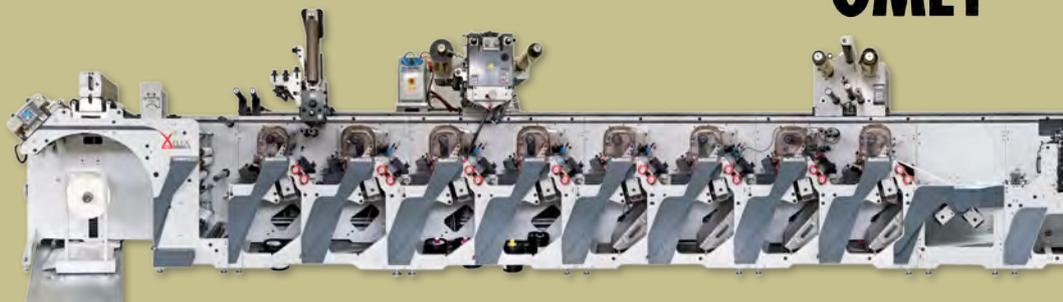
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growing in popularity and the ability to 'tap' an NFC phone against a POS terminal to make a purchase has been found to have huge user appeal. It also provides new and personalized retail marketing and sales opportunities.

More NFC payment pilots are being launched and developing into full commercial services worldwide, spearheaded by mobile network operators and financial institutions. According to Juniper, NFC mobile payments are set to exceed 180 billion US dollars worldwide in 2017 as NFC becomes standard.

However, the report warns that NFC retail payments services must include a fully integrated and tested customer care channel. A single point of contact responsible for resolving problems quickly and efficiently must be established.

Carrefour City in France has developed a mobile ordering service using Airshop solution by Airtag. A web and mobile ordering application, it is claimed that 'Mon Panier' will improve Carrefour's customer relationships.

Once the customer places an order on their smart phone, the Carrefour City team has two hours to prepare it. Upon arrival at a special in-store kiosk, the customer scans a 2D barcode, QR code or 'taps' the NFC smart phone to collect their order. Additional products such as fruits and vegetables can be purchased via the application or during the visit to the store, allowing flexibility and the freedom of choice to customers. The free-to-load app will also locate the nearest shop and allow access to offers and promotions as well as loyalty cards, etc. The service is free and has no minimum order.

SCHREINER PROTECH DEVELOPS AUTHENTICITY SEAL FOR BEER KEG

Schreiner ProTech has developed an authenticity seal to complement Huber Packaging Group's Draftking party keg.

Provided it is purchased unopened, the five-liter keg retains the beer's freshness for up to 30 days. Schreiner's specialty seal cannot be closed unnoticed once the keg has been opened and provides reliable authenticity protection.

'The authenticity seal has to be particularly sturdy to withstand the production environment of the filling lines and external cleaning of the kegs at the breweries,' explained Markus Britsch, business unit manager beverage at the Huber Packaging Group.

To qualify the film, Schreiner ProTech conducted material tests in the laboratory to guarantee rugged marking and functional adhesion of the label. A special adhesive ensures reliable bonding with the low-energy plastic material of the tap.

The material, liner and roll make-up were subsequently

adjusted to the high cycle rate of the keg production line. The label dispensing system has to guarantee trouble-free application as the seals are dispensed in parallel to the fully automated production run. 'We were involved in the concept design of the seal right from the beginning. This allowed us to respond quickly and – as needed – flexibly to the requirements,' said Christian Staudt, the responsible project manager at Schreiner ProTech.

Breweries can also have the labels custom-printed with their logos and use them for advertizing purposes. In this case, Schreiner ProTech pre-prints the original seals with brand graphics using flexo printing technology.

UK STORE INSTALLS ELECTRONIC SHELF LABELING

Nisa Local in Shrewsbury has become the first UK convenience store to use Electronic Shelf Labeling (ESL). The 2,000 ESL units were installed by Herbert Retail.

ESL enables store owners to make automatic pricing and timed promotional updates when required at any time of the day or night. The technology cuts out the cost of printing labels and offers savings in staff time when distributing and applying updated labels. They also provide business metrics and facilitate efficient re-stocking.

Using technology similar to e-readers, ESL dynamically displays price and product information at the point of purchase.

Rav Garcha, store owner and independent retailer board member at the Association of Convenience Stores, said: 'A significant amount of UK customers make unplanned in-store purchases. Commonly their decisions are based on price, so the most important thing for stores, is to ensure that pricing is easy to see and compelling, encouraging repeat purchase and customer retention at local stores such as mine. ESL technology facilitates this dynamically, allowing time-of-day promotions, and also facilitates added-value point of purchase information, such as cost per unit, recipe ideas, QR codes, suggestions for accompanying products, such as wine to compliment your meal choice, and much more. As you can imagine this exciting technology adds real business advantage to both me and Nisa, and offers the customer the best possible local deal.'

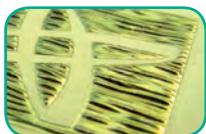
Raj Sangha, Herbert Retail's business development manager, added: 'Electronic Shelf Labeling offers enormous potential to increase store revenue and profitability. Far more durable than paper, the labels that Herbert installed at Nisa operate on batteries that utilize technology for long-life. All labels work together on the same system allowing Nisa to mix and match sizes, shapes and styles according to different needs in different areas of the store, as and when required.'

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Dion in Digital Groove

DION LABEL PRINTING was an early adopter of HP Indigo technology and seven years later is still leading the digital label field, writes Danielle Jerschefske

Since first installing an HP Indigo WS4000 press in 2005, Dion Label has printed over one billion labels digitally. By investing in digital technology at an early stage, Dion Label has established itself in a variety of smaller, more specialized markets, some with technical needs that require digital printing knowledge and expertise. The over-the-counter pharmaceutical, nutraceutical and medical markets make up a good piece of the business. It also produces labels for the food and beverage markets, private label candle companies and industrial applications.

In high value niche work, the converter has found a sweet spot in producing multiple SKUs and shorter runs. President John Dion says, 'there has been no application that we haven't been able to put through digital. And we have had zero complaints with quality.'

DIGITAL RISE

Dion Label runs two HP Indigo WS6000 digital presses, finishing on an ABG Digicon Series I and two Delta Industrial Mod-Tech lines, complemented by a series of narrow-web flexo presses. Jobs have been shifted to digital where this is a better fit, opening up analog capacity.

Right now the two production sides are about split equally in terms of revenue, yet two thirds of items are printed digitally. 'And that trend continues,' explains Dion. 'Most new jobs coming in are digital jobs. It's a trend that follows the sort of work that we do – variations, more runs becoming shorter with more frequent changeovers.'

Dion Label marketing manager Stacy Santos says, 'We don't necessarily market towards digitally printed labels. We're just finding that digital is becoming more and more a fit for typical orders and that more of the work out there is falling into where digital fits best.'

At numerous Labelexpo Series conferences and Dscope (Digital Solutions Cooperative) sessions in recent years, digital has been described as 'much more predictable' by veteran digital label printers, including Dion Label. Randy Duhaime, general manager, says, 'When it comes to a more difficult job, there's just more that can go wrong on the analog end with plates, inks, anilox rolls, waste and uptime. Analog could end up being double what was quoted. When it comes to digital, the set up is the set up.'

'Efficiency and waste are independent of job complexity when it comes to digital. There's not a direct relationship. You can use as many colors as you want. You can use as many elements printed adjacent to each other as you want. That all has a direct bearing on how well the job is going to go in analog where there are many more considerations.'

REAL RUN-LENGTHS

Digital label converters are most commonly asked: what is your average run length? The answer is, 'if it fits the bill, it will run digital'. Dion Label has completed projects for various applications with run lengths between 30-45,000 feet. It has produced paper jobs in excess of 80,000 feet, and jobs have been on a press for three days – highly complex with 10 SKU's, screen printing, hot stamping and a couple of varnishes. Duhaime says, 'Still the average run length is below 5,000 feet.' A job may involve as many as 30 different items with 30 different tickets all using the same die and all done as different jobs. Duhaime explains, 'Each is 2,000 feet, but all together the job is longer.'

BRANDS, CONVERTERS AND DENIAL

The majority of brands, all sizes and markets, are not 'digitally aware'. It's common to find brand managers, their marketing teams and label buyers with a bias against digital. They just don't believe that the

technology can meet their requirements for color matching, quality print and consistency. Dion Label encountered a situation with a client that passed digital tests for matching color, but once the buyer realized the order would be printed digital, they changed their mind and demanded flexo.

Brands can realize great savings and other benefits when they're in the know about digital printing. For example; one of Dion Label's customers ordered a medium sized run of labels to be printed digitally. Duhaime explains, 'They decided to go digital even though the initial run would have been cheaper to go analog. But anticipating future runs where there may be multiple SKU's and smaller runs, they decided to start with digital from the beginning. They understood that they may pay more now, but that future runs would actually be cheaper than analog.'

Shortly after the initial order the client thought of things to change on the outside of the package for the next run, and won't have to re-do and pay for new plates. 'They're an educated buyer. You don't always have that.'

SHRINK

Most recently Dion Label has invested in shrink sleeve converting and finishing capability. The converter had been looking at getting into the market for years and was outsourcing shrink sleeve label production for customers. It eventually started by printing shrink labels in-house and can now complete the sleeving as well.



DION can produce complex labels with high quality graphics

Santos says, 'We have been shy to market ourselves as "experts" in printing shrink sleeves. Now that we have successfully completed multiple shrink sleeve projects, we feel comfortable pursuing this market.'

The strategy has been to go after existing customers that currently use the decoration technique rather than going through new clients with trial and error. Duhaime explains, 'We wanted to be proficient in the process before aggressive marketing.'

The incremental move was possible because of the economical entry-level package offered by Karlville that includes a seamer and inspection unit, software, and a steam box for prototyping and testing distortion.

Says Duhaime, 'the equipment is ideal for short run work without any issues. We may grow out of it soon, but it will last us a year or two as we transition into the space.'

Right now Dion Label has limited orders to PETG film material only. Dion says, 'It's mostly what's been asked for and PVC is not something that we want to bring into our plant.' The converter has long recycled its solid waste with International Paper to be reprocessed into fuel pellets as an alternative to coal. PVC cannot be turned into energy pellets to burn. Dion Label would rather turn the business away, as it is typically a bit cheaper and higher volume, not the high value niche work it's accustomed to.

'We had to really work on the price and see our way to figuring out how to get it down,' explains Dion. 'Shrink typically runs on larger presses, but we're able to achieve better print quality with analog flexo or digital. The labels are much more vibrant. And there's no comparison in the registration and quality.' The converter is able to print analog shrink sleeves for jobs wider than 13 inches – the width of the HP Indigo WS6000 machines – up to 16 inches on an MPS press, which is good for long run jobs of a couple hundred thousand feet.

NARROW VS. MID-WEB

Dion Label has not made any investments in analog since 2008. Says Dion, 'We're not giving up on analog, but it also hasn't been a driver of growth, and it's not clear that it makes sense to push further into it.'

HP Indigo made its leap into the mid-web printed package market at drupa, announcing the development of two new lines with widths of 30 inches and 29.5 inches respectively designed for producing shorter runs of flexible packaging and folding cartons. Continues Dion, 'If we make a successful foray into flexible package printing then this would be the natural first step, to operate and invest in tooling for such modern digital equipment.'

'Still, with changeovers for machinery that wide, everything else that you do needs to be wider, bigger beefier, and heavier, and we do not have that space right now. Even thirteen inch is wide enough for plenty of the jobs out there, and almost too wide. These jobs will never be suitable for such packaging machines built for serious orders that go out in the millions.' Dion reiterates, 'We're looking for safe little niches that have some difference that is well suited to digital or some special technical feature that we can apply.'

FINISHING WITH VALUE

Dion Label has used an ABG Digicon Series 1 finishing machine since it entered the digital printing market. In the fall of 2008 it installed a full rotary Delta Industrial Mod-Tech as a back up for medical products production. The converter initially wanted semi-rotary, but found that full rotary was the way to go with the work going on the line hitting speeds up to 250 feet/min while die cutting and laminating. Duhaime says, 'It was getting jobs done in half the time.'

Through the digital upswing Santos, marketing manager, ultimately discovered new opportunities and potential customers with a great interest in foiling, hot stamping, multiple coatings and laminates, and it was a market that Dion Label wanted to delve further into. With its in-line analog equipment the converter could produce hot stamp and cold foil finishes, but had nothing for short run finishing with higher decoration techniques.

In February 2012 Dion Label installed a monster of a machine with a customized fully servo Delta Mod-Tech that is completing work at speeds between 200-300 feet/min. The strength of the converting machinery supplier's engineering breadth is apparent in every inch of the line.

Dion's new Mod-Tech has the first flatbed hot stamp unit and silk screen unit of their kind to be placed into the market, with

software modified to suit the converter's needs. The finishing unit has two line guides to support the long web path, a special lift for loading and unloading dies, a visual inspection camera, and sheeter that can be switched between both Delta machines. Already the converter has found value in printing an analog job of 145,000 feet to be sheeted on the Delta running at 275 feet/min.

Dion says, 'The flat bed hot stamping and embossing unit will make such finishing much more cost effective for almost everything we could ever run, since the rotary embossing requires a high initial investment.'

DIGITAL PREPRESS

While prepress for digital printing is generally simpler, it does need to be automated, and Dion Label uses Labeltraxx MIS software to streamline the digital workflow.

Dion Label's customer service is responsible for completing the initial job setup, including job specs and file names. Dion says, 'Having the job specs completed earlier in the process helps in other areas along the way. Files need to be defined correctly up front if we want efficiency.' Intensive training has made the customer service team more technically knowledgeable. They've been taught, for instance, that it's important to fill the print frame properly on the digital press for efficiency. Additionally, all of the file planning is completed up front: if the job has multiple SKU's, if it requires ganging with multiple items across, and this is all done by customer service. For exact repeat digital jobs the order is just sent along.

Armed with this experience, a talented team, deep market knowledge, and a proven willingness to be an early adopter of advanced technology, the Massachusetts-based converter will continue to remain a leader of the pack in both North American and global label markets.



STACY SANTOS, Randy Duhaime and John Dion

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Brand protection in a gray world

AKASH KUMAR, manager, marketing communications at Creed Engineers, looks at the counterfeit product situation in India and outlines some innovative solutions

The rapidly changing global economy demands ever-greater vigilance to combat brand piracy, which is currently responsible for losses and has become an ever-increasing issue facing many brand owners today. The gray market activity involves the unauthorized movement of commerce through various geographies by rogue distributors and trusted channel partners alike.

In India, even as the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry's (FICCI) Brand Protection Committee estimates a loss of Rs 200 billion per annum, the media reports assess the damage to the Indian industry at around Rs 300 billion per annum. It is no wonder that companies are now taking a hard look at their brand protection strategies to combat this ever-increasing problem.

GRAY MARKET AND PARALLEL ECONOMY

It refers to a series of illicit activities that are associated with intellectual property rights (IPRs) infringement. Also known as 'product diversion' or 'parallel importing', it is a fraudulent activity that deflates profits of participating distributors, while reducing the revenue of the brand owner. Counterfeiters capitalize on surplus money, lower manufacturing costs, fluctuating distribution costs and currency exchange rates by exporting goods

without country specific permission or those of brand owners.

In this process the prices are undercut and on par or higher profit margins are attained due to lower cost of production in the originating countries. This activity disrupts the invisible hand of competition in a given sales region by keeping purchasers and consumers away from authorized channels.

IMPACT ON BRANDS

- **Loss of market share**
The gray market activity spoils business relationships between manufacturers and their channel partners. In the end, authorized distributors may reduce their ordering from manufacturers, which ultimately reduces the profits of both business entities.
- **Deterioration of brand image**
In the open market customers are not aware that the product has been diverted through unauthorized means potentially creating issues with warranties and returns. The imported product from gray market may not have the functionality, accessories, and features that lead to the customer dissatisfaction towards brand, creates brand equity issues, quality, packaging, instruction manual, price, and safety concerns.

LOSS OF CONTROL ON SUPPLY VS DEMAND

Low prices as supply goes up causes the genuine channel partners to slow down in their order patterns from the original manufacturer as he gets more profit on the product from gray market. This results in conflict in various systems as inventory planning issues, demand problems within the prevailing distribution system that ultimately affects product pricing and availability concerns of the product. It also causes reduction in profit margins and impact of the brand.

OTHER CONCERNS

Apart from these main conflicts gray market creates various issues as negative customer experience, legal and regulatory risks, health issues (pharmaceutical and FMCG industry faces the direct impact), and also directly affects the economy. It also creates factors like surplus inventories, falling of manufacturing and distribution costs. Brand owners may experience channel conflict, inventory issues, price fluctuation, reduced profit and brand erosion concerns.

STEPS TO TAKE

- A comprehensive brand protection strategy against counterfeit activity, infringement of trademark, intellectual property rights, and copyright
- Regular awareness about brand among internal stakeholders as well as channel partners and other associated partners
- Seeking an external brand protection expert
- Implementing various technologies available for brand protection
- Regular audit of the product, packaging, and gathering feedback from the market
- A complete legal framework



AUTHORITIES are engaged in a global struggle against the gray market diversion of consumer branded goods



NEIL LILLY, customer service director



CHRIS GREEN, business development director, Europe

RotoMetrics looks beyond the label

NOW TRADING SOLELY under its own name following the integration of Gerhardt's die technology, RotoMetrics held its first European Open House in the UK. David Pittman reports

Precision rotary tooling specialist RotoMetrics hosted a European Open House event at its UK headquarters in late September, with 20 international suppliers and label industry customers from across Europe gathering to hear about opportunities beyond labels.

Attendees at the three-day event heard from a number of RotoMetrics' own staff, as well as presentations from suppliers, and were given a guided tour of the manufacturing facilities at the Walsall plant.

Peter Emerson, the recently appointed European managing director for RotoMetrics, spoke of how the company is planning to offer a revised flexible die portfolio as the synergies and technologies brought into the company after the acquisition of Gerhardt come to the fore.

UK and Ireland sales director David Casey reiterated this on a factory tour, stating: 'Such is the nature of sales that both companies had been telling customers that their products and processes were better than the other.'

'The fact is that both are good for different applications. Consolidating the two companies allows us to cherry pick and offer the best from both.'

Emerson said: 'Henceforth, we will be trading solely as RotoMetrics as it has a bigger presence around the world and the name is better known in key markets.'

Chris Green, RotoMetrics' business development director in Europe, gave the main presentation addressing the opportunities for label converters to go beyond labels, the theme of the event, and spoke of various industries that require die-cut products that could be produced using existing converting equipment.

This included the potential to extend into packaging converting, but also medical, industrial and other markets that do not require the application of ink to a surface.

The astronomical growth in mobile phones was one of the main markets he highlighted as needing die-cut components, with a global total of six billion devices and each requiring 34 components, equating to an opportunity for some 204 billion die-cut parts.

'We are looking at markets where we can supply die cutting tools, and if they need those then it is a potential avenue of business for label printers.'

'The market needs to innovate and diversify, and find ways of adding value

to products.'

The factory tour included following the production of both flexible and solid dies from smooth steel barrels to the finished product, with explanations of both the CNC and EDM processes used.

The labor-intensive hand finishing of EDM dies and the thorough testing of each and every die produced at the site were also covered.

A table-top exhibition inside the specially-erected tent that played host to the event featured companies ranging from press specialists Gallus and Mark Andy, platemaker Dantex, business software developer Label Traxx, finishing company AB Graphic and material supplier Ritrama, through to the rebranded European Flexographic Industry Association (EFIA).

In closing the event, Neil Lilly, RotoMetrics' former sales director, now in the role of customer service director, said the event had been a great success, adding that the company is planning to make it a bi-annual event.

'We have had a good attendance over the three days, and are thankful for the support of the 20 global suppliers that exhibited.'



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(L-R) DAVE MCDOWELL, John McDowell and Jay Luft

McDowell Label communicates success

UNSURPASSED CLIENT COMMUNICATION and technical excellence have driven success at McDowell Label, writes Danielle Jerschfske

McDowell Label, winner of thirteen World Label Awards and many other accolades, is a premium supplier of heat shrink sleeves, decorative labels and flexible packaging. Headquartered in Plano, Texas, the globally recognized company is in its thirty-first year of business – and it's only getting better with age. The company achieved its highest annual sales in 2010, surpassed it in 2011, and is on pace YTD to 'three-peat' again in 2012.

McDowell Label positions itself as a partner to brand owners who want their products to make an emotional connection with the consumer. The company's associates deliver this using leading edge technology, world-class combination printing and a relentless focus on innovation.

'We target graphics-intensive categories and are deliberate about whom we want to do business with,' says company president John McDowell. 'We are very unique in the way in which we partner and serve our customers. We are not a vendor. We are not a job shop. We are an integral part of their brand identity; we occupy a seat at the proverbial table.'

At the same time McDowell has a strong commitment to sustainable production, having achieved TLMI's Project LIFE certification.

FOCUSED SELLING

McDowell Label's business encompasses a wide range of regional, national, and international customers, with a strong presence in the nutraceutical, health & beauty and premium

liquor markets (wine & spirit). The company links a low turnover of customers with its ability to retain experienced and motivated staff. Dave McDowell, founder and CEO, explains, 'We have a unique and disciplined culture of quality, one which fosters innovation and rewards ingenuity and creativity.'

Jay Luft, McDowell's VP of technology, has authored multiple patents for labels. Pre-press manager Chris Brannon has been with McDowell for sixteen years, bringing with him experience from an offset trade shop. His father was an illustrator for the converter in its early years. A knowledgeable team produces digital plates in-house. Each employee is cross-trained and has a valuable skill set.

The most recent addition to the management team, sales manager Bryan Cook, came to McDowell from a former customer in an industry-leading distilled spirits company. After being served by the team at McDowell as a customer, he says that he chose to work with McDowell, 'because of the quality of the work being manufactured and the attitude that permeates the organization; it is pure craftsmanship along with a culture that is dedicated to stewardship, creativity, innovative technologies, and continual improvement. I wanted to be a part of what they're building – a part of the team.'

McDowell Label has a focused, targeted approach to capturing new business. Explains John McDowell, 'While the over-simplification of what we do is put ink on material, we serve as a branding company versus a printer. Our sales & marketing team, with all due respect, is as competent as



MCDOWELL plant in Plano, Texas



JAY LUFT, Dave and John McDowell, show a small selection of the company's awards

HISTORY

Dave McDowell worked for Stan Avery for 10 years before the birth of McDowell Label. For thirteen years he acted as a labels broker before deciding to produce labels on his own, 'to improve the clarity of the conversation between the brand and the manufacturer'. He began manufacturing in 1994. He was TLM's 2009 Converter of the Year and will serve as the association's next chairman. John, the youngest of three brothers and self-described coach's kid, entered the business in 1997. Both are graduates of Texas A&M and bleed maroon; hence the color of the company's logo identity. Another son, Jeff, was a key HR acquisition for the company in 2011 and has been serving in a variety of responsibilities specific to managing the company's growth.

McDowell Label is proud of its Texan roots. Texas became a republic after gaining independence from Mexico on March 2, 1836. It became, by treaty, the 28th US state in 1845. Dallas is one of the biggest cities in the world not on a navigable waterway. The city is a commerce hub receiving shipments direct from the coasts via railway. It's also a NAFTA port.

any brand or category manager. We study and learn the essence of brands and the brand strategies of not just the companies we serve, but of virtually every one in each CPG category. Success in retail is incumbent on a brand's ability to 'out-graphics' its competition, to incite an emotional connection with the consumer, which ultimately leads to the barcode getting scanned at the cashier again and again. We don't speak about velocity-to-market, we demonstrate it; we don't speak about opportunities, we create them.'

One key area of innovation for McDowell Label has been shrink sleeve labels, tied into a focus on delivering environmentally sustainable solutions. By using shrink sleeve labels with a UV barrier capability, brands can use any color glass or plastic containers – including materials using post-consumer waste – saving money and boosting shelf presence. McDowell is also working on low density (below .995), shrink label solutions with key downstream supply-chain partners, that float in a PET recycling system and can effectively be separated from PET flake.

Decoration techniques include iridescent and glow-in-the-dark inks for products like spirits, energy drinks, and nutraceuticals. Materials are chosen specifically to enhance differentiation.

McDowell Label has diversified into packaging in the form of pouches, but has no plans to enter the folding carton market any time soon. John McDowell says, 'When it comes to sustainability, the first thing to go will be the box, a trend that can already be seen in the shift towards flexibles.'



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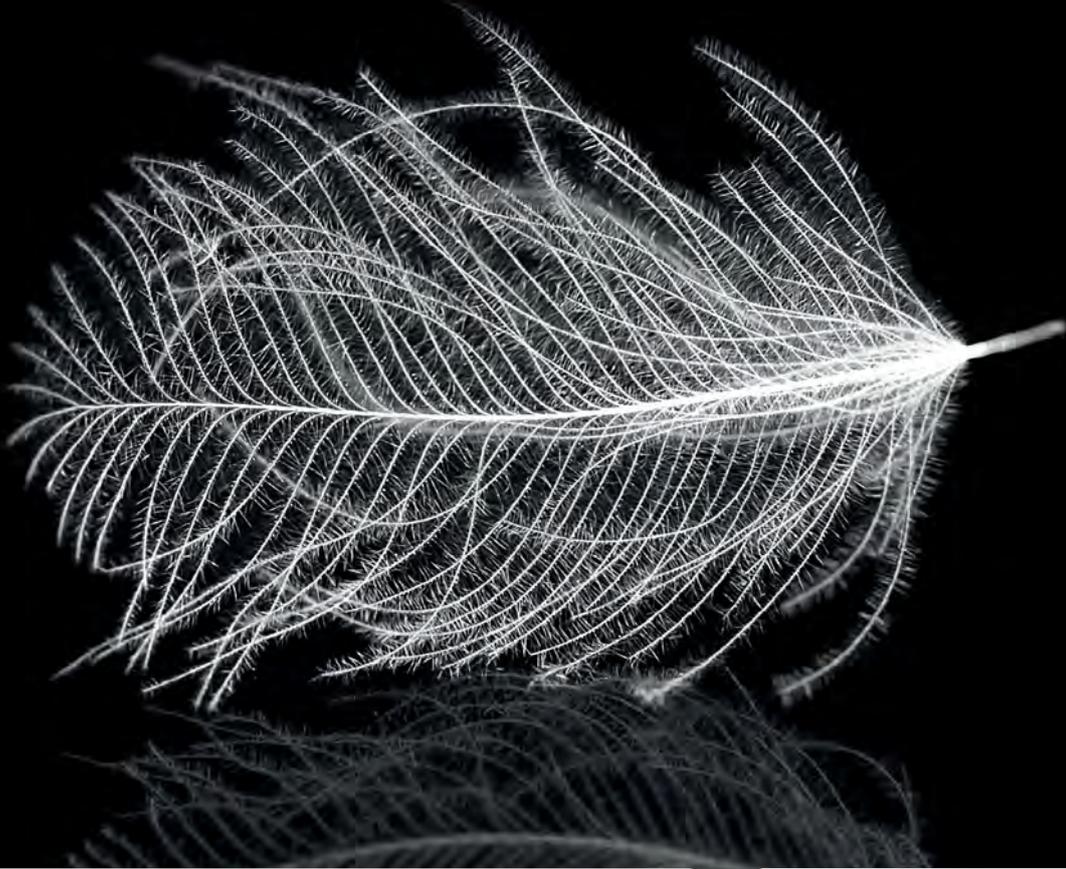


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EXAMPLES of the high quality shrink sleeve and clear label work undertaken by McDowell working closely with its customers

AWARD WINNING PRODUCTION

McDowell Label’s arsenal of presses includes an MPS EP 410 and multiple Gallus EM 280 UV flexo presses loaded with multi-combination processes and multiple web paths. McDowell also employs a multi-substrate digital press with combination finishing technology that serves its prototype and short-run business. Of the 13 World Label Awards earned, the 9th World Label Award was produced on the oldest press in the house.

The company believes that digital will ultimately prevail, but not in the way the industry understands it now. Dave says, ‘We currently operate on a digital platform, meeting the graphic and brand criteria for excellence. But combination

print elements will forever remain relevant. It’s what produces the printing effects required to give packaging that human experience.’

Controlled growth is a key strategy at McDowell. ‘We could easily be twice the size we are’, asserts Dave. ‘We’ve always been focused on growing internally before growing externally; managing our growth deliberately, with prudence. We are, very much, entrepreneurial and our focus is to be considered among the best, not necessarily among the biggest.’ Clearly, with an award case the size of Texas, pride and a strong will to stand true to its principles, McDowell Label is one team with the right strategy to deliver excellence.

HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

DIGIFLEX APPOINTS

A&V AS AGENT

Israel-based DigiFlex has appointed Anderson & Vreeland as its distributor in the USA and Canada. Hezy Rotman, CEO of DigiFlex, said: ‘We are delighted to have A&V as our partner for North America, and are certain that it will enhance our market presence. Our inkjet CiP system commenced worldwide sales at Drupa. The market realizes the excellent quality and superior cost-of-ownership our solution brings, to produce high quality printing plates with amazing dot-shapes for labels and tags printers.’

UPM RAFLATAC

OPENS UKRAINE SITE

UPM Raflatac has opened a new labelstock slitting and distribution terminal in Kiev, Ukraine. The facility will supply both film and paper label materials to customers in the country.

MPS UK TO

REPRESENT RAANTEC

Germany-based Raantec has appointed MPS UK as distributor of its plate mounting equipment range in the UK. MPS has already sold more than six of the units to various label and packaging printers.

ETI APPOINTS UK DISTRIBUTOR

ETI Converting Equipment, based in Boucherville, Quebec, Canada, has appointed Steve Harris and his team from GSM as its exclusive agent in United Kingdom and Ireland.

EFI LAUNCHES FIERY PROGRAM

EFI has launched a certification training program for its Fiery digital print servers, tools and software options. The Fiery program validates acquired skills through a certification exam.

ISYS APPOINTS

EUROPEAN AGENT

iSys Label has appointed UK-based Intec Printing Solutions as exclusive distributor of the Edge 850 digital label press in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and India.

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PILOT Italia's new site covers an area of 20,000 square meters

Space to grow

DESPITE A TOUGH ECONOMIC CLIMATE, converter Pilot Italia is making big changes to accommodate future growth. Carol Houghton reports

Leading Italian converter Pilot Italia is seeking new opportunities for growth with the opening of a new factory and the establishment of a network of like-minded European converters.

The new plant at Cornate D'Adda, near Milan, was commissioned in November 2011. The site covers an area of 20,000 square meters. As yet only 7,500 square meters has been built upon, leaving plenty of space for expansion.

Pilot works mainly in combination printing on 11 presses; two Nilpeter MO 3300, two Drent 520 Offset, five Gallus (silk and letter press combination), one Arsoma and one Codimag waterless offset. During the five week move into the new factory, production was kept running. 'The customers had no idea and we experienced zero losses in production,' says Pilot Italia sales manager and ex-Finat president Andrea Vimercati. The second plant in Usmate is still in use for pharmaceutical work.

The new plant was specifically designed to take advantage of Kaizen, a Japanese principle which translates into 'continuous improvement'. Under the concept, printing and finishing at the new facility is done on the same floor. Vimercati explains, 'We started with Kaizen as business was becoming too expensive and we were losing work to competitors. The idea came from my travelling in Japan. Now we offer a better price and quality while maintaining margin.'

The company has invested heavily into sustainability. For example, an extraction system takes matrix waste from each production line, to be compacted and sent on to an incineration

plant to create energy. These activities are in line with TLMI's Label Initiative for the Environment (LIFE) program.

The company is also working with its suppliers to replace a three week warehouse inventory with just-in-time delivery.

CHANGING FOR THE FUTURE

Pilot Italia specializes in a wide range of end user sectors including pharmaceuticals, home and personal care, industrial, cosmetic, beverage and food industries.

Before the recession, the company had an annual growth rate of seven percent, but turnover has been flat in the last five years. 'The new plant will help business to grow,' says Vimercati. He expects the facility to open up new business opportunities such as security labels, which 'were too complicated to introduce in the old plant'. Specific areas within the new plant have been designed for temperature and humidity control and have special hygiene measures for food labeling.

In addition to labels, Pilot Italia prints film and occasionally flexible packaging. It does not yet print cartons, although this is an option for the future. We market ourselves as having "label and packaging knowhow", Vimercati explains. 'When we go to customers we want to give them the best total solution; to understand more than just the printed label.'

He believes too many printers 'just take the order'. Pilot Italia prefers to ask why the order is being placed to evaluate whether that the best option has been selected, or whether



ANDREA Vimercati, sales manager



PILOT was a 2012 Finat Label Competition winner for its promotion coupon label for Print Buyer magazine

HISTORY

A branch of the international company Pilot, Pilot Italia began manufacturing customized, self-adhesive labels in 1968. It became a Joint-Stock company in 1984, serving the European pharmaceutical, cosmetic and food industries. The company's French activities closed in the 1990's with the plants passing into the ownership of by Avery Dennison.

Pilot has 90 employees, running two eight hour shifts. Exports account for 10 percent of the business, and a growing sector is multi-language labels for global brands which export out of Italy. The company makes its own plates and screens.



THE PRATI VEGAPLUS LF530 finishing system at Pilot

a more suitable alternative can be suggested.

COMPETITORS AND PARTNERS

Pilot Italia has recently set up a partnership with Schaeffer Etiketten, in Stuttgart, Germany – a similar sized company, sharing its market vision and using similar machines. Vimercati explains, 'We wanted a partner to offer insurance so we can keep printing by off-loading work, in compliance with a disaster recovery policy. It also works for exchanging technology and ideas.'

For Vimercati, the next step is to increase collaboration and work on a new partnership with Germark, a Spanish company based in Barcelona. His vision is to build a truly international network.

Another interesting partnership has been established with three Italian printers; Notarianni, Aro Etichette and Mida Etichette. The idea is to offer

INVESTMENT

In July 2011, Pilot Italia increased its production capacity with the purchase of a Muller Martini VSOP 520mm web width offset line and a matching Prati Vegaplus LF530 finishing system. Of the Vegaplus, Andrea Vimercati says, 'We have been particularly impressed by the processing speed of this machine, a feature which is essential to keep up with the speed of the offset press. But there is another feature that makes it unique and innovative: the modular construction of the machine, which allows the addition of die-cutting, an inkjet system for numbering labels or flexo printing heads.'

The Vegaplus LF530 system incorporates a 100 percent inspection camera control system and is specified to handle a wide range of materials including paper labels, foils, self-adhesive labels, and single or multiple component flexible packaging materials.

each other complimentary production and technology. Vimercati suggests one example, 'We don't do digital but the other three have HP machines so we can use their machines if a job requires'.

Vimercati explains, 'The network is an additional offering to the customer. It will be used for a creative purpose but also act as a purchasing group.' It is all about relationship building and he hopes it will help each individual company to grow with its partners. Together the group has a turnover of 50 million euros and is currently discussing a network name and logo to help bring the offering to customers and explain what it is doing.

Alfredo Pollici, CEO of Notarianni, gives his reason for joining the partnership, 'Andrea is a good friend but it also provides good R&D opportunities for us.'

Vimercati concludes, 'The world is changing the way in which business is done, Buyers are changing and new, younger work forces are using more technology and social media.' A reflection of this can be seen in the recently updated logo to create the image of a 'younger, faster, modern company'.



THE new plant in Cornate D'Adda



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(L-R) Christian Poirault, managing director APE, Magali Bécot, head pre-press operator and Pascal Coullouette, pre-press manager

Innovation brings APE a decisive edge

APE Etiquettes has adopted a digital water wash platemaking system supplied by Dantex as part of a major investment in machinery and manufacturing plant. Andy Thomas reports

Located in stunning countryside near Poitiers in south west France, APE Etiquettes is a company with 135 employees, running 80 print units converting over 14 million sqm of materials a year. Turnover has grown from 12 million euros in 2000 to 17m euros today.

APE was founded in 1974, when the company's current owner, Christian Poirault was running a large format screen printing business. 'I sold that business in 1998 and the guy who ran APE was retiring. So I was in the right place at the right time and bought APE in 1999. Since then we have doubled the number of employees.'

Christian Poirault is an extraordinary character, animated by a passion for extreme sports. He has driven regularly in the tough Dakar rally in a car sponsored by leading industry suppliers including Dantex and Nilpeter. Poirault's intense interest in sporting excellence extends to his factory. When a new press is commissioned it is named after a champion sportsman or woman, and they are invited to a ceremony inaugurating the machine along with hundreds of guests. In addition, APE actively sponsors local cycling and soccer clubs.

APE services a wide range of end user markets, with food being the most important, followed by lubricants and automobile products, pharma, cosmetics and household cleaning products.

Almost 90 percent of APE's production is PS labels, using

equal amounts of paper and film face stocks. The remainder is wraparound films for food products like cheese, as well as a little folding carton work.

'The French market has become a lot more competitive, particularly now we have converters from Spain coming here after business,' asserts Christian Poirault.

But there are also more positive trends. 'Between five to seven years ago we were worried our business would go to Eastern Europe. But for our French customers it is easier to come here from Paris to approve a job, and then we export the label to their Eastern European production plants.'

Some 10 percent of APE's production is for export, mainly to Francophone West and North Africa and to Middle Eastern countries including Iran and Egypt, as well as to Europe and as far afield as Korea.

PRODUCTION AND INNOVATION

APE runs the full range of print production processes including flexo, offset, letterpress, screen and digital. The digital operation is housed in a separate company called G9, and runs a Xeikon and two HP Indigo presses. APE claims to have been the first French converter to install digital presses 15 years ago. Run lengths under 5,000 meters will generally be put on the digital machines.

A key part of APE's operation is the R&D lab, which drives the

APE'S new factory



company's innovation projects. APE specializes particularly in promotional and information-intensive labels, including booklet and multi-page labels.

As L&L was visiting the plant, APE was commissioning a highly sophisticated 11-color Nilpeter press, set up with the ability to produce, in-line, multi-layer labels with up to six pages. The FA4 press is configured with two unwinds, 11 UV-flexo heads, turner bar, de-lam and re-lam, crossover, two movable un-/re-wind towers on rails, a special dual web lamination cassette, automatic matrix removal and slitting. It is designed to run at 100 m/min with the multi-layer label process in operation.

'This is an important innovation for many industry sectors,' says Christian Poirault. 'The Total (oil) label, as an example, has three layers and 27 languages. Before we had to produce that label in two passes – now we can produce it in one.'

The new Nilpeter press is the first machine in a brand new production hall. 'The new building not only increases our capacity, but is a matter of customer faith,' says Christian Poirault. 'Customers require the security of having this two factory capacity with back up machines.'

WATER WASH CTP

APE has just finished installing a water wash digital flexo and letterpress platemaking system. All the equipment, along with support and training, was supplied by Dantex through its French general manager Marc Fiadino. The installation consists of a Dantex branded Esko Spark 4835 imager and an AquaFlex AQF 900FD digital in-line processor. The 900FD includes a LAM removal module and is specifically designed to work with the Aquaflex Optima LAM plates used by APE.

Why move to digital platemaking – and why specifically to a water wash plate system? Explains Christian Poirault: 'Film suppliers are disappearing and this was a chance to reduce our use of chemicals. But the key benefits are quality and flexibility. Many of our customers come to the plant to sign jobs off, and if anything needs to be changed we can remake the plates very quickly.'

The digital flexo project is led by APE's pre-press manager Pascal Coullouette, an 11-year company veteran. The switchover is planned to take just 2-3 months, although implementing the full workflow – including Esko Web Center – is expected to take up to a year.

Coullouette had never before worked with CTP, but found the move from analog surprisingly easy. 'To train an operator to make analogue plates would take 3-4 months, but with the CTP and support from Dantex it was only 3-4 weeks.'

Before coming to work at APE, Coullouette did not have any experience working with water wash plates and was of the opinion they were of lower quality than solvent.

But Coullouette now says that the combination of the Spark imager and Dantex's new water wash digital plates has been a revelation. 'With analogue plates we were achieving a 1.6 percent dot, but with the Spark and Optima Aquaflex plate we hold a 0.6 percent dot at 175lpi.'

Coullouette says it is easier to manipulate the compensation

LABELS&LABELING

HEAVILY customized Nilpeter FA4 press



curve on the digital compared to analogue plate. 'Previously, we needed a bump curve, but with the Optima digital plate you do not. It is truly a WYSISYG. The 0.6 percent dot is printable and stable. And this reduces downtime on the press, making it easier to get into registration.'

A key advantage of water-based plate processing compared to solvents is the reduction in drying time. 'We can have a plate from box to press-ready in just 40 minutes,' says Coullouette. 'The plate is dry within five minutes.'

The Aquaflex Optima plates are compatible with water, UV and solvent-based inks and can be stored for long periods without degradation. For some customers APE is using two year old plates for repeat work. To achieve high efficiency in plate archiving, a Dantex plate washer was also included in the package of equipment supplied by Dantex.

Water wash plates are certainly more expensive than solvent, but Coullouette says the total cost of ownership is less, and there are additional sustainability benefits. For example there is no requirement for special air conditioning or ducting. All processing chemicals are eliminated, and the only waste product is the occasional removal of solid polymer waste.

Coullouette adds that the transition to water-wash was a one-stop-shop with Dantex. They were able to supply all the necessary equipment for plate making and filtration for the wastewater. 'This eco-friendly system was attractive to our company and we wanted to continue protecting the environment. Dantex was also able to give us in-depth support in engineering and after sales training.'

Coullouette does not see any advantage in implementing High Definition Flexo. 'We found there was nothing extraordinary in the print characteristics. With a well calibrated Spark we obtain as good quality and it is more productive without HD.'

FIVE YEAR PLAN

Where does APE see itself in five years? 'We are committed to innovation,' says Christian Poirault. 'You can see this from the Nilpeter press we have just installed, which is the first of this configuration in Europe. Digital will become more important but there will remain areas which digital cannot service – for example our new multi-label products. To just produce ordinary, every day labels you must kill yourself to make them.'

MANAGING INFORMATION

APE has a sophisticated management information system. Each machine is linked directly into the network, allowing speed, downtime and profitability per job to be measured in real time. Electronic planning boards are placed strategically in the sales and shop floor. 'In a market which has become very competitive, we have to improve our internal productivity and reduce waste,' remarks Christian Poirault.

An extranet allows customers to view their stock holding, as well as what is being manufactured and delivery dates. The next stage is to implement Esko's WebCenter remote viewing and approval system.

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Leading from the front

DOUGLAS STORRIE LABELS' 'digital dilemma' was solved by the installation of the first Edale FL-350 press, developed as a joint project between the two companies. Andy Thomas reports

Leading UK converter Douglas Storrie Labels has purchased the industry's first Edale FL-350 flexo press following a two year joint development program.

The FL-350 at Douglas Storrie is a top of the range variant, with eight fully servo-driven UV flexo print heads with computerized pre-register, auto register and print length control. The press incorporates chill rolls, cold foil, turnbars and a sheeter. A comprehensive ancillary package includes 100 percent inspection supplied by Lake Vision Systems, double sided web cleaning and corona treater.

According to managing director Nigel Storrie, the decision to co-develop a press with Edale was a 'calculated risk' as the company wrestled with the dilemma of whether to take the digital route.

'I was initially the most enthusiastic about digital,' concedes Storrie. 'But prices keep going up and you still have to buy secondary finishing equipment. Also too many people have already gone digital and you need to have the right mix of work. So we decided on the quick change conventional route. We thought we could fight digital and we are now better than digital.'

Neal Livermore, sales manager at Douglas Storrie, agrees: 'We all felt we were fighting against digital. But ultimately the quality of the printing with this press, with so little waste and the ability to run fast and finish in-line means it's so much more versatile.'

The press also gives Douglas Storrie the option to extend its business into package printing. 'Labels and tickets is our core, but sometimes you can make more money from different parts of the business,' says Neal Livermore.

He compares the print quality of the FL-350 press with offset litho and gravure, and with good reason (see below), 'with the added advantage that UV flexo can print on any substrate without requiring special coating.'

The addition of chill rolls and servos on the press has already opened up new markets beyond PS labels. A particularly striking example is a job for conference and exhibition name badges printed on a very expensive 200 micron thermal pp film specially imported from the US. 'The stretch is huge, but because we have no gears and no pulling, we can run it. We tried and failed to run it on our older technology, and this is a job that could not be run digital,' remarks Neal Livermore.

Another piece of new work came from a chance conversation with a label buyer who asked if Douglas Storrie could print a 280 micron board insert. 'This was easy to achieve using our sheeter and conveyor and we could do it faster than their current supplier using flat bed cutting – and in one pass.'

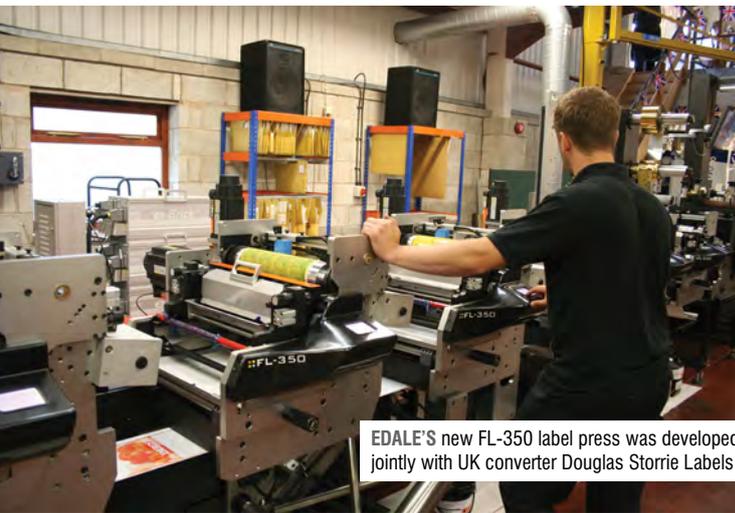
OPEN DAY DEMOS

The versatility of the FL-350 was shown during a recent Open Day at Douglas Storrie Labels, with press demos moving rapidly between a PS label, folding board and unsupported wraparound OPP.

The first job was a 4-color process cut sheet on gloss laser paper with gold cold foil. 'The feedback from the trade is they have never seen a better laydown of foil – and we have had a lot of interest in manufacturing machine trials for other companies,' said Neal Livermore.

The second job, 'Wuffitmix', was a 4-color process plus special color label on PP film. Douglas Storrie has entered this label into the 2012 Flexotech awards (Edale has entered the FL-350 press into the new machine innovation category).

The third job was an unsupported OPP wraparound film for a water bottle application.



EDALE'S new FL-350 label press was developed jointly with UK converter Douglas Storrie Labels



L-R: James Boughton, MD Edale; Neal Livermore, sales manager Douglas Storrie; Stuart Robinson, production manager Douglas Storrie; Chris Chappel, Edale engineer; Jessica Gong, Edale marketing executive; Nigel Storrie, MD Douglas Storrie Labels

'With the colors preset in the machine, we have a record for changing a job in 70 seconds and in the industry this is as fast as it gets,' says Douglas Storrie production manager Stuart Robinson. 'Auto register means each job runs perfectly without the operator having to do any manual adjustment. We print registration marks off each plate and this brings the eight colors automatically into line and keeps them there through any variation in web tension. We are seeing just 15 meters of waste in an 8-color job, which is around one machine length. Once the plate hits, the press is in register.'

Continues Robinson: 'If we run the job again, the press control recalls all press tension settings, as well as the position of the cylinders and moves them into position relative to each color and the press is virtually in register before any material is run.' In addition, Edale's inking and impression 'strike' feature allows print station set up with minimal waste.

'The older the machine, the more printing is an art and the more you need a good machine minder. This machine almost runs itself,' says Neal Livermore.

PUSHING QUALITY

The gravure-like print quality on Douglas Storrie's Edale FL-350 press was achieved in great part by an extensive fingerprinting program undertaken by their repro suppliers, as well as the use of leading edge flexo plate technologies.

Creation Reprographics used Esko's Equinox deltaE color management software to develop 4-color process profiles for the FL-350 which are used to optimize digital platemaking. These sheets can also be made available to designers to show the color gamut which can be achieved without special colors.

As well as using Kodak NEXcel digital plates, supplied by Pulse Media, Creation Reprographics has tested Asahi's new AWP water-wash digital plate imaged with an Esko HD CDI, and these were also used during the Open Day demos.

'Water wash technology has really

moved on and we can now run flexo to the same quality as litho,' enthuses Alan Coker, business development manager at Creation Reprographics.

'The Asahi plate does not start to deteriorate like previous waterwash plates we've used, and we are conducting trials with plate resolutions up to 350lpi. We are seeing better ink transfer due to the reduced surface energy characteristics of the plate and no dot bridging, which also giving us a wider color gamut. They are also more environment friendly.'

The 1600 line/inch aniloxes were supplied by Cheshire Anilox Technology and use the company's new ProFlo cell profile developed specifically for high definition flexo.

This high-release cell delivers as much as 15 percent additional ink compared to Cheshire's conventional engravings, allowing printers to achieve high color densities at extremely fine line counts.

'This unique cell profile allows printers to work with the expanded tone range of offset and rotogravure to produce vibrant colors and high contrast images,' says Cheshire Anilox md Paul Smith.

'Because we can hold such tight register, process printing now really works on this press and this makes life a lot easier,' adds Neal Livermore.

Concludes Livermore, 'This project with Edale has taken a long time but I'm certain the calculated risk will be repaid. It is a cracking machine and the possibilities it offers are endless. Our biggest quandary is where we go from here. My ambition for next year is to create new jobs through an extra shift and be in a position where we have to get second machine.'

FL-350 CLOSE UP

'The FL-350 could be considered Edale's first "mainstream" label press,' says Edale managing director James Boughton.

'Up to now just 25 percent of Edale's market has been label printers, with the rest being for packaging and specialist applications such as security lottery tickets. We will use this press to build up

our label printing base.'

The FL-350 print units are based on Edale's Gamma package printing press. 'The beauty of this print head is it gives you all the functionality of more advanced three axis machines,' says Boughton. 'You can take the inking elements out of the machine without changing print pressure or anilox, which gives you good control over color management. Also because there are no gears between plate and impression rolls you can run a wide range of materials from 30 to 450 microns.' The FL-350 prints up to 200 m/min with a print width of 350mm and will be offered by default with a single axis of servo on each print station.

'Edale now offers a product that pushes back the perceived advantages of digital to only the ultra-short runs whilst providing the printer with the comfort and simplicity of printing technology that he fully understands,' says James Boughton.

CONVERTER HISTORY

Douglas Storrie Labels celebrated its 60th anniversary three years ago. Company founder Douglas Storrie was a colorful character, whose first print-related endeavor was printing colored ribbons in a rented unit at the local railway station of St Annes-on-Sea on the English North West coast. His first employee was the station porter, who became a lifelong company stalwart.

Douglas was a driven entrepreneur open to all business opportunities, and was soon printing labels for shoe insoles – including the first example of gold foil print onto black vinyl and satin seen in the UK.

A second-hand Mark Andy 4150 was acquired in the early 1980s leading to a large contract for printing computer labels from a major UK retailer. Douglas Storrie was also a big Edale user. An Edale press purchased by Douglas in the 1970s was only recently decommissioned, and the company runs an Edale Alpha machine.

Today Douglas Storrie prides itself on the technical support it gives to its customers, particularly in specifying and testing correct adhesive/face material combinations. The design department regularly undertakes design concept work for smaller clients.

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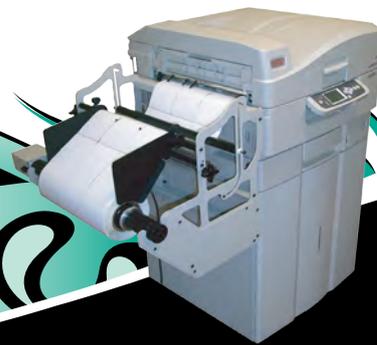
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No Longer Black and White

ANDREW RECKNER, The Highland Group, identifies a paradigm shift in private label

Initially fueled by the early-2000s recession and resulting consumer demand for lower-cost product options, the dramatic growth in private label (PL) manufacturing continues unabated. Particularly within the consumer packaged goods (CPG) industry, the economic downturn, coupled with improved PL branding and innovation, has fundamentally changed the customer and industry mindset. In what can safely be termed a paradigm shift, retailers and their customers are coming to expect, if not demand, brand-level quality and selection at private label prices. All parties in the private label industry, including label designers and manufacturers, must be increasingly innovative and efficient to thrive in this shifting and complex marketplace.

Private label goods, once derided as the no-frills choice among budget-conscious consumers, have seen extraordinary growth in popularity in the last decade. PL market share has grown dramatically over the last decade and continues to expand; it now stands at north of 30 percent and growing in certain product categories, such as frozen food. The recent economic downturn and resulting price consciousness among consumers were major drivers of this growth. Yet even before the 2009 recession, trends legitimizing PL as the first choice among consumers were already strong. Increased quality and selection of PL products have fueled the growth. Coupled

with enhanced packaging and labeling, many PL offerings are nearing the perceived status of major brands among consumers. Crucially, the proliferation of PL products increased retailers' profit margins: on average, a supermarket earns 10-20 percent more selling a unit of their own label's product than a brand-name product.

It should come as little surprise that retailers, encouraged by their PL successes and resulting higher profit margins, generally wish to increase the reach of their private label products. And while PL manufacturers welcome the business growth, it will continue to require significant enhancements to their production and design status quo.

GREATER NEED FOR SPEED AND EFFICIENCY

Retailers are eager to grow market share and have increasingly high expectations of PL product quality and development. Therefore, they are demanding the PL industry be proactive in both the development of new products as well as innovative in the labeling and packaging of existing products. To meet these demands, PL manufacturers are improving the efficiency and innovation across all aspects of their operations and staff, from R&D engineers, to supply chain managers, to label designers.

Historically, new private label products lagged about three months behind the corresponding product launches by

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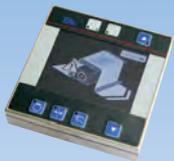
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major brands. Now, retailers want their PLs to be 'fast followers,' if not leaders. According to the senior operating executive of a large PL health and beauty manufacturer, 'The pressures on PL today are totally new for an industry used to emulating existing successful products and efficient production. Now client demands, and ultimately those of consumers, are for innovative products more or less on par with brands, yet for the same low price.'

INVESTING IN INNOVATION

Needless to say, there's a squeeze, and the PL industry, including labeling companies, is reacting accordingly. Not surprisingly, PLs are shifting funds internally to R&D to achieve increased innovation. This shift has been initially expensive, as PL engineers were previously trained to solely deconstruct existing products and develop cheap means of reproduction.

Increased training in innovative operations and product development takes time, but are eventually cheaper and more flexible once the processes are in place and optimized. The situation is analogous to a chef making beef stew from canned broth: it's easy, quick and formulaic. In response to demand from diners for a higher value product, the chef changes production to making the stew from 'scratch,' with original beef stock. Additional time and ingredients make the production more challenging, but it holds significant benefits of higher quality and flexibility.

Akin to this example, we worked with a PL manufacturer that, like typical process manufacturers, made most of their products from a select number of pre-mixed ingredients. In response to demand from their clients for faster new product turnaround, as well as their need to reduce costs, the manufacturer changed production to mixing more of their ingredients on-site. That was a big change with more ingredients and a more complex process, and there were many more tasks to manage. Contracts with vendors providing new ingredients required negotiation and optimized delivery schedules to effectively manage inventory. Similarly, their chemists required training to develop new products from constituent ingredients, rather than emulating an existing formula. Finally, their manufacturing processes fundamentally changed, which affected production and change-over processes and times.

One would think these new initiatives would be prohibitively expensive for a cost-conscious private label manufacturer. Yet once these processes were in place and optimized, they were actually less expensive because the new approach allowed for more tinkering, flexibility and cost savings from efficient purchasing. In

the end, the manufacturer realized millions of dollars in cost savings as well as faster time to market on new products.

LABEL APPEAL

The example above holds lessons for what's on, as well as what's in, the final product. Of course, labeling manufacturers know the importance of 'perception of quality.' Private labels, as we all remember, were plain with generous white space, black lettering and generic graphics. Now, they've been replaced with colorful, attractive labels that rival the major brands in aesthetic appeal. Like product developers, the pressure's on more than ever to produce visually appealing, innovative designs with high shelf velocity.

Yet as in product development, there is also a drive to provide quality labels at a much lower cost than big brands. Label manufacturers, like PLs themselves, must look toward efficient operations as the best way to manage the financial and operational squeeze in this sector. Though overlooked and unglamorous, behind-the-scenes improvements such as accounting department efficiencies help label manufacturers by freeing working capital to hire and train top-notch talent and purchase advanced equipment. Private labels can distinguish themselves through original design elements, but dynamic images and label materials cost more to assemble, just like beef stock 'from scratch.'

The efficient scheduling and maintenance of printing and labeling machines are another important way to maximize efficient production. Innovative design is important, but turnaround times are crucial as the PL market still often operates in reactionary mode. One PL manufacturer risked losing their biggest order of the year because the competing national brand made a minor change to their label that the retailer loved. The PL had to make a similar change within 48 hours and commit to production demands with the new label. The ability to react has always been important in labels, but incredibly short turnaround times plus innovation means labeling firms with flexibility will prosper.

Label designers and printers might face an uncertain path at the start, but there's ample opportunity to manage these demands and reap the benefits of this fundamental shift in the marketplace. In partnership with PL manufacturers, the next decade could hold even greater sales opportunities as the industry continues to compete head to head with name brands. PL manufacturers and label/packaging firms alike would be well advised to invest resources now for increased flexibility and cost-effective production to meet ever-increasing customer demands and expectations.

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Revolutionary inkjet CTP set to change label platemaking

A NEW COMPUTERIZED INKJET PLATEMAKING SYSTEM offers label converters a new solution for high quality printing plates with amazing dot shapes, at an affordable price. Mike Fairley visits DigiFlex in Israel to review the technology and assess progress to-date

Plate imaging and processing for the label industry has undergone numerous changes over the years, from conventional camera, film and plate processing to the newer technologies using some form of computerized system. Certainly, both computer-to-film and computer-to-plate technologies have had their devotees in recent years for the production of flexo, letterpress and dry-offset printing plates.

Computer-to-film systems utilize UV beams passing through a film mask to change the surface characteristics of a plate surface prior to a mechanical washout process, drying and plate hardening; Computer-to-plate systems based on laser ablation use a laser beam to write an image on to a pre-coated plate surface, in the process destroying the surface coating of the image areas, again enabling mechanical washout, drying and hardening.

Now a new computerized plate-making system has come to the market. Shown at Labelexpo and Drupa – where they commenced worldwide sales – the DigiFlex inkjet computer-to-plate system has already created considerable interest for the excellent quality and high performance of plates produced, for the speed of processing, for fast make-ready, and for being an environmentally friendly process.

What's more, it enables label converters to move up from a negative film system to the new technology at an affordable price. This latest CtP solution eliminates films and the film

"The DigiFlex inkjet computer-to-plate system has already created considerable interest for the excellent quality and high performance of plates produced, for the speed of processing, for fast make-ready, and for being an environmentally friendly process"

exposure process, yet offering higher quality results – but still uses the same, affordable analogue plates as before. It also provides an excellent alternative to laser ablation technology.

Distributors have already been established through Jet Europe BV – the second biggest distribution group in Europe, with distributors in some 36 countries – and most recently through Anderson & Vreeland for the USA and Canada.

So how does DigiFlex technology work? In simple terms, it's based on a unique, patented, ink technology which is designed to enable extremely high print quality (initial tests have shown a higher quality result than HD flexo) to be produced from a flexo, letterpress or dry-offset plate and, now, in a new development, from rotary screen process stencils as well.

Creation of the image area on the plate is achieved using a special bi-component (reactive) ink which is inkjet-printed to produce a UV opaque mask onto a polyester film substrate – using appropriate software and a modified Epson printer as the system's engine – and which chemically reacts instantly with a second reactant on top of the plate to freeze the ink droplets without any time for ink spread. The outcome is a high resolution, with zero dot gain on the plate, and the capability of achieving a two percent dot on the press. Currently the minimum dot-size is 23 microns, but a complementary technology still to be launched is planned to go even smaller in the future, with a dot size approaching 10 – 15 microns.

The reactive layer is then transferred from the polyester substrate to the top of the plate using a lamination process. This can be seen in Fig 1. The primer layer, which has no reaction with the plate surface, is washable during the plate development process and can be used with all standard water-washable plates, with solvent washable plates, with rotary screen plates and with Cosmolight plates. Effectively, after the image has been created on the plate, the rest of the plate-making process remains unchanged, so providing minimal adaptations to an already familiar workflow.

The resultant DigiFlex plate dots are flatter (see Fig 2.) than

US DISTRIBUTOR STRENGTHENS GLOBAL NETWORK

In August, DigiFlex appointed Anderson & Vreeland as its distributor in the USA and Canada. The company's FlexoJet 1725 inkjet computer-to-plate system was shown in the A&V booth at Labelexpo Americas.

Hezy Rotman, CEO of DigiFlex, commented: 'We are delighted to have A&V as our partner for North America, and are certain that it will enhance our market presence.'

Darin Lyon, VP and general manager of Anderson & Vreeland, added: 'The unique technology of DigiFlex immediately attracted our attention. A careful technical examination proved excellent performance. We are excited to bring this solution to our customers.'

This follows the announcement last year that Jet Europe would distribute DigiFlex technology in Europe. That agreement covered the sales, marketing and technical support of the FlexoJet 1724 as well as the associated DigiFlex ink and DigiFlex coating sheets.

Harry Heesen, managing director of Jet Europe, 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. It will also complete our product portfolio.'

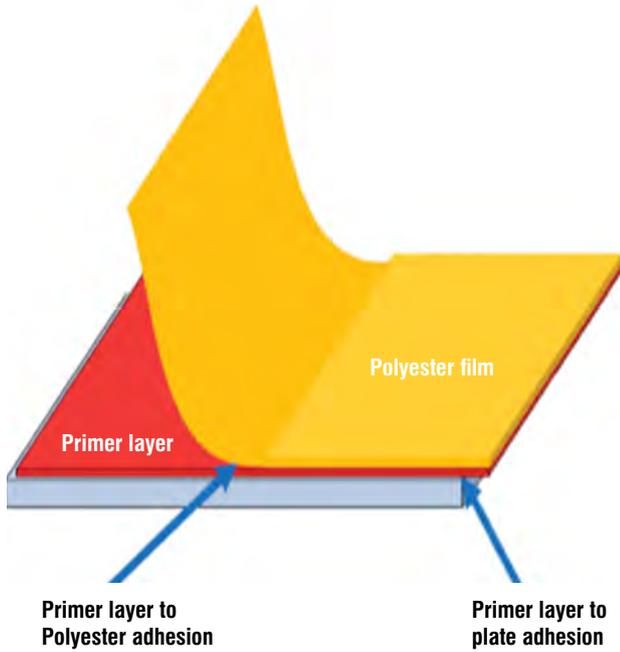


FIG 1. The DigiFlex primer coating process



FIG 4. The DigiFlex inkjet Computer-to-Plate system

"Under magnification, the DigiFlex dots are perceived to be sharper and more solid (Fig 3.) when compared to laser ablation produced dots, which appear more cloudy and gray"

dots produced by computer-to-plate laser ablation, enabling easier set-up on the press and better ink capture. Under magnification, the DigiFlex dots are

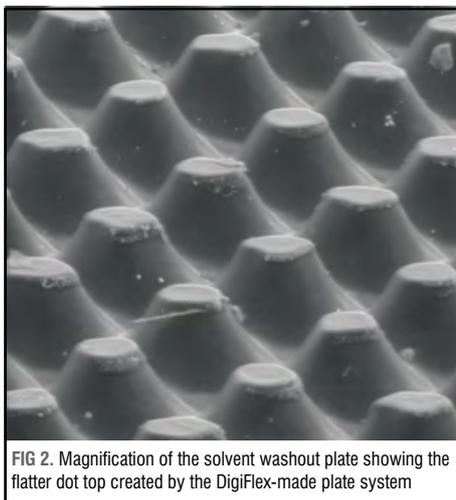


FIG 2. Magnification of the solvent washout plate showing the flatter dot top created by the DigiFlex-made plate system

perceived to be sharper and more solid (Fig 3.) when compared to laser ablation produced dots, which appear more cloudy and gray: results that can truly be said to revolutionize the label plate-making process – and at an affordable price for a quality computer-to-plate-making system installed in-house.

Certainly the ability to keep the full plate-making process in-house results in savings in time and money, provides total control over the plate-making process to be achieved, and enables the converter to create opportunities to take on board more jobs of a higher quality – all better serving their customers.

Based on patented technology developed over several years by a group of scientists and technologists with an excellent printing industry track record and semi-conductor vision for growth gained at companies

that include Scitex, Kodak, Creo, Agfa Graphics and Applied Materials Israel, DigiFlex offers the label converter a novel system for producing high quality, high throughput, affordable and easy-to-use plates.

Hezy Rotman, CEO of DigiFlex told Labels & Labeling, 'Our inkjet CtP system commenced worldwide sales at drupa and we already have extensive distributorships established to enable us to rapidly grow the market; a market that has rapidly realized the excellent quality and superior cost-of-ownership our solution brings to producing high quality printing plates with amazing dot-shapes for label and tag printers.'

There seems little doubt that after drupa, and a further showing at Labelexpo Americas on the booth of Anderson & Vreeland, much more will be heard about DigiFlex and the way in which it is revolutionizing label platemaking in the year to come.

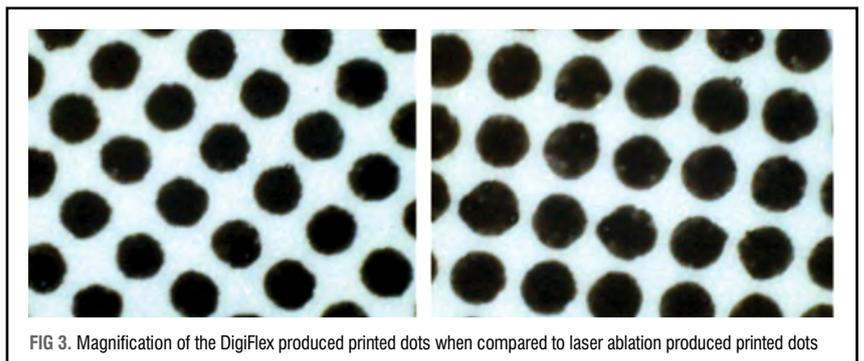


FIG 3. Magnification of the DigiFlex produced printed dots when compared to laser ablation produced printed dots

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INNOCENT Smoothies avoids the typical image of a 'drippy' fruit

Food designs

CAROL HOUGHTON discusses how trends towards healthier lifestyles are impacting food label design

In recent years consumers have become increasingly concerned with nutrition and wellbeing. Where food was once an affordable indulgence, buying decisions are often now based on the caloric and nutritional values displayed on the main panel of a product's label. Healthy foods are no longer considered boring and tasteless and this needs to be reflected by the label and packaging.

Twenty years ago, low-calorie or fat-free products – 'lighter' versions of a regular product – were extremely popular. Generally, these products were associated with restrictive diets and were supported by quite bland packaging.

More recently, the high demand for such products encouraged a number of new brands to launch, specifically targeting the 'light' market. These brands do not have alternative products for non-calorie counting consumers, unlike, for example, Müller, which used the same brand and design for its main and 'light' yoghurt range. The only difference was the background color.

Guillermo Dufranc, graphic design coordinator at design agency Tridimage, adds, 'This

trend is so popular that "light" products are even bought by people who are not on a diet; moreover, it has become a habit for them. It is considered to be a smart choice that allows the consumer to "eat without guilt".' He believes 'light' products, are now a synonym for nature and wellness. 'This is evidently defining consumers' way of life, and that is exactly what the marketing teams need to know to identify what the new consumers' needs and interests are.'

DESIGN PARADIGMS

Dufranc says these changing market trends require new forms of communication. 'The challenge of the new era is to create products that look as if they do not want to be sold, designs which break the rules and defy the laws of tradition. Creativity has really become a basic need.'

White backgrounds, opaque matte materials and simple logotypes are particularly popular characteristics of 'healthy' food labels. Dufranc highlights the importance of using white space as a design decision – not the consequence of emptiness. 'It is important to use it thoroughly, otherwise it could be perceived as an incomplete design. Every negative packaging aspect that



HÄAGEN-DAZS Five Ice Cream design uses white background to convey purity and give a fresh, natural feeling

BELAZU'S natural origin is depicted by a tree that looks like a hand and symbolizes craft care

DESIGNED by Tridimage, Baggio Light is one of a number of products launched specifically for the 'light' market

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SMART PACKAGING TACKLES FOOD WASTE

An estimated five to seven percent of food is lost in the perishable food sector because of poor inventory management, according to Smithers Pira, a worldwide authority on the packaging, paper and print industry supply chains. Smart packaging systems could help deal with this waste.

An interesting response is SAP's Future Retail Centre, set up to investigate how RFID and temperature sensors on pallets and food packaging could provide real-time information to avoid wastage along the supply chain. And as recently reported in L&L, PragmatlC Printing has embarked on a project to integrate intelligent circuits into food packaging to help monitor food through the supply chain.

perfection. Brands want the image to look as real as possible, imperfection is considered an honest brand attitude.'

The new packaging design trends are not only a set of graphic resources – such as soft white illumination which creates a natural 'look and feel'. Dufranc notes a major change in the style of package texts; with more products using verbal branding with colloquial claims and phrases on the front panels. This approach talks to consumers in a more relaxed and friendly way, 'Capital letters yelling "BUY ME" are history. The new brand strategies aim to represent consumers' interests more than their own.'

Governmental requirements have also had an impact on food label and packaging design. Legally, Guided Daily Amounts (GDA) must be included to allow consumers to make informed and healthy decisions based on a product's nutritional offering.

BRAND GUIDELINES

Whatever the product category, working with strict brand guidelines presents a challenge for designers looking to create innovative packaging and labels.

Design agency BridgerConway, for example, has been working on the supermarket chain Jumbo's brand

consumers perceive will have an effect on their trust about the product. White space symbolizes purity, a direct speech which does not want to distract with decorative ornaments. The usage of white background has created a new visual language.'

CONVEY THE TASTE

The search for nutritional quality has raised the expectation for packaging design. Low quality packaging suggests a bad quality product. Dufranc adds, 'Consumers prefer natural authenticity to industrial



BELAZU'S natural origin is depicted by a tree that looks like a hand and symbolizes craft care



THE HEINZ Whole Peeled Tomatoes label depicts tomatoes in their natural environment



packaging design since early 2011. Alejandra Pouchot, packaging director of BridgerConway explains, 'Considerations need to the complexities and limitations of brand guidelines. Developing inspirational and innovative ideas using creative designs takes time and a new working approach when working within strict guidelines.'

The objective was to achieve a unique graphic identity, enabling the two product lines, Clásico and Gourmet, to be easily differentiated and recognized by consumers.

JAMMY DESIGN

A good example of a label design for a niche 'artisan' product, is Bonnie's Jams. Company owner Bonnie Shershow designed the labels herself when she first started her business, 12 years earlier. Recently she approached Louise Fli's design agency to move the product to the next level.

Originally a book cover designer, Louise Fli founded her graphic design studio in 1989, branching into restaurant and food packaging design. 'A design inspired by handmade French labels for a line of artisanal jams was appealing to me – it just needed a more professional approach' says Fli.

'In the many makeovers I have done for food packaging, I have found that a lot can be changed, as long as one or two elements stay the same. In this case, we kept the jar, changed the lid from gold to silver, and retained the black and white, all-type label. From there, I developed a font based on samples from my many collections of alphabets and handwriting, specifically from the 40s. The rubber-stamped batch number was reconfigured to look more authentically hand-crafted, and the text was arranged in a grid that could accommodate type both horizontally and vertically, for a vintage yet crisp apothecary look.'

Shershow reports that the business has doubled since the label redesign. Fli adds, 'Many people have told me that they bought the jam for the label, but then were pleasantly surprised to discover that the product was excellent.'

Fli concludes, 'This project is typical of a movement towards artisanal, hand-crafted designs in food packaging. This is a backlash against computer-driven design, and a preference for the virtues of tactility.'



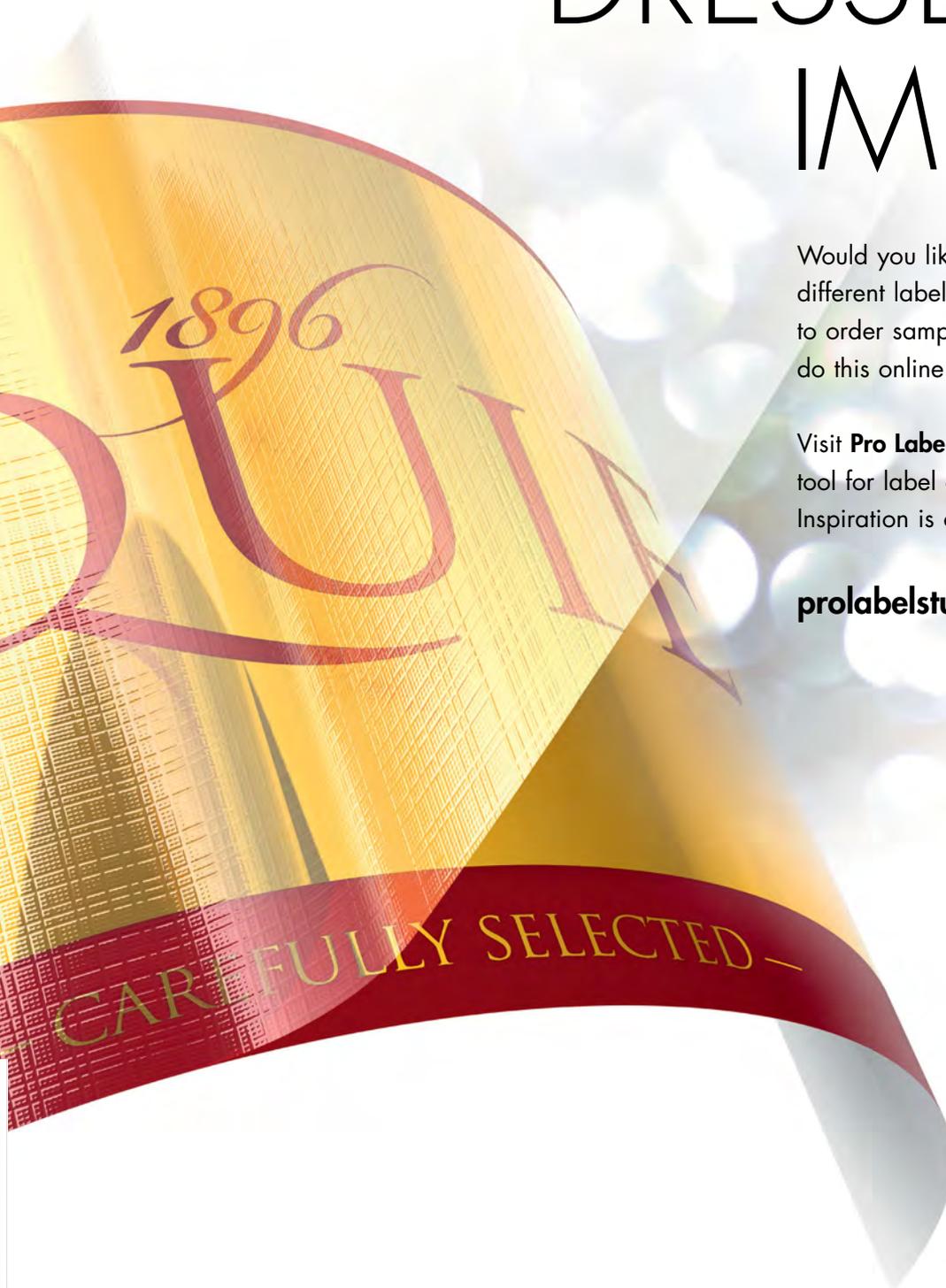
LOUISE Fli recently redesigned the label design for Bonnie's Jams

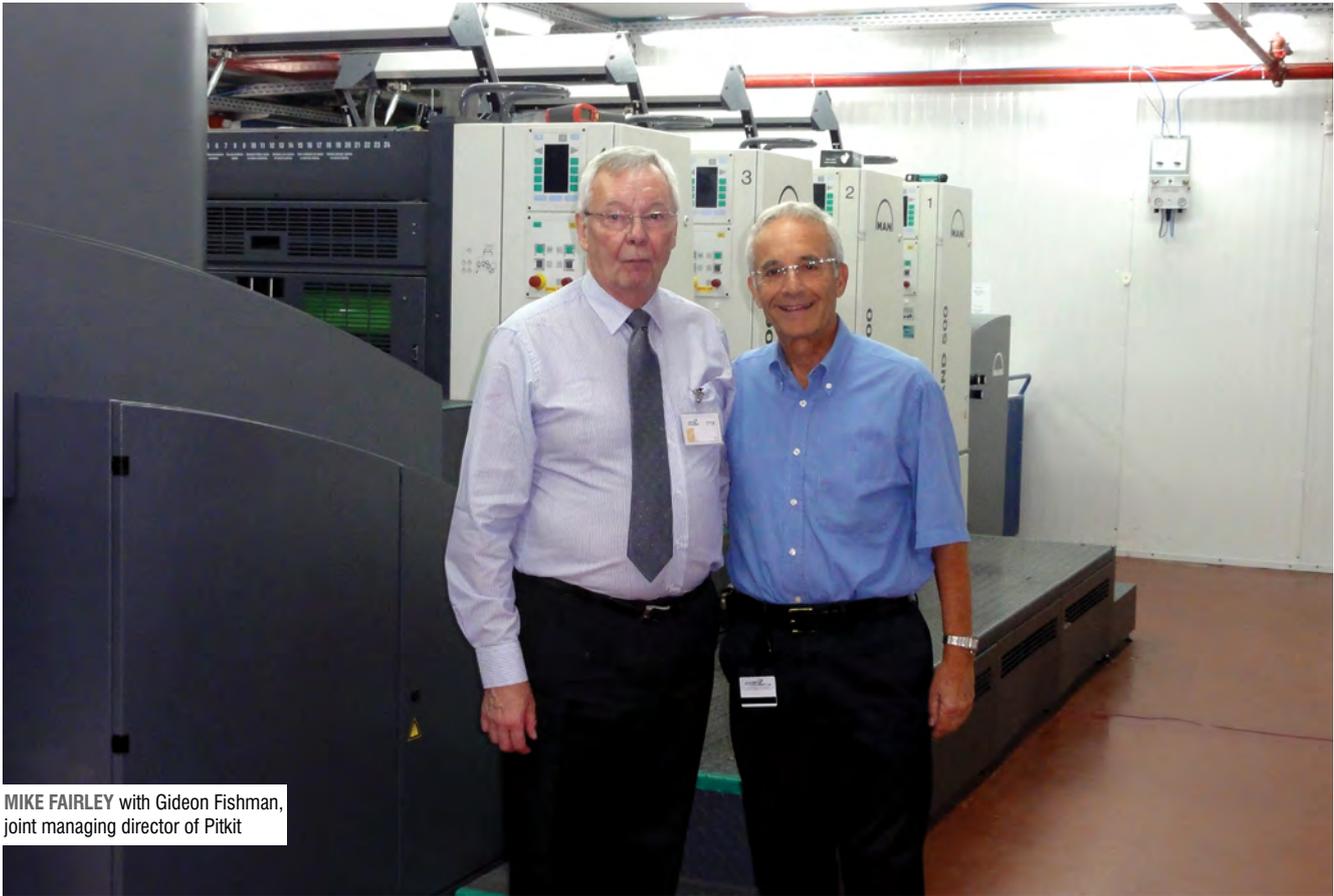
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MIKE FAIRLEY with Gideon Fishman,
joint managing director of Pitkit

Securing business beyond labels

MIKE FAIRLEY visits Pitkit in Israel to see how the company has developed a global reputation for high quality, specialized labels and unique security printing solutions

The label industry is changing fast. No longer just about printing labels, it's much more to do with providing new solutions, products and services.

Take Pitkit Printing Enterprises in Israel for example. One of the largest and oldest label manufacturers in the country, it not only manufactures high quality labels, in-mold labels and shrink sleeves for a wide range of industries – nationally and internationally – but has also become a global specialist in re-sealable labels, in anti-counterfeiting and brand protection solutions, in the development of secure, tamper-evident tape for sealing cartons and packages, in the manufacture and personalization of e-ID Cards, and even producing self-adhesive postage stamps for the Israeli government.

More recently, they have been moving into small-run folding cartons, writing software for security label viewing and authentication, and producing wine bottle capsules incorporating track & trace capabilities. They have even developed their own inkjet inks for authentication purposes incorporating special optical taggants.

Not unsurprisingly, Pitkit has invested a tremendous amount of effort and resources into research and development, particularly in secure printing technologies, in the process of gaining a reputation

LABELS&LABELING

as one of the worldwide leaders in this field. It also aims to do everything in-house, from a talented graphic department, through quality pre-production, and on to the latest top-of-the-line printing equipment – which today includes Gallus presses, a HP Indigo WS6000, a manroland 500 dry offset, ABG finishing systems, AVT inspection equipment and DCM slitting and sleeving machines. All pretty impressive.

Formerly a public company that traded on the Tel Aviv Stock Market, it decided to move back to a private-ownership – it is now 100 percent owned by the joint managing directors Gideon Fishman and Zeev Blajwajs – in 2011. This decision was partly due to the 'high on-going cost of complying with growing corporate legislation'.

Today the company employs some 90 people in a two-storey 4,000 sq meter factory in the Caesarea Industrial Park. The factory is certified to ISO 9002 (since 1992), and in compliance with UL, HAACP and BRC (ISA) standards.

The production of high quality labels using letterpress, screen, flexo, hot stamping or digital for cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, wines and beverages is the main core

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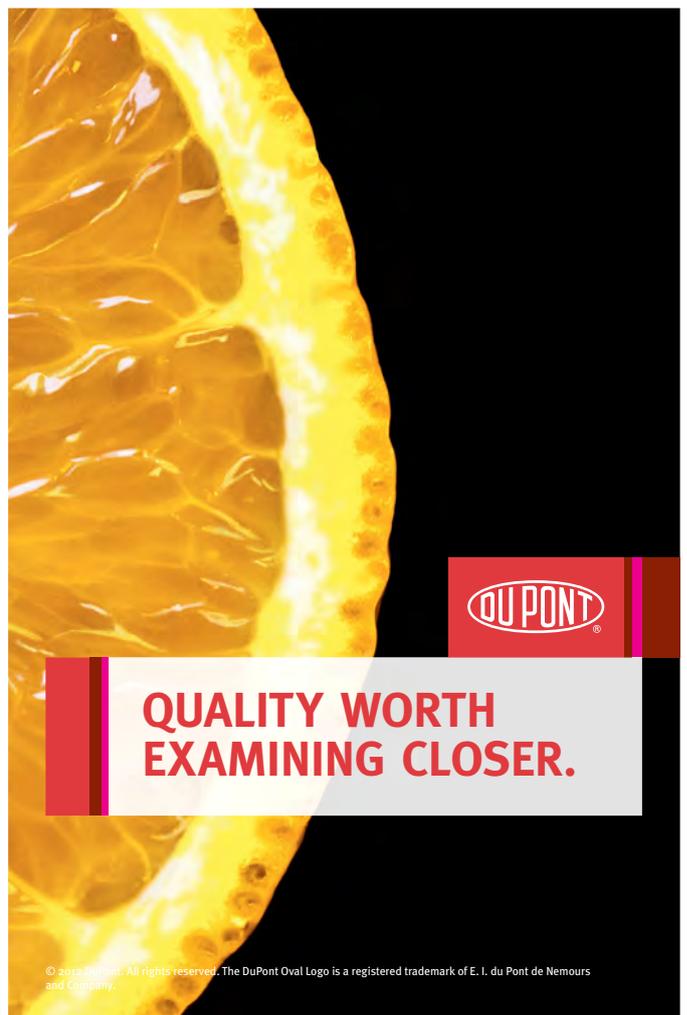
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JOINT managing directors of Pitkit, Zeev Blajwajs (left) and Gideon Fishman in the company's label solutions reception display area

of the company's business. Fishman explains, 'We also aim at adding value wherever possible, using the abilities we have developed and built-up over the years to print on the label adhesive or backing paper, the ability to neutralize part of the adhesive, to be able to provide added-value tamper-evident solutions, or for the printing of state-of-the-art security features. Pharmaceutical labels also pass through a computerized optical control system to provide 100 percent precision flawless printing.'

Interestingly, it also offers a unique technology to produce exquisite labels combining 3D with superb color effects for sales promotion, advertizing and security. This technology is based on an exclusive knowledge-sharing agreement with Dufex Technologies, a UK manufacturer of labels and tags, to produce colorful 3D images for a variety of applications.

However, it is in security printing that Pitkit has built an international reputation for incorporating state-of-the-art security features for brand protection, prevention of product diversion and brand counterfeiting, as well as ID theft and document counterfeiting.

One subsidiary, Bsecure, develops new security printing technologies and a further subsidiary, SecuSystem, has developed a revolutionary type of ink recognized by a special small optical handheld authentication reader developed exclusively for the purpose.

For brand protection – for pharmaceuticals, medical devices, machine and electronic parts, cosmetics, sports goods, consumer electronics, apparel, tobacco and cigarettes, wines and spirits, DVDs, CDs and videos, computer equipment, etc – the security ink can be printed as part of a security label or tag, or directly on the item or its packaging. Both inexpensive and convenient, the

SecuSystem is said to be the only machine-readable system to provide real counterfeit protection for large quantities of essentially identical items. The hand-held authenticator provides visual and audio notification and is powered by a standard battery.

The system has been used to guard government documents, famous brand name products, and transportation tickets for more than a decade. All SecuSystem applications are designed together with the customer to provide custom-made solutions. For track & trace applications hidden barcodes or other covert codes can be used to determine where the product was initially delivered by the manufacturer. This latter application requires digital printing.

For the apparel market using woven labels, SecuSystem dyes can be used to dye yarn, which is then incorporated into the weaving process. The resulting woven security labels retain the identifying graphics of the former, unsecured labels, while providing counterfeit protection. The authenticators can be calibrated to authenticate the labels and protect the brand against counterfeiting.

The inks can also be printed on cloth using the heat transfer process. They are first printed on heat transfer paper, and then transferred to the garment by heat transfer without any additional steps. The size, shape and color of the security features are determined by the required graphics. Minimum feature size is six mm in diameter. The existence of the SecuSystems signature is then checked with an authenticator.

Another recent innovation by Pitkit is the development of a revolutionary line of tamper-evident products, with the first three products in the family consisting of a tamper-evident security sealing tape, tamper-evident stickers, and stickers for

verifying suitcases and carry-on bags. The latter are used by security staff of airlines in Israel and around the world for placing on bags that have undergone various stages of security clearance.

The tamper-evident sealing tape was designed with a proprietary technology to ensure the secure sealing of cartons and varying types of packages. Once the package has been opened it becomes immediately apparent, being impossible to re-seal without it being obvious that it has been tampered with. A company logo can be printed on the tape, and it can be produced in relatively small quantities.

Pitkit has also developed tamper-evident stickers to guarantee the security of envelopes containing such things as legal or medical documents.

A further part of the company, Pitkit Smartech – jointly-owned by Pitkit Printing Enterprises and Belgium-based Zetes, developers of registration and enrolment systems – produces custom electronic smart cards based on highly durable polycarbonate. All production is performed in a specially designated high security area using high resolution printing as well as technologies and automated processes developed by the company. The resulting electronic smart cards are exceptionally rugged and integrate a wide range of overt and covert security elements, as well as proprietary level 3 security features that make them virtually impossible to replicate or alter. Both contact and contactless options can be provided.

In the e-ID card production process Pitkit incorporates state-of-the-art security features, such as Fortuna security software, micro-text printing, printing with Optically Variable Inks (OVIs), holograms, invisible inks and counterfeit-resistant security inks, Changeable Laser Images (CLI) and additional security means which can be authenticated only by using a dedicated device.

To guarantee the security of the system, every card owner will have a certified secret numeric code. The certificates for these codes are issued at every transaction and only the holder of the appropriate certificate will have access to the information which, as an extra security measure, will be encrypted before it is transmitted.

As can be seen, Pitkit is a quite unusual and enterprising company – even unique – not just for high quality label production (at which it excels) but for a range of high-tech security and specialized solutions that have gained a worldwide reputation. The message on all its promotional material is 'Technologically Advanced Printing for perfect results'. A message it certainly seems to live up to.



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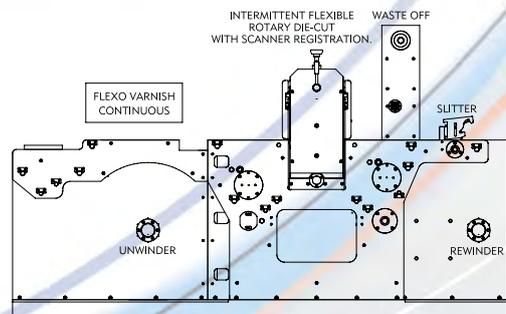
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INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR CREATIVE LABELS

Maximizing new investments

INVESTMENT in modern technology is wasted without changes in workflow and company culture, argues regular L&L contributor Alexander James of Harper Corporation

Every company's goal is to achieve an efficient level of productivity to remain competitive and profitable. Maximizing today's flexographic opportunities involves more than purchasing the latest available technology. When any new equipment is added to your environment it is imperative to find out from your supplier what is required to properly maintain and calibrate the equipment to ensure it is operating correctly. Once that is accomplished adjustments will also be required in the following areas:

- Internal culture change, requiring training for new workflow adjustments.
- Optimizing your converting process.
- Incorporating the new equipment in an efficient workflow.
- Controlling your processes by establishing measurable guidelines, tolerances and goals.

In this article I will go through each bullet point and cover areas where the adoption of information and guidelines provided from your vendor(s) play an equally important role as investing in the latest technology.

Internal culture change involves defining new guidelines and establishing training in each department to assure that investments made with new equipment(s) are maximized. Establish a higher level of accountability by mapping out the workflow from start to finish to incorporate each new piece of equipment. Once training programs are set, within each department it is also a good idea to incorporate an interdepartmental cross training schedule. This will give each group a better understanding of how the departments interrelate and depend on each other.

Optimizing your converting process comprises of defining your tolerances and specifications for graphics, anilox inventory, print cylinders, sticky-back or tape, inks and substrates. Having these stages optimized will enable you to achieve efficient productivity at a

consistent profitable level.

Graphics guidelines – your capability – this should encompass the file formats and resolution requirements for graphic files, raster or vector. Included in your graphic guidelines will be the lpi for your polymer; the minimum size for positive and reverse fonts; the color-trap tolerances (one color to another); the minimum acceptable line width; maximum number of printable colors; print width and repeat specs. This information can be kept internally or can be part of what you provide outside companies who will be submitting artwork for printing.

Defining anilox specification for your process, combination, solids, whites and varnishes should be the start of your optimization process. Take the time to know what anilox specification will give you your desired print targets. It doesn't matter if the target is density, dot-gain, $L^*a^*b^*$ color or G7 color method. The important point is to define the anilox specification as related to your print target numbers.

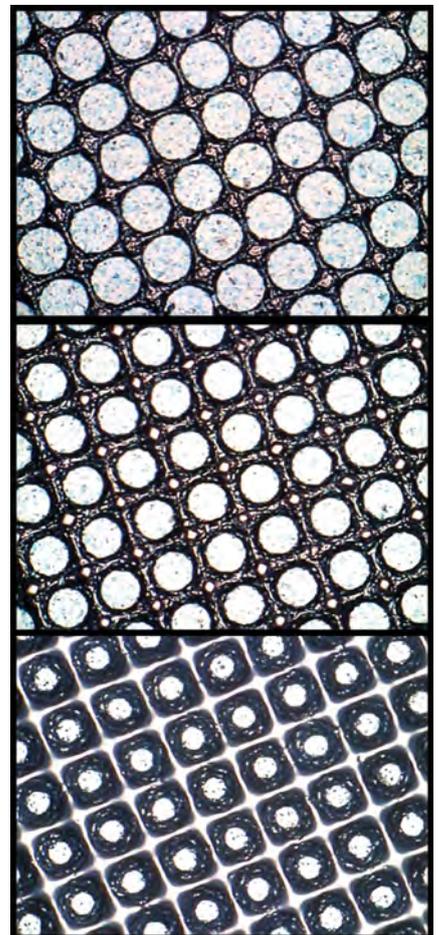
Once your targets are defined then you can establish your print tolerances. Your targets and tolerances will be your print production window for acceptability of quality goods. Incorporating the use of numbers in your workflow will result in improved consistency and will provide you an objective method for troubleshooting any print related challenges. Removing as much of the subjectivity from your process will always lead to an efficient production environment.

I once audited an operation and was making my way through the press room when a lead press operator commented, 'I hope you're not about to require us to start to writing down information. Our print processes are very complex and I don't have time to be writing stuff down. That will only slow me down.' Comments similar to that, show some of the challenges when wanting to adopt new processes and needing to make a change. Regardless, every print operation has the opportunity

to incorporate the use of numbers in their workflow. Proper information and documentation is key to print repeatability and consistency. As you work through each phase, your suppliers and vendors should be a key source for information.

Polymer imaging and plating department will be another area that requires inspection and verification for consistent processing. All imaging and proofing devices must have a calibration schedule. Every device will over time experience a drift in consistency and will require a linearization and calibration

FIGURE 1
POLYMER DOTS, 20 PERCENT,
50 PERCENT AND 75 PERCENT





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test to be conducted. Your vendor/supplier can assist with a calibration schedule. Plates should be inspected for correct imaging of graphic elements using a light table. Plates should be inspected for consistent plate thickness, plate relief, dot reproduction and correct content. Incorporate a plate-measuring device that can be used to measure your print targets – 75 percent, 50 percent, 20 percent and minimum dots – on each plate prior to going to the press. In the plating department all imaging and plate processing devices must have a cleaning and calibration schedule that is known and posted.

Going hand in hand with the polymer specification will be your tape or sticky-back selections. Define your tape (sticky-back) choices for process, combinations and solids/whites. Be sure to keep on hand only what is needed. You don't want eight choices lying around. The idea is to minimize your variables and limit your choices to your specific needs and processes.

Another area to address is the ink room, especially when matching line/spot colors and custom colors to meet your customer's expectations. Your workflow should incorporate a method for matching your ink color proof to your press prior to going to production. This can be accomplished by adopting an ink proofing system. In today's flexographic industry there are many different types of proofing systems, each with their pluses and minuses. Adopt a system that uses anilox inventory specifications which correlates to your on press anilox inventory. Having optimized your anilox specifications for your presses, you can do the same using your anilox inventory needed for an anilox proofing device. Adopting this proofing workflow can save hundreds of thousand of dollars annually in excess 'work-off inks.' The key to successfully accomplishing this efficient workflow is in the optimization stage – defining your anilox specifications for your print needs – process, combination, spot, whites and varnish – and carrying that information over to your ink proofing device for a measurable correlation – anilox specification (numbers) to color – CIE L*a*b* or L*C*H° numbers.

An optimized operation should have defined targets, measurable guidelines and defined tolerances. With an optimized operation and defined specifications and tolerances it becomes imperative to incorporate the numbers within your workflow and document the numbers at each phase of your operation. Running to numbers will

FIGURE 2 PHANTOM MOTORIZED QD PROOFER



enable you to become efficient, and have a greater ability to raise the bar of your operation. Incremental increase in quality will require tighter control throughout the entire process.

Communication always plays a vital part of any successful daily production, especially when changes are required. I audited a customer that had frequent down-time at the press. Analyzing the underlying reasons, apparently the prepress department periodically made the decision to separate different graphic elements in order to make it easier to print at a faster production speed. But changes made in the plating section were never communicated to the other departments. Once the job arrived at the press with the extra plate(s) mounted, there were no inks prepared for the extra plate(s) and the press operators were not

aware of the extra color(s). As a result they had not changed out the extra print station(s) required for the extra plate(s). In addition to waiting on inks, the press operators now had to make adjustments in their setup to account for the other color(s).

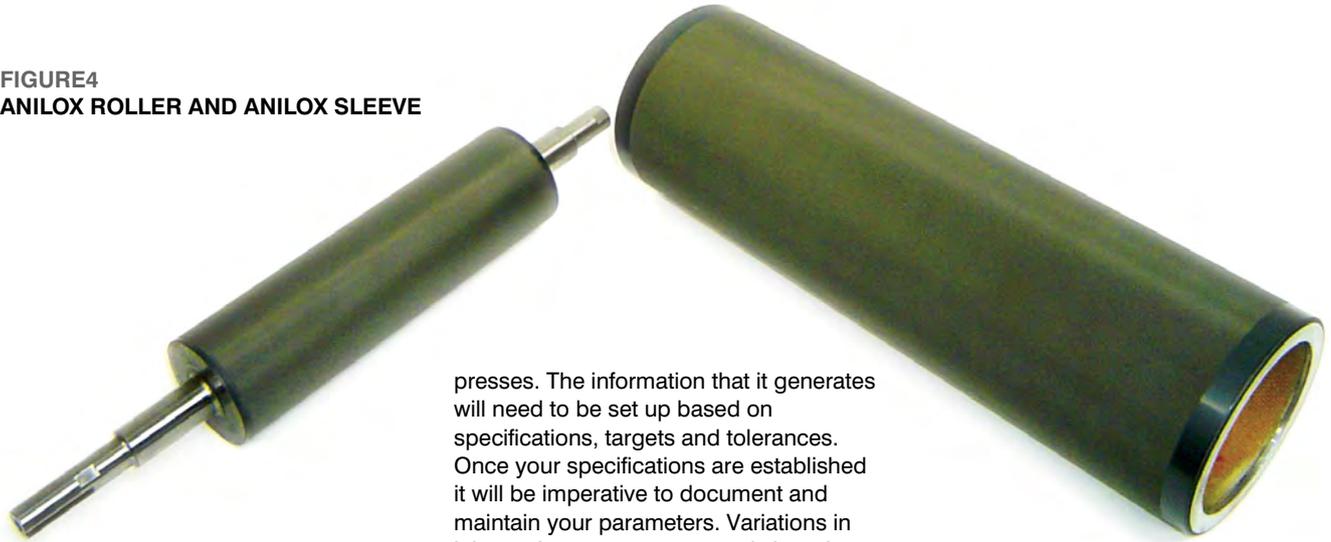
Similar scenarios are played out on a daily basis and can be alleviated by incorporating a numerical workflow.

In today's flexographic industry the press manufacturers continue to make technological enhancements to their presses that can greatly contribute to improved efficiencies and faster press speeds. Improvements can be seen in both the narrow web and wide web markets. Some of the technologies include anilox sleeves, servo drives, UV curing units, auto registration systems, turret die changing station, gravure

FIGURE 3 PROOFER DRAWDOWNS MEASUREMENT



FIGURE 4
ANILOX ROLLER AND ANILOX SLEEVE



station, screen station, inline color measurement systems and on-press color adjustment systems, just to name a few. Almost all have shorter web paths that lower your substrate waste percentages.

ANILOX SLEEVES

Anilox sleeves and traditional journal rollers both function the same but sleeves are quite different compared to traditional Anilox rolls. Sleeves are much lighter and except for the sizes larger than 52" in length, can be easily handled by one person. This difference in weight makes it easier to carry, but also easier to damage. I see a tremendous number of sleeves that have surface damage and damaged ends due to impact by contact with press part, carts, storage racks or another sleeve. The ease of handling sleeves makes them easier to damage.

SERVO DRIVES

Servo drives improve press performance and minimize press bounce. Along with the servo drives modern presses can print a wide range of substrate and difference gauge thickness. Having servo drives do not guarantee no barring marks or bounce marks, especially when NIP points are not adjusted. Tension adjustments for the various substrates will always be a factor for any press, servo or geared.

TURRET DIE CHANGERS

A turret-die changing station is a fantastic addition to modern presses. A key ingredient will be to properly plan scheduled jobs to be sure the correct dies are loaded. When scheduling jobs, coordination between the planning department and the production floor will ensure that proper die pattern is scheduled and loaded for each upcoming job.

INLINE COLOR MEASUREMENT

Inline color management systems are another fantastic addition to modern

LABELS&LABELING

presses. The information that it generates will need to be set up based on specifications, targets and tolerances. Once your specifications are established it will be imperative to document and maintain your parameters. Variations in inks such as temperature and viscosity will affect the results. Also any changes in impression, sticky-back and especially anilox specs will also affect the readings. Variations in tolerances will occur from time to time in order to meet the needs of your customer. When such variations do occur proper documentation will be critical to assure correct reproduction of the job when there is a repeat order. It is always unfortunate when your repeat orders are not quickly and efficiently produced. Most repeat orders should be your 'money-makers': after all you've already successfully printed the job once.

ANILOX CLEANER

Investing in an anilox cleaning device and a microscope will be necessary. The condition of your anilox inventory should be part of your product history. Ideally, standardizing your anilox inventory will enable you to know what specification will result in specific color targets. Having proper care and maintenance practices and documentation will be critical to ensure consistent on-press results.

All these technologies can be tremendously beneficial. Investing in any new technology will require adjustments to your workflow to assure that you are maximizing the potential gains of your investment. Once you have optimized your operation, you then have the opportunity to define the workflow guidelines to assure that any new technology is efficiently incorporated into your production environment.

- If it is a press, do what it takes to maximize your uptime by having all supplies correct and ready for every job prior to running.
- If it is a new plating/imaging technology, establish a calibration schedule to assure the device is performing consistently. Any and every imaging device will drift. Therefore, it is imperative to define and establish a posted calibration schedule.
- If it is a plate processing device

define a schedule for maintaining good fresh chemicals required for process/washing.

- If it is a change to new anilox specification – particularly for higher engraving specifications of 1000cpi-1400cpi – invest in a chemical bath cleaning system and a microscope for inspection of the anilox prior to use.
- If it is a new press, understand the what, why and how for each button required to maximize the operation of that equipment.

Investing in new technologies is a great idea, however the act of purchasing new equipment does not automatically guarantee success. Adopting and defining workflow guidelines for each new technological investment(s) will greatly improve your daily efficiency and contribute to your bottom line. Remember, your suppliers and co-vendors can be of great assistance in providing setup, calibration and maintenance guidelines.

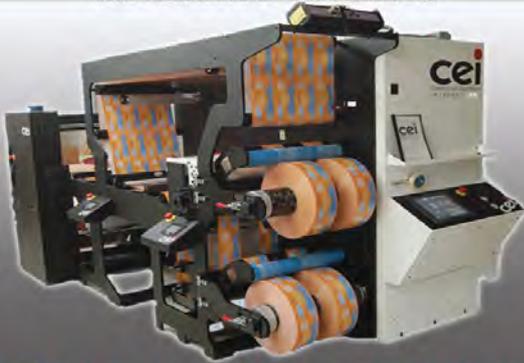
Maximizing today's flexographic opportunities is possible and, yes, it does involve change. If you are not willing to incorporate a defined numerical workflow, in order to get it right the first time, raising the bar of your operation will be a painful experience.

As Steve Jobs famously said: 'We had a fundamental belief that doing it right the first time was going to be easier than having to go back and fix it.'

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Alexander James is the director of Harper GraphicSolutions, the technical division of Harper Corporation of America, Charlotte, NC. Alex has a Master of Science degree in graphic communications from Clemson University and more than 20 years of experience in the – graphics industry. James has presented at numerous industry related events and travels globally assisting customers in establishing print workflows, improving efficiencies and productivity.

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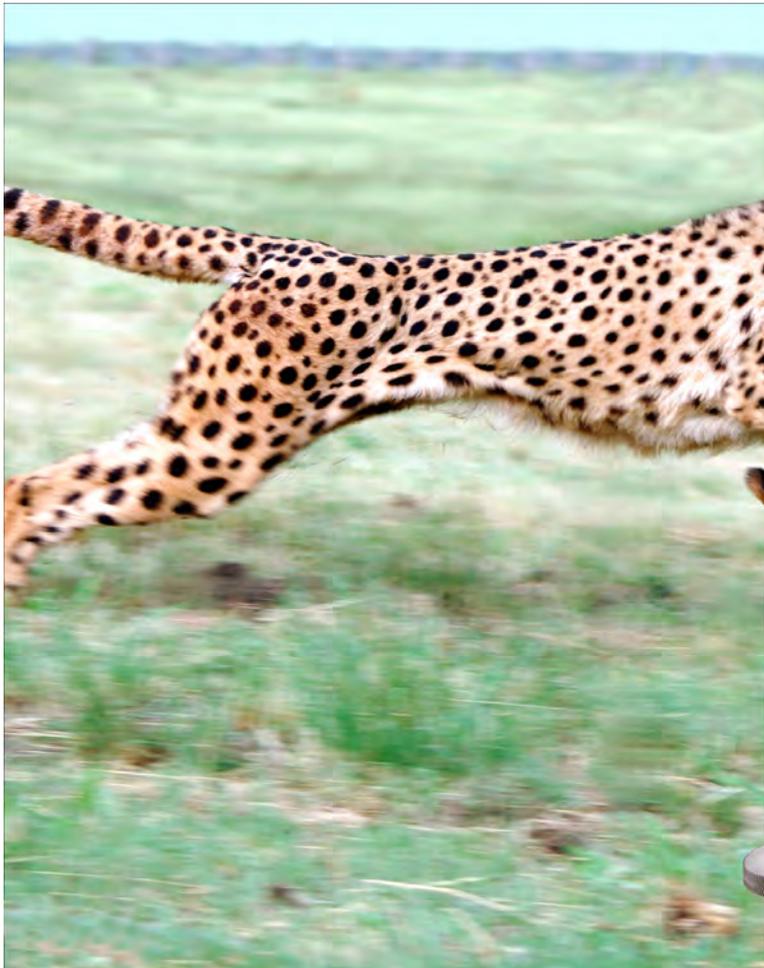
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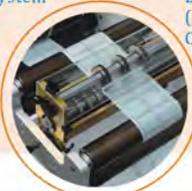
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Witch label flies off shelf

REDESIGNING an established wine label requires innovative design, excellent print technique and high caliber marketing, as Andy Thomas discovers

When 51 winegrowers in the Baden region's Acher valley established a cooperative in 1934, they called the entire vineyard location around Kappelrodeck 'Hex vom Dasenstein' ('Witch of Dasenstein') in honor of an ancient local legend.

Every year, more than 1.8 million wine labels with the distinctive witch branding are printed for the co-operative by local label converter Achertäler Druckerei.

This is not mere 'contract' work. Martin Bruder, the former owner of Achertäler Druckerei, was instrumental in renewing the 'witch' brand, bringing his friend the renowned Alsace artist Tomi Ungerer to Kappelrodeck to design labels for several special-edition red wines.

Last year the winegrowers cooperative decided to have all their wine and sparkling-wine labels redesigned. Graphic artist Rüdiger Ertel was commissioned to reinvent the witch

image in a series of designs which employed ornate, embossed serif lettering requiring the use of high end combination printing techniques.

Achertäler Druckerei selected a new Codimag Viva 420 Aniflo press for the work, operating alongside its existing Codimag Viva 340 press supplied by Codimag's German agent Chromos.

'The advantages of this printing press are obvious,' says Klaus Sedlmayr, head of printing and purchasing at Achertäler Druckerei. 'A 60 percent saving in waste paper and 30 percent time saving compared to conventional solutions. We also get offset quality at a width of 420mm, 100 percent reproducibility and standardization.

Above all, the four-cylinder offset short inking system guarantees constant and reproducible print quality for manufacturing self-adhesive labels.' The press is supplemented by two

magnetic cylinders and a Kocher+Beck GapMaster.

For printing high-precision tactile special effects with intricate lettering, a screen-printing unit was integrated along with Kocher+Beck's TecScreen 88W screen-printing material.

The Hex vom Dasenstein winery labels require precise and crisp printing of the serifs in the distinctive Galliard font. The TecScreen fabric allows the printing of tactile varnishes with a 40µm layer thickness.

Kocher+Beck also installed screen exposure and mounting equipment at Achertäler Druckerei, allowing the converter to produce a print-ready screen in less than an hour.

As with all wine label work, printing was to a very tight deadline for the first 1.8m labels, a job made more complex by the requirement for 30 special colors to cover the different ranges.

Company owner Günter Dresel says the new Aniflo press with the Kocher+Beck TecScreen material 'proved its technical abilities excellently during production of this order.'

Rebranding an established product always carries a small risk in terms of shelf recognition, but vintner Marco Königer proclaimed himself 'very impressed with the outstanding printing results. I am sure that the witch's rejuvenation will do justice to the wines of Hex vom Dasenstein.'



THE HEX vom Dasenstein winery labels



KOCHER+BECK'S TecScreen 88W screen



L-R: Nguyen Quach, Ricoh; Dylan Uboldi, Ricoh; Manuel Astorga, Gráfica Novaro; Juan Bermudez, Harper Corporation; Edgar Martinez, Acoban; Marco Silva, AW Die Engraving / Todo en Flexografía; Kay Avila, Natural Ink; Fernando Espitia, Avery Dennison; Guillermo Pérez, Esko; Alexis Cruz, RotoMetrics; Bernardo Rubio, Acpo; José García, UPM Rafflatac; Jonathan Cervantes, AGC Digital; Ricardo Rodríguez, HP Indigo México



L-R: Cesar Anaya, Papeles y Conversiones de México; Juan Bermudez, Harper Corporation; Jorge Martínez, Grupo Etimex



ACOBAN president Edgar Martínez

Acoban hosts Labelexpo conference

ACOBAN, the Mexican Association of Narrow Web Printers, hosted a conference for members and partners during Labelexpo Americas, with 98 people in attendance, writes James Quirk

The event allowed Acoban president Edgar Martínez, of Mexican converter Grupo Etimex, to outline the association's achievements in the two years since its previous meeting at Labelexpo 2010.

Membership has doubled in that time, said Martínez, while impressive initiatives have also taken place around the technical school founded in 2011 by Acoban and Conalep, the College of National Education for Professional Technicians. An annual work experience program, the Acoban Tour, was inaugurated this year, with students spending time with converter members. The association has also founded a scholarship fund, which each year will grant 26 scholarships ranging from 50 to 90

LABELS&LABELING

percent to aid promising students who are unable to pay for their studies.

Martínez thanked supplier partners Avery Dennison, Gráfica Novaro, Harper Corporation, Natural Ink, RotoMetrics and Todo en Flexografía for their support in 'making the project a reality'.

Acoban has hosted a number of workshops and discussion forums, and was an associate partner of and presented at Label Summit Latin America in Guadalajara earlier this year. The association has compiled a series of flexo training videos, and has begun a twice-yearly survey of members to gain statistics and information on trends in the market.



L-R: Hugo Cruz, James Quirk, Fabian Silva

SEE the video on LabelTV of Latin America editor James Quirk speaking to Fabian Silva and Keren Becerra of AmetiQ about how the association is working with the university to encourage the development the next generation of industry professionals.

L&L DONATES TECHNICAL BOOKS TO MEXICAN UNIVERSITY

LABELS & LABELING has donated a series of technical books to the Fidel Velazquez University in Mexico, writes James Quirk

The donation, which took place during Labelexpo Americas 2012 in Chicago, includes three copies each of Environmental Performance and Sustainable Labeling; Encyclopedia of brand protection and security printing technology; and Digital Label Printing – A 'How to' guide for the label converter; and four copies of the Spanish edition of the Encyclopedia of Labels and Label Technology.

L&L's Latin America editor James Quirk presented the books to Fabian Silva and Hugo Cruz of Mexican label association AmetiQ, who accepted them on behalf of the university.

Fabian Silva, president of AmetiQ, said: 'Thank you to the Tarsus Group for all its support for the industry in Mexico. On behalf of association's committee of directors and all our members, we thank you. We are sure that the students will find the books very useful with their highly educational content.'

Silva described how AmetiQ has partnered with the Fidel Velazquez University to promote training and development in the Mexican label industry. 'We have a partnership with the university whereby we as an

'Silva described how AmetiQ has partnered with the Fidel Velazquez University to promote training and development in the Mexican label industry'

association participate in various programs, in order to strengthen the flexographic and digital printing sectors in Mexico,' he said.

'We are donating a flexo press which will help the graphics arts students gain a specialization in flexography.

'We are also organizing a recruitment fair at the end of September, where we as companies will be recruiting students from the university – those who are graduating, and those who will continue to study – for a series of conferences.

'As suppliers in the industry we are always looking to increase the students' capabilities: we believe that the industry will develop through having better-trained technicians who will participate in the future in flexo and digital printing.'

THE INSIDER

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST LATIN AMERICA LABEL STORIES

LABELXPO ANALYSIS: LATIN AMERICA VISITORS UP 25 PERCENT

At Labelexpo Americas two years ago, Latin American label converters had made their presence felt as never before, writes James Quirk.

Visitor numbers from the region had not notably risen from the previous event – the difference had been felt thanks to their numerous orders of advanced machinery.

Before this year's event, a note of caution might have been forgiven. Despite strong label sector growth, Brazil's economic development has been slow since the middle of last year. In neighboring Argentina, meanwhile, currency controls and import restrictions are an unlikely precursor to the country's converters splashing money at a foreign trade show.

But their impact was even greater this year, as Labelexpo Americas 2012 saw a 25 percent increase in attendees from Latin America. The higher visitor numbers from the region – combined with their increasing purchasing power – had a tangible impact on the show, with a large number of exhibitors reporting interest – and often orders – from Latin American converters.

L&L spoke to the regional sales managers of the major press manufacturers during the event; all reported multiple installations in the region over the last 12 months, with Peru, Colombia and Venezuela the most often-cited destinations. Even Argentine converters are finding ways around the restrictions – one press manufacturer is currently installing three new machines in the country.

Mexico sent the largest delegation of label converters to Labelexpo from the region this year, with a 20 percent rise from two years ago. Brazil was next, sending the same number as in 2010. Colombia, in third, saw its attendance leap by 75 percent, while fourth-placed Argentina had a 21 percent rise. Peru saw visitor numbers increase by a whopping two and a half times; Venezuela and Chile had rises of 30 percent and 20 percent respectively. Of particular significance is the large increase in visitors from Peru and Colombia. The countries are two of the region's current success stories, with strong GDP growth, rising local demand and increasing exports all combining for strong development in their respective label markets.

As reflected in the increased number of Latin American attendees at Labelexpo, the region's label industry growth continues apace. AWA's recent analysis of the South American market estimated regional label volume growth to be nearly 12 percent in 2011 – the same figure as China, and three percent more than India.

A final thought – the region has seen extensive merger and acquisition activity in recent years, with companies such as CCL, UPM Raflatac, MultiColor, CTI Invest and Sato all investing to acquire local businesses. Industry gatherings such as Labelexpo Americas are always likely territory for the first whispered breaths of such deals; what M&A news will be seen before the end of the year?

AWA analyzes South American label market

DR WILLIAM LLEWELLYN, vice president and senior consultant, AWA Alexander Watson Associates, reveals the trends found in the company's latest analysis of the South American label market

'Labeling Markets: South American Market Study & Sourcebook 2012' is our third assessment of one of the world's fastest-growing label markets. It records current trends in the South American market by different label formats and materials, and technologies used, within the context of changing demographics and evolving infrastructure in the region's business arena.

SETTING THE CONTEXT

In 2010, label markets around the globe demonstrated a marked recovery from the lows of the prior two years and, in general, managed to transition to strong, positive growth. However, in 2011 – the period covered by the statistics in this report – signs of developing uncertainty in the label market were becoming globally apparent. While all-round growth in the label market had returned to lower, more reasonable and sustainable levels, it was tempered by the economic ambivalence in Europe, North America and elsewhere, which seems set to continue.

The mature label markets are showing limited growth, at or below GDP; and global 2011 growth rates, at 4.5 percent, are unquestionably buoyed by activity in the emerging label markets in China, India, and South America. While Asia continues to drive growth in label volumes, South America is unique in exhibiting high growth rates across all label formats – wet glue, pressure sensitive, sleeving, and in-mold – albeit from a lower starting point than other regions.

THE SOUTH AMERICAN MARKETS

Driven by the leading regional economy, Brazil, and to a lesser extent by Argentina, Chile, and Colombia, the South American label market evinces differences across its countries' varying preferences and levels of sophistication. It is not homogeneous. Estimated regional volume growth for 2011 at 11.5-12 percent conceals significant variations by country, from a high of 12.5-13 percent in Brazil to a low of around 7.5-8 percent for Chile. These growth rates compare to those of China and India, at 12 percent and 9 percent respectively, and are strong evidence of lively market growth in South America, both in label manufacturing and consumer demand.

THE LABELING TECHNOLOGIES

In terms of preferred label format, it is the glue-applied technologies – cold glue and wrap-around hotmelt glue-applied – that currently take the largest market share, 65 percent, across the region; and the technology is forecast to continue to deliver healthy growth in the medium term.

With less than half the overall volumes of glue-applied labels, pressure sensitive labels enjoy only a 26 percent overall market share in South America. However, the market continues to invest in narrow web flexo and, particularly, UV flexo, supported by the global press manufacturers – such as Mark Andy, Nilpeter, MPS, Omet and Gallus – who are today often able to provide local support. There is also growing interest in digital printing. Opportunities in pressure sensitive labels exist in particular in the area of added functionalities – especially security labels using anti-counterfeiting devices, and clear-on-clear film labels for beverages.

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Sleeving technologies have so far achieved only 3 percent market penetration, but are growing rapidly – driven by their container barrier protection and tamper-evident properties, the wide range of special effects offered – thermochromic, pearlescent, etc – and the innovative and complex container geometries which they can accommodate.

In-mold labeling – with its greater demands on machinery infrastructure – is still in its relative infancy but, following strong investment in 2011, is forecast to grow considerably in the medium term.

The many label technologies competing for volumes, particularly in the primary product application segment, are, of course, further challenged by the alternatives offered by direct-printed containers, cartons, and flexible packaging and pouches as decorated primary packages.

MATERIAL PREFERENCES

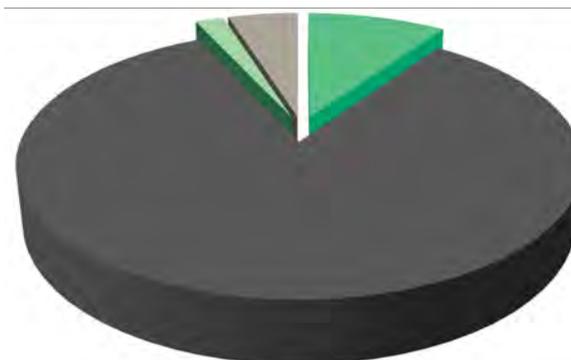
The majority of South American labels are manufactured using paper facestock. However, there are wide variations in the use of paper and film/other materials by label format. Sleeve labels are entirely dedicated to film materials; pressure sensitive labels are dominated by paper; and glue-applied labels (because of the influence of film wrap-around labels) use a combination of film and paper.

Overall, the use of film in label formats is increasing at a faster rate than paper materials, not only in pressure sensitive primary product labeling, but also in hotmelt wrap-around glue-applied labels; sleeve labels; and in in-mold labels, where the real potential is for film-based orientated IML-IM and IML-EB formats.

THE END USER MARKETS

Brazil's vibrant economy makes it the dominant label consumer in the region, with an estimated 50 percent of the market, followed by Argentina with 18 percent, and Colombia and Chile with 10 percent and 9 percent respectively. Label usage is very much focused on prime label applications – particularly and

SOUTH AMERICAN LABEL MARKET – APPLICATION SEGMENTATION BY VOLUME, 2011



■ VIP
■ Primary Product
■ Functional/Security
■ Promotional

Source: AWA

unsurprisingly in the beverage and food sectors. Shelf 'stand-out' is a major consideration in label design and print in a growing consumer-focused environment with increased spending power, and with the world's major retail chains – such as Walmart, Carrefour, Tesco and Metro – developing a presence.

Promotional labels take a larger role in South America than in many other regional markets, representing 5 percent of total label usage. They are heavily used to make special offers or present discounts by direct attachment to the product, and are often targeted at specific age groups or followers of events, such as the upcoming FIFA World Cup (2014) and Olympic Games (2016), both scheduled to take place in Brazil and representing major opportunities for promotional labeling across the region. Functional/security applications represent around 2 percent of the total South American label market, but this segment represents much of the higher-value-added and innovative labeling. It employs all the extant label technologies to a greater or lesser extent.

VIP and logistics applications – major market shareholders in the mature markets – have yet to fully develop in the region, and are another future opportunity area.

GLOBALIZATION

Already in this fast-developing marketplace there has been quite extensive M&A activity – much of which has involved foreign companies. Examples are CCL Label's acquisition of Prodesmaq in 2006 and ITW in 2007; UPM Raflatac's acquisition of Gumtac Auto-adesivos in early 2011;

and Multi-Color's acquisition in May 2011 of Collotype Labels in Chile and Argentina. As this aptly demonstrates, globalization continues apace; and multi-national companies across the spectrum can benefit from investing in South America – in terms of economies of scale, easy access to raw materials, and a huge domestic market.

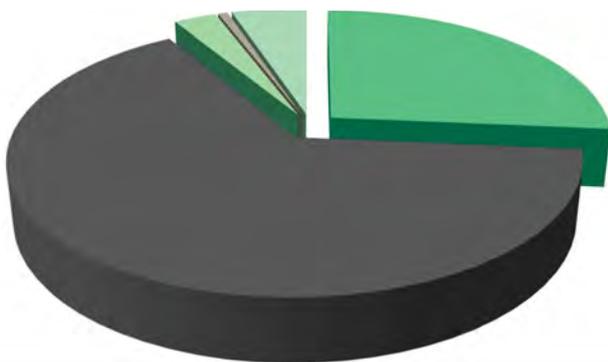
ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

In South America, against a background of developing economies and markets, the introduction of legislation relating to the environment has been ongoing since the turn of the century. Several countries have introduced legislation which shifts the responsibility for the management of end-of-life consumer products from governments to manufacturers, importers and retailers. Through the offices of the regional free trade association Mercosur, the member countries have worked towards creating harmonized environmental management programs for post-consumer waste, including 'take-back' programs and consumer awareness campaigns.

IN CONCLUSION

There can be no doubt that South America represents a truly dynamic economic region, offering potential in terms of an enormous domestic market – around 6 percent of the world's population – and a huge opportunity for exporting manufactured goods. And it is a fact of life that manufactured goods require labels, so the dynamism of this growing economy certainly extends to the product identification and decoration technologies, across the entire value chain.

SOUTH AMERICAN SHARES BY LABELING TECHNOLOGY 2011



- Pressure sensitive
- Glue applied
- Sleeve labels
- IML
- Other

Source: AWA

HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST LATIN AMERICA LABEL STORIES

TRELLEBORG ACQUIRES PRINTING BLANKETS BUSINESS IN BRAZIL

Trelleborg has acquired Printec, the printing blankets business of Day Brazil SA. The investment comes at a time when the organization's long-term strategy to invest in markets with encouraging growth potential will also see it open a new facility in the region in October.

With a strong presence in Latin America and the US, as well as a production facility in Brazil, Printec has annual sales of USD \$38.2 million and approximately 160 employees.

'The acquisition of the established industry leader, Printec, supports Trelleborg's long-standing strategy to strengthen our leading positions within attractive and profitable market segments,' said Dario Porta, president of Trelleborg Coated Systems, which is part of the Trelleborg Engineered Systems business area.

'The graphics industry is an attractive industry, and it is developing in new directions, not least in Latin America, and as such, an increased presence in this region was central to our growth strategy.'

Thomas Linkenheil, president of Printing Solutions at Trelleborg, said: 'We believe the addition of the Printec business, which already has a great collection of advanced products, to the Trelleborg brand, will ensure that we are best placed to support our customers, now and in the future. And we are confident that the increased local production of high-performance printing blankets for the graphic industry through this acquisition will strengthen our position as global leader and business partner in Latin America and in the US.'

MEXICAN CONVERTER IMPRESIÓN Y DISEÑO INVESTS IN XEIKON 3500

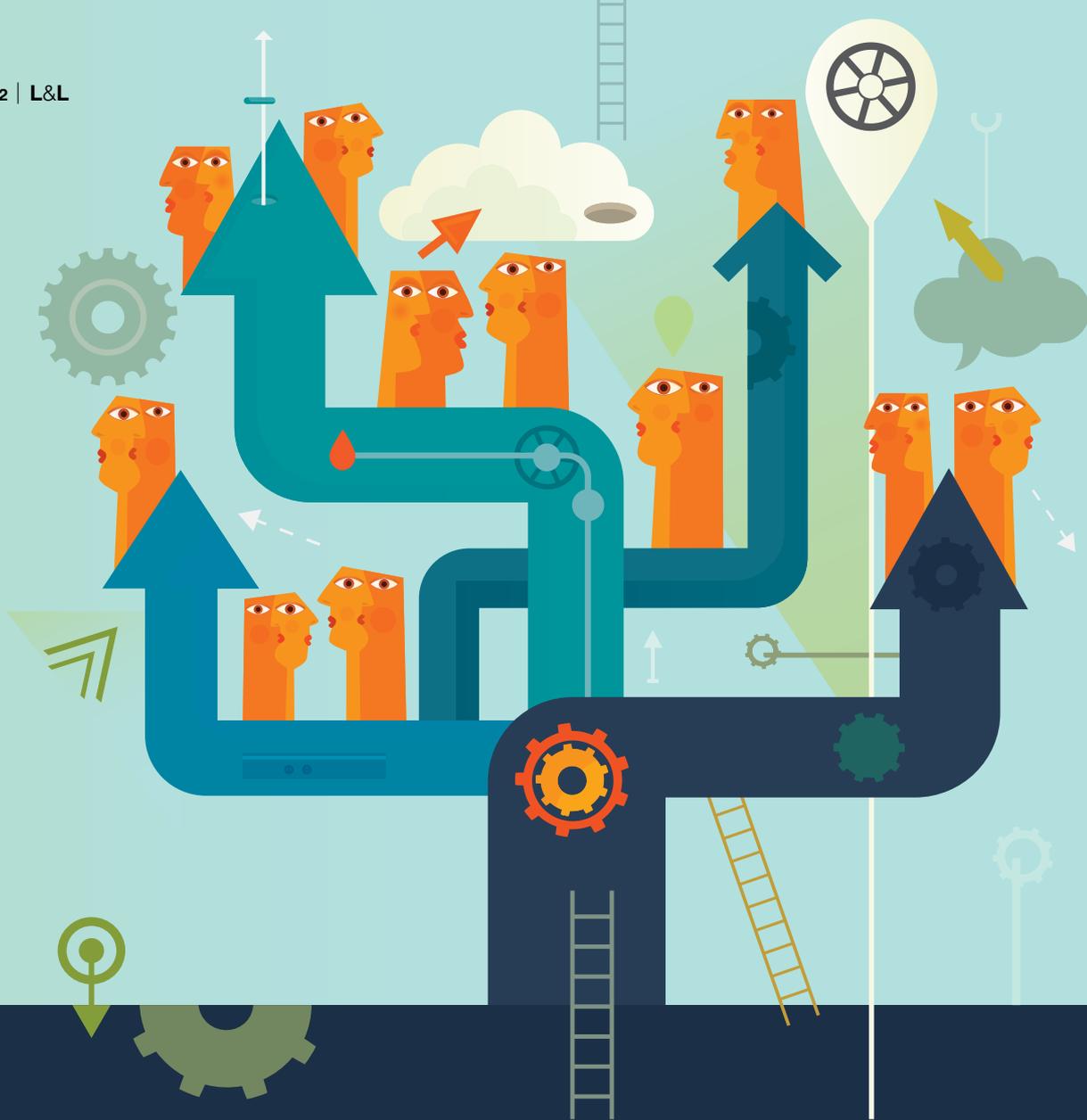
Impresión y Diseño de México, a label converter based in Guadalajara, has purchased a Xeikon 3500 digital press.

The Xeikon 3500 is the flagship model of the Xeikon 3000 Series of digital label presses, which was launched in 2010. The Xeikon 3500 runs at a maximum speed of 19.2m/min (63 feet/min) at 5 colors, and at a maximum width of 516mm (20.3 inches).

'We are dedicated to focus on the needs of our customers,' said Angel Calderon, president and owner of Impresión y Diseño de México. 'We already operate two digital presses, but feel that the Xeikon 3500 will provide our business unique benefits.'

This press has full rotary capabilities, which ensures a high level of productivity, and is unrivalled in terms of width. There is no need to coat standard label substrates when printing on a Xeikon press, which positively impacts my operational cost. This investment will enable Impresión y Diseño de México to expand our offering to our customers and to grow our business further.'

Filip Weymans, Xeikon's director of segment marketing and business development for labels and packaging, added: 'We are delighted that Impresión y Diseño de Mexico chose Xeikon to complement and enhance their stable of digital presses. More and more label converters in Latin America are discovering the flexibility and productivity of the Xeikon 3000 Series. We support our customers with our own local service hub in the region, which was installed nine months ago.'



Comarbel moves to expand its niche

RECENT INVESTMENT in presses from Nilpeter and HP Indigo has allowed Colombian converter Comarbel – only printing labels since 2005 – to tackle higher quality work. James Quirk reports

Bogota-based Comarbel's move into flexo label printing in 2005 is representative of the boom in the technology in Colombia at that time. Seven years later, flexo's prevalence in the local industry has created a highly competitive market – one in which Comarbel, with recent investment in presses from Nilpeter and HP Indigo allowing it to tackle higher quality work, is well positioned to thrive.

Brothers Rodrigo and Juan Carlos Arbelaez, manager and assistant manager respectively, have a keen sense of their company's position in the market. Comarbel's early years were spent focusing on smaller brands, targeting work that could be effectively carried

out by its first flexo presses, and which was not being handled by the country's largest converters.

The apprenticeship has now been served. Comarbel is combining its new technology with a range of value-added services in order to target bigger brands with higher quality work and increased productivity.

FLEXO MOVE

Comarbel was founded in Bogota, the country's capital, 30 years ago by the brothers' father, Rodrigo, who imported steel for distribution in Colombia and exported typical Colombian products to expats living in the US.

When Rodrigo's sons joined the

company in 1996, Comarbel began to dedicate itself to importing prime materials and paraffin, which was used in cellophane paper production. The material was sold to offset printers. When customers started requesting BOPP, Comarbel began importing and selling the material in 2001.

Wanting to begin in-house production, and encouraged by the increasing local demand for the technology, the company decided to diversify into roll to roll flexo printing in 2003 – thereby not competing with its offset clients, to whom it continued to sell materials.

'Between 1999 and 2008, Colombia, previously dominated by offset, had the highest growth in any flexo market in



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THE shop floor at the factory in Bogotá



L-R: Juan Carlos and Rodrigo Arbelaez with the Nilpeter FB 3300

Latin America,' says Rodrigo Arbelaez. 'Between 1999 and 2003, it was an explosion.'

A separate division was created and the brothers began studying in earnest, gathering information from books, trade magazines and exhibitions, and seeking advice from industry suppliers. Rodrigo attended training courses in Mexico and the US.

'The learning curve was very hard,' admits Juan Carlos Arbelaez. 'Many flexo converters already had printing experience with offset technology. Our offset market knowledge helped us, but we had no previous experience in printing. It took us four years to reach the point where we felt really confident.'

After two years of initial study and preparation, Comarbel installed its first flexo press in 2005, an 8-color machine with 16in web width and lamination, cold stamping and die-cutting capabilities, plus inline inspection from Erhardt + Leimer. Each print station is equipped with drying units, the final of which is UV curing. In 2008, a second machine of the same specifications was installed.

Self-adhesive labels were the first to be produced, followed quickly by shrink sleeves, for which Comarbel installed equipment from Karlville. More recently, the company has begun wraparound label production.

'With those first two presses, we targeted brands with smaller consumption, who we felt were being overlooked,' says Rodrigo Arbelaez. 'The tactic worked. With this knowledge under our belts, we wanted to move into higher quality markets.'

The desire to compete in higher quality markets led to the installation last year of a servo-driven 8-color Nilpeter FB 3300 flexo press with a 13in web width, equipped with UV curing throughout the print stations, die-cutting and inline inspection from BST.

'We were looking for a servo-driven press which would run more efficiently

and produce less waste,' explains Juan Carlos Arbelaez. 'Previously we had been unable to produce full UV labels, so this was also important. The Nilpeter press was bought in order to increase productivity and to start serving bigger brands. Because of the competitive nature of the Colombian market, it is important to be able to offer added value.'

Rodrigo Arbelaez says Comarbel was also keen to reduce its reliance on smaller brands whose orders could be erratic in length and regularity. The company routinely processes around 175 different jobs a month.

Food and beverage represents Comarbel's biggest end user sector, at 40 percent of production. Cosmetics follow with 30 percent, and household goods take up the majority of the remainder. The company is seeing particular growth in the cosmetics and beverage sectors, while shrink sleeve applications are also on the rise.

Comarbel houses 89 employees at its 2,200 sqm facility. Running two shifts, it had a production capacity of 220,000 sqm a month before the recent addition of the HP Indigo digital press (see boxout).

Other equipment includes an offline inspection rewinding system, which operates at 250m/min. Two slitter rewinders of 50in web width, running at 300m/min, handle BOPP for the materials division as well as flexo-printed labels. Self-adhesive labelstock is mainly supplied by local manufacturer Arclad.

ADDING VALUE

Having installed more advanced technology, Comarbel has set its sights on offering value-added products and services to its clients in an effort to differentiate itself in its competitive local market. 'We are working to educate the brands and to position ourselves as their partner, not just a label supplier,' says Rodrigo Arbelaez. The company works with design agencies to accompany

brand managers through the whole process. Digital pre-press services are also a target for the near future.

Comarbel has also begun to target environmental sustainability as a further added-value offering to its clients, developing a line of compostable shrink sleeve labels. 'We were keen to show our customers that we can offer a more environmentally friendly solution,' says Juan Carlos Arbelaez. 'Again, we are aiming to differentiate ourselves.'

Comarbel does not export its labels – an emerging middle class in Colombia has fuelled a rise in local demand. But export is planned for the future, with Venezuela, Central America and the Caribbean all likely targets. 'We want to go where the big guys aren't going,' says Rodrigo Arbelaez.

Comarbel also aims to benefit from the recent free trade agreement established between Colombia and the United States. The Arbelaez brothers see potential for labeling niche local products intended for export, in a similar fashion to their father's business 30 years ago. Some of the company's clients already have plans to export to the US, including a manufacturer of exotic soft drinks.

DIGITAL INVESTMENT

During L&L's visit to Comarbel, the Arbelaez brothers spoke about their interest in adding digital technology to their portfolio. Shortly afterwards, at Drupa, they invested in an HP Indigo WS4600 digital press, which was installed shortly before Labelexpo Americas. With a maximum web width of 13in, the press can run pressure sensitive label and filmstock of 12 to 350 microns. It runs up to 30m/min in one or two color mode, and up to 15m/min with four colors.

'We purchased the digital press to serve markets with ever shorter runs and ever increasing SKUs' says Juan Carlos Arbelaez. 'The technology provides a balance that gives us an acceptable printing speed and a web width that allows us to handle different types of work, for example in short run flexible packaging and shrink sleeves.'

'The HP Indigo press will help to produce the smaller runs that our first flexo presses had been handling, but with less waste, of course, as well as the other benefits of digital technology,' adds Rodrigo Arbelaez.

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(L-R) DON NOLAN, president of the Materials Group at Avery Dennison Corporation; Steve Lee, vice president of technology, RotoMetrics; Mike Fairley and Clive Smith, Labelexpo Global Series



SEE the video of Mike Fairley congratulating RotoMetrics' Steve Lee
<http://www.labelsandlabeling.com/label-tv/general-interest/interview-steve-lee-rotometrics>



(L-R): Mike Buystedt, director of sales, Flint Group; Fernando Gabel, managing director Baumgarten; Art Yerecic, chairman TLMI and president Yerecic Label



SEE the video of James Quirk speaking to Fernando Gabel at
<http://www.labelsandlabeling.com/label-tv/general-interest/interview-fernando-gabel-baumgarten>



(L-R) Niklas Olsson, global brand manager of Flint Group Narrow Web and Amir Dekel, vp marketing at AVT

INDUSTRY CELEBRATES AWARD WINNERS

THE LABEL INDUSTRY came together on 11 September to celebrate some of the sector's leading companies and individuals at the Label Industry Global Awards 2012. Held as part of Labelexpo Americas 2012, the ceremony took place before an audience of 500 at the Aragon Ballroom in Chicago.

Steve Lee, vice president of technology at RotoMetrics, received a standing ovation as he was announced as the recipient of the R Stanton Avery Lifetime Achievement Award, which is sponsored by Avery Dennison. Lee, over a 35 year career, has been a pioneering force in the design and manufacture of rotary LABELS&LABELING

tooling. The judging panel commended Lee for being instrumental in growing RotoMetrics from a small, low-tech die supplier in a fledgling industry into a global, full-service supplier of a broad portfolio of products designed around converter needs.

Lee was also singled out for his passion

and dedication in getting the industry to work together to develop and spread the use of pressure sensitive labels worldwide. He has played an active role in industry associations, especially TLMI, where he has served on the board multiple times and acts as chairman of the TLMI Annual Label Awards

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(L-R) Stefan Nolte, advertising manager G&K Techmedia; Steve Katz, editor Label & Narrow Web; Dick Joustra, CEO Stork Prints Group; Andy Thomas, editor Labels & Labeling



(L-R) Don Nolan, president of the Materials Group at Avery Dennison; Filip Weymans, Xeikon marketing director Label & Packaging; Roger Pellow md Tarsus Labels & Packaging group



AN audience of 500 gathered to celebrate the winners of the Global Label Awards at Labelexpo Americas in Chicago

Competition. The panel also underlined that his guidance in developing new solutions has maximized the ability of converters to produce world-class products for their end users.

The Label Industry Award for Continuous Innovation – sponsored by Labels & Labeling, Label & Narrow Web and NarroWebTech – was won by Stork Prints from the Netherlands. With over 25 years' experience in inkjet printing for the graphics and textile printing industries, its long standing record of innovation and powerful distribution network enables Stork Prints to add significant value to its customers processes and products, according to the judging panel.

The Label Industry Award for New Innovation was presented to Advanced Vision Technology (AVT). AVT took the accolade for its SpectraLab, a new add-on module to the AVT inspection platforms. It allows converters to make in-line spectral measurements to deliver improved efficiencies and enhance process control.

Baumgarten scooped the Converter Award for Sustainability/Environmental Responsibility, sponsored by Flint Group. A major player in the Brazilian label and package printing market, the company has put sustainability at the heart of its business.

Avery Dennison took the Green Award in recognition of its company-wide drive to make its products and manufacturing processes more environmentally friendly. Championing sustainability, the company has introduced a number of initiatives to increase recycling compatibility for the pressure sensitive adhesive market.

Mike Fairley, chair of the judges, commented: 'Our congratulations go to all of the winners and finalists of the Label Industry Global Awards 2012. The quality of entries once again exceeded our expectations and judging across all of the categories was very close. The awards highlight the significance of innovation across the labeling industry and it is important that we recognize these true pioneers for their hard work and commitment to best practice. Due to the nature of our sector, continual improvement and advancement is vital to ongoing growth and success. We hope these accolades prove inspirational and go some way to encouraging others and the next generation of suppliers and converters to achieve similarly high standards.'

L A B E L E X P O

A M E R I C A S 2 0 1 2

L A S E R D I E - C U T T I N G

A V A L U E - A D D E D T E C H N O L O G Y

MIKE FAIRLEY reviews the Laser Die-Cutting Workshops held alongside Labelexpo Americas and summarizes what the technology can bring to today's label converting plants

Laser die-cutting of self-adhesive labels is not new. The first machines showing the technology at Labelexpo exhibitions goes back to the mid-1990s. These were not only cutting the label to shape, but laser etching and also cutting windows out of the release liner. They certainly attracted a lot of interest, but were seen as rather slow and expensive at that time, as well as prone to causing brown edges to the die-cut face material, and not always waste stripping effectively.

How things have changed. Laser die-cutting technology for labels today is far superior to that of 16/17 years ago. It's faster, more efficient, has a higher cut quality and, if used for the right kinds of applications and markets can certainly both reduce a converter's costs and create value-added opportunities. Yet laser label cutting has still been somewhat slow to gain mass adoption in label converting plants – perhaps because of its early perceptions.

It was to address these issues and better highlight what laser cutting technology can offer converters that

LABELS&LABELING

Labelexpo introduced its Laser Die Cutting Technology Workshops at the 2012 show held at the Donald E Stephens Convention and Conference Centre, Rosemont, Chicago from September 11 to 13.

Developed over a period of six months or so in the run up to the show, the challenge was to bring a number of laser cutter manufacturers together to set-up and run the same cutter profiles on the same substrates, from the same files and MIS, so that label converters could compare and assess the resulting samples from each machine. Indeed, see just what modern laser cutter technology can achieve, what materials can be converted, how pre-printed reels can be re-registered, what kind of complex shapes can be cut, and how this impacts on cutter speed. Certainly the likes of this exercise has never been attempted before.

The laser cutter participants and machines in the Workshop sessions came from: Spartanics with their L1000Finecut High Speed Laser, with

a working width of 350 mm; ABG International with the Sabre Extreme Twin laser and a working width of 340 mm; Delta Industrial Services with its Delta Edge Laser Technology and a web width of 330 mm; and SEI Spa with its Spa Label Master, again with a web width of 330 mm.

The aim of the Workshop sessions was fourfold:

- To set-up and run each laser cutting machine to optimize die-cutting performance and register.
- To understand how pre-printed webs and workflow solutions enable re-registration through laser cutters.
- To find out how to maximize value with complex shapes, cut-outs and laser etching capabilities.
- To compare laser die-cutting results from four different laser cutter manufacturers.

On each day of the show, the four laser cutter manufacturers and machines, in workshop sessions run by a neutral moderator, each set-up and ran four



THE LASER DIE-CUTTING WORKSHOP featured machines from Spartanic, ABG, Delta Industrial and SEI

different die-cut jobs, covering prime product labels on a UPM Raflatac polypropylene face material with PET liner, industrial labels on a Flexcon metallized film, blank label shapes on a Green Bay Packaging white labelstock and paper liner, as well as a free-style label of their own choice. Not only were there different jobs, but the label shape and size changed during the run of each job.

Origination for all the set label designs and die-cut files was provided by Esko using their Esko Suite 12. For the prime labels a Cerm MIS system supplied information from estimate to order via JDF to Esko and Xeikon – who pre-printed the prime labels on a Xeikon 330 with inline D-Coat, and also provided a software file to each cutter manufacturer to drive cutting and cutting changes, as well as the MIS supplier.

The origination for the industrial labels, pre-printed on metallized film, was again undertaken using Esko Suite 12, this time in association with EFI Radius and with EFI Jetrion. Step-and-repeat of the designs on the web was done by EFI, including creation of eye-marks for cut-to-print registration for the laser cutter machines, information to indicate changes of logo and cutter during the run, as well as sequential number by laser. The labels were pre-printed on a Jetrion 4900 UV inkjet system, with Jetrion providing a laser cutter software file to each cutter manufacturer to drive cutting, cutting changes and sequential

numbering.

A range of variations in blank die-cut label shapes to show some of the complex shapes (including a 40-point star) capable of being produced by laser systems, again originated by Esko and including eye-marks for cut-to-sheet registration, text changes to indicate participating companies, and with the MIS workflow undertaken by Cerm, were prepared and pre-printed on a Mark Andy Performance Series press.

Each cutting machine manufacturer also produced their own free-style label to further enhance just what can be produced on sophisticated laser cutters today. These include complex cut-out shapes, label batching across and along the web, sequential laser etching, and much more. In addition, laser cutter participants were asked to complete a questionnaire, with the answers incorporated into a sample and information pack that attendees could take away. Details of the questionnaire answers are reproduced in this article.

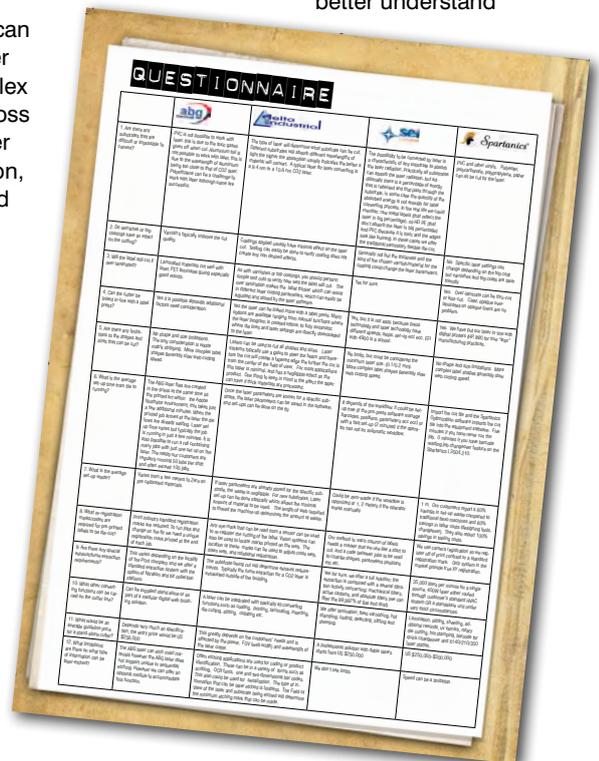
Sessions throughout the show were pretty well attended and created much interest. Undoubtedly the profile of laser cutter technology was significantly enhanced and many more converters will look to invest in laser cutters in the future. So what was learned from these Workshops?

Certainly all the participating

companies will have benefited.

Substrate suppliers will have a better understanding of what materials can be successfully cut with a laser, the quality of cutting achieved, and had the opportunity to qualify their substrates through a range of different laser cutting machines.

Esko in turn, has been able to work with the MIS companies, and a number of different digital and conventional press manufacturers – as well as the four different cutter manufacturers – to better understand



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"Purchasers of laser cutting systems in the future can certainly be assured that the Workshops have created a greater pool of knowledge and information amongst these industry suppliers that will be of benefit to the industry in the years ahead"

the requirements for eye-marks for cut-to-print and cut-to-sheet registration, the incorporation of information for changes of logos and cutter profiles during running, the inclusion of sequential numbering information, and the provision of the necessary software file for each cutter manufacturer.

Purchasers of laser cutting systems in the future can certainly be assured that the Workshops have created a greater pool of knowledge and information amongst these industry suppliers that will be of benefit to the industry in the years ahead. But what will converters have learnt from the Workshops? Quite a lot if the message from the demonstrations, presentations and discussions during the show are anything to go by.

So let's summarize some of the understandings and key benefits of laser cutting technology that were demonstrated at the Workshops:

- Firstly, the technology offers 100 percent savings in cutter tooling. No dies are required, whether flat, rotary or flexible. If a converter has enough die and size changes a day then laser cutting very soon starts to become a very viable option.
- Tool-less laser production offers multiple depth cutting possibilities and can include kiss-cutting, thru-cutting and perforation in one pass.
- Converters using laser cutters estimate that the savings in set-up waste can be as high as 60 percent. Undoubtedly a key benefit in today's challenging sustainability environment.
- Existing converter users also estimate that there can be as much as a 40 to 60 percent saving in labor costs – a significant element of any converters costing.

- Lasers today can be used to cut all shapes and sizes. There are generally no size limitations, except that more complex shapes will lower the web cutting speed.
- With few exceptions, lasers can cut most types of substrates. PVC is not possible due to the toxic gases given off when cutting. Aluminum foil is also not possible as its wavelength is too close to that of a CO₂ laser. Otherwise, pretty much anything.
- Apart from cutting, laser systems can be used to etch OCR fonts, one and two dimensional bar codes, serial/sequential numbers and codes. The type of information that can be laser-etched is limitless – and all in one pass with the cutting operation.
- Laser cutters can be used offline with re-registering of webs, or linked inline to digital or conventional label presses.
- There are major possibilities to provide added-value solutions with laser that cannot be achieved with conventional die-cutting.
- When using digital printing from inkjet or Xeikon presses there can be an unlimited print and cut length with laser cutting to provide extended label/banner opportunities.

- Again with inkjet/Xeikon technology jobs can be batched across or along the web to maximise short-run production.

Put together, laser cutting can play a valuable part in a modern label converting plant, working with conventional and digital printing outputs to offer materials and cost efficiencies, reduced waste, added-value opportunities, sequential coding and numbering, and more complex shapes and lengths. The technology has a valuable role to play in the future and more label converters should be evaluating the benefits and opportunities when drawing up their investment plans.

Discussions are now in hand to repeat the Laser Die Cutting Workshops at Labelexpo Europe in 2013, bringing the knowledge, expertise and converter benefits seen in Chicago to label converters in not only Europe but also the hundred or so other countries that converters come from to Brussels. Although still a long way off, it's certainly worth putting a bookmark in your diary now. Here's a technology that can help to make a converting business more efficient, more cost competitive, and certainly able to benefit from new added-value opportunities and solutions.



THE prime label and industrial label designs for the laser die-cut workshop



NILPETER'S new FB3 press



REVOLVER die changer integrated on FB3



NILPETER FA-4*



NILPETER Air Control Satellite (ACS) for wireless press operation

PRODUCTIVITY KEY TO FLEXO DEVELOPMENT

LABELLEXPO AMERICAS showed the flexo press industry concentrating on raising productivity. Andy Thomas reports

With flexo press technology reaching something of a plateau in terms of speed and servo drive integration, manufacturers are now concentrating on streamlining workflow, reducing waste and automating press controls. In particular they are turning their attention to the die-cutting end of the press.

The only global introduction at the show took place on the Nilpeter stand with the debut of two new press models and a flatbed hot foil and embossing unit.

The FB-3 press represents the latest evolution of the FB3300 machine line and packs a lot of punch into a compact frame. Running at a top speed of 228 m/min (750 ft/min) on a web width of 350 mm (13.75 inches), the fully servo driven press incorporates pre-setting and recall of all press parameter, automatic plate

positioning (APPS), and Nilpeter's new print-to-cylinder (P2C) register system. The quick-change Revolver die-cutting system – shortlisted for last year's Global Label Innovation Award – allows on-the-fly loading and unloading of dies and is for the first time fully integrated into a Nilpeter press. The FB3 platform is designed to accept all Nilpeter's standard modules, including the new FP-4 flatbed hot foil and embossing unit.

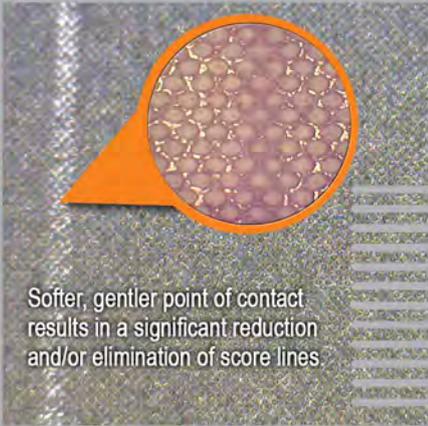
The FB-3 incorporates Nilpeter's latest lean inking system and chill drums. Compared to the FB3300, the web length in the press has been reduced by 50 percent by raising the material transport. A useful touch are the removable rods which go through each cylinder – different sized rods allow legacy rotary tooling to be used in the machine.

The FA-4* is designed to handle short runs of labels and flexible packaging. The sleeve-based UV-flexo press has a maximum web width of 420 mm (16.5 inches) and a top speed up to 175 m/min (574 ft/min). It is controlled by Nilpeter's Press Management Center (PMC), augmented by an Air Control Satellite (ACS) for wireless press operation. Extra features include P2C register control, clean inking for water-based or UV-cured flexo inks and Nilpeter's Automatrix automatic waste rewinding unit.

A notable feature of the press is Nilpeter's new Quick-Change magnetic die module, developed in close cooperation with Kocher & Beck. The operator can set up the magnetic base cylinder and flexible die while the press is running. When the press is stopped, the

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SEE the video of the Mark Andy quick die change on Label TV



XFLEX goes wide with the 20in Omet X6

previous cylinder is rolled out to an unload position and the new cylinder run in just a few seconds. The cylinders, supplied by K&B, are equipped with bearing blocks that are automatically engaged and retained in the QC station.

Mark Andy unveiled its Quick Change Die-cut (QCDC) technology at the show, an innovative design which effectively turns the die-cutting unit through 90 degrees, allowing dies to be loaded from the side rather than hoisted in from above the press. In demos, QCDC allowed operators to reduce die setups by up to 60 percent.

QCDC is available in a single or dual-die station configuration. Dies are loaded on a cassette – which is prepared offline – then automatically registered by servo motors before running up to full production speed in a fraction of the time of conventional die stations. The quick change cart was specifically designed for the Performance Series platform and allows for accurate loading of dies either offline during job changeover (single die station) or in a

second station while the press is running (dual die station).

In addition to these benefits, QCDC will aid considerably in waste savings, says Mark Andy. The design offers trouble free matrix stripping and winding to reduce web breaks, as well as enabling stripping of difficult die shapes. QCDC can adapt older Mark Andy dies as well as most dies from other press manufacturers. QCDC technology was demonstrated on both the Performance Series P5 and P7 models.

Omet showed for the first time in the US the 530 mm (20in) wide XFlex X6. The press incorporates a range of features designed to shorten makeready time, most notably the Monotwin Cut die-cutting unit, which uses a single size magnetic cylinder to mount any flexible die repeat. The press uses easy change glass fiber or aluminum sleeves, and is equipped with Omet's latest Vision-2 automated register system.

Also on the stand was a sleeve-based offset unit now under production in Italy. The offset unit can be combined inline on both the XFlex X6 platform (in widths of 430 and 530mm), and on the Varyflex V2 machine platform (up to 670 and 850 mm). The X6 platform can also accept Omet's JetFlex 4-color inkjet module, a configuration displayed at Drupa.

MPS demonstrated an 8-color EF-410 press showcasing its latest Automated Process Control (APC) technology, which brings together plate mounting, print setting and die-cutting.

The APC plate mounter allows plates to be mounted on print cylinders or sleeves to a tolerance of ± 0.03 mm or ± 30 μ m (1.18 thou of an inch). An optical measurement system determines the exact position of the printing plate on the positioning table



OMET modular Sleeve offset unit

ZIRCON BUYS MARK ANDY PRESS/REWINDER PACKAGE

Fast growing Indian converter Zircon announced at Labelexpo Americas the purchase of a P5 Performance press and two Rotoflex VLI inspection rewinders.

Company director Sanjeev Sondhi told L&L the 8-color 13in P5 press and one of the rewinders will be converting short runs of pharma labels in Zircon's North Indian plant, while the second VLI goes to the company's Chennai plant, primarily to rewind shrink sleeve labels on a 16in web width.

Zircon's specialty is banknote-style high-resolution security graphics, printing micro text down to 20 microns. 'The P5 press has demonstrated the stability for this work,' said Sondhi. The plates will be imaged on Zircon's Esko CDI digital imager, the first installation at an Indian label converter. The P5 press is also fitted with chilled impression rolls for heat sensitive substrates.

Sondhi specified Nikka inspection cameras for his VLI rewinders, and these will also generate QC reports for customers.

and mounts it automatically.

APC die-cutting uses digital technology to automate pressure settings per design and material, allowing repeat settings to be downloaded from the press' calibration database. MPS new iMatrix tension controlled stripping system is claimed to allow the press to reach speeds up to 600 ft/min.

A new rail mounted converting option is provided by a horizontal die-cut unit, which uses the same APC technology.

MPS also promoted its mid-web EXL packaging press technology, equipped with hot air tunnel dryers for use with solvent and/or water based inks.

On the second day of the show, MPS partnered with Kodak and Reproflex3 for a powerful demonstration of spot color reduction in everyday flexographic print production. Kodak supplied its Flexcel NX Plates and Spotless software for the

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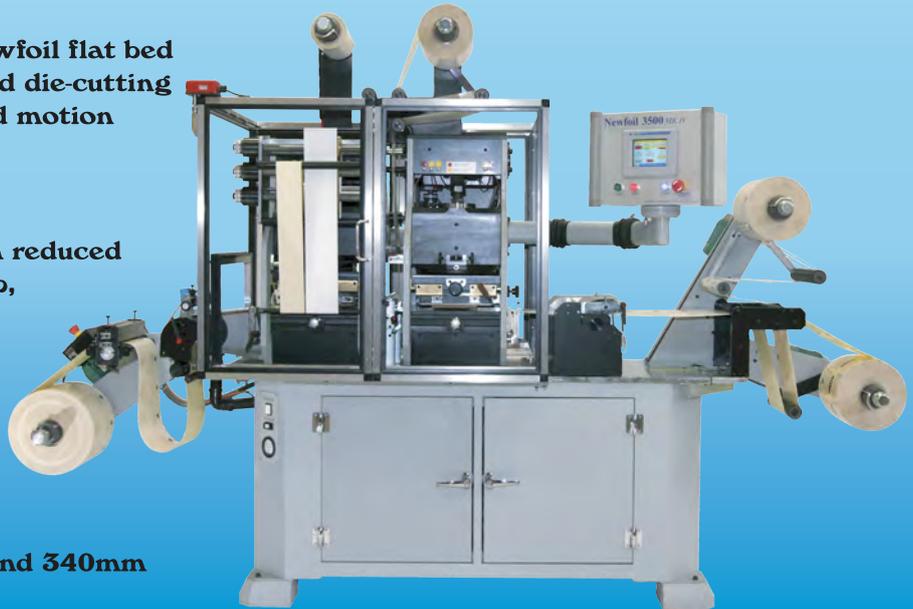
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IS UV-LED THE NEXT BEST THING?

The working partnership of Mark Andy, Flint Group and Phoseon Technology showed its hand at Labelexpo Americas 2012 with the launch of a new type of curing system that could change the face of UV in the printing industry, writes *Nick Coombes*

Using solid-state semi conductors, the principle difference of the new UV-LED technology over conventional mercury based lamps is that it uses medium wavelength UV, which avoids ozone and heat generation.

The partners claim that it offers advanced capabilities, with economy of operation, and 'green credentials' that leave existing systems far behind. Operating at 16-watts/square cm, the developers are predicting an ROI of less than 12 months, with a far higher level of press uptime than is currently possible.

The drawback is that the system will not cure conventional UV inks and lacquers, so a range of EkoCure inks (F for Flexo, S for Screen) is being offered, with development underway for coatings, metallics, shrink whites, and laminating adhesives.

Designed for use on flexible packaging and folding cartons, as well as labels and shrink sleeves, UV-LED claims to consume 50 percent less power than existing systems. With maintenance also reduced (by up to 75 percent) because of an absence of blowers and ducting, and with no moving parts like mirrors and shutters, the whole system has a footprint half the size of existing UV set-ups.

According to Greg Palm of Mark Andy: 'This technology will bring UV to new users because of its low cost and simplicity. For existing users, it offers a deeper and faster cure, but it also brings in those who are running water based inks.'

In fact, the Beta site in the US is a water-based press, which substantiates what Palm said about attracting new business by having UV/WB combi capability. Designed initially for OEM fitment, the new system also has great sales potential in the retrofit market, where its size makes it an easy shoe-in on existing presses, UV or otherwise.

As evidence of the new technology's reliability, Palm added: 'In the five year trial we ran, we didn't have single LED failure!'

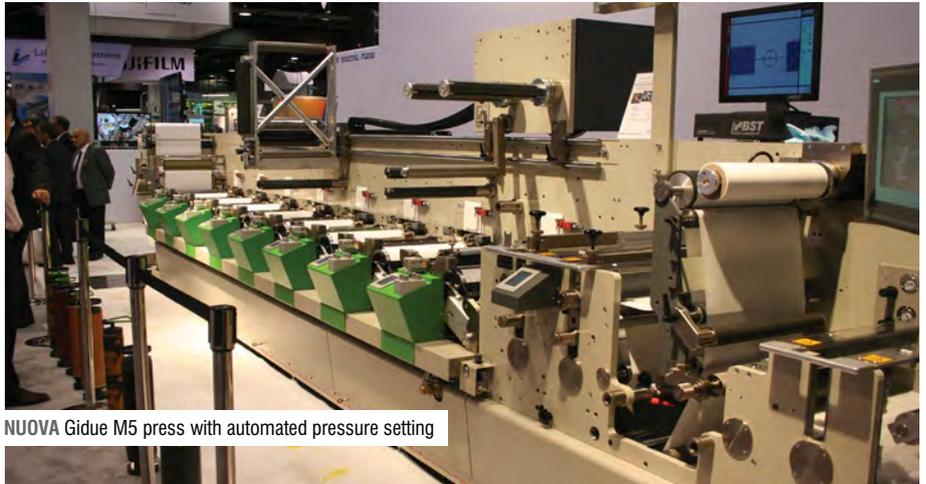


See Label TV interview with Niklas Olsson, global brand manager of Flint Group Narrow Web

demo printed on the EF-410.

For the first time at a trade show, Codimag demonstrated a VIVA 340 Aniflo press printing printing with an expanded gamut 7-color process (CMYKOGB) utilizing Esko's Equinox prepress system.

LABELS&LABELING



NUOVA Gidue M5 press with automated pressure setting

Aniflo technology brings a high degree of stability to the offset process, using an anilox roll to deliver a consistent and regular ink volume. This allows the kind of reliable color management required to run the 7-color ink set.

Four complete job changes were undertaken, including a technical sheet with 116 PMS colors separated out of CMYKOGB. For a full discussion of this technology, see the next edition of L&L.

Nuova Gidue introduced the latest version of its 'Digital Flexo' system on a 430mm 8-color M5 UV flexo press with three die-cutting units, delivered to Australian converter Gulmen Engineering after the show. Digital Flexo 3.0 uses a combination of pattern recognition and registration/density monitors to automatically adjust print pressure and register during makeready – without operator intervention – and maintain those systems dynamically during the press run. In a demo, a 'hands off' job was set up with just 12 meters waste.

Nuova Gidue managing director Federico D'Annunzio demonstrated a computer model which showed how 'Digital Flexo' is more efficient than digital printing on run lengths of just 600 linear meters. 'Between 600 to 1000m is the

gray area and above is digital flexo.'

D'Annunzio used Labelexpo to announce a technical support partnership for North America with the Kemp Smith Machine Company, a long established US-based manufacturer of flatbed dies for the folding carton industry. D'Annunzio also told L&L that a carton press will be unveiled in November. Based on the M7 platform, the press combines interchangeable gravure, flexo, offset, hot stamping, embossing and five die-cutting units.

Gallus demonstrated the integration of digital and conventional press technologies linked by an overarching workflow system. The elements of Gallus' Print Shop included the ECS340 'granite' UV flexo press, the ECS C modular converting system and the Heidelberg Linoprint L inkjet press, seen for the first time in North America after its launch at Drupa. The workflow solution was provided by Cerm's dedicated narrow web MIS – Cerm was recently acquired by Heidelberg – and Heidelberg's Prinect press management system. Jobs are automatically bundled according to the optimum web path, using factors including number of colors, substrate type and finishing complexity, then sent down the appropriate production path. Gallus claims this kind of automation generates potential cost savings up to 20 percent.



MPS iMatrix significantly increases stripping speeds



MPS rail-mounted die-cut unit with APC servo pressure

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GRAPHIC EQUIPMENTS

- Plate Making Machine, UV Varnish Machine, Auto Rewinder, Au to Slitting Machines, Computer Label Air Punching Unit Machines



SPM350 (Japan Spec) High Performance Intermittent UV Rotary Letter Press Label Printing Machine



New SEN SMP320 (Economy Spec) High Performance Intermittent UV Rotary Letter Press Label Printing Machine



New SEN OS380 Printbester Intermittent UV Web Offset Label Printing Machine



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LABELXPO AMERICAS attracted a record number of visitors

Inspection technology

JAMES QUIRK rounds up the label inspection technology on display at Labelexpo Americas, which reflected the growing trend towards integration of inspection and workflow systems

AVT

AVT introduced SpectraLab, a new add-on module to the Helios II family, featuring inline spectral measurements allowing converters to match brand owners' color standards.

AVT received the Award for New Innovation for SpectraLab at the Global Label Industry Awards dinner held on the first evening of Labelexpo Americas, and AVT's marketing manager, Guy Yogev, told L&L that the add-on received 'huge interest' from customers at the show.

Other new products shown were the AVT PrintVision/Helios Sense 100 percent inspection platform, which is designed to simultaneously inspect and verify print and braille faults as well as inspect transparent varnish in parallel to print; and RLM (Repeat Length Measurement), a new addition to Helios II, enabling to monitor the repeat length and alert for deviation.

AVT presented its 'zero setup' ability and advanced automation for visual inspection on shorter runs and digital presses. A demo of the WorkFlow Link option used the information from the inspection on the press to automatically

stop the rewinder. ProMIS sends the relevant information from MIS systems directly into the Helios II inspection system, shortening setup and preventing mistakes. Other options include job verification using the original PDF file, barcodes and variable data verification, and DeltaE color measurement.

AXICON AUTO ID

Axicon showed the latest versions of its verifiers for linear barcodes and 2D codes. These verifiers measure print quality of barcodes in accordance with the ISO-IEC 15415 standard. All verifiers, including the high speed options, work in conjunction with a PC where the software resides or with a portable powered data collector.

BST PRO MARK

BST Pro Mark showed its complete product offering of print inspection for presses or re-winders, including visual, defect detection and 100 percent inspection systems. Options include integrated workflow, PDF, barcode verification and color monitoring, as well as the company's most recent

developments: new inline spectral color measurement and thickness measurement systems. The company's Q-Center concept brings together different inspection technologies, including spectral measurement, in an intuitive, integrated touchscreen based environment.

CC1

CC1 showed its DRC 5000L automatic mark-to-mark register control system, and the Visionary II web inspection system, which employs high resolution digital color cameras for programmable area inspection.

ELECTROMATIC EQUIPMENT CO

Electromatic Equipment Co showed its ranges of Check-Line LED and Xenon stroboscopes for hand-held and fixed mounted applications. All models provide bright and uniform light for online visual inspection of labels, printed material and more. LED models have a permanent light source never requiring any maintenance or replacement. Synchronized to web speed automatically via external trigger



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or supplied with optional manual flash rate controls. All models are CE-certified. Models are offered in three sizes to cover web widths of 12", 24" or 36". Two or more strobes can be combined to cover wider webs.

ELTROMAT

Eltromat unveiled the TubeScan camera system, described as a 'powerful alternative' to current methods of quality control, intelligently combining imaging and stroboscopic technologies.

'Digital strobe web viewing' is claimed to deliver a steady image and true color fidelity regardless of line speed – particularly important during the critical start and stop phases of the press. 'Missing label detection' both identifies missing labels per lane and in total, but also detects remains of label matrix across the entire web width.

Specific requirements in the design were a high image refresh rate, automatic synchronization, as well as the high-quality image display also of reflective or metalized surfaces.

TubeScan is the first product developed by Nyquist Technology, a joint venture between Eltromat and Nyquist Systems.

ERHARDT + LEIMER

Erhardt + Leimer launched a vision camera-based missing label detection system. The new Elcam missing label detection system is said to be easy to install, easy to use and robust in operation, while quick job setup times will increase productivity.

The system consists of the Elcam smart vision camera in combination with LED light sources, a small controller to handle stop signals for the production process if needed, and a touch screen panel with an intuitive user interface.

The company also launched the Nyscan relocatable inspection stand. The stand solves the problem of having to dedicate one machine to (or buying a new machine for) 100 percent print inspection by letting the user quickly convert any existing rewinder into a 100 percent inspection station when needed.

Available for 13- or 16-inch machines, the stand contains the E+L Nyscan Web:Inspector:2 system with TubeLight, an E+L DRS 22 web guide, one or two LCD monitors and an enclosure that houses all of the electronics. Compact in design, the stand holds the monitors at the preferred ergonomic height to make it easier for the operator to use them.

Easily moved with a pump truck, once in place, the stand simply locks to the machine. The machine is controlled via a quick connect interface cable. The stand can be used on all rewinders and many types of presses.

E+L's TubeLight illumination is a lighting system that allows the user to inspect all work without special options. TubeLight lets you accurately inspect foiled labels, metallic inks, embossed labels, holograms and other challenging elements. Standard Web:Inspector:2 features include repeatable, reliable defect detection, high operating speeds, comprehensive data collection and other features.

EYEC-AMERICA

EyeC-America showed its comprehensive QC strategy for all offline and inline inspection needs, including file-to-file inspection (comparison) for initial artwork design, revision

LABELS&LABELING

control and pre-press applications; sample testing; and 100 percent inspection on rewinders and presses.

GLOBAL VISION

Global Vision showed its line of automated proofreading products, featuring text-based, pixel-based and Braille inspection technologies. Global Vision's products can be applied throughout the packaging workflow process, including upfront design, packaging development, regulatory affairs, label control, incoming QC and production.

Scanner and camera-based hardware allows for the complete inspection of items such as labels, cartons, inserts and leaflets.

LABEL VISION SYSTEMS

LVS showed its LVS 7000 inline inspection system that verifies 1D and 2D codes to ISO/IEC standards and offers blemish detection, OCR/OCV, Delta E color process control, checks for duplicates, sequential/random validation, holograms/reflective/security marks, and more.

The LVS 7500 offers vision technology for thermal printers, ensuring accuracy and data integrity on every label. The LVS 7000 was also demonstrated on the Xeikon and AzTech booths. LVS also offers the LVS 7500 for thermal printers and Integra 95XX Series of 1D/2D barcode verifiers. Partners on its booth included AzTech, CEI and Western Slope.

LAKE IMAGE SYSTEMS

Lake Image Systems' products inspect, track, report and map defects for correction on rewinders and inspection tables, whether sheets, simple rolls or even streamed turret rolls.

Visitors to the company's stand saw the end to end process from print and inspect to visual review, through to defect correction on a tabletop rewriter.



AVT Helios II on a HP Indigo WS 6600



ELTROMAT unveiled the TubeScan strobe and camera system, developed with Nyquist Systems

PC INDUSTRIES

PC Industries launched a low cost 100 percent inspection system. The Guardian Mini is a customizable system that allows the user to select only the features needed. It is an economical alternative to the full Guardian PQV 100 percent verification system.

Each system includes LED lighting, color or grayscale cameras, and a Windows 7 computer. The Guardian Mini can be expanded by selecting one of the optional software modules, including 100 percent inspection, optical character recognition with sequential check, ANSI barcode verification, and defect roll mapping. The system has a compact camera housing, making it easy to integrate with many machines. These include presses, inspection rewinders, tabletop rewinders, inkjet, thermal transfer printers, and packaging and converting machinery. In addition to the Guardian Mini, on display at the show were the Guardian PQV 100 percent inspection system and the Guardian OLP offline proofing system.

RE CONTROLLI INDUSTRIALI

Re showed its auxiliary equipment for the converting industry: pneumatic and electromagnetic powder brakes, load cells and tension controls, web guides, air expanding shafts and video inspection systems.

TRI-TRONICS COMPANY

Tri-Tronics featured its Smarteye photoelectric sensors designed for high performance sensing tasks which include the Label Eye for label detection, product inspection, invisible UV luminescence mark detection, color mark registration, true color sensing, ultra-high speed sensing, and clear object sensing. The company's contrast indicator and unique 1-button push Autoset provides for precise set-up and performance verification.

UNILUX

Unilux introduced its new LED-Series 2000 family of LED strobes. The lights are said to combine the operational and environmental benefits of LED lights with the power of traditional xenon-based strobes plus a few more operational benefits.

The new systems are claimed five times brighter than Unilux's first generation LED strobes. This gives them the same lighting performance as the company's proven xenon-based lights with only 25 to 35 percent of the power consumption of a comparable Lith-O-Light strobes. The new LED-Series 2000 strobes are about one-third the size of the traditional equivalent – and lighter than the xenon lights and have a greater flash-rate range. All this gives printers and converters many more options for mounting lights and adjusting flash rates to maximize

inspection capability at full production speed and reduce the fatigue factor for inspection.

The LED-Series 2000 family comes with a new product-naming convention that corresponds to the coverage area (in millimeters) 50cm (20in) from the light to the inspection area. The new LED-Series2000-500, for example, which replaces the LED 5X2, will emit 2000 lux of illumination on a 500mm width from a distance of 20 in. This is five time more light than the LED 5X2 produces. In fact at a flash duration of 35 microseconds, the LED-Series2000-500 puts out as much light as the xenon based LOL IV-20.

'The LED-Series 2000 family gets its name from the fact that at a distance of 50 cm the lights will produce a light intensity of 2000 lux,' said Matt Runo, chief engineer, who led the year-long R&D effort to develop the new lights. 'While the amount of light produced is the same as the xenon lights which have been workhorse products for years, there's a big technical difference. The lens designs for the new LED-Series 2000 strobes provide a sharper focus than the xenon lights. This benefits the user by concentrating more light on the inspection area with less spillage outside the area of interest. Getting the same output or more as a xenon-based strobe was our key objective because light output (brightness and coverage area) was a major issue with our first LED strobes.'

Automating corona treatment

VETAPHONE'S new iCorona treater is designed to maintain treatment parameters automatically during the run. Andy Thomas reports

Vetaphone has launched its iCorona -1 'intelligent' corona treater. The new machine series features a generator setup which utilizes highly efficient one GBT controlled resonance frequency power operation. The iCorona-1 offers output sizes from one to two kw, all based in one single generator cabinet for easy integration into narrow web presses.

The iCorona -1 is manufactured on a modular basis and the entire generator assembly can be easily addressed and quickly exchanged if required. This provides a way of upgrading power for future needs as well as reducing downtime on press in the event that a part needs replacing.

As standard the iCorona -1 comes with an easy-to-use operator panel with LED display. The panel has four individual control buttons with internal sub-menus for adjusting different operator settings. An optional seven inch LCD touch screen control panel provides a graphical overview of the whole system, and offers a range of intelligent automatic controls including auto-substrate matching and auto-proportional speed control. Production data can be downloaded via a USB link, which also allows for software upgrades.

AUTOMATION

iCorona stands for 'Intelligent Corona' and replaces Vetaphone's established CP series, which has been on the market since year 2001.

Automation is the key theme for the iCorona technology, with its ability to auto-match system settings to substrates. This means the operator simply inputs the material type, width and thickness and the system chooses the optimum settings.

This auto matching of power to width and speed can also be described as watt density control.

Auto matching maintains a consistent treatment as line speed changes. If the line speed increases, the generator will automatically increase the power

according to the material factor set by the operator. If the line speed drops, the generator will automatically lower the power, again according to the material factor set by the operator.

At minimum line speed the iCorona will automatically stop, and automatically restart when the speed goes up again.

The effectiveness of corona treatment depends on the matching settings to the material. The required treatment/intensity level (watt/min/m²) may vary within a wide range, and the iCorona takes account of material parameters, the required dyne-level, the machine speed and the number of sides to be treated.

Materials factors which affect this choice include age, width and whether the material has been pretreated.

THE TREATMENT LEVEL CAN BE CALCULATED BY USING THE FOLLOWING FORMULA:

Power (watt) = T • S • W • M

P = Total Power (Watt) required

T = Number of sides to Treat (single/double sided)

S = Line Speed (in meters per minute)

W = Film Width (in meters)

M = Material factor (required Watt per m² per minute)

The exact value is best determined by testing a sample of the actual film that is used for a specific application. The only parameter to set before production is material choice. Parameter setting during running of the material is carried out automatically.

QUALITY CONTROL

The iCorona generators constantly monitor production in regards to material factor effect, speed, stops/breakdowns. All the data is automatically stored in the iCorona display unit ready to be extracted by a USB stick. This allows every batch produced to have a full report in regards to the performance of the iCorona system.

The iCorona generators also allow

the production manager/operator to set auto maintenance schedules. This could be schedules for maintenance on electrodes, roller or ventilator, for example. All the maintenance schedules are entered on the touch panel or downloaded from a USB stick. When a scheduled maintenance time is reached, the iCorona touch display will show a system message informing the operator that maintenance is required on the next line stop.

Based on the intelligent maintenance schedules the system can show the operator where and how the work needs to be done. The spare part lists can be also be integrated with the auto maintenance schedules, and maintenance 'how to' videos can be run on the display panel.

VETAPHONE REPRESENTED BY WELDON AT INDIA EXPO

Vetaphone will be represented at the Technology Bar of Indian agent Weldon Celloplast at the Labelexpo India show. The Danish manufacturer of corona treatment equipment reports increasing sales throughout Asia, and the partnership with New Delhi-based Weldon, announced last year, is part of its continued expansion in the region.

Nicolai Bisgaard, Vetaphone's area sales manager for Asia, said: 'Our partnership with Weldon Celloplast makes it possible for us to go into the Indian market as a serious business partner. We look forward to cooperation with Indian customers to help them with achieving their production goals.'

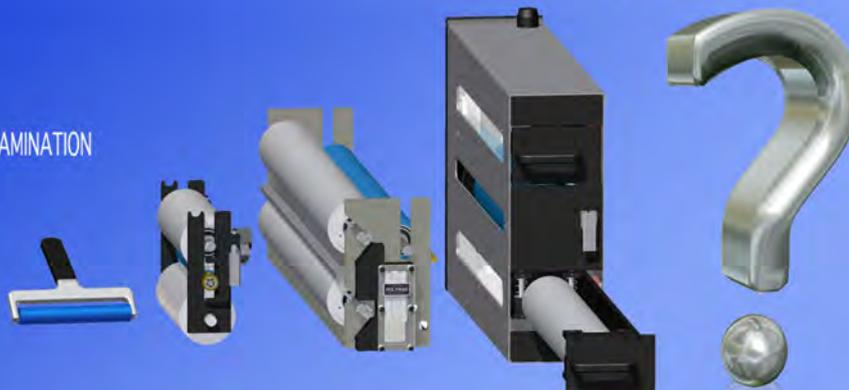
Vetaphone, founded by Danish engineer Verner Eisby, has supplied corona treaters around the world since 1951. The foundation of an Asian subsidiary in Singapore now provides local sales and service support to plastic and paper manufacturers in the region.

Pawandeep Sahni, marketing director at Weldon Celloplast, said: 'Vetaphone is a pioneer in corona treaters. We are happy to bring to our customers yet another premium product that will enhance the value of their product offerings.'



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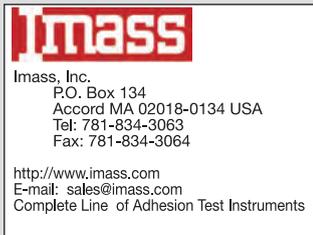


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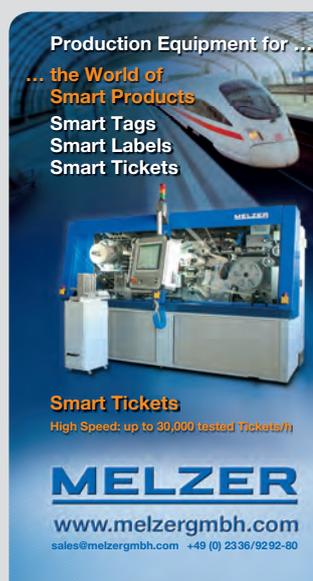
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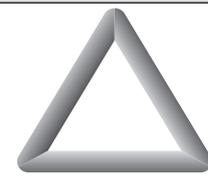


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Doing business in India

THE INDIAN RETAIL FDI saga continues, writes Andy Thomas

It's generally agreed that allowing Foreign Direct Investment by global retailers in India will give a significant boost to domestic growth, encourage the development of modern nation-wide logistics chains and greatly boost the demand for value added labels and packaging.

Up to now, foreign retailers have only been able to enter India with majority owned businesses if they are selling their own branded products – multiple brand vendors always needed to be in a minority partnership with an Indian partner.

Now that has changed, with the passing by the Indian government of a retail industry FDI act allowing foreign retailers to own 51 percent of their Indian enterprises (which would most likely come from acquisition in the early stages).

The government tried to introduce FDI earlier this year, but was forced to retreat in the face of raucous opposition protests and coordinated street demonstrations. Now the cabinet has summoned the courage to try again, and this time it looks like it will stick.

But to get it through parliament a number of loopholes have been

inserted which could fatally weaken the new law.

Most importantly, the government has given each state an effective veto over FDI in its own jurisdiction. So far just a handful of states have announced they will sign up, including Metropolitan Delhi. Throughout India, however, opposition is growing, most ominously in key states such as West Bengal and Punjab, which have announced implacable opposition to retail FDI.

Making this situation worse, another clause in the bill means foreign-owned multi-brand retailers can only set up in cities with one million or more inhabitants. There are 53 such cities these in India, but only 16 in states which have signed up to FDI.

So we may yet see the first Walmart, Carrefours or Tesco PLC in India, bringing with them the complex supply chains of the major global brands.

But for many millions of consumers in India the retail revolution is still a long way off.

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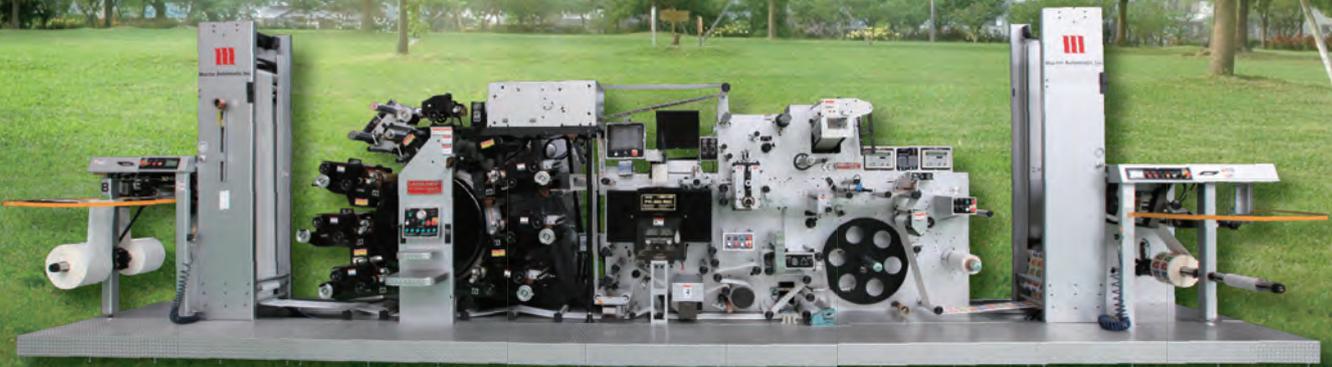
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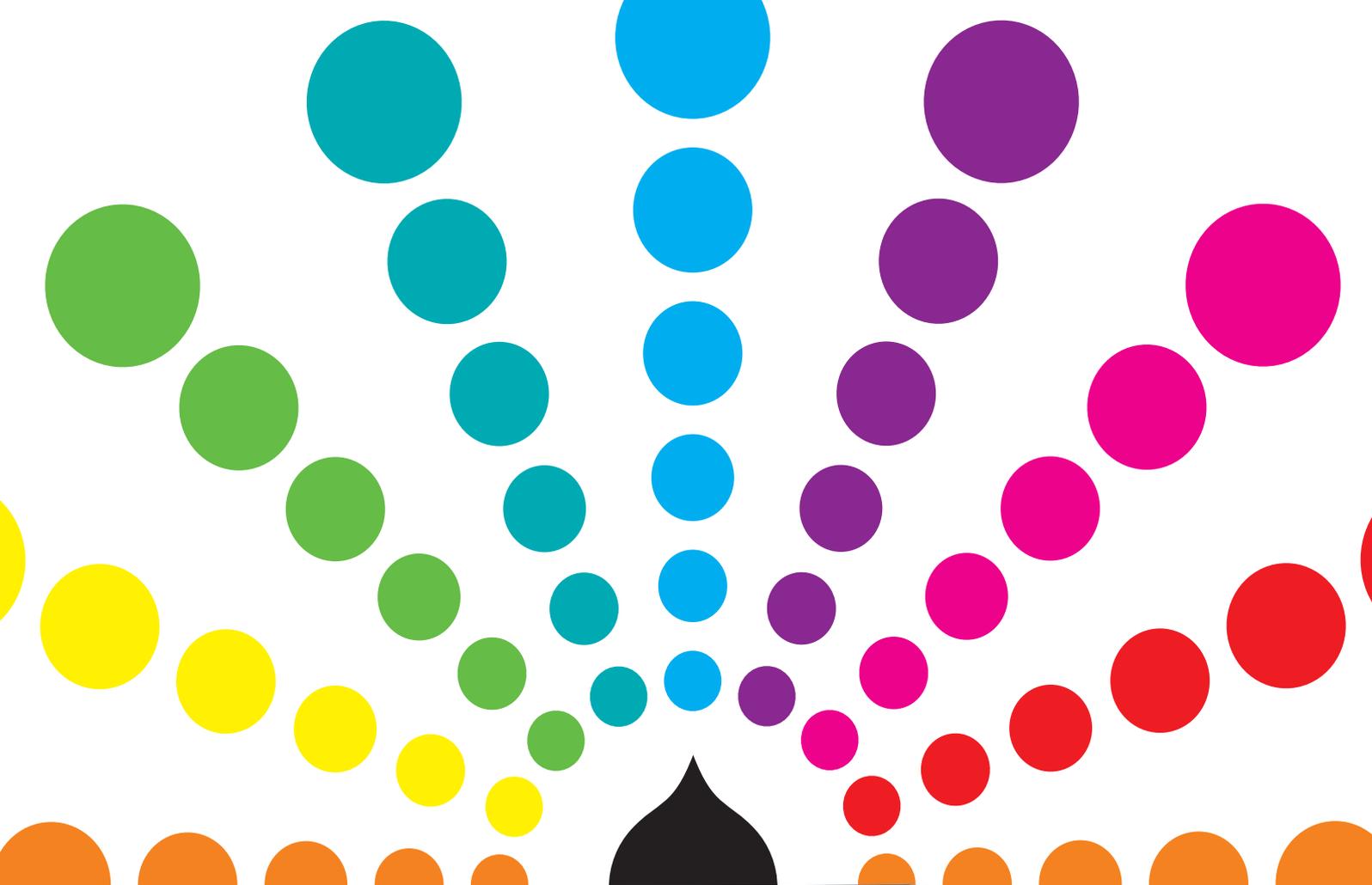
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