

# EU RULES ON FOOD LABELS

New European Union regulations will affect all aspects of design and printing of food labels

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## FOOD LABEL REVOLUTION TO SWEEP EU

The European Union's latest regulations concerning food labels will require a top to bottom re-think of how food labels are designed and printed (see the full article on pages 14-16). Clearly this will not only affect European converters, but also converters anywhere in the world supplying food labels into the European market.

For the first time the regulations not only specify what information must be shown, but how that information is presented. Illegible product information is apparently one of the main causes of consumer dissatisfaction with food labels, so a new approach to design will be enforced which takes into account all aspects related to legibility, including font, color and contrast.

There will be a minimum font size significantly bigger than the text size currently used on most food packaging, and marketing/branding information is regarded as 'voluntary' – to be fitted in AFTER the mandatory legal information.

As legal compliance expert Phil Dalton says in this issue: 'In extreme cases, we could even finish up with legal information on front of pack, compromising design space. The least we can expect is an impact on front of pack design, the worst is a need to change the pack format, add an extra label or a sleeve.'

It is not only the EU looking closely at how nutritional and other legal information can be presented legibly. Across the developed world we are faced with an ageing population with deteriorating eyesight. No brand wants to be sued because a consumer could not read some critical piece of information, and more and more information is now regarded as critical outside of the branding message: recycling profile, ethical sourcing of ingredients and so on.

As ever in the labels and packaging industry, every new challenge presents new opportunities for forward thinking converters and designers. Whether we see more use of Smart label technologies, extended information labels, labels printed in shorter batches for particular categories of consumer, printed lenses or simply the use of bigger labels with more real estate, brands need these solutions – and need them now.

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**US MAILING**Labels & Labeling (USPS No: 002-914) is published  
bi-monthly by Tarsus Exhibitions and Publishing Ltd and  
distributed in the US by SPP, 95 Aberdeen Road, Emigsville  
PA 17318. Periodicals postage paid at Emigsville, PA.POSTMASTER: send address changes to Labels &  
Labeling, 3175 N. Patrick Blvd, Suite 180, Brookfield, WI 53045**PRINTERS**

Bishops Printers, Portsmouth, Hants

© Tarsus Publishing Ltd

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# INBOX

## Amberley gives Labelexpo the VIP treatment

WHEN LABELEXPO, the largest label converting event in the world, put out a request for personalized digital labels, UK-based Amberley was quick to respond

Amberley received a call from James Wenman, design and production manager at Labelexpo and *Labels & Labeling* on Thursday 19th September with an urgent request for labels for Labelexpo Europe. The labels, to be used on VIP passes for the show, had to be personalized in two places with unique numbers and therefore required a sophisticated digital workflow to meet the challenging lead-time.

The artwork was received on Thursday afternoon and entered on to Amberley's Labeltraxx MIS system, linked to Esko AE12 workflows.

All the repro was carried out on Esko PackEdge and proofed through an AE12 workflow, automatically producing proofs and emailing them to *Labels & Labeling*.

Approval was given later that day and labels were printed on an HP Indigo WS6600 digital press during the night shift.

Labels were then finished on a Digicon Lite and rewind during Friday ready to be taken to Brussels on Monday morning.

James Wenman said: 'Richard pulled out all the stops and got us out of a really tricky spot when one of our supplier's machines went down. Richard even met me before the show and presented me with the labels literally from his suitcase as he attended the HP users group on the Monday before the show. Exceptional service.'

Richard Geller, director of Amberley, commented: 'In the label sector speed and agility in responding to customer needs is critical. This request from Labelexpo clearly illustrates the power of integrated digital workflows in delivering unique label products over very short lead-times.'

**For more information on digital printing or to discuss your latest project contact Amberley at +44 1258 455 772. Amberley Adhesive Labels Ltd, Team House, Shaftesbury Lane, Blandford, Dorset, DT11 7FG, Tel: +44 (0)1258 455 772, e-mail: sales@amberley.net**



DIGITAL LABEL printed by Amberley at short notice for Labelexpo. The label, printed on an HP WS6600, is personalized with two unique codes



The John Crosfield Foundation

### JOHN CROSFIELD FOUNDATION DONATES CHARITABLE FUNDS

The trustees of the John Crosfield Foundation have announced it 'will now be wound up', with all remaining charitable funds will be donated to The Printing Charity, which will continue to administer those funds to provide bursary grants to students undertaking courses related to printing technology and printing business management.

The John Crosfield Foundation was set up as a charity in 2000 by former Crosfield employees to provide educational bursaries to students of printing technology and to keep the name of Crosfield alive in the printing industry. John Crosfield set up Crosfield Electronics Ltd in 1947, which made a major contribution to the technical advances in the printing industry world-wide, as evidenced by the company's 15 Queen's Awards for Technology and Exports.

Lars Janneryd, chairman of the trustees of the John Crosfield Foundation, said: 'Over the last 13 years, the Foundation has helped some 16 students through their degree studies to go on to successful careers in the printing industry. Sadly Mr Crosfield died in March 2012 aged 96 and we feel it is time to pass this charitable purpose to another organization that has the momentum to carry it forward.'

'We believe that The Printing Charity, which was established in 1827 and last year gave away over one million GBP, has a management structure that is well able to do this. The Print Futures Awards, which are co-sponsored by The Printing Charity, give grants each year to young people aged between 16 and 30 years, who wish to train or further their careers in printing publishing, graphic arts or the allied trades. This very much aligns with the aims of the John Crosfield Foundation.'

Stephen Gilbert, The Printing Charity's chief executive said at the event to formally mark the handover of funds: 'This is a perfect fit with the Print Futures Awards that we co-sponsor. The Print Futures Awards will acknowledge this funding, continuing the Crosfield name and encouraging young people who share his passion for printing.'

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# NEWS



CHESAPEAKE Labels Bristol

## CHESAPEAKE AND MPS IN \$1.4BN MERGER

**COMBINED** company will employ 7,000 people in 50 operations on three continents

Chesapeake and Multi Packaging Solutions (MPS) are to merge to create a global supplier of print-based specialty packaging.

The combined company will supply a broad range of packaging, including printed folded cartons, labels, inserts/leaflets, rigid boxes and specialist packaging for the pharmaceutical and healthcare, consumer, personal care, confectionery, spirits and multimedia end markets.

Upon completing the merger, ownership in the combined company will be split evenly between funds managed by global alternative asset manager The Carlyle Group and Chesapeake's management, who currently collectively own 100 percent of Chesapeake, and investment funds advised by Madison Dearborn Partners and management of MPS, who currently collectively own 100 percent of MPS.

It is anticipated that the merger will close during the first quarter of 2014.

The combined company will have sales of more than 1.4 billion USD on a pro forma basis, employ over 7,000 people throughout the world and operate from more than 50 manufacturing facilities on three continents. The vast majority of operations are divided between the US and nine countries in Europe. The combined company will also have a growing presence in emerging markets, including from an existing facility in China.

Marc Shore, current chief executive officer (CEO) of MPS, has been appointed CEO of the combined company. Mike Cheetham, Chesapeake CEO, and Dennis Kaltman, current MPS president, will be co-presidents and will serve with Shore on the executive committee responsible for overseeing the integration and growth of the combined company.

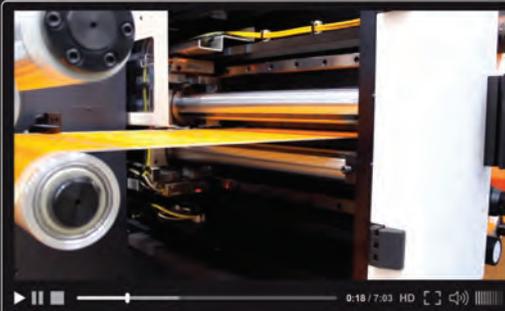
Shore said: 'Joining these two companies will greatly benefit our customers and employees. The combined manufacturing footprint and technological capabilities are truly unique and will position us to match our customers' needs with a broader range of products and operational flexibility.

'The ability to produce these goods and services in the US, Europe and China will also give our customers consistency on a global basis. We are very excited to bring these two families of passionate, hardworking and committed employees together as they will ensure our future success.'

Cheetham said: 'I'm excited about the prospects this transaction offers for our collective customers, employees and suppliers. Both companies have benefited from a strong ongoing investment program and will continue to invest in order to deliver on the considerable growth opportunity this merger presents. 'Our extensive global network of dedicated operations provides our customers with a strategic partner for their long-term needs.'

## HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES



### ABG LAUNCHES AUTO-SLIT KNIFE BOX

AB Graphic International has launched an Auto Slit digital knife box, which automates the slitting and set-up for labels and packaging production through an HMI touchscreen interface. Tony Bell, sales director at AB Graphic International, said: 'Auto Slit saves on both time and material wastes for setting up a job. For example if a job requires 15 knives this would usually take an operator up to ten minutes to set up. However with the Auto Slit this can be done in less than 50 seconds.'



RAFLATAC takes delivery of Cartes laser die-cutter

### UPM RAFLATAC SELECTS CARTES LASER FOR MATERIALS TESTING

UPM Raflatac has selected a Cartes L360 laser die cutting machine to test the effectiveness of laser technology both on standard films and on new materials.

The Cartes L360 has already successfully processed a wide range of plastic materials, including: PP clear TC50/RP37/HD70; PP white TC60/RP37/HD70; PET white TC50/RP37/HD70; PET clear TC50/RP37/HD70; Raflex Plus Clear TC/RP37/HD70; and PP Clear film TC50P/RP74/PET25.

The system has successfully cut very challenging materials including clear-on-clear labels and labels on both glassine and thin polyester liners.

### EDALE AND FFEI PARTNER TO BUILD GRAPHIUM PRESS

Edale and FFEI have announced a partnership program for the Graphium digital UV inkjet press, whereby Edale will build the web transports for all Graphium machines based on the FL-3 flexo press platform. The FFEI Graphium press was launched in Europe at Labelexpo in Brussels.

## HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES



GEROLD Linzbach, CEO of Heidelberg

### SUPPLIERS AGREE MAJOR DIGITAL PARTNERSHIPS

Landa and Komori and Heidelberg and Fujifilm have agreed strategic partnerships for the development and supply of next-generation digital printing technology.

Heidelberg and Fujifilm are to work on developing inkjet printing technologies, with the broad alliance aimed at strengthening existing business and establishing a platform to drive new business.

The deal gives Heidelberg access to Fujifilm's inkjet technology, and Fujifilm will leverage Heidelberg's strengths in engineering and manufacturing.

# CCL ACQUIRES EUROPEAN FILM EXTRUSION OPERATION

CCL Industries has signed a binding agreement to acquire the assets of Advanced Packaging Films in Schkopau, Germany, as it looks to grow its ability to design 'proprietary, specialty films for new sleeve and pressure-sensitive label applications'.

The new business unit will trade as Advanced Performance Films and will be an integral part of the CCL Label global Food and Beverage business, headed by Guenther Birkner.

Birkner, president of the CCL Label global Food and Beverage business, said: 'This new capability allows us to design proprietary, specialty films for

new sleeve and pressure-sensitive label applications while improving our supply chain performance for part of today's demand. It is an important strategic step as we seek to accelerate growth with global brand owners in the premium segment of this market.'

Geoffrey T. Martin, president and chief executive officer of CCL Industries, said: 'Over time we expect to develop more capabilities across the company in the materials science field as we seek to innovate new ideas for customers.'

'Bolt on acquisitions like this could become an important part of that strategy.'

# NUOVA GIDUE OVERHAULS ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Nuova Gidue has made a series of appointments and promotions to gear the company up for growth.

Matteo Cardinotti has been appointed as its new managing director, and will work closely with Maurizio Trecate, Nuova Gidue's vice-president of sales, who took up the position in September. He will also work with Cristina Toffolo,

who is now vice-president of marketing, and the Italian press manufacturer's new vice-president of finance Magda Ciapponi.

Federico d'Annunzio, president of Nuova Gidue, said: 'We believe the new positions will complement our existing organization and help us to prepare for our future growth in the market.'

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GEW'S new Crawley factory

## GEW CELEBRATES ANNIVERSARY OF UK FACTORY MOVE

UV systems manufacturer GEW has recently completed the first year in its new facility in Crawley, England

GEW has invested heavily in the new premises, including installation of state-of-the-art software modeling packages and laboratory testing equipment to facilitate further advances in UV technology, as well as a quality-assured manufacturing system.

In response to the growing requirement for more energy-efficient UV systems, GEW's Crawley site is now producing the established E2C low-energy arc lamp system and also a new range of UV LED devices. Both types of system are driven and controlled by GEW's RHINO Power Electronics, which will also be

built in Crawley.

Malcolm Rae, MD, believes strongly in developing products using innovative, original ideas and design techniques which can be cost-effectively produced in Europe. 'The choice of location is also important, being ideally situated near to London's main airports and road links. In addition, having a good source of skilled people available locally is especially valuable,' said Rae. 'We are excited about the energy efficiency and productivity benefits that the new products will bring to our customers.'

### HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

#### DIGIFLEX SELLS 50TH UNIT

DigiFlex has passed the 50 unit mark within a year of its computer-to-plate becoming commercially available.

DigiFlex's unique bi-component inkjet technology and flatbed inkjet system allows the production of high-quality plates using standard analog plate materials. The DigiFlex inkjet-based CTP system is applicable for flexographic, letterpress, dry-offset and rotary silkscreen printing.

Hezy Rotman, chief executive officer of DigiFlex, said: 'We would like to thank our growing number of satisfied customers and to our distribution channels for their great trust and commitment.'

#### APOLOGY INGLESE SRL

Due to a production error in Labels & Labeling 5 some editorial text was mistakenly placed on an advertisement from Inglese SRL. L&L would like to apologize for the error. The correct advertisement can be seen on page 58 of this edition.

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# All change for food labels in Europe

**PHIL DALTON**, head of regulatory at consultancy Legal Impactt, looks at radical changes in EU food labeling regulations affecting all converters in this critical sector

The print industry is set to get very busy over the next few months as the European Union brings in new mandatory food labeling legislation, formalized in Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers. The regulation is the result of a review of detailed labeling requirements and how information for consumers is presented on pack, and means that we are in the implementation phase of the biggest shake up of food labeling in Europe since 1996.

The new regulation hasn't radically altered the basic information requirements, despite the intention to simplify and make the information more consumer-friendly. However it has added compulsory nutrition information, which has the effect of requiring ALL current food labels (it only affects food) to change across the EU. Food businesses now have to either add nutrition information to their labels or change the content of nutrition information if it was already included.

It's vital to note that the regulation affects every single food label for products sold across the EU. The new food labeling regulation was published in 2011, complete with a set of rules around the presentation of this mandatory information on packaging and elsewhere. It's the impact of these presentation rules, and the challenges that the regulation throws up for labeling and print specialists that are of practical interest.

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First however, a quick summary of the key points of the regulation:

- A new definition of food information that is more all-encompassing than previous definitions
- Widening of the sectors having responsibility for food labeling and definition of their responsibilities
- Changes to the presentation as well as the content of required information
- All foods labeled on or after 13th December 2014 must be compliant

And food labels will have to include as mandatory all of the following information subject to some detailed exceptions that we won't go into here:

- Name of the food
- Ingredients
- Allergens
- QUID
- Net quantity
- Minimum durability
- Storage conditions
- Name and address of food business
- Country of origin (if required)

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Additionally, the regulation specifies that 'food labels should be clear and understandable in order to assist consumers who want to make better-informed food and dietary choices. Studies show that easy legibility is an important element in maximizing the possibility for labelled information to influence its audience and that illegible product information is one of the main causes of consumer dissatisfaction with food labels. Therefore, a comprehensive approach should be developed in order to take into account all aspects related to legibility, including font, color and contrast.'

Legibility is clearly defined as relating to:

- Font size
- Letter spacing
- Line spacing
- Stroke width
- Type color
- Typeface
- Width/height ratio of letters
- Surface of material
- Contrast between print and background

The new regulation deals in detail only with font size, but retains the option (even intention) to make specific rules on other aspects of legibility in the future. The font size provision says that the minimum height for the text used for each and every one of the mandatory elements (as outlined earlier) is determined by the size of the largest surface of the packaging. Note the largest surface is NOT the size of label used, which is always smaller than the pack to which it is affixed, but the largest of the physical surfaces of the packaging. This minimum is based on the height of the lower case 'x'. It is set at 1.2mm, which is significantly bigger than the text size currently used on most food packaging currently.

In addition to the specified minimum font size for mandatory information, the Food Information Regulation has changed the balance between marketing information and mandatory labeling by stating that 'voluntary food information shall not be displayed to the detriment of the space available for mandatory food information'.

Essentially, everything except the list of mandatory information is regarded as 'voluntary' and this now takes second place, in law, to the newly mandatory information. While this is unquestionably overly-simplistic – as ever with EU mandates, the reality is obviously more complex – it's a good approximation that could turn the way we currently approach the creation of labels on its head.

The current approach to label design to create the marketing text and imagery and fit the legal text into any remaining space is not sustainable. There MUST be sufficient space for the mandatory labeling at the minimum font size (at least). In extreme cases, we could even finish up with legal information on front of pack, compromising design space. Reduced space on pack for marketing products will be an issue for food businesses and it is this issue primarily that is delaying the implementation by business. The least we can expect is an impact on front of pack design, the worst is a need to change the pack format, add an extra label or a sleeve.

We are now almost two years into the three allowed for all labels to change, and many, many labels are yet to be addressed. The next 14 months promises to be very busy for the food industry and for their customers in the print industry,

To cap it all, the regulation isn't finished; there is a timetable of further probable and possible changes, nine of which have a specific timetable – the remaining 27 have no fixed deadlines as yet. AND we also have the 'voluntary' schemes, such as the 'multiple traffic light' (MTL) system recently announced by the Department of Health in the UK, adding to the complexity of change. The MTL scheme has the potential to be rolled out across Europe after a review by the European Commission in 2017, creating another raft of label change. We can therefore expect a constant churn of labels flowing from regulatory change, from interpretation of the new rules in the

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form of official and unofficial guidance AND from new voluntary initiatives intended to make the labels more understandable to consumers.

In addition to the sheer volume of label revisions, there is a potential conflict not just with marketing and packaging design but also with the environmental agenda and minimization of packaging in particular. New minimum font size rules applied to all mandatory information could require larger labels or cardboard sleeves or a rethink of pack formats, leading not only to a further increase in cost, but also to potential manufacturing difficulties.

Another hitch could come from the requirement to include allergens in the ingredients list in a typeset or font that distinguishes them from the rest of the list. This could result in some technical print problems, especially for smaller businesses that print their own labels on simple printers.

All this does, of course, present opportunities for the labeling and packaging industry, namely an ongoing churn of label change in significant volumes due to the initial implementation of the Regulation, guidance and interpretation as it emerges from official sources and trade associations, and the further changes to the regulation, both timetabled and not.

It is also likely that individual businesses may make mistakes. The support network formerly provided by local authorities is now very limited. Therefore your customers may need help to ensure they get this change 'right first time'. As I said at the start, we're likely to be busy for quite some time.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Philip Dalton is a qualified trading standards officer with over 12 years of experience. He manages the team of regulatory and labeling advisors, specification technologists and copywriters at the Legal Impactt consultancy.

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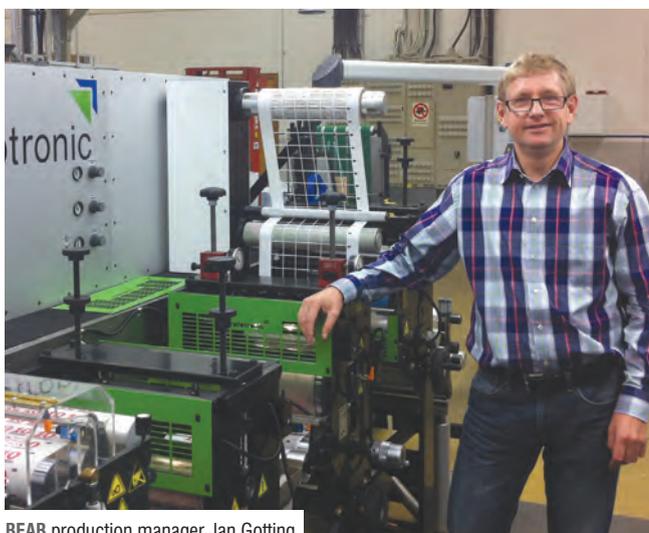
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# INSTALLATIONS



BEAB production manager Jan Gotting

## GRAFOTRONIC DCL BEAB BOXON (SWEDEN)

The first Grafotronic digital converting line (DCL) has been successfully installed at BEAB Boxon in Borås, Sweden.

The DCL installed by Grafotronic at BEAB Boxon is equipped with a printing unit, the new combined servo semi-rotary and rotary die-cutting system, and a heavy-duty sheeting unit. It is fully servo driven and comes with a new re-register system from Mitsubishi.

It has been purchased as a multi-purpose machine and will be used for the finishing of digitally printed labels, but also other self-adhesive and cardboard labels.

Jan Gotting, production manager at BEAB Boxon, said: 'Grafotronic impressed us during our tests in their factory. We have made a lot of die-cutting tests on several substrates and I have to admit that the result with Grafotronic is satisfying.'

'With the new machine we can run all our digitally printed labels and even other types of labels.'

Grafotronic vice-president Mattias Malmqvist said: 'We are proud being a supplier to a company like BEAB that is a very well-known and respected name in the Scandinavian label industry.'

'The installation is very important in our ambition to be an established supplier of digital converting machines.'

## RAPID X2 DIGITAL LABEL LINE ALDINE PRINTERS (AUSTRALIA)

Aldine Printers of Cairns, Australia, has installed a full Rapid X2 digital label line in order to satisfy the demand for full color, mid-level label runs.

Rapid Machinery Company, the Australian-based manufacturer of Memjet-powered narrow web digital label printing systems, has completed the installation, which includes a Rapid X2 press, a Rapid D2 die-cutter/laminator and Rapid SR2 rewinder.

Aldine Printers produces a range of specialized labels, including those used by butchers and supermarkets, often printed on bright fluorescent substrates. The company also prints hot-foil and full color labels, and offers design services.

Its equipment portfolio includes a Nilpeter FA2400 five-color UV press, a Rapid RP180 foiling unit, three Roland DG wide format printer cutters and thermal printers.

Its newest investment features a 220mm web with inline



ALDINE Printers owners Tracy and Rob Kingdom with the new Rapid X2 line

die-cutting, laminating and rewinding.

Rob Kingdom, who runs Aldine Printers with his wife Tracy, said: 'We have been watching the development of the Memjet and Rapid digital label technology for some time and we decided it was the right time to move – the technology is now ready and proven.'

'As a Rapid customer of 16 years with the hot-foil machine, we knew about the build quality and reliability of the company. We travelled to the Melbourne PacPrint exhibition in May and saw for the first time the complete X2 line with much needed die-cutting and laminating, so we ordered it on the spot.'

He added: 'We have the excellent Roland DG wide format printer cutters for very short runs of full color labels, but they are quite slow and require hand-slitting into rolls. Our demand for mid-level label runs was increasing so the Rapid X2 makes complete sense.'

'Although we would normally put four color runs over 10,000 labels, depending on meters used, on the Nilpeter; we have actually produced a 30,000 label run on the Rapid X2.'

## DURST TAU 330 RAKO ETIKETTEN (GERMANY)

Leading European label converter Rako Etiketten has invested in a Durst Tau 330 UV inkjet label press.

The Tau 330 was supplied by Durst's distribution and service partner Chromos, and is a 7-color configuration featuring CMYK, white, orange and violet.

The Rako Company, which claims to be the biggest user of digital offset printing in Europe, will use the Durst Tau 330 to develop new applications as well as produce typical inkjet work. It is Rako's first UV inkjet label press.

## XEIKON ICE TONER ELEFThERIADES (CYPRUS)

Cyprus-based printer Eleftheriades has successfully tested Xeikon's new ICE toner, becoming the second customer to benefit from the recently launched digital dry toner.

The ICE toner has been developed to suit heat-sensitive substrates such as PE and direct thermal labels.

J. Eleftheriades Offset Printers has served the Cyprus market for many years. It entered the digital market in 2004 and since then, demand for digitally printed labels increased and surpassed the company's expectations.



GEOSTICK building

In 2011, Eleftheriades invested in a second Xeikon machine – a Xeikon 3050 – to further its digital capabilities.

Eleftheriades has been testing ICE since early June. It follows Germany's bsb-label in conducting tests of the new toner, which was announced earlier this summer and will be on show at Labelexpo Europe 2013.

John Eleftheriades, managing director at Eleftheriades, said: 'The toner meets the quality standards that we expect from Xeikon and it enables us to broaden our application range.'

'We have been able to produce labels for our customers that we were not able to handle before, and as a result we could generate extra business.'

'This toner will for sure help us to develop our penetration into the health and beauty market specifically.'

#### CERM MIS

##### GEOSTICK (NETHERLANDS)

Dutch label printer Geostick is using Esko and Cerm workflow tools to enable it to exploit its recent investment in digital printing technology.

Cerm MIS is used in its sales and order department, while the company's pre-press department has started using Esko's Automation Engine.

Geostick has recently purchased and installed a trio of HP Indigo WS6600 presses, and continues to operate flexo press technology.

Cees Schouten, Geostick technical director, said: 'With the automation now in place, we can do more work in less time. And we continue to improve our performance every day.'

'Switching to a new MIS system is not an easy process, as it is the heart of your entire operation. We are using Esko's pre-press system to feed our digital and flexo presses.'

'By adding Esko's Automation Engine on top and connecting it to the Cerm MIS platform, we were able to bring our

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productivity and responsiveness to a new level.'

He added: 'To start, we had to enter all available information on clients, orders and products into our systems. This took extra time and work, but as soon as the first repeat orders came in, we immediately benefited from those efforts.'

'Our new configuration meant that these repeat jobs went directly to press – without human pre-press intervention, and saving time and money for both us and our customers.'

**DICE GT3000 INKJET PRINTER**  
**HORIZON LABEL (USA)**

The Dice GT3000, from Dice Graphic Technologies, has been installed at the Horizon Label facility in West Berlin, New Jersey, and has been added onto a Mark Andy flexo press.

Paul Falkowski, president of Horizon Label, said: 'Many of our newer customers are small business owners and entrepreneurs who utilize our express digital printing services. With this new technology, we can offer faster turnaround, lower prices, and continue to maintain a beautiful product.'

Falkowski added that the combination of flexo and inkjet has allowed Horizon Label to target new business, and said: 'Integrating the DICE GT digital printer into our Mark Andy press has allowed us to enter a segment of the market that wasn't effectively being served. It has also helped us to dramatically grow our sales and account base in the food industry, which is now our largest market.'

'This system allows us to easily produce high-quality process color printing and in perfect CMYK registration without producing plates, make-ready or wash-ups.'



THE Dice GT3000 installed at Horizon Label

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# Riding the waves of the ‘perfect storm’

IS NOW THE TIME TO SELL? By Bob Cronin, The Open Approach

The recent surge in M&A activity – in labels and virtually every other industry – is giving business owners pause. Has the market really turned around? Are things truly in my favor? Can I get a good multiple on my investment? Is it finally time to sell?

The short answer to these and other related questions is yes. Transaction closing rates have returned to close to where they were before the financial crisis. Global deal volume reached 778 billion USD in 3Q2013 – 41 percent higher than the same quarter of 2012. The big guys are launching new acquisition initiatives. And major mega-mergers, divestitures, and pending IPOs are keeping the public, investor, 401K manager, and others’ interests at an all-time high.

Fueled by increasing competition and the NEED for measurable investment growth, M&A is on the rise. Indeed, today has become the ‘perfect storm’ – a combination of attractive interest rates, newly freed-up private equity capital, growing pools of crowd-sourced funding, and hungry shareholder demand. This has created a market that begs to forge the next generation of powerhouse,

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M&A-created enterprises.

Indeed, the banks are our friends again. With other investments depleted, the banks are looking to deploy cash to venues from which they can get a quick return. They are eager to finance deals – label deals especially – and offering favorable rates with some flexibility. But act fast. I have seen this situation come up only sporadically in the last 40 years.

Additionally, the government is helping us! It may sound unbelievable, but the Fed’s indecisiveness, disagreements, and shutdown are sustaining our historically low interest rates.

If there was ever a time to consider monetizing the investment and the platform you’ve built, it’s now.

But this will be a very limited window. Ahoy Captain, this perfect storm will not last forever! Decisions are being made now about the US budget and future central bank activity. Bond-buying is likely to draw back. Changes in business lending are at hand. Such things will make our now-low interest rates disappear faster than the good wine I mistakenly put out for my last picnic. And these rates are one of the most important issues of consideration in any

deal – especially those in which debt is assumed. In fact, by the time this article gets published, we could be facing an entirely different barometer.

So, should you chart your course or wait out the waters for a higher tide? Here are a few things you should know, intertwined with my personal experience.

## CONSIDERING A SALE

Every significant decision carries risk. Thus, it’s wise to examine all potential consequences of your actions – especially in business. However, many people take too long ‘looking into’ things and miss their best opportunities. This is even truer in climates like today’s that seem to be holding steady. Companies that could sell now at an attractive valuation may be completely off the radar soon. And these changes can take place seemingly overnight. Risk, my friends, is perhaps one of the strongest indicators of reward.

In June/July of 2008, we had more clients wanting to sell than ever before. They knew the market was favorable, the great terms the banks were offering, and the high multiples acquirers were paying. Impressed with our track record, they signed on. We marketed their companies

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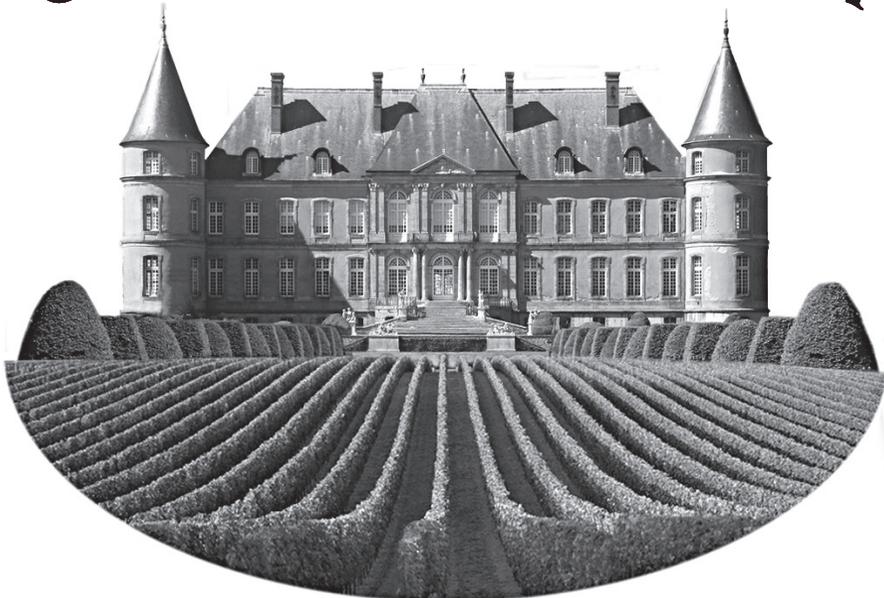


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with full force and within a few months had the offers lined up – all of which exceeded owners' original objectives. Some sold (and these people are still thrilled to this day). Others started rethinking: 'If we got that much interest this quickly, what could we get if we went out to a bigger pool of investors? Let's hold out and see what happens.'

While these 'up the ante' thoughts unfolded, politics changed, the economy tanked, lending fizzled, and presto, the stellar M&A market all but vanished. Our clients' great deals were dead. In the blink of an eye, exceptional companies that had generated tremendous buyout buzz were out of luck. Even if they got a reasonable offer from a strong suitor, the banks wouldn't fund it. So they went back to the day-to-day, now fighting the effects of the changing economy – diminishing customer loyalty, stronger purchasing negotiation, and assorted other demands.

The market changed, and our clients missed the boat. The tide died down. And sadly, some of these great entities did not prevail. But there was a lesson to be learned: The business world's and your 'optimal timing' may not coincide. Sometimes, you just have to strike when the iron is hot.

Today's climate is one of those times. Consider your risk, and weigh it against your potential reward. If you have up to a five-year exit window, it is judicious to consider your options today. So how do you best prepare?

### PREPARING FOR A SALE

Entire books can be – and have been – devoted to this subject. In brief, preparation rests on two elements: your finances and your people. These are the keys to any and every successful transaction. Regardless of what equipment you have that your neighbors don't, which credentials you have that your neighbors don't, and which customers you have that your neighbors don't, these are not the top considerations of your best buyer. As recent history has taught us, the value of these things can be gone tomorrow.

Acquirers need to be assured that you have the intellectual strength and vision to steer your company to the next level. They also need to know that your financial practices are sound and that your management team can make critical decisions that fortify your top and bottom lines. This is what I call 'organizational discipline' – without which, too many deals falter, even

(and especially) in the end stages.

As you start considering whether today's perfect storm is perfect for you, take a look at who's on board and whether these are the individuals whom you feel are best to navigate your ship for the future. Can they help you achieve your transition/exit plan? If you keep your brand on the company, will you be proud of what these people can accomplish in your name? Looking out two years, are you comfortable in their taking the reins?

Next, take a good look at your financials. Private equity buyers and strategics understand that private companies often have expenses on their books that a public company does not. Perhaps you employ family members. Perhaps you have some really nifty vehicles or a club membership to the Grand Poobah Lodge. During a sale, these things will go away and are thus considered 'add-backs' to your financials. Don't fret about their presence. These costs aside, where do your financials truly stand? How profitable are you? How are your financials trending? Namely, are you positioned NOW in the right segments, with the right products and services, with the right customers – with the right sales approach – to ensure 1) a steady revenue stream; 2) strong profitability; 3) three- to five-year profitable growth?

And finally, combining these two assets, how aligned is your financial future with the people who will drive your company forward? In some longtime family businesses, there can be significant attrition if a family member leaves with a sale. Can your business thrive without you (and any other family) at the helm?

### MAKING A SALE

Selling your life's work can be a greater emotional experience than a business one. Mental preparedness is just as important as everything else. But, if you set realistic objectives to start, this process will be a lot easier.

If your company has a solid, future-directed growth strategy – and is marketed properly – there is no doubt you will get numerous offers. Have a strategy in place to determine if they are fair and equitable. Moreover, make sure any deal you consider is one that will truly set you on path for the future.

You sell your company only once; take every measure necessary to evaluate your offers and ensure the deals truly work. Transaction value is not simply in the final dollar amount. Brand continuation, debt assumption, ongoing participation or investment, family



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

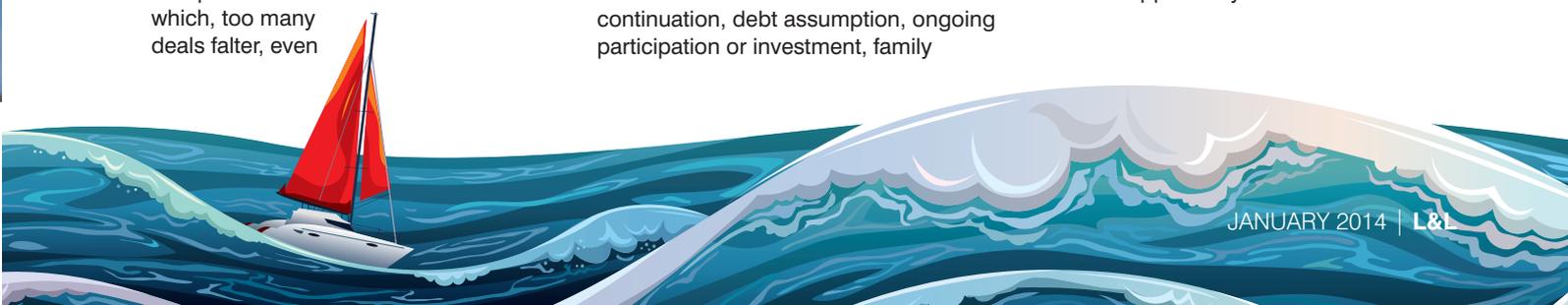
Bob Cronin is managing partner of The Open Approach, an investment banking/M&A firm focused exclusively on the world of print. The firm's proven results have made it the exclusive member-recommended firm of PIA/GATF and IPW. For more information, visit [www.theopenapproach.net](http://www.theopenapproach.net),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

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Selling your business is the second most important step in monetizing your vision. The first was starting it. You've been there, and accomplished that. As you transition to your next opportunity, be confident that your moves will channel you through today's perfect storm and bring you to the next great wave of opportunity.





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# Smart and interactive

**JAMES QUIRK** rounds up some of the most innovative smart and interactive technology on display at Labelexpo Europe

As global brands look to secure their supply chains in the face of a growing counterfeit and diversion threat, there was great interest at the show from converters looking for 'smart' systems to add to their sales portfolio.

Adents International was showing a new track and trace system which scans a product's uniquely assigned 2D code and automatically distributes information to authorized users, including associated case and pallet information. The technology is based on a secure 2D code (data matrix, QR code) associated with the company's software package. Scanned information can be read anywhere in the world and in real time. Each code is associated with an individual, unique URL code, making it possible to adapt and change web data instantaneously and in real time.

Italian firm SixTrue launched a new anti-counterfeiting system that creates a printed fingerprint to allow end users to authenticate products.

The SixTrue system uses ink droplets that are pressurized, causing them to create a unique splatter pattern, which is then captured as an identifier. It is manufactured using a flexo press from fellow Italian firm De Rossi Vittoriano.

Labels that have been printed in this way are then coded and linked to a specific product set or campaign, creating an anti-counterfeiting tool that is impossible to mimic, according to SixTrue's Guido Dameri.

A mobile application is used to authenticate the fingerprint, and allows brand owners to provide further marketing and incentives to those who authenticate their products.

'The system creates a unique fingerprint that cannot be replicated, not even by us,' said Dameri. 'Counterfeiting is a big issue, but this system creates a way for brands to securely and effectively protect their assets, and to trace and identify where the source of any problem is.'

## RFID MAKES WAVES

RFID technology continues to grow in niche applications, and several suppliers were demonstrating systems converters can use to develop their own smart label business.

Bielomatik promoted its latest SmartTwo T-165 machine, which provides the capability to encode continuous smart labels, tickets or hang-tags from reels. Encoding units are developed for High Frequency (13.56 MHz), and also for Ultra High Frequency (902 - 928 MHz) products. The web speed of the machine can be set for stop-and-go or continuous operation.

Furthermore, the SmartTwo T-165 offers serialization printing on the front and/or back side of the product via a high resolution digital printing system combined with optional drying and camera data verification.

Finally, the serialized smart labels, tickets or hang-tags can be rewound, shingled, or fan-folded. HF or UHF products can be encoded at up to 30 m/min. This translates to approximately 90,000 units per hour, depending on product size.

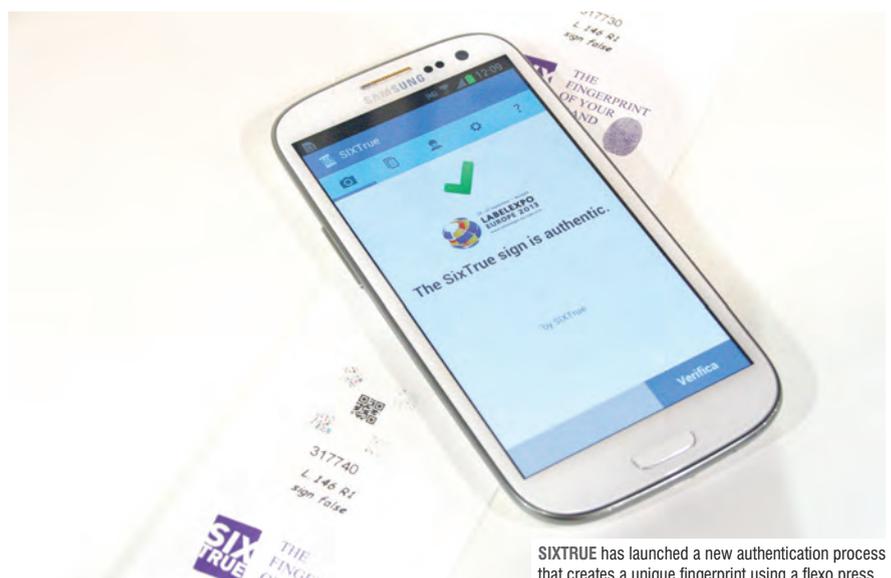
The SmartTwo T-165, three years in development, is being tested at beta sites.

Melzer showed its 60,000-products-per-hour SL-600 processing unit designed for the production of labels for alcohol brand protection, pharmaceutical fraud protection, vehicle identification and similar high-value applications.

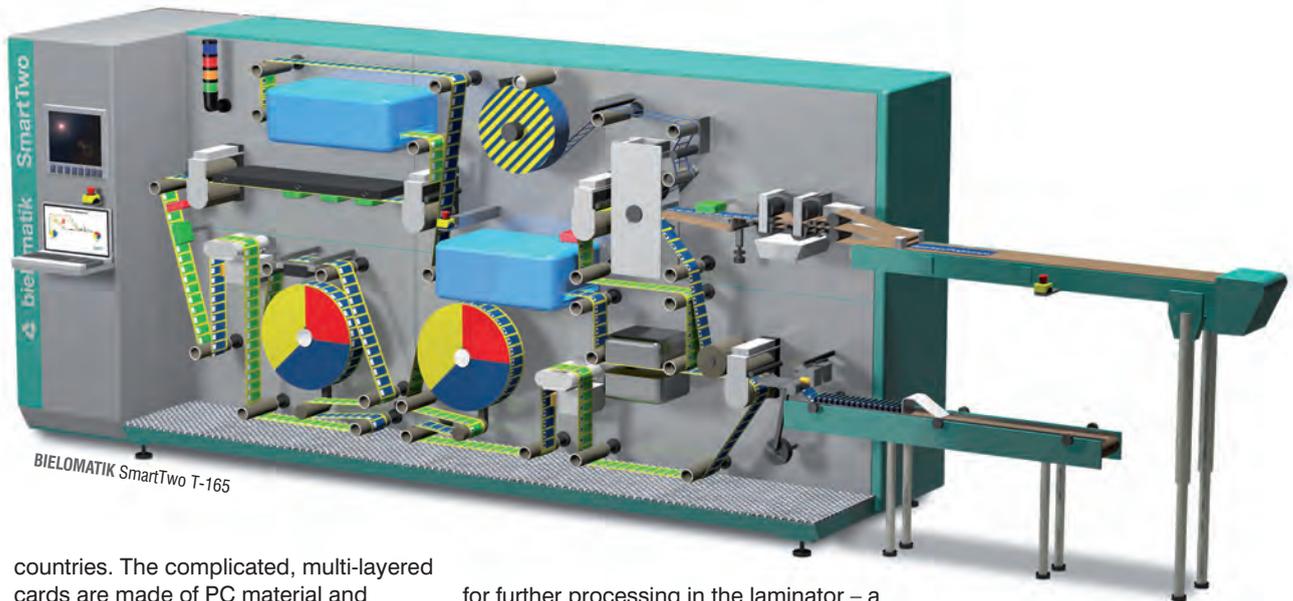
Lenka Huslik of Melzer said: 'Many new and existing customers could see the perfect converting of UHF labels in 6-track mode. Experienced managers state that transponder selection before the final converting is the only way for cost-efficient production and to meet the 100 percent yield demand of the final customer. Although transponder yield is increasing, there is still an unpredictable and considerable amount of waste.'

'If you have the right equipment, this is not a problem. Melzer is the only supplier offering such a solution and it is chosen by several converters for short and long runs.'

The company also promoted its capabilities in the area of identification card production, which are coming into use in Germany and other European



SIXTRUE has launched a new authentication process that creates a unique fingerprint using a flexo press



countries. The complicated, multi-layered cards are made of PC material and include laser foil and other security features. Melzer can produce such cards through its in-line production system.

The key to success, says the company, is the secure assembly of a card constructed from a combination of sheet materials and various continuous web materials made of PC or other durable substrates.

In Melzer's production system, sheets containing reference marks (called T-marks) are cut into strips in a sheet feeder and subsequently placed onto material coming from reels. This material web is ultrasonically fixed into position

for further processing in the laminator – a fully automated process with no manual intervention required.

With this process, the PC material sandwich is only laminated for 20-30 seconds at 180-200 deg C.

This patented lamination technology ensures a gentle handling of the electronics (ICAO inlays) and other security features like ink and security thread.

Thanks to the modular system, control stations or card inspection systems can also be integrated.

Melzer has already installed such machines in a number of government

enterprises.

Comercial Arqué, an expert in Texlin fabric ribbons (TTR), electronic article surveillance labels, inlays and Durasin synthetic paper, launched a new modular RFID inserting machine.

At the Mühlbauer stand two new RFID personalization systems – PL 20000 and PL 60000 – as well as a single tag handling machine were introduced. The PL 20000 reaches up to 20,000 units per hour and works with all common chip types available on the market. A special feature comprises the removal of

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defective labels and tags.

The PL 60000 runs at a top speed of 60,000 units per hour and incorporates Impinj's new encoding technology – for the first time fully integrated into a Mühlbauer system. The flexible PL platform works on a reel-to-reel basis. Extra features include output station for single labels, barcode reader, and printer with UV curing.

The single tag handling machine is based on a basic handling system combined with STP technology and includes an inkjet printer as well as a bad unit reject for bad labels.

Placing RFID labels on metal products is a challenging application, for which Security Assembly Group unveiled two sizes of RFID-on-metal labels in reel format. The use of a special antenna design and materials means they can be read directly on metal surfaces. Customized printing is available upon request.

#### PROOF IN THE FIBER

Prooftag introduced its FiberTag technology at Labelexpo Americas 2012 in partnership with Neenah Paper. Prooftag and Neenah Paper have now been joined by Avery Dennison and HP Indigo in the development and commercialization of the technology.

At Labelexpo Europe, Prooftag introduced its LABELrec high speed encoding equipment, which allows converters to integrate production of secure and interactive labels made with FiberTag into the printing process.

Demonstrations took place at speeds up to 600,000 FiberTags per hour on the HP Indigo booth during the show. 'With LABELrec, Prooftag offers to label converters equipped with HP Indigo digital presses a ready-to-use system to produce security labels,' said the company.

Produced by Neenah Paper, and commercialized by Avery Dennison, Fiber Tracker is a security paper engineered for the production of FiberTag labels. Avery Dennison showed the technology and the range of material available on its booth during the show.

After serialization of each label on a digital press, each FiberTag and its unique 2D code is recorded and linked to the end user's secure account on the Prooftag Cerv platform. This service platform enables end users to manage their labels by linking each of them to a customized description and ancillary services.

New Delhi, India-based Weldon Celloplast promoted its new and expanded range of tamper evident label materials for countering theft and to provide brand protection. The company also launched its new tamper evident security envelopes and exhibited its specialized developments for laser and inkjet labels.

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NUCERIA Adesivi team in Milan label converting plant

# Nuceria plans European expansion

**LEADING ITALIAN PACKAGE PRINTING GROUP** Nuceria Adesivi has ambitious plans to become a major European player. Andy Thomas reports

There have been big changes at Italian label and packaging converter Nuceria Adesivi since L&L's 2010 visit, as the family business gears up to become a major European player through an ambitious series of investments and acquisitions.

Over the last three years Nuceria has grown by more than 20 percent year-on-year, more than tripling in size from 16m euros in 2006 to a projected turnover of well over 50m euros by the end of this year.

The company has diversified from its core self-adhesive label business into a full range of package printing products – including a folding carton division – and into a wide variety of markets including pharma, food and beverages. The group's product range now encompasses a full packaging solution, including labels, boxes, leaflets, in-mold labels and sleeves, with an integrated design service.

'For 2014 we have unbelievable forecasts because of the continuing support of our existing customers – mainly multinational groups – who constantly confirm the success of our "true north" based on cost, innovation and speed to market,' says Guido Iannone, general manager of Nuceria Adesivi.

In order to supply its customers' pan-European plants, Nuceria Adesivi is planning an ambitious series of acquisitions, the first of which will be concluded in the Czech Republic.

'The country has been chosen because it is at the heart of Europe, next to Germany and Poland, which has great logistical

advantages,' says Iannone. 'The work mentality is closer to the German model and we also gain from access to cheaper labor, factory and logistics costs. We believe we have many opportunities to increase our turnover in central Europe, which will give us global visibility.' Further acquisitions are planned in Poland, France and Germany.

## INTEGRATED GROUP

Nuceria Adesivi claims to be Italy's biggest integrated package printing group, operating at locations in Salerno and Milan. This allows a high degree of production flexibility and back-up capabilities.

The company runs 35 rotary label presses as well as a new sheet offset carton division in the south, which includes capabilities for labeling, coding, data verification and traceability of pharmaceutical folding boxes.

As Nuceria grows, the Milan operation will become the company's 'European showroom' and center of excellence. Guido Iannone is very clear that an increasing international manufacturing focus will not mean less attention is paid to its Italian customers. 'Each customer, no matter how small, remains the first customer for us.'

Nuceria has built its business around service and quality, but Iannone believes innovation is critical to the company's future development. In the last three years Nuceria has invested heavily in its R&D 'lab' in Naples, where two engineers work full

## SUSTAINABLE VALUES

In line with the demands of multinational brand owners, Nuceria Adesivi maintains a strong focus on sustainability, with projects ranging from solar panels and closed loop water recycling to automated matrix disposal systems.

A wide range of certifications includes FSC and PEFC, ISO 9001/14001/18001, BRC/IOP and GMP 22716/2007.

Nuceria is now offering to recover glassine and PET liners from its customers. PET is sent for regeneration in a closed loop recycling system, and for glassine Nuceria is working with a German supplier who burns the waste for energy recovery. 'This costs less than paying to dispose of glassine liner through the Italian system,' says Guido Iannone. 'Now the German guys pay us and we take the customer's liner waste at zero cost to them.'

Guido stresses that Nuceria's Lean manufacturing program has cut waste dramatically, 'so has become a central part of our green agenda.'

time on new materials and applications.

'They work with the customer to find new market opportunities and to develop special designs – in particular including sustainable solutions such as waste reduction, thin and green materials,' says Iannone. 'We also share experiences in increasing efficiencies and lean management.'

Nuceria has carried out a seven year research program into linerless labels. 'Linerless is the future for perhaps 20 percent of the market, but it is not a replacement solution for all of the market,' says Iannone. 'The shape is still a limitation and most customers are still not ready to make the investment in application equipment.'

The Salerno R&D lab will soon be joined by a dedicated 'Nuceria Design' center now being constructed in a new hall of the company's Milan plant, which will include Esko's 3D visualization software and digital proofing systems.

'The idea was born from the increasingly frequent involvement of Nuceria in the management of customer artwork at the earlier stage of the printing process, as well as amending graphics and making mock-ups,' says Iannone.

## PHARMA FOCUS

After making its reputation in the HBC sector, Nuceria has diversified strongly into pharma applications. 'Being an integrated secondary packaging converter – self-adhesive labels, folding boxes, leaflets, shrink sleeves and security tapes – is the main strength of the group,' says Paola Iannone, director of sales for the pharma sector.

'When we talk with a customer our target is to understand the problem and



PAOLA and Guido Iannone

take a positive and proactive partnership approach.'

Nuceria has invested heavily in GMP-compatible equipment and procedures in terms of security, traceability and anti-counterfeiting. A dedicated technical division, Nucerialab, is involved in the creation of special pharmaceutical packaging designs for applications including blister packs, capsules, ampoules, pens, bottles and pre-filled syringes.

Two years ago Nuceria was awarded the government's IPZS license to produce the special 'bollino' pharma label, and invested in two machines to apply the bollino – or any other labels – onto the folding boxes, including a certificate to account for correct disposal of waste. Variable date can be added to provide traceability solutions.

## ORGANIZATION

Despite its rapid growth and ambitious future plans, Nuceria remains very much a family-run operation. 'We are changing our management approach towards a more structured organization, but we remain a family company with all the strengths that brings,' says Guido Iannone.

The workforce is encouraged to participate enthusiastically in the company's growth, and the sense of dynamism is reinforced by an astonishingly young average age of just thirty.

'Investing in people and in a team culture is as important as investing in machinery,' says Guido. 'The most difficult part is not printing labels, but to create and motivate a team which will create the Nuceria of the future.'

There is an 'open book' approach to distributing information through a range of channels including in-house

## SHORT HISTORY

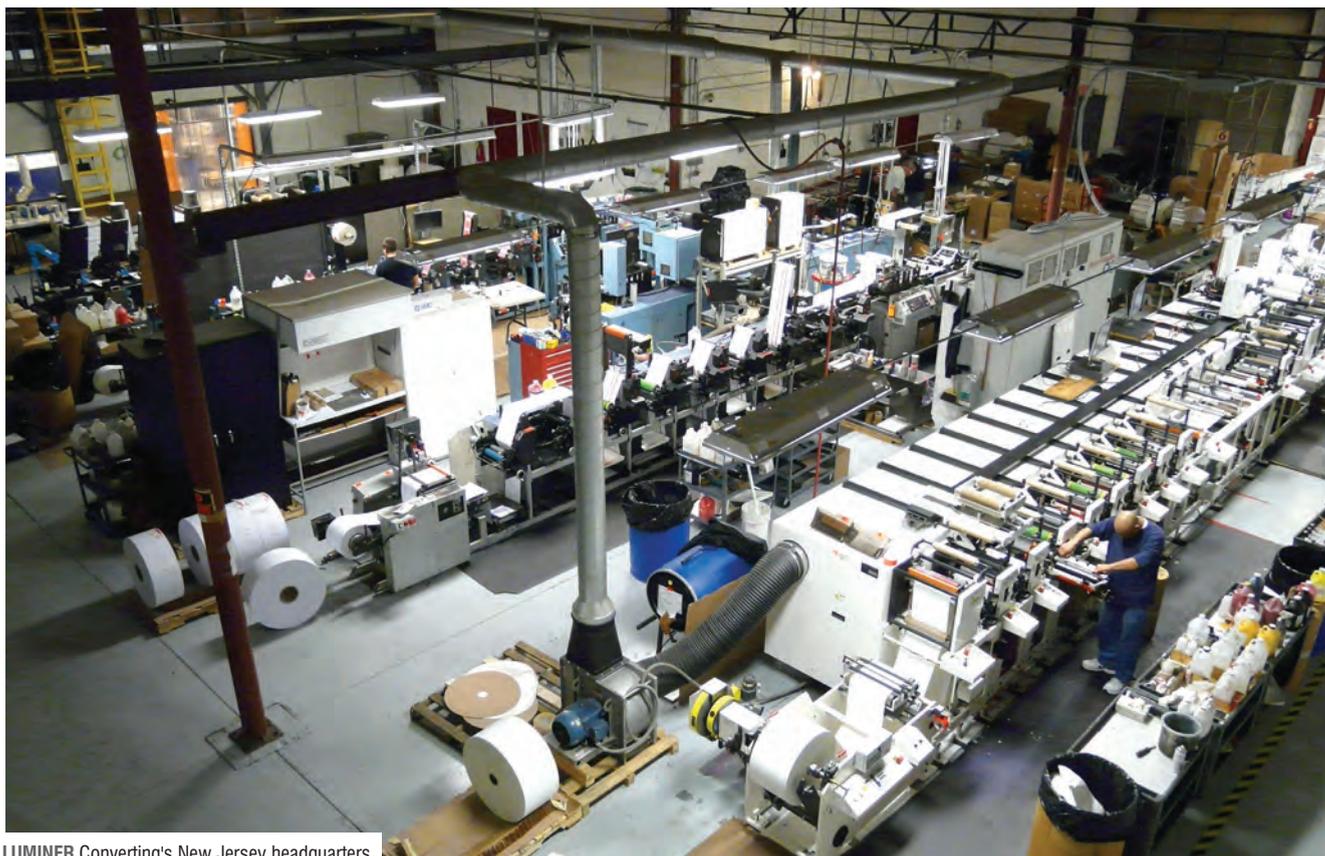
Nuceria was founded in Salerno in 1988 by Antonio Iannone. Antonio remains president, concentrating on strategy and leaving the day-to-day operations to his young management team.

Nuceria started as an adhesive tapes printing operation in southern Italy and moved into pressure-sensitive labels in the 1990s, with Johnson & Johnson its first multinational account. At the end of the 1990s a self-adhesive label plant was opened in Milan, which grew rapidly from 2,000sqm to 6,000sqm today. By the early 2000s Nuceria had established itself in the high-end cosmetics and beauty markets as more multinational clients came on board.

In 2008 the decision was taken to turn Nuceria Adesivi into an integrated packaging group, a true one-stop-shop supplying all types of labels and package printing. A folding carton division with state-of-the-art Heidelberg and Bobst equipment was founded in Naples, and plans were made to diversify into flexible packaging using wider in-line presses.

magazines and a website which displays on large LCD panels in the main factory building. A wide range of information is published, including machinery maintenance schedules, efficiency targets, fault-finding investigations following a customer rejection, and news on new machinery and customers.

In conclusion, Nuceria Adesivi is becoming a player to watch on the European scene. To help fund its ambitious acquisition program the company is planning a listing on Milan's elite stock exchange for smaller, rapidly growing tech companies. Driven by its dynamic young management team, and combined with the deep experience of Antonio Iannone, who is to say they will not succeed?



LUMINER Converting's New Jersey headquarters

# Epson complements converting operations

LUMINER Converting has invested in Epson inkjet print technology, writes Danielle Jerschefske

Back in 1989 Tom Spina recruited high school friend John Borrelli from the construction industry to join him in launching an adhesive coating business, Luminer Converting. The company rapidly diversified as customers made requests for die-cutting the adhesive products, eventually adding printing.

The majority of business remains in converted pressure-sensitive device manufacturing and functional labels, booklets, extended content, wraparound, medical device, pattern coated and other specialty pieces. Pharmaceutical, cosmetic, and chemical are Luminer's main markets.

COO Borrelli says, 'There are a lot of parts that start in one production cell and end in another. If (a piece) does something other than identify, we're interested, and set up for complex production requirements.'

## SERVICE WITH DIGITAL

Borrelli and his team spent time selecting which digital print technology would best suit Luminer's business needs, eventually settling on an Epson Surepress L-4033AW

## LABELS&LABELING

6-color water-based inkjet label press, which operates in the converter's pharma clean room.

Luminer has more and more key clients requesting extended content and short order runs. Borrelli explains, 'If they need them, then we will service them. The digital investment is a customer service tool for our clients, a chance for them to try new artwork and label constructions. We are building it up.'

Luminer did not have a significant volume of work to transition over to the Epson when the press was installed in March. Today the company is aggressively communicating the new capability to customers in combination with its other capabilities.

Adds CEO Tom Spina, 'The digital press is purely complementary at this point. It is not a profit center; but without it we would hurt our other profit centers. The Surepress works great for us in conjunction with our conventional process to make parts of complete products.'

During L&L's visit, the SurePress was printing the wraparound metalized paper base label for an automotive industry



PROPHETEER producing complex converted materials at Luminer

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TOM Spina and John Borelli of Luminer Converting



EPSON SurePress supports automotive and industrial label short run business

booklet of 40+ pages. Conventional technology finishes the work printed on the Epson digital machine. Rotary Technologies built a custom press for Luminer with two spot color stations, three die stations and a tight re-registration system. Smaller volumes of booklet pages are printed on a Xerox Laser Imager. Higher volumes are produced on one of the main floor flexo presses.

'The color gamut on the Epson press is fantastic,' says Borelli.

'And the water-based inkjet looks like flexo,' Spina says. 'We don't have to worry about the print being more shiny or having a "raised letter" look. We constantly use the white station and can print on clear film, foil and paper with high quality.'

#### CORE ADVANTAGE

Production is managed in five different cells, one of which is located at its satellite Red Lion, Pennsylvania facility. This includes the main pressroom, the pharma clean room with the new Epson Surepress, a cosmetic device cell, and the pattern adhesive/coating room. The company shares its history with Kraemer Coating, an equipment manufacturer for funky adhesive applications, and its machining production sits within the Luminer facility.

An 18 inch Propheteer has been custom built with hotmelt rotary screen coating to make pattern-coated substrates in register with other converting operations. It is a critical support mechanism for key business accounts and device expertise. With four stations, a Rotary Technologies re-registration system and a slot die unit for full coverage coating, the proprietary machine helps produce work for a large beauty products company.

Luminer installed a 13-inch Aquaflex ELS two years ago dedicated to prime labels production. It has a plow folder, nine printing stations, four UV units, cold foil and hot stamping. It offers accurate

#### LABELS&LABELING

registration and is capable of running 4-5 webs together.

There are five Propheteer machines in total. One runs complex prostate cancer testing samples 6-7 times each year at quantities in the millions. It requires the splicing of two 1,100 foot rolls of material specially coated with hemoglobin into a single roll. The final piece requires two shots of water-based adhesive, one hit of hotmelt used to seal the entire converted piece, followed by quality testing.

When the order comes in, it runs for up to three weeks. Four people are required as support on the finishing side for a total of eight people involved in producing the complex converted piece.

Luminer has Rotary Technologies re-registration systems on most of its Propheteer machines, and highly recommends the performance. With such support, the converter can produce work using up to 14 colors when two presses with 7-colors each are turned on to work in tandem. These systems will also be added to the complement of Mark Andy and Webtron presses at its Red Lion facility in time.

The markets Luminer participates in require a significant amount of testing once materials are delivered to the plant – and throughout each of the processes. For this, a complete R&D laboratory equipped with a full line of pressure-sensitive testing equipment has been built at the NJ facility. Luminer also uses A&V in-house direct imaging equipment and wash out systems to make water wash printing plates.



LUMINER specially engineered Propheteer 700

#### GROWTH

'You have to go where the customers lead you,' explains Spina. The converter's next step is to become a full packaging hub acting as a contract manufacturer. 'In less than one year we will be outsourcing the folding cartons our device products go into and then complete all packaging of those products right in our facility so our plants become total turnkey so our customer's products can move direct to distribution. We're not just making labels anymore.'

The company has made a few acquisitions over the last seven years and is looking to continue expanding on the prime label side. The partners believe there's room to grow their core business in devices. Already it has plans to increase production capability from 38 pages up to 52 as demanded by key clients.

Borelli adds, 'There's room for innovation to produce more unique stuff with pattern adhesive coating. This will be a differentiator for us.'

This year a new marketing campaign will launch to spur growth in devices. The company's custom-built MIS system will be moved to the cloud to eliminate in-house servers. Renovations will be completed in January around the main pressroom to improve security and control temperature.

The converter is moving towards 100 percent inspection. Currently it uses mostly water-based inks in the pressroom, but will be investing in UV flexo to meet customer demands.

Spina says, 'Either fall backwards or move ahead. There must be a constant evolution of moving the company ahead.'



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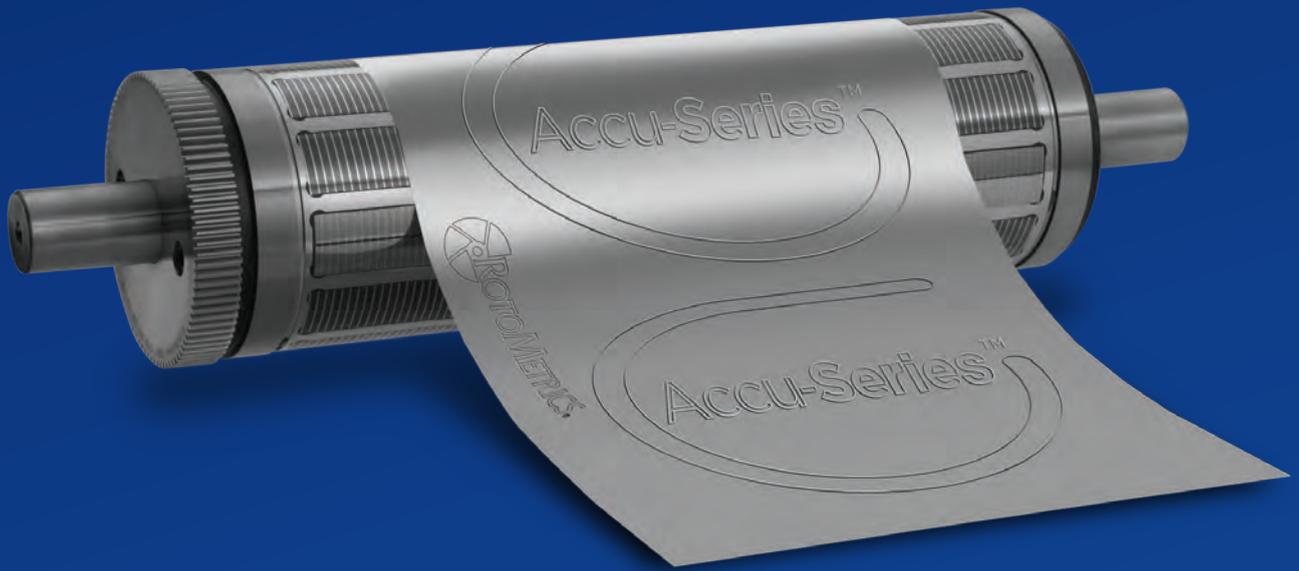
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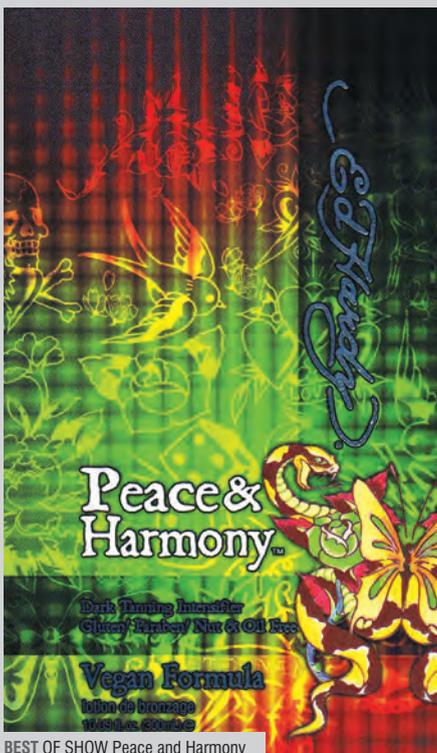
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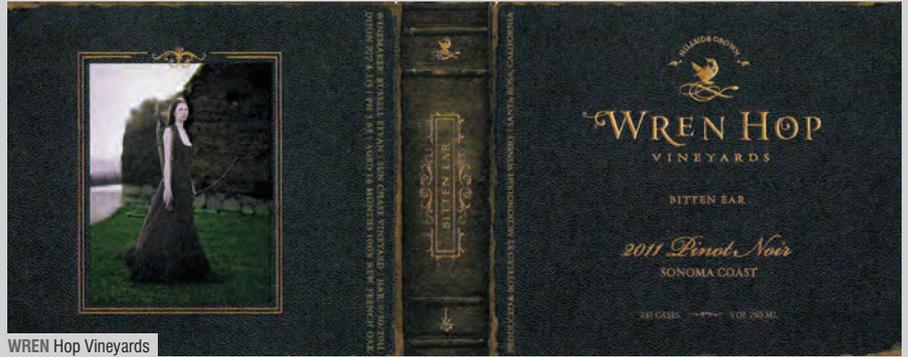
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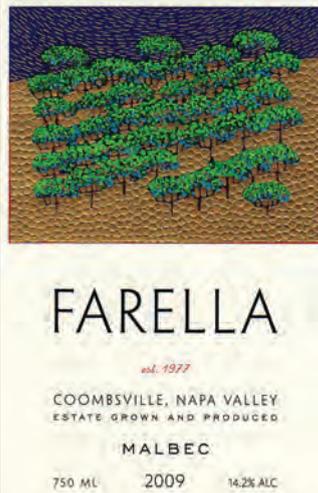
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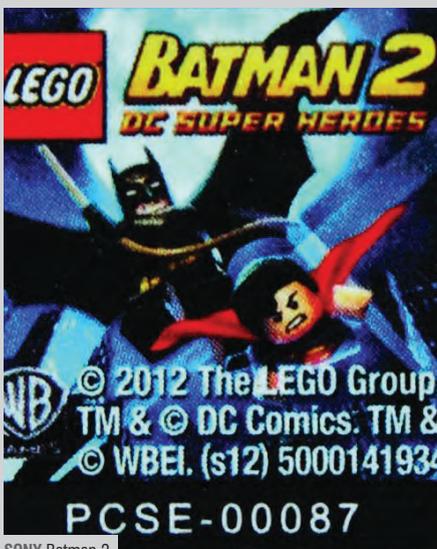
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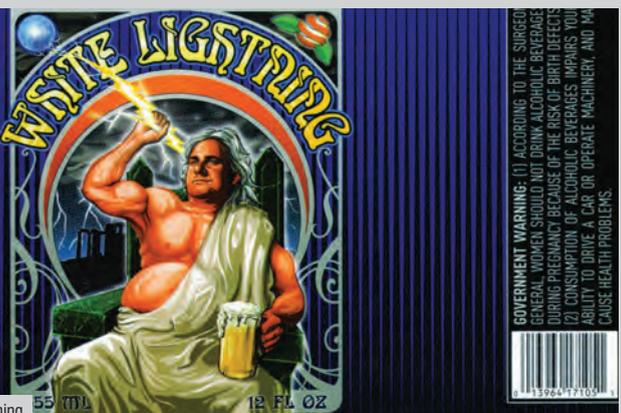
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# TLMI gathers in Texas

**THE TLMI ANNUAL MEETING** held in chairman Dave McDowell's home state of Texas welcomed association members from across North America and overseas in October, writes Danielle Jerschefske

Themed as 'My Generation – Leading Strategies for Multigenerational Trends and Technologies', two speakers gave attendees much to discuss – no matter their age. :

Cam Marston, author, columnist and leading expert on the impact of generational differences in the workplace, stressed the need to understand the differences between Millennial, Baby Boomers and 'Gen X' characteristics.

Scott Klososky, a technology futurist looked at implementing a digital strategy.

Jeff Dunphy of Design Label Manufacturing was awarded TLMI Converter of the Year while David Taylor of EFI was recognized as TLMI Supplier of the Year. The winners of the 2012 TLMI Label Awards were announced on the final evening using the latest categories as decided by the World Label Association (L9).

**McDowell Label & Screen Printing took the Best of Show Award and Best in Class for its Peace & Harmony label in the Roll to Roll – Color Process – Prime category. The Texas-based converter also earned Best in Class in the Wine & Spirits – Flexography/letterpress – Color Process – Prime category for the Ten High Kentucky Bourbon Whiskey.**

**The four other winners of Best in Class awards are:**

**Multi-Color Corporation** – Collotype Division, Digital Printing – Wine & Spirits (Beer) – Wren Hop Vineyards, 2011 Pinot Noir  
**National Label Company**, Offset – Color Process – Prime – Sony Batman 2

**Collotype Labels, USA**, Wine & Spirits Offset – Color Process – Prime – Farella, 2009 Malbec

**Alpine Packaging**, Flexography – Line & Screen/Tone – PrimeFull Pint Brewing Company White Lightening



L-R: Peter Woods, general manager, Pyramid Labels Industries (Malaysia); Buangruang Meejaroen, general manager, Weber Marking Systems (Thailand); Jeniaty Satjawiguna, marketing director, Master Label (Indonesia); Richard Tan, managing director, Prestige Label (Singapore); Yam Kee Neng, general manager, Super Enterprise (Philippines)

## Bali Summit sees lively debate

**THE LABEL SUMMIT** held by the Tarsus Group in Indonesia saw a lively discussion from a group of SE Asia's leading label printers. Joe Ives reports

The South East Asian labeling market is growing fast. However, like any emerging market, it is challenged by the lack of a skilled labor force, the means to build one and uncertainty over where future capital investment should go.

At a Q&A session chaired by L&L editor Andy Thomas at the Indonesian Label Summit in May, Peter Woods, general manager Pyramid Labels Malaysia, said that maintaining a manufacturing skillset is 'the biggest challenge I feel for our business'.

Buangruang Meejaroen, general manager of Weber Marking Systems (Thailand), recognized similar challenges: '[Thai label workers] have quite a high skill level and a lot of experience in printing, but labeling and flexible packaging is new to them.' Wong Sung explained that demand for more technologically advanced printing is accelerating at a faster rate than the Thai labor market can equip itself with new printing techniques, though he remains confident that they will catch up.

The panelists agreed that there is a pressing need for a printing academy dedicated to narrow web and flexo package printing. Their local training resources are aimed mainly at commercial printers.

'In Malaysia there are some printing-related academies, but not really for label printing,' said Peter Woods. 'The real problem is that while in the Western developed world – and I come from Australia – there is a fairly thorough education system including manufacturing training, in Malaysia we have expensive machinery to produce A-class products, yet we have to do all training internally, because people join us with no background in machinery operation or knowledge of printing. So I would welcome an educational platform in this region that

businesses could use to develop their staff.'

The Philippines has a school which offers a BA in print technology, but it is mainly for offset printing and not for narrow web technology. 'So even if we engage a graduate from the print school we have to basically train them from scratch,' said Yam Kee Neng, general manager of Super Enterprise (Philippines). He remains supportive of such programs, however, as they at least give some foundation knowledge.

Ariana Susanti of the Indonesian Packaging Federation then made the timely announcement from the floor of plans to set up a modern printing training school. She informed the panel that the new school 'will have Adobe Illustrator training for packaging and flexo, flexo step & repeat and trapping and everything else, and we will have the top European platemaking equipment, along with printing and die-cutting technology. I already have support confirmed from local and multinational supplier companies in the food, beverage and personal care markets.'

The rapturous applause that followed her announcement reflected the obvious demand for such educational programs specific to the label industry.

### HEALTHY GROWTH

There is little doubt the label industry is growing at a healthy rate in most of the South East Asian region. According to Jeniaty Satjawiguna, marketing director, Master Label (Indonesia), Indonesia's GDP is growing at around seven percent, and the packaging and label industry even faster than that. The biggest packaging sector is food and beverages, but

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this is currently dominated by flexible packaging, particularly pouches and sachets, which provides big growth opportunities for labels.

The situation is more uncertain in Singapore, according to Richard Tan, managing director of Prestige Label: 'Singapore's labeling market has undergone a lot of consolidation and has faced some big challenges in the last five years.' Tan told delegates that industries have been moving out of Singapore, which has become a 'mature' and 'static' market. Tan believes there are still opportunities for growth in niche areas like shrink sleeves, however.

Yam Kee Neng noted that the big global label printing companies have not yet moved into the Philippines, but they will as the market continues to grow: 'The growth of the demand for labels will go in tandem with population growth and the disposable income of each family.'

The lower income groups mainly buy products in sachets at the moment, said Kee Neng, but as their incomes rise they start to buy products in labeled packages – the same trend identified in Indonesia by Jeniaty Satjawiguna. 'The sizes of individual orders are at the same time getting smaller, so we need to invest in machinery that can cater for these shorter run lengths.'

### WET-GLUE VS PS

The next question concerned the relative penetration of wet-glue and pressure-sensitive labels in the region.

'The way we approach the market is to give (end users) the applicator for free if they commit to buy the label from us,' said Weber Thailand's Buangsuang Meejaroen. 'An increase in the minimum wage has made hand-applied labeling extremely expensive, so manufacturers now want to invest in automated equipment.'

Singapore has noted a similar change, said Richard Tan, where 20-30 percent of wet-glue users have converted to self-adhesive labels and flexible packaging over recent years. Of all the ASEAN markets Indonesia appears most advanced with this transition. Here, the health and personal care market is already well covered by pressure-sensitive labels, while the food industry remains 90 percent wet glue.

Yam Kee Neng of Super Enterprises said that in the Philippines the food and beverage market remains overwhelmingly wet-glue, but other sectors are making the transition. At least four of his customers in the chemical and agricultural sectors have switched from wet-glue to PS labels. 'So it is up to our company to introduce customers to the advantages of automatic labeling machines. They have a lot of problems using wet-glue labels – even one big multinational company was having problems using a low end wet-glue applicator, and that's why they're switching to PSA.'

Malaysia is already a fairly advanced manufacturing country, so opportunities are continuing to develop for PS labels without having to take market share from wet-glue, said Pyramid Labels' Peter Woods.

### FROM THE FLOOR

A lively exchange with the audience followed. One delegate asked the panelists whether in their countries it is possible to charge clients for the extra work they have to do to make artwork files ready for printing.

Peter Woods stated: 'It's case by case. Some customers are willing to be charged, but for others it has to be amortized into the label cost. We have the challenge that unless we do it for free, someone else will do it for free. From my experience, if we could charge for that extra work we do to their art file it would be a miracle!'

Buangsuang Meejaroen agreed: 'You cannot charge for that in Thailand, that's for free!' Yam Kee Neng made a similar report from a Philippines perspective: 'I would say for more than 95 percent of our new development work, you can't charge. The bottom line is that you cannot charge the customer – that is how the trend is going here.'

Another question came from Mark Andy's international sales manager Mike Russell, who asked whether, for standard prime label work, flexography was replacing letterpress in the region.

The unanimous answer was that while everyone wants to make the transition to flexo, letterpress remains a powerful force. 'Where's the value proposition?' asked Peter Woods. 'We have a letterpress machine where we can make the plates relatively cheaply in comparison to flexo. Where we have transitioned from a traditional 100 percent letterpress to flexo, it is not for the local work – it's more for work with higher end requirements. The flexo platform delivers extra embellishments. But to move some of the local stuff it's hard: there's still money in letterpress.'

'We're moving from letterpress to flexo like a lot of people in Thailand,' reports Buangsuang Meejaroen, but the transition to flexo is occurring at a slower rate at Super Enterprise in the Philippines. 'We have letterpresses with one flexo machine on the way,' said Yam Kee Neng. 'Of course the trend is moving towards flexo but I will say that letterpress is there to stay for a long time.'

The choice between letterpress and flexo is not necessarily black and white, as Federico d'Annunzio from Nuova Gidue explained from the floor: 'Especially in China, many people are using flexo presses with letterpress plates, so, you get all the advantages of flexo in terms of color stability and very fast set up, especially on repeat jobs, and the cost of the plates will be identical to the cost of letterpress plates – because you are actually using letterpress plates.'

James Woods agreed that this is a good solution to replace continuous rotary letterpress, though intermittent letterpress will not be affected.

Delegates and speakers agreed it will be interesting to see how all these issues have developed by the time of the next Indonesia Summit, which is likely to be held in Jakarta in 2014.



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# Karlville focuses on flexibles finishing

AS THE NUMBER of mid-web presses dedicated to flexible packaging grows, Karlville is launching new finishing systems targeting flexibles and pouch packaging markets.

Danielle Jerschefske reports



Karlville Development Group is probably best known in the labeling industry for its shrink sleeve label seaming and application machinery and its slitting and rewinding equipment. But as label converters look to move into package printing markets with new mid-web inline presses, Karlville has developed narrower machines for the laminated flexible packaging and pouch converting sectors.

The global flexible packaging market is estimated to be worth around 76 billion US dollars with a five percent anticipated growth rate, while the global label market is 55 billion US dollars with growth slowing to one and two percent in mature markets. Fifty percent of flexible packaging in the US contains food, and thirty percent of this consists of pouch containers. Most of this flexible market is served by wide web converters with the narrow web industry currently contributing an insignificantly small percentage.

Last year Karlville opened an R&D facility in Elgin, Illinois, dedicated to laminating and pouch conversion. Label converters looking to diversify their portfolios beyond pressure-sensitive label production will likely find these facilities to be a useful resource. Raul Matos, vice president at Karlville, says, 'There are many label converters that claim to be pouch producers, but in reality they are purchasing pre-made pouch structures to be top coated and printed. We would not consider this to be sophisticated pouch business

and much of the margin can be achieved simply with in-house solventless lamination capabilities.'

A move into flexible packaging is feasible for the label converter willing to research and invest accordingly, Matos believes. The market's requirements differ from, and are more demanding than label manufacturing. In North and Latin America, some converters can be seen using shrink sleeve label conversion as a platform to move into flexible packaging production. A clear strategy is imperative. On a scale of difficulty from one to 10, Matos believes that shrink sleeve label production is about three, while flexible packaging is more like a seven.

## STAKEHOLDERS ALIGN

The stars are coming into alignment to make mid-web packaging conversion an efficient and profitable move for a label print business. New machinery is here to manage multiple SKUs, faster turnaround and more efficient production to meet brand, retail and consumer preferences for variety and more frequent design changes.

Many of the narrow-web industry's leading press manufacturers offer machines engineered for thin material conversion: a list would include Muller Martini, Xeikon, Omet, MPS, PCMC and Nuova Gidue, all of whom offer presses at widths between 20-26 inches. At Labelexpo Europe 2013 more players introduced mid-web offset, flexographic

and digital offset 20-30 inch presses: Nilpeter's MO-5; the Mark Andy Versa Max; HP Indigo 20000. These high-end machines are intended to capture a piece of existing consumer packaging orders coming down in run length.

Converters will be looking for production benefits against wider web printing and converting machinery including improved uptime, rapid changeover and better profitability. This can be achieved using wider 'label' machinery with flexible packaging industry-specific design attributes.

Says Matos, 'The potential reward requires a change in mentality. First of all, this is production of primary packaging that comes into direct contact with food. Converters must be knowledgeable about the inks and adhesives involved and layering techniques. They must have a lab to test the complex laminations made and will need to acquire FDA and American Institute of Baking (AIB) Superior Certification compliance to service the food sector in the US.' Separate but functionally similar certifications apply in Europe.

At TLMi's recent Technical Conference, chemical migration of inks and adhesives was a prominent discussion as North America's leaders looked to educate themselves on what's at stake. A panel including Tom Hammer of Flint Group and Catherine Nielsen, a packaging attorney, spoke frankly about the attention to detail that is required for properly producing packaging that comes into direct contact with food.



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### LAMINATION

Lamination equipment is a 'must' for entering these markets with an added value proposition, and Karlville has developed a series of offline solvent and solventless laminating machines in both wide and mid-web widths via its Webcontrol partnership.

Offline solventless laminating offers a number of advantages including lower energy and raw materials costs and a better environmental profile. Solventless adhesive is generally applied at a lower weight and modern chemistries cure thoroughly at room temperature. Curing time too is typically shorter at around eight hours.

While inline lamination is an option for some of the latest mid-web packaging presses, only solvent, water-based and UV adhesives can currently be applied inline. Solventless Inline is relatively new to the market and Nuova Gidue was seen launching this technology at Labelexpo Europe. While current application systems use a traditional flexo or gravure coating head, solventless lamination requires a multiple smooth roll system with precise and consistent tension.

Karlville's lamination head consists of three rollers: lamination back-up, nip and heat lamination to eliminate small dots. The entire coating head includes five rollers with three independent motor drives for the feeding roller, dosing and application. Already available in 1,000mm and 1,300mm wide options, Karlville showed its latest 800mm wide system at Labelexpo Europe. It can reach speeds up to 400m/min and can include a corona treater.

### POUCH SYSTEMS

Karlville's KSG multiple format inline pouch converting machines are available in twin lane and single lane formats. For liquid packaging,

### LABELS&LABELING



EXAMPLES of various pouches with spouts made possible with Karlville equipment

machines come equipped with modules that allow for two pouch formats. Module I produces single and dual gusset shaped pouches with a front dispensing spout. Module II makes side gusset pouches with a front pour spout. Each comes with a vibratory bowl feeder and rotary spout application system.

For the mid-web market Karlville now offers its KSP Standup Pouch machine with half the footprint of the company's existing machines to convert material widths up to 800mm (31in). This machine is an ideal partner for offline finishing of materials produced on the new range of mid-web presses.

The next step for the Karlville Group will be the introduction of pouch filling machines. The supplier specializes in catering to the needs of both packaging converters and CPG buyers or contract packagers, bridging the machinery gap between supply chain stakeholders. This strategy can be seen in its offerings for the shrink sleeve label market, and will be mimicked for flexible packaging.

### PAINT IN A POUCH

The Association for Dressings & Sauces (ADS) named Coldec Concepts its 2012 Package of the Year Award winner. Coldec won for its Paletto Paint Mix & Shake Bag, which has possible future applications in the dressing and sauce industry, as well as potential environmental benefits. Mondi produced the bags at its Steinfeld, Germany plant, and also has the capability to produce the top spout, or NorSpoutBag, at its recently acquired location in Jackson, Missouri.

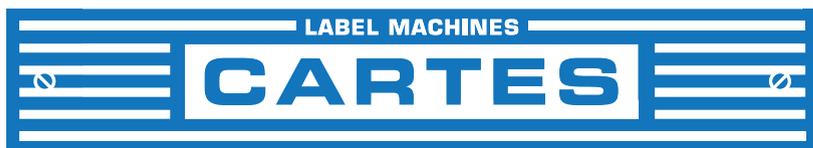
The Paletto Paint Mix & Shake Bag can hold up to 2.5 liters of liquid. Color is made by adding a tube of pigment to a pouch of either pastel or saturated paint. The consumer then mixes the pouch to produce the desired paint hue.

### SUSTAINABILITY: LABELS VS FLEXIBLES

All supply chain stakeholders must closely review environmental claims surrounding flexible packaging. It is critical that Life Cycle Analysis used to support sustainability claims includes end of life recovery. While benefits can be found reducing carbon and energy emissions by shipping lighter materials, the recyclability and reuse opportunity for laminated flexible packaging is limited. On the other hand, the label industry is currently collaborating closely with value chain leaders to address label and rigid container recycling and contamination issues.



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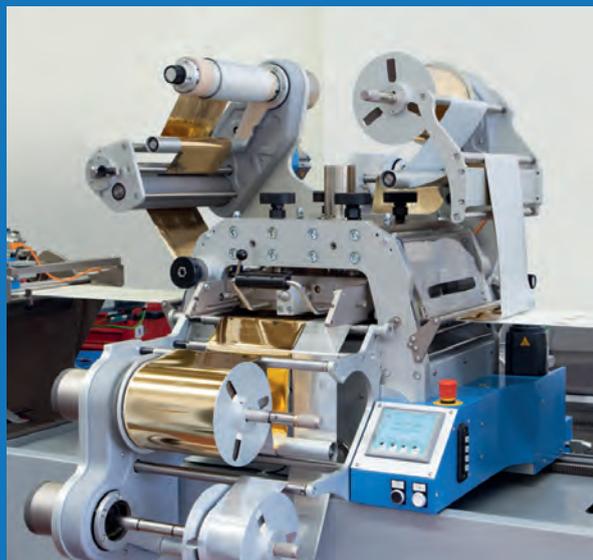
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# Standardization generates cost savings for Paragon

**AFTER 18 MONTHS** of tests and measurements across its entire printing operation, Paragon Print and Packaging has settled on a new anilox-ink combination which has generated significant cost savings. Andy Thomas reports

As a leading European manufacturer of packaging for the retail food industry, standardization of the label printing process is a key issue for UK-based Paragon Print and Packaging.

Paragon Labels produces more than one and a half billion labels a month on 52 flexographic label presses across six plants. With extremely high demands on print quality, the company has a strong focus on process control and stability.

Some 18 months ago, Paragon set out on a project to more consistently achieve customer-specified digital color targets, reduce spitting problems to zero, control the print process and achieve outstanding results on HD flexo.

Understanding the variables in the flexographic print process and establishing controls is paramount to achieving a total color management system. Paragon tested and measured a range of different anilox rolls using Troika's Anicam and press side tests, all using the same inputs. Apex GTT anilox rolls were selected after showing a variation of less than one percent.

The next stage was to standardize the other components of the flexo printing process.

Paragon chose to measure the ink directly on the press itself rather than off-line. 'We know that the whole process does not work if the ink does not match,' said Michael Marshall, operations manager at Paragon. 'Issuing Ink Right First Time (RFT) to press is critical to delivery, quality and consistency. Apex GTT has allowed us to control one of the critical inputs when achieving customer demands of less than 2.00 delta e 2000.'

As part of the standardization project, Paragon switched to INX inks, finding them to work well in combination with the Apex GTT rolls. Step-by-step Paragon changed its whole printing process and gained clear benefits – particularly the elimination of spitting problems with UV inks.

Cost savings were significant: ink waste decreased by 55 percent and doctor blade usage showed a reduction of 50 percent. Ink changeover time was reduced by 46 percent reduction and makeready waste reduced by 15 percent.

'Understanding your process means being aware that there are points that might be small, but nevertheless are of crucial importance,' said Dennis Patterson, group operations director at Paragon. 'For us it became very clear that the ink transfer is one of the key issues a printer needs to have control of in his job on a daily basis. Otherwise standardization remains challenging if not impossible.'

Continued Patterson, 'With Apex GTT we selected a high-tech tool that gives us the highest degree of control around the ink transfer. At the same time we were able to reduce our anilox inventory, thus saving a significant number of set up anilox roll changes across the business on a daily basis.'

All of Paragon's more than 50 presses, from seven different suppliers, are now under control with a delta e value of less than two. Paragon maintains these high quality and control standards through regular, very precise and critical volume measurements of its GTT rolls.



FAST changeover Apex GTT anilox roll



MARK Chapman, production co-ordinator at Paragon Print and Packaging, measuring an Apex GTT anilox roll



THE new Atlas CW1040 is available in widths from 8.2-10.4m

# Rewind to the future

ATLAS Converting Equipment offers a slitting option for the entire materials supply chain. David Pittman reports

The Atlas Converting Equipment story dates back nearly five decades, when the first Titan slitter rewinders were manufactured in 1964. A decade later and Atlas Converting Equipment came into existence, shortly before acquiring Titan Converting Equipment in 1981.

Three decades of mergers and acquisitions followed, culminating in Atlas Converting Equipment returning to private ownership following a period of stewardship that included Valmet, which became Metso Corporation of Finland in the late 1990s, and Bobst of Switzerland.

The latter phase was brought to a close following a management buy-out in 2010, and placed the new-look company in the hands of chairman Stephen Darlington, managing director Alan Johnson, sales and marketing director Stan Braycotton and finance director Tom Walker.

Braycotton speaks well of the company's past, including the good relationship Atlas maintains with Bobst. 'We are still in contact with Bobst because we have a shared history and many of our customers are also customers of Bobst, with no conflict of interest between our ranges of products.'

The make-up of the company's history has allowed it to develop the product set it currently has, such as the acquisition and integration of technologies related to aluminum foil and splicing systems, and will allow it to continue to develop in the future, Braycotton says.

## NEXT-GENERATION EQUIPMENT

The current Atlas Converting Equipment portfolio includes primary and secondary slitter rewinders, with the Atlas branded models the largest and fastest.

The Titan brand of slitter rewinders falls into the secondary slitting rewinding category, and are operated by printers and converters directly in order to produce reels that can be dispatched to customers mainly for flexible packaging applications.

Titan equipment includes the compact ER610 twin-shaft cantilever slitter rewinder with a web width up to 65in (1,650mm) and a rewind diameter of 24in (610mm), and which can run at speeds up to 1,476ft/min (450m/min). It can handle various films and laminates from 20-200 microns, as well as paper from 30-200gsm.

The Titan brand now includes the SR9 series, which has been

designed with a focus on increased efficiency, rewind quality and modularity.

The SR9-DT dual turret model was first shown at ICE Europe 2011, and was met with great interest from attendees to that show. A 1,650mm (65in) wide model can operate at a speed of 1,000m/min (3,300ft/min), and process a range of narrow web substrates, including BOPP, BOPET, BOPA, CPP, HDPE and LDPE, plain, printed, coated or metalized materials from 10-200 microns. It can also process laminates 20-200 microns thick and fiber-based substrates with a weight up to 200gsm.

The dual turret design features two rewind turrets (four rewind shafts) that are rotated automatically, enabling machine stop-time to be reduced to no more than 30 seconds between rewind reel sets for substantial gains in productivity.

The patented turret support device (TSD) facilitates this fast turret rotation and is one of three patent applications related to the SR9 series – the TSD patent has already been granted.

The SR9-DT has been followed by the SR9-DS duplex slitter rewinder, which shares many of the same mechanical and operational characteristics as the DT model, including a linear tracking slitter section which maintains a constant short distance between the knives and the rewind shafts for the highest quality rewind reels (smooth side wall profile). Atlas also claims that the rewind clamp cut-off and rewind stick down options also provide production output previously unobtainable from a duplex slitter rewinder.

## VALUE-ADDED SERVICES

The Atlas proposition further includes specialty slitting and rewinding options that can be developed on a case-by-case basis, and roll handling equipment, which can be used to support the high productivity of the SR9 series with conveyors and reel handling systems, such as wrapping and palletizing operations.

A new service platform for both the Atlas and Titan ranges is now in place to provide expanded global customer service and support operations, with engineers based in the UK, US, Mexico, India, China and other parts of South-east Asia.

Upgrades are similarly supported by a global footprint, with genuine Atlas and Titan parts available across the complete range, including replacements for obsolete parts and retrofits. Parts are held in stock in regional centers around the world, and all parts are guaranteed.



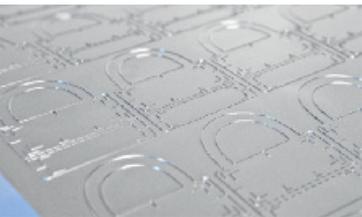
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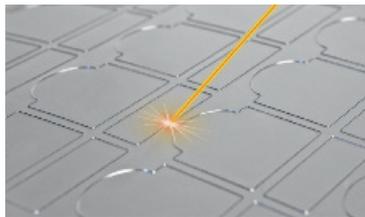


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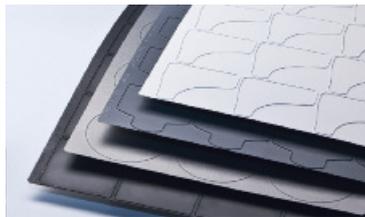
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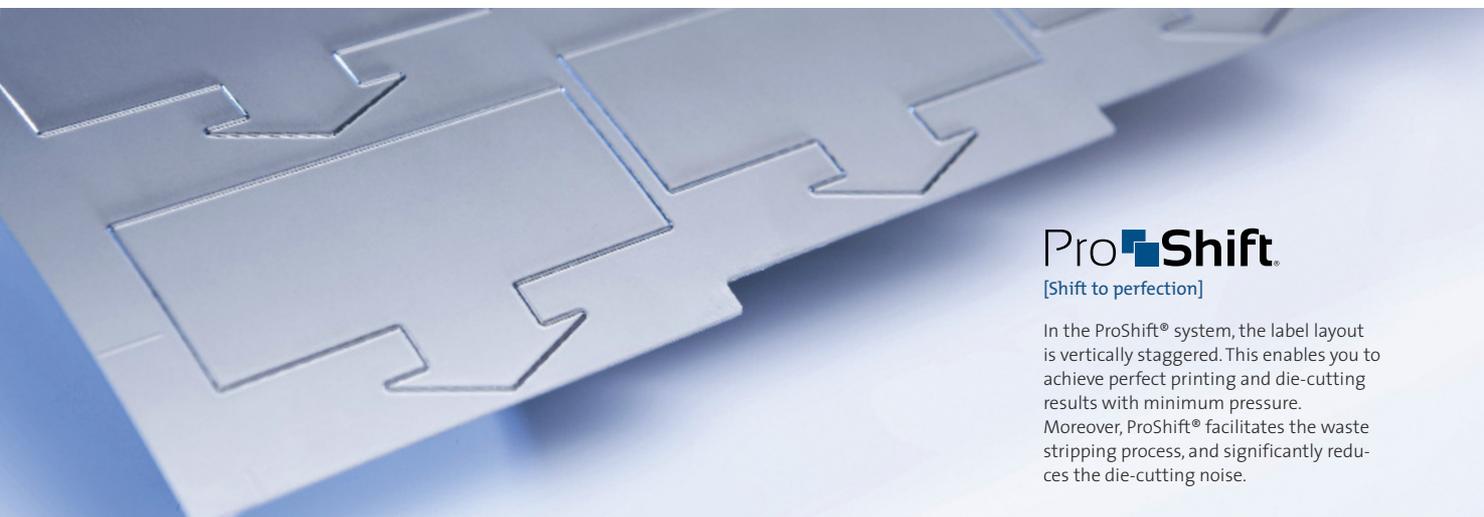
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# Digital printing and the Labelexpo Inkjet Trail

**MIKE FAIRLEY** looks at the background to the Labelexpo Inkjet trail, how and why it was set up and what it achieved

Digital print-on-demand (POD) color inkjet printing has certainly been one of the rapidly-emerging and fastest growing label printing technologies over the past eight-to-10 years. From just a few inkjet color presses on the market in the early part of the 21st century, there has been an explosion of makes and models of machines arriving and label converters can today look at probably more than 40 or so digital inkjet label presses – most of those on show at the recent Labelexpo Europe.

One only has to look at the inkjet technologies currently on display to begin to understand the challenges that converters may face when deciding whether to invest in this latest, and most exciting, of printing solutions. Just to begin with there are a range of something like half-a-dozen different print head technologies, with dot sizes per inch (dpi) between them ranging from 360 dpi up to 600, 720 or even higher. The number of dots per inch gives the press its 'native' resolution. In general, the more dots per inch the higher the print resolution. But this is only part of the story.

To dot size can be added the range of drop sizes that are selectable within the print head, often referred to as grayscale capability. A grayscale converts the original image to a platform of dots that create the continuous tones of the original. Lighter shades of gray will be made up of smaller ink jet drops spaced far apart, while darker shades of gray will typically contain larger dots with closer spacing. Different print head technologies have different grayscales. Xaar heads operate with eight grayscales, for example, while Kyocera print heads have five grayscales.

Added into this mix the capability with some print heads to jet more drops per linear inch than across the head width, then it is possible to create an equation that allows inkjet press manufacturers to talk about their press having an 'apparent' or 'effective' resolution that is much higher. Based on this equation, Xaar heads will be quoted as having an 'apparent' or 'effective' resolution of over 1000dpi and Kyocera heads will be quoted at over 1,300dpi. Some vendors using Xaar print heads have developed special non-standard print head architecture to further increase resolution, and speed.

In some inkjet systems the resolution can also be affected by the print speed, that is, higher resolutions are achievable but at lower speeds, and vice versa. So press buyers should always check what speed a quoted resolution refers to.

## NOT ALWAYS ABOUT RESOLUTION

But it is not just the native or effective resolution of the print heads that determines printed inkjet quality, performance and finished results. Such factors will also be influenced by the number of colors that can

be printed by the press and by the type of ink and ink-drying or curing system. There are also various options of gloss or matt varnishing that can be used to enhance or modify the end result.

All of the color inkjet label presses on the market today are certainly able to print in CMYK, but many will also provide an opaque white as well for printing on clear materials, while a number can additionally include orange and violet, green and violet or, in a few cases, special metallic and silver ink capabilities. The types of end-use markets and applications that the label converter is involved in will give an indication of whether additional colors, low migration, white or metallic inks are required.

The actual ink and ink drying system used will also have some impact on print quality. Some inkjet presses use UV-curable inks, some use UV LED-curable inks, while others work with water-based inkjet or even dye-based inkjet.

Typically, UV-inkjet cures the ink droplets after jetting onto the substrate, which may give time for the droplets to spread on some materials and possibly lead to dot gain, line spread, mottling of solids, etc. To overcome this, some inkjet press manufacturers offer a curing system that provides a high 'shock' of low intensity UV radiation using an array of high-power light emitting diodes (LEDs) immediately after jetting – which provides a thickening or gelling of the ink so as to improve print quality for lines, solids and dots. This 'shock' is known as UV LED pinning. Pinning additionally helps press designers to achieve a higher perceived resolution with less complex jetting hardware.

As can be seen, the quality and performance of inkjet presses will depend on many, quite complex, factors – resolution, grayscales, press speed, number of colors, ink type, drying or curing technology involved and even whether 'pinning' is available. Little wonder that label converters looking to invest in an inkjet press may sometimes find it difficult to choose the best make and model for their particular business and customers.

Never mind all the complex terminology, what the converter really wants to see is how the presses they are interested in purchasing might compare if they were all asked to print on the same substrates and using the same



DURST Tau 330

origination and, better still, across a number of different type of jobs or market applications.

### CREATING AN INKJET TRAIL

It was this requirement that formed the basis for Tarsus to set up the digital Inkjet Trail at Labelexpo Europe. Six different inkjet presses involved, three different substrates – a white coated paper, a white polypropylene and a metalized polyester – and three different job specifications and sets of identical artwork origination covering food labels, pharma labels and an industrial safety warning label. All quite a challenge.

The first requirement in building the Inkjet Trail was to determine what make or type of presses should be included. In the end it was decided to incorporate three different inkjet head technologies (Xaar, Kyocera and Epson), three different dpi capabilities (360 dpi, 600dpi and 720 dpi), a range of press running speeds – from five m/min to 50m/min. and both UV and water-based ink and drying systems.

In terms of press manufacturers the target aim was to choose companies that had a substantial historical pedigree in inkjet technology – whether mono or color printing, wide or narrow format and with expertise in inkjet ink specification or formulation and with a substantial global sales and support network. Additionally, press manufacturers were to be drawn from those with web widths that fitted between 310mm and 350mm wide, so as to be compatible with the extensive base of flexo presses in the market place.

Based on these various criteria, the press manufacturers and presses selected to participate in the Inkjet Trail were key market leaders in the field: the Domino N610i, the Durst Tau 330, the EFI Jetrion 4900M, the Epson SurePress L-4033AW, the Heidelberg Linoprint L and the SPGPrints DSI. All have a growing installed base and good base of satisfied customers.

Origination for all the food, pharma and industrial label design was undertaken and made ready for production using Esko's professional label pre-press software 'Suite 12'. With DeskPack, Esko Suite 12 added label functionality on top of Adobe Illustrator. The Esko Automation Engine integrates with MIS and automates the workflow to ensure consistent quality.

Material used for the food labels was a semi-gloss coated paper, Hermawhite super (240), which is designed for excellent quality printing by all the main printing processes, including inkjet. The pharma label designs were printed on a UPM Raflatac PP White TC 60 polypropylene face material, a top coated film that provides a superb foundation for premium print jobs. This face material was complemented by UPM Raflatac's RP 31 Purus acrylic water-based permanent adhesive well suited to demanding pharmaceutical applications.

The industrial safety warning labels were printed on a Flexcon Thermifilm Advantage Value Satin Silver, a 50 micron



satin silver metalized polyester film with a unique top-coating that allows for conventional, digital and thermal transfer printing. It also comes with UL approval.

In operation, the presses were all situated on their respective supplier booths, with set demonstration times for each press on each of the show days. Label converter visitors to the Inkjet Trail were able to attend the demonstrations on any day or set time listed, collect a sample collection pack containing all the participant details, job specification sheets for each job and a press manufacturers' completed questionnaire containing their answers to many common questions relating to press set-up time, wastage, running speed, substrate compatibility, etc. Samples of all the set printed labels for each press could then be collected from the booths and placed in the collection pack.

### HOW DID THE PRINTED LABELS COMPARE

So what did label converter visitors to the show gain from following the Inkjet Trail? Certainly a good collection of inkjet-printed samples from six different presses and various head technologies, between them representing two different food labels printed on white semi-gloss coated paper, two variations of a pharma label printed on a white top-coated polypropylene, and an industrial label printed on a metalized polyester.

What can be said about these printed samples? At first glance they all look remarkably similar and of a very good saleable quality. But the Inkjet Trail was not intended to be seen as a competition. It was really intended as a means of comparing results from a whole range of technology and materials solutions – and it did that extremely well. Literally, thousands of the labels samples were collected by visitors during the show.

Look longer and closer and you soon begin to see some small differences between the different press-printed results, but that is only to be expected when some are printed at 360 dpi and using eight greyscales and others at 600 dpi or higher with five greyscales; five of the presses are UV inkjet printing and one printing water-based inkjet. Depending on the press, running speeds, as mentioned earlier, ranged from five m/min to



EPSON L-6034VW



EFI Jetrion 4950LX



HEIDELBERG Linoprint L

50 m/min.

Yes, there were some small variations in color, halftone or text definition, gloss, etc., between the different inkjet press samples, yet all showed the capabilities that inkjet printing can increasingly achieve today when competing in the market against, particularly, flexo and screen processes. Even variations in results will be found between different flexo or screen presses.

Looking at the various samples from a conventional label converter's point of view it might be said that the higher the resolution and the smaller the dots

printed on the samples, the nearer the results can be said to resemble flexo quality. This can perhaps best be seen under a magnifying glass with the Domino, Linoprint and Epson samples. Indeed there are already converters with 600 dpi inkjet presses that refer to them as their 'Short run flexo' presses. Remember too, that UV inkjet inks are chemically very similar to UV flexo inks, so again, with the smallest dots, might be expected to achieve results that are close to flexo quality.

Conversely, presses printing bigger droplets (say 360 dpi), as seen with

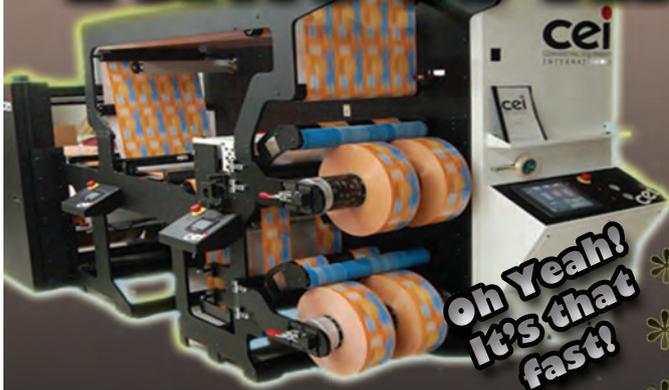
Durst, EFI and SPGPrints, seemed to be able to produce a thicker inkjet ink film, with results, when required, might be said to be closer to resembling some types of screen process work, thus enabling UV inkjet from these manufacturers to be particularly successful in competing with the point-of-sale, screen, and display sectors in the production of industrial, durable and chemical labels, in the printing of blister packs, and in graphic and sticker markets. However, it should be noted that thicker ink films might also drive up ink usage.

Having said that, all the press participants certainly achieved excellent results with the printing of their industrial safety warning labels and would seem to offer their converter customers key opportunities for the future, with short-run industrial labels printed by inkjet likely to be extremely competitive – and with no fixed repeat length inkjet can even profitably print long chemical or oil drum labels, providing they fit within the web width of the press.

An inkjet-printed gloss varnish (and UL approval) might also be added to enhance the durability performance and end-user acceptance for many industrial labels. The industrial label from SPGPrints shows locally enhanced

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gloss level of the image. A controllable digital primer function can be selected to regulate the gloss level definition. Certainly all the above areas show where UV inkjet, and the press participants in the Trail, have achieved much of their success to date.

Looking at the high gloss quality of many of the pharmaceutical label samples printed during the Inkjet Trail could possibly give the impression to some label converters or pharma brands that inkjet maybe provides an image that can look too glossy in this market. Durst anticipated this and additionally over-printed some of their labels samples with a matt varnish.

Barcodes in all cases looked to have printed well by each of the presses – on all the different substrates – although it was noted that EFI had printed some of their industrial samples with a white behind the code. Interesting to show what can be achieved, but probably not actually necessary in the case of the metalized polyester, although it might help attain 100 percent readability.

**WHAT CAN BE CONCLUDED?**

No doubt some label converters that collected the inkjet printed samples will also eventually end up going over them with a magnifying glass to detect minor imperfections in this or that sample, as they would also do with any conventional printed samples they happen to pick up. They will always do that. It's in the printer's nature.

But that is not what the Inkjet Trail was all about. It set-out to show that the quality and performance of inkjet printing from the key players has dramatically improved in recent years, that in particular it can successfully compete today with flexo and screen process printing for the right kinds of work and applications, and that the six press participants that took part



were confident enough to set their printed results against each other from the same origination and materials.

They should all be congratulated on what they achieved. There are some small differences between their various printed results, but that was expected anyway. Indeed, some visitors to the show were surprised that the differences between the different head technologies, greyscales and drying systems was not even greater. At the end of the day a converter looking to invest in a digital press will most likely want to have the selected press manufacturer(s) print samples from the converters' own origination and materials anyway before making a final decision.

What can be said however is that between them the six press participants in the Inkjet Trail have undoubtedly gone a long way towards fast establishing digital inkjet printing as a mainstream label printing technology for the future. Press investment over the next year will surely confirm this and the industry will see further rapid expansion in the installed base of inkjet label presses.

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# HP Indigo showcases innovation at Labelexpo

HP INDIGO USED LABELXPO EUROPE 2013 to present its Innovation Showcase awards, which recognize the most innovative uses of HP Indigo digital printing technology. At the same time the 'digital supermarket shelf' on the HP Indigo stand demonstrated a wide range of applications across labels, flexible packaging and cartons (visit Label TV on the L&L.com website to see North America editor Danielle Jerschefske interview HP Indigo CEO Alon Bar-Shany)



The Innovation award Showcase winners were the following:

## 1. DIGITAL LABELS, ISRAEL

### HP INDIGO WS6600

These Coca-Cola branded smartphone coverings were produced to deliver a unique personalized product to consumers. 'The VDP capabilities powered by Esko enabled mass production while maintaining print quality and overall look and feel,' commented the judges.

## 2. INNOVATIVE LABELING SOLUTIONS, USA

### HP INDIGO WS6000

Balm Cosmetics wanted to introduce a specially decorated tube with high-quality graphics without investing in additional inventory. A label was printed on the HP Indigo and applied to a white tube prior to crimping, utilizing nearly all of the surface area. 'This cost-effective solution eliminated the cost of purchasing and warehousing pre-printed tubes, but at same time providing the right design for the marketplace,' said the judges.

## UNIPACKAGING, FRANCE

### HP INDIGO WS6600

The client needed to produce a three-section flexible pouch. 'The HP Indigo WS6000 Digital Press printed the complex images and text in high-quality registration and vivid color on a white substrate,' said the judges. 'The result is a high-quality feel with nice gradients.'

**LABELS&LABELING**



## 3. S&K LABEL SPOL, CZECH REPUBLIC

### HP INDIGO PRESS WS4500

A traditional wine manufacturer wanted to create a label with a more modern feel. Rustique Blanc wine label stock was combined with hot foil stamping and silk-screen. Commented the judges: 'The combination of red, black and 3D effects produced a striking label with a fine modern look.'

## ALLFLEX, GERMANY

### HP INDIGO WS4500

The Kaiser Karl Tee label, for application to a tin can, uses a dull gold foil substrate, primed to enable successful printing on the HP Indigo. The white background is achieved using a single white separation, enabling faster and more cost-efficient production. The judges commented: 'The attractive look achieved is modern, but established, with an attractive use of gold and purple colors.'

## AUGUST FALLER KG, GERMANY

### HP INDIGO WS6000

This label, printed as part of a marketing campaign, demonstrates an ability to provide secure printing with embedded anti-counterfeiting measures including serial numbers and barcodes. All security features were printed in one pass using Esko VDP software for the serialization.



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4

#### 4. DIGITAL LABELS, ISRAEL

##### HP INDIGO WS6600

Printed as part of a rebranding campaign for an existing product line, this label uses a substrate which changes with the light, 'giving an exclusive yet soft appearance'. Said the judges: 'Digital printing provided superior print quality and color consistency, as well as answering the need for a short turnaround time.'

#### GRAFICAS VARIAS, SPAIN

##### HP INDIGO WS4500

This unique wine label is printed on a special paper, and incorporates silk screening as part of the finishing process. 'The result is a delicate and romantic feel with an added multisensory experience,' said the judges. 'The project required high-quality printing to produce a wine label in vibrant color with the addition of glitter and scent.'

#### IMPERIUM PACKAGING, MOROCCO

##### HP INDIGO WS6600

A variety of hand-made tea bags are displayed in envelopes using a transparent substrate to create an eye-catching window. 'The printing challenges were the differing quantities as well as featuring attractive typography,' said the judges.

#### LABELS UNLIMITED, USA

##### HP INDIGO WS6000

These customized water bottle labels for high-end resorts were time and quality sensitive. 'Efficient performance entailed sandwich printing multiple ink layers in a single pass showing the reverse side image through the transparent water bottle,' commented the judges. 'The result is an innovative product, with the reduction of waste and enabling a quick turnaround required by the customer.'

#### PEER PRINT, ISRAEL

##### HP INDIGO WS6600

An Arak liquor bottle needed a label with a high degree of white opacity, while maintaining color consistency and a variation of color tones. The label was printed in a single pass on a transparent substrate. 'High-quality printing, combined with the hot foil finishing, produced an authentic-looking label rich in detail with a Middle Eastern feeling,' said the judges.

#### LABELS&LABELING

## PACKAGING PRESSES AT LABELEXPO

Following HP Indigo's demonstration of its new wider web packaging presses at Labelexpo Europe, L&L's Mike Fairley and Andy Thomas held a round table discussion with Christian Menegon, business development manager, Labels & Packaging; Simon Lewis, manager strategic marketing; and Ronen Samuel, General manager HP Indigo EMEA.

Great excitement was generated when HP Indigo announced the presence of its new, wider web package printing presses at Labelexpo Europe – the HP Indigo 20000 web-fed press for flexible packaging and the HP Indigo 30000 sheet-fed for cartons.

Although first shown at Drupa last year, this was effectively the launch of both machines to the labels and packaging market. What does this tell us about the merging of the labels and package printing markets?

'It shows HP's commitment to develop packaging solutions,' said Simon Lewis. 'We targeted specific customers to come to the show and see the 20000 and 30000 presses, but at the same time the 20000 digital press and Q3000 finishing line caused a lot of label converters to open their eyes to possibilities they had not previously considered – wider web label production.'

Lewis pointed out that it was not just converters who showed an interest in digital package printing at the show. 'Brands who attend Labelexpo increasingly take an integrated view of packaging applications and we were able to open a dialogue with them as well as with the converters.'

Christian Menegon reinforced the point: 'Brands have proved a need for the flexibility brought by digital printing in labels, but up to now have not been able to achieve the same for their folding boxes, pouches etc. With the 20000 and 30000 they now can. This makes room for label converters to offer the whole range of these possibilities to service brand owners. This will shake up the industry.'

Commented Ronen Samuel: 'We wanted to make a clear statement: in the last ten years we went from a niche player in the label industry to a mainstream player in this market, and today we dominate the label market. Now we are driving the same movement to make package printing digital.'

Mike Fairley confirmed that brands now have 'multiple buying needs' across all categories of labels and packaging. 'Label converters are in a good position to supply them.'

Interestingly, label converters were showing a lot of interest in digital carton production on the HP stand – as well as commercial printers looking to enter the carton market. 'Short run digital carton converting and finishing, as shown by Highcon and Scodix, is ideal for the promotional carton market, which is where nice digital opportunities exist,' said Menegon. 'Conventional folding carton producers have already their own finishing tools. These new solutions bring a perfect fit for companies motivated to offer a print service rather than volumes of boxes.'

Not surprisingly, flexible packaging production generated the most enquiries from label converters at Labelexpo: 'We had a huge interest from label converters, particularly about how to deal with lamination and converting,' said Samuel.

HP also generated a lot of interest in its new metallic ink and high slip white for shrink sleeves, both of which will be applied on the wider HP Indigo 20000 and 30000 presses to generate a new raft of added value solutions.

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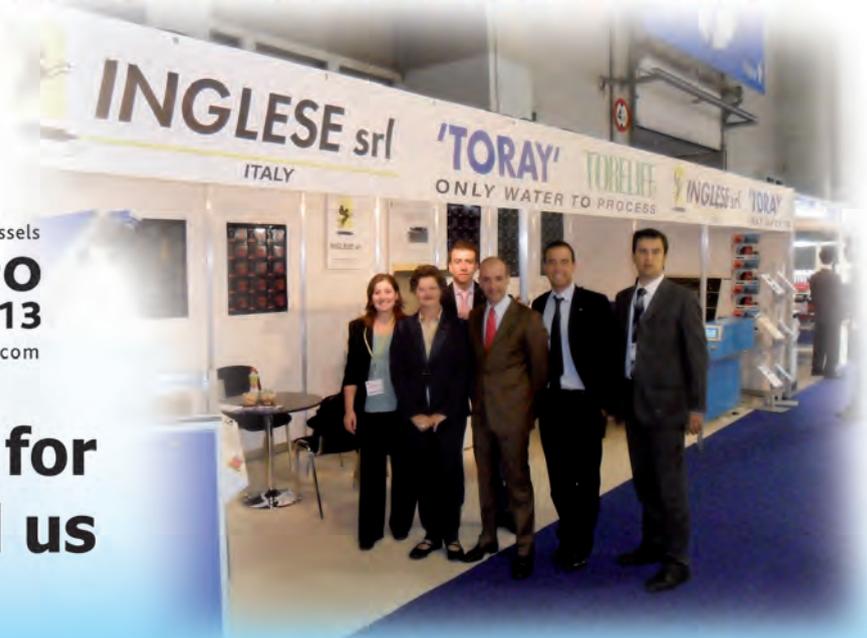


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L-R Derek Cheng, GM Sunrise Labels, and Kevin Lui, L&L China editor, With the Epson Surepress L-4033AW

# Chinese converter moves wine to PS

L&L China editor Kevin Liu interviews Derek Cheng of Beijing Sunrise Printing, a pioneer of PS wine labels which has just installed its first Epson digital label press

Pressure-sensitive wine label specialist Beijing Sunrise Printing has installed the first Epson SurePress L-4033AW digital press in Mainland China, pushing the converter into a leading position as the wine industry begins a slow transition from wet-glue to PS labels.

Beijing Sunrise Printing was established in 1995 and is located near Nanyuan Airport, Daxing District, Beijing.

Sunrise was one of the first printing plants in China to specialize in PS labels and around 2009 started printing red wine labels. It is the supplier of labels to the famous Chinese red wine brand Great Wall, a brand belonging to the COFCO Group, and co-operates closely with dozens of wineries and chateaux both in and outside of China.

## PS WINE POTENTIAL

According to data provided by the Chinese Wine Industry Association, China's wine production in 2012 was up to 1,381,600 liters, growing by 16.9 percent year on year. Wine consumption was 2.2 billion bottles, growing by 37.5 percent year on year. Today China is one of the five largest grape wine consuming countries in the world. There are more than 600 wineries in the country, of which approximately one third are controlled by Chinese companies, with leading enterprises including Changyu, Great Wall, Dynasty and Grand Dragon.

Wine growing regions are mainly spread throughout Yantai, Penglai in Shandong province, Changli, Huailai in Hebei province, Tonghua in Northeast China, Gansu, Ningxia, Xinjiang in Northwest China and some regions in Southwest China.

Therefore, with respect to geographical distribution, 80 percent of wine is produced in the North of China. Although the equipment and management techniques of northern label converters are generally less developed than those in the Yangtze River Delta and Pearl River Delta, northern label converters are well positioned to service the growing wine industry and hence have a great potential for rapid development.

"PS labels consumption in the wine industry is only two percent, which is much less than the other wine consumer countries. Even Great Wall applies PS labels only on selected luxury wine brands, which is a very small portion of its production"

## NEW MARKET OPPORTUNITY

Although the global wine label industry is a mature one, in China it is still a new market and business opportunity. Beijing Sunrise purchased a Lintec intermittent letterpress machine in 2000 to supply PS labels for foods and beverage companies, and in 2009 purchased a PS offset press and won the bidding to produce PS wine labels for Great Wall.

'Actually, Great Wall was one of the earliest brands in China to start using PS labels,' says Derek Cheng, general manager of Beijing Sunrise Printing. 'Before this, there was almost only wet-glue label production in China. With respect to the Chinese market, PS labels consumption in the wine industry is only two percent, which is much less than the other wine consumer countries. Even Great Wall applies PS labels only on selected luxury wine brands, which is a very small portion of its production.'

Continues Cheng, 'One of the most important reasons that PS labels are difficult to popularize and apply, is the impact of the outer package. In China, most manufacturers are fastidious in the design and printing of the outer package for wines. They would spend dozens of RMB on a paper or wooden packing box on luxury wines, which naturally means they neglect the

labels on the wine bottles themselves.'

Compared with wet-glue labels, PS labels also cost much more, which is another important obstacle. The equipment and production lines of wine suppliers are prepared only for wet-glue labels, and they would have to invest a significant amount to change process.

#### SHELF IMPACT

Derek Cheng says that once wine manufacturers understand the impact PS labels can have, they are more willing to consider the extra costs: 'We believe that effective packaging and branding start with a good design strategy, and compared with wet-glue labels, PS gives much more opportunity to play with new ideas. Wineries expect to boost shelf impact by applying PS labels in order to promote their sales. Great Wall wines has seen how PS wine labels enhance their brand through the design and printing process.'

With the growing maturity of PS label technology in China and the increasing efforts by PS label industry suppliers, more brands are realizing the advantages of PS labels and starting to transform from wet-glue.

Because PS wine labels represent a challenge for label converters, the price wars which affect other sectors like PS supermarket labels or logistic labels will not be so fierce. 'Although many converters have expressed an interest in PS wine labels, in practice they just wait and see,' says Cheng, who points out that converters looking to enter this market will need strong technical and service capabilities.

Sunrise chose to actively seek out this market, to get to know the demands and requirements of its customers, and to provide a range of solutions to customers according to brand position, label design concepts and the style of each wine maker.

Sunrise positions itself as a solution provider for its customers rather than just a label supplier, and consults on issues such as

"Because PS wine labels represent a challenge for label converters, the price wars which affect other sectors like PS supermarket labels or logistic labels will not be so fierce. Although many converters have expressed an interest in PS wine labels, in practice they just wait and see"

barcode standards, positioning and readability. 'If we check for customers, that will not only avoid the potential reprint risk, but also provide an additional value-add service,' says Cheng.

#### GOING DIGITAL

In respect of production equipment, Sunrise has both intermittent letterpress and offset presses, an offline die-cutter, stamping press, slitting and rewinding machine, AVT quality control check and now the SurePress L-4033AW digital press, which was installed in May.

For many wineries, PS labels are mostly applied to luxury wines, which are usually produced in small quantities. Customers therefore request lot batches or place small orders. For this reason, Sunrise ordered its Epson digital press.

The SurePress L-4033AW is a 7-color digital inkjet label printing machine. It uses Epson's SurePress AQ water-based ink and micro piezo printheads, which provide high quality reproduction and accurate color matching. The newly added white ink meets the requirements for printing on transparent film and metallic substrates.

'Now we mainly use the Epson digital press for sample

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**AWARD WINNERS**

COFCO Group-Great Wall's Terroir Impression series, printed by Sunrise printing, won a Gold award in the PS paper label category in the China Print awards sponsored by the Printing and Printing Equipment Industries Association of China together with the printing industry associations in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau. It is the only award with state approval in the printing industry of Greater China and thus has huge influence in the Chinese printing field.

This set of labels used a special printing process combining UV varnish for moisture resistance, silk screen printing and embossing.



GREAT Wall Terroir Impression Series, printed by Sunrise printing, three images in one set. Winner of Gold award in 4th China Print Awards

printing and short run orders,' says Cheng. 'The SurePress L-4033AW digital press is comparable with our offset machine in printing quality and could completely replace it to accomplish short-run orders. Compared with the offset machine, the SurePress L-4033AW will accelerate our response times and reduce material waste.'

Since inkjet is a non-contact process, it does not produce any pressure marks on the substrate, so is ideal for structured wine label papers. The ink infuses into the paper, which protects the print during finishing and application processes.

Cheng says many customers are now enquiring about QR codes, track & trace logistics codes and security applications, and digital printing offers many interesting possibilities here.

According to Cheng, the SurePress L-4033AW

is the first Epson digital label press in mainland China. Sunrise is now acting as an 'experience center' for Epson in China, providing a showcase and learning resource for potential buyers of digital printing equipment. Sunrise also hopes to share experiences with industry colleagues who have developed new approaches to digital printing.

Though wine labels are only one small sub-branch of PS label printing, they require in-depth professional skills and customer service capabilities. Cheng and the Sunrise company management keep up with international trends by participating in industry seminars and visiting both Labelexpo Europe and Americas as well as overseas printing plants in order to keep a leading position in the Chinese PS label field.



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BARRY LEWIS, MD Reel Appeal, with Domino N600i

# Reel Appeal installs UK's first Domino N600i

**THIS FAMILY RUN UK CONVERTER** is looking to transform its conventional print business with the installation of the latest UV inkjet technology. Andy Thomas reports

Trade printer Reel Appeal, based in Oldham near Manchester, has installed the UK's first Domino N600i UV inkjet press, which it hopes will be the platform to triple the company's turnover over the next three years.

Managing director Barry Lewis has been involved with labels since the age of 11, working school holidays at his father's label company, learning how to operate the company's Edale-supplied Sanjo letterpress. Lewis learned his craft at two local label converters in nearby Todmorden and Burnley before setting up Reel Appeal with financial help from his family and three other shareholders Xten years ago.

Reel Appeal started out with a Sanjo letterpress and Arpeco slitter, before adding a 5-color stack flexo press from Chinese company Zonten, plus a flatbed hot foil press. Recently they added a rotary die-cutting unit from Wenzhou Rhyguan. They are now the UK agent for both Chinese manufacturers.

Reel Appeal quickly developed a specialty in booklet and leaflet labels for the agro chemicals and chemical markets after modifying the Sanjo press into a dedicated booklet converting line. Most final end users are UK-based multinationals who send their products all over Europe. Because this is a seasonal market, Reel Appeal soon diversified into prime label work.

Seven years ago the company moved to its current premises, and with its continued expansion took an option on the neighboring business unit – which now houses the Domino digital press in a temperature-controlled clean room.

'When it came to the next investment decision, we decided

not to go flexo, but, looking at our customer base, decided on UV inkjet as the best step,' recalls Lewis. 'The Domino N600i, we felt, was the best machine and with the best support in the UK market. It's a comfort that in three hours I can be face to face with Domino technicians.'

In fact Reel Appeal had already ventured into digital printing with a desktop Memjet press supplied by Magnum Materials. But without lamination this did not offer the print fastness required for the harsh outdoor environment typical of the agricultural and chemical sectors.

'We did look at the toner technologies, and in fact we did farm some work out to printers with Xeikon and HP presses,' says Barry Lewis. 'But there were always caveats for our market – particularly with color fastness and robustness for outdoor labels.'

## PRINT TRIALS

After meeting Domino's UK sales manager Stephen Hancock at a trade show, things moved quickly, with job trials taking place on Domino's N600i press at its Cambridge HQ. 'I felt I could have confidence in the Domino UV inkjet press, which was the most robust machine I had seen,' says Lewis. 'When I open up the covers I can see things I can relate to. I was also confident that I would receive from Domino the technical backup and training I needed for this big step for our company. There will be a steep learning curve from prepress to post press and all steps in between.'



CONVENTIONAL operation at Reel Appeal

The Domino N600i installed at Reel Appeal is the same specification as the press demonstrated at Labelexpo Europe – but without the new white capability. ‘White was a step too far for our sort of work,’ says Lewis. ‘There was a cost implication and we haven’t put white in our flexo press for two years, CMYK fits my current customer base.’

Nor does Lewis see a future requirement for the extended gamut ink systems now being developed by Domino. ‘Our work is a lot of four color process and varnish. We are quite happy with the wider CMYK gamut of the Domino press.’

In terms of the digital crossover point, Lewis does not want to treat the Domino press as a short run machine. ‘The Domino runs fast, so we do not wish to take on “traditional” short run digital work with 10-20 jobs an hour. Ideally I’m looking for 7-8 jobs a day with a reasonable run length with variants, which we can cope with in terms of quotes and enquiries.’

### TALKING IT UP

When L&L visited Reel Appeal, the company’s staffs were undergoing training on the recently installed press – but already Barry Lewis has been out selling its capabilities.

‘This will open up new markets for my trade customers and allow them to offer more variety to their end users,’ said Lewis.

‘The cost of additional printing plates meant that for smaller jobs we advised only making minor changes so there would only be one extra plate, and we shied away from suggesting variants. This prohibited our customers from marketing their products as much as they wanted to. With digital it is the opposite. Now the final customer can change whichever elements of the design they choose, and at no additional cost, so can up-sell their products. If I didn’t offer this, another supplier could have done. Now they are loving it and we have their marketing people fully on board. They won’t go back.’

### OPERATIONS

The new digital printing operation will be run by Barry Lewis’ brother Martin, who left a well-paid IT post to take up this new opportunity. A young press operator from the flexo department is being trained to run the press itself, and an employee who worked up through the design side of the business – and

already handles artwork for the Memjet – will handle the front end. New positions are being created for dedicated marketing and digital pre-press roles.

Finishing will be carried out on the company’s existing converting units, where the Memjet finishing is already done. The 13in width of the Domino press is fully compatible with existing tool sets. ‘There’s no advantage to us in in-line finishing,’ says Barry Lewis. ‘When you’re printing at 50 m/min you don’t want to slow down to set up slitting knives.’

### CONCLUSION

The installation of the Domino N600i at Reel Appeal is an example of the transformative effect of digital printing – and the smaller the company the more powerful the effect. ‘People already think I’m in a totally different league,’ says Barry Lewis. ‘Now there’s no reason that I can’t get to the top level. While printers with HPs and Xeikons are competing on price and turnaround, I’m now leading the pack instead of following.’

Looking to the future, Lewis aims to more than triple the turnover of Reel Appeal from just under GBP £1m to £3m in 2-3 years, and this will be achieved by further investment in supporting and improving the digital offering. ‘At the moment I can only see myself investing in digital.’

But there are dangers in pushing the ‘digital’ message, says Lewis. ‘You need to be careful about using the word digital in case it tells everybody that it’s cheaper, and that is not the message I want to get out. We want to say it gives you the ability and quality to help you promote your products. We are using the press to add value and not to save costs. It’s not just about saving plate costs but up-selling products.’

### PRESS SPECS

The Domino N600i digital color inkjet press installed at Reel Appeal is the 4-color version of the new N610i machine launched by Domino at Labelexpo Europe 2013, (minus the new White print station). The press prints at up to 75m/min (246ft/min) with a native resolution of 600 dpi using Kyocera KJ4 jetting assemblies. Domino’s unique i-Tech technology features include CleanCap automated print head cleaning and capping station, and the ActiFlow ink circulation system which maintains ink temperature and degasses the ink for improved print quality and reliability. Domino’s StitchLink micro-motor controller technology maintains enables precise head alignment to eliminate stitch lines across the 333mm (13in) print width. The press is driven by an Esko DFE.

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# BPIF informs digital debate

THE UK'S LABEL PRINTING COMMUNITY received an update on the state of the art in digital printing at a recent BPIF seminar. Mike Fairley reports

The latest in the series of technical seminars to be organized by BPIF Labels took place at the Marriott Hotel, Forest of Arden, near Birmingham on October 9 and featured an impressive panel of speakers on the topic of 'Digital label printing goes mainstream', as well as having a strong delegate attendance.

The keynote address was given by Matthew S Daniels, global capacity leader at Unilever, who reviewed some of the biggest categories of Unilever's business, from personal care products to deodorants, hair care, oral hygiene and skin care, and highlighted some of the group's market leaders such as Dove and Lux. Some 55 percent of turnover, he added, now came from the world's emerging markets.

Turning to digital printing, Daniels said that Unilever were not only looking at the digital printing of labels and packaging but also at the potential of using 3D printing for the production of physical products such as cups, pots and lids – an interesting area of development for the future.

However, it was digital label and package printing where digital technology seemed to offer a wide range of possibilities for Unilever, explained Daniels, from late differentiation to a reduced level of write-offs, as a marketing tool that could include personalization, to improvements in working capital, and to retailer specific opportunities and the viability of launching niche products. Pure production benefits that were envisaged included no tooling costs, faster job changeovers and materials price competitiveness for lower volume SKUs.

However, although there were many potential benefits to be achieved with digital printing Unilever considered that there were still a number of challenges to be resolved, or better resolved, before digital perhaps became a more mainstream technology with brand owners. These challenges included topics such as production using metallic effect inks, rather than more expensive foiling. It was also felt that there were still challenges with ink safety in terms of the necessary approvals by various bodies, such as the FDA, etc.

Ink performance in relation to water, rub, oil and product

resistance were other aspects for digital press manufacturers, ink/toner suppliers and printers to consider, said Daniels, as well as color opacity, depth of colors, whiteness and brightness of inks.

A series of technical speakers then followed, with up-to-date technical presentation from the industry experts at Esko, HP Indigo, Domino, Intec Printing Solutions, Avery Dennison, AVT and AB Graphic.

Of particular interest to the label converters present was a session presented by Phil Dalton of Legal Impact on 'Practical challenges of the new food labeling rules and voluntary schemes' which will require every single food label in Europe to be compliant with new food labeling requirements which come into effect on or after December 2014.

The new rules, amplified further in a separate article in this issue, will mean that nutritional information on food labels becomes compulsory, minimum font sizes for label information will be specified and standardized traffic light information displayed on the front of pre-packed products sold through retail.

An interesting and perhaps more unusual session at a label technical seminar was a guide through the commercial benefits of social media, which was presented by Michal Lodej of Whitmar Publications. Although LinkedIn, Facebook, and other social and business media were now widely used, it was useful to hear amplification of the benefits that such media can bring to the label industry.

The final presentation by Michael Fairley, director of strategic development at Tarsus, looked at the impact that digital printing can make on a digital label printing plant in terms of personal, sales and marketing, color management, workflow, and on the decision of whether to print conventional or digital at the latest possible stage. He also looked at the production and technical benefits of digital that should form part of a label converter's sales and marketing message.

Further Technical Seminars are now being planned for 2014 and details of these will be published shortly.

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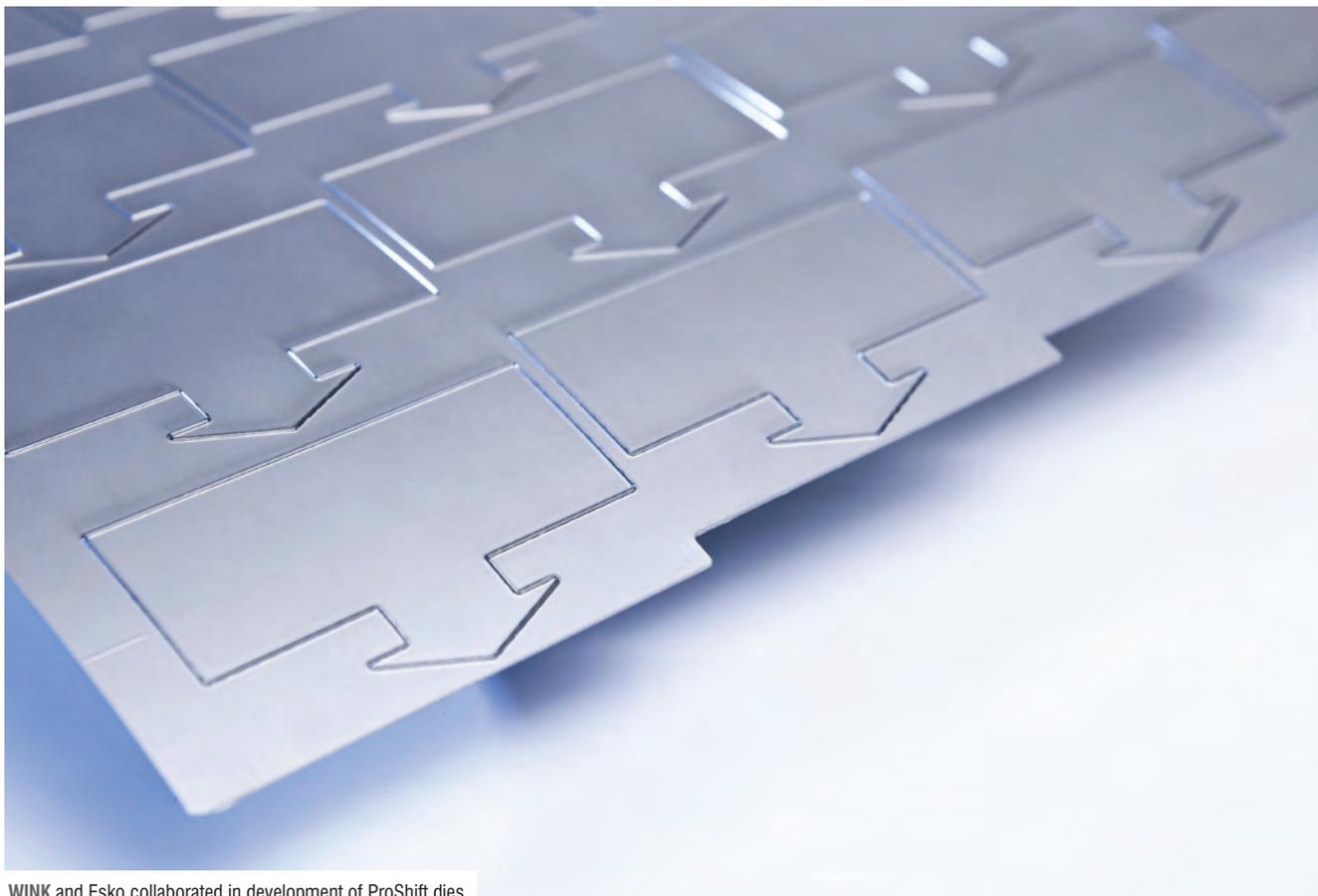
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WINK and Esko collaborated in development of ProShift dies

# Die-cutting adjusts to new materials

**LABELXPO** Europe saw tooling and die suppliers responding to challenges around thin films and the need for lower downtime. Danielle Jerschefske and Andy Thomas report

At Labelexpo Europe 2013 die and tooling manufacturers introduced systems which helped converters reduce downtime and increase productivity on press, while handling the new generation of thin filmic liners.

Kocher + Beck introduced major enhancements to its established GapMaster range. GapMaster Auto-Sensor continuously measures the gap between the magnetic cylinder and the GapMaster during the print run and dynamically maintains the gap by use of a servo motor. Also new was the Magnet-GapMaster, designed for intermittent cutting units which operate with a single cylinder; and cutting units without counter pressure rollers can now be modified to accommodate the GapMaster.

Kocher + Beck also introduced its Quick Change Die-Cutting (QCDC) station at the show. The company worked closely with Nilpeter on the design of the QC Die unit on the Nilpeter FA-4\* press, allowing the operator to set up the magnetic base cylinder and flexible die while the press is running. When the press is stopped, the previous cylinder can be rolled out to an unload position and the new cylinder is rolled into the running position within a few seconds. K&B magnetic cylinders are

**LABELS&LABELING**

equipped with bearing blocks that are automatically engaged and retained in the QC station.

A newly designed non-stop winding system, the UR Precision 440, was shown in line with a thin liner cutting technology, and the UR Precision M non-stop matrix winding system was seen for the first time.

## STAGGERING INVENTION

Esko and die-cutting tools specialist Wink Stanzwerkzeuge combined their soft- and hardware expertise to create a highly efficient staggered label solution, enabling label converters to increase production speeds, reduce material waste and produce highly accurate print and die-cutting results.

The partnership combines Wink's die-cutting technology with Esko's 'staggered cut' software and Esko Kongsberg cutting tables, resulting in the ProShift technology. ProShift enables impressions to be arranged more flexibly and make full use of the entire printing area. This is done using Wink's laser technology to arrange the upper and lower edge of the flexible dies in steps. Esko's sheet layout software Plato then creates the staggered label layout. Perfect alignment between



the printing and cutting plate is claimed, as the data is exported simultaneously to create the staggered flexo plate and to order the shifted die at Wink.

'This type of shifted printing and die-cutting has many advantages,' explained Fransz Verbeek, product manager at Wink. 'In most cases, labels are arranged symmetrically to save space and keep the consumption of materials to a minimum. However, this configuration is less beneficial for the rotary die-cutting process because vertical lines tend to cut more forcefully than horizontal lines and high contact pressure causes the vertical lines to cut even deeper. This can also damage the liner material and result in wear and lasting damage to all components in the cutting unit.'

ProShift counteracts these negative effects by vertically shifting the impressions in the machine's running direction, which significantly reduces the number of horizontal lines and evenly distributes cutting pressure.

ProShift is particularly beneficial when cutting rectangles or other shapes with many horizontal lines, and benefits include reduced liner damage, longer lasting flexible dies and machine parts, and stable waste stripping which prevents web breaks.

Wink also launched its GapControl adjustable anvil cylinder, built for the company by tooling specialist RotoTechniX. Adjustments can be made during production and on both sides individually, so that it is possible to compensate for one-sided wear or tool inaccuracies. A high level of stability comes from directly supporting the solid cylinder body, claimed to eliminate resonance and vibration problems. GapControl can be implemented in machines without a supporting roll.

RotoMetrics promoted its Accu-Series line of flexible dies, now produced at local facilities for the European, Asian and Australian markets, giving a fast-response, 24-hour service. AccuStar UltraFilm is targeted at the new generation of thin liners, including 23 and 19 micron (.00092in and .00075in) PET liners.

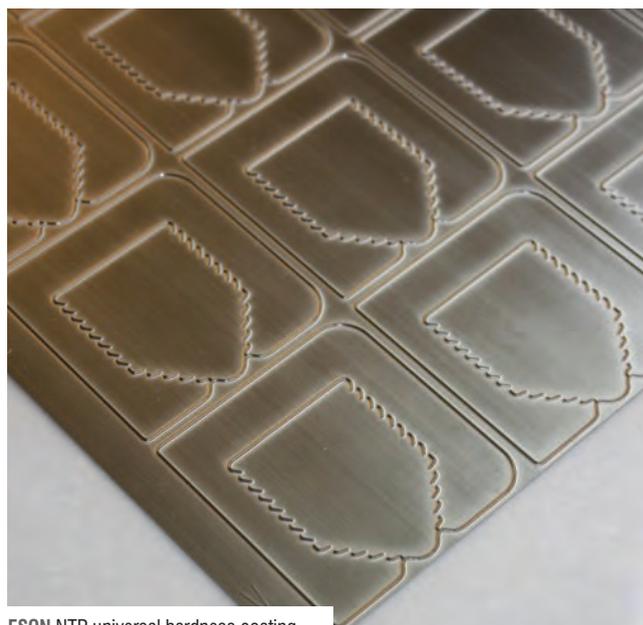
Ulrich Kretschmar, RotoMetrics business development manager, said: 'Thin liner is challenging us to keep a tight tolerance, while the size of the printing plates is growing as narrow web converters invest in wider machinery.'

The influence of the Gerhardt acquisition can be seen in the back grinding and nickel coating techniques applied to the Accu-Series dies. Benefits include faster manufacturing to a tighter tolerance. The series is complemented by AccuStar Life, targeted at more abrasive materials.

Also new was RotoMetrics' Pin Eject solid die, providing an alternative to air eject dies, eliminating the need for an expensive air-source and increasing production speeds.

Spilker demonstrated its Labelshifter Plus system on an S-Con inspection and converting machine, removing labels from their original position on a liner to another location while maintaining spacing as needed. This is helpful for overcoming dispensing problems associated with kiss cut and adhesive bleeding issues. With the Labelshifter Plus it is possible to remove waste matrix in one line at 80m/min. Without the shifting unit the machinery is capable of converting up to 240m/min.

Eson CZ has introduced its NTP universal hardness coating,



ESON NTP universal hardness coating



## EMBOSSING PROOF

RotoMetrics' UEI operation continues to develop the state of the art in embossing, as the company reports its aluminum embossing cylinders gaining popularity over brass cylinders. Aluminum has embossing capabilities equal to brass but weighs substantially less.

UEI demonstrated a Digital 3D Embossing Proof that converters can review and share with the end client. This preview allows converters to determine if the proof matches expectations prior to development of an embossing tool. Many converters have also imported UEI's Digital 3D Embossing Proof into their own software to overlay the print file, providing a complete visual to their customer. Once approved, the Digital 3D Embossing Proof is archived by UEI. Converters then have the option of ordering embossed samples on job specific material using the approved art. The complete timeline from design to production can be accomplished within 7-14 days.

Before confirming a design only to find out the stock is not suitable for embossing, converters should conduct the Foldover Test, developed by UEI. Hand-fold a corner of paperstock and check spring-back. If the paper holds the fold at 90 degrees or less, it is suitable for embossing use. If the stock tends to revert to its natural state and does not accept a 90 degree fold, it is less likely to accept the contouring from an emboss cylinder set and an alternative substrate should be selected.



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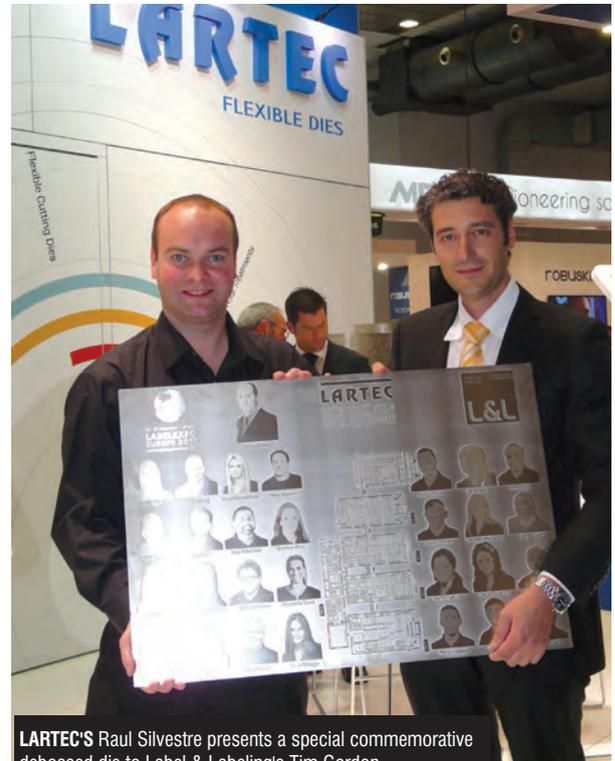
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allowing dies a longer lifetime with highly abrasive materials. It can be applied to standard or laser hardened dies. The cost of an NTP coated die is around 10 percent more than a non-coated die and 24 hour delivery is the same. Eson has also introduced its non-stick, highly resistant DLC coating.

Electro Optic used Labelexpo 2013 to promote its latest Gold Line Special die as a solution to cutting on thin film liners down to 19 microns (0,00075 inch) and less. Wilson Manufacturing unveiled the results of a new machine sharpening process to meet the requirements for thinner films and substrates, with claimed tolerances of .0001. Other die manufacturers reporting a successful Labelexpo included flexible and solid die specialist Holfeld, headquartered in Dublin, Ireland.



**LARTEC'S** Raul Silvestre presents a special commemorative debossed die to Label & Labeling's Tim Gordon

**LARTEC PRESENT TO TARSUS TEAM**

At Labelexpo Europe Lartec presented the Labelexpo and L&L teams with a highly effective gift of personalized debossed dies.

The dies are engraved with state-of-the-art micro-edging technology, explained Lartec's Raul Silvestre. 'The original idea behind this type of 3D Effect Debossing die was that you could take basically any photo, image or pattern and convert it into a series of engraved lines of different thicknesses and heights, so that the customer can deboss the 3D design into their material or onto their cold stamping. The aim was to enable label manufacturers to offer added value to their customers using this innovative new technology, but without the need to invest in expensive machines or cylinders, etc. These plates were specifically designed so that they could be used on a standard die-cutting station.

'The same technology is also used to make our Micro-Text dies which are predominantly used as an additional security feature on labels, bank notes, passports etc, because of the extreme difficulty in forging the technology.'

With regards to other new products, the company is developing special Embossing dies for things such as foil wine capsules and spirits labels. 'Again, the key motivator here is to help our customers avoid the need for large investments in special machines and embossing cylinders, enabling them to make completely personalized labels at economic prices,' said Silvestre.

# NEWS EXTRA



THE IN-LINE solventless capability will be made available on Mark Andy's new Versa Max series

## MARK ANDY SHOWS IN-LINE LAMINATION

MARK ANDY introduced in-line solventless lamination capability at Packprint Summit Americas 2013

The in-line solventless capability will be made available on its new Versa Max series, and is intended to further the ability of the new press to meet the requirements of flexible packaging converting.

Mark Andy presented the in-line solventless technology development as part of its keynote presentation at Packprint Summit Americas 2013.

The Versa Max brings together Comco's historical film printing technology and the recent innovations found in Mark Andy Performance Series presses, renewing the foundation for printing thin films and many other specialty substrates. The Versa Max can print on substrates ranging from mono-layer materials to multi-layer structures for flexible packaging. As such, applications range from shrink-sleeve labels and bottle wraps, to pouches, sachets, tickets, cartons and lids.

Versa Max presses have a printing width of 26in, with a repeat range of 10-32in. The press speed can reach 1,200ft per minute. A web-reversing option allows for double sided printing, and hot air impingement drying is available for water- or solvent-based inks and coatings, as is EB or UV curing, or a combination of them all.

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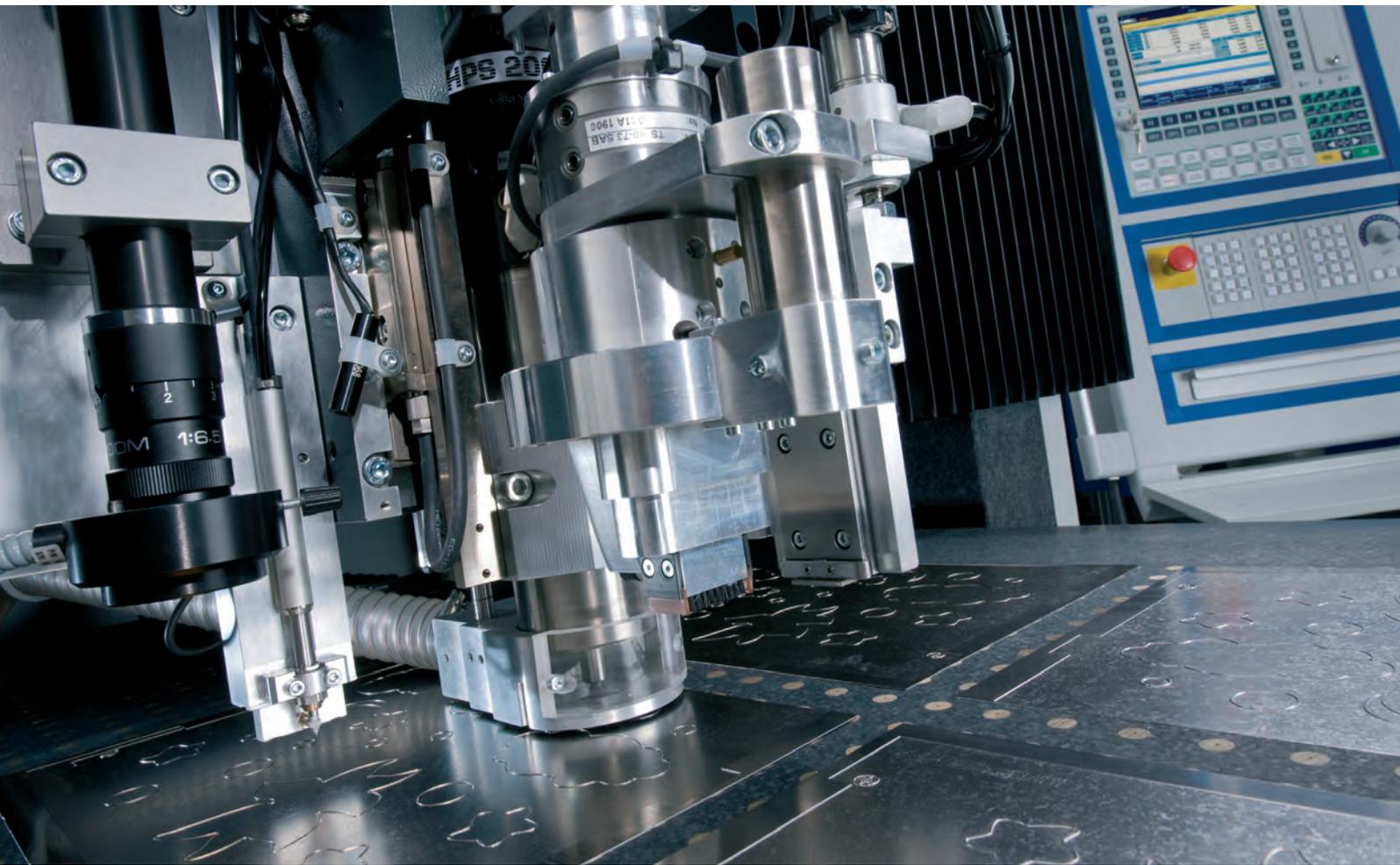
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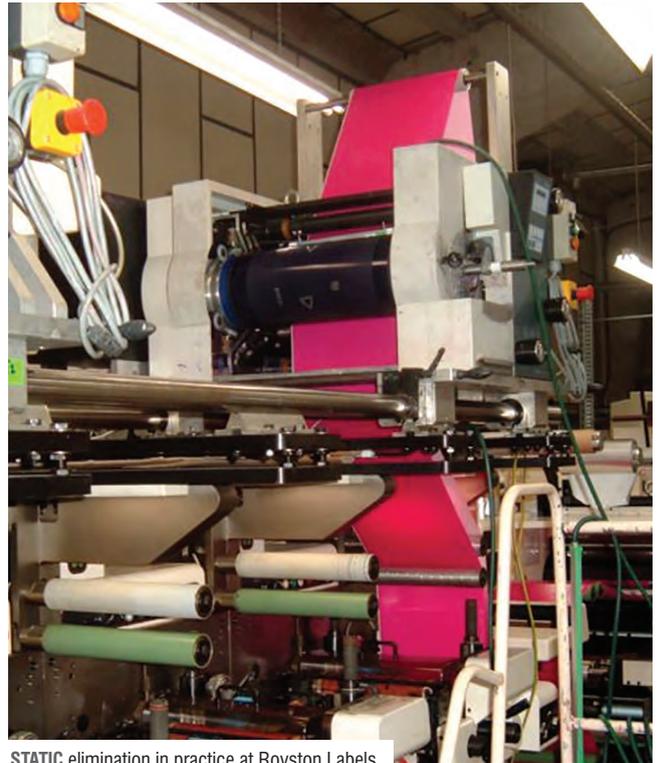
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STATIC is a big issue in the printing industry, but one which the market has not fully come to terms with



STATIC elimination in practice at Royston Labels

# Taking control of static

**MEECH International** is continuing to invest in the development of static control technologies to help the label market improve print quality, minimize rejections and reduce press downtime. David Pittman reports

Static control and web cleaning might not be the sexiest topics in the label printing industry right now, at least not compared to the excitement being created by the latest generation of digital presses, but they are important topics that printers continue to need to be aware of in their day-to-day operations.

According to David Rogers, business unit director for static control at Meech, static is a big issue in the print industry, but one which the market has not fully come to terms with yet.

'As a whole, the industry is still coming to terms with the effects static can have,' says Rogers. 'A lot of companies are aware – more so today than they might have been five years ago – that particularly in filmic applications static control is needed, but they may not really understand why.'

'A massive static charge can be generated both during printing and as the film or paper is unwound from a roll,' he explains. 'These charges are capable of attracting dust to the web from several feet away.'

'Once the dust has deposited on the material, it can cause defects in print quality. It is no good if a labelling company is trying to offer a fast service if they have to keep stopping their machines to clean them because of the build-up of contamination attracted by static charges, or if at the inspection stage labels are rejected, which is of course not only waste but expense.'

Static control also includes the generation of a static charge for beneficial purposes, such as ionization and surface bonding, although in a controlled way so as not to be detrimental to the production process by attracting dust and contaminants, or posing a health and safety risk. However, whether eliminating or generating static, its control becomes ever-more important as the label industry evolves to meet modern demands and introduces new technologies.

'Labelling companies are now expected to offer a full service,'

says Rogers, 'from printing, to converting, punching and die-cutting. In order to successfully fulfill this new role, they are having to learn some new tricks when it comes to the more "modern" label. For example, the printing of in-mold labels is a burgeoning market that demands high-quality.'

He adds: 'Labeling is moving in the direction of using filmic linerless products, which are far more environmentally friendly, with less material costs. However by their very nature, they will generate far higher static charges than the average label produced today.'

'Combine this with the label printer now running at faster speeds, not to mention the increasing use of digital print, and there is no doubt that the industry requires up-to-date static control solutions, backed up by experience of the industry.'

## MARKET KNOWLEDGE

Industry experience is something Meech has built up over the years. The company was founded in the early 20th century as an electronics firm with a small interest in static control, which would go on to become its primary focus.

Based in the UK, the company has grown to have a truly international footprint with direct offices and joint ventures in Europe, North America, China, India and Australia, plus an expansive distribution network, which continues to grow. These add their own regional knowledge and expertise to Meech's overall intellectual property developed over more than a century.

Meech's physical presence is also being expanded, with recent investments at its international headquarters in the UK designed to cope with growing global exposure. Its premises in Witney, Oxfordshire, have been bolstered with the lease of an additional building located close to its established premises, with this 4,000 sq ft property to be used primarily as the main



MEECH'S new 4,000 sq ft property is to be used as the main production facility for Meech web cleaners, as well as the IonRinse and JetStream systems

production facility for Meech web cleaners, as well as the IonRinse and JetStream systems, while additional space in the new building will be allocated to general research and development of all Meech products.

By moving the entire web cleaning production process to the new building, Meech has been able to reorganize and rearrange its current warehouse, which has enabled the creation of a larger, more productive environment for both static control and air technology.

### BEYOND STATIC

Air technology represents one part of the Meech portfolio of products beyond static control, as does web cleaning. And while static control is the company's core competence, Meech Air Technology (MAT) and the portfolio of web cleaning systems are also being developed in line with its growth.

For instance, MAT production has effectively doubled with the reorganization of Meech's UK facility, while the development of new compressed air technologies continues.

This includes new nozzle designs to cut energy and compressed air demand by as much as 70 percent, as well providing improvements to worker safety, reducing noise levels and amplifying existing air flows to make them more effective and efficient.

### CLOSE TO THE WEB

Web cleaning is more closely aligned to the label and package printing markets, but, like static control, is an often misunderstood process, according to the supplier.

Donald Lewis, business development manager at Meech, says many printers and converters will know of web cleaning, but simply request a tacky roller as part of their latest technology investment. 'Many people just accept a tacky roller as their standard web cleaning equipment, although there are

many different products and systems available for the process.'

For Meech, this includes CyClean, VacClean and ShearClean, as well as TakClean. TakClean is a contact cleaning system, as is VacClean. The latter utilizes a vacuum system for cleaning, as opposed to the traditional tacky roller in the former, and is available in the widest width with the fastest maximum web speed of Meech's web cleaning portfolio. This is reported at 155in (3,590mm) and 6,561ft/min (2,000m/min) compared to 82in (2,100mm) and 820ft/m (250m/min). CyClean and ShearClean have 78in (2,000mm) and 82in (2,100mm) web widths respectively, and can both operate at a web speed up to 1,968ft/min (600m/min).

CyClean is Meech's latest offering in its versatile web cleaning range, and features integrated static control bars. This occurs as the web enters the unit, before accurately balanced turbulent air and vacuum effectively clean the web. Static control at the out feed then prevents re-contamination upon completion of the cleaning process. Without the need for any adhesive rollers, there are also reduced ongoing consumable costs and, being a non-contact cleaner, it can be used with all roll-fed materials.

All four are suitable for the printing industry or food and medical packaging environments, with only ShearClean highlighted as not applicable for labelling applications. CyClean and VacClean are applicable for slitting and rewinding applications.

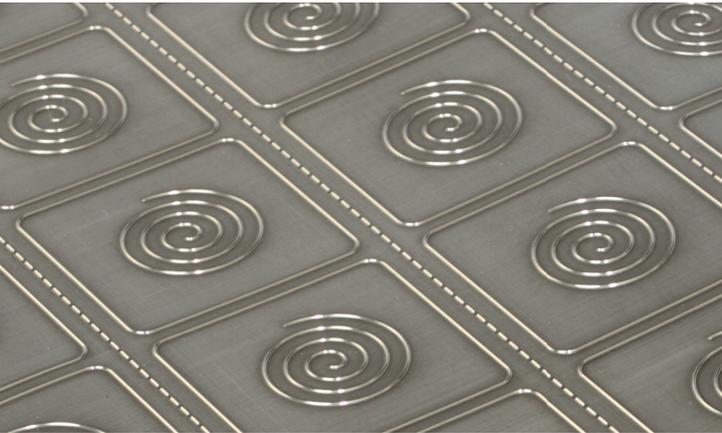
All four are also available to be demonstrated on a dummy machine at the company's UK headquarters, allowing effective comparison and testing on a single web path.

'TakClean is still a very important option in many markets, but new non-contact technologies, such as CyClean, can have added benefits and should be considered and specified per the application. It might be that a tacky cleaner has worked well for you to date, but a non-contact option could provide further benefits.'

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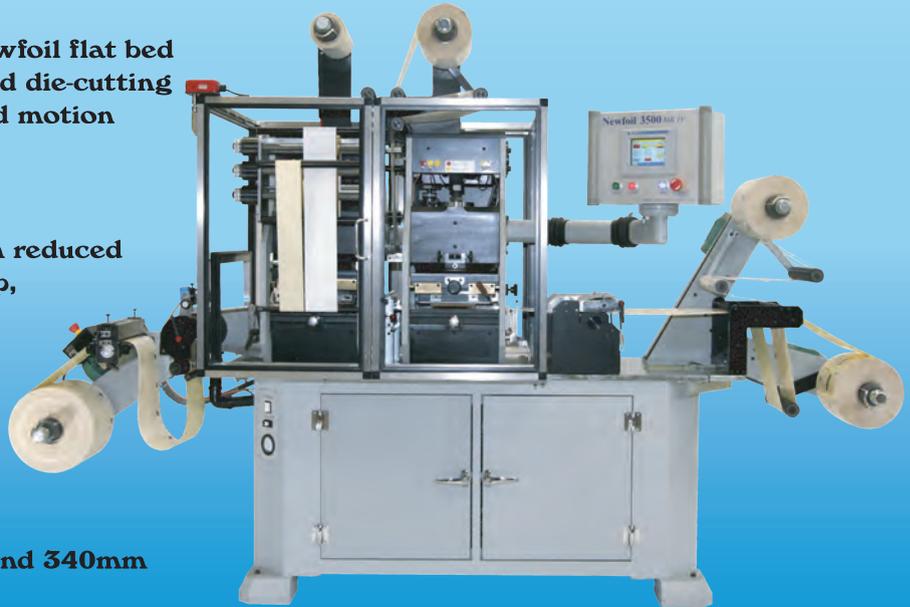
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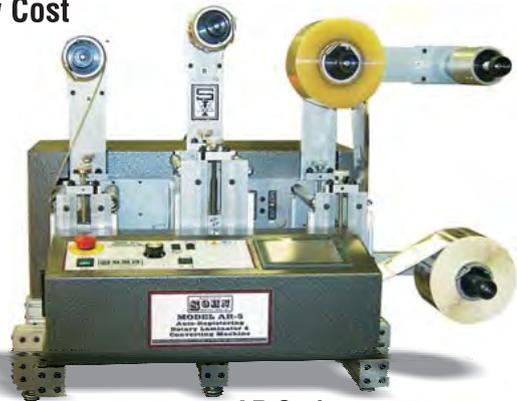
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AUDIENCE at label release liner seminar 2013

# Where next for liners?

ANN HIRST-SMITH reports on the recent AWA seminar on issues and opportunities confronting the label release liner industry

Opening the Label Release Liner Seminar, AWA Alexander Watson Associates' president and CEO, Corey Reardon, confirmed that business in the roll-label sector 'continues to be optimistic'.

Globally, growth in the use of release liner across all its market segments averaged out at four percent in 2012. The Asia Pacific region showed the greatest growth, at 7.1 percent, but this is a significant slowing down on prior years. South America – and new arrivals in the growth markets, Africa and the Middle East – evidenced growth rates of four and a half percent. North America, at 2.1 percent growth, and Europe at 1.9 percent both just managed to match approximate GDP growth.

## ISSUES AND INNOVATIONS

Among its broad-ranging activities, UPM-Kymmene is the world's largest manufacturer of release base papers. Mikko Rissanen, product manager, paper business group, examined the global trends impacting release liner.

Rissanen said the scarcity of some raw materials, particularly platinum, and the resultant high costs, continue to create problems across the value chain, as do the issues of sustainability, global competition, and market instability and volatility. Material innovation, renewability and recyclability, a cost-efficient production process and supply chain, and technical service and support from suppliers that are viable for the long term are the key challenges for the future, he said.

As well as showing UPM-Kymmene's

strong actions in the direction of recycling and re-use, he highlighted possible future technological pathways in product innovation such as downgauging, 'clean' liner, and improved/optimized compatibility of liners and silicones.

## THE LABEL MAKER'S VIEWPOINT

'A label maker's perspective' on label release liner was provided by Alan Hazlewood, group quality and technical support manager for major multinational label and application technology provider Skanem AS, whose focus is on primary product labels, and 99 percent of whose production is in pressure-sensitive labels.

Overall, he said, the company is very happy with the quality of today's liner. 'Our liner mix is roughly 53 percent honey glassine, 41 percent white glassine, and six percent film (of which 70 percent PET 30).'

Skanem's requirements for release liners are technically clear: standardization between suppliers and across grades; consistency in thickness (for die-cutting), in strength (as an unsupported web), and in curl (for label layflatness); and controlled siliconization in terms of coat weight and process control (avoiding voids and inclusions) for optimal release.

The major change drivers in Skanem's experience are related to net price improvement and environmental/sustainability impact. For on-press running and high-speed, reliable label application, Skanem finds that glassine liner is the answer, with film liners providing solutions in specific market niches, but with some performance

'watch outs'.

'Long term,' he concluded, 'all the options will be on the table', with glassine losing some market share to alternatives and PET establishing itself as the global film liner.

Skanem has experience of linerless label materials, but while there are savings to be made, label shape restrictions remain a limitation.

Recycling must, Hazlewood said, 'be disciplined and stand up economically.' The fact that matrix waste is located at the end-user site and at the end of an extended supply chain makes achieving this mission difficult.

## THE LAMINATOR'S VIEWPOINT

Moving from the viewpoint of a label converter to that of a laminator, Robyn Buma, global procurement director, paper, for Avery Dennison broadened the competitive context to include glue-applied labels and the rate at which their users switch to pressure-sensitive.

The economics and the requirement for very high-speed application are the defining factors. 'Sustainability in the pressure-sensitive label industry is a slow trend,' she said. 'Europe is much further ahead in this respect than North America, and, additionally, there is no "pull" from the end user market. Our industry needs to take a position.'

In release liner for pressure-sensitive labels, Buma underlined the importance of finding 'a way to differentiate' for laminators through alternative products that can deliver cost reductions. The term 'innovation', she said, 'is used too loosely in this industry.'



COREY Reardon, CEO and president AWA

### TECHNICAL ADVANCES

Turning to supplier innovation stories, Geoffrey Debaugnies, senior application engineer and technical service professional from Dow Corning discussed the company's new Ultra Low Platinum Advantage release coatings on its Acti-V glassine and SCK release papers. The coating 'offers a competitive formulation, plus high-speed performance, for price-sensitive bulk roll-label applications', said Debaugnies. He added that, comparing the coating and Acti-V release base to 'current standard constructions', platinum could be reduced by over 75 percent.

Designing adhesives for optimal release

performance was the topic addressed by Henkel's Ingrid Brase, market segment director, pressure-sensitive adhesives.

Her paper, jointly written by colleague Pete Walter, described an in-depth technical study in which 10 hot melt adhesives of varying chemistries were evaluated in conjunction with a single UV-cured silicone release formulation.

Brase emphasized the importance of balancing label performance needs with release requirements: release properties need to be considered in relation to both adhesive formulation and silicone selection.

### HEINEKEN'S VIEWPOINT

Dennis Bakx, global category buyer, packaging materials, for Heineken Global Procurement, focused from a brand owner's viewpoint on sustainability and recyclability in beverage labeling. With over 250 brands and 165 breweries in 70 countries, Heineken is the world's third-largest beer brewer in an increasingly-consolidated market environment. A minimum 95 percent of all Heineken beer bottles are pressure-sensitive labeled.

Heineken is committed to 'brewing a better' future through sustainability, with four priority areas: water, CO2, sourcing, and responsible consumption. Bakx showed how this commitment tangibly delivered results in 2012.

What, then, are his requirements for release liner? With an emphasis on film liner, Heineken is looking for reductions in liner thickness – or, indeed, linerless labelstock – as well as bio-based and biodegradable plastics. Recycling and re-use are key metrics, eventually across its global supply chain.

Bakx showed that his company understands the high value of PET liner, and how the company is moving from 'collection in recycled industrial waste' to 'collection in the plastic waste stream'. But, he underlined, this is not easy. A clear supply-chain-wide approach is currently missing, and needed, as is a one-stop-shop partner for Heineken in Europe and, potentially, globally.

### MAKING IT HAPPEN

Calvin Frost, CEO of Channeled Resources Group and long-time campaigner for responsible use of used label materials, pulled no punches and addressed the audience directly. He asked, 'Why don't you force the paper industry to use a percentage of recycled release liner fiber in new release liner?' Frost said last year in Europe 360,000 to 400,000 tonnes of 'spent' paper release liner was available for repulping, with 20,000 tonnes of PET/PP spent liner. 'And how much did we repulp and/or re-melt in Europe in 2012? Under 30,000 tonnes. That's about seven percent of

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available spent liner.'

Attempting to address these challenges, the European pressure-sensitive label association, FINAT, has established a release liner recycling project which aims to address the requirements of the EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive and retailer and brand owner 'green' initiatives.

Mark Macaré, FINAT's public affairs and recycling project manager, said that although commercial solutions are available today, 'critical mass is needed'. He identified the bottlenecks in the label industry's recycling chain – particularly the problem that spent liner is generated downstream, where collection creates a logistical challenge and there is lack of awareness and urgency among label end users.

Echoing Calvin Frost, he indicated that pan-European 'ownership' of the problem is essential, and invited delegates to partner FINAT in promoting the 'exploration, development and availability of alternative secondary materials solutions.'

**LINERLESS TODAY AND TOMORROW**

Mike Cooper, business development director of linerless labeling expert Catchpoint, highlighted the fact that food and beverage represent the lowest penetration for pressure-sensitive labels, yet the largest potential markets. Linerless

labels could help, said Cooper, who pointed to the latest developments in linerless label printing, die-cutting and application shown at Labelexpo, which opened in Brussels on the day following the seminar.

While acceptance of linerless labels has been slow, there is certainly evidence of real innovation here. Roelof Klein, commercial manager of the Maan Group – specialists in gluing and surface treatment technologies – showed how his company's Inlinerless system can print, silicone coat, and adhesive coat linerless label material, ready for application, in one flexible production run and, using groundbreaking cutting and marking technology, create an increased variety of label shapes and optimize reliability on the labeling line.

**WRAP UP**

Dennis Bakx of Heineken succinctly summed up the day's proceedings. He said: 'I shared my requirements and at the same time learnt more about the industry. In our production cycle, after application of the label, the release liner becomes a waste material and I am looking for possibilities to do something smarter with it.'

'I am happy to see the industry is putting more and more focus on sustainability and look forward to the (joint) extra steps that we can take, and that also need to be taken. In the end, I expect that a supply-chain-wide approach will indeed prove to be the most effective outcome.'



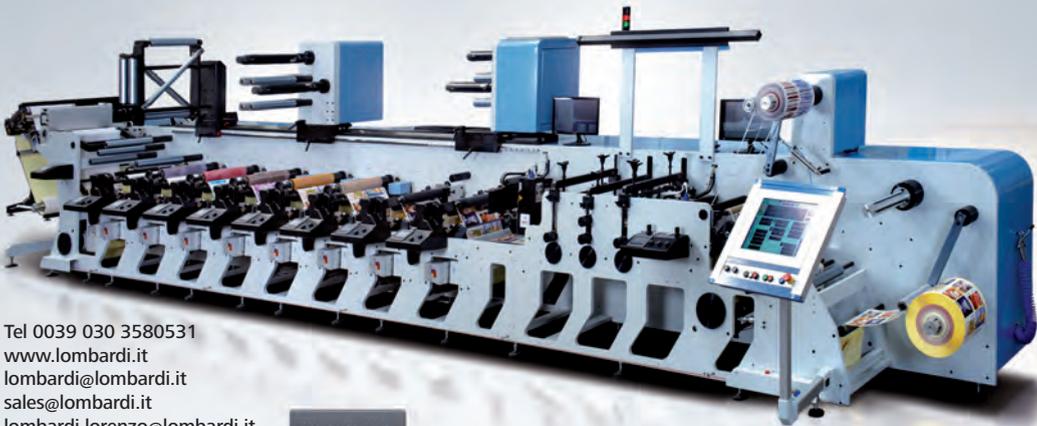
SKANEM'S Alan Hazlewood

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# Foiling moves forward

ANDY THOMAS looks at new developments in foiling technology

Although cold foiling has been around for many years, we continue to see new developments, particularly around the use of UV-LED to cure the adhesive, and now in the application of cold foil to shrinkable sleeves – opening up many unique decoration avenues for narrow and mid-web in-line converters.

At Labelexpo Europe, Flint Group Narrow Web built on its Ekocure UV-LED ink systems with an LED-curing cold foil adhesive, introduced in conjunction with K Laser Technology cold foils.

The EkoCure cold foil adhesive was developed using specially selected photo initiators matching the narrow wavelength area typical for UV LED lamp output.

Michael Rivera, VP of K Laser's cold foil business unit, commented: 'The main advantages with UV LED can be summarized as ecological and economical. Energy will be saved and UV LED lamps are ozone and mercury free. In production terms UV LED cold foil runs faster, shows less production problems and can cure through dark colored cold foils. Printers experience a higher certainty and faster rates of cure with inks using this process.'

Univacco announced at Labelexpo Europe it had developed a cold foil for shrink sleeves. The company showed its Cf4.6S foil applied to a 50 micron PETG substrate with a shrinkage MD under five percent and 75 percent TD using a Sun Chemical UV adhesive. The demonstration label was reverse printed CMYK followed by cold foil then white.

Univacco was also involved in a joint project with Flint Group Narrow Web to demonstrate the anti-counterfeit properties when combining overprinted cold foil with a transparent holographic cold foil. This label was printed with Flint Flexocure Force CMYK inks and UV adhesive and laminated to a 25 micron OPP film. Printing was on a Gallus EM280 on a 40 micron PVC.

Another security design, also converted on an EM280 was printed on a silver laminated 50 micron PET, printing on top of the holographic cold foil and followed by a partial matte varnish.

Manufacturers of hot stamping systems have meanwhile continued to improve the efficiency of the process to compete with coil foil. Pantec GS Systems launched its Swift rail-based

foil saver at Labelexpo Europe. The system was demonstrated along with the Rhino flatbed hot foil/embossing unit, producing challenging high-end labels at speeds up to 120m/min.

The Swift saver is powered by Pantec's pSave vacuum saving technology, which achieves a high stepping frequency by using vacuum buffers – meaning that the mass of dancer rolls does not have to be moved, just the foil. This means the foil can be stopped and synchronized up to 17 times per second, so even with a typical 50mm repeat length, high printing speeds can be achieved where traditional mechanical savers cannot operate.

Pantec managing director Peter Frei says printers switched to using cold foils mainly because of the reduced tooling costs. 'Nowadays, with the introduction of new, innovative hot foil technologies, printers are in a position to produce items at lower costs whilst simultaneously providing the renowned level of quality offered by hot foil processing,' says Frei. 'This is not because tooling costs have been reduced. The key factor is foil saving. As the foil itself is the main variable cost factor, there is huge potential for saving on costs.'

Depending on the stamping design, state-of-the-art foil saving devices allow between 25 and 90 percent of the foil to be saved, depending on the design, says Frei.

DMS' recently introduced its latest FV-Series hot stamping system, which retains the company's bearer-based impression technology and heat/cool temperature control, and with a range of interchangeable shafts can run a variety of tooling systems. DMS also offers a range of legacy shafts to allow use of tooling manufactured for other hot stamping systems.

A custom designed predictive/adaptive control algorithm monitors the die's temperature and running speed and continuously adapts to press conditions.

New from Euroworks is the TTR 1600 Hybrid slitting machine, specifically designed to handle hot and cold foils as well as thermal transfer foils.

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# Kumar Labels expands aggressively

**ANUJ BHARGAVA** has made Kumar Labels into one of India's leading converters, seeking new opportunities in machinery manufacturing and geographical expansion. Aakriti Agarwal reports

## KUMAR LABELS – THE BEGINNING

'My family was clear that the second generation should not get everything served on a platter,' says Anuj Bhargava, CEO of Kumar Labels.

That work ethic is clearly reflected in Bhargava's CV. He completed his graduation and went to the USA to do his Masters in science. Having graduated in December 2001, right after the 9/11 tragedy, finding a job was a challenge. He was eventually interviewed by American company Corning, the largest specialty glass manufacturing company in the world. He worked in its display technologies division which is headquartered in Japan. Bhargava was posted to Taiwan for some time and frequently travelled to Korea and China.

Thus, he was exposed to a lot of technology and cultures. 'When I see the label industry, I feel there is so much more we can do. It was unbelievable the level of automation I saw in a plant where LCD glass was made. If we can handle a thin sheet of glass using robots and automation, we can definitely do it with the paper,' he asserts.

Bhargava came to India in 2006 and tried to start a furniture business, HassleFree Furniture. 'I wanted to remove hassles from people's lives and offer furniture at better price than the other interior decorators,' he says. It did not work out because of investment and space constraints. While backpacking in the UK, Bhargava attended Iplex where he saw the scope of the

label industry. He made a business plan, met his customers, did a survey, went to the bank, took loans, and in June 2007 started production in a small unit in Okhla Industrial Area in Delhi. Since then there has been no looking back.

'Our strategy has been to offer the best product decoration innovations to our customers at an appropriate price, in least time and produced with the most appropriate technology,' says Bhargava.

Spread across an area of 22,000 sq ft (2,043 sqm), the Kumar Labels factory in Greater Noida houses a total of six presses – two Multitech presses of which one is a custom made Multitech Ecoflex with a UV system from Korea and anilox rollers from the Netherlands. The silkscreen press used for value addition was bought in from Korea and was installed in 2011. A Bang Sung 8-color press, also added in 2011, is again a customized press which has two flexo units and six letterpress units and cold foil stamping. It is claimed to be the only intermittent press in India to have cold foil on it.

In the next three to four months, Kumar Labels will be shifting out of the current rented premises to its own plant which is also located in Greater Noida. Spread across an area of approximately 20,000 sq ft (1,858 sqm), there is scope to expand the floor area in the new unit. Several equipment additions are planned.

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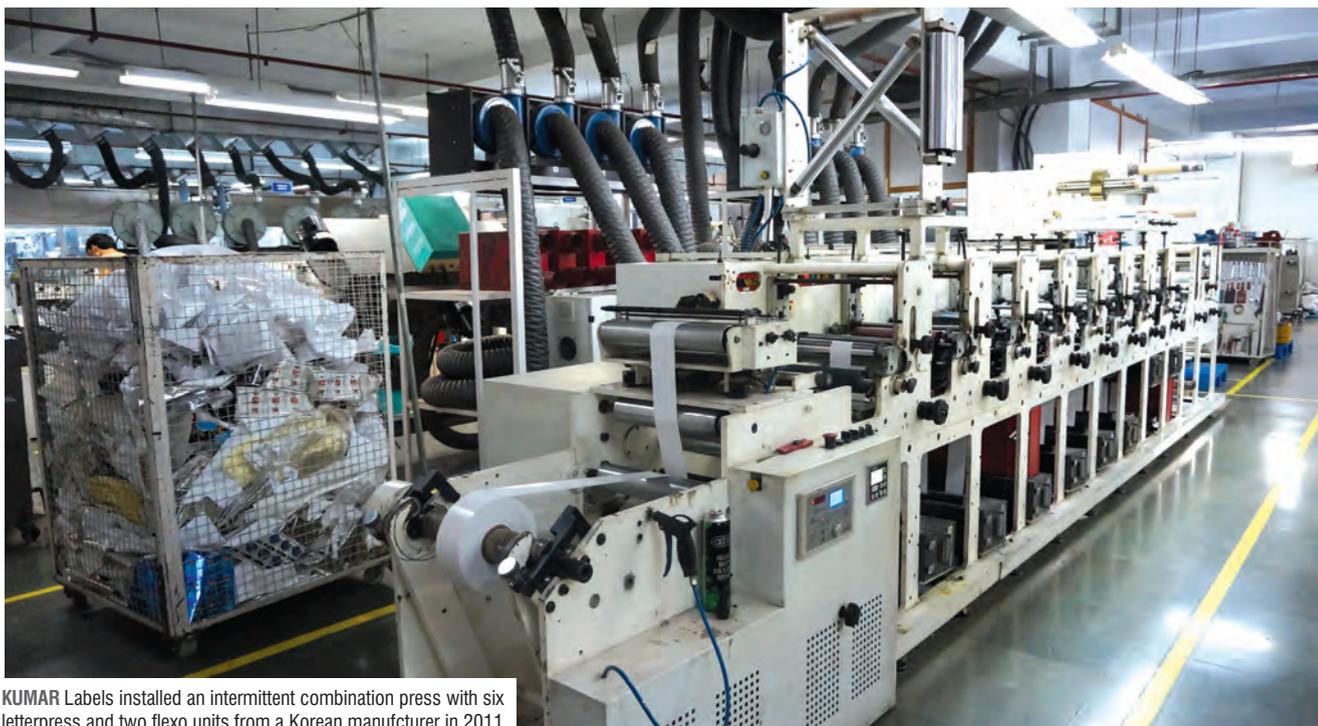
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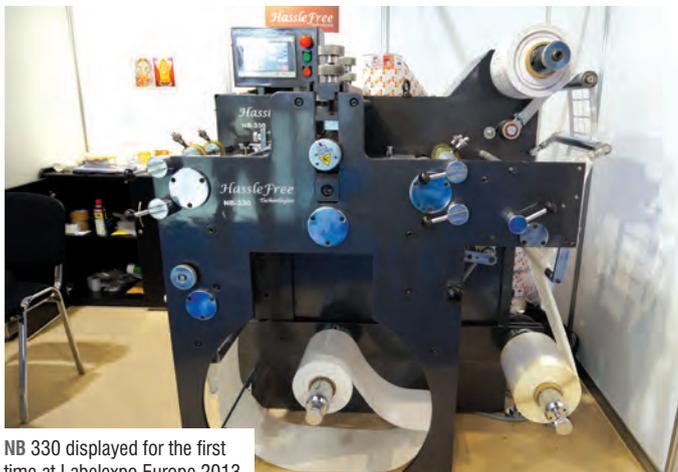
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KUMAR Labels installed an intermittent combination press with six letterpress and two flexo units from a Korean manufacturer in 2011



NB 330 displayed for the first time at Labelexpo Europe 2013

**THE DUBAI PROJECT**

Kumar Labels recently announced a joint venture with the Delta Group based in Dubai. The new company, Delta & Kumar Labels, plans to follow the same strategy of offering its customers the most appropriate product decoration innovations in the least time.

The Dubai plant is about 5,000 sq ft (465 sqm) in area with the scope for infrastructure expansion of another 20,000 sq ft (1,858 sqm). There are plans to install an intermittent offset and off-line conversion machines in Dubai. Currently, the plant houses a flexo press from Multitech along with an off-line die-cutter and an off-line inspection system.

Delta & Kumar Labels will soon be making inroads in Africa as well. Bhargava says that they see it as a potential market and are looking at setting up base in Tanzania where Delta already has a marketing office.

**BIRTH OF HASSLEFREE TECHNOLOGIES**

Kumar Labels uses six flatbed die-cutters for short-to-medium run label jobs. The hassles involved in running a flat-die

cutter always upset him. They took a lot of time to set up and required a skilled worker, the cost of which is very high. 'It used to be between Rs. 6,000 to Rs. 7,000 (\$95-\$110) a month two to three years ago and today it ranges between Rs. 12,000 and Rs. 15,000 (\$188-\$235) each month for each operator,' says Bhargava.

It was when six of Bhargava's operators left him together for a better salary offered by a competitor that he was in a difficult situation to finish and deliver the orders. 'That day, I decided that I need an operator-independent machine,' he remembers. He looked for intermittent rotary die-cutters in the market but was not happy with the price. His mind frame was that the productivity of the machine is twice as much as the flatbed die-cutter so the price should not be much more than double that of the flatbed die-cutter, or around Rs. 15 lakh (\$25,000). 'So, we decided to make something in-house at a low cost. We worked day and night and made our first machine in 24 days - just in time for Labelexpo India,' he says.

**THE NEW NB-330**

The NB-330 is an upgraded version of the semi-rotary die-cutting machine that was launched at Labelexpo India



INK and foil stocked at the Kumar Labels plant



THE operations floor at the Kumar Labels plant in Greater Noida, India

2012. It weighs approximately 800kg and has a footprint of just one sqm. Bhargava claims that this is the world's most compact semi-rotary die-cutting machine. According to him, two of these machines can be run simultaneously by one operator. The machine can be set up in five minutes and a fresher can be trained in two hours to operate it. 'The people just have to try it out and then really feel the difference between flatbed and this one. NB-330 can deliver almost double productivity than flatbed presses and give better quality. The deep cutting on the label would not happen on this machine because it is not possible to mechanically push the die beyond a certain point,' Bhargava explains.

HassleFree technologies displayed this version for the first time ever at Labelexpo Europe where it received over 100 enquiries with at least 20 percent serious buyers. Visitors appreciated the compact size, high accuracy of cutting registration and quick set-up possibilities. The first installation of the NB 330 was successfully completed at SARL AiREP Etiquettes located in Poitiers, France, in October. Marie Salerne, owner of AiREP Etiquettes, and her team challenged the machine with over 20 different tricky cutting jobs of different shapes and sizes during installation and successfully tested both the semi-rotary and full rotary mode on different substrates.

Kumar Labels has uploaded a video of the running machine on Youtube.com in English and Korean languages. It has got more than 2,000 clicks within seven months of which 25 percent have come from India and 18 percent from the USA. The equipment can be monitored remotely for maintenance.

Kumar Label is in the process of developing another machine, the SB-330, a modular platform which accommodates a printing station, varnish and hot foil stamping – all in one press. It is expected to be ready by January 2014. At Labelexpo India to be held from 29 October to 1 November 2014, Kumar Labels will showcase the NB-330, SB-330 and MK-330 inspection systems, all of which will be launched next year.

Continued innovation is a key strategy for Kumar Labels. Following late deliveries and delays, the company decided to make labelstock in-house. A custom-made machine was installed in October. Kumar Labels has filed for a patent for a specialized labelstock which reduces the usage of label liner by 50 percent. Striving to do something new and challenging at all times, the company recently printed electronic labels for a bicycle company.

HassleFree Technologies has signed a distribution agreement in the UK with LPP Ltd, which will now be its agent for the UK and Ireland markets. The company is in the process of signing distribution agreements in Portugal and Spain but is yet to appoint a representative in the US.

Kumar Labels plans to work on a 'hub and spoke' model in the coming years. Development at one base location and manufacturing (repetitive work) at multiple locations with the

## LABELS&LABELING



THE production floor also has a silk screen press for value addition jobs bought from Worldtech, a Korea based company, in 2011

help of partners is the long term plan, Bhargava states. 'We would like to keep one main development unit and other local units small enough to offer personalized service to our customers.' Bhargava likes the saying 'Small enough to care and big enough to dare' and plans to achieve that with this model.

### THE INDIAN SCENARIO

The margins in the label industry in India range between seven to 15 percent depending on the job. However, there are a lot of inexperienced people venturing into the label industry, says Bhargava. 'Extremely low pricing is harming the industry. One must consider overheads such as depreciation of the equipment, the operating cost, labor cost, power, etc. To survive, companies need to innovate and stay super-efficient. We would become history if we always under-cut and do not charge a reasonable profit from our customers.'

Label converters are still predominantly family-owned, and Bhargava sees a lot of similarities between a printing press and a restaurant. Both are about service and 'taste'. Both require tremendous hard work. Efficient operations and innovation are the most essential in both. 'I see the coming generations not too willing to give the hard work that is required to sustain in this competitive industry,' he says. 'This would only open doors to more and more foreign players buying out Indian companies. However, given the Indian way of running a business, running printing operations in India is going to be a difficult task for the MNCs as well.'

Bhargava concludes by complementing his team on the hard work they have all put in together with him from day one. Kumar Labels has a high retention rate and the core team has been with him since the time he started the business.

'Those six die-cutting operators who left came back after a few months but provoked me to develop a new machine,' he says with a smile. 'I keep my team challenged at all times beyond what they can do on a day to day basis. There is a lot of stress but then we work hard and play hard.'



ANUJ Bhargava, the CEO of Kumar Label

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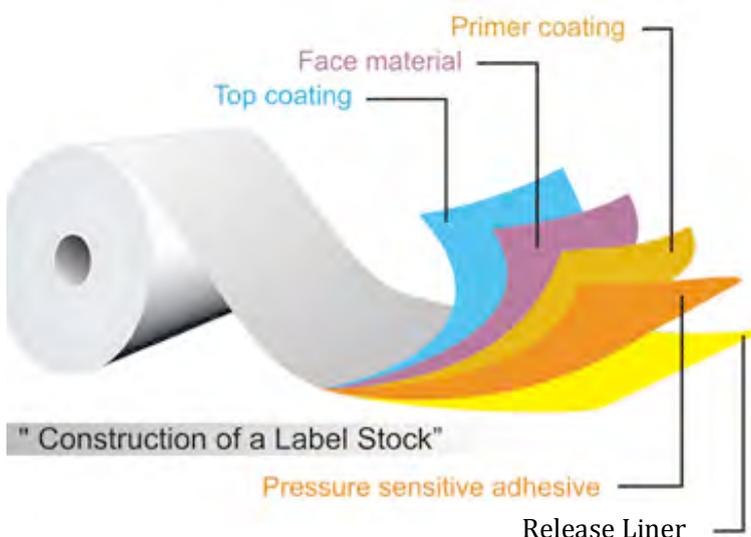
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ALPHACOLOR'S 6,000 sqm factory is located in Sao Paulo

# Alphacolor spreads its wings

**A MOVE INTO FLEXIBLE PACKAGING AND INVESTMENT** in a specialized laboratory for cosmetic and pharma labeling production are helping Brazilian converter Alphacolor to continue its rapid growth. James Quirk reports

Many a Latin American label converter has seen a similar early trajectory. Founded in 1992, initially as a printer of continuous forms, Alphacolor entered the label market in 2000 with the installation of a 6-color Webtron flexo press. Further Webtrons were added, before an 8-color Mark Andy flexo press arrived in 2004. Form production ceased in 2006, and Alphacolor embarked on a period of investment that now sees it run five Mark Andys (two P7s and three 2200s), two HP Indigo WS6600 digital presses, two AB Graphic digital converting lines, a fleet of Rotoflex finishing systems and shrink sleeve production equipment from Karlville.

In little more than 10 years, therefore, the company has essentially gone from a label printing start-up to one of Brazil's most important converting operations, producing high quality labels, shrink sleeves and other products for a wide variety of sectors, including pharmaceutical, cosmetics, food and agro-industrial.

It is a microcosm of what makes the Latin American label market occupy a unique position within the global industry. In no other region has market potential been so swiftly married to rapid investment in advanced equipment. Though fair, in economic terms if not necessarily technological, to describe the region's sector as 'developing', it can also be misleading: in numbers of advanced machinery and top-class converting operations, the Latin American label sector is far closer to the 'developed' markets of the US and Europe than it is to China, India and South-east Asia.

With top quality processes in place, Alphacolor is now spreading its wings further, with investment in a specialized

laboratory for cosmetic and pharma labeling production – the first of its kind in a graphic arts company in Brazil – and expansion into the flexible packaging market.

## DIFFERENTIATION

With 150 employees housed in a 6,000 sqm facility in Sao Paulo, Alphacolor has a production capacity of 1.2 million sqm of labels per month. Its wide product range already encompasses self-adhesive labels, shrink sleeves, aluminum products, tags, booklet labels with reverse printing, double-stick labels, and security seals for the pharmaceutical market.

The movement into flexible packaging, says operations director Helio Tunchel, is part of the company's desire to offer its clients a product range that is as far-reaching as possible. Similarly, Alphacolor operates in a variety of end user segments: pharmaceutical, cosmetics, food, agro-industrial, lubricants and others. They all have a roughly equal share of production. 'We want to be present in as many markets as possible,' says marketing director Raphael Abbate. 'It helps to compensate against fluctuations in different sectors.'

Helio Tunchel believes personalized flexible packaging will soon be the industry's fastest-growing sector. Alphacolor is already equipped for flexible packaging production: two of its Mark Andy presses – including the most recent arrival, this year – are 8-color P7s with a 17in web width and a host of value-adding options. (The new Mark Andy also features the company's new Quick Change Die-Cut System.) Alphacolor's two HP Indigo ws4500s were upgraded in 2009 and 2010 to



L-R Helio Tunchel, director of operations, and Raphael Abbate, director of marketing



ALPHACOLOR'S latest Mark Andy P7 was installed this year

WS6000s, the software and hardware of which have both since been reconfigured to become WS6600s. Additional investment in digital printing technology is likely, says Tunchel, to assist the move into flexible packaging production.

Shrink sleeve production was added in 2010, and the company now runs two Karlville converting lines. Alphacolor offers smaller clients test shrink sleeve versions of their labels to show them the technology's capabilities. 'We have specialized staff that can follow the particular product and individual client all the way,' says Tunchel. 'The self-adhesive label sector is growing in Brazil, but the shrink sleeve market is growing even faster.'

Abbate and Tunchel report growth for the company across all end user segments. Hosting the upcoming football World Cup and Olympic Games will bring many benefits to Brazil, but the graphic arts sector is particularly well-placed to take advantage. Alphacolor says work on promotional label runs is already under way with a number of clients.

The high-profile nature of these events, not to mention the emergence in the last decade of a sprawling middle class in Brazil, has helped stimulate an increasing desire for quality in the local market. 'Quality has become fundamental,' says Tunchel. 'Previously, price was king in the Brazilian label market. It remains an important factor, but people will pay more for better quality in a way they didn't used to.'

Increasing quality demands are a motivating factor behind another key initiative recently undertaken by Alphacolor. After nearly two years of planning and investment, the company has created within its factory a 'clean room' – a laboratory with highly controlled conditions dedicated to production of labels for the pharmaceutical and cosmetics industries. With a Mark Andy P7 press housed within, the lab has been built to exacting standards from ANVISA, the Brazilian equivalent of the United States' FDA. The room can have no corners: the edges must be rounded. Workers

wear specially designed clothes. There is control over temperature, air pressure and humidity. The lab is the first of its kind in a graphic arts company in Brazil.

'Nowadays we are more like NASA scientists than label printers,' says Helio Tunchel. 'It has been a big investment – more than buying a top-of-the-line press – and has needed a lot of work. Our company is founded on inspiration and perspiration.'

#### PRODUCTION

The HP Indigo WS6600s and Mark Andy 2200s and P7s are complemented by two AB Graphic Digicon converting lines and eight finishing systems from Rotoflex. Production is run by two or three shifts, depending on department, six days a week.

The Mark Andy P7s, both of eight colors and 17in web width, are fully UV and feature cold foil, hot foil and silkscreen units. Alphacolor is delighted with the quality the machines can achieve, and says that Mark Andy's Brazilian distributor, PTC Graphic Systems, run by Miguel Troccoli, provides ample local support. The press manufacturer's Latin America sales director, John Cavey, was brought up in Brazil and speaks fluent Portuguese, which further assists the close relationship between the companies. Both Mark Andy and HP Indigo have been heavily involved in training Alphacolor's press operators.

Alphacolor runs a pre-press system from Esko linked to workflow software from Brazil-based Metrics, which was acquired by EFI last year. The company was an early adopter, in Latin America at least, installing the system more than four years ago. Alphacolor wanted to automate its production processes and business management, and solidify its impressive growth. The workflow system was first integrated into Alphacolor's sales and client service activities. This was expanded in 2010 to include planning and production control, purchasing and accounts. The company reports increased production

efficiency thanks to the system's analysis of its pre-press, printing and finishing resources, which allows Alphacolor to compare data easily and use it to make informed decisions. Furthermore, the system has provided strategic information about overlay on materials, performance of operators and levels of efficiency in communication with a client.

Plates are sourced externally. 'It's not our area of expertise,' explains Tunchel. 'We want to concentrate all our efforts on printing at very high quality.' The repro houses used by Alphacolor operate Kodak equipment and Esko's HD flexo technology.

The majority of Alphacolor's production serves the Brazilian market, with small amounts occasionally exported. 'We have a huge local market, of course,' says Raphael Abbate. (Brazil has a population just shy of 200 million people.) Some local clients export their goods, so the company is often required to produce runs in multiple languages.

Alphacolor is certified to ISO 9000 and 14000 standards as well as the guidelines set out in Good Manufacturing Practices, enforced locally in Brazil by ANVISA, the National Health Surveillance Agency. No solvents are used, while an external company has been hired for removal of material waste. Alphacolor mainly uses recyclable PET liner in its production.

Corporate social responsibility is also high on the company's agenda. It employs five people with learning difficulties, for example. 'It's not a question of us helping them,' says Tunchel. 'They're helping us – they do a terrific job.'

Alphacolor won't allow its annual growth figure to be published, though L&L can reveal it is extremely impressive. Three years ago, the company expanded into the adjacent space in its industrial park, doubling in size without needing to relocate. 'We are very open to new technology and are always looking to invest,' reveals Raphael Abbate. It seems Alphacolor's impressive growth is likely to continue.

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# LATIN AMERICA NEWS



THE Brazilian delegation at Italian label converter Grafical

## BRAZILIAN CONVERTERS TOUR EUROPE

DELEGATION of 40 visits Nilpeter and Gallus customers and Avery Dennison plant

A group of Brazilian companies toured European converter and supplier facilities the week before Labelexpo Europe, writes James Quirk.

The delegation of around 40 converters visited companies such as Nilpeter customer Grafical, based in Valpolicella, Italy; Gallus' plant in St Gallen, Switzerland, as well as a local customer; and Avery Dennison's factory in Luxembourg.

At Grafical, a wine label specialist, the delegation saw a demonstration of a Nilpeter MO-4 offset press with its lightweight sleeve technology. The converters witnessed the production of a wine label job with six different hot foils, a complete job change, a combination and a standard job – and a job run at 160m/min on an offset flexo combination.

José Vitorino of Brazilian converter

Oliver Print Adesivos said: 'I was amazed by the degree of professionalism demonstrated by Grafical. The MO-4 is an outstanding piece of equipment – and the demonstration was impeccable. At Oliver Print, we have Nilpeter's FB-3300S flexo press, which for us has been a quantum leap ahead.'

The tour was organized by Castel Turismo, run by former ABIEA president Eduardo Chede. 'I have been organizing VIP tours for 15 years – and this is by far the best visit we have ever had,' he said. 'It will be a hard act to follow. Grafical definitely set all sails and were extremely accommodating. We even were presented with personalized gifts and banners in Portuguese.'

The night before Labelexpo opened, a cocktail reception for the Brazilian delegation at the Hilton Hotel welcomed more than 120 attendees.

## ISYS LABEL APPOINTS PROFLEXO INTERNATIONAL AS DISTRIBUTOR

iSys Label, the Canada-based manufacturer of short to mid run digital label printers, has appointed ProFlexo International as its newest distributor. Covering Mexico, Central America, Colombia and Venezuela, ProFlexo International will offer iSys Label's Apex 1290 and Edge 850 digital label printers both directly and through a dealer network.

'The appointment of ProFlexo International will greatly enhance our presence in the Latin American market. Their existing industry knowledge was a key factor in the decision making process and we believe that ProFlexo will be a valuable partner within our existing distribution network,' said Randy Rickert,

director of iSys Label.

Jaime Dagnino, president of ProFlexo International, said: 'Mexico, Central America, Colombia and Venezuela are markets that are rapidly adopting world class equipment and technologies for the label and converting industries. Our markets have a clear need for a cost-effective digital solution for printing of short run labels, but also demand high print quality and color consistency. iSys Label's Edge 850 and Apex 1290 range of digital printers clearly deliver best-of-class, cost-effective digital solutions which are a perfect fit for our market. We are delighted to join the iSys team.'

## HOT OFF THE PRESS

### LEFTECH APPOINTS CHILEAN DISTRIBUTOR FOR COSMOLIGHT

Argentina-based Leftech, the agent for Japanese company Toyobo's Cosmolight water-wash plate technology, has appointed Antalis GMS as its distributor for the system in Chile, writes James Quirk.

Antalis GMS, created in 2004 when Chilean distributor GMS was acquired by European packaging conglomerate Antalis Group, is one of the largest distributors in the Chilean graphic arts industry. It supplies inks, papers, films and other consumables to the local market, and boasts a network of affiliated companies in the region, including in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Peru.

Esteban Fraire Cambiasso, sales director at Leftech, said: 'For Toyobo and Leftech, it is fantastic to be able to rely on Antalis's professionalism and energy to promote our range of products to narrow web converters in Chile. The narrow web market in Chile is mature; it is one of the most developed in Latin America and is home to much top-of-the-range flexo technology. We are convinced that local converters will be keen to incorporate the advantages of the Cosmolight system – its speed of processing, high quality and significantly reduced environmental impact.'

Claudia Langlois, product manager at Antalis GMS, said: 'One of Antalis GMS's main objectives is to manage a portfolio of environmentally friendly products. Historically, photopolymer plates for flexo printing were washed with solvents that can be damaging to health and to the environment. The Cosmolight system eliminates this contamination and has other advantages including reduced energy consumption and high speed of plate processing.'

'In the Chilean market, our clients are committed to environmental sustainability and favorable working conditions and are continually looking for ways to reduce their environmental impact. They are embracing the Cosmolight system and we are very happy to be able to offer this technology to the market.'

Fraire Cambiasso reports that Leftech's sales of the Cosmolight system have been going from strength to strength in Latin America, with multiple installations throughout the region. Recent adopters include Kuresa and Logotex of Peru, Etipress of Colombia, Multilabel of Argentina, Arroviach of Ecuador and Impresora Editora Teofilo of the Dominican Republic. Bolivia-based Flexoprint, a user of Cosmolight since its foundation, has recently added the digital version of the system to complement its new Esko CDI equipment.

'Throughout Latin America, leading converters are adopting the Cosmolight system and producing high quality, environmentally friendly flexo plates in just 40 minutes. It's a system which quite simply has no downside,' he said.

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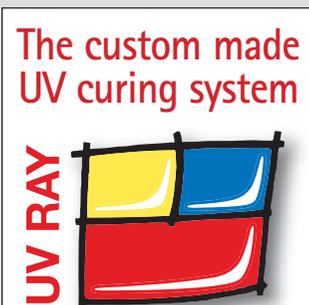
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Why is it so tough to transform enthusiasm fakers, paycheck collectors and clock watchers into employees who truly feel like they have a stake in your company's success?

'Frankly, it's because in many cases employees really don't have a stake,' says Michael Houlihan, co-author with Bonnie Harvey of *The Barefoot Spirit: How Hardship, Hustle, and Heart Built America's #1 Wine Brand*. 'Too many companies try to paste "engagement" initiatives on a foundation that's fundamentally flawed. It won't work. True engagement is a natural, organic extension of a company's culture, and people can't be cajoled, tricked, or bribed into feeling it. There just aren't any shortcuts.'

Houlihan speaks from experience. He and Harvey are the founders of Barefoot Cellars, the company that transformed the image of American wine. 'Michael and I learned early on that our growth and success depended on our employees: how hard they worked, the ideas they had, how committed they were when times got tough, the types of relationships they formed with customers, and so much more,' Harvey comments. 'Keeping our employees inspired and happy, and honestly acknowledging how much we appreciated their loyalty and efforts, were some of our top priorities as business owners.'

### CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

**Would I work for me?** Are you really to blame for low morale, low productivity, low enthusiasm and high turnover. Take your temperature in this area on a regular basis.

**Hire smart.** Avoid hiring solely based on someone's technical skill set and hire people with foundational qualities you can build on: integrity, enthusiasm, a willingness to learn, a sincere interest in your business.

**Go overboard with orientation.** Extra time and energy spent in big-picture education pays off handsomely with fewer mistakes, fewer misunderstandings and more efficiency.

**Share the wealth (as long as people are helping create it).** Sharing the wealth allows you to reduce turnover, attract go-getters, and motivate people to produce even more. Best of all, increased profit is 'found money' – it really costs you nothing.

**Give more days off.** Barefoot gave employees a Friday off during each month that didn't already have a built-in three-day weekend. These 'Barefoot Days' didn't hurt productivity: associates put in extra hours to finish their work before the weekend and returned recharged and refreshed.

**Be a mentoring matchmaker.** Mentoring works. When a new employee comes on board, try to match him up with a more experienced worker who can advise, teach, challenge and encourage him.

**Say 'thank you'.** While nobody wants to hear a constant stream of criticism or anxiously delivered 'suggestions' from the boss, workers do want to know that they're doing well.

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Michael Houlihan and Bonnie Harvey are co-authors of *'The Barefoot Spirit: How Hardship, Hustle, and Heart Built America's #1 Wine Brand'*. (Evolve Publishing, 2013, ISBN: 978-0-988-22454-4, \$15.95).

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