

DIGITAL CONVERTING

Analysis of systems available
for finishing digital labels

LABELS & LABELING

THE WORLD OF PACKAGE PRINTING

LABELEXPO SOUTHEAST ASIA

Review of most successful
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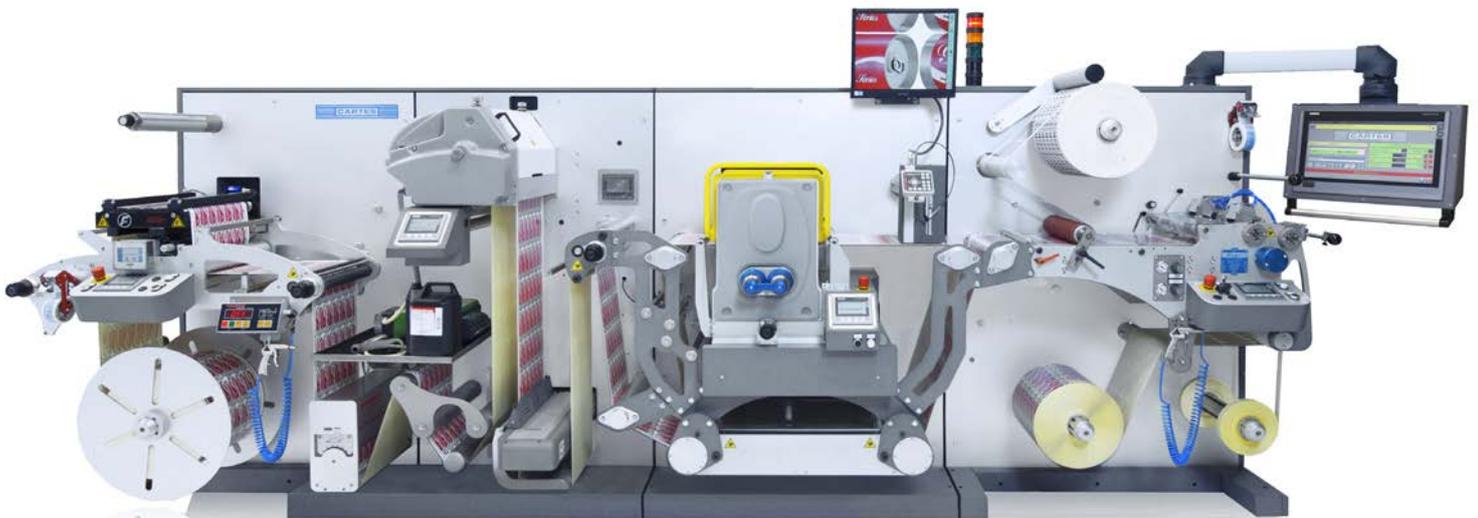
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– Meet the team

Labels & Labeling is the leading global information source for the label and package print converting industries with an editorial team located in the UK, North America, Latin America, China, India, Africa and Australasia



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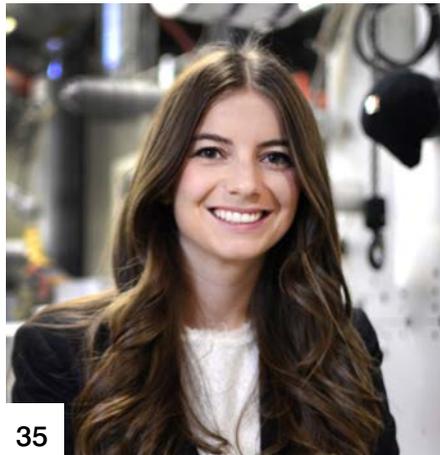
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Contents



30



35



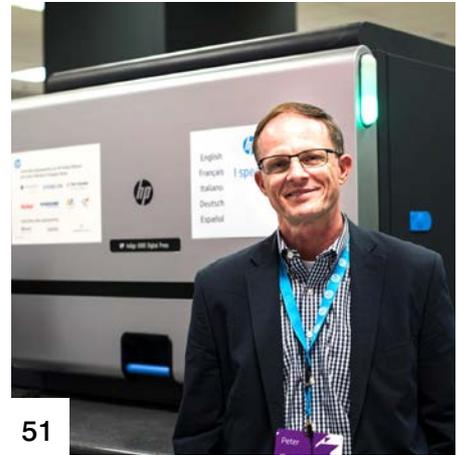
38



45



49



51

Regulars

- 9 Editor's welcome
- 10 News
- 17 New products
- 23 Installations
- 27 Appointments
- 30 Label & packaging showcase
- 33 The Mike Fairley column
- 35 Young managers: Deanne Sinclair, Cambridge Label
- 37 M&A
- 38 Q&A: Kuldip Goel, LMAI
- 114 Label trends
- 120 Label society

Trends

- 45 Augmented reality success for vineyard
19 Crimes range 'on fire' with augmented reality
- 91 Converters discuss ASEAN issues
Panel discussion at Labelexpo SEA revealed key trends
- 101 Indian industry discusses anti-counterfeiting
ASPA hosts Authentication Forum
- 105 The battle for beer
As craft beer continues to grow in the US and around the globe, competition for shelf space is at a premium
- 109 Eliminating waste from liners
Supply chain collaborates for release liner recycling
- 111 The green column
Dispelling release liner recycling myths

Features

- 29 Beyond the loupe
Up close with the best of French digital label printing
- 43 Huhtamaki PPL acquires Ajanta's India plants
Ajanta's Middle East and Southeast Asia plants to operate independently following acquisition
- 47 TLMI 4.0
New initiatives unveiled at the North American association's converter meeting
- 49 Focus unveils first UV LED press
UK manufacturer Focus has added UV LED curing to its e-Flex flexo press
- 82 Resounding success for Labelexpo Southeast Asia
Nearly 8,000 people attend inaugural event in Bangkok, Thailand



55



62



82



105

Online Contents

labels&labeling.com

The *Labels & Labeling* website presents daily news and exclusive content generated by its international editorial team and addressing the most pertinent developments in the label and package printing industry



Labels and flexpack crossover (opinion)

Label converters are well positioned to take a niche share of the fast-growing flexibles market



TLMI hits the road (video)

TLMI president Dan Muenzer visited Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, North Carolina



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L&L on LinkedIn (news)

Labels & Labeling has a new profile on LinkedIn, which you can follow at <https://www.linkedin.com/company/labelsandlabeling>

Digital special

95 Evolving with the African market

South African converter Packology sees shrink sleeve success thanks to collaborative approach

97 Perseverance pays off for Mexico converter

Mark Andy P5 press installation marks Mexican converter Etipress' recovery from harder times

99 Sri Lankan converter on growth trajectory

New plant helps Sri Lankan converter Flexiprint increase local market share and its export business

51 eAgile combines RFID and digital

HP 6900 powers smart label operation

55 Dscoop talks flexible packaging

Label printers learn about opportunities

57 Color management key at St-Luc

Investment in digital printing fuels growth

59 Digital path for ProLabel

US converter becomes all-digital print shop

61 Xeikon increases digital penetration

New inkjet press and Jetrion acquisition

62 Finishing digital labels

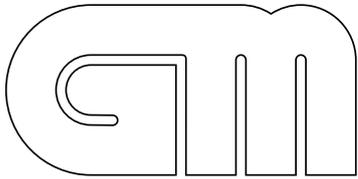
Analysis of digital label finishing systems

75 Upgrade your digital finishing

Each layer of a digitally printed label provides value, says Kurt D Hudson of Actega

79 Digital workflow

HP-Esko partnership tackles workflow challenges



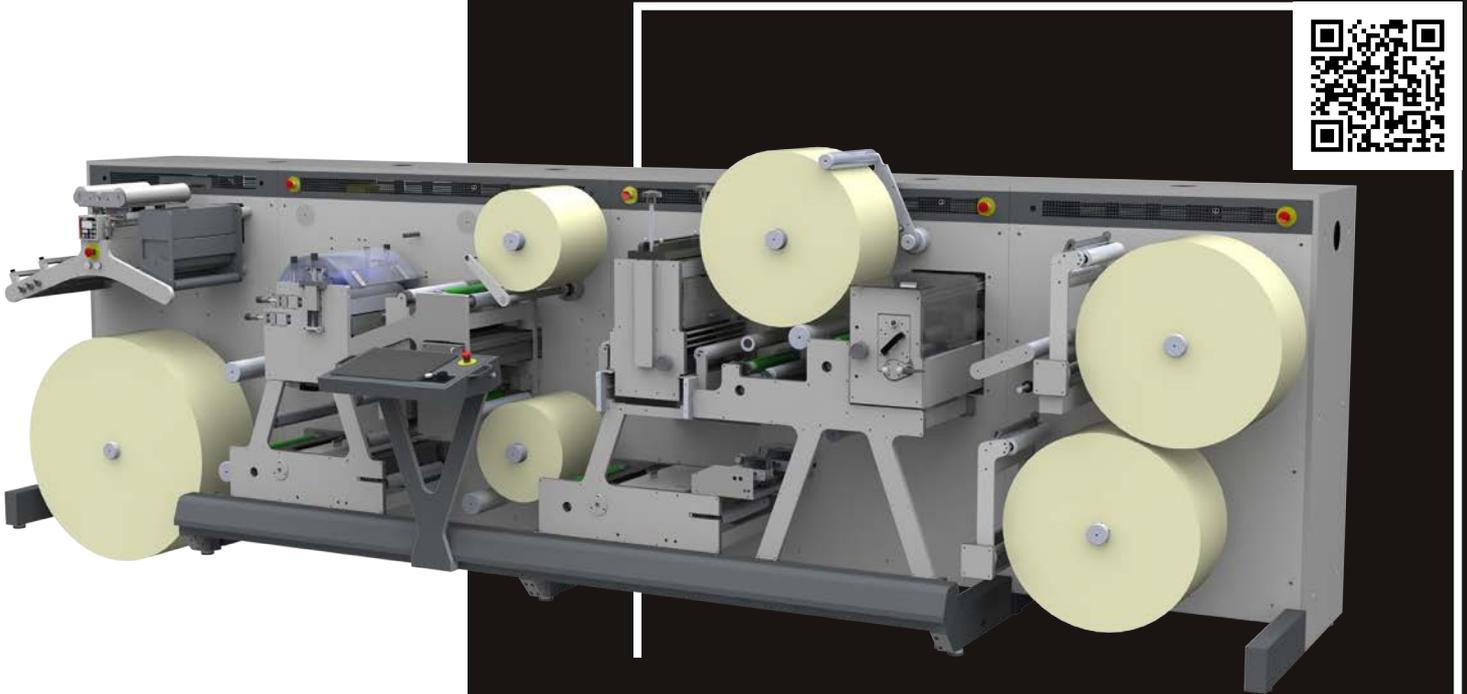
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Thirty years ago (L&L issue 2, 1988)



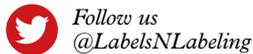
P12 . Nilpeter opened a new Rotolabel press manufacturing facility in Denmark, which Mike Fairley described as 'the most advanced of any label press manufacturer in the world – indeed of almost any other engineering facility to be found internationally.' Planning for the new factory began five years prior, around the time Nilpeter introduced the Rotolabel F-200 and B-200 presses.

P23 The Label Makers celebrated its silver jubilee, having started out in 1963 as an overprinter of labels bought outside for the local worsted cloth industry. The company began label printing in 1969 with a Gallus B 166, which was still in daily use for single and two-color work at the time of writing the original story. A new R 250 B was the company's 11th press, 10 of which were Gallus machines.

P30 Stork X-cel launched its latest rotary screen printing technology into the label market, MRS. It was a relatively inexpensive, compact and versatile modular screen printing system that offered significant reductions in the cost price of the end product. MRS featured a universal screenholder that allowed repeat lengths to be varied between 539.75mm and 914.4mm in steps of only 3.175mm.

P44 The printing of variable information, graphics or sequential barcodes was an increasingly important element in label production, which any label printer could take on by making use of VIP, a variable information printing bureau established by Alpha-Numeric Systems in Buckinghamshire, UK. VIP deployed almost all variable information and barcode printing technologies.

Twitter chatter



@MarcelCoe15: With @AveryDennison team and #WWF this morning planting Acacia trees in #FSC forest in Vietnam! A great opportunity to get team involved with the local community

@Womeninpackuk: L'Oréal has launched a #sustainable beauty brand with paper #packaging <http://ow.ly/xZTG30JEqF8>

@FlexTechAssn: The simplest choice for a narrow web printer is a substrate combining sealing, barrier & aesthetics, says Tom DuPont of @acpoldt <https://bit.ly/2Kdsk4C>

@TLMI: Announcing the TLMI Ecovillage at @Labelexpo Americas <https://tinyurl.com/yaco8544>

@Germark_labels: Escuchando a los brand owners en la #LabelSummitLatinAmerica, muy interesante saber lo que le piden a los impresores de etiquetas

Labelexpo Southeast Asia 2018 fills gap in global market

Editor's note

The first edition of Labelexpo Southeast Asia, held last month in Bangkok, Thailand, was the most successful launch event in the history of the Labelexpo Global Series, with 7,934 attendees from 62 countries flocking to BITEC in Bangkok, Thailand for the three-day show. It represents a return for Labelexpo to the ASEAN region. Older readers will recall the last ASEAN Labelexpo show in Singapore in 2004 before it relocated to China.

The Thailand location makes sense in terms of the wider Labelexpo portfolio. Labelexpo Asia has become mainly a 'local' show for Chinese visitors and exhibitors – although it has been strongly supported by Bobst and Omet among Western press manufacturers. Likewise the India show. Although Labelexpo India

features a lot more equipment from Western manufacturers, it has also developed into a show mainly for the local market, and has not heavily attracted ASEAN visitors.

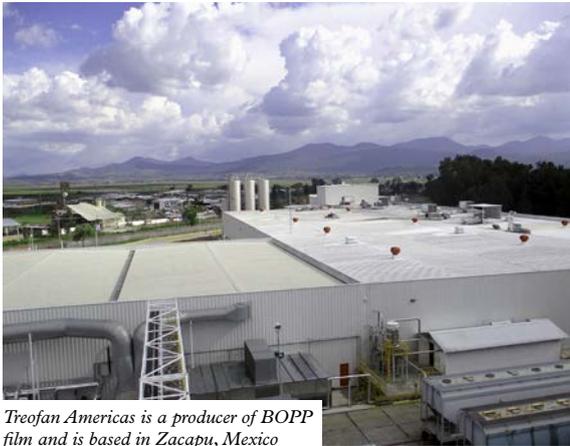
Of course some of the larger ASEAN converting groups come to Labelexpo Europe, but there remained a significant need for a show which addressed the specific needs of the fast-growing consumer economies of Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia and the Philippines. In fact, the show attracted many visitors from the 'wider' South Eastern Asian region beyond, including Korea, Japan and Australasia. Delegations were reported from as far afield as Latin America.

Thailand is the leading ASEAN country in terms of concentration of label converting companies and global converting groups such

as Multi-Color Corporation and Skanem, which is why the country proved such a good location for this Labelexpo show. ASEAN label converters are looking to make the transition from letterpress to flexo, and in some cases to digital. The Bangkok show featured demonstrations of cutting-edge flexo presses from Nilpeter (launching its new FA-line in the region), with Omet (iFlex) and Bobst (M1) showing 'entry level' presses including the kind of automation features vital in countries where a shortage of skilled flexo operators remains a critical factor.

James Quirk
Group managing editor

News



Treofan Americas is a producer of BOPP film and is based in Zacapu, Mexico

CCL to acquire Treofan Americas

Treofan's US, Canada and Latin America operations sold; European business maintained

CCL Industries has signed a binding agreement to acquire Treofan America and Trespaphan Mexico from their parent company, Italy-based M&C.

The entities to be acquired represent the Treofan Americas business in the US, Latin America and Canada. M&C will continue to control the equivalent European business through Treofan Germany and Treofan Italy, which form no part of this transaction. The purchase price, net of cash and debt assumed, is approximately US\$255 million, with closing anticipated in the second quarter of 2018.

Treofan Americas is a producer of BOPP film based in Zacapu, Mexico, with capacity of 60,000 tons for specialty applications in consumer packaging and label markets. Approximately 65 percent of sales are transacted in the US from a sales office and distribution center in North Carolina, the remaining balance predominantly in Latin America.

The acquired Treofan entities will trade under the Innovia brand name post close with M&C retaining rights to the Treofan name. CCL completed the takeover of Innovia last year, providing a platform for the world's largest specialty label business to grow and further enhance its offer in security printing, polymer extrusion and surface engineering.

Geoffrey T. Martin, CCL president and CEO, commented: 'The proposed acquisition gives Innovia a solid strategic footprint for BOPP films in both North America and Europe with highly complementary technologies and products. The business will be combined with Innovia in the Americas under a common brand and the leadership of Guenther Birkner, who heads our label interests globally in the food and beverage, healthcare and specialty markets as well as this important new strategic initiative in the materials science arena.'

Treofan Americas is to install a 10m-wide BOPP extrusion line in late 2018, adding 30,000 tons of capacity and requiring a significant facility expansion in Mexico.



Presstek is a supplier of direct imaging offset plates and presses, and CtP products

Mark Andy acquires Presstek

Presstek's Zahara waterless plates division will be spun out into a new company

Mark Andy is to acquire Presstek, with its product portfolio and employees to be integrated into Mark Andy.

Presstek is a supplier of direct imaging (DI) offset plates and presses, CtP products and service for commercial and in-plant customers. Its team of over 60 technical professionals will be integrated within Mark Andy's service infrastructure. Certified technicians will support equipment service for brands such as Presstek, ABDick, Ryobi, Heidelberg, Xerox, KBA, Epson and more.

Mark Andy and Presstek have maintained a strong partnership over the years, with Mark Andy Print Products (MAPP) fulfilling all orders in North America for Presstek DI and CtP products. Integrating Presstek's sales and service teams within MAPP will yield many benefits to Presstek's existing customers, it is claimed, including improved market coverage, extensive parts inventory, enhanced service resources, single point of invoicing and faster response times.

Kevin Wilken, Mark Andy CEO, commented: 'Presstek has been a force in the small and medium format offset segment for many years. Presstek's DI plates and equipment, and CtP solutions are well-respected throughout the industry, and I am happy to welcome the Presstek employees and products into the Mark Andy family.'

Presstek's Zahara waterless plates division, which is not being acquired by Mark Andy, will be spun out into a new company, Verico Technology, headed by former Presstek CEO Yuval Dubois. Verico Technology will focus on expanding its market share for cut sheet aluminum waterless plates and coating technologies in the printing industry, as well as venturing into new market segments.

Constantia acquires Indian packaging group

Constantia Flexibles has agreed to acquire a majority shareholding in the Indian film-based laminates producer Creative Polypack. Creative Polypack is India's fourth largest flexible packaging group, manufacturing film-based flexible packaging for the food, and home and personal care industries, as well as paper-based soap wrappers. The company serves domestic and international consumer goods companies in India.

Creative Polypack is family-owned and was founded in 1986. It has eight production sites in Baddi, Kanpur, Kolkata, Assam and Puducherry, in northern, eastern and southern India. It is expected to achieve sales of around US\$92.6 million in 2017/2018.

Alexander Baumgartner, Constantia Flexibles CEO, said: 'Through this acquisition we will become the third largest flexible packaging company in India – the fastest-growing packaging market globally.'



Read L&L's M&A columnist Bob Cronin's regular articles at www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/bob-cronin



Polymount CEO Jan Willem Boers

tesa acquires Twinlock from Polymount

Polymount and tesa have come to an agreement regarding the change of ownership of Polymount’s Twinlock product division. The Twinlock division will now be run by a management team that comprises members from both tesa and Polymount.

The machine division of Polymount, which manufactures the Polymount plate cleaner and film cleaner, will continue to operate as an independent production and development company, with its headquarters in Nijkerk, the Netherlands.

Jan Willem Boers, CEO of Polymount, said tesa is committed to expanding the usage of Twinlock sleeves worldwide. ‘We are delighted and proud to become part of such a prominent world-class company as tesa SE,’ continued Boers. ‘This new partnership will provide us with an excellent opportunity to help further our plans to grow the Twinlock business globally.’

TC Transcontinental acquires Coveris Americas

TC Transcontinental has agreed to acquire the business of Coveris Americas, described as ‘a turning point’ in TC Transcontinental’s 42-year history and crystallizing its shift towards flexible packaging.

TC Transcontinental is Canada’s largest printer and a key supplier of flexible packaging in North America. The company is also leader in its specialty media segments.

Coveris Americas, a business held by Coveris Holdings and a portfolio company of Sun Capital Partners, is one of the top 10 converters of flexible packaging in North America. For its fiscal year ended December 31, 2017, Coveris Americas generated US\$966 million in revenues. Headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, Coveris Americas manufactures a variety of flexible plastic and paper products, including rollstock, bags and pouches, co-extruded films, shrink films, coated substrates and labels. As of December 31, 2017, Coveris Americas operated 21 production facilities worldwide, in the US, Canada, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, the UK, New Zealand and China. TC Transcontinental currently operates seven flexible packaging facilities.

The acquisition positions TC Transcontinental among the top 10 flexible packaging converters in North America. The acquisition expands TC Transcontinental’s product offering with best-in-class capabilities and greater film manufacturing capabilities, and giving it the capability to insource a portion of film production.

The purchase price is US\$1.32 billion. Coveris is to focus its efforts in Europe post-completion of the sale.

M&A news in brief



Uni Packaging has invested numerous times in HP Indigo 20000 digital presses

Schur to acquire Uni Packaging

Schur Flexibles Group, a European flexible packaging operation, and France-based flexible packaging producer Uni Packaging have begun acquisition negotiations. Headquartered in Baden near Vienna, Austria, Schur Flexibles Group employs around 1,400 people and is made up of 12 companies with 14 production plants in Germany, Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Greece and Russia. Flexible packaging specialist Uni Packaging has a network of seven production sites, five logistics hubs and worldwide sales offices. It is a major player in digital printing for flexible packaging in Europe, having invested numerous times in HP Indigo’s 20000 digital press technology.

ePac acquires Precision Pouches

ePac Flexible Packaging, an all-digital flexible packaging converter, has acquired Precision Pouches, located in Schiller Park, Illinois. Precision Pouches, a flexible packaging converter, will become a part of ePac Chicago, and will continue providing pouching services to new and existing customers.

ePac recently made headlines with HP’s largest packaging press order to date, by purchasing 10 HP Indigo 20000 digital presses.

Sonoco to acquire Highland Packaging Solutions

Sonoco has signed an agreement to acquire Highland Packaging Solutions. Owned by CEO Steve Maxwell and John Durham, along with members of the company’s leadership team, Highland has grown from a regional supplier of agriculture packaging products into a global packaging company. It operates a production facility in Plant City, Florida, producing packaging for customers that includes sophisticated engineered containers, flexo-printed labels and inventory management through distribution warehouses in the US southeast and west coast.

Loftware acquires Gap Systems

Loftware has acquired UK-based Gap Systems, extending its global presence and introducing a new cloud-based digital platform promising to ‘redefine’ how enterprises create, manage and print complex labeling and packaging artwork, and scale across their operations. Gap Systems is a provider of SaaS-based artwork management technology.

News



Peter Frei was CEO of the Pantec print decoration business

Pantec's Peter Frei passes away

Credited with transforming Pantec into leading player in hot foil embossing machines

Labels & Labeling is sad to report the passing of Peter Frei, CEO of the Pantec print decoration business, who died in an accident on April 29.

Peter was born on June 30, 1963 in Zürich, Switzerland. In 1988, he graduated from ETH Zürich as a mechanical engineer and started working as a development engineer and project manager. In 1996, he began his career in the printing industry as a director of new business development and system sales before joining Pantec in 2008.

Over the next 10 years, he transformed the newly formed print decoration business unit into a leading player in the field of hot foil embossing machines with three product lines for narrow and wide web. He convinced printing houses worldwide to change their production concepts to in-line processing, allowing them to utilize Pantec's hot foil embossing technology for greater efficiency. Due to his management, Pantec was successfully positioned as the leader in its market sector.

Reinhard Braun, Pantec owner and CEO, said: 'Peter was not only a great business developer with technical aptitude and tenacity, but also a passionate leader, building up a very strong team around him with extensive application and engineering know-how. Through this, he was able to achieve an outstanding market position in such a short time. I will always remember Peter as a great entrepreneur with an inspiring personality and a huge passion for the printing industry.'

He leaves behind a wife and three children.



A visualization of the new Herma coating plant for self-adhesive materials

Herma targets growth in film-based materials

New coating plant doubles self-adhesive material production capacity

Herma is to double its capacity for self-adhesive material production with a new coating plant at its Filderstadt headquarters, with the first test runs of coating technology and material handling scheduled to take place in summer 2019.

Herma managing director Dr Thomas Baumgärtner, who also heads the company's self-adhesive materials division, commented: 'The new plant will enable us to produce new self-adhesive materials, and particularly to extend our portfolio in the film-based materials sector, which is experiencing fast growth.'

The new coating plant consists of five building sections: a central warehouse for raw materials and semi-finished products; the coating machine hall with two production facilities; a two-floor wing with cutting and packaging systems on the upper level, and the shipping area below; a finished goods warehouse; and a social/technical building. Coating technology and material handling will be robot-assisted for the first time.

With the inauguration of the new coating plant, Herma will extend its production capacity for self-adhesive materials by 50 percent from 800 million sqm to 1.2 billion sqm, an area approximately the size of New York City.

Baumgärtner expects the outer structure to be finished in autumn 2018, and regular production to start in late 2019. Since an innovative energy concept is being implemented, the new building complex will be able to run its production fully independently from the existing Herma location. On the new Herma premises, the labeling machines production facility is currently also under construction. It is planned to go into operation towards the end of 2018, when this Herma division moves from its current location in Deizisau to Filderstadt. By the end of 2019, Herma will have invested some €100 million (US\$81.5 million) in production facilities and buildings on the new premises.

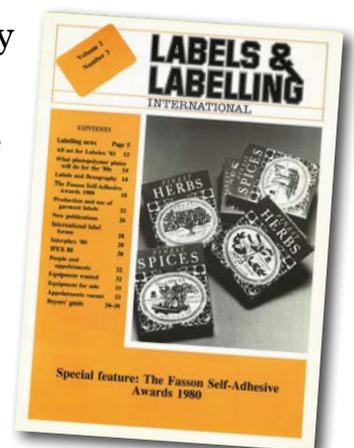
L&L to celebrate 40th anniversary

Labels & Labeling, founded by Mike Fairley in 1978, celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. Issue 6 will be a celebratory anniversary special, looking back at the history of the magazine and the industry it helped to create.

The 40th anniversary edition will feature contributions from the magazine's former editors, long-term industry experts, and suppliers and printers who have worked with Labels & Labeling since its early days. It will highlight the major technology developments from the past four decades, and will analyze the issues affecting the industry in the coming years.

We welcome contributions to the anniversary issue – get in touch with us at editorial@labelsandlabeling.com, and follow us on social media for more updates throughout the year.

For information about advertising opportunities in this special edition, contact advertising@labelsandlabeling.com.



Functional is Fast Growing



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The multi-million dollar investment is the single largest Avery Dennison made in its Label and Graphic Materials business in China to date

Avery Dennison inaugurates advanced coating line

High-speed emulsion and hotmelt coating line at Kunshan facility

Avery Dennison has inaugurated a new high-speed emulsion and hotmelt coating line at its Kunshan facility in Jiangsu province, China.

The new coating line, C11, incorporates the most advanced process technology as well as emulsion and hotmelt coating functionality. This makes it one of the most automated and most efficient pressure-sensitive adhesive coating lines in the industry. C11 will significantly expand Avery Dennison's production capacity as well as enhancing its customer service capability in China.

By optimizing both environmental performance and energy efficiency throughout all stages of its design, construction and operation, the facility to house the coating line has been certified 'Silver' by LEED, a widely recognized international green building rating system.

The investment also includes a 14,000 sqm facility expansion with room for a dedicated warehouse and finishing. The multi-million dollar investment is the single largest Avery Dennison has made in its Label and Graphic Materials business in China to date.

Georges Gravanis, Label and Graphic Materials president at Avery Dennison, commented: 'The launch of this high-speed coating line is another important milestone in the history of our growth in the Chinese market. Underlying our long-term commitment to the local market, it will enable us to continue to provide high-quality products and services to our customers here in China.'

Lifetime achievement award renamed

This September at the Label Industry Global Awards, held during Labelexpo Americas 2018, the R. Stanton Avery Lifetime Achievement Award will be renamed R. Stanton Avery Pioneer Award. George Gravanis, president, Label and Graphic Materials, Avery Dennison, explained: 'It's a subtle change, but one we think better reflects Stan Avery's legacy and our industry as it exists today. We at Avery Dennison have been deeply honored to not only sponsor the awards since their beginning, but to also have had this important accolade named after our founder.'

'This is an exciting time for our industry. Innovation is coming from everywhere. For these reasons, we thought it was time to rename the award. A lifetime of achievement in our industry is still something to celebrate. Past recipients of the Stan Avery award are to be admired. But after giving it careful thought, we concluded that innovation is what we'd like to recognize with this award. We wanted to honor that part of Stan Avery's legacy and recognize the pioneers who are driving us all forward, whether their work has spanned two years or two decades. We want their example to inspire our industry.'

As in the past, Avery Dennison will not be among the companies represented on the panel of judges who choose the recipients of the Label Industry Global Awards.

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Bill Shen (left), general manager at Ritrama Guangzhou Slitting Center, and Choy Wai Weng (right), Ritrama Asia-Pacific general manager

Ritrama opens second slitting center in China

New site located in Guangzhou

Ritrama has opened a new slitting center in Guangzhou, China to offer shorter delivery times and a wider range of products to the Italian self-adhesive material specialist's customers across Asia.

The opening ceremony took place on March 9 in the Zengcheng district, Guangzhou City, Guangdong Province. This is the second

slitting center opened in China by Ritrama, following the production and distribution center opened in 2009 in Hefei, Anhui Province. The investment will allow the company to offer shorter delivery times and a wider range of products.

The new factory covers an area of 2,000sqm and is only 30km away from the hub of the label printing plants in

the region. It is estimated that the annual slitting capacity can reach more than 50 million sqm after completion.

Choy Wai Weng, Ritrama Asia-Pacific general manager, said: 'Being one of the largest self-adhesive materials manufacturers in the world, we have been in the past extremely careful in our venture in China, as though we are walking on thin ice. We took many years to understand the Chinese market and finally in the second half of 2016, through restructuring of the management team, and building of reliable product quality and improvement of service experience, our products and services have been widely accepted by the market.'

'Since then, our monthly sales have quadrupled. This substantial growth not only reflects the striving spirit of the Ritrama team, but more importantly, we put the customer buying experience as our top priority. We hope to provide not only reliable products, competitive services, but more importantly, to let our customers enjoy better buying experience.'



Pictured (from left) Pierre Panel, Codimag; Robert Drozd, Graw; Benoit Demol, Codimag; Michal Brendzel, Graw

Codimag appoints distributors

Codimag has expanded its global support network by appointing Graw as its agent in Poland (pictured). Codimag has also appointed DewaFlex as its distributor for Benelux, and intends to further strengthen its global sales network. It is currently in discussion with agents in Croatia, Slovenia, Russia and Southeast Asia.

Edale names North Africa agent

Edale has named Redagraph as its new agent for Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. As a result of the partnership, the sale of an FL5 + FDC has already been made to a printer in the region.

Tresu appoints Iberia distributor

Tresu has appointed Innova Flexo Products of Barcelona, Spain as the agent for its ancillary division in Spain and Portugal.



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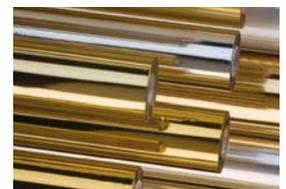
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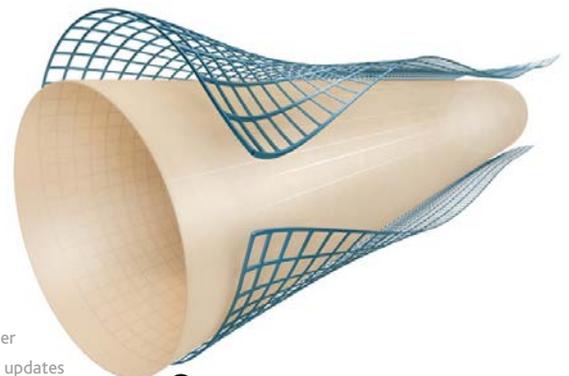


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New Products



PICTURED

1. BW Bielomatik, TagLiner
2. Techkon, SpectroDens updates
3. tesa, Softprint FE-X Flex-Design
4. UPM Raflatac, PP Solid White FTC Lite



01 TagLiner

BW Bielomatik

The machine provides fast production speed, high output and great bonding strength to help reduce the cost and increase efficiency in the production process of RFID tags. Additional features include a single-track design for easy operation, short set-up times as well as a servo-controlled curing device that avoids heat-up changes. A production yield of more than 99 percent increases production efficiency.

02 SpectroDens updates

Techkon

Available to download for free from the Techkon website, these new practical features include: a new measurement function for the quality control of spot color tone value (SCTV), which can be used with all SpectroDens units having color displays; average

measurement, available for all devices; and the PhotoLab Module for colorimetric quality control, which is embedded within the SpectroConnect software.

03 Softprint FE-X Flex-Design

tesa

Derived from a grid characteristic, its design consists of a foam carrier embedded between two PE-reinforcement films. This results in a more forgiving laydown of the tape which helps to counterbalance the increase in sleeve circumference whilst achieving a better bonding on inconsistent surfaces through a specially-engineered adhesive.

04 PP Clear FTC Lite/PP Solid White FTC Lite

UPM Raflatac

PP Solid White FTC Lite is a non-pearlescent, solid white PP film that offers a bright white

base color with 'dependable performance'. PP Clear FTC Lite is a clear PP film that can be combined with R704 adhesive and PET Lite liner to offer a 'no-label look', as well as offering clean performance in converting and dispensing. Both films are described as ideal for multipurpose labeling applications on smooth, rigid containers.

MB

MoistTech

The at-line moisture detection system is described as an affordable lab method for measuring moisture content. MoistTech MB is designed for a variety of applications for accurate results. It is equipped with a high-resolution lattice LCD back light and high precision thermal sensor with halogen heating/drying and short test times. Simple touch button operation allows for ease of use.

Seal

Sappi

Sappi Seal is designed to replace hot seal laminates made from plastic with materials containing a high proportion of renewable raw materials. It is single-side coated and has been finished with a dispersion coating on the reverse side, said to achieve good results with hot sealing. Developed for use as flexible standard packaging in the food and non-food sectors, where hot sealing properties are required, Sappi Seal is intended for us in primary packaging, such as sachets, but also secondary packaging, such as flow wraps for sweets, toys or DIY goods. In addition to its excellent hot sealing properties, Sappi Seal also provides barrier properties against water vapor. The new specialty paper is recyclable within the paper waste stream.

New Products



.....
PICTURED

- 5. Futec, machine learning capabilities
- 6. Esko, WebCenter
- 7. Primera, RX500
- 8. Herma, PP white extra topcoat (grade 880)



05 Machine learning capabilities

Futec

Software enables patterns to be identified in real-time, and the system is able to quickly and clearly distinguish between a printing defect and a machine defect. With 'Industry 4.0' in mind, these new benefits enable swift troubleshooting as well as avoiding unnecessary disruptions in production, therefore helping printers transform their businesses. This development coincides with the installation of the 10,000th Futec system (see installations pages).

06 WebCenter 18

Esko

This is a major new release of its packaging management system that streamlines and speeds up the packaging development workflow by delivering extra features that give brand owners

and converters more control and visibility of their packaging pre-production specification, approval and project life cycle. Every new system will have the new version installed, while existing customers will be updated following customers' request, to ensure they can prepare for internal training and roll-out.

07 RX500

Primera

It is claimed as the world's only full-color on-demand RFID label and tag printer. Labels are encoded, verified and printed in a single pass. Finished labels are then cut with the internal guillotine-style cutter and dispensed one at a time. On-demand printing makes the printer ideal for applications such as visitor or trade show badges where just a single label at a time with unique information is required.

08 PP white extra topcoat (grade 880)

Herma

This new polypropylene film allows users to produce visually appealing, glossy, non-transparent labels. For recycling reasons, Herma said these labels are preferably used on PP surfaces. A special surface treatment also means the film ensures optimal printing quality with standard printing methods, such as UV flexo printing and UV letterpress printing.

FCD4954

Mactac

It is a 2.0 mil semi-gloss, white polyester film designed with outstanding resistance to solvents, humidity, elevated temperatures, ultraviolet light and more. It features Lintec's reputable high-performance permanent acrylic PAT1 adhesive, which has a long history – more than 30

years – of superior performance. It also offers a white glassine liner, excellent dimensional stability and superior printability via flexographic and thermal transfer printing processes.

Flexpet F-STF

Flex Films

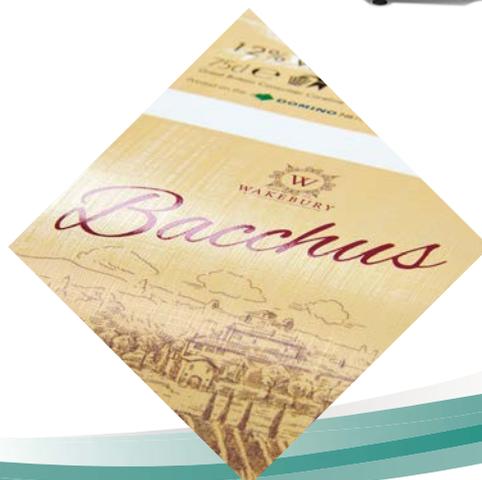
The BOPET film features a velvety surface and has been developed at the Flex Films manufacturing plant in the US. Dr Steven J. Sargeant, general manager of technology at Flex Films USA, said: 'If we scratch the surface of this film, it won't be scratched. Soft touch is rendered through a robust surface coating, in combination with a proprietary in-line anchor coating on the base polyester film. It is this combination which imparts unique properties of self-healing, toughness and durability along with the soft texture. This effectively increases converters' yield as they generate less scrap

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New Products



09



10



11

-
- PICTURED**
- 9. GEW, mUVm
 - 10. Meech, 233v4 pulsed DC controller
 - 11. Sato, W2NX
 - 12. Schreiner ProTech, SCLF 2



12

and have less customer rejections or other associated issues.'

09 mUVm
GEW

This multi-pint UV monitor is claimed as a highly reliable and cost-effective option for production monitoring of UV intensity at multiple positions across the web, to eliminate the possibility of inadequate UV dose. It features a simple user interface that displays the UV output of the lamps on the Rhino system touchscreen and alarms can be set to warn when the output gets too low or too high. With up to five sensors per lamp monitoring once a second, 'unprecedented control' over the UV curing process can be achieved. As a result, potential waste is eliminated and thus efficiency is greatly improved.

10 233v4 pulsed DC controller
Meech

Suitable for use in a wide variety of sectors, it is a compact device that enables greater control of the ionization performance and claimed as 'the most powerful and capable' controller in the Hyperion range. 233v4 is powered by 24V DC via a standard industrial M8 connector, while its dual output allows for the control of two ionizers simultaneously. IP67 rating means the controller is not vulnerable to dust, water and other contaminants, ensuring consistent performance.

11 PW2NX
Sato

The range is designed for the printing of markdown labels, price tag labels and delivery labels in heavy use front-line operational environments.

12 CLF 2

Schreiner ProTech
This next-generation color laser film features extra levels of counterfeiting and tampering protection, and builds upon 20 years of implementation of the original CLF system, primarily in the automotive industry. CLF 2 has been developed in response to growing demand for an even higher level of counterfeiting and tampering protection for vehicle nameplates, according to Schreiner ProTech, prompting it to develop new compositions for these CLF layers. The result is enhanced counterfeiting protection via specific proprietary interactions that occur during the laser marking process, diminishing the possibility of tampering to 'near impossibility', it is claimed.

UV inkjet products

Acucote
Stocked UV inkjet products include polypropylenes, polyesters, vinyls, semi-gloss, high gloss, boardstocks, metallized paper and foils. Unique to Acucote, are the singly-ply instant redeemable coupons for UV inkjet printers: 60# UV semi-gloss Diamond-Cote SP and IRComplete. These single-web constructions are built with a geometric-designed release system to support any die cut shape and provide UV inkjet printers the capability to offer both single and two-sided coupons.

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 For more new products, go to www.labelsandlabeling.com/news/new-products

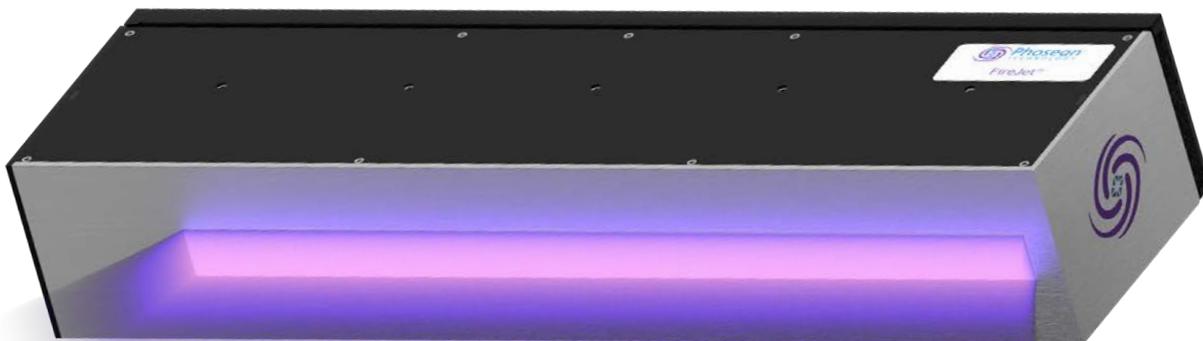
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Bellissima DMS

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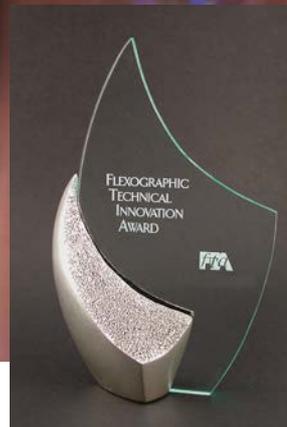
Rivaling the quality of print typically associated with offset and gravure, Bellissima DMS is challenging digital as the future for flexible packaging and labels.

Highlights:

- High-quality prints equivalent to 350 - 450 lpi
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Installations



01



02



03



04

Mark Andy Digital One
Barcom Industries, India
The first Mark Andy Digital One label printing press installed in Asia. Segregation of jobs to be printed on existing flexo presses and the new digital press is based on quantity of labels required.

01 HP Indigo 20000
Jiyin (Shanghai) Printing Technology, China
The digital press, the first in eastern China, was installed in November 2017 and used by HP Indigo for a recent open day to showcase the 20000 digital press to potential customers in the country.

Xeikon 3030 Plus
Label Factory, Australia
The family-owned business has made the move to meet ongoing demand for four-color process work in multiple kinds – shorter runs and variable data. Label Factory's 3030 Plus is one of three presses installed by Xeikon since

it converted to direct sales in Australia, with a fourth booked for later this year.

02 Screen Truepress Jet L350UV+
First Impression Labels, South Africa
The UV inkjet label press has been installed alongside a Rotocon Ecoline RDF-330 for converting and finishing. Both machines were supplied through Rotocon.

Dantex PicoColour
Cresta Labels, UK
The company has been providing flexible labeling to a wide range of industries for over 40 years. Its print capability includes flexo, hot foil and thermal transfer, as well as digital. The Dantex PicoColour, with corona treatment unit, is seen as the next step in the printer's continued investment in digital technology.

03 MPS EF Symjet
EDNN, Netherlands
To date, EDNN has only specialized in flexo presses for label printing jobs, however, the company has experienced an increased demand for smaller sized jobs and variable data. Its recently installed digital-flexo hybrid all-in-one printing press with in-line finishing adds extreme flexibility and very short turnaround times to its label production capabilities.

Prati Digifast One
CCL Master Label
Dharmadi Bongso, managing director at CCL Master Label, said: 'With growth in digital printing, we wanted to efficiently convert digital print into finished labels. This machine has transformed our digital label printing due to its quick set-up times and simple operation.'

04 Mark Andy P7
Reflex Labels Plus, UK
The new press, which features the updated P7 platform, brings to 27 the number of Mark Andy presses currently in use at Reflex plants, including the seven P-Series presses installed last year at Boston. Significantly, this will be the first Mark Andy to be installed at the Barwell site.

Edale FL3
Silverline Print, South Africa
The 8-color, 350mm-wide flexo press is equipped with UV drying, a peel and reveal module, turnbar, lamination and delam/relam.

Omet XFlex/iFlex
Coreti, Spain
Based in La Coruña, Coreti was founded in 1991 by Luis Fernández Vilela. It is now dedicated to the production of adhesive labels. The company has gone through big growth and expansion in the last few years, which has made it one of the

Installations



top 10 label printers in Spain. The cooperation with Omet started at the beginning of 2017 with the installation of a 10-color XFlex X5, dedicated to the production of labels as well as flexible packaging and folding cartons. In addition to this purchase, it has added a further XFlex, with six colors, and a 4-color iFlex.

05 Nilpeter FA

Primoreels, Denmark

9-color, 17in flexo press with double die-cutting unit has three printing units fitted with color pumps to speed up the flow and output on the more frequently used colors. The press is further configured with three Nilpeter automation and application packages: film, progressive print and automatic register.

06 Heidelberg ICS

Al Mawrid Printing & Advertising, UAE

After successful production with a first installation in 2012,

Al Mawrid has ordered another Heidelberg ICS. The press, consisting of flexo and gravure printing as well as different converting modules, will be installed soon. The company has identified growth in the Middle East and Africa, with growing market demand for highly finished packaging.

Fujifilm Illumina

Beau Label, US

The retrofit system, for converting any traditional UV or water-based flexo press to UV LED curing, has allowed for increased productivity and cost savings at the third generation family-owned New Jersey-based print services provider. The UV energy emitted at Illumina's 20 percent power setting is the same as the 100 percent power setting of other UV LED curing systems, it is claimed. Patented LED technology delivers up to 44 percent more energy toward the substrate, resulting in faster curing.

PCMC Fusion C

Prestige-Pak, US

The CI flexo press installation comes as the Wisconsin-based convertor marks its 50th anniversary. Vince Kuber, Prestige-Pak president, said: 'With the installation of this new press and its technology, we will be able to better meet our customers' requirements in the future.'

07 Cartes GT 360

Signature Labels, Australia

Signature Labels sees the Cartes GT 360 as rounding out its label printing portfolio, expanded to now include enhanced label embellishment capabilities that complement a new Miyakoshi semi-rotary offset press that has recently been installed.

08 Martin Automatic MBS/LRD – PIC

Mal-Pol, Poland

Automatic unwind/butt splicer and automatic transfer rewinder technology have been added to

its 10-color Gallus RCS 330 UV flexo press, which also has two screen print units, cold foil and varnish capability. The press was installed in 2016 to produce labels using a variety of substrates including laminates for tubes and sachets, self-adhesive stock, and unsupported film from PP to PE and PET. Key to the investment for Mal-Pol was the facility of the equipment to handle tube laminate material.

Nilpeter MO-4

Sanfaustino, Italy

Due to expansion, the Italian converter has acquired the offset press in order to add capacity and sustain its growth. The new Nilpeter MO-4 will be installed in a renovated plant in Brescia, which meets BRC standards.



Go to www.labelsandlabeling.com/news/installations for more installation news

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HP Indigo 8000 Digital Press



HP Indigo 6900 Digital Press



HP Indigo 20000 Digital Press

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Appointments



Ken Ingram
President
Screen Americas
He had been vice president of sales and marketing at Screen Americas for the past five years. Prior to that, he had work with JohnsByrne and Creo.



John Hrdlick
President
INX International
He started at Acme in 1977 as a third shift worker. He accepted a variety of jobs at different locations throughout the US, rising to become senior vice president and COO in 2012. One of the many projects Hrdlick has managed is a multi-year capital improvements program. Several US manufacturing facilities have been built or expanded since 2015, including on-going construction at the INX R&D campus in west Chicago that is expected to be completed later this year.

Tim Cook
President
Sato America
He is an industry veteran of 25 years with six years spent as Sato America's senior vice president of sales. In his new role as

president of Sato America, Cook assumes the execution responsibility and oversight of the company's North and Central America, Caribbean and Mexico business.



Didier Solano
Area sales director,
Mexico and Central America
UPM Raflatac
Solano joins UPM Raflatac from Zeller Plastik where he has worked since early 2016, and prior to that he served in various roles at CCL Label, Avery Dennison and Quad Graphics Mexico. He will be based at UPM Raflatac's sales office at the company's slitting and distribution terminal in Mexico City.



Jenne Smit
Vice president, flexo
Cron Europe
Smit will be responsible for the growth of Cron's expanding flexo CTP and pre-press portfolio. His appointment follows Stefan Werner taking over as Cron's EMEA sales director following the retirement of Derek Sizer as Cron's regional director.

Robert C. Tiede
President and CEO
Sonoco
Prior to being named CEO, Tiede served as executive vice president and chief operating officer at Sonoco, with global leadership, sales and operating responsibility for all of the company's diversified consumer, industrial and protective packaging businesses.



Carina Shia
Sales manager,
Southeast Asia
Koenig & Bauer
In her new role, together with the local KBA-Asia Pacific service team, she will support KBA-Flexo-tecnica with developing its market share in this region. Shia has already sold a second flexo press into Malaysia within a short period of time.



European sales and service team
(Michael Reuter)
Verico Technology
Following the acquisition by Mark Andy, Presstek's former waterless offset plate division has been spun out as an independent company. The sales and service team for the EMEA region consists of: Karol Wolnikowski,

sales director; Oliver Schindwein, EMEA sales manager; Claude Zähringer, EMEA sales manager; Günter Schmid, who joined Presstek in October 2017 and will now pursue his consultancy work for Verico Technology; Michael Reuter, another plate application specialist; and Candido Presa Arjones, technical project director.



Area sales managers
(Sebastiaan Rakhorst)
MPS
MPS has made three key appointments to its global sales team in response to successful international sales and preparation of forecasted future growth of its flexo, hybrid and offset printing presses. Joining MPS in the roles of area sales managers are Niels van Groenendaal (Spain and Latin America), Suwannee Tantisrisuk (Southeast Asia) and Sebastiaan Rakhorst (junior area sales manager).



Ralf Ottilie
Area sales manager
Herma Self-adhesive Materials
Responsible for the UK, Middle East and parts of eastern Europe, he

manages international customer accounts and brings extensive experience in the field to his new job.

Sean McGovern
Digital business analyst
Anderson & Vreeland
McGovern will support customers with a mix of technologies in their shops. His background includes working with Agfa, Kodak, Pitman and Screen. Customers will quickly benefit from his broad perspective, eagerness to share knowledge and help customers take advantage of the latest technologies, according to the flexo technology specialist.



Nina Kessler
Marketing manager
Kroenert
This position is new at Kroenert and is intended to enhance the coating technology specialist's market position worldwide and its communication activities. Kessler has wide experiences in national and international marketing. After her studies of business management in Lueneburg, Germany, and Málaga, Spain, with the major of marketing and international marketing, she worked for different B2B companies, including Euler Hermes Rating and Aura Light.

For more appointments, go to labelsandlabeling.com/news/appointments

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The judges were (L-R): Barry Hunt, representing Labels & Labeling; John Penhallow, a freelance writer living in Paris; Jean Poncet, editor in chief of Etiqu & Pack; and Wolfgang Klos-Geiger, publisher of LabelPack

Beyond the loupe

Barry Hunt gets close up with the best of French digital label printing

Print trade awards that reward printed excellence remain internationally popular. They help promote the participants' services, while extending a certain kudos to their employees. More generally they can provide a snapshot of that sector of the graphics industry, in this case French digital label printing.

This year 14 companies submitted 54 entries to the 2018 edition of an annual print competition organized by the journal Etiqu & Pack. The judging was held at the Paris headquarters of UNFEA (Union Nationale des Fabricants d'Etiquettes), which has a membership of around 100 label converters and 80 suppliers. The winning labels will compete for the UNFEA Grand Prize awarded at the All4Pack event in November.

The digital label scene in France shows similar patterns of growth and evolution as in other parts of Europe. This year, however, the entire label and packaging industry is expected to improve its recent performance in line with a sharply improved business climate and a stabilized unemployment rate. Official sources forecast the country's return to economic growth reduces a dependence on household consumption and mirrors that of most eurozone countries.

Nevertheless, the demand for labels and packaging continues to rise. A retail market report suggests that unlike in the rest of Europe, French brand owners stand to gain a larger share at the expense of own-brands. Furthermore, this will help boost digital label printers as brand owners become more adept at adopting marketing methods based on print-on-demand, personalization and versioning capabilities for their main consumer brands. Other positive factors

include increased volumes of labels for products requiring stringent regulatory requirements, such as pharmaceuticals, a more focused approach to using anti-counterfeiting labeling, and more digitized plants capable of offering fast turnarounds within 24 hours.

All this reflects the technology's homogeneity on the global scene. In France, as elsewhere, most digital installations complement conventional flexo and offset technology, with a few hybrid systems being installed. Generally speaking, digital label production in France accounts for a 10-15 percent share of most users' turnovers.

Stand-out labels

Against this background, the competition judges with their loupes to hand sought to identify the stand-out labels in each of the nine categories. Among the quality criteria, judgements were made on the sharpness of small-sized reversals, the accuracy and gradations of flesh tones and vignettes, the color consistency of solid areas, and cut-to-print registration.

Other questions were more subjective. Was it a true digital job? Could other print processes have worked equally well? The label's overall aesthetic appeal, especially for high-value products, was also important, but the judges were not looking for the best-designed label. Rather, it was a question of balancing the aesthetic factors with the technical competence required.

In terms of the technologies used, HP Indigo's strong presence in France was evident. Several entries were created with HP's SmartStream Mosaic software. This automatically creates millions of designs

Award winners and special mentions

The winners are pictured in the Label & packaging showcase over the page. Special mentions were awarded to: Etiqroll (Labelys Group) for 'Marquerau Maison Bevillon, a label for olive oil (food category); Stratus Packaging for 'Origine France' security tags (other); Provetiq for 'Safran d'Anduze' artisanal beer label (beverage); Stratus Packaging for 'Mon Huile Vegetale', hair-care label (cosmetics); Neo-Color for variable-numbered and encoded security labels (variable data/limited edition); Lorge Imprimeurs for 'Cartiflex' diet supplement for horses label (industrial); ELC Etiquettes for 'Vegan Sport' health and fitness supplement label (sports products); Gigault (Labelys Group) for '1670' wine label with variable foiling effects (wine).

based on core patterns for end-users' customized marketing campaigns. Xeikon's dry toner system is also strong, while high-end, drop-on-demand inkjet technology using UV-curable inks continues to gain ground. Epson and Domino were cited as major players here. The presence of many intricate shapes pointed to a noticeable use of laser die-cutting, while several entries made good use of metallized filmic substrates, as well as variable numbering and encoding.



Turn the page to see the winning labels in the Label & packaging showcase

Label & packaging showcase



01



02



03



04



05



Etiq & Pack French digital label award winners

Food

01 'Miel de Sapin', a honey jar label
Neo-Color

Variable data / limited edition (joint winners)

02 'Nutella Unique' shrink sleeve label

03 'Janus Gin' variable-image test label
Lithobru and Linea

Other (joint winners)

04 'Point Par Point', a scented candle label
Provetiq

05 'Le Lion' sample decorated tags, promoting Mosaic software
Autajon

Beverage

06 'AIR bière d'excellence', a sample beer label
Azur Adhesifs

Cosmetics

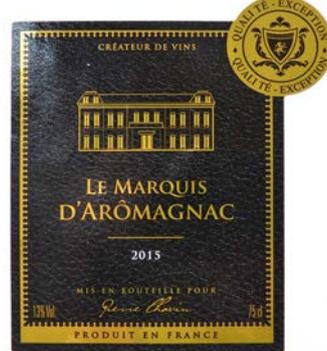
07 'Organissime', multi-version shampoo labels
ELC Etiquettes



06



08



09



07



10



11



12

Industrial

08 'Hyperflex' cleaning product

Large Imprimeurs

Wine (joint winners)

09 'Le Marquis d'Aromagnac' wine label

5 Sept Etiquette

12 'Livret Lantern' wine label with variable foiling effects
Etiquroll

Sport products

10 'Hydrogel' energy drink label

APE Etiquettes (Labelys Group)



This regular feature is dedicated to the best designed printed packaging from around the world. If you would like your product featured here, email label Exposure@labelsandlabeling.com. We require a high resolution photograph and supporting text.



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Trevor Smith, MD, Amberley Adhesive Labels



Edale FL3 AiiR - Automated Label Printing



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The Mike Fairley column

A moral responsibility

With automation and robotics set to change the industrial landscape, how will the label industry fare?

In a recent television interview Bill Gates, the Microsoft founder, was asked what developments would have the biggest impact on society over the next twenty years. His answer was automation and robotics. Many others in influential positions are also looking at similar conclusions: Mark Carney, the governor of the Bank of England, seems to be going even further, warning that automation of millions of jobs could even lead to mass unemployment, rising inequality and wage stagnation.

Even Oxford University researchers are claiming that robots have already stolen more than 66,000 jobs in Britain alone. Separate studies have further predicted that large numbers of workers will be replaced by robots and machine automation. So, how will the label industry fare in the automated world of tomorrow?

The past few years have already shown that both machine and business automation is already having an increasing impact on many key areas of label production – lead times, quality control, efficiency, employee communications, output speed, performance, customer liaison and satisfaction.

Almost every week there are announcements by leading conventional and digital press manufactures, pre-press and systems suppliers, finishing and converting equipment producers, inks and ink curing companies, etc., indicating that almost anything that can be automated is being automated. Software advances mean that more and more label related machines are able to communicate with each other, and through computers, laptops, tablets or mobile phones to humans operating or managing such equipment and systems.

Add in all the label MIS advances taking place that in turn now communicate and interact with both machines and humans to more efficiently manage a business, analyze job and performance data, provide management tools, automate planning, job ordering, estimating, financial management and much more, and the industry is increasingly recognizing that the progress of automation to date has almost always been positive.

Labelexpo Americas this year will certainly see label industry automation taken to new levels, both on exhibitor booths and in conference and master class sessions, as well as in the Automation Arena feature area – this time additionally adding in the introduction of automated shrink sleeve slitting, forming, sealing and inspection. A world first.

What the label industry has yet to see (if it happens at all) is any degree of job losses due to automation. If anything the label industry has had to create new jobs for computer experts, software designers and engineers and IT experts, that can develop, build and maintain the new automated machinery and business plants for the future.

Concern

If there is to be any job displacement, the key challenge for the industry – even moral responsibility – will be to find them something meaningful to do. How far will label companies need to go to continually update or replace employee job skills?

The concern of many label companies at the moment is that our current education, training and business systems are no longer really fit for purpose and are not keeping up with the industry's rapidly changing current and future automated and artificial intelligence demands. If we don't evolve, then some employees may get left behind.

While the Label Academy's series of educational books is already looking at MIS and Automation, Shrink Sleeving, Digital technologies, and more, there is undoubtedly still much more to be done.

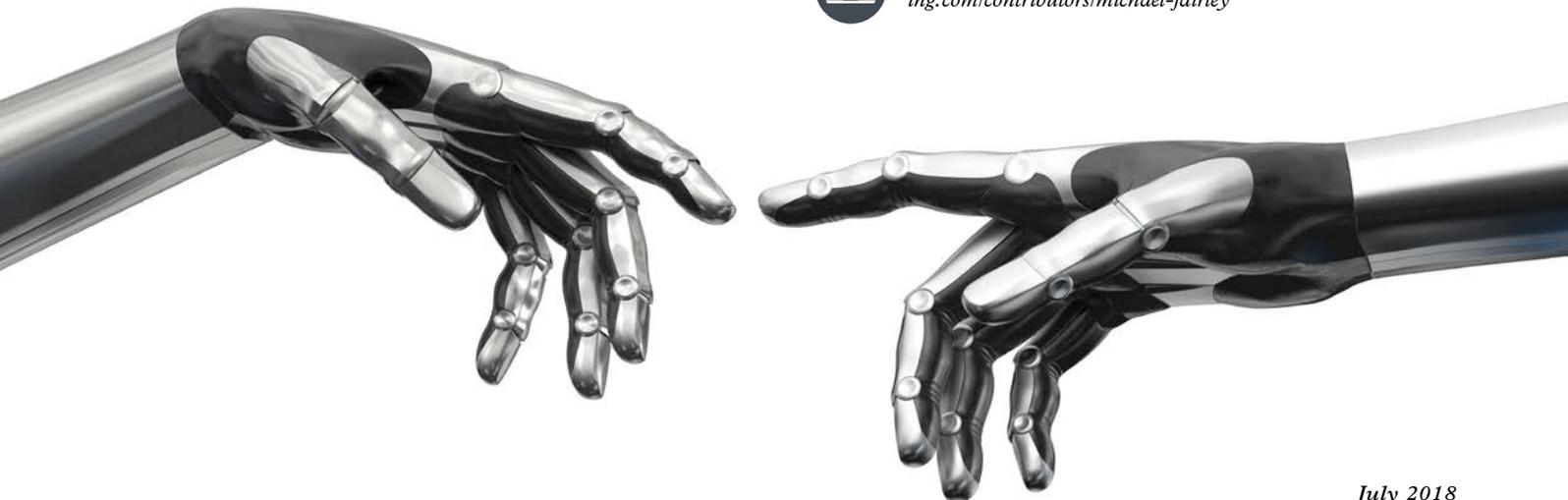
Outside of automation, the industry has yet to see much impact from robotics. Indeed, will it see much impact at all? With heavy lifting and moving (large size reels on wide web presses, for example) and constantly repetitive jobs in an industrial setting, it is suggested that robotics may be able to take over an increasing share of the workload.

However, research by management consultant McKinsey and Company suggests that fewer than 5 percent of occupations can be entirely automated by existing technology, largely because the jobs are too varied and changeable for robots to take them over. That sounds much like the label industry.

Yes, label machines will continue to get more automated; they will do more and more repetitive things; the way they are operated and managed will change significantly – but they will still largely require humans to work them. What is needed however, is new and better ways of educating, training and retraining the industry's employees for an automated and more intelligent label industry future.



For more Mike Fairley columns, go to www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/michael-fairley



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Young managers — Deanne Sinclair, Cambridge Label

Deanne Sinclair is a passionate entrepreneur and proud family business owner at Cambridge Label, a label printer in Ontario, Canada. She has an honors business administration degree and a master of business (MBA) degree from the Ivey Business School



“Label printing is a huge market: as long as you put your heart and mind into it, you will find plenty of opportunities”

was frustrated with the lack of progress I was making; no one was giving me the time of day. He said: ‘You shouldn’t have put marketing manager on your badge. Next time put owner and tell them you’re one of the final decision-makers.’ Sure enough, next show I followed his advice and my results were drastically different.

This experience changed the way I look at attendees when I exhibit at a show. The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow; they should not be ignored because they will soon become the decision-makers. I also learned that having a good mentor will drastically accelerate your success.

Opportunities exist

A prominent leader in the Canadian print industry once said to me: ‘You have your MBA, why did you choose to work in the print industry? I feel like no one in their 20s who has their MBA chooses to work in print.’

Out of my graduating class of around 100 people, only two of us went to work in Canadian manufacturing, with no one else in my class choosing entrepreneurship as a career path immediately upon graduation. I found myself, once again, being the outlier.

My classmates thought I was crazy; unfortunately print has been generalized as a dwindling industry due to decreasing demand for newsprint and so on.

Personally, I view the print industry as quite the opposite. It’s such a dynamic place for young leaders. It’s a great place to be because there are many in the workforce that are near retirement, and those jobs need to be replaced with the youth of today.

Lastly, and most importantly, print

Cambridge Label chooses Nilpeter FA flexo press

Cambridge Label has installed a FA flexo press from Nilpeter. The fully automated, 8-color, 17 in-wide press is equipped with full UV and a number of value-added features.

As a label supplier exclusively for trade, Cambridge Label manufactures custom-printed labels in quantities as few as 100, and up to several million. Cambridge Label specializes in print for food and beverage, health and beauty, household products, industrial products, nutraceutical and pharmaceutical, as well as medical facilities.

Terry Sinclair, president and owner, said: ‘We strive to deliver in 3-5 days. In this business everyone wants it yesterday, and the quicker, you can deliver, the better. In order to deliver a high quality product quickly and consistently, you need to invest in the best equipment possible.’

My family has been in print for more than 35 years, but to be honest, I never envisioned myself working in the print industry at my family business. Growing up, my father always had a strict ‘no family members as employees’ policy, out of respect for his other business partners. It wasn’t until I had graduated from high school, when my father purchased the entirety of Cambridge Label, that he allowed me join the business.

I started in our rewind department, doing the tedious tasks that no one was thrilled about doing. One of my first jobs was manually counting out stacks of hundreds of sheeted labels and rubber-banding them. As a young female in the industry, you have to get your hands dirty to earn the respect of the staff. I was willing to do whatever was required, and am still open to helping wherever needed in order to get the job done. I believe that to be a good leader you need to get in the trenches and do what you have others do.

I remember going to my first trade show and being shocked by the high proportion of 40+ year-old males in the industry. I was in my early 20s, and had ‘marketing manager’ on my attendee badge. My father gave me a long list of new technologies and equipment to explore; equipment that we were serious about investing in. At the end of the day I

is everywhere, and I don’t foresee it disappearing. As you go about your daily routine, think about how many products you interact with that are printed, how many signs you see; somebody, somewhere is manufacturing those for a profit.

Cambridge Label has nearly doubled in size in the past eight years. We’re constantly investing in new technology to expand our capabilities and keep our operations efficient. In 2015, we were the first in Canada to invest in an HP Indigo 6800 digital press. This year we have invested in Nilpeter’s new FA 17-inch wide flexo press (see boxout), a laser die-cutting machine for digital labels, and new pre-press software. I’m proud to be a young female working in such a fast-paced and dynamic market.



For more information on Cambridge Label, visit www.cambridgelabel.com

RUN OR BE OUTRUN

Facing short runs and more demanding customers, staying both profitable and agile to stay ahead is the name of the label game. Digital label printing complements traditional technology in that way. But with so much territory to cover, what would be your matching technology?

Aiming for a broad approach to label production a digital press with dry toner will make you run like no other



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Growing your business during the M&A frenzy

Not planning to sell your business? You still need to take action, writes Bob Cronin of The Open Approach

M&A is about change, innovation and growth. Acquirers buy where there's opportunity – and a healthy return on investment. The current M&A frenzy in labels and packaging underscores the potential of our industry. It also portends its rapid and continued transformation.

While you can cash in on today's high multiples, you may wish to hold on. But staying in charge doesn't mean 'staying put'. Accelerated M&A activity brings new dynamics, offerings and expectations. The reality of today's fast-paced landscape is that you can't survive by doing nothing. Even if you're thriving now, things can be radically different soon.

If you stay, you need to take action. Here are four key areas to focus on:

1. Your position – To best prepare for the future, you need to know where you stand today. What is the status of your business? What are your strengths? How are you positioned amongst your competitors?

Labels is a market driven by innovation, delivering products that help businesses stand out. Your capabilities are a huge consideration. But beyond manufacturing, the most valuable vendors are the ones that add value.

To position a company today, you need to look at your platform and see how it fits with your customer base. If you specialize in pharmaceutical labels, you may need a totally different set of tools than when serving clients in food packaging, beverages or retail products. You may also need certifications, reviews, or third-party assurances. Select what's best to make sure your customer sees you as a resource – now and in the long term.

Gather with your key players from sales, operations, finance, and customer service and have an open conversation on your strengths and weaknesses. Discuss where you thrive and where you're falling short. Analyze lost projects, and more important, lost accounts. It's not just about what you think; it's about how you're perceived. It always comes down to 'the customer is right' whether you like it or not.

2. Your moves for the future – The best companies spend less time worrying about what they're doing today and more about preparing for the future. Preparing your company should be an ongoing activity. Business will continue to change, and you'll need to adjust accordingly. Concentrate on your three greatest focal points: capital, staff and competition. But before you begin strategizing, understand your own willingness to take on the challenges in these areas over the next five or ten years. (If you get stuck here, you might want to revisit a consideration to sell.)

First, think through how much you will want to invest, and from where it will be best to get funds. What types of funding, rates and sources are available to you? The economy will always impact planning. Next, look at the skills of your staff and where you need to build or cross-train. How solid is your team, and how well-equipped are they to take you into the future? Finally, examine your competitors – not just the current ones, but those forming via M&A. How are they gaining traction? Do they

“Preparing your company should be an ongoing activity. Business will continue to change, and you'll need to adjust accordingly”

have the financial power to usurp your business, as private equity may? Regardless of whom you compete with, it's imperative to understand their trajectory so you can decide how best to carve out your advantage.

3. Your funding plans and opportunities – If your best use of new money is to retire to Florida, then by all means do so. But if you're looking to stay, you need to assess your financial opportunities. Ask yourself two questions: 1) What would be the single most lucrative addition to your company – equipment, acquisition, systems, capabilities? And 2) Do you have the talent to execute it? Aligning your funds in this way will ensure your greatest success.

At the core, capital expenditures (like M&A) are about growth and change. While entrepreneurs often talk about industry revolutions, most find it difficult to adapt to new dynamics. But keep in mind that if you've run your business for 10 years or more, you've already adapted to some of the greatest and most dramatic changes ever seen.

4. Your targets and timelines – The final decision about your business is up to you. You've reviewed what it will take to thrive. Now, you need to set goals and schedules for their accomplishment. Determine your best pathways, and select the people, processes, and procedures to succeed. Don't be afraid of adding, subtracting, augmenting or supplementing what's needed.

We tell our clients 'You sell your business only once'. You must make the best deal at the time it's presented. It's the same idea when you're keeping it. Do what you can to ensure your prosperity. What you have today may not be what you have tomorrow. Strategize for your future, and enlist an advisor to help you unlock every opportunity. Buy, sell, merge or stay in place. There is abundant opportunity to capitalize on the plan that fits you best.



Bob Cronin is managing partner of The Open Approach, an M&A consultancy focused exclusively on the world of print. To learn more, visit www.theopenapproach.net, email bobcronin@aol.com, or call (001) 630 323 9700



Kuldip Goel, president of the Label Manufacturers' Association of India (LMAI), started his printing journey in 1976 at the tender age of 14. Braving through many hardships and financial turmoil, Goel invested in his first label printing machine in 1995. There has been no looking back ever since. His company, Anygraphics, is the only Indian converter to have received four World Label Awards, seven Fespa Gold Awards and more than 60 LMAI National Awards for excellence in label printing. Interview by Aakriti Agarwal

Q&A

Labels & Labeling (L&L): Congratulations to your company for winning in the L9 World Label Awards for the fourth time. What was the job that won the award?

Kuldip Goel (KG): Anygraphics won the award in the screen printing category. The quantity of this label that we print is about 5,000. Each label is passed four times on the press with accurate registration. It is impossible to tell that it has been passed multiple times on the press even when you look at it with an eye glass. We used thick UV and then glitter varnish on this label.

L&L: What goals do you want to achieve during your tenure as president of LMAI?

KG: I understand the huge responsibility that comes with being a president of LMAI. We need to grow the label industry in India. The association has become a platform for suppliers and printers to interact and exchange ideas. We are working towards making this communication stronger so LMAI members can discuss and solve their problems at this platform.

We are trying to bring a wave of change by introducing more frequent interaction between printers and brand owners as well. This will enable printers to understand brand owners' requirements better. Traditionally, we have hosted many technical and networking sessions but we received overwhelming response for our first event organized with brand owners and printers.

L&L: How is LMAI enabling better communication among its members?

KG: We found that most label printers don't end up using all their labelstock, inks and other products. Unused material blocks cash flow and eventually becomes waste because most label material, for example, has to be used within a certain time frame. So, it's not only an added cost to the printer but also results in waste that goes to landfill and puts unnecessary pressure on environment.

Therefore, LMAI will soon launch a mobile application called Advantage for its printer and supplier members. Any printer can log



Kuldip Goel with his family

“LMAI will soon launch a mobile application called Advantage. A printer can log in to the portal and put details of products they want to sell. Another member who may need that product can click on it and confirm the quantity required”

in to the portal and put details of products they want to sell. Another printer member who may need that product can just click on it and confirm the quantity required. The requirement is sent to all members by email. This system will help them know the availability of material but they will have to check quality at their end. We estimate

that labelstock worth more than 6 crore INR (US\$88,800) goes to waste every year in India. It will be an achievement if we can save some percentage of it and put it to good use by enabling better communication among printer members. It will also be cheaper to buy leftover material from the portal so it may come as a relief to some small and medium size printers in times of rising raw material prices.

In the first phase, we will have only label material to be sold on the portal but eventually, other products such as ink, foils, UPS, stabilizers and even second-hand label printing machinery will be added. If any printer decides to upgrade technology and sell old equipment, the portal will serve as one of the platforms. It is an advantage for machine supplier members as well because it is in their interest to service the second-hand machines sold on the portal if they want to see their machine running.

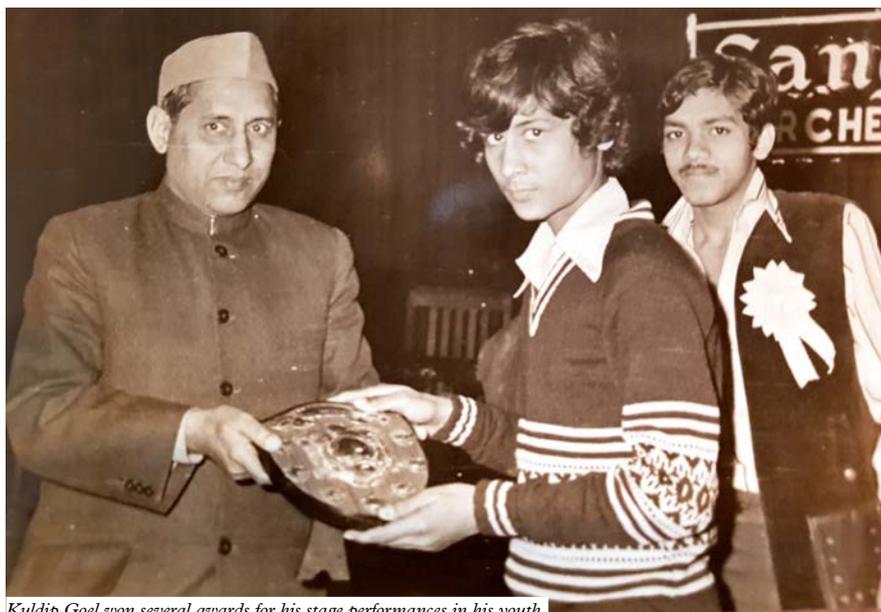
L&L: What other steps has LMAI taken under your leadership to protect the environment?

KG: LMAI has started tree plantation initiative as a first step to protect the environment. My aim is to involve every LMAI member across the country in this activity. Everyone can plant and water trees in their regions and help the next generation in their own small way. At my company, Anygraphics, we have a water-harvesting plant and we intend to use solar panels for generating electricity, but that needs more space. I am trying to lead the industry by example.

The label industry is not very environmentally friendly because of the nature of the product we manufacture, so we must help make a better environment in some other way. It is not possible to organize



The LMAI planted more than 500 trees in Noida



Kuldip Goel won several awards for his stage performances in his youth

“India has one of the lowest per capita label consumptions in the world, so the opportunity is huge. We must not get into price war and instead focus on increasing the market size by making a niche and offering value addition to the customer”

business events, awards, networking sessions, etc to keep everyone connected regularly. However, with an initiative that can be driven independently in each city, all members can contribute towards one goal.

L&L: How many trees have you planted in your city?

KG: We have planted more than 500 saplings and we follow up with caretakers to ensure they grow and are nurtured. Often plants don't last too long because they are not taken care of. We have, therefore, planted these trees in cricket grounds across Noida where there are caretakers to water them. We even bought water pipes for them and are motivating the caretakers with an award if they help us with growing these trees.

L&L: Is there any reward, as a motivation, for printers if they make an effort to go green?

KG: LMAI has decided to introduce the Green Sustainability Awards at the LMAI Awards night. Any label printer making an effort to save the environment will be recognized and awarded. We are also trying to create some value for suppliers as they sponsor the event

and don't get enough recognition at the awards night. We will try to place hoardings and banners to give better visibility to them.

L&L: What is your take on mergers and acquisitions in the label industry?

KG: Big multinational companies bring in a lot of experience and professionalism in the market, so it is a good step. However, they get much better price on raw material and other products because of high volumes they purchase globally, thus improving their margins. This could affect small and medium size printers so they need to buckle up and work on improving their efficiencies to remain profitable.

L&L: What advice would you give to Indian label printers?

KG: The need of the hour is to increase the market size instead of fighting for the same pie. Initiate the shift from wet-glue to pressure-sensitive labels. India has one of the

LMAI to host first L9 meeting in India

LMAI will host the first L9 meeting ahead of Labelexpo India in November. It will be a four-day event that will be attended by the global label associations that are part of L9. Members will share regional issues and developments in the global industry to promote better label industry growth worldwide. LMAI intends to take delegates to visit an Indian label printing company as well as a product manufacturing factory. The L9 will, for the first time, also attend the LMAI Awards event that is hosted during Labelexpo India.

lowest per capita label consumptions in the world, so the opportunity is huge. We must not get into price war and instead focus on increasing the market size by making a niche and offering value addition to the customer.

Most brand owners don't even know what label printers are capable of offering them. We need to engage in educating brand owners so they see value in the labels we produce. Increase the price of labels by providing value addition to the brand owner so it benefits them as well.

L&L: What are some of your hobbies outside the industry?

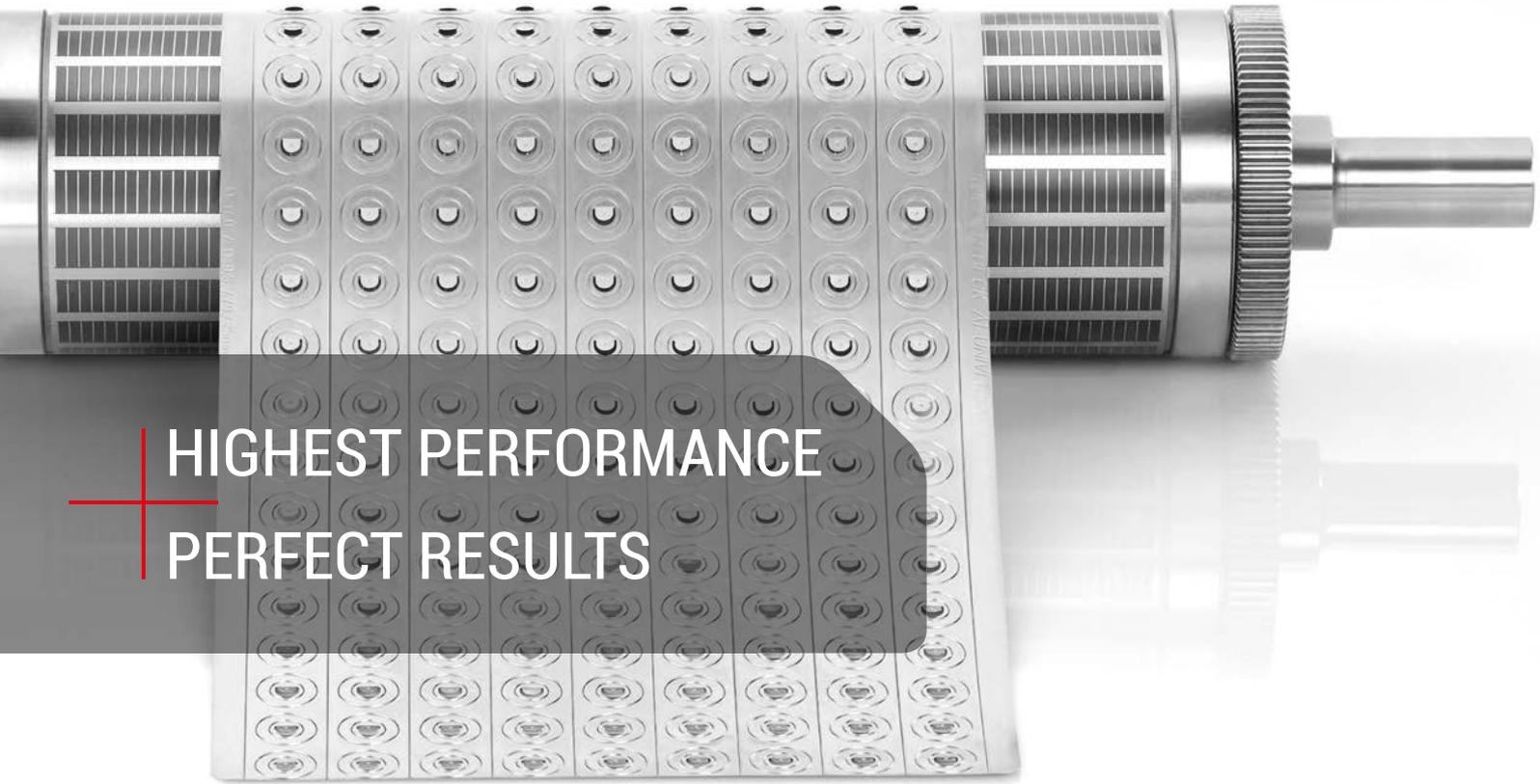
KG: I have always enjoyed writing poetry. As a youngster, I also used to participate in debate competitions and have won several prizes. Designing is one my passions too, which has been very useful in my professional life as well. I enjoy spending time with family and friends the most.



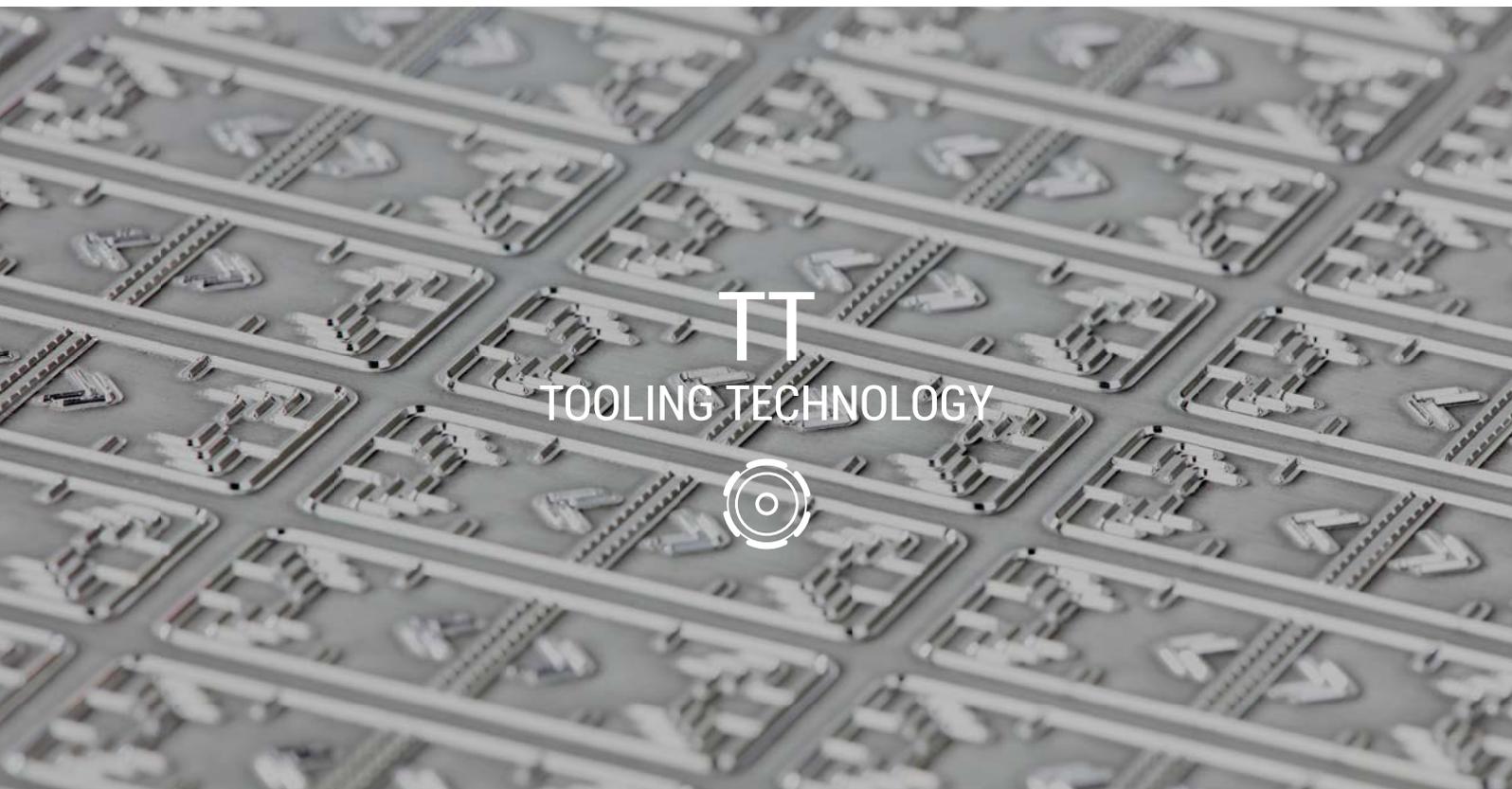
Labelexpo India takes place on November 22-25. www.labelexpo-india.com



Kuldip Goel performing on the stage in his school days



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Coating your success

Huhtamaki PPL acquires Indian operations of Ajanta Packaging

Chandan Khanna, MD of Ajanta Packaging, discusses recent developments in India and the growing market in Southeast Asia. Aakriti Agarwal reports

Huhtamaki Paper Products has acquired the Indian operations of Ajanta Packaging at an enterprise valuation of 1003 million INR (\$16 million USD), on a cash-free, debt free basis. This includes Ajanta's two plants in India, in Baddi (north India) and Daman (west India).

The Indian multinational label printing company, run by Chandan Khanna, has a total of five plants including two each in India and the Middle East, and one in Southeast Asia. Khanna will continue to run independently the company's plants in other countries while helping Huhtamaki in India for its operations in that country.

The flagship unit of Ajanta Packaging in Baddi houses two MPS and two Nilpeter presses as well as an Iwasaki intermittent offset press alongside finishing equipment from Grafotronic and Prati. The factory in Daman houses similar machines.

The Indian business of the company grew by about 10 percent in 2017-18 fiscal. 'We maintained a healthy growth of our company by bringing in more efficiencies, improving our production and getting better systems in place,' Khanna says. 'Though the prices are gradually going down, Ajanta Packaging continues to enjoy good business in the country as the focus is on high quality, impeccable service and best production plants with good manufacturing practices.'

Ajanta Packaging started business in Daman in 2000 with an Iwasaki waterless offset label press and opened its second plant in Baddi in 2006, gradually growing its footprint in India. With the dream of making it India's first multinational label printing company, Khanna started the first plant outside the country in

Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, in 2008, which was then followed by another unit UAE in 2012 and then in Thailand in 2014.

Thailand

Ajanta Packaging prints PS, wet-glue and in-mold labels at its Thailand plant and plans to start printing shrink sleeves soon. This unit now employs 45 people.

It houses one 6-color Iwasaki intermittent offset press, a 7-color Nilpeter MO offset press and a new 11-color Nilpeter FB330S flexo press with a gravure unit installed in 2017. Alongside it also runs an in-mold label die-cutting machine from Iwasaki and two Grafotronic slitting and inspection machines, as well as a hot foil stamping unit from SPGPrints.

'Though Ajanta Packaging excels in printing labels for FMCG, home and personal care segments, we are catering to a wider segment of industries in this market,' says Khanna.

'Thailand is a mature market and still growing, but it is also challenging to do business here because we compete with not only good local Thai players but also many multinational companies operating in the market. One needs to have good infrastructure and high quality to be able to succeed.

'It is tough to get low hanging fruit, so we are focusing on innovative labels that cannot be printed by many converters in the region. We are now enjoying good growth here and are excited about our Thai venture as we are catering to new segments and have been accepted as an innovative company. Our quality and innovation capabilities are appreciated in the market, and our turnaround time is one of the best.'

Indicating consumer habits in Thailand that makes the country a lucrative market, Khanna explains that consumers like to have packaged goods because they are mostly working couples who don't cook at home. 'As a result, a lot of packaged food is sold in the market. Packaged food is also exported from Thailand to neighboring countries including Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia.

'In addition, big multinationals such as Procter & Gamble and Hindustan Unilever, among others, have production centers here to cater to the entire Southeast Asian region. These companies manufacture popular products such as shampoo and conditioners,

"We maintained a healthy growth of our company by bringing in more efficiencies, improving our production and getting better systems in place"

which are exported to different countries in the region. Personal care is a huge and growing segment in Thailand.

'Another interesting segment is that of small and medium enterprises that manufacture goods with locally produced products. For instance, if coconuts are grown in an area, then local manufacturers are encouraged by the Thai government to use coconuts to make a variety of products that can be sold in the market. The quantity of these product is small but the variants are many. These products are packaged and labeled before they are sold in the local market. Therefore, Thailand is a mature market and label industry here is big and growing.'

Middle East

Another venture growing steadily is the factory in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, which houses six Iwasaki presses and a Nilpeter FB3300S flexo press. The company prints pressure-sensitive, wet-glue and in-mold labels at this site. It has also recently started printing shrink sleeves in Sharjah, to offer its customers a wider range of services, but is not directly competing in the segment.

Locking a turnover of 175 crore INR (\$26 million USD) in 2016-17 fiscal, the Ajanta Packaging Group was growing at 10 to 15 percent year-on-year. The business in Thailand, starting from a small base, grew 20 percent in 2017, and the Sharjah operation grows by five percent a year. Khanna expects all his plants to eventually grow at a steady 10 percent.

Following the acquisition, Ajanta Packaging International is investing in a new venture in Egypt in 2018-19, and expansion of its operations in Southeast Asia is also on the horizon.



Ajanta Packaging's managing director Chandan Khanna (right) with his core team at the Thai unit



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Winemaker sees success with augmented reality

Treasury Wine Estates, an Australian-based winemaker, is seeing success with the use of augmented reality on its labels. Chelsea McDougall reports

Labels historically have been the vehicle for brands to communicate directly with consumers at the point of purchase. An Australian-based wine brand is learning that with augmented reality, the company has a new way of engaging with buyers.

Treasury Wine Estates has launched an augmented reality strategy across five wines in its portfolio. The company began playing with augmented reality on its 19 Crimes wine brand, and quickly realized AR's boundless potential. The labels for 19 Crimes feature different British prisoners who, according to the story line, were banished to Australia for committing one of the 19 crimes. The story in itself was attractive to consumers, but Treasury Winery Estates took it a step further.

The winemaker developed a smartphone app, Living Wine Labels, which allows users to watch the labels come alive. Consumers download the app and point the camera at the label, and one of the criminals appears on the phone screen and tells the story of their crimes.

'Brands are asking: "how can I scream at the audience and elevate myself above that sea of sameness?"' says Andrew Floor, VP of brand and digital marketing at Treasury Wine Estates. 'Consumers are hungry for stories. The reason 19 Crimes has been so successful is because as a brand it's built on authentic, genuine and interesting stories. 'One of the things we discovered through augmented reality is that it allows us to be a partner and guide to our shoppers. I think AR for some people is a gimmick. For us it's so much more than that.'

Benefits realized

With 19 Crimes, Treasury Wine Estates was

"19 Crimes is a brand that has been absolutely on fire. There is no doubt augmented reality played a key role in fueling that growth"

quick to learn the benefits of an augmented reality strategy. The winemaker was able to improve communication and deepen consumer engagement. Globally, brands are also realizing the potential of augmented reality, as the overall market is expected to reach \$117.4bn USD by 2022, according to Forbes. Marketers who adopt augmented reality as part of an omni-channel packaging campaign are also seeing the perks: they're able to better facilitate personalization, they're able to create an emotional and interactive connection with customers, and they're able to get a clearer picture of who's buying their product and where.

For 19 Crimes wine, the buzzworthy labels are creating a league of brand evangelists. The Living Wine Labels app has been downloaded more than a million times and has a 4.2-star rating on iTunes. The wine is also getting attention in other areas. Market Watch named 19 Crimes the 2017 Wine Brand of the Year.

19 Crimes is one of the fastest-growing brands in Treasury Wine Estates' portfolio. The company has shipped more than one million cases and grew 60 percent in volume sales and 70 percent in value.

'19 Crimes is a brand that has been

absolutely on fire,' Floor says. 'There is no doubt augmented reality played a key role in fueling that growth. The reaction from consumers have been nothing less than astounding.'

Treasury Winery Estates has since expanded to other wine labels in its portfolio and is working to enhance the AR experience on established brands. Augmented reality can be found on TWE's The Walking Dead, Beringer Bros, Chateau St Jean and Gentleman's Collection wines.



Matua uses thermochromic inks on its wine label to tell optimum drinking temperature

Treasury Wine Estates plays with thermochromic inks

Treasury Wine Estates launched new labels for its Matua wine brand featuring thermochromic inks that tell its drinkers when the wine has reached optimal drinking temperature.

Matua released its sauvignon blanc and rosé with labels that activate as a bottle is chilled to optimal drinking temperature. When it's time to drink, the label's features changing color.

Each label is calibrated according to its corresponding varietal: sauvignon blanc and rosé, for example, are at their aromatic and lively best at 45/46 deg F. When chilled, the label retains its color for about 45 minutes, before returning to the initial label color. Chill it again and the label will again change color. Treasury Wine Estates worked with Chromatic Technologies for the ink technology. The labels were produced by CCL.



19 Crimes was named Wine Brand of the Year by Market Watch



Treasury Wine Estates VP of brand and digital marketing Andrew Floor will speak at Labelexpo Americas in a session on smart and connected packaging. www.labelexpo-americas.com



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TLMI introduces 4.0

TLMI hosted its annual Converter Meeting in March in San Diego, California, as the organization launched TLMI 4.0.
Chelsea McDougall reports

TLM I greeted guests to its yearly converter meeting with what the North American tag and label association is calling 'TLMI 4.0.'

Dan Muenzer, a one-time TLMI member who's now serving at the helm of the association, unveiled a new website and initiatives designed to increase the value and services companies receive from their TLMI membership. Behind a cleaner and more sophisticated looking website and fresh logo, the association is building a portal where members can interact and learn from one another.

Muenzer said the portal can help guide its converter members through industry changes such as increased digital adoption, an aging workforce and heightened environmental pressures.

'The whole industry is changing,' Muenzer said. 'This is forcing TLMI to evolve and help our membership navigate this landscape.'

The new portal will be a resource for converter and supplier members, functioning as an online repository for TLMI reports, meeting presentations, archives, intelligence and other resources. The portal will also serve as a private social network for members to manage their profiles, form communities, and connect with peers and colleagues.

'The secret to making that work is member engagement,' Muenzer said.

Converter panel

The event continued over two days in San Diego, California, where a panel of label converters was a highlight of the conference sessions. Panelists were Lori Campbell of The Label Printers; Greg Jackson of Columbine Label; John Wynne of Fortis Solutions and John Attayek of Inovar Packaging Group. Each offered a different outlook on leadership and the challenges facing their companies.

Both Fortis Solutions and Inovar Packaging in recent years have grown significantly by acquisitions. Both CEOs explained their

processes in building synergy among new employees and across locations.

Wynne of Fortis Solutions Group said being a leader means being a good listener. When acquisitions occur, he said, 'We have to understand what made their company great.'

Attayek of Inovar Packaging has a similar approach. To build trust with new employees through acquisitions, he gathers them around a table. 'We've bought a lot of pizza over the years. Trust is built on relationships. Dress down, relate, engage, make it more familial.'

Above all else, the panel showed that even leaders of successful companies are not immune to struggles. The Label Printers' Campbell said as the leader of her company it's important that she engage with employees. 'I have to work hard on engaging with people on a regular basis,' she said. 'It's taken me a long time to realize that has an impact on people. Now I have to be really conscious to go through the plant, through the office with my eyes open and head up.'

Jackson, of Columbine Label, doesn't dwell on losses, but rather looks at them as opportunities. He said: 'If I'm not going to get the sale, I'm going to at least get the lesson.'

In addition to the panel discussion, the converter meeting hosted motivational speakers who addressed the meeting's theme: 'Leadership = Vision + Values + Fortitude.' Speakers included Ryan Estis, who spoke on embracing change; Nathan Jamail, whose talk focused on creating a 'coaching culture'; Dr JP Pawliw-Fry, who offered a scientific approach to leadership; and economist Alan Beaulieu, who provided insight into future economic trends.

TLMI member winners of the L9 World Label Awards were also announced at event and Eugene Singer awards for best-managed companies were honored at an awards banquet (see boxout).



To view TLMI's new website and member portal, visit www.tlmi.com

TLMI names Eugene Singer award; winners of L9 World Label contest

Winners of the Eugene Singer Award for Excellence were announced at the converter meeting. The award recognizes excellence in business management measured and defined by an established set of growth and profitability ratios through participation in the TLMI ratio study. **The winners were:**

- Precision Label, based in Grandville, Michigan, won in the small company category for the second time.
- Digital Label Solutions, based in Yorba Linda, California, won in the mid-range company category. This is the company's fourth time winning the Eugene Singer award.
- The Label Printers, from Aurora, Illinois, won in the medium company category. This is The Label Printers' ninth consecutive year winning the Eugene Singer Award.
- Consolidated Label, in Sanford, Florida, won in the large company category. This was Consolidated Label's sixteenth consecutive year winning the award. Also at the meeting, it was announced that five converter member companies have won World Label Awards. The L9 World Label Awards (WLA) competition is judged by an international panel of judges who represent each of the participating L9 member associations. The winners were:
- Flexo line/screen – Label Impressions, for 'Deva Curl Buildup Buster'
- Combination line/screen – McDowell Label & Screen Printing, for 'Performance Nutrition'
- Combination wine/spirits – Multi-Color Corporation, for 'Octopoda Cabernet Wine'
- Digital printing – Digital Label Solutions for 'KIA –The Extra Mile'
- Digital wine/spirits – Syracuse Label & Surround Printing, for 'Ryze Vodka'



TLMI hosted a converter meeting at the Fairmont Grand Del Mar in San Diego, California



TLMI members participated in a converter panel. From left Lori Campbell, Greg Jackson, John Attayek, John Wynne, Charlie MacLean

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Focus showcases first UV LED press

Focus Label Machinery has 'stepped up a level' as it unveils a range of new developments and partnerships – including a first venture into UV LED. Andy Thomas reports

Over two days, Focus Label Machinery opened its production and showroom facilities in Nottingham, UK, recently to showcase new technology and partnerships.

The headline news was a demonstration of UV LED curing on an e-Flex servo press, with Phoseon TargetCure UV LED system fitted, including the white station. The press was demonstrated running at 150m/min.

The job also included a high-build varnish from Flint Group, applied using specially selected anilox rolls supplied by Cheshire Anilox Technology.

The UV LED-equipped e-Flex is a test bed for Focus and for Phoseon, which supplied the UV LED systems and Flint Group, which provided the inks. Testing of low migration (LM) UV LED inks will be a particular focus.

'The knowhow we gain will allow us to give our customers guidance in investment costs and overall lifetime costs, savings and benefits using LED technology,' said Antony Cotton, sales manager at Focus.

The lamps are air-cooled, meaning there is none of the ducting or chiller units associated with water-cooled lamps. Being fully self-contained, retrofitting is much easier.

'The lamp becomes part of the fabric of the press, as you are not continually having to replace lamps as with an arc-UV lamp,' said Rob Karsten, Phoseon's regional director EMEA, who was on hand to talk about the TargetCure UV LED system fitted to the e-Flex.

A striking feature of the UV LED-equipped print stations was the lack of noise, which Karsten puts down to the advanced thermal management of the TargetCure system. 'With TargetCure the lamp temperature remains stable across all ambient operating temperatures and continually monitors the lamp's efficiency, adjusting output over the lamp's lifetime.' Karsten estimates LED lamp life with TargetCure at around 20,000 hours.

Thermal stability translates into better process control, 'which makes it easier to control curing on LM UV LED inks,' according to Karsten.

Barry Deri, UK-based technical sales manager at Flint Group Narrow Web, was equally enthusiastic on the future of LM UV LED inks, particularly when curing more

"The knowhow we gain will allow us to give our customers guidance in investment costs and overall lifetime costs, savings and benefits using LED technology"

opaque colors like whites at full press speeds. 'And using UV LED on whites you don't get an "orange peel" effect as you sometimes can with arc-UV.' The Focus e-Flex press was also fitted with chill rolls. Along with the low heat output UV LED lamps, this extends the press' substrate capabilities to heat-sensitive unsupported films.

Digital imaging

Focus showed its d-Flex hybrid digital-flexo press for the first time with Konica Minolta's latest KM1800i printheads, with digital print engines supplied and integrated by Cambridge, UK-based Industrial Inkjet (IJ).

The KM1800i images at 600dpi with a 3.5 picoliter drop size and uses the 'independent' firing technology already well proven in the 1024i series.

IJ says the heads are suitable for use with recirculating ink systems for jetting white or

Waste handling

Another partnership unveiled was with waste handling specialist Lundberg, with demonstrations of the WasteTech 80 'all-in-one' unit, which can capture, cut and collect edge trim waste ready for baling and collection.

metallic inks. The heads can be used in binary or grayscale (3bit) modes.

Focus also unveiled new partnerships to enhance the d-Flex's digital front end and workflow integration. The Hybrid 'Pacz' software now allows operators to adjust colors more easily on the press, without going back to pre-press, and also to better manage workflow integration.

Both inkjet and UV LED are now available options on all Focus servo-driven presses, including their latest Proflex and Reflex models, as well as the full servo e-Flex.

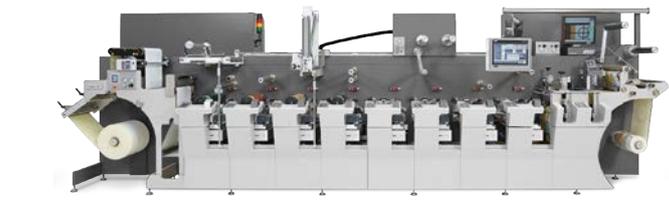
The overall impression of label converters at the event interviewed by L&L is that with these developments and partnerships, Focus Label has 'stepped up a level' in terms of offering state-of-the-art systems with a strong focus on innovation.



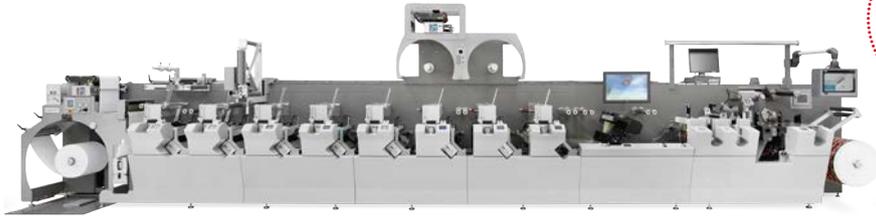
To learn more about UV LED ink systems vs arc systems, see the forthcoming *Label Academy* book *Inks and Coatings*. www.label-academy.com



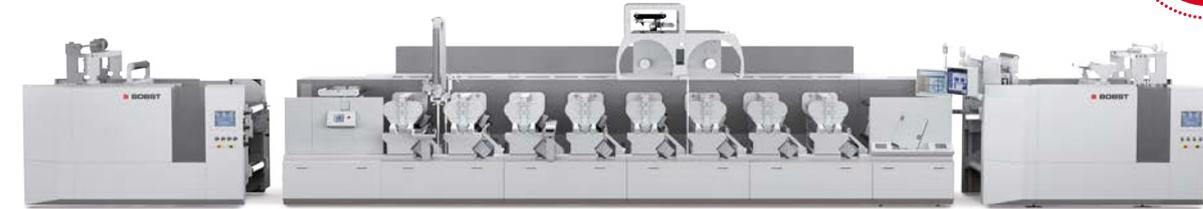
Focus Label Machinery hosted an open house at its facility in Nottingham, UK



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RFID plus digital gives eAgile the edge

The US converter has combined RFID/NFC with HP Indigo print to deliver multiple benefits to brands and consumers. Andy Thomas reports

eAgile has combined a long legacy of RFID expertise with secure digital print using the latest HP Indigo 6900 press to deliver multiple benefits to pharmaceuticals and high value consumer goods brands, including authentication, supply chain visibility and consumer interaction.

'With the expansion of on-line purchasing, international distribution models and an increasingly savvy counterfeit industry, there are limited ways to affordably police your brand at all levels and in all places,' says eAgile president Peter Phaneuf. 'By providing an effective authentication process powered by a smartphone, nearly everyone will have access to safe and secure goods.'

eAgile calls this total offering eLink.

'The real breakthrough is that label technology is now part of the Internet of Things,' says eAgile CEO Gary Burns. 'The amount of value and benefits the technology provides is incredible.'

Why is this level of protection required?

'Up to now people thought serialization would combat counterfeiting,' explains Burns. 'But the bad guys can figure and use the serialization numbers easily and make the item look even more authentic, so it gives you a false sense of security. When you print a visible unique number on something it can make it easier to clone and, if cloned, the existing systems will incorrectly validate a fake product as authentic, so everyone in the supply chain, including the end consumer, relies on a flawed system.'

"For brand owners we solve a number of core problems: we provide a data rich environment where we can assure visibility through the supply chain; we can allow marketers to see where things are by country and identify fast moving products; we provide product authentication; and we enable direct engagement with the final customer"

The eLink Label system provides complete visibility through the supply chain including delivery to the customer, and allows brands to spot where counterfeit products are being slipped in, or where diversion is happening.

But eLink goes much further than simply securing brands' supply chains, as Gary Burns explains: 'For brand owners we solve a number of core problems: we provide a data rich environment where we can assure visibility through the supply chain; we can allow marketers to see where things are by country and identify fast moving products; we provide product authentication; and we enable direct engagement with the final customer.'

Burns says RFID has to provide multiple functions to realize true value while

Company background

eAgile was founded in 2004 as an RFID inlay manufacturer. The company was purchased by Avery Dennison in 2006 and eAgile RF engineers helped commercialize the company's RFID technology for the retail sector.

In 2009 it became apparent that healthcare provided a value proposition for RFID – getting the right dosage to the right patient at the right time. This is more complex than it seems, because hospitals must also take into account expiration dates for each drug.

So that year the company 'budded off' to become eAgile and acquired a healthcare printing company to complete its service offering.

eAgile went on to become a leader in pharmaceutical product tagging, then diversifying into brand protecting in the OTC (over the counter) sector.

remaining easy to use.

'We focus on meeting whichever is the brand's most pressing issue – authentication for example – then design the technology to do other things. So you can have customer engagement and product security and supply chain management on the same chip. This added functionality does not add substantially to the cost of the tag. The final result is a direct measurable sales uplift



HP Indigo 6900 press with Pack Ready for Labels



Peter Phaneuf, eAgile president

provided by the smartphone engagement that can actually finance the whole project.'

A real world example is an NFC-enabled cap label on vitamin bottles, which not only provides point of use authentication, but also promotes compliance through a pill reminder app which sits on a patient's smart phone or smart watch.

'We can add additional functionality, like letting the client validate directly with the manufacturer that the product is authentic, within expiry date and or encouraging a reorder. Or we can send the consumer to an appropriate page on the brand's website where they can obtain more information, all with a tap on the label.'

This is where the Internet of Things (IoT) and e-commerce join the party, allowing an RFID/NFC enabled product to communicate with an array of brand products and services.

'The object just needs to say "here I am and do you want to interact with me" and you opt in. This is a frictionless buy because you've been moved so far through the system that you have confidence you are dealing with a trusted brand, the product is legitimate and it will arrive.

For us it is about making sure our data flow fits into the brands or retailer.'

eAgile can deliver combinations of RFID and NFC to combine near and far fields. The far field RFID would read items on a pallet, for example, while the near field provides direct interaction once the product reaches the store and end consumer.

The future will also see sensors being added to eLink labels, enabling new forms of interaction.

Importance of print

Despite its wide-ranging expertise in RFID/IoT, print remains center stage at eAgile. 'The Internet of Things requires print,' says Gary Burns. 'We have



Gary Burns, CEO of eAgile

to let end customers know that the product will work for them and how to engage with it. You also need to remember that not everyone will have a smart phone to interact with NFC or scan a QR code. Print technology also drives AR (augmented reality) applications which are becoming increasingly popular.'

Burns points out that the inlay often has to be delivered as part of a highly decorated label – for example with high-end wines and spirits, which could also involve embossing, hot stamping and other decorative effects.

'And security printing directly supports the chip-based elements of eLink. Digital watermarks, holograms, guilloches, micro text or barcodes printed with invisible inks, or just very

Choosing the HP Indigo 6900

eAgile was the first company in the world to buy the new HP Indigo 6900 digital press. Two factors drove the decision: the new in-line priming unit, Pack Ready for Labels, which gives the print more durability without the need for lamination; and the availability of a more powerful RIP.

The power to process large amounts of data in real time comes from the new digital front end (DFE), HP Production Pro for Indigo Labels & Packaging, launched at Labelexpo Europe (see interview on page 79).

'This is the first machine that approaches the speed we need to keep up with all the data that we require,' explained Gary Burns. 'Up to that point we would have needed multiple HP machines to handle our data throughput, which would have been crazy. We tried to overload the press with data during trials but could not.'

Variable data per label might include multiple color images and two or more security elements.

The print quality of the HP 6900 also allows eAgile to sell directly into consumer product markets, particularly where accurate brand colors are required.

small text buried in the design.'

Having access to a high quality digital press like the HP 6900 also allows brand owners to quickly change their security strategy 'to beat the bad guys who think they have figured things out.'

Production process

The eLink label production line starts with HP Indigo 6900. The printed label with the unique number and barcode are joined with an RFID inlay. In this process all the printed serialized data is synchronized with the information stored on the chip.

All RFID/NFC chips are tested before entering the print process.

If a defective chip is detected the job stops, the label is removed and the web spliced back together. 'One challenge, which we have overcome, is to ensure the serial number on that label has not been skipped or duplicated,' says Gary Burns. 'The larger challenge is that as the product leaves our facility the data on the label will have to be available to be accessed in real time to all participants in the supply chain, including the end consumer. This would make it challenging for a traditional printer without IT / data storage capabilities.'



For more details on the new HP Indigo 6900 RIP, see page 79

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Dscoop talks flexible packaging

Flexible packaging was a key discussion point at Dscoop North America. Chelsea McDougall reports

Flexible packaging was a popular topic of conversation among the label printers at Dscoop North America, an HP Indigo user's event held March 25 to 27, in Dallas, Texas.

Among the many HP Indigo machines on display, the HP Indigo 20000 – used to digitally print flexible packaging – drew much attention from label converters.

This theme was also evident during the three-day event's conference sessions, many of which were aimed directly at label printers looking to join this ever-growing market.

Flexible packaging is being called the fastest-growing print segment, with the global market reaching US\$32.4bn in 2016. It's expected to grow at a rate of 5.2 percent to US\$41.6bn by 2020.

In the US it is a US\$23.5bn market, dominated by a handful of key players, in contrast to the highly fragmented label market. There are an estimated 420 flexible packaging converters in the US, compared to 2,200 label converters.

Still, digital flexible packaging is a relatively new phenomenon and makes up only about 1 to 2 percent of total volume, but Ralph Giammarco from S-One Labels and Packaging says there's a shift taking place. As run sizes and lead-time demands from customers are both shrinking and SKUs are growing, digital printing presents an opportunity for label converters to

expand to new markets.

'Digital changes quite a few things,' Giammarco said. 'When you think of the flexibility of digital, it attacks that old mindset, and now all of a sudden we can do custom runs and do things we can never do before and we can do it a lot shorter time frame.'

“It never made sense for us to buy a Ferrari and hook a tractor to it to take it around the race track. We wanted to get to market quickly and solventless lamination made the most sense”

Research has shown that the jobs with the shortest run sizes are in pouches of any kind, as well as single serve and one-dose packs and sachets. These are key areas that narrow web converters can enter in flexible packaging.

A panel of peers

A panel session featured two flexible packaging converters who are making a splash in the market. First, there was ePac, which has been making headlines with its rapid-fire expansion. Also speaking was Kala, a label converter which rebranded from Flex Tech, and is having an exceptional run in the flexible packing market.

ePac, as reported in issue 2 of L&L, has purchased 10 HP Indigo 20000 presses that will be deployed across the US.

For ePac, digital printing has opened up a whole new range of customers who never had a solution for short-run orders. ePac's standard lead time for stand-up pouches is 10 business days; it's five for shipping roll stock. Traditionally, lead times on flexible packaging have hovered around 42 days.

HP presents latest Inkspiration Americas Awards

At Dscoop, HP revealed the winners in its third annual Inkspiration Americas Awards program, recognizing innovative brand experiences produced with HP digital printing technology.

Winning label and packaging companies included Brazil's Indemetal Gráficos and Red Pepper Comunicación, and US companies Hammer Packaging and Digital Label Solutions. Indemetal Gráficos won in the 'Spirits' category, where Etimex claimed an honorable mention. Fellow Mexico-based company Red Pepper Comunicación won in the 'Home, Sports and Recreation' category. The 'Health, Beauty and Fashion' category winner was GLS/Next Precision Marketing, with Hammer Packaging claiming the top prize in 'Food and Beverage'. The People's Choice Award was awarded to Digital Label Solutions.

Kala had been producing flexible packaging on a 13-inch wide HP digital press for at least 15 years, and has since purchased a HP Indigo 20000 digital press that's allowed it to expand into new markets. Kala also recently purchased an HP Indigo 6900.

Kala was one of the first companies to invest in electron beam curing and also employs Karlville's Pack Ready lamination. 'It never made sense for us to buy a Ferrari and hook a tractor to it to take it around the race track,' said Kala's Ryan Chai. 'We wanted to get to market quickly and solventless lamination made the most sense.'

Labels & Labeling is hosting a free educational webinar on the flexible packaging market on Tuesday, June 12. Kala is a participant

To see what the audience was talking about at Dscoop, follow the hashtag #DScoopUP on Twitter



Indemetal Gráficos won in the 'Spirits' category



Hammer Packaging claims the top prize in 'Food and Beverage' category

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Color management key to success at St-Luc

St-Luc Labels & Packaging Group continues to grow, fueled by investment in digital printing and supported by color management. David Pittman reports

Family-run St-Luc Labels & Packaging Group has been on something of a growth spurt in recent times.

The progenitor of the group, St-Luc Labels & Packaging, has been added to with the addition of France-based folding carton specialist Microbox and Altrif Label in the Netherlands. The group is now able to offer labels, shrink sleeves, flexible packaging and folding cartons printed conventionally or digitally, coupled with an array of finishing techniques. These are offered to markets including food, cosmetics and chemicals. More recently, it has added Pharamlabel, a Dutch pharmaceutical label specialist, giving it presence in a new sector.

Dion Goderie, Altrif Label's COO, notes the company can meet every demand since joining the group in 2016. 'We can handle any assignment in the label and packaging field. Together with St-Luc, we offer offset, flexo, screen printing and digital printing. Our digital printing presses make us even more versatile. With our team of experts, we can produce short runs and short delivery times. We even print flexible packaging and shrink sleeves digitally.'

'Our "one-stop shopping" philosophy means a customer can source all their packaging products from one company,' continues Niko Dhondt, MD at St-Luc Labels & Packaging Group. He says many of the group's customers were using labels and flexible packaging, but struggled with order quantities and lead times for flexible packaging in the face of new designs, on-pack changes and destocking. With its expertise in digital label printing, the company decided to move into digitally printed flexible packaging and hasn't looked back.

'It has been very successful, and we have invested in a second machine to increase capacity,' says Dhondt. 'We choose a base laminate that makes it 100 percent food safe. As the ink is sandwiched between two layers, it can't migrate and we are able to produce on demand with product ready to go to market in four days.'

Color management

Speaking at this year's Xeikon Café in Belgium, Dhondt sees color management as central to the group's overall integration of different packaging products as a 'one-stop shop'. 'In every company we have an integrated pre-press department with color management. With color management we are able to produce folding boxes, flexible packaging and labels, printed conventionally or digitally, but which look the same.'

Nestling between labels and flexible packaging is shrink sleeves, which he describes as 'a fantastic product', although he notes: 'Color management is very difficult with shrink sleeves, as we are reverse printing but require the correct finished look when the sleeve is applied to the primary package.'

The situation is complicated further by the group's use of different digital technologies, dry toner and liquid toner. The group's digital press portfolio includes multiple HP Indigo and Xeikon machines, with big investments including the 100th HP Indigo 20000 installed globally and an HP Indigo 8000 at Altrif Label, which was also recently confirmed as a beta test customer for the Xeikon CX500. The wider width of this press – up to 520mm – suits the bigger chemical and oil labels that Altrif Label is commonly associated with.

Altrif adds Xeikon CX500

Altrif Label has become a beta test customer for the Xeikon CX500.

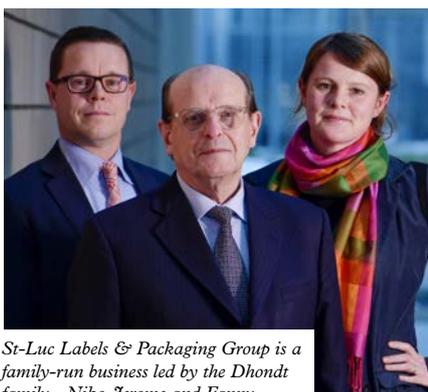
Dion Goderie, Altrif Label chief operating officer, commented: 'We need to stay ahead of the market, so it's always good to be the first to try a machine like this. The Xeikon CX500 is as fast as the Xeikon CX3, which we also use. But on top of the full rotary printing speed of 30m/min, the Xeikon CX500 has a unique web width of up to 520mm.'

'The Cheetah technology is great for printing on unconventional substrates. When it comes to opaque white, the dry toner technique beats liquid toner every time. Some of our customers are part of the chemical industry, so we do a lot of production on synthetic substrates. Especially in that case dry toner gives us the quality we need.'

'Altrif Label and Xeikon have a long history, as it was the first digital printing company in Benelux using a Xeikon web press. St-Luc is known as an HP Indigo house and with the takeover we suddenly had a Xeikon portfolio. They are completely different printing processes, but when we use color management we hardly see any difference,' says Dhondt. 'We often use a mix of different technologies to complete a project so use color management to ensure a uniform look, and to match conventional and digital print. Color management is also very important in regard to the substrate being printed on.'



See page 61 for more on Xeikon and its strategy with inkjet



St-Luc Labels & Packaging Group is a family-run business led by the Dhondt family - Niko, Jerome and Famy



Altrif Label joined St-Luc Labels & Packaging Group in 2016



Dion Goderie, Altrif Label chief operating officer



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A digital path for ProLabel

Miami-based ProLabel discusses its transition from conventional printer to an all-digital label shop. Chelsea McDougall reports

Ramon Fernandez jokes that shortly after his first digital presses were installed in his south Florida label shop, he threw his conventional assets in the lake. He's figuratively speaking, of course. Literally, Fernandez, owner of ProLabel, sold the press, but the point is he eschews conventional wisdom that digital press technology is a complementary – not a replacement – technology.

It should be noted that the greater majority of label printers still view digital presses as complements to existing conventional technology. Experts estimate that 90 percent of North American label jobs are printed today on conventional presses.

But Fernandez, an American of Cuban descent, has never been one to follow conventions. Along with his two flexographic presses, he threw away \$40,000 USD of ink and saw dollar signs in all the equipment he would eventually shed from ProLabel. 'At the time, I said to myself, 'I'm either really brave, or really stupid.'"

And now? 'The jury is still out,' he says, laughing. 'I chose this path and I'm not looking back.'

“At the time, I said to myself, ‘I’m either really brave, or really stupid’”

Never look back

Fernandez started ProLabel in 1995 after spending years in the label business at different companies. 'I really understood the product, I felt the comfortable selling what I sold and I believed in it. I knew labels really well, but the business side is where I really struggled,' he admits.

Even the best businessmen and women were limping along in the early 2000s. In 2010, the world was still reeling from the worst economic downturn since the great depression. Some businesses were folding, and nearly all were struggling. ProLabel was no exception.

On the verge of collapse, Fernandez needed a radical change. That's when he turned to digital printing, and in 2012, bought his first digital press with the Xeikon 3030. ProLabel has since installed a Domino N610i and Xeikon 5000 to round out its digital printing capabilities.

'The world was in the midst of the economic meltdown, and here's this little Cuban guy buying \$1 million USD worth of equipment. What the hell was I thinking? But we pulled it off,' he says.

At the time, ProLabel had three flexo presses, but Fernandez slowly shed his business down to one, which he kept until about two months

Xeikon turns 30

Xeikon is celebrating 30 years since its founding, the company announced earlier this year. Xeikon was founded toward the end of 1988, and Danny Mertens, corporate communications manager at the digital printing specialist, commented: 'It's quite special to be part of Xeikon, a company that was a key player in giving birth to the era of full-color digital printing and a company that continues to innovate as digital printing evolves.'

Industry expert Laurel Brunner noted: 'It's been 25 years since the Xeikon DCP1 and the Indigo E-Print 1000 were introduced at Ipx 1993. The Agfa Chromapress, based on the Xeikon engine with an Agfa front-end system, one of the first integrated digital production systems on the market, was also introduced at that time.'

into his digital press installation. And with that, ProLabel became an all-digital label company. 'It was the best decision I've ever made,' he said. 'I can't look back. I never second-guess myself. I don't talk about things I can't change.'

Everywhere Fernandez looked he saw dollar signs. He saw plate charges, and makereadies and downtime and shrinking run sizes and eventually he had enough of what he calls 'non-revenue producing time.' He admits, getting rid of his flexo assets was an unconventional move at the time, and even today. It was a choice that was met with some internal resistance. His finance, sales and production departments all fought him. 'I paid by bills and ate for a long time on flexo,' Fernandez said. 'But if you want to lead the orchestra, sometimes you have to turn your back to the crowd.'

Today, ProLabel has a Xeikon 3030 press and a Domino N610i. Finishing is completed on a GM DC 330, a custom-built 20-inch Aztech and Brotech CDF 330. A GM hot stamping machine and a GM Miniflex finisher are ProLabel's latest purchases. A digital workflow integrates Esko and LabelTraxx to track and streamline the production process.

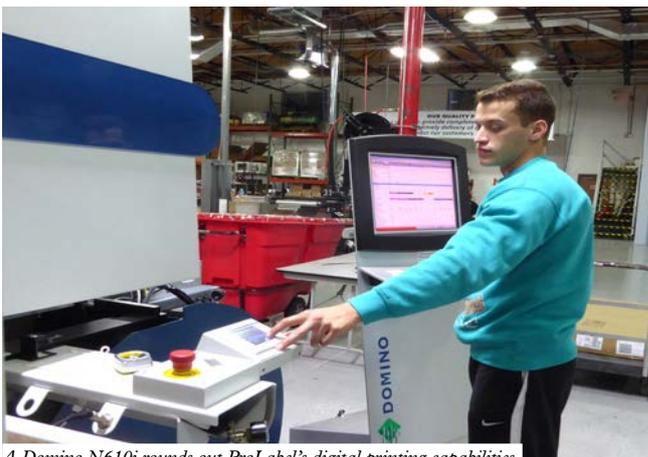
ProLabel's business is built on quick turnaround, short-run jobs in the food, beverage, nutraceutical and cosmetic markets. Many of its customers are in south Florida, as well as Latin America and the Caribbean. ProLabel has 15 employees and grossed \$3.2m USD in 2017, and is forecasted to grow 20 percent in 2018.



Ramon Fernandez, owner of ProLabel in Miami, Florida, stands by the Xeikon 3030 press that jumpstarted his foray into digital printing



ProLabel offered insight into the North American nutraceutical market in L&L issue 1, 2018



A Domino N610i rounds out ProLabel's digital printing capabilities

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Zeikon introduced the Panther press series in spring 2017 with the PX3000

Zeikon increases digital penetration

The digital printing specialist has set itself on the road to further growth with the addition of inkjet to its offer. David Pittman reports

After demonstrating its inkjet prowess in 2015 with Fusion, spring 2017 saw Zeikon's formal move into full color inkjet label printing with the introduction of the PX3000. This was followed by its acquisition of the Jetrion product portfolio from EFI, and the expansion of the Panther range with an entry-level model, PX2000.

These developments have established Zeikon as a major player in the UV inkjet label printing market, adding Jetrion's 230-strong install base to its customer list, in addition to the 10 Panther models now sold. Adding dry toner machines, Zeikon now has a total install base of over 700 label presses.

'If you look at Zeikon's position before inkjet, we were number two in the digital label printing market,' says Filip Weymans, vice president of marketing. 'We have a dedicated sales and service organization to get ourselves into this position, but occasionally you need to reflect on your technology mix and ask yourself if you have the right offering to allow customers to keep buying from you, and buy more in the future. Our analysis came to the conclusion that the core components of inkjet [printheads, etc] are quite mature. UV inkjet also delivers complementary benefits to dry toner, which excels in applications where food safety is paramount. UV inkjet excels in terms of resistance and durability.'

'The beauty – and complexity – of the label industry is its diversity of applications and requirements,' continues Weymans. 'In certain markets, such as health and personal care, where you are printing on synthetic materials, end users appreciate the tactile look and feel achieved with UV inkjet. Conversely, for high-end markets like wine and spirits, where you are printing on open,

“The beauty – and complexity – of the label industry is its diversity of applications and requirements”

porous, natural papers, printing using any liquid-based process can cause issues with the ink being absorbed, causing deformation of dots and affecting quality. This is worse with UV inkjet than UV flexo, as the viscosity of the ink is six times lower to allow it to pass through the inkjet nozzles. This is the nature of the technology, and not something that can be overcome. It also contributes to dry toner and UV inkjet being complementary technologies. This was a driving factor for us as we strive to lead UV inkjet in digital label printing as we do with dry toner.'

Sustainable technology

Weymans notes that while Jetrion is viewed as a mature platform, it is still recording growth in terms of print volume, 'which is very encouraging.'

'Assembling a UV inkjet press is what many can do but building a UV inkjet press that delivers consistent, high quality output is something else,' he states. 'It takes effort to service these systems. You also need to be developing the next generation of print engine, workflow, ink, services, converting, embellishments, etc, and having an established install base helps with funding and in giving direction to continuous innovation.'

'It requires a company of a certain size to be able to provide this. There is still a lot of room for growth in inkjet but there will be further consolidation among suppliers. There are smaller companies selling machines

without the required resources, such as a service network living up to the expectations of a digital business.'

'EFI concluded that its resources were best deployed elsewhere. As EFI was the first to industrialize UV inkjet for label printing, it made sense for us to buy the number one in a market where we want to be a leader. This includes service engineers dedicated to the Jetrion platform, which boosts our existing sales and service teams around the world. For us and our customers, this a tremendous advantage.'

Zeikon's desire to further its position in UV inkjet label printing has seen the Panther portfolio modified to match the requirements of Jetrion customers, with PX2000 having a printing width of 220mm, equivalent to the Jetrion 4830 and Jetrion 4900, and PX3000, at 330mm, matching the Jetrion 4900-330 and Jetrion 4950.

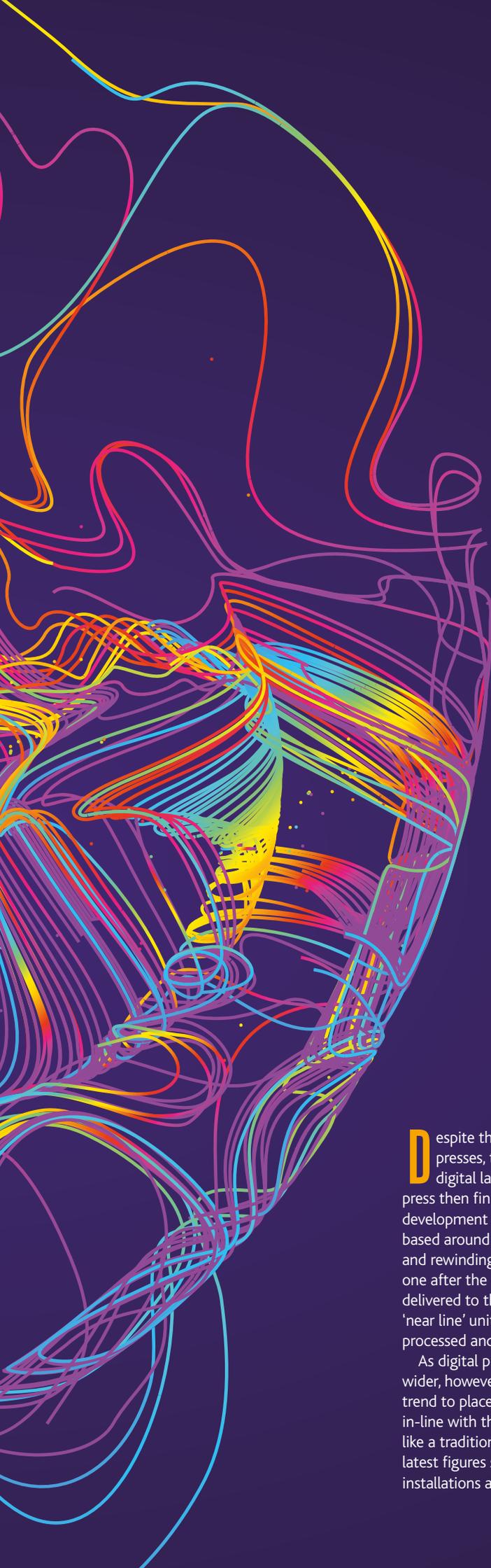
In the future, Zeikon will also look to break into new areas with inkjet, according to Weymans, namely flexible packaging and corrugated, although they will require a different platform to its current offering.

Weymans is confident about the future of Zeikon and the digital label market. 'With our selection of technologies, we are able to engage with customers and advise them on the correct printing technology, workflow system, finishing equipment and embellishment tools for their production, while being able to serve them at their location across the globe. We see a great deal of opportunities coming towards us.'



See page 57 for more on Altrif Label, a St-Luc Labels & Packaging Group company and beta-test site for the Zeikon CX500





FINISHING DIGITAL LABELS

Andy Thomas considers the options for finishing digitally printed labels

Despite the advent of hybrid flexo-digital presses, the main configuration for digital labels is to print on a standalone press then finish off-line. This has led to the development of a wide range of machines based around registered die-cutting, slitting and rewinding. The press keeps printing jobs one after the other and the finished roll is delivered to the finishing unit (usually a 'near line' unit), where each job is separated, processed and rewound ready for delivery.

As digital presses have got faster and wider, however, there has been an increasing trend to place these same finishing systems in-line with the press in a configuration more like a traditional narrow web workflow. Our latest figures show roughly one quarter of all installations are of this kind.

There are many 'grey areas' in digital press/finishing configurations. For example, some finishing systems manufacturers have added digital print units, either mono or full color; this allows the units to double as late stage versioning for both digital and conventional presses. In some cases these digital imaging units are used to jet varnishes and 3D coatings, replacing a flexo varnish or screen module.

In the benchtop digital printing world, finishing systems are more usually sold as part of a fully integrated digital print and finishing line. In this case the finishing units are not usually sold as stand-alone systems.

This feature examines all these types of digital label finishing configurations. Hybrid flexo-digital presses will be covered in a later L&L feature on digital printing.



AB Graphic Digicon Series 3 with full automation options

MAIN REQUIREMENTS

What are the main requirements of a digital label finishing system? Clearly, the key feature is the ability to handle short runs efficiently with minimal waste and with rapid changeover of tools. This has led to the development of increasingly automated lines. For example most manufacturers now offer automated slitter knife positioning which saves valuable minutes over manual knife setting, and is more accurate and consistent on repeat jobs.

Manufacturers are now looking to tie their finishing units into wider factory MIS workflows, so the finishing unit 'knows' what jobs to expect on a roll, and knife setting and laser die-cutter setting are driven from the pre-press end of the operation.

Another major requirement of a digital label finishing system is to add value to the print by supplying the 'missing' decorative tooling stations found on a typical in-line narrow web press. Modules might include UV flexo coating, screen, hot foiling/embossing, cold foil, lamination and so on.

The requirement to handle a large number of jobs with varying repeat sizes has led to the development of servo-driven semi-rotary modules able to adjust format size automatically. Die-cutting is an obvious example, but now we see the introduction of semi-rotary screen and even semi-rotary flexo units.

Because the digital label finishing line runs relatively slowly compared to

a conventional narrow web press line, flatbed tooling has made something of a comeback, particularly on hot foil stamping and screen modules. This allows converters to take advantage of lower tooling costs compared to rotary and uses the longer dwell times on an intermittently-driven web to achieve high levels of quality.

SYSTEMS SUPPLIERS

AB Graphic was one of the first converting systems manufacturers to build units dedicated to finishing digitally printed labels, and its Digicon series of machines is widely established.

The latest iteration is the Digicon Series 3, which puts the emphasis on automating as many previously manual jobs as possible, including automated slitter knife positioning.

ABG's latest automation offering is the SGTR AutoSet turret rewinder. This incorporates quick-change mandrels and a programmable print and apply label applicator to close the finished roll with a label.

Other significant developments include the high speed Fast Track semi-rotary die-cutting unit – which allows the Digicon unit to keep up with higher speed in-line print processes up to 150m/min – and the addition of flatbed screen to Digicon embellishment options.

Cartes offers the Gemini series of fully modular machines, which can be equipped with hot stamping/embossing, silkscreen printing, flexo varnishing, laser converting and semi-rotary or flatbed die-cutting.

With a web width of 360mm, it runs at 180m/min at full rotary mode or 100m/min in semi-rotary.

The Italian manufacturer's GT 360 series is also a modular series with hot stamping/embossing, silkscreen printing, flexo varnishing, flatbed die-cutting, semi-rotary die-cutting and laser converting as options. With a web width of 360mm,

The GT 360 series have built-in LPS and SHPS systems, which are even more precise thanks to a new automatic Multi Head Positioning System (MHPS) that corrects continuously on every printing unit and can detect possible gap irregularities on pre-printed materials. Each printing and die-cutting unit is automatically positioned to ensure a perfect centering to minimize waste material. This also reduces the time required for the initial set up and increases productivity.

The IGBT technology and the centralized management system that drives power supply allows the sharing of energy between the motors during the operation of the machine; the energy released by the motors during braking phase is reused or even returned to the power grid that results in energy saving from 30-40 percent, according to Cartes.

The manufacturer has introduced a modular assembling concept that allows the user to invert, replace or even add new printing and die-cutting units to the original configuration of the machine.

Both the Gemini and GT 360 series can be equipped with the Cartes laser converting unit, which features an unlimited lifetime and semi-sealed source that guarantees constant power and cutting quality.

Thanks to the radio frequency laser power control and 'cut on the fly' software, the machine can process in a single cycle any shape die-cutting and cut through, micro-perforation, engraving, progressive and regressive numbering. All these jobs are digitally programmable. The laser technology is available in single or dual versions, at 350W, and is suitable for paper or film. It can be controlled by a management software which provides an option for automatic saving of production parameters.

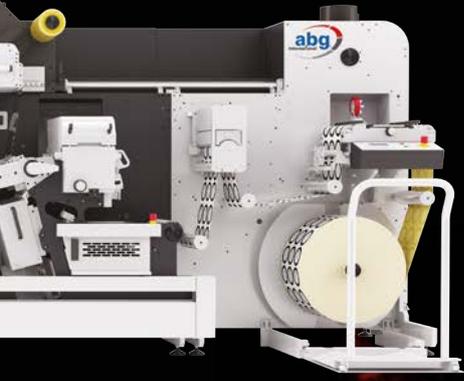
Cartes recently developed ILC – Invisible Laser Cutting – which allows the die-cutting of dark printed labels while avoiding the unsightly 'white-edge'. With the ILC-system there are no limits in processing materials with extremely thin liners, including films, or even linerless materials such as in-mold labels.



Cartes Gemini 362WL



Cartes GT368SSSHSR



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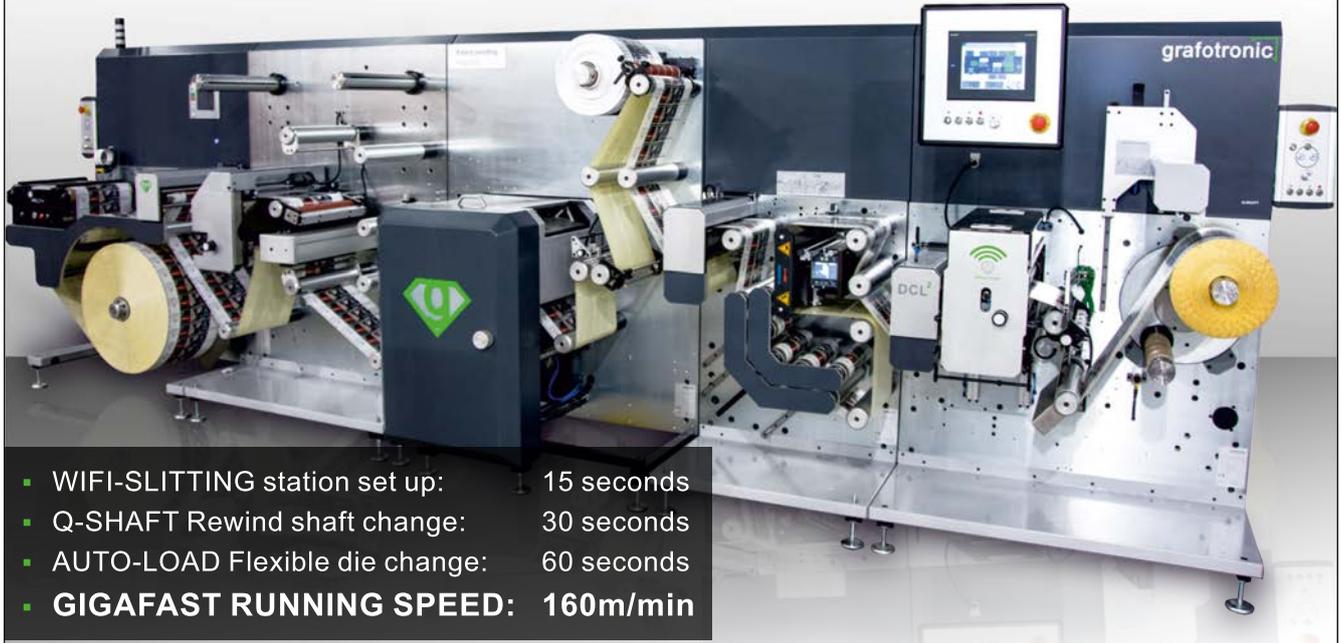
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Prati DigiFast

GM is another established player in the digitally printed label finishing sector. The latest development is the DC350, a semi-rotary machine available in web widths up to 350mm and operating at 72m/min (semi-rotary) and 90m/min (full-rotary). Varnish and die-cutting are standard and a wide range of options includes multilayer labels, laser die-cutter, automatic slitting and backscore stations, register lamination, semi-rotary flexo station and turret unwind.

The DC330 operates on a smaller web width of 330mm and is designed for extensive job-automation. It can be configured to work with industry standard workflow automation software from the likes of Esko, Cerm and Label Traxx. Speeds are up to 50 m/min (semi-rotary) and 72 m/min (full-rotary) and modules include turret, Automatic Slitting Station and register lamination.

The DC330Mini is a more compact version, measuring 2.8 x 1.4 x 2.2m. It shares web width and speed with the DC330 but adds a 65m/min semi-rotary productivity pack upgrade. Options include spot varnish and cold foil and the Automatic Slitting Station. Other more compact systems include the DC330Miniflex, with a 3.2 x 1.4 x 2.0m footprint and the most compact finishing unit, the DC330Nano.

The DC330Hybrid variant adds a laser die-cutting module to flexo varnish, lamination, slitting and dual rewinds. It can also be combined with GM's automatic knife system for fully automated production.

Another specialist variant is the DC330FB, which combines a flatbed hot stamping/embossing unit with flatbed screen.

Moving up in web width is GM's DC500,

with a maximum web width of 500mm, speed of 32m/min (semi-rotary), 72m/min (full-rotary) and 45m/min semi-rotary with the productivity pack upgrade. GM's turret, register lamination and automatic slitting stations are also available at this web width.

The DC500Mini operates at 40m/min (semi-rotary), 72m/min (full-rotary) with modules including backscore, spot varnish and cold foil.

Prati's solution for finishing digitally printed labels is Digifast, which has a 90m/min running in semi-rotary mode with registered die-cutting, all to a tolerance of ± 0.10 mm. Explains Prati's sales and marketing director Chiara Prati: 'We're not talking about semi-rotary die-cutting alone when we say it runs at 90m/min. We're talking of a fully operational flexo semi-rotary print and die-cutting register mode, running at high speed.' Options include a re-registration lamination unit for producing coupons and sandwich labels.

Labeltech has entered the competitive digital label finishing market with the launch of its compact, modular Stelvio machine. It is available in web widths of 330mm (13in) or 430mm (17in). Full rotary speed is 140m/min and semi-rotary 50m/min.

Processing modules include flexo varnish, full and semi-rotary die-cutting, and fast change rotary/razor slitter modules. The company has its own automated slitter positioning system called Lavaredo for both slitter types. 100 percent inspection is available with an inkjet marker for variable data front and back. Other options include a variable repeat rotary sheeter and conveyor belt, and the Vajolet semi-automatic turret rewriter.

Colordyne introduces laser finishing-only system

Colordyne Technologies, already a leading digital print systems equipment manufacturer, has introduced the 2800 Series Mini Laser, an off-line or near-line finishing system. The new addition to Colordyne's suite of packaging systems marks the first of its finishing-only product offerings.

The 2800 Series Mini Laser features the same established finishing technology as Colordyne's 2800 Series Mini Laser Pro. It laminates, laser die-cuts and removes matrix waste in a single pass. This system is ideal for accompanying roll-to-roll digital printers, such as the 2600 Series Mini Press, to complete the short run, custom label and tag production process.

Says Andrew Matter, president of Colordyne Technologies: 'We have brand owners and private label manufacturers using our digital printers that typically source pre-die-cut material from outside vendors because they do not have the space or resources to manage a multitude of dies. We wanted to provide a solution for these customers to bring label finishing in-house to take full control of their label production.'

The 2800 Series Mini Laser is designed to finish labels off-line or near-line, and it can create custom die-cut blank label stock for use on digital benchtop presses. The laser technology eliminates the need for dies and knives.

The 2800 Series Mini Laser offers a max cut width of 7.87in (19.76cm) and a max cut length of 47.24in (119.98cm) with speeds up to 60fpm (18.28m/min).

An intuitive visual user interface allows operators to make cutting adjustments on-the-fly. Transitioning from one cut to another is completed quickly with a built-in job library that allows users to save and reopen die cuts on-press.

Says Matter, 'We decided to offer the 2800 Series Mini Laser for companies that do more than labeling, such as brand owners and private label manufacturers. There was a gap in the market for this type of application, so we stepped in to fill it.'

The 2800 Series Mini Laser has a compact footprint and low level of noise, allowing it to fit anywhere from a press warehouse to an office.



GM DC500Mini



Colordyne 2800 Series Mini Laser Finishing System



Labeltech Stevio

Smag has launched the latest generation of its Digital Galaxie digital label finishing system. The third generation machine has a 330mm/13in web width and a maximum processing speed of 120m/min in full rotary mode and 60m/min semi-rotary.

Smag historically comes from the flatbed silkscreen industry, and this technology has been upgraded to operate at speeds up to 25m/min. This is combined with flatbed hotfoil and embossing – operating at speeds up to 45m/min – and either full rotary or semi-rotary UV flexo coating units. The line can accommodate unwind rolls up to 800mm diameter.

Smag has also developed its own semi-rotary die-cutting and a slitting module offering razor, shear, crush knives and automatic knife positioning. Rewind options include semi-automatic turret, non-stop rewinder and sheeter.

Orthotec is another company which had adapted its 'conventional' press technology into the digital finishing space. The company has a long history manufacturing letterpress, offset and screen presses.

The SRFD3030 is a multi-function servo-driven flatbed converting machine. It has a web width of 340mm and speed of 25m/min. Processing modules include screen printing, flatbed hot stamping, semi-rotary flexo varnish, semi-rotary and full rotary die-cutting and

slitter.

The screen station uses dual sliding shafts to achieve its faster speeds while maintaining stable squeegee pressure. The units also feature automated pressure and frame position adjustment.

The DGCON350 is a servo-driven converting system with web width of 340mm and speeds up to 50m/min. Processing modules include flexo varnish, cold stamp and lamination, semi and full rotary die-cutting, slitter and sheeter.

Delta ModTech's Spectrum Finishing System offers the flexibility to die-cut and coat digitally printed webs in-line with any digital printer or near-line as a stand-alone finishing system.

Key features include tight tolerance cuts, quick changeover, and a modular platform.

The Delta ModTech machines incorporate the Intelli-Mod control system which speeds up job set-up and changeover and maintains counts of pieces produced.

Processing modules available include auto-set slitting, inspection, flexo print/coat station, semi/full rotary die-cutting, sheeter, ability to run in-line/off-line with digital press, laser die-cutting, embossing, hot/cold foil stamping, embossing, winding/rewinding, steering and conveyors.

Maximum web width is 13in (330.2mm) and web speeds up to 350ft/min (106m/min).

Newfoil has leveraged its long experience in hot foil technology with two models dedicated to digital label finishing.

The servo-driven 'NM' range incorporates flatbed embossing, hot stamping and die-cutting.

The company says flatbed tooling increases quality and is easier to control than rotary, as well as being cost-effective compared to rotary tooling for short batch work. A screen printing unit is available as a standard option and both UV and hot air drying options are offered.

The NM data management system allows the machine to interface with inkjet barcoding and serialization options.



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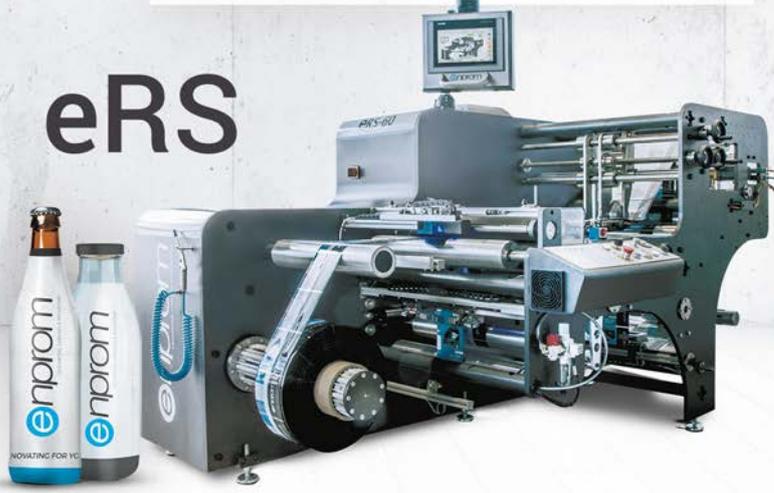
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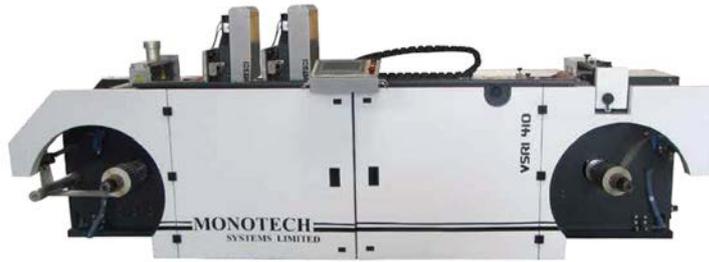
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Monotech Jetsci VSRI Series

A system for hot stamping holograms in register – with foil-saving facilities as standard – is available along with the Quick Set embossing kit, which makes initial setting of complicated labels a quick and simple operation.

Other modules include scissor slitting, back slitting, inspection, laminating, sheeting and hole-punching.

The NM3534 and NM5534 have standard 340mm (13in) web widths and speeds up to 75m/in (250ft/min).

Rotatek also comes from the 'heavy metal' conventional press sector, and has adapted its semi-rotary offset expertise to develop the Digitalis, which combines semi-rotary and rotary systems on the same machine. Print width is up to 350mm and configuration options include hot stamping/embossing and screen printing.

Mark Andy company **Rotoflex** has launched Vericut3, the latest generation of its off-line finishing platform for digitally printed webs. The servo-driven machine features motorized roll lift,

Rotoflex's URC 2.0 proprietary control system incorporating the Report Management System (RMS), and biometric login. Additional process modules include lamination, hot and cold foil, screen and flexo coating.

Indian company **Monotech** has meanwhile launched its Jetsci VSRI system which focuses on short run modular finishing. It is available in web widths up to 450mm operating at speeds up to 150m/min. Processing modules include in-line corona treatment, VDP camera inspection, flexo printing station, dual waste rewind, optional rotary die-cutting and rotary scissor or razor slitting.

Gallus markets its established ECS-C digital label converting machine. Based on the 'technical granite' frame of the ECS 340 flexo press, the converter unit is fully modular, from

Digital finishing in brief

Grafotronic has launched GigaFast, a semi-rotary die-cutting module for finishing digitally printed labels at 160m/min. It is available as a module for the company's fully modular DCL2 finishing line, and as a retrofit option.

Brotech has developed the SDF Plus for finishing digitally printed labels. The system is available in web widths up to 530mm and with a semi-rotary flexo unit and semi-rotary die-cutting. New is a patented flatbed hot foil stamping module, with a stamping head that can be rotated 90 degrees to allow web direction and cross-web direction hot foil stamping.

Werosys has added a fully automated flexo printing module to its Compact line. This module can be combined with multiple Compact modules including UV varnish and cold foil, to make a fully configured hybrid printing and finishing line.

The latest **anytron** Duoblade S is a dual blade finishing machine that features lamination and slitting. It can be paired with the anytron any-002 toner-based digital printer to produce various label types, including those that are BS 5609 certified.

Rhyguan Machinery has launched the unique Plus 330 Gravure, a digital finishing machine with gravure printing and coating units.



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Delta ModTech Spectrum finisher



Rotoflex Vericut3HI

“Because the digital label finishing line runs relatively slowly compared to a conventional narrow web press line, flatbed tooling has made something of a comeback, particularly on hot foil stamping and screen modules”

a basic configuration of flexo coating and semi-rotary die-cutter to a multi-color configuration with surface decoration. Features include front loading, a sleeve system, chambered doctor blade, presetting and a short web path. Web width is 340mm and processing speed up to 60m/min (197ft/min).

Coming more from the digital (inkjet) side of the business is MGI, which has launched the JETvarnish 3D Web Color+ machine. The core of the unit is inkjet-based spot and tactile effects including digital varnish and foiling, inline semi-rotary die-cutting, slitting and rewinding.

In addition, users can add a printing unit which, via a re-register system, allows overprinting of foil with CMYK toner to create a wide range of tints and hues, as well as precise spot coats to match colors generated from previous digital printing operations.

The JETvarnish 3D Web Color+ is available in 330mm/13in web widths with in-line printing, and 420 mm/16.5in without the 4-color toner unit. Production speed for 4-color varnish and foil is between 10-20m/min, and, for just varnish and foil, up to 42m/min. A UV flexo module is optionally available.

A new entrant to the European converting machinery market is Chinese manufacturer Rhyguan, which is making a major push into the market with a range of converting machines including systems

suitable for converting digitally printed labels. Options available include laser die-cutting, flatbed foil and flatbed silkscreen. A full review of the company’s machines will appear in a future edition of *L&L*.

PRINT AND CUT

Systems designed to print and finish as part of a seamless benchtop-style system are increasingly popular among end users and for label converter bureau operations.

Allen Datagraph has built on its existing technical expertise in this sector to launch the iTech Talon digital label finisher, an all-in-one finishing system that laminates, digital die-cuts, strips, slits (optional) and re-winds labels. The iTech Talon utilizes the proven plotting technology developed by ADSI to die-cut labels on-demand.

Print to cut registration is accomplished via the company’s established SmartMark optical registration system. Multiple registration marks can be scanned to automatically adjust the cut file, compensating for any skew or scale issues caused by the output device or material.

Finishing speeds are up to 10ft/min (3m/min) on a web width of 4-8.5in (101-215mm).

Allen Datagraph’s established systems include the iTech Centra HS which can laminate, digital die-cut, strip and slit custom labels in one production pass. Web width is up to 14in (355mm) and operating speed up to 30ft/min (9.14m/min).

The iTech Axxis XL Plus digitally cuts, slits, and rewinds. Additional features include continuous cutting to provide a smooth slit before the rewind and larger 12in input and output roll capabilities. Automatic tensioning further reduces operator intervention.

The Afinia Label DLF Series includes all-in-one systems that unwind, knife cut, remove waste, slit, and rewind in one process. The DLF-220L and DLF-350L add lamination capabilities.



Orthotec SRFD3030



Newfoil NM3534



Graphtec DLC1000

All systems use plotter cutting technology and a cutter management tool and camera black-mark registration system.

Maximum web width is 225mm (8.86in) for the DLF-220 and 220L and 355mm (14in) for the DLF 350L. Maximum cutting speed is up to 24in/s (600mm/s) in all directions.

Graphtec's DLC1000 digital label finishing system enables users to laminate, cut, removal waste, slit, and rewind in a single production pass.

The stylus digital cutting system is fitted with the company's ARMS (Advanced Registration Mark Sensing system), which uses sensors to detect registration marks and automatically aligns the cutting axis. Cutting force, speed, blade offset, and cutting position are configured at the machine's front end.

The DLC1000 operates with the DLP1000 digital printer, which can control up to eight DLC1000 units simultaneously from its operator interface.

DPR has launched its Virgo compact desktop finishing system, incorporating digital (plotter) die-cutting, a lamination option, waste stripping and slitting. Web width is up to 140mm and speed up to 10m/min (32ft/min).

Lemorau has launched its Digi EBR+ print and convert system available in web widths of 260, 330 and 400mm (10, 13, 17in).

Finishing speeds are up to 40m/min semi-rotary (131ft/min)) and 120m/min (394ft/min) full rotary.

Processing modules include die-cutting, slitting, inspection, flexo station, corona treatment, semi-/full rotary screen station, sheeter, web cleaner, lamination, razor slitting, back scorer; anti-static bar; anvil roll with adjustable gap and turret rewind.

To conclude, we are seeing a great deal of innovation around the finishing of digitally printed labels. A key trend going forward will be how these machines are integrated into Industry 4.0 automation systems, which should greatly enhance the value of digital printing by removing more barriers to productivity at the converting end.



MGI JETvarnish
3D Web-Color+CMYK

Mark Andy launches Digital Series HD

An upgraded platform and high pigmented white ink are highlights of the new Digital Series HD digital flexo hybrid press from Mark Andy. The company hosted a preview event at its Digital Technology Center in San Diego, California, which coincided with TLMi's converter meeting.

The Digital Series HD hybrid press can be configured with five to eight colors and can be integrated with in-line or near-line finishing. Expanded gamut is offered in a high-chroma ink set (CMYK + OVG). Mark Andy pointed to its high pigment white ink, saying it compares to rotary screen, has three times the opacity of flexo white, and more than double the opacity of conventional EP white. Further, digital white can be run at speeds of up to 240ft/min. In a demo, Mark Andy ran 17 SKUs on three substrates – clear PP, white BOPP and an estate paper – in under 14 minutes. All jobs were printed at 240ft/min and used extended gamut printing at 1200 dpi. Additionally, a job used a flexo station directly following the digital print engine to apply a metallic flexo spot that cannot be produced digitally.

The Digital Series HD press also comes with three head cleaning options – manual, automatic, and semi-automatic. Additionally, the platform now offers a more advantaged VDP tool in response to market demand for personalization.

The Digital Series HD builds on the Digital Series hybrid press, launched at Labelexpo, which was the recipient of the 2017 FTA Technical Innovation Award.

Chris Yanko, digital sales director at Mark Andy, said: 'This press has been in R&D for at least five years. Mark Andy wanted to get it right. We learned that people don't want to slow down on white, and they don't want to sacrifice quality.'



Information on digital finishing systems can be found in Mike Fairley's Digital Label book produced for the Label Academy. www.label-academy.com



DPR Virgo



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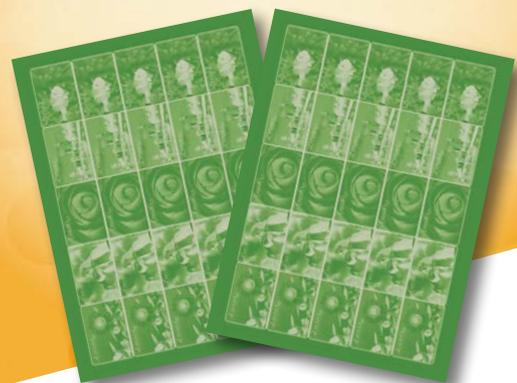
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Upgrade your digital finishing

Kurt D. Hudson, head of key account management at Actega North America, explores the tools and processes that allow converters to reproduce layers of functionality when employing digital print

In many ways, producing digitally printed and finished labels is like making lasagna – a layered masterpiece. I use this simile because functional, digitally printed labels are engineered constructions with each layer providing aesthetic and/or structural value.

Label printing and converting has evolved over the years, employing water-based, UV and solvent technologies that work together to create a whole greater than the sum of the parts. These familiar technologies have produced structures that have passed the test of time; these structures are part of our core competencies and comfort zone. Can we employ digital print methods to create complex structures with different inks, primers, method of fixing the inks, etc, and use the same adhesives, coatings and functional layers we used with analog print methods?

Viable digital technologies include dry electrophotographic toner (DEP), liquid electrophotographic toner (LEP), UV inkjet (UV IJ) and water-based inkjet (AQ IJ). Are UV flexo inks the same as UV IJ inks? Would one use the same cold foil adhesive for UV flexo inks and UV offset inks to produce optimum results? Sure, the same adhesive may work, but what are the compromises? Similar structures utilizing different technologies simply require different components.

This article explores the use of tools and processes that can allow the printer to reproduce layers of functionality when employing digital print. We will explore how to systematically address digital finishing processes for labels.

It all starts at the foundation

A conversation about primers is often a divided conversation. The simple fact is that regardless of the digital print technology, the use of a primer – whether applied to the substrate prior to the printing process or during the printing process – creates a more consistent, optimized surface. For now, let us agree that a properly primed surface has advantages in terms of highest potential print quality and subsequent embellishments. On a connected subject, I encourage all printers to really dig deep into analog versus digital print cost structure and value to shed light onto the actual cost centers of each. There are a few surprises in this examination explaining, in part, why we see single-digit digital market share of labels, yet double-digit value (sales) of labels.

Primers employ different mechanisms to affix ink, control ink gain and begin to optimize ink durability required for movement through the press and in converting processes. In a similar manner, any

“Functional, digitally printed labels are engineered constructions with each layer providing aesthetic and/or structural value”

protective coatings should be both compatible with the ink type used plus incorporate properties that capitalize on the primer mechanisms to best accept, improve flow, improve adhesion and add additional durability to the coating.

Coating and ink compatibility

Coatings for durability, receptivity (eg inkjet, thermal transfer, laser marking), haptic effects, cold foil adhesives, security, etc exist for analog printed constructions, and similar coatings exist for digital printed constructions. Again, the best coatings for analog printing are most likely not the best for digital printing. Unless vetted for a digital application, coating adhesion to digital inks, ink protection, protection against heat, ability to prevent chemical or water attack, and other properties will most likely be sub-standard for the ideal properties required for a digital construction. As a rule, analog inks have as a base advantage a wider window for the formulator to work her magic. Rheology alone makes it easier for the formulator to use a wider range of ingredients to improve adhesion, durability and in general incorporate a higher solids content. Digital inks also tend to have a narrower bandwidth for raw material types.

To a higher degree in digital print applications, the coatings must impart durability, aesthetic and functional properties while bonding with the inks to form a complimentary structure, bringing qualities that mitigate or even eliminate inherent deficiencies in those ink chemistries. This sentence is a key message in this article. A coating used for one ink chemistry will most likely not impart the same properties as a coating used on a different ink chemistry.

Here is an example. If one is producing a wine label with UV flexo inks, that printer requires a coating that is hard, durable, has a low coefficient of friction (COF) and is water-resistant. If a printer is producing a wine label with an electrophotographic digital ink, that printer requires a coating that is tough yet flexible, and also

Layers of a digitally printed label



What you see





What you do not see

- Scuff resistance
- Slip / COF
- Product resistance
- Sealing properties
- No fingerprinting
- Chemistry interactions
- Heat resistance

has a low COF plus water-resistance. These coatings would have two different resin systems. Hard and tough are two different attributes, and a hard coating applied over an electrophotographic ink in this application will exacerbate failure.

Corona treatment

We often see a new finishing line with a price tag upwards of seven digits with no corona treater. In this context, the old saying 'pay now, or pay later' has never been more true. When writing this article, I went online and saw quality used corona treaters for label finishing equipment for as low as four digits. I am not advocating placing used equipment on new equipment, but I am emphasizing the relatively low cost to place corona treatment on a digital finishing unit.

The impact of corona treatment to enhance adhesion of coatings and adhesives onto digital inks varies from essential to benign. Essential is the most common impact. Digital inks require additives and chemistry to impart properties that deliver, hold and affix the inks onto the base material. Although analog inks also require additives and specialized chemistry to do the same, the level and need for precise modification in digital inks is greater. The subsequent acceptance of other products like adhesives and coatings onto the surface of digital inks is therefore not as easily achieved, and corona treatment is a good, relatively inexpensive

method to create a surface ready for bonding and able to support even coverage onto the surface of the digital inks.

Coating and adhesive cost is another reason to utilize corona treatment. If corona treatment is not used, the coatings and adhesives now must incorporate surface tension modifiers, adhesion promoters, surface-active materials and more to create a chemistry that flows well across the digital inks, bonds and still performs in the desired manner. I was once told that as the number of syllables increases in the name of an additive, the cost increases exponentially. That may be an over-simplification, but surface tension modifiers, adhesion promoters and surface active materials are indeed some of the most expensive raw materials. One can pay now – with a corona treater, or pay later – with highly-modified coating and adhesive chemistry. Multiple studies show that a corona treater can pay for itself in 18 months or less on a single label finishing unit used to service two digital presses operating one shift a day or servicing one digital press operating two shifts per day. The pay back will come from using more traditional coating chemistries compared to using more costly modified coatings and adhesives.

Another compelling reason to have a corona treater in place is the depth and breadth of the coating and adhesive chemistries and corresponding attributes



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Kurt D. Hudson, head of key account management at Actega North America

that can be used over corona treated digital inks compared to non-corona treated digital inks. Cold foil, primarily due to the adhesives, are very challenging without corona treatment. Tactile coatings do not flow as well, or produce the level of clarity without corona treatment. Soft touch coatings are more easily abraded. The list goes on. Some digital ink types require corona treatment to a lesser degree than other digital ink types. Some digital ink manufacturers promote inks that are stated to require corona treatment to a lesser degree than other digital ink types. But the use history is clear. Almost all digital finishing has a broader processing window (capabilities and cost) with corona treatment. Plus, if you need corona treatment, and you do not have a corona treater, then your digital finishing is significantly and negatively impacted.

The bottom line

Digital printing is highly impactful, if not redefining printing facilities, print technology, workflow and value structure in our industry. Whether product finishing for digitally printed products is performed with total in-line converting or off-line, whether with DEP, LEP, UV IJ or AQ IJ products are utilized, whether using UV, UV LED or water-based coatings and adhesives, or whether primers and/or corona treatment are utilized, the brand owner expects the same or higher performance from a digitally printed

“A coating used for one ink chemistry will most likely not impart the same properties as a coating used on a different ink chemistry”

structure. All the embellishments found atop (or under in some cases) analog inks are required to be in the same construction with the same characteristics. Value structure differences between analog and digital constructions have been a footnote, but here we bring that element to the front of the discussion. Although the use of digital primers, specialty coatings and adhesives, and corona treatment can be debated in an intellectual discussion, the production environment is not the place to play out any compromises. Create success with the right tools, because your significant cost variables between analog and digital printing are rarely found in embellishment components or consumables.



See the digital converting systems available on the market in L&L's special round-up starting on page 62

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HP Indigo is now a reseller for Esko Automation Engine QuickStart for Labels

HP-Esko partnership tackles workflow challenges

Alon Bar-Shany, GM of HP Indigo, and Esko president Udo Panenka discuss with Andy Thomas the development of the two companies' partnership and its implications for the future of digital – and conventional – print

HP Indigo and Esko have embarked on an ambitious program of co-operation and joint development which will see a new range of capabilities and integration brought to the HP Indigo digital press series for label and packaging converters.

The two companies have been partners for the past ten years, with Esko software powering the original digital front end (DFE) for the HP Indigo ws4000 and WS6000 series presses. But this new partnership takes the integration of the two companies' technology to a new level.

The first fruits of the enhanced partnership are two complementary products: the HP Indigo Production Pro DFE for Labels and Packaging; and the Esko Automation Engine QuickStart for Labels, for which HP Indigo is now a reseller.

'We have been working together for a long time and we have a great relationship,' says Alon Bar-Shany, general manager of HP's Indigo Division. 'Each of us has strengths and can bring value, but we can't do everything by ourselves.'

Bar-Shany notes that Esko has a strong reach into the entire packaging supply chain from converters to premedia to brands, while HP Indigo brings experience from the converter/press user side.

'We were going into the Pack Ready world, providing our PSPs with the tools to digitally print any kind of label or package.

We also had the Mosaic (randomized print software) tools. At the same time, Esko was looking towards connecting packaging suppliers with the brands, and towards automation,' says Bar Shany.

'Integrating Esko's Color Engine into our DFE gives users of our Indigo press the best of both worlds – world class color management and a more powerful RIP, all integrated transparently into Esko's (Automation Engine QuickStart for Labels) workflow solution.'

Fragmented market

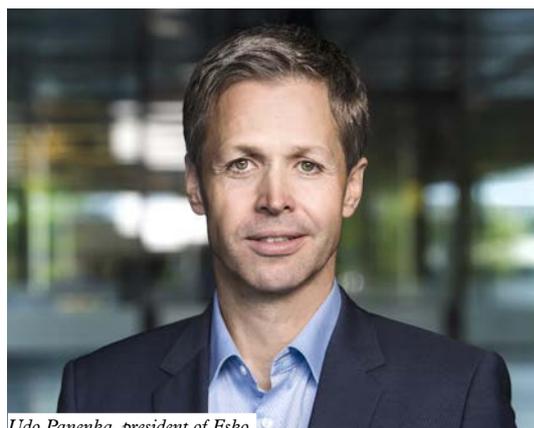
Udo Panenka, president of Esko, confirms that Esko's perspective was to help brands meet the challenges of a rapidly fragmenting retail market place: 'The larger consumer

brands struggle to grow – they need to create innovative products much faster, and not get disrupted by new and more agile players using customization and personalization to enter established markets. Some of the larger players can take up to 200 days to make a label change.

'Our partnership with HP Indigo is about solving this problem. HP is the leader in the field of digital presses and we are helping to leverage this technology. How do we help converters and brands manage shorter run lengths and turnaround time?'

One way this is achieved is to pre-flight files based on pre-set color tolerances.

Esko Color Engine analyzes the artwork and determines the best color space and ink



Udo Panenka, president of Esko



Alon Bar-Shany, general manager of HP Indigo



AVT is now part of the Danaher Group, alongside Esko, Pantone and X-Rite – a key development, according to Panenka

separations to print the job at the right quality and with the fewest number of clicks.

Esko Automation Engine QuickStart for Labels integrates simplified, pre-configured workflows directly into the HP Indigo press DFE.

'In the past it would have taken between 20-30 days to implement this technology at the PSP, depending on the level of expertise of the pre-press operator,' says Panenka. 'Today, with pre-configured workflows, it takes less than five days and customers will get a best in class workflow.'

RIP power

On the other end of the workflow, the new high-powered (five times faster) RIP is provided by HP Indigo.

Developed by Global Graphics and launched at Labelexpo Europe, the RIP draws on HP Indigo's experience in the commercial print market, as Bar-Shany explains: 'We have a lot of experience on large commercial printing sites which need to handle lots of jobs a day and drive multiple presses. Their focus is on efficient workflow and data throughput.'

He cites Shutterfly, the world's leading online retailer and manufacturer of high-quality personalized products and services, which last year added a second batch of HP Indigo 12000 digital presses and named HP as its preferred digital press provider.

'Our DFE helped Shutterfly leverage its multi-press business, with a unified DFE stack driving multiple presses for the highest level of security. They are able to repeat a job two months later on a different press, managed automatically, and the color will be the same.'

This same RIP will now be driving all the HP Indigo fleet – commercial sheet-fed and labels to begin with, and soon the 20000 and 30000 as well.

'This also makes sense because more of our customers are now doing both commercial print and packaging,' notes Bar-Shany.

'Label customers are getting into flexible packaging or sleeves or in-mold labels. Commercial printers are getting into cartons and some into labels. Users of the HP Indigo 20000 and Indigo 30000 presses and digital label

converters are forming alliances, going to brands and offering any products they want.'

Panenka agrees: 'This mix of services is getting bigger. We see in particular labels and flexible packaging being produced at the same time. And most PSPs are mixed houses, with both digital and conventional presses, and want to achieve the same results on both. So how do we make sure the output is consistent in all these cases?'

Extended gamut

Panenka believes the key lies in extended gamut (ECG) printing and digital specification of color.

'Digital print has been a real game changer here because it does not use spot inks. So brands who bought digital print had to accept CMYK – later CMYK+OGV – as a substitute for reproducing their brand colors with spot inks. They were happy to do this providing it was to a specific DeltaE tolerance.

'Now ECG inks are available for (flexo and offset) conventional print processes, they can work in the same way and to the same tolerances as digital. This means brands can design 'for digital' whether the image is eventually printed on a conventional press using ECG, or a digital press. Our software will match colors in both cases.' Panenka believes there is still work to do educating brands on the potential benefits of ECG.

Collaborative workflow

Both Bar-Shany and Panenka see their new collaborative workflow as helping converters, premedia and brands work in partnership to drive down product cycle times, so a lead time of three-to-four weeks can be reduced to few days if all work processes are optimized.

'This allows all players in the supply chain to optimize their working capital,' says Bar-Shany. 'So we move away from a situation where a job takes one hour to print but two weeks to flow through to the press.'

Bar-Shany highlights the administrative challenges involved, and so the need to integrate the press DFE into wider on-line workflows.

'Once again, we can learn from the commercial print sector,' he says. 'If you're printing multiple jobs a day you need to find

new ways of managing your shop. You need to know – online – how many jobs have been printed, how many are left to print and what happens to those jobs beyond print. We see an increasing use of our cloud-based HP PrintOS for exactly this reason. Production managers using mobile devices know the status of all jobs and the shift manager can manage the entire press fleet remotely. And all this is integrated with MIS, which is constantly analyzing and updating job costs, delivery schedules and press scheduling.'

Esko has already made big strides in this direction, having deeply integrated its label workflows with Cerm in particular but also other vendors, as demonstrated at the last Labelexpo Europe.

Panenka says Esko is already seeing more 'dynamic collaboration' between PSPs and brands using the company's WebCenter remote viewing and approval software. 'It is simply a faster way of handling job changes and approval.'

Panenka says that label converters who install digital presses tend to insource pre-press, and this is the gateway to adopting exactly the kind of simplified and automated workflows embodied in Esko's Automation Engine QuickStart for Labels.

Color in the cloud

Panenka sees cloud-based color management as another key tool for automated workflows.

'For me a tipping point is that AVT is now part of our group of companies along with Pantone and X-Rite. Now we are looking with AVT and Indigo at in-line print inspection which also looks at cloud-based color measurement.

He concedes that up to now there has been a slow take-up of the PantoneLive cloud-based color management system.

'But now brands have a lot more interest in specifying and communicating color "digitally" for multiple substrates. And more brands are saying they want to see quality reports from each print run. Some of these brands want an automatic color report at the beginning, during and at the end of the print run. Many large CPG brands have already adopted print quality reporting capabilities across their supply chain with solutions such as X-Rite's ColorCert. Inadequate color management is the cause of a big proportion of the waste we see. Two years down the line I think it will look different, likely with further brand adoption with better integrated and more elements in this reporting.'

What developments can we expect next? The key for Panenka is connecting packaging with e-commerce workflows. 'Connecting brands' eco-systems with converters and premedia and developing the packaging software tools to overcome their challenges is where Esko is moving.'



HP Indigo and Esko will be announcing their line-up for Labelexpo Americas, including demonstrations of integrated workflows, in L&L issue 4

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Ribbon cutting ceremony

Resounding success for first Labelexpo Southeast Asia

Labelexpo Southeast Asia – the most successful Labelexpo Global Series launch to date – demonstrated the region's dynamic growth. Report by Aakriti Agarwal, Andy Thomas and James Quirk

The launch edition of Labelexpo Southeast Asia exceeded all expectations, with 7,934 attendees from 62 countries flocking to BITEC in Bangkok, Thailand for the three-day show. Exhibitor rebookings for the next edition in 2020 stood at 42 percent at the end of the show – the highest following a Labelexpo event launch to date.

The event attracted strong delegations from Thailand, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Vietnam and Australasia. Supported by the Thai Department of Industrial Promotion (DIP) under the Minister of Industry, and the Thailand Screen Print and Graphic Imaging Association (TSGA), Labelexpo Southeast Asia 2018 covered over 4,100sqm and hosted stands from 174 of the global industry's principal manufacturers and suppliers. These included Bobst, Epson, Flint Group, GEW, HP Indigo, Konica Minolta, Lintec, Mark Andy, Nilpeter, Omet, UPM Raflatac, Xeikon, Yupo Corporation and Zhejiang Weigang Machinery. Almost a quarter were exhibiting at a Labelexpo for the first time, including Berli Jucker, Flying Man Assembly Automation, IGS Asia-Pacific, Navitas Vision Solution, Ojita, PMC Label Materials, Press Systems, Techno Global Graphics and Tsukatani Hamono Manufacturing.

Jade Grace, project director for the show, said: 'We are absolutely delighted with the success of our very first Labelexpo Southeast Asia, which, as our most successful show launch to date, has exceeded all expectations. Visitor feedback has been excellent, with major sales deals being closed on-site. Thailand proved to be the perfect location, in a region that is emerging as one of the

world's fastest-growing manufacturing hubs and consumer markets, and we are grateful for the Thai Government's unwavering support in getting Labelexpo Southeast Asia off the ground.'

Conventional presses

The event was well-supported by the leading players of the international narrow web press community, and those who brought presses to their stands saw packed booths during demonstrations.

Bobst showed an entry-level M1 press, shaft-driven but with significant automation features including laser pre-register and inbuilt connectivity to MIS, allowing remote monitoring and reporting. Bobst's Matteo Cardinotti said: 'Our expectations have been reached. We have seen many customers from the area but also from India and Australia. Southeast Asia is a market which we believe will become more and more important.'

The company's Maurizio Trecate added: 'The show was fantastic for the number and quality of visitors across the board in terms of profiles and nationalities. In addition to deals closed at the show, we recorded a huge number of leads.'

The big news from Brotech MD Raymon Lee was a joint project to build the converting end of the latest Konica Minolta AccurioLabel 190 label toner-based press, which replaces the bizhub Press C71cf with converting unit built by Miyakoshi. Brotech had a successful show across its full range of label converting systems.

Edale did not have a press at the show, but was promoting its flexo carton capabilities using in-line flatbed die-cutting as well as labels and unsupported film.

Brazilian flexo press manufacturer Etirama exhibited at an event in the region for the first time, as it looks to set up a local distributor network. The company has a large installation base in India, and international sales manager Francisco Andrade believes Etirama's success in that market can be replicated in Southeast Asia.

Gallus was present through its local agent IGS Asia-Pacific.

Eric Blankenstein, sales director Nilpeter Asia-Pacific, said: 'The first day was extremely busy for us and we had a lot of attention for the new FA-line.' Blankenstein described Thailand as an important hub for Nilpeter. 'We have our technology center here and it's a great market to further expand for us into Southeast Asia.' Nilpeter set up a new office in Indonesia last year and is looking at Vietnam next.

'We decided to go all the way at this show with our latest FA-line – it shows we take the Asia market very seriously. This was brought out here from Denmark and is in addition to the press at our demo center here in Bangkok. We have a variety of partners here so we cover pre-press, post-press and waste management and we are set up to show a total solution – to act as a consultant and to educate the customers.'

Jakob Landberg, Nilpeter's sales and marketing director, reported that a Bangkok-based converter had ordered an 8-color FA-line press with 17in web width on the show floor. 'Thailand is one of the five fastest-growing label markets in the world,' he said.

Omet reported an excellent show. ASEAN manager Dario Urbinati said: 'We are very glad to be part of this show and



The Brotech stand



AB Graphic had equipment on HP Indigo's stand

we saw an amazing amount of customers. Thailand is one of the hot spots in the labels and packaging industry in Southeast Asia. The wider ASEAN region has one billion consumers with a double digit growth rate in labels and packaging, so it is a significant part of our business strategy.' Omet brought its entry-level iFlex press to the show, configured with 10 colors and a 370mm (14in) web width.

'We were impressed with the result of the first Labelexpo Southeast Asia,' said John Huang, director of **Orthotec**. 'We had many visitors from ASEAN countries and there was particular interest in the CFT3330 semi-rotary offset press due to its more steady registration and inking.'

Zhejiang Weigang brought its ZJR-330 flexo press, which features Rexroth-Bosch servo drive for tension control, 330mm printing width and a high speed of 180m/min. The press features 23 servo motors in eight color units and three die-cutting stations. The company has installed 60 of the machines in its native China, and sees the Southeast Asia market shifting towards flexo technology.

Spring Xu, international sales manager, said: 'We already have many letterpress and offset machines installed in Southeast Asia. As in China, there are lots of short-run jobs in the Southeast Asia market, and local converters have traditionally used letterpress and offset machines to target this work. But we see a trend in companies moving into flexo technology.' The company has

customers in the Philippines and Bangladesh for its ZJR-330 flexo press.

Zhongte showcased its ZTJ-330 intermittent letterpress and Super-320 intermittent offset machines, both of which were installed at Thailand-based converters following the show. 'We see great demand for letterpress and offset technology in this market,' said Shirley Zhou, international sales manager. 'We received good quality visitors from Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam. Labelexpo Southeast Asia is a good platform to build our brand in the region.'

Digital

Dilli sold Neo Picasso digital press to a Thai converter, according to the company's Joong-Rai Cho. This will be the third such machine to be installed in Thailand. The press, with a web width of 350mm, can print CMYK+W. It features a cooling lamp from GEW and can have a full variable data printing unit. The press runs at 50m/min and prints at 1200 dpi.

Harn Engineering showed samples printed on a **Domino N610i** digital UV inkjet label press. Harn Engineering also promoted the Domino K600i White digital print module inkjet system, targeted primarily at printers looking for a digital alternative to screen printing.

Epson Thailand used the show for the regional launch of its SurePress L-4533AW digital label press. The press is the successor to the L-4033, which was successful in the region. It maintains the same configuration

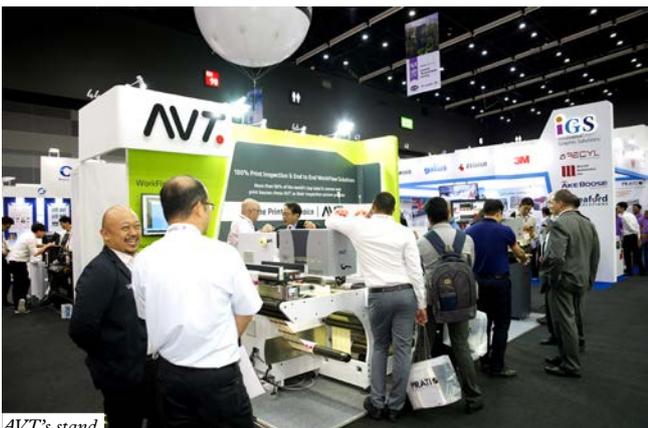
of 7-color aqueous inkjet heads set on an x-y scanning frame and uses a dual-stage drying process for optimum ink adhesion to label substrates.

The press now incorporates a range of automated printing features, including up to eight hours of unattended printing, email alerts and minimal manual cleaning.

Graphtec showed digital label printing machines Labelrobo LCX1000 and LCX603 alongside auto sheet feeder F-Mark. LCX1000 comes with the DLP1000 digital label finisher with functions of laminating, free-shape cutting, matrix removing, slitting and rewinding. LCX603 delivers high-durability 3-color printing, laminating, contour cutting, matrix removing, and slitting. F-Mark is an automatic sheet feeder for the Graphtec cutting plotter CE6000 Plus.

HP Indigo sold two presses during the show. Thai printer Salee opted for an HP Indigo WS6800 – its second from the digital press manufacturer; fellow local converter Githay bought a 6900, moving the flexo house into digital print for the first time.

HP Indigo's Melvin Lew said: 'We mainly saw visitors from Thailand but it was a good show for us. We exhibited 13 real products at the booth, some of which we purchased from the market to display on the show floor to indicate the possibilities with digital label printing and HP Indigo. Products with labels printed on HP Indigo press were brought in from Thailand, Singapore, Philippines and Indonesia.' HP Indigo also created a dark room experience where it displayed labels



AVT's stand



The Bobst stand



L-R: Kanwardeep Sahmi of Weldon Celloplast, Omet's agent in India; Jade Grace and Lisa Milburn of Labelexpo; Harveer Sahmi of Weldon Celloplast; Andy Thomas of Labels & Labeling

with mainly fluorescent colors that shine in the dark.

'The region is growing well with Thailand being a huge market, and we see growth potential in Indonesia,' continued Lew. The company has several demonstration centers in Southeast Asia, including two each in Thailand and Indonesia, three in the Philippines, and one each in Singapore and Malaysia.

Konica Minolta showed its AccurioLabel 190 digital label printing press, which offers 1200 dpi image quality at a printing speed of 13.5m/min, and FDA standard toner.

Mark Andy was showing its entry-level Digital One toner-based hybrid press. Sean Pullen, sales director Asia Pacific at Mark Andy, said that local printers are upgrading from letterpress and could either go the digital or flexo route – or both. 'Also it is very much a flexible packaging market in Thailand of pouches and sachets.'

OKI unveiled two new label printer models. The Pro1040 and Pro1050 are narrow-format label printers made for users who need on-demand printing that is easy to set-up and require minimal training to use. The printers are built for in-house use and help cater to customers who desire a wider choice of label designs yet print a lower print-volume to reduce label stock and wastage. The Pro1040 prints in CMYK, while the Pro1050 prints in CMYK plus white (CMYK+W). With the white toner, users have the added advantage of printing on transparent or colored label media – this is done by printing an opaque white background under the CMYK image, thus making printed labels stand out even more. The Pro1040 and Pro1050 can produce waterproof labels that have been tested to survive underwater, and are robust and resistant to UV fading, thus making them ideal for industrial chemical labeling and for producing asset tracking labels.

Bent Serritslev, managing director of **Zeikon Asia-Pacific**, said it had been a quiet show on the digital printing side, where the company was demonstrating a Zeikon 3300. 'There was actually more interest on the Thermoflex platemarking side,' he said.

Durst's Florian Kössler said: 'Many of our existing label and package printing customers from the region visited us; in addition lots of new contacts with potential new customers have been established. The new Tau 330 RSC attracted a lot of interest and we look forward to a very interesting development in Southeast Asia and Asia-Pacific.'

Converting

AB Graphic had a presence on both the HP booth and that of its distributor, Thai Global Graphic (TGG). It showcased a Digicon Lite on the HP booth, which was sold during the show. 'We were impressed with the turnout at this first Labelexpo Southeast Asia,' said Keith Montgomery, ABC's business development manager. 'We saw a lot of visitors, not only from Thailand but from all over the region. Southeast Asia is a large potential market for us.'

Berhalter's Ivo Schmid said the die-cutting equipment specialist sees good potential in the Southeast Asia market in the coming years, and used the event to promote its name and range of machinery. It appointed TechnoGlobal as its local agent last year.

Korean manufacturer **Bitek** sold its first digital laser die-cutting machine, any-cut III, in Thailand through its local agent. The machine comes with a maximum web width of 350mm and runs at a speed of 30m/min. Bitek, which has agents in Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam and Japan, also promoted its digital knife die-cutter and small-footprint digital label printing machine.

Brotech demonstrated the CDF330 digital finishing system, with options including flexo varnishing, coating, cold foil, semi-rotary die-cutting, slitting and conveyor stacking on non-modular system. It can be configured for roll-to-roll or roll-to-sheet label converting jobs. The company sold an FS330 and a CDF330 to converters in Thailand and Malaysia respectively. Brotech's Ramon Lee said: 'It is a good market that has high concentration of digital, flexo and letterpress technologies. The labor cost, however, is increasing because of which label printers are shifting to more automated machines. We see

growth in Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand.'

ETI Converting Equipment, represented by its Japan-based regional distributor Libero, was promoting its Cohesio, Metronome and Pellicut systems.

Martin Automatic discussed its non-stop unwind and rewind systems for narrow web applications. It has a large installation base in Southeast Asia and regards it as a growing region, according to the company's Hope Hu.

Indian manufacturer **Monotech Systems** highlighted its industrial inkjet systems, label converting and brand protection equipment under its brand Jetsci. The company's Neeraj Thappa said: 'With more than 125 installations in 12 countries, Jetsci is an established brand and has footprints in this market but the show helped us reach more customers in ASEAN.'

Korean company **Packers** promoted its range of lid punching machines, punching tools and embossing units, and reported the sale of a punching system on the first day of the show.

Prati, represented locally by IGS Asia-Pacific, sold the Saturn Omnia finishing system on display at the show to Thai converter Future Business Group – which ordered an additional two machines at the same time. The modular system can be equipped with a wide range of options, and can convert self-adhesive labels, clear-on-clear labels, in-mold labels, cardboard and flexible packaging.

China-based **Pulisi** sold seven finishing machines – three to India, two to Thailand and two to Vietnam.

Press Systems, exclusive distributor of **Rhyguan** in the region, sold the first machine in Thailand to Simat Label. Benjamart Fagg, MD of Press Systems, said: 'We have had a great show and met many new customers from Thailand, China, Europe, India, Japan, Indonesia and Taiwan.'

SanSin, the distributor for Hans Gronhi in Southeast Asia, showed two laser die-cutting machines.

Shenzhen Reborn showcased its 330mm web-width hot stamping and die-cutting machine, which runs at 80m/min.

Tradeally International, exclusive distributor for Flexor in Asia, displayed xCut, a 'plug and play' machine that can print, laminate, die-cut and convert in one pass.



HP Indigo's stand hosted a dark room for fluorescent labels

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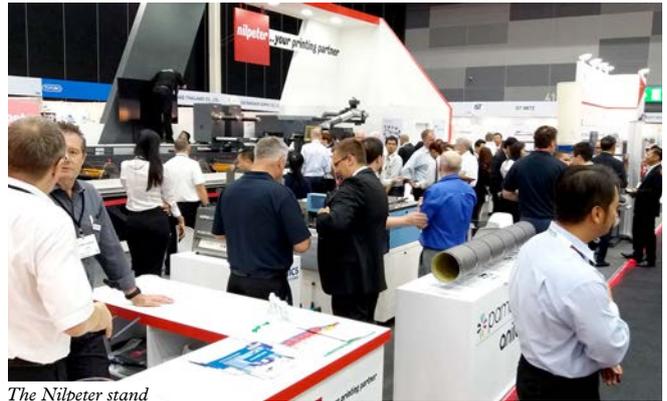
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The Konica Minolta stand



The Nilpeter stand

The system is compatible with any printer. It can convert at 18m/min and produce blank labels at 24m/min with precise semi-rotary die-cutting. The company co-exhibited will Print-on-demand solutions (PODS), which offers a digital label printing machine with Memjet technology. Patsy Ng of Tradeally said: 'Labelexpo Southeast Asia has been one of the few exhibitions that Tradeally has handpicked to participate and the response is overwhelming. The event's visitors are our target audience and potential leads who know what they want and came with a clear agenda. We have secured orders from this show and have managed to bring much

publicity to our machinery.'

Indian manufacturer **Vinsak** displayed a USAR 430 modular slitter rewinder and VRL 400 Vinsak roll lifter.

Inspection

AVT highlighted its product range for quality assurance, process control, automation and efficiency systems for printing and converting, running live demos of a variety of 100 percent print inspection products – including in-line and off-line inspection, color monitoring and barcode verification.

On display were the company's Helios S Turbo+ and Helios Turbo HD+ inspection systems, which offer high-resolution monitoring

even at top speeds.

AVT systems were also on display at partner booths, including HP Indigo's 6900 digital press equipped with AVT's Helios D 100 percent inspection system, which supports various digital printing technologies at all stages of digital production workflow.

Other featured systems included PrintFlow Manager, a reporting tool which ensures that production data collected from all platforms is presented directly to overseers, and Offline Proofing, for scenarios where in-line inspection isn't feasible.

BST eltromat Southeast Asia's managing director Oliver Finkeldey said the show had exceeded his expectations. 'The

market here is booming,' he said. The Germany-headquartered inspection specialist opened an office in Bangkok two years ago. On its stand, it showed the Tubescan 100 percent inspection system, Powerscope 5000 video inspection system, and web guiding equipment.

Erhardt + Leimer's business development manager for Asia-Pacific, Thomas Grimm, reported 'lots of good discussions with converters from Thailand, but also Malaysia and Indonesia'. The company showed web guiding equipment for the narrow web market, and its Smartscan entry-level inspection system, described as particularly suitable for emerging markets.

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The Omet stand

E+L opened an office in Thailand in 2016 which handles the wider Southeast Asia region. It employs five staff but that number is expected to double soon. A local distribution network is also in place.

Luster demonstrated its LabelRoll-H series offline inspection system. It provides 100 percent inspection at 250m/min for any defects including that of variable data such as QR code or barcodes. LabelRoll-H series also integrates rewinding and slitting functions and can be set up within three minutes.

Luster's Frank Li said: 'The company has started to penetrate the Thai market, with about 20 systems installed in the

country. We are happy with the performance of the first edition of Labelexpo Southeast Asia, and sold two inspection systems into Thailand and Malaysia during the show.'

Substrates and adhesives
Armor Asia Imaging Supplies introduced inkanto as a new brand for its thermal transfer offering in Southeast Asia. The company, which has manufacturing bases in China and Singapore, said it sees huge growth potential in Korea, Indonesia and Thailand.

Armor's Mark Day said: 'The Southeast Asian market is very price-sensitive, but we bring value addition to ribbons with the inkanto product range. We

are growing with the market and witnessing double digit growth year-on-year in volume consumption.'

Beijing Langshuo showed its range of thermal transfer ribbons.

DNP focused on two new resin products. R550, a durable resin designed for extreme resistance to most chemicals used in the automotive, chemical, pharma and electronics industries, was launched last year at Labelexpo Europe. M255, meanwhile, is a premium wax resin launched just before Labelexpo Southeast Asia.

Dow Corning showcased Robond Invisu PS-7910, which builds on Dow Adhesives' expertise in water-borne adhesive technologies for self-adhesives filmic labels. This adhesive is a water-based acrylic adhesive polymer with proven runnability on high productivity curtain coating equipment.

Kurz showed its Trustseal Decorate and Trustseal SFX products. Trustseal Decorate allows color changes and 3D effects on a product. The pseudo-plastic character of

Trustseal SFX creates spatial effects and appears to rise off the surface.

Lintec used the show to introduce products from its recently acquired Mactac America division. These give Lintec access to the prime label retail and consumer good markets, which perfectly complements the company's traditional focus on high performance industrial products. Lintec's Masaaki Yoshitake said these products will be Lintec-branded in the Asia-Pacific region, although the brand name will be retained in the US. 'And we are using the Mactac brand to introduce Lintec product to the US. At Labelexpo Americas, Lintec will be part of the Mactac booth.'

Lintec has a major commitment to the ASEAN region, with a manufacturing base in Thailand and Indonesia and sales/slitting centers in Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam.

'ASEAN is certainly a growing market for us,' said Masaaki Yoshitake. 'We see big growth for Lintec now in the food, toiletries and cosmetics markets.'

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The opening ceremony

Lintec has a policy of auditing printing plants to make sure their equipment is properly specified to print the company's label materials.

Mega Synthetics is a Taiwanese-based BOPP film manufacturer which two years ago set up a factory in Thailand. Today the company is a supplier of specialist HP Indigo coated materials and has a wide range of products from direct thermal coating to food grade top coated and non-top coated films, including IML and UV inkjet coated.

Polyonics, a specialist in materials for harsh environment applications such as electronics and chemicals, reported strong leads from companies in India and across Asia. It showed ESD-Safe polyimide and PET labels, tapes and films that comply with the S20.20, IEC 61340 and JESD625B standards and are safe to use in ESD control plans.

Indian manufacturer **Stic-on Papers** launched a digital self-adhesive labelstock targeting digital printing applications both in paper and filmic labels.

TTR Euroworks showcased thermal transfer ribbons, thermal print heads, TTO printheads and ribbons, dye sublimation ribbon, hot foil, PIY ribbons, fabrics and print heads.

James Tsai of foils manufacturer **Univacco** said the company sees Indonesia as the fastest-developing market in Southeast Asia. **Univacco** is witnessing 20 to 30 percent growth in the region, compared to global growth of 15 percent. The company met potential agents for new markets in Southeast Asia. It has distributors in Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines as well as an office in Malaysia.

UPM Raflatac displayed its latest self-adhesive labeling materials for various end uses, including food, beverage, logistics, home and personal care, pharmaceuticals and healthcare, and more.

Inks

Pulse Roll Label Products participated with its exclusive Thai partner, Press Systems. It showed live demos of PureTone UV flexo ink mixing and color matching to showcase the benefits of the total color management system for narrow web label printers.

Siegwerk presented its inks and services portfolios for narrow web applications, including the company's latest innovations for plastic tube laminates, shrink sleeves and in-mold labels, also covering low migration systems, LED inks and specialties for combination printing.

Tokyo Ink showed its new line of UV inks and UV flexo inks.

Ancillary equipment

GEW was represented by local distributor Press Systems. The partnership began four years ago and has since been extended to the wider Southeast Asian market. International sales director Marcus Greenbrook said: 'We've seen big growth in the region since appointing Press Systems as our distributor, in terms of sales, retrofits and service support.' GEW was showing its E2C low-energy UV curing system. 'A key benefit is that the system can be upgraded to UV LED at any time,' said Greenbrook.

IST Metz showed its MBS range with its standard hot swap functionality that enables users to switch between UV lamp technology and LED technology at any time during production.

Nagase Thailand showed its AWP-DEW water-washable flexo plate system featuring Clean Transfer Technology.

Phoseon Technology, a manufacturer of patented LED technology, focused on its new FirePower FP601 and FireJet FJ601 systems for film and flexible packaging applications.

RotoMetrics is expanding its production facility in Thailand owing to the growing market in Southeast Asia. Paul McKay, general manager, said: 'The expansion is expected to be completed by the end of this year.' Speaking of the Southeast Asian market, he added: 'While Thailand and Singapore are big and mature markets, we see potential growth in the Philippines and Indonesia. As volume in these markets will grow, small and medium size label printers will have to switch from flat-bed die-cutting to rotary die-cutting technology. We already see it happening in Indonesia. We see a growth of 20 to 25 percent in rotary dies in the region year-on-year.' RotoMetrics supplies some 70 dies a day in Southeast Asia, and 200 dies

every day across Asia, from its Thai plant. The company showcased RotoRepel, a non-stick treatment for flexible dies and solid rotary dies.

SPGPrints and its Southeast Asian distributor, Techno Global Graphics, reported a highly successful event, with visitors and enquiries from a wide geographic area representing interests beyond label printing. Commented Jaap Storm, area sales manager: 'In addition to seeing existing customers and press manufacturing partners, we received many visits from newly established companies seeking to differentiate themselves, as well as businesses wanting to learn more about incorporating screen printing into their existing flexo, offset, and gravure workflows. Converters supplying beverage, food and personal care markets especially are recognizing rotary screen's potential for building strong, identifiable brands. It is seen as the quality standard for opaque white ink. We had a surprising number of queries about tag and flexible packaging applications, and even a few about textile printing!'

Also represented by Press Systems are **Sandon** anilox rolls and **Rotometal** cylinders. Benjamart Fagg, MD at Press Systems, said these products are well-established in the market and received 'a good number of enquiries'. With all its clients performing well in the region, Press Systems is growing at 50 percent year-on-year and employs 30 people.

Techno Global Graphics represents a plethora of international brands, including AB Graphic, Contilaserline, Flexo Wash, Grafikontrol, GSE Dispensing, Kocher+Beck, SPGPrints, Unilux, and Vetaphone. The company's Phatthira Sangchansri reported that **Flexo Wash** sold seven machines; **Vetaphone** sold one and AB Graphic sold a Digicon finishing system.

S G Edge, an Indian manufacturer of label printing machines and ancillary equipment, reported a successful show, with CEO Santosh Kumar, 'busy meeting printers from the region'.

Toyobo showcased water-washable flexo plate Cosmo Light, which can be washed in tap water with a small amount of mild detergent. It eliminates the usage of hydrocarbon and hazardous solvents. Plates are press ready within an hour. Cosmo Light enables resistance with water-based, alcohol-based, UV flexo and solvent inks.

Troika Systems showed its AniCAM with Anilox QC products which measure the surface profile of anilox ink metering rolls, sleeves and plates used to deliver the correct density of ink to the packaging material to be printed.

Universal Engraving, a manufacturer of hot stamping and embossing dies, was represented by its regional agent, Press Systems.

Voyantic reported a good show. It has an office in Vietnam that handles sales in Southeast Asia. Smoos Peng of Voyantic said: 'We meet more and more traditional label companies in Southeast Asia expressing interest in adding RFID technology to their product portfolio. Voyantic has been in the RFID measurement and testing business since 2004; we want to help label companies make their product smarter.'

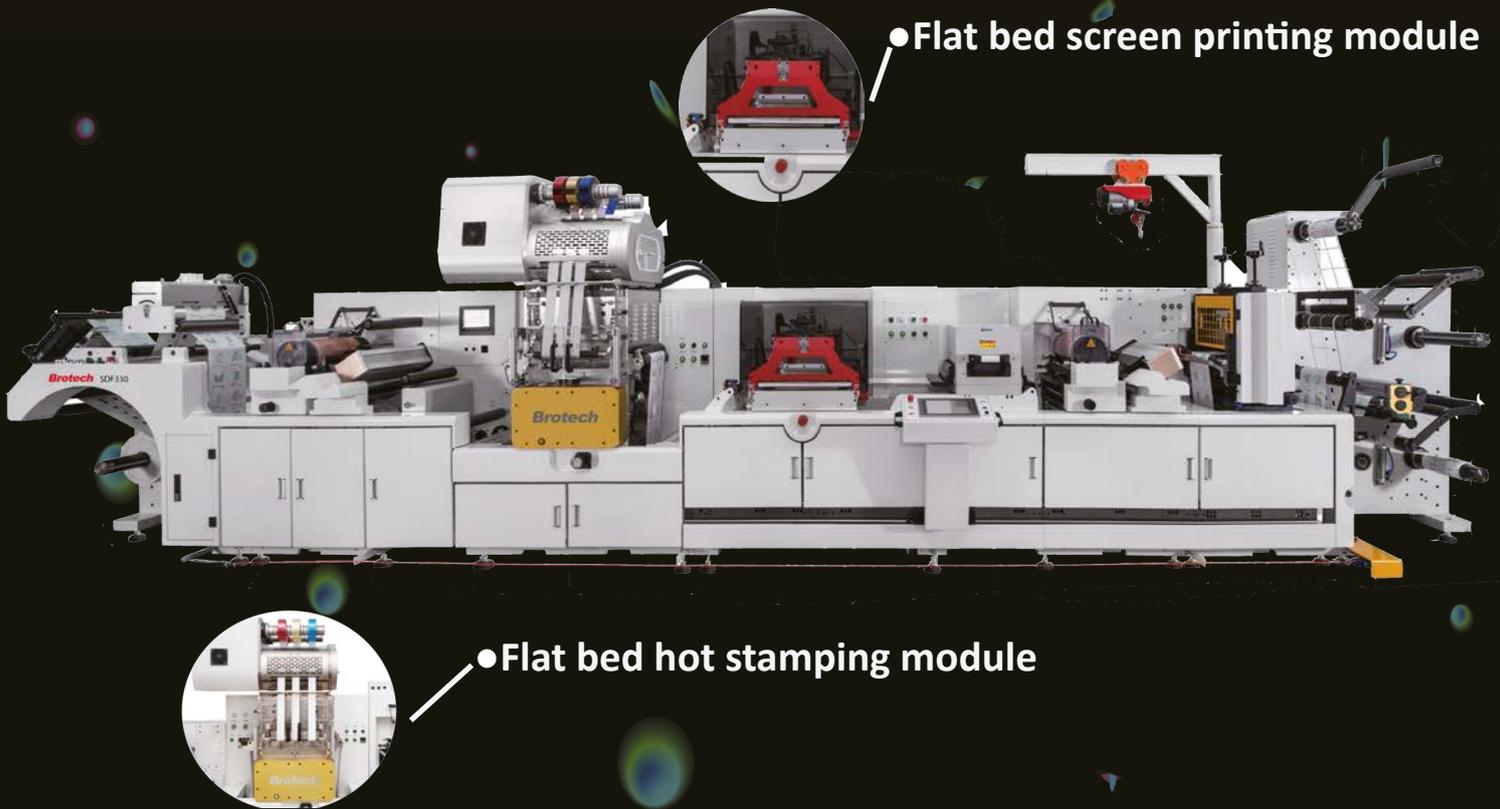


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James Quirk, Labels & Labeling, Piyapong Wongvorakul, Trisan Printing, Thailand, Peter Woods, QLM Label Makers, Malaysia, Brenton Barrett, Multi-Color Corporation, Asia-Pacific, Adrian Pratiwiharja, PT Interflex Sejahtera Perdana, Indonesia

Converters reach heart of ASEAN issues

During Labelexpo Southeast Asia, converters from across the region took part in a lively panel discussion which revealed key trends both in ASEAN and globally. Andy Thomas reports

A panel session chaired by L&L editor James Quirk during the Labelexpo Southeast Asia conference yielded some fascinating insights into the dynamics of the ASEAN market and identified trends of interest to converters globally. The participants represented a great mix of local converters, converting groups and global players. They were Piyapong Wongvorakul, Trisan Printing, Thailand: originally a letterpress label converter, the company has diversified into cartons and adopted flexography and sheet-fed; Adrian Pratiwiharja, PT Interflex Sejahtera Perdana, Indonesia: the company was founded in 2008 to produce shrink sleeves, and has now diversified into flexible packaging; Peter Woods, QLM Label Makers, Malaysia: the label group has operations in Australia, Malaysia, Bangladesh and Vietnam; and Brenton Barrett, Multi-Color Corporation (Asia-Pacific), global label group heavily invested in ASEAN.

The first question looked at opportunities for growth in the ASEAN region. Brenton Barrett said the key question is how to make money from growth, 'as growth comes at a much lower margin than existing business.' Both Adrian Pratiwiharja and Piyapong Wongvorakul said they are looking to grow their businesses through exports, although the latter noted that increased sales do not automatically translate into increasing turnover.

Brenton Barrett said Vietnam appeared to be the fastest-growing market in ASEAN. He said that despite MCC being an international converting group, its ASEAN customers are looking for the company to be local. 'It is all about speed to market and being local. We can export to a market for perhaps 1-2 years

before we have to put down bricks.'

Consolidation is a key trend in today's global market. How does that impact ASEAN? Adrian Pratiwiharja said: 'We have big multi-national converter competitors in Indonesia and that is a good thing. It is fair competition and makes us want to improve continuously. Certain brands in Indonesia still prefer to buy from a medium-sized local company, where we can be more price competitive. They like the quick lead times from a small business.'

Brenton Barrett commented: 'Before I sold my company in Australia to Multi-Color Corporation, I had become a medium-sized printer and I could not compete against the big guys. At the same time I had all the costs so I was no longer competitive with local companies. So medium-sized printers have a hard time.'

Peter Woods opined: 'We are driven by our customers to grow and get bigger and increase our footprint. When we stop growing and investing we will be overtaken and then we can't compete. We need to be big but our local customers want to be engaged locally – they still want to ask a favor of the boss. And we must not get locked up in red tape.'

Barrett reinforced his earlier comments about localism: 'More than half of our business is local in all locations. Global brands still look at you as a local company, so we have to look, feel and act better than the local guys. It does not give us any right to the business.'

Diversifying from labels

A key trend seen globally is a diversification from pressure-sensitive labels to other forms of labeling and package printing. This trend

clearly impacted the panelists' businesses.

Adrian Pratiwiharja said: 'We started with gravure printing, but we saw the shrink sleeve market was not growing so we diversified into flexible packaging which includes single structure packaging to multi-structure.'

Piyapong Wongvorakul added: 'We started with letterpress, and then moved into folding cartons on the roll and now sheet-fed as well. We produce wraparound and in-mold labels and also wet-glue from our sheet-fed presses. We get more orders for folding cartons on the web and sheet-fed can produce smaller runs of IML, so we have adapted both products.'

Brenton Barrett commented: 'We provide all decorating technologies including tubes, shrink sleeve labels, heat transfer and cut and stack – we want to be able to make sure our customers don't leave because there is a packaging technology we do not supply. Not in every plant, but within every region. We also invest heavily in MIS because our customers look for us to take work off their desk, to manage their inventory and scrap. So how can we take their costs away? This about more than the decorated product.'

Key digital press manufacturers were present at Labelexpo Southeast Asia. How did the panelists feel about the future of digital? Piyapong Wongvorakul said: 'We started digital printing 3-5 years ago. In Thailand it is more costly than conventional presses. Customers are looking for cheaper label prices but digital is not cheap, so digital print is suffering. But in the next 2-3 years, when wages increase and cost of producing conventional labels increases, digital printing might come into the market at a better per-label price.'

Peter Wood said: 'Our customers demand



Peter Woods, QLM Label Makers, Malaysia



Piyapong Wongvorakul, Trisan Printing, Thailand



Adrian Pratiwiharja, PT Interflex Sejahtera Perdana, Indonesia



James Quirk, Labels & Labeling



Brenton Barrett, Multi-Color Corporation, Asia-Pacific

Conference and Master Class

Running alongside the main exhibition was a two-day conference program, developed in line with feedback from printers in Southeast Asia. The keynote was delivered by Harit Hiranyaphinant, deputy managing director of TSGA member Copack, who gave an overview of the package printing industry in Thailand. Danny Lim, sales and marketing director at Theia Digilab Indonesia, a converter which recently set up a dedicated digital print division, advised delegates on how to decide whether conventional or digital printing is right for their businesses. Brenton Barrett, president Asia Pacific of Multi-Color Corporation, looked at market trends in the region and in the wider global industry. A CEO panel discussion rounded off the first day (see main article).

On day two, Ryan Shaw, creative director for Southeast Asia at global design agency Landor, examined business models and 360 degree design thinking. Sanjay Alekar, division manager, India Sub Continent, Middle East and Africa, at UPS Logistics, presented on implementing logistics labeling and tracking technologies. For a panel discussion on branding, Landor's Ryan Shaw returned to the stage alongside Damodaran Govindaraju, packaging development director at Marico Southeast Asia, and with Andy Thomas, strategic director for Labelexpo and Labels & Labeling.

Another show highlight was the sold-out Label Academy Master Class covering shrink sleeve technology, which took place on the final day of the show. Moderated by Andy Thomas, the workshop covered design and origination, inks, substrates, and converting and application technology. The workshop ended with a presentation on quality control and fault-finding by leading shrink sleeve expert Dr Séamus Lafferty, president of Barry Wehmler company Accraply.

quality as a given. Our industry is based on a skilled workforce but customers are not interested in our expertise, so technology has to help us deliver quality on a consistent basis. This means speed on turnaround and supply – for the new generation of purchasers this is what they want. They do not want to hear about lead times. So digital will continue to grow and this will be number one on a local level.' Brenton Barrett added: 'MCC initially struggled with digital. The thing that helped us reach a tipping point was when we had a separate sales team. Nobody in that digital sales team is over 25. They do not talk about costs – price never comes up. In our industry we should sell digital as the premium product which it is. Traditionally we used digital to take the worst-performing jobs off the conventional press and put it on digital, but that's not what we bought the digital machines for.'

Adrian Pratiwiharja said: 'In Indonesia it is not really the time yet for digital. We thought about investing in digital but the price is still high there. We have more output on gravure, and certainly that will be the case for the next five to ten years.'

Brand protection

With the prevalence of counterfeiting in the ASEAN region, is protecting brands a growth

opportunity for local converters?

Brenton Barrett said: 'MCC has a division to look at anti-counterfeit packaging, and probably the fastest way to grow is to help our customers protect their brands. It's not just putting something on the product but also to do with the mining of data. They are prepared to pay a little premium for an end-to-end solution and this has been very positive. When we opened in China in 2011, anti-counterfeiting technologies was the way we got into the market. We did it in China and they are the best counterfeiters in the world, so this is where my team is. We take one step forward, then counterfeiters take a step forward – it's a constant battle.'

Adrian Pratiwiharja said: 'We had a water bottle customer being counterfeited, so the customer asked if we had anti-counterfeiting labels. They wanted us to print holograms but this meant we had to laminate, which required different machinery. We tried to suggest micro-print, but they wanted something more visible and overt. In the end they used two different colors coated on the product.'



For more information about the Labelexpo Global Series of trade exhibitions and conferences, visit www.labelexpo.com



Dr Séamus Lafferty, president of Barry Wehmler company Accraply, at the Shrink Sleeve Workshop



Ryan Shaw, creative director for Southeast Asia at global design agency Landor

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Evolving with the African market

Close relationships fostered with flexo and digital printing concerns have enabled the Packology team to convert and sell what they describe as 'the greatest range of printed shrink sleeve sizes on the continent'. Gill Loubser reports

If you ask Brett Collett, Packology's MD, to name the greatest challenge facing shrink sleeve manufacturers, he remarks on the heightened level of responsibility that has to be taken for the end result, compared to that taken by producers of self-adhesive labels.

In his view, self-adhesive label manufacturers can generally place the onus on their customers to know what they want and what will work, but shrink sleeve customers expect suppliers to lead, advise and specify sleeves that are guaranteed to work in a particular environment.

'As a result, we've learnt not to rush our estimating process,' he reports. 'We have to think around all the angles and specify a sleeve that will perform in whatever environment it's applied. This involves a great deal of investigation before submitting an estimate. We have to be certain we won't have to run a job on three different films before the customer is satisfied.'

Sleeve development is critical to the product development process, Collett continues. 'Marrying the film to the application process, ink to the film, and artwork to the pack shape takes time and attention. Suppliers can't be expected to manage all this within a stated lead time without a detailed quotation,' he asserts.

And this is where Packology's expertise comes to the fore. 'Once brand owners have developed sleeve specifications, they can rest assured that they're comparing apples with apples and purchasing sleeves that are fit for purpose.' Indeed, during the past year, Packology has taken great strides towards its goal of becoming South Africa's go-to supplier of shrink sleeves for those navigating this challenging labeling field.

Collaborative approach

Packology's collaborative approach and advanced conversion facilities at its Modderfontein operation in Gauteng, South Africa, are helping other printers to enter this market, without having to invest in post-press ancillary machinery and related staff.

'What's more,' Collett adds, 'our pre-press services provide their sales teams with the confidence to test the waters with existing customers. In essence, we're providing a safe and cost-effective avenue for new entrants to explore the shrink sleeve market; and once they're ready to go on their own, we support them further by supplying conversion equipment and staff training.'

Close relationships fostered with flexographic and digital printing concerns have enabled Packology to convert and sell what Collett describes as 'the greatest range of printed shrink sleeve sizes on the continent'.

'We're able to produce printed sleeves from 16 to 410mm wide,' he continues, 'opening doors for many branded products to benefit from the infinite marketing benefits of shrink sleeves.'

As another feather in its cap, Packology was appointed as the African distributor of the Fesrif range of PET films in August 2016 – by Taiwanese partner FENC (Far Eastern New Century Corporation) – not only for the company's own use but also for sale to smaller converters for whom bulk importation would be too expensive. With this migration to Fesrif PET films, which mimic the shrink behavior of PVC, Packology has eradicated its use of PVC. 'This is possibly my proudest achievement to date,' Collett comments. 'And we have an alternative to offer those companies caught

out when heavy penalties are imposed on the use of PVC.'

Short-run venture

Last year, Packology formed a joint venture called Revolution to specialize in the short-run application of shrink sleeves, especially when it comes to intricate designs and tricky shapes. 'Cosmetics manufacturers have fast become this JV's most faithful customers,' says Collett. 'Not only do we pay great attention to detail, but, more importantly, our acquisition of steam and radiant heat tunnels allows us to run trials and simulate customers' packing environments during the product development phase.'

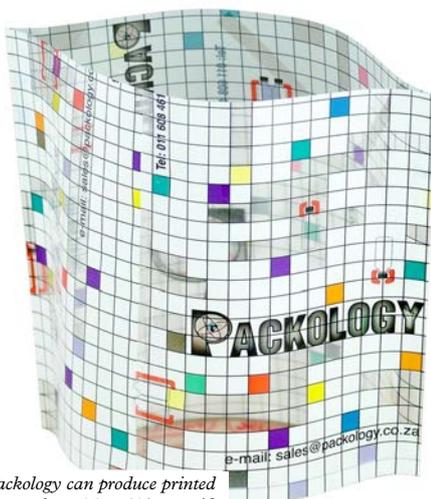
Continuous R&D is constantly expanding insights into the interplay between primary pack, product, film behavior and application method. This experience is further leveraged by offering on-site troubleshooting on a consulting basis.

Packology has also developed a line of steam tunnels for converters whose existing tunnel lines are proving inadequate or for those whose volumes have grown sufficiently to move sleeve application in-house. Additionally, the company offers very short runs of digitally-printed sleeves.

In conclusion, Collett stresses that Packology has never deserted the product that gave birth to this entire market and started his company's journey – the ubiquitous Fuji Seal shrink label. 'We can produce hundreds of thousands of these unprinted sleeves on a daily basis,' he sums up.



For more from Gill Loubser on the African label market, go to www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/gill-loubser



Packology can produce printed sleeves from 16 to 410mm wide



The team at South African shrink sleeve specialist Packology



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Etipress general manager Juan Carlos Arroyave and new products manager Kenjiro Kobayashi



A Catholic priest blessed a new Mark Andy press installed at Etipress

Perseverance pays off for Mexican label company

Guadalajara, Mexico-based Etipress is seeing success with the installation of a Mark Andy P5 press. Chelsea McDougall reports

Many label companies give a name to their presses. But for Guadalajara, Mexico-based Etipress, the moniker they chose had a deeper meaning. For its Mark Andy press, the company chose 'Perseverancia', or perseverance in English - a nod to the years of hardship the company has overcome.

Etipress opened its Guadalajara label business in 2006 with Juan Carlos Arroyave and Kenjiro Kobayashi. Arroyave's father spent four decades in the label industry, so Arroyave knew what he was getting into.

Arroyave and Kobayashi admit that Etipress initially struggled. The co-owners made the mistakes of many new businesses: they made some wrong choices, they didn't study the market, and there were inefficiencies in their processes, company structure and costs. For about a decade, Etipress limped along, printing labels on two legacy presses.

The company relied on support and help from its range of suppliers, but it is Arclad that the pair cites as a major contributor to the fact that they were able to remain open. In 2015, Etipress began to turn things around. In fact, the company was starting to see so much growth, that earlier this year they opted for its first major capital investment in years with a Mark Andy Performance Series P5 press.

'We changed our mindset, we changed our processes, and the result of those changes was a new press,' Arroyave says.

A press blessing

With the press acquisition, Etipress focused on addressing key problems: a loss of business due to productivity issues and the need to stay cost-competitive. The objective was to find a machine that could output similar results as its legacy printing units but with higher productivity.

"In order to reduce waste, we needed to switch to an ink system that would give us more stability during printing"

The 8-color Performance Series P5 that Etipress chose is capable of printing 750ft/min (228m/min) with in-line rotary die-cutting. Etipress opted for Mark Andy's ProLED UV curing over traditional UV curing, and says it is the first printer in the Mexican state of Jalisco with a full LED press - the second in the region.

For Arroyave, the decision to install LED was based on the processes that the team had worked so diligently to streamline. 'In order to reduce waste, we needed to switch to an ink system that would give us more stability during printing,' he says. 'We decided to go with ProLED instead of traditional UV because it's a sustainable, more efficient technology.'

When the new press was installed in September 2017, it coincided with an

About Etipress

Etipress' self-stated mission to produce quality products at competitive prices while still hitting delivery deadlines using the most advanced printing machinery on the market. The company specializes in self-adhesive and security labels and is looking to grow the prime label market.

11-year anniversary for Etipress, and the company didn't let the moment pass without fanfare. 'With the opening, we wanted to celebrate the anniversary of Etipress. We celebrated with employees and with suppliers who helped Etipress in more difficult times, and we recognized the all partnerships of Etipress,' Arroyave says.

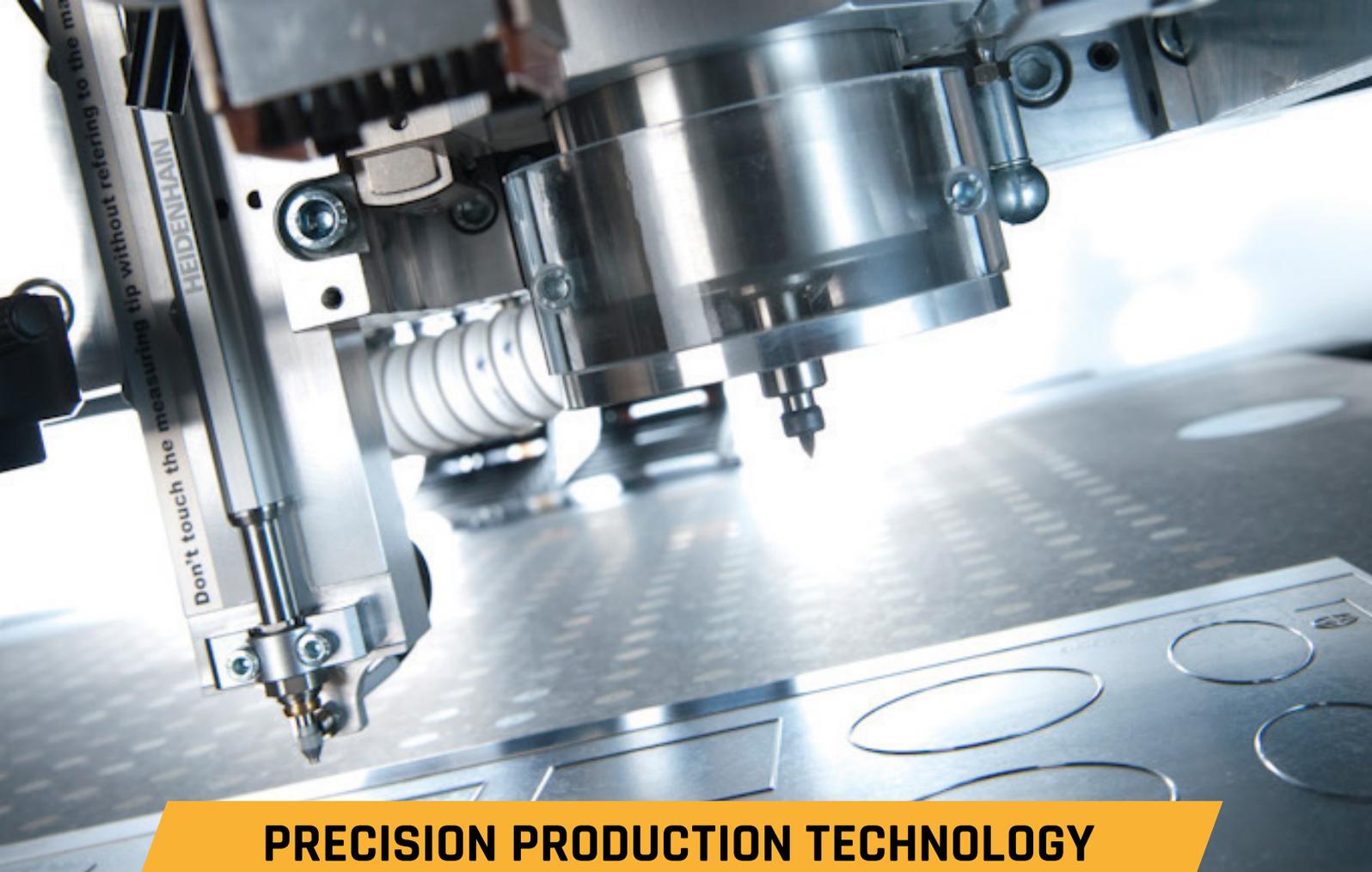
The company invited a Catholic priest to bless the press and pray for its continued success.

The P5 prints jobs 24 hours a day, seven days a week and has impacted Etipress' capability for new business. In the future, Etipress aims to expand into the prime label market, printing jobs for food and beverage as well as the wine and spirits industry.

The company hopes to double their sales from the previous year and in terms of average sales triple their growth overall.



Label Summit Latin America returned to Mexico in April. For a full review, see issue 4



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Sri Lankan printer continues growth trajectory

After moving into a new plant last year, Flexiprint has continued investing to increase its domestic market share and export business. Aakriti Agarwal reports

Sri Lankan converter Flexiprint moved into its new plant in Flinth Industrial Estate in May 2017. The new facility, spread across an area of more than 90,000 sq ft (8,350sqm), was inaugurated by the country's Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe.

The factory houses eight Gidue and Bobst presses – the latest bought in 2017 – and two Martin Automatic MBS unwind/splicer systems and six LRD rewinders, alongside a highly automated ink kitchen by DIC, inspection systems, DuPont Cyrel Fast 1000 TD flexographic plate making system, anilox rollers from Koehler+Beck, and an array of other ancillary equipment.

Sathis Abeywickrama, managing director at Flexiprint, says, 'We house the highest number of Bobst and Martin Automatic machines in all of Asia. With the company growing at 10 percent annually, we invest in a new press almost every year. We are now in the process of evaluating our next investment.'

'The Martin Automatic machines have reduced our wastage by more than 20 percent and enable our flexo presses to reach full potential without unnecessary stops and changeover times.'

The company has invested in improving efficiency at its plant at every level. From using automated machines required for its operations to high quality equipment, advanced ink mixing technology that uses basic colors to blend and make any desired shade in required quantity with just a click of a button while also indicating ink inventory. 'This



Sathis Abeywickrama, managing director at Flexiprint Sri Lanka



Flexiprint Sri Lanka's new factory

eliminates any chance of human error. Thus, it saves time and wastage, which makes us more efficient,' says Abeywickrama.

Tea business

Flexiprint, an ISO 22000:2005 certified company, is primarily a manufacturer of tea tags and envelopes. It began its tea bag tag printing business in 1993 with an 8-color Propheteer press and was the first printer in Sri Lanka to use water-based inks at that time. Abeywickrama gradually added five more Propheteer presses to his artillery and invested in the first Bobst machine in 2005 after its visit to Labelexpo Europe.

'Early on, I knew the tea business was going to grow but that minimum order quantities were going to get smaller,' says Abeywickrama. 'Therefore, I always said that tea tags shouldn't be printed on a gravure machine, and invested in narrow web flexo presses.'

Flexiprint claims to service 63 percent of the Sri Lankan market for tea tags and bags, and is the largest supplier to Dubai for these products. It also exports to India, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Maldives, Papua New Guinea, Vietnam, Australia and New Zealand. It converts some 800 tons of paper and board every quarter.

Flexiprint diversified from manufacturing traditional tea bags to pyramid tea bags in early 2007. However, initially the supply of tagged pyramid mesh for manufacturing pyramid tea bags was a Japanese monopoly, and Flexiprint was not authorized to supply it to its customers. The company therefore ventured to Korea and invested in a machine to manufacture tagged pyramid mesh. Today, it services 60 percent of tagged pyramid mesh in Sri Lanka.

Over time, the company has diversified its business to cater to other industries including

Association

Sathis Abeywickrama is a former president of the Sri Lanka Association of Printers (SLAP). During his tenure, he persuaded the US government to invest in the Sri Lankan printing industry under the Technical Innovation for Private Sector (TIPS) scheme. With the funds received, he took a printing industry delegation to visit Labelexpo Europe to help grow the sector in the country. Abeywickrama was honored with a lifetime award by SLAP in 2016.

garments, liquor, pharmaceutical, food and beverage, and lubricants, among others. It now also prints pressure-sensitive labels, barcode labels and blank labels and is venturing into RFID labels to for the garment and food industries.

Abeywickrama also runs an offset plant, under the name PrintUSA, which manufactures cartons for packing tea bags, tea envelopes and loose tea to customers in Kenya, Rwanda, Iran and Sri Lanka. PrintUSA also manufactures offset-printed cartons to service the value-added rubber industry for pharmaceutical and industrial gloves and all kinds of tags and offset printed packaging to the apparel industry.

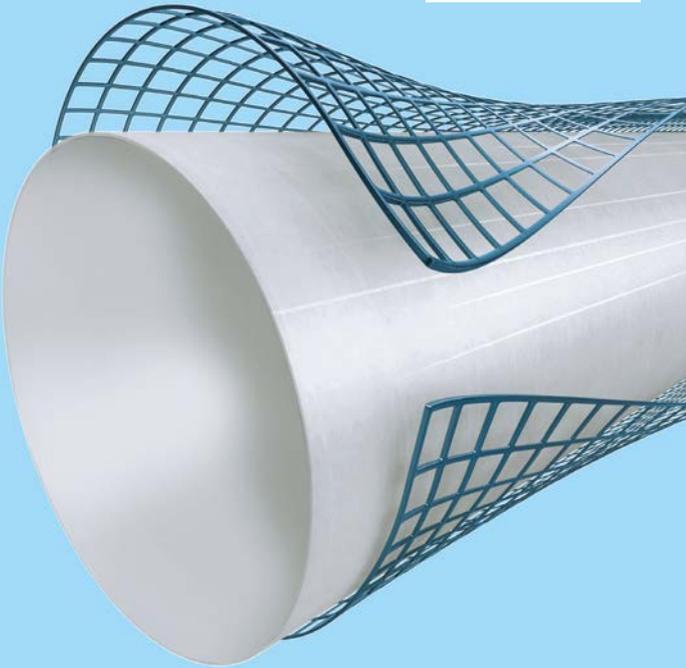
'It is not very tough to make a business successful,' says Abeywickrama. 'However, staying at the top and constantly innovating is sometimes challenging because there is limited room. That's why not many companies remain successful for a long time. I, however, am ready to climb even further.'



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One of the eight Gidue presses with Martin Automatic installed at Flexiprint Sri Lanka



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Indian industry discusses anti-counterfeiting

Brand owners, suppliers and printers come together to find ways to combat the problem. Aakriti Agarwal reports

The Authentication Solution Provider Association (ASPA) recently organized the second edition of The Authentication Forum to discuss counterfeit problems in India and propose ways to combat the same.

Attended by around 200 suppliers, printers and brand owners, the forum was sponsored by Holostik, giriraj foils, The Manipal Group, Vinsak, veritech, Monotech Systems and Pays. The two days saw eminent personalities participating in four panel discussions and individual presentations.

The forum started with an inaugural address by Suresh Prabhu, Union Minister, Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Civil Aviation, Government of India, who reiterated the government's resolve to deal harshly with the rising menace of counterfeiting. 'We are going to create a modern Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) era in India and that will lead to people investing in brands. This will lead to a knowledge economy which will make India a far better and developed place,' he said. 'To make Brand India acceptable, we must first protect IPR because companies that are going to invest money into brand building, creating new rights in the form of patents, copyrights or new product development, all of them need IPR protection. If Indian brands want to become global then they must also be able to respect global brands in India.'

This was followed by a panel discussion on role of government and industry to fight against fake products. S P Sahu, commissioner of Central Board of Excise and Customs, told the audience that Indian customs can be informed through its website about counterfeit products in the market or those expected to cross the border.

S K Singh, scientific advisor to the Ministry for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, added that the country needs better infrastructure in agriculture. 'We need to develop laboratories whose certifications are accepted by the developed world,' he said. He told how the government was trying to digitize farmers to get accurate information on not only the number of farmers in the country, but also their total production. 'It has been noted that the size of the spurious pesticide

"According to the WHO, 25-30 percent of medicines in India are fake. The only way to combat this problem is by empowering and protecting consumers"

market in India is as high as 30 percent by volume and 25 percent by value. It is predicted that the market for spurious agrochemicals will reach 40 percent by value of pesticides sold in the country by 2019,' added Singh.

U K Gupta, president, ASPA, agreed that counterfeiting is increasing globally. In order to put up a real fight against counterfeit products, it is critical that customer identifies a genuine product from a fake before buying it, he said.

Anil Rajput, senior chair at Ficci Cascade (the Committee Against Smuggling and Counterfeiting Activities Destroying the Economy) and senior vice president, Corporate Affairs, ITC, agreed: 'The consumer has a very important role to play in illicit trade so it is important to empower people by educating them about their rights. For this, India needs to have more fast-track courts. Currently, 75 percent of people don't even ask for bills to avail of a 10 percent discount they get by avoiding tax.'

Echoing the same thought, Suresh Sati, anti-counterfeiting investigator expert, said that consumers must be protected. He cited several examples of how people have been affected by consuming fake medicines. 'However, not a single death due to fake medicine has been reported by any doctor. This indicates the lack of seriousness. According to the World Health Organization, 25 to 30 percent of medicines in India are fake. The only way to combat this problem is by empowering and protecting consumers. A pro-consumer law must be



Brand owners, suppliers and printers attended the second edition of the forum to discuss anti-counterfeiting measures



The two-day event hosted an array of presentations and four panel discussions to discuss the fight against counterfeiting

“Budgets for conducting anti-counterfeiting investigations are smaller compared to marketing budgets. All brands must identify the importance of gathering information and investigating”

passed by the government.’

Jayashree Gupta, president at Consumers India and chairperson, Human Rights Group, said: ‘Chemicals used in making tobacco and cigarettes are often used in perfumes. Lipsticks in India have high lead quantity of 20ppm whereas the permissible limit in the US is 10ppm. If the permissible limit in India is so high, the fake products can have even higher amounts that are very dangerous to consumers.’

Sidhartha Gautam, director, risk consulting at KPMG, commented: ‘Budgets for conducting anti-counterfeiting investigations are smaller compared to marketing budgets. All brands must identify the importance of gathering information and investigating. They need to understand problems in their supply chain to be more profitable.’

Combating counterfeiting

The Indian government has addressed the problem in the pesticide industry by introducing the Pesticide Management Bill. ‘This bill makes it mandatory for manufacturers to trace the product to the consumer, ensuring leakages are avoided in supply chain,’ said Sandeep Panwar, regulatory specialist and representative at Pesticides Manufacturers Association of India (PMFAI).

Prashant Behl, associate partner, fraud investigation and dispute services, EY India, stated that companies must identify the modus operandi of fake product manufacturers. He highlighted that scrap dealers, packaging manufacturers and third

party manufacturers are some of the critical sources fake packaging. ‘Counterfeiters operate with a just-in-time model and work with small inventory, often using genuine packaging leaked from a company’s supply chain,’ he said. ‘It is critical we choke the counterfeiter’s supply chain and reduce their margins. One of the many ways is to use a code on a label that needs to be scratched off before buying a product. This ensures the label is destroyed by the consumer and cannot be reused by counterfeiter.’ However, he added that each company, product and brand must be dealt with differently because one approach cannot fit all. ‘Push the counterfeiter to increase the cost by changing your packaging often and making consumers aware. The problem has to be looked at strategically and we should target scrap sellers, the supply chain, ports and customs instead of creating a fear factor by raiding retailers and wholesalers,’ said Behl.

Ranesh Bajaj, director at Vinsak, said, ‘The government must qualify corporates to have an annual authentication budget similar to what has been done for corporate social responsibility. This will leave companies with no choice but to get serious about this problem and in turn, it will benefit them by increased sales.’

‘Consumers must start searching brand names with word authentication on Google. If enough consumers start this practice, it will not only benefit them but also push brands to quickly make a budget to address counterfeiting.’ Bajaj further explained the benefits of block chain technology in

Counterfeit market in India

‘Counterfeiting is increasing globally,’ said U K Gupta, ASPA president. ‘In India, the problem is growing at an alarming rate of almost 44 percent every year. According to industry body Ficci-Cascade, from counterfeiting activity the government of India incurred a loss of 26,190 crore INR (\$4,029 million USD) in 2011-12, which has increased to 39,239 crore INR (\$6,036 million USD) in 2013-14, a growth of 49.8 percent in two years. The market for fakes is constantly growing, and has surpassed 40,000 crore INR (\$6,154 million USD) in the organized sector alone, as law enforcement remains weak and fraudsters freely make inroads into the market.’

addressing this issue.

Deepika Raikwar, supply chain counsel at Hindustan Unilever, said that one third of all FMCG products in the country are fake. ‘We must fight fakes by effective anti-counterfeiting awareness campaigns and ensure the anonymity of brands is maintained,’ she said. ‘We want to educate consumers on how to communicate with brands if they are using a fake product. A constructive dialog is always empowering.’

Alex Lundvall, CEO at Rolling Optics, Sweden, spoke of technology for anti-counterfeiting with 3D micro optical labels. ‘We have printed the English dictionary 1,000 times on an A4 sheet. That’s how evolved and attractive this technology is.’ This technology offers several barriers for counterfeiters.

Sourav Mitra, associate vice president of packaging strategy at Mylan Laboratories, shared measures taken by the company to combat the menace. ‘We are focusing on bundling track and trace technology in the Indian market so products can’t easily be copied. We have done away with linear barcoding.’ The company is also in talks with manufacturers to develop child-resistant cartons for packing medicines. If tampered with, they leave a permanent mark indicating interference. ‘These will not only be child safe cartons but also be tamper evident.’

In the Australian market, the company has stopped using leaflets in its medical packs. ‘Instead we use a barcode on the label that when scanned takes consumer to a pdf of the leaflet on the company’s website, thus authenticating the product and reducing counterfeiting,’ said Mitra.

The Authentication Forum ended with a debate on global growth of the counterfeiting trade.



A small table-top exhibition showed the expertise of suppliers in the anti-counterfeit market



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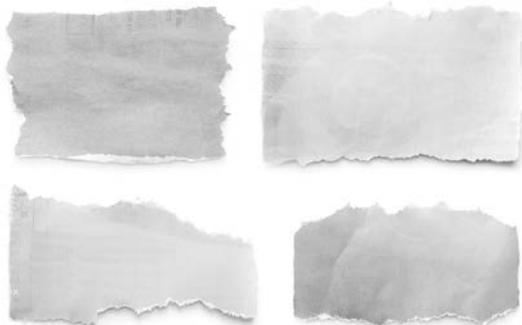


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Form + Function For Craft

The battle for beer

As craft beer continues to grow in the US and around the globe, competition for shelf space is at a premium. Chelsea McDougall reports

In craft beer, the battle for customers is often fought and won at store shelves. According to research from Nielsen, 71 percent of craft beer buyers said they decide which beer to try once they've made it to the store, rather than knowing what they want ahead of time. Further, that same percentage said they like to try brands with bold or interesting packaging.

With those figures in mind, craft beer really becomes a market in which the outside of the can or bottle is just as important as what is on the inside.

By the numbers

Globally, the craft beer market is dominated by the US and Europe. The US creates more craft beer across the globe both in terms of volume and in revenue. American craft beers are driving much of the demand in Asia and in Europe, according to a report by Research and Markets.

Craft beer is defined as operations with annual production of six million barrels of beer or less. Small independent brewers such as this make up about three percent of US annual beer sales.

The Colorado-based Brewers Association puts into context just how rapidly the market is expanding. In 1980 there were eight craft brewers in the US. By 1994, that grew to 537 small or independent breweries. Today, the US is home to an estimated 6,000 craft brewers – and growing.

The Brewers Association says there are an estimated 9,200 active brewery permits, meaning more breweries are expected to come on line soon.

The market's rapid growth rate is creating a competitive landscape, and craft breweries strive to differentiate their beer against a sea of competitors.

'Breweries love to experiment. They like to play with holographic materials, add foils, embossing, colorful graphics,' says Lorri Martinez, VP of sales at Columbine Label Company in Centennial, Colorado.

Some breweries might start small, but soon move to more value: 'When they're starting out, every cent counts,' Martinez says. 'As they grow and get off the ground, they realize how important labels are.'

Adam Heissler, from Prime Package & Label in St Louis, Missouri, is not alone in saying that labels and packaging are often a forgotten piece of the puzzle. 'It's the cheapest part of the pie, and it's the last to go on, so we're often thought of last. But it's arguably the most important piece. They need it from a regulation stand point, but most importantly, it captures their brand.'

Shrink and PS on cans

Columbine Label and Prime Package & Label, were two of several label suppliers either exhibiting or attending the Craft Brewers Conference, an annual trade show and conference organized by The Brewers Association. The event hosted 14,000 attendees in Nashville for its four-day show. They welcomed small and independent breweries across the US, as well as attendees from foreign breweries who came to learn about the market at a trade show and conference.

Blue Label Digital Printing, an all-digital

“Initially, the buzz was all about shrink when the market shifted to cans, but breweries are realizing the flexibility of pressure-sensitive labels over shrink sleeves”

label converter in Lancaster, Ohio, counts about 800 craft brewers as its customers. Blue Label recently purchased an HP Indigo 8000 and at the show was displaying some of the work the company has done for labels on beer cans.

Blue Label Digital Printing president Andrew Boyd says: 'Everybody moved to cans pretty quickly. I remember first seeing craft beer in a can and thinking why would they market a premium product like that? Now it's ubiquitous.'

In the US, craft breweries are largely moving away from bottling beer in glass and turning to canning beers, and quickly realizing the flexibility and benefits.

Canned craft beer is lighter and easier to transport, making it a more sustainable and less expensive way to ship to retail, and a boon for on-the-go consumers.

Cans also preserve beer freshness and integrity longer, and canning lines are proving themselves cheaper to manage than most bottling operations.

Further, many small brewing operations



The Craft Brewers Conference welcomes 14,000 visitors over four days



Craft beer labels on display at the Craft Brewers Conference



Craft beer samples from Blue Label Digital Printing

don't have the space or budget to meet the minimum orders for direct-to-can printing. So, they're ordering blank cans and slapping a highly decorated label or shrink sleeve on it.

'Some of the world's leading brewers are switching to pressure-sensitive beer labels to improve shelf impact and increase market share,' says Avery Dennison in a new case study. 'The no-label look, in particular, is sweeping the market.'

UPM Raflatac, an exhibitor at the Craft Brewers Conference, was talking to show visitors about pressure-sensitive labeling for cans, and its materials that work well with the cold and wet conditions of canning lines.

'Pressure-sensitive labels on cans is a huge shift in the market,' says Jean Willson, UPM Raflatac segment manager for wine, spirits and craft beverage. 'Initially, the buzz was all about shrink when the market shifted to cans, but breweries are realizing the flexibility of pressure-sensitive labels over shrink sleeves.'

Flexibility, Willson says, means custom die-cuts, smaller rolls, ease of application, and the seemingly endless value adds.

'Pressure-sensitive labels open up so many opportunities to experiment,' she says.

While PS labels on cans are popular, label converters at the show were fielding the most questions about shrink sleeves.

Shrink sleeves on cans are growing in popularity among craft breweries looking for the benefits of direct-to-can printing, without having to maintain the minimums required those companies often require. Such large MOQs can be problematic for small craft breweries, or those who frequently change their artwork or experiment with seasonal or promotional flavors – in other words, pretty much every craft brewer on the market.

'The beauty of shrink compared to pressure-sensitive or cut-and-stack labels is

“Initially, the buzz was all about shrink when the market shifted to cans, but breweries are realizing the flexibility of pressure-sensitive labels over shrink sleeves”

that you have a larger platform to play with,' said Inland Packaging's Mike Miller during a sponsored presentation. 'You can have 360-degree graphics to cover that bottle or can and there are some neat special effects that you can do with them. A label can accentuate the contours of the can. You have deeper colors and have some design freedom with your artwork'

Stand out

According to Kurz, foil has a proven track record of successful eye tracking results. Foil can boost the likelihood of a consumer picking up a product by a considerable percentage. In the wine, spirits and craft beer markets, foil markedly raises the eye-tracking and shelf appeal statistics. With the increased interest in premium products, foil is absolutely key in selling the concepts of individuality and quality, according to a Kurz white paper.

In a double-blind study using a selection of similar products in a grocery store, consumers chose the products with a metallized label over similar products with a plain paper label as much as 26.7 percent more often over similar products.

'Our research shows that consumers like

Craft Brewers use independence seal to stand out

The Brewers Association is encouraging its members to adopt the Independent Craft Brewer Seal.

The seal is designed to give craft beer drinkers an easy and unified way to identify true small and independent craft brewers, against multinational brewers seeking to 'blur the line and confuse the beer drinker,' the Brewer Association said.

For many brewers, this means giving the seal real estate on its labels and packaging. For those who are more brewpub focused, they're encouraged to put the seal on display in windows, menus or merchandise. To date, more than 3,000 small and independent breweries have adopted the seal.

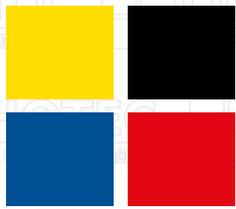
packages that shine or gleam,' says Kym Lee, business development manager, Rexam Metallising. 'With food products, there is a lot of shelf competition. A metallized label can increase the perception of value.'

Harry Leibowitz, PhD, president of the research firm, adds: 'This study confirms that shoppers are attracted to items that catch their eye. With all things being equal, a label or package that has a metallic look stands out, giving those products a clear advantage in the marketplace.'

For burgeoning craft brewers, the label can be a make or break moment.



For more information on US craft brewers, including market information, visit the Brewers Association at www.brewersassociation.org



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Eliminating waste from liners

The supply chain is working to improve the recycling of release liners. David Pittman reports

'2018 will show gains and improvements in sustainability for the self-adhesive industry in every aspect of the supply chain,' so said Channeled Resources chairman Calvin Frost at the end of 2017. In particular, he predicted growth in liner recycling. 'We still only recycle 5-7 percent of available spent liner in the Western Hemisphere.'

Juha Virmavirta, RafCycle Solutions director at UPM Raflatac, identifies 20-plus percent growth each year in the volume of release liner recycled through the company's RafCycle program. This he attributes to the supply chain pushing such tools alongside the growing appetite of consumers and brand owners for sustainable options.

'We clearly see a consistent trend towards stronger, but lighter weight, less resource-hungry solutions and more use of recyclable and renewable materials,' says Georg Müller-Hof, vice president marketing at Avery Dennison.

Frost's colleague Cindy White, CEO at Channeled Resources, notes however that release liner recycling is still a subdued topic. 'Companies want to be sustainable but they also don't want to spend extra money if that is what it takes to be sustainable.' Virmavirta agrees, saying there is still a lot of work to do with a large amount of label industry waste being incinerated or going to landfill.

Müller-Hof identifies 60 percent of waste across the label industry value stream created during manufacturing and converting, including 20 percent in converting. Moreover, once the end user applies labels to the final product, nearly half of what they receive from the converter is waste. 'The majority of that is the liner.'

He continues: 'The product goes to the consumer, maybe to landfill, and so we concern ourselves with how our labelstock affects the ability of the product to be recycled. The bigger concern at this stage, though, is the liner waste generated during the labeling of the product itself. One of the most important challenges that our industry faces today is how to manage that liner waste in a productive way.'

Viable

To help make release liner recycling a more viable proposition, programs such as RafCycle exist and are being enhanced.

'At the moment the main challenge is the collection of the materials,' says Müller-Hof. 'The liners cannot be "contaminated" with cores, labels and adhesives,

and other waste. This means that training is needed on how to segregate the liners from the "normal" waste stream. Technology innovations could also help address this challenge.'

White sees large generators across America collecting truckloads and sending them to paper mills for recycling. 'The problem is the companies that generate less than truckload quantities.'

Virmavirta says the cost structure needs to be analyzed in each situation, as it is a 'function of volume, frequency and transportation distance.'

"There is a shared responsibility for the industry as a whole to find an all-encompassing solution, rather than have individual companies striving for fixes in isolation"

'Logistics play a critical role. We are developing logistic solutions in different markets and partnering with logistics companies to make the process more efficient and as easy as possible. With some partners, we ask if the volume is justified. If so, then we collaborate directly with the brand owners on collection and transportation for recycling. Where the volumes are smaller and more frequent, then deliveries of spent liner are required.'

Future developments

Today, pressure-sensitive manufacturers can access a number of industry-specific programs for recycling and reuse of spent release liner, says Müller-Hof. 'But, we are convinced there is a shared responsibility for the industry as a whole to find an all-encompassing solution, rather than have individual companies striving for fixes in isolation. On top of liner recycling the industry needs also to address matrix waste.'

The European Union will also soon make a decision on renaming 'waste' to 'bi-products', which Müller-Hof explains will affect recycling as it could open up the possibility to transport more freely the materials intended to be recycled.

Virmavirta sees PET-based and filmic release liners as a key future development. 'The volume of PET liner is growing, although still modest and not yet established from the recycling point of view. We welcome more collaboration between material suppliers, brand owners and plastic recyclers to establish a reliable recycling solution for PET liners.'

A previous example of PET liner recycling in action saw Avery Dennison collaborate with Viridor and PET UK to help Coca-Cola European Partners reduce waste, costs and the carbon footprint of SmartWater production in the UK through recycling tonnes of PET waste into a material suitable for making new items such as PET staple fiber, strapping or thermoformable sheets.



A previous example of PET liner recycling in the UK from Avery Dennison, Viridor and PET UK on behalf of CCEP



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The green column

Liner recycling: dispelling the myths

Why do many in the industry still think release liner cannot be recycled? Danielle Jerschefske dispels this inaccurate notion

The paper industry has historically regarded siliconized substrate as a problem. The perception is that silicone cannot effectively be dispersed in the de-inking process, leaving defects in the material structure. This notion is part of a longstanding culture, yet at least one paper pulping company has found the material to be highly valuable, proving that PS label release liner can, in fact, be recycled.

The Fox River Fiber Company, located in De Pere outside Green Bay, Wisconsin, collects and repulps paper release liner. Adam Kositzke, fiber procurement manager at Fox River Fiber, says: 'We love liner because the material is 100 percent cellulose; it's silicone on paper only. Years ago, we were in the same mold as other mills, communicating no and declining to accept residual liner because it would create fish eyes in the paper.'

'With the help of label industry leaders, we discovered we're able to remove the silicone coating with our existing mechanical equipment. We now view this capability as a differentiator.'

A number of years ago, Calvin Frost, chairman of Channeled Resources Group (CRG) based in the US, and Petri Tani, founder of Cycle4green in Finland, together approached Fox River Fiber wanting to make desiliconized pulp (DSP) from 100 percent liner. And while the trials were unsuccessful in a 100 percent inclusion rate, the pulper collects release liner, using it as 20-30 percent of the value of post-consumer mixed paper and other office materials, effectively removing all of the silicone coating.

Collecting paper liner

Fox River Fiber continues its relationship with CRG, purchasing 100-150 tons of bailed liner per month from the business, which accounts for approximately 30 percent of spent liner received monthly. It has educated and now collaborates with recycling collectors in Milwaukee, Chicago and northern Indiana, working to capture more suppliers to move it closer towards collecting up to 3,000 tons each month.

Fox River Fiber has close relationships with many of the industry's suppliers that create the base sheet and facestocks for PS labels, collaborating to bring viable solutions to the value chain.

Volume and distance continue to be challenges at this point. While the company receives calls from many small end users, the cost of

"With the help of label industry leaders, we discovered we're able to remove the silicone coating with our existing mechanical equipment. We now view this capability as a differentiator"

getting the material collected can be more expensive than throwing the liner into landfill.

Kositzke explains: 'The way we can make it work depends on what we're talking about, what format the material is in and what it costs to transport it to our facility. Each scenario is different.'

From liner to alternative fuel

Convergen Energy is the rebranded business formerly known as Greenwood Fuels, a supplier of cleaner burning fuels (pellets) used as a substitute for traditional fuels such as coal or other solid fuel used in a boiler. The enterprise accepts printed packaging industry waste – such as paper and film release liner, matrix, unsupported and laminated flexible films – and converts it into pellets that meet the economic and environmental objectives of power plants and brand owners alike.

Since its onset, Convergen had been beholden to natural gas prices and extreme weather conditions, which can dramatically affect material intake volumes. This ebb and flow caused planning and capacity issues, creating many uncontrollable variables. The company needed to be able to control demand in-house.

Therefore, in 2016 Convergen purchased a small power plant in upper Michigan, L'anse Warden Electric Company (LWEC), to close the loop on converting and generating energy. The power plant has different fuel sources and long-term contracts. The liner waste to energy pellet fuels are an additional usable resource to provide alternative energy to the grid.



Fox River Fiber Company, based in Wisconsin, USA, collects and repulps paper release liner

Liner recycling facts and figures

- The label substrate used at Labelexpo Americas 2018 will be collected and shipped to Convergen Energy with the help of Channeled Resources Group
- Silicone coating represents up to 2 percent of paper liners and less than 0.2 percent is of film liners
- Convergen has capacity to accept 8,000 tons of packaging waste material per month
- Some of the world's largest beverage and e-commerce enterprises are involved in liner recycling programs to meet their corporate goals in reducing their firm's environmental impact



Convergen pellet truck

“In the past, we relied on fuel sales to customers that were out of the company’s control. We changed the model by purchasing our own power plant, making us vertically integrated, and providing our business and customers with a continuous outlet for these otherwise landfilled materials”

Explains Ted Hansen, CEO at Convergen Energy: ‘The vertical integration is a huge step forward for us. In the past, we relied on fuel sales to customers that were out of the company’s control. We changed the model by purchasing our own power plant, making us vertically integrated, and providing our business and customers with a continuous outlet for these otherwise landfilled materials.’

The fuel pellets are manufactured in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and are shipped direct to LWEC.

Rising importance of zero waste

With the closed loop system, Convergen’s pellet plant is currently at about 40 percent capacity, collecting, on average, 4,000 tons of raw materials each month. As sustainability continues to drive a certain amount of sales – with consumers rewarding environmentally conscious product suppliers with their hard earned dollars – Convergen is steadily increasing the amount of material brought into the pellet plant.

‘Our goal is to ramp this up and build plants in other parts of the country,’ continues Hansen. ‘It used to be that there wasn’t a lot of drive to get the materials out of the landfill, but we are finding more and more that our suppliers’ [end users] customers [consumers] are pushing them

to be landfill-free and to demonstrate sustainability.’

Still, most participants are looking for cost savings compared to landfill, and an attractive means for facilitating the switch. The company is working with recyclers, providing certificates of destruction to show that the material is not going to landfill, and verification that the system will protect their brand’s authenticity. The last thing a participating end user wants to see is their packaging material being used in a second-hand or counterfeit marketplace.

Convergen is busy educating recyclers and waste haulers on its capabilities so when these companies provide a bid for a current or prospective customer’s waste hauling and disposal, the waste-to-energy, landfill-avoidance solution can be included in the offer.

‘Every customer is different,’ says Hansen. ‘Some will do more to be landfill-free. Others understand that their landfill costs may decrease with the right volume and distance from our facility. Some want a more economical opportunity for their business. As an alternative energy company, we try to make it work for all of these parties in the most seamless way possible.’



Learn more about LWEC at www.convergenenergy.com/clean-power/biomass/

Green news in brief

Amcor makes recycling pledge

Amcor has pledged to develop all its packaging to be recyclable or reusable by 2025, and says it is the first global packaging company pledging to do so. The move addresses a major environmental issue with capability, scale and reach. At the same time, the company committed to increasing significantly its use of recycled materials and driving consistently more recycling of packaging around the world. The action joins Amcor with 10 leading brands and retail companies making the same 2025 commitment, in collaboration with the Ellen MacArthur Foundation (EMF). Most of those companies are Amcor customers.

Grafokett replaces petrol and diesel cars with hybrid fleet

Sweden-based converter Grafokett is replacing its entire fleet of petrol and diesel cars with seven hybrid electric vehicles. Grafokett is ISO 14001 certified and sees new Volkswagen Passat GTE and Golf GTE vehicles hybrid electric vehicles as a step towards a better environment. Daniel Nehl, chief marketing officer at Grafokett, said: ‘We know that seven vehicles won’t appreciably lower the global temperature. However, we can do something. That’s why we chose to go electric.’

Sun Chemical and Eastman introduce recycle-friendly PETG sleeves

Sun Chemical has launched its SunLam de-seaming adhesive for shrink-labeled containers to help recyclers improve recycled polyethylene terephthalate (rPET) yield without process changes. Sun Chemical and Eastman tested SunLam on labels made with Eastman Embrace LV copolyester. By changing from a traditional solvent to SunLam de-seaming adhesive, shrink labels de-seam and release during the whole bottle wash step of the wet recycling process. The label removal occurs prior to color, infrared and manual sorting, thus preventing shrink-labeled PET bottles being removed from the rPET stream due to misidentification

Tetra Pak delivers more than half a billion renewable packages

Tetra Pak has delivered more than half a billion packs of Tetra Rex Bio-based, claimed to be the world’s first beverage carton to be manufactured entirely from renewable materials. Tetra Rex Bio-based, which was launched in October 2014, is manufactured solely from Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified and controlled sources paperboard, together with plastics derived from sugar cane, all traceable to their origins.

Lecta publishes environmental report

Lecta, a European manufacturer and distributor of specialty paper for labels and flexible packaging, has published its latest environmental report. The company says that over the past ten years, nearly 135 million euros have been invested in projects to minimize environmental impact. The primary goals have been to increase energy efficiency, decrease air emissions and optimize the use of natural resources in the manufacture of the company’s product portfolio, based on paper as a natural, renewable raw material.

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Label trends

Data from Label Sub Association of PEIAC, the Printing Equipment Industries Association of China, shows continued growth in the local label market



The total production area of PS label is **5.8 billion sqm**, a **12% increase** from 2016

In 2017, the annual production value of label printing in China was **43.2 billion RMB**, a **10% increase** from 2016

In 2017, **35 offset presses** were installed. The total install base in **2017 is 258** – a **15.7% increase** from 2016

In 2017, **180 flexo presses** were installed. The total install base in 2017 is **2,197** – a **8.9% increase** from 2016

The detailed data from 2013-2017:

YEAR	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017	
	Value	Year-on-year % increase								
Label printing production value (billion RMB)	30	10%	33	% increase	36	9%	39.2	8%	43.2	10%
Production area of PS label (billion m²)	4	10%	4.4	10%	4.8	9%	5.2	8%	5.8	12%

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Ad index

AB Graphic	65	GEW	53	Pantec Gs Systems	110
Achem	2	Grafisk Maskinfabrik A/S	8	Phoseon	21
Anderson Europe GmbH	98	Grafotronic	66	Presstek	74
Armor	48	GSE	113	Pulse	85
AstroNova	56	Hamillroad	22	RK PrintCoat Instruments Ltd	113
Avery Dennison	13, 104	Harper Corporation Of America	103	Rosemont	78
Aztech machinery	54	Herma	42	Rotometrics	14
Berhalter AG	113	Hofeld Tool & Die	103	Sandon Global	60
Bobst	50	HP Indigo	25	Schober	86
Brotech	90	Inkjet Solutions Ltd	100	Screen USA	70
Cartes	1	KAO Collins Ink Corp	58	Sihi GmbH	76
Cerm	85	Kocher + Beck	41	SMI Coated Products Pvt. Ltd.	110
Codimag	73	Korea Label Show	96	Sohn Manufacturing	70
Colordyne Technologies, LLC	66	Label Academy	81, 108	Spartanics	77
Daco Solutions	100	Label Awards	46	SPG Prints	IFC
Dantex Graphics Ltd	93	Label Traxx	60	Tesa	100
Delta ModTech	BC	Labelexpo Americas	26	Theurer.com GmbH	93
DMS Inc	103	Labelmen	IBC	TLMI	108
Domino	19	Lintec	28	UEI	16
DPR	69	Lombardi Converting Machinery Srl	73	Venture Electronics Spain, S.L.	58
Durico	15	Martin Automatic	94	Vetaphone	103
Durst	34	Meech	87	Xeikon International by	36
Edale	32	Miyakoshi Europe	56	Xeikon Prepress	74
Enprom	68	Newfoil machinery	88	Yupo	88
Erhardt + Leimer	119	Nilpeter	4	Zeller + Gmelin	108
Focus Label Machinery	94	OMET Srl	44		
Gallus	3	Orthotec	107		

Label SOCIETY



TLMI converter meeting San Diego, USA

- 01 TLMI staff Kyle Baldwin, Vicki Runyon, Dan Muenzer and Charles Millitzer
- 02 Terry Pennington, Steve Ehlerl from Ennis and Kevin Kalkofen from Badger Tag & Label
- 03 John Pedroli from CCL, Anthony Dardano and Mark Turk from International Tape & Label
- 04 Tony Macleod, TLMI's legal counsel, Sharon Lane from The Meyers Printing Companies, Lori Campbell from The Label Printers and Mike Lane from The Meyers Printing Companies

Label Summit Latin America Guadalajara, Mexico

01 - 07 Delegates enjoy the networking reception, sponsored by HP Indigo, on the first evening of the Summit

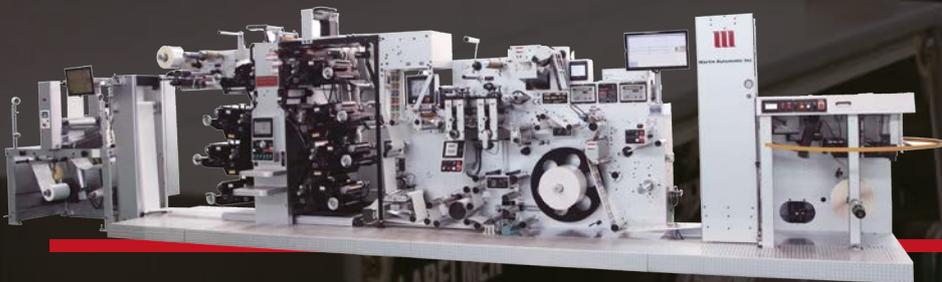


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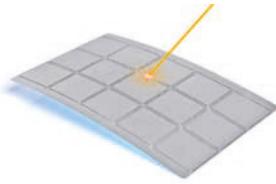
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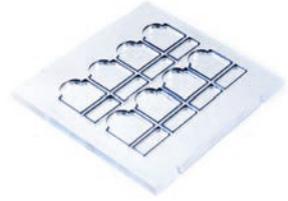
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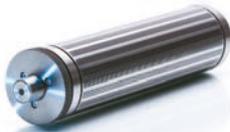
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- + Label and packaging designers
- + Industry suppliers

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- + New markets: the rise of printing on demand

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