

# LABELXPO AMERICAS REVIEW

Comprehensive report from the industry's  
biggest show of the year

# LABELS & LABELING

THE WORLD OF PACKAGE PRINTING

## 'WAR ON PLASTIC' REACHES PACKAGING INDUSTRY

Some print segments are braced for a challenge;  
others eye opportunity

## INDUSTRY 4.0

Cyber-assisted automation is becoming  
a reality, but obstacles remain

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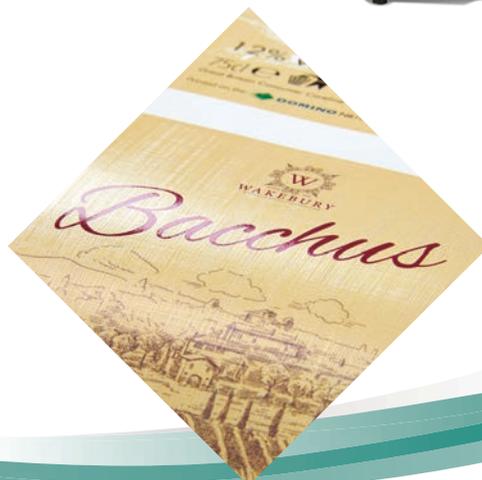
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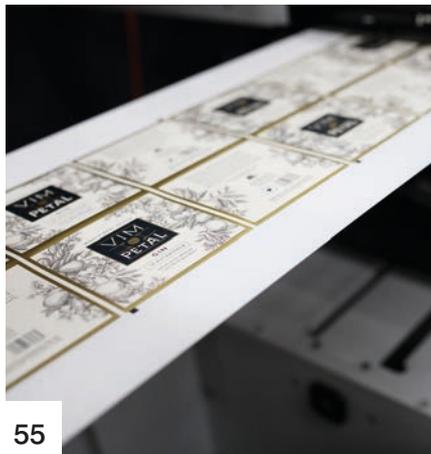
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### labels&labeling.com

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



### Coca-Cola and its custom labels (feature)

As part of our look into the L&L archives, read again about this landmark digital printing project



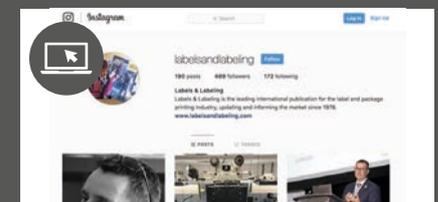
### #LnLturns40 (feature)

Read a selection of features from the Labels & Labeling archives as we prepare for our 40th anniversary



### New languages (newsletter)

To broaden the reach of our industry-leading newsletters, new languages will shortly be added to make them more accessible – <https://tinyurl.com/ybjj34a9>



### L&L on Instagram (news)

Follow us on Instagram for a more visual update on the label and package printing industry

# PET bottle recycling made easier, with the Avery Dennison CleanFlake™ portfolio.

The real challenge in the recycling process of plastic containers is that the label material, adhesive and ink can contaminate the plastic flake.

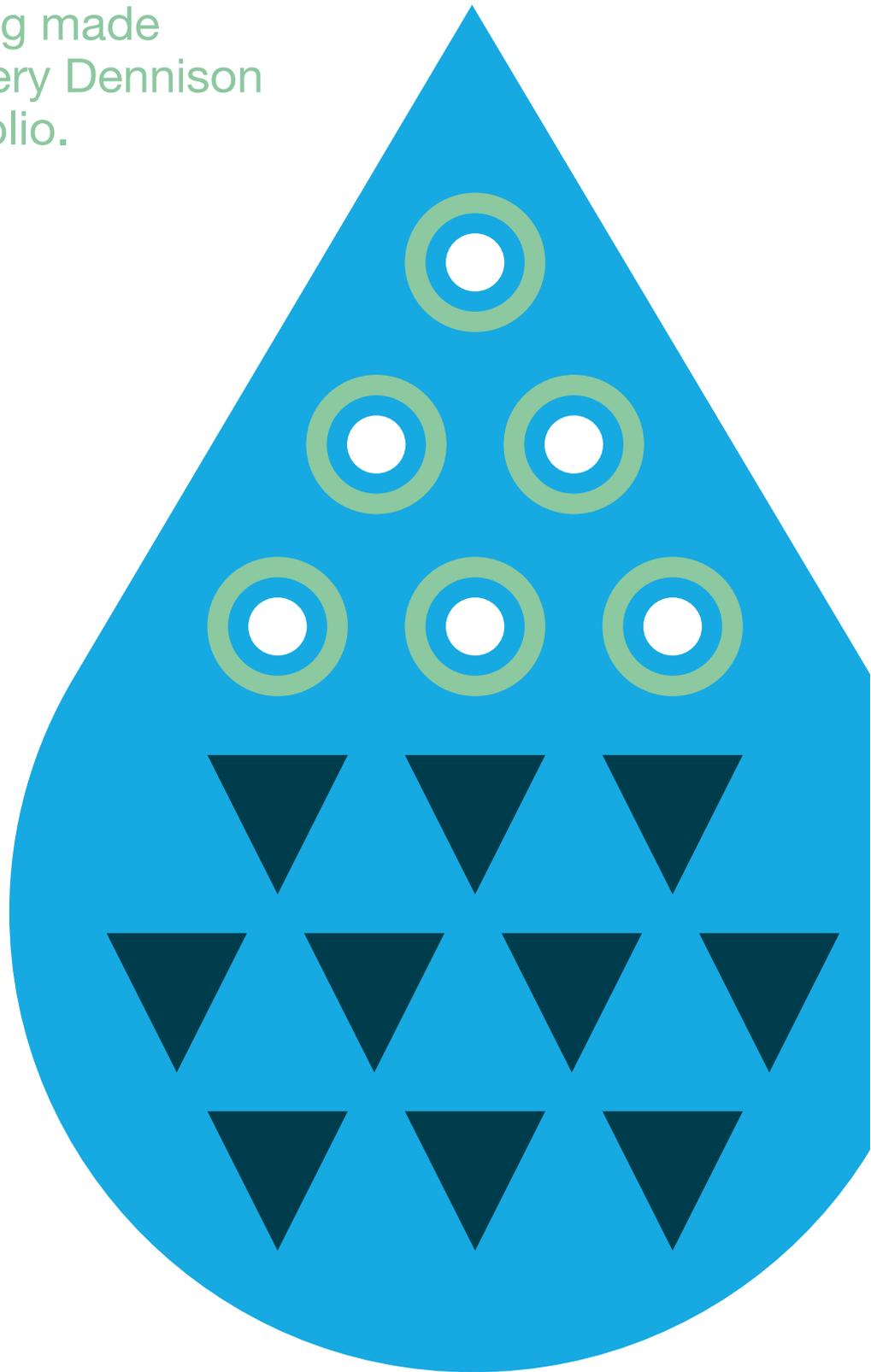
As Material Scientists we have invented the solution.

Our CleanFlake™ label solution enables 100% recyclability of any PET bottle by separating labels cleanly. The adhesive adheres to the PET bottle until the very end of its life-cycle, when the adhesive is switched off at the recycler in a sink/float process.

The result is pure, clean PET flakes that can be recycled—the result is also less landfill waste

If you are looking to make PET bottle recycling easier or to find sustainable design solutions visit us at: [label.averydennison.com/sustainablesolutions](http://label.averydennison.com/sustainablesolutions)

#Builtonbreakthroughs



## Thirty years ago (L&L issue 5, 1988)



**P14** A new form of continuous inkjet printing technology was introduced by UK company Elmjjet that was capable of printing everything from barcodes, graphics variable text, 2-color illustrations and, longer term, of producing good quality 4-color halftone printing. Mike Fairley described it as a technology offering a whole range of exciting new possibilities for economic personalization.



**P20** It was predicted that the majority of Bordeaux wines would move to self-adhesive labels in the next 2-3 years. The pattern of wine and spirits labeling in France was starting to change, with more wineries starting to convert some of their product lines to self-adhesives. The past 18-24 months had seen the introduction of quality self-adhesive wine labels go from strength to strength.

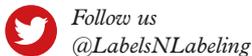


**P22** Dennison's unique non-impact printing technology had created a US\$15 million market for variable data, sequential numbers and barcodes on labels and tags. It was now gaining acceptance in Europe with distributor partnerships for its Idax systems formed in the UK, Holland, Switzerland and Germany, Sweden, Belgium and Denmark.



**P48.** L&L reported on the considerable investment that had made Waddingtons one of the world's fastest-growing label groups. Five years before, its involvement in labels had solely been through Waddingtons of Gateshead. By 1988, its label division was made up of five autonomous companies working together and specializing in wet-glue, self-adhesive and mono-web labels.

## Twitter chatter



**@GreatLakesLabel:** Warmth in label design means warm colors, yes, but it also includes a more abstract concept of nostalgia and understanding or compassion. <https://buff.ly/2M1leNV>

**@PaulPage:** Just 22% of Indians own a smartphone. Yet the country will pass the US next year to become the world's No. 2 smartphone market. <https://on.wsj.com/2Nndma8>

**@Microsoft:** @Kroger, America's largest supermarket chain, aims to cut its electricity consumption by 40% with #IoT. Here's how: <http://msft.social/jceans>

**@NewPlasticsEcon:** A blueprint for a #NewPlasticsEconomy that designs out waste and pollution, while keeping the material at its highest value use for as long as possible. <https://t.co/4TVe9JGky6>

**@AveryDennison:** Our Foundation and employees granted \$9K to support the build of an inclusive field and playground in #OH. <http://avydn.co/2oDnYDY>

## A change of pace in Rosemont

### Editor's note

In an interview at Labelexpo Americas, TLMI president Dan Muenzer commented on the pace of technological development in the industry: 'There's so much innovation going on in our industry right now, and it's happening so fast. Historically companies would wait until [Labelexpo] Europe to launch new innovations, but there are more innovations being launched here than in previous editions. Because of the speed of technology changing, you can't wait two years.'

It's a salient point. Show organizers like to quote numbers, and at this year's Labelexpo Americas there were some good statistics to shout about – impressive increases, for example, in exhibitor numbers, floor space, rebook, and visitors from Latin America (see page 89). But technological developments

are harder to quantify; it is not merely a question of tallying product launches – key, incremental improvements to existing technology can equally cause a tipping point to be reached, as has been seen in the past 12-18 months with both inkjet and hybrid presses, and as was very much on display at Labelexpo Americas.

It is not unfair to say that Labelexpo Europe traditionally attracts more product launches than Labelexpo Americas. But last month in Rosemont there was a tangible change of pace, with an abundance of new products and innovations on display on the show floor.

There were impressive gains made in conventional, digital and hybrid printing presses; in materials geared towards new markets and greater sustainability; in ever-more sophisticated workflow

software tying production together; in the continued push of UV LED into the narrow web mainstream. You can read about all these developments in L&L's extensive review of the show in this issue.

Industry 4.0 technologies are driving the whole label converting supply chain towards greater efficiencies, integrating design, approval, factory management, print and finishing into one seamless operation. Change is happening quicker than ever, and Labelexpo Americas 2018 provided emphatic proof.

*James Quirk*

James Quirk  
Group managing editor

# News



*Armor is a France-based thermal transfer specialist with operations worldwide*

## Armor acquires Iconex TTR business

*Deal strengthens Armor's US presence*

Armor is to acquire the thermal transfer ribbon (TTR) business and related intellectual property (IP) of Iconex, strengthening its position in the US and worldwide.

Iconex is a provider of low-cost receipt, label and imaging products. Its TTR IP includes the patented formula of all Iconex grades including Ultra V. Armor noted that Iconex invented the paper receipt over a century ago, and today offers products including receipts, labels, printer supplies and other essentials.

Armor is a France-based thermal transfer specialist with operations worldwide, including a manufacturing unit in the US since 2000. It continues to pursue growth in the region, such as with the opening of Armor Canada and its presence at trade shows such as Labelexpo Americas. The acquisition of Iconex's TTR business marks a new stage in positioning Armor as a key TTR player in the US market.

Hubert de Boisredon, chairman and CEO at Armor, said: 'Today's news strengthens the industry by bringing together two long-time leaders in the TTR market with storied histories in the market. The Iconex brand is well known for its product innovation and we are excited to merge with our existing technology to better service our customers.'

The two companies have also signed a global reseller agreement, under which Iconex will become a preferred global reseller for Armor and its TTR products.

Iconex CEO Craig Gunckel said: 'This strategic decision to sell our TTR business and associated IP will allow us to better focus on our strategy to become the world's leading provider of receipts and innovative label solutions. We are also very excited to enter into a distribution agreement to become a reseller of the full line of Armor products and technologies.'



*Read about Armor's new facility in Canada in L&L issue 4*



*Amcor and Bemis' combined revenues are US\$13 billion*

## Amcor and Bemis merge

*Deal creates global leader in consumer packaging*

Amcor and Bemis have entered into an agreement that will see Amcor acquire Bemis in a US\$6.8 billion all-stock combination.

Combining the two complementary companies will create the global leader in consumer packaging, according to a statement, 'with the footprint, scale and capabilities to drive significant value for shareholders, offer customers and employees the most compelling value proposition in the packaging industry and deliver the most sustainable innovations for the environment.'

The transaction will be effected at a fixed exchange ratio of 5.1 Amcor shares for each Bemis share, resulting in Amcor and Bemis shareholders owning approximately 71 percent and 29 percent of the combined company, respectively. Combined revenues are stated at US\$13 billion.

Amcor CEO Ron Delia said: 'The strategic rationale for this combination and the financial benefits are highly compelling for both Amcor and Bemis shareholders. We are convinced this is the right deal at the right time for both companies, and with the right structure for both sets of shareholders to participate in a unique value creation opportunity. Amcor identified flexible packaging in the Americas as a key growth priority and this transaction delivers a step change in that region.'

William F. Austen, Bemis president and CEO, commented: 'The combination of Bemis and Amcor is transformational, bringing together two highly complementary organizations to create a global leader in consumer packaging. We believe this combination, which is an exciting growth story for both companies, will benefit all stakeholders.'

Amcor is to establish a primary listing on the NYSE with an estimated market capitalization of US\$17 billion, while maintaining a listing on ASX, with expected index inclusion in both markets. The combination will be effected through a newly created holding company, New Amcor.

New Amcor will continue to maintain a critical presence in Wisconsin and other key Bemis locations. The combined company also expects to leverage Bemis' plant network and innovation center while continuing to invest in the US. New Amcor is further making a US\$35,000 contribution to the Bemis Foundation.

# News



L'Oréal Australia will divert over six tonnes of glassine paper liner from landfill

## Avery Dennison and L'Oréal collaborate

*Australian recycling program aims to eliminate label waste*

Avery Dennison, L'Oréal Australia and Wasteflex, an Australian waste management company, are collaborating on a recycling program to deliver zero waste to landfill.

Avery Dennison's liner recycling program will help brands divert glassine paper liner (waste from the label application process) from landfills into recycled products. Through this program, L'Oréal Australia will divert over six tonnes of glassine paper liner in Australia into recycled paper for use in the recycled paper industry.

Anil K. Sharma, vice president and general manager, South Asia Pacific and Sub-Saharan Africa, Avery Dennison Label and Graphic Materials, commented: 'As a materials science innovator committed to making a meaningful difference, we see sustainability as both a responsibility and an opportunity to lead. With our liner recycling program, brands now have a solution that will enable them to reduce the environmental impact from discarded label liner waste. We are delighted to partner with L'Oréal Australia and Wasteflex on this sustainability journey.'

David O'Leary, national logistics manager at L'Oréal Australia, added: 'The savings from this program have been significant but the biggest benefit for L'Oréal Australia is being able to meet our zero waste to landfill through the services and expertise of Wasteflex and Avery Dennison.'



Read more about Avery Dennison's liner recycling program in L&L issue 4

## Prati opens US subsidiary

Finishing specialist Prati has opened a sales and service office in the US as it seeks to strengthen its commitment to the market in North America.

Based in Dallas, Texas, Prati USA serves the domestic market in the US and Canada. In addition to sales activities, the company will provide its own technical assistance network to provide qualified service. Prati USA is led by Frank Hasselberg.

Prati sales manager Chiara Prati said: 'Our commitment to the North American market has never been stronger. I am confident that once our technologies spread deeper into the sector through our Dallas-based operations, new and existing customers will enjoy the benefits and, above all, begin to witness enhanced profitability for their businesses.'

The official launch of Prati USA took place at Labelexpo Americas 2018.



Treofan's facility in Neunkirchen, Germany

## Treofan European business sold to Jindal Films

*Deal follows sale of Treofan's Americas business to CCL*

Italy-based M&C, the owner of Treofan Holdings, has sold its controlling stake in Treofan Europe to Jindal Films, an Indian film and label manufacturer.

The legally binding agreement was signed on August 6, and the transaction is expected to be closed before the end of the first quarter of 2019.

Jindal Films is a global manufacturer of specialty biaxially oriented polypropylene (BOPP) films and has affiliated production plants in India, Europe and the US. The company and its affiliates have sales offices in countries around the world, including North and South America, Europe and Asia, with a global headcount of approximately 3,000.

'The takeover of Treofan by Jindal Films will open up new global strategic directions for the company and its employees,' said Dr Walter Bickel, CEO of Treofan. 'At the same time, I would like to thank our current shareholder M&C for its commitment and support over the last decade.'

Earlier this year, Labels & Labeling reported that CCL acquired Treofan Americas' business in the US, Latin America and Canada. Treofan Germany and Treofan Italy were not part of the earlier transaction.

## Digital installations surpass conventional

European digital label press installations overtook conventional press sales for the first time in 2017, according to the latest Finat Radar report.

Published twice a year by the international label association Finat, this market monitor report compiles focused research and analysis based on surveys conducted by LPC. Finat Radar also reported that 2017 was a year of growth for the non-prime label sector.

The ninth edition of Radar provides a unique perspective on the trends in the European label and narrow web industry. In addition to data and analysis obtained from the Radar Converter Survey, it contains a special section on the evolution of digital printing, and the inaugural edition of the Finat Digital Press Index featuring press installation volume figures from every European digital label press manufacturer for 2017.

The latter found that 2017 was the first year that, with nearly 300 digital press installations, the volume of newly added digital label presses surpassed that of new conventional label press installed volumes.

# News



Omet will sell Durst's Tau product line in North America

## Omet to represent Durst in North America

Durst and Omet have formed a partnership in North America that allows Omet exclusive access for sales of the Durst Tau product line.

Helmuth Munter, global segment manager for labels and package printing at Durst Group, said: 'Bringing together our know-how and market expertise provides increased value for our customers and accelerates the digitization of the label and packaging market.'

Claudio Semenza, Omet Americas sales director, added: 'This partnership allows us to offer a complete system of printing solutions to our customers in North America. The interest in digital printing is growing quickly and Omet Americas now has the right answers for the market.'

This is the latest development since the companies collaborated to produce a hybrid press, and decided to unite their sales and distribution teams worldwide to sell presses.

## Finat launches #LABELicious

International label association Finat has launched #LABELicious, a competition to attract young industry talent. Finat's aim is to increase awareness among students and young professionals about the creative, technical and leadership skills involved in shaping tomorrow's label sector.

The #LABELicious competition features three categories: Brand Design, Smart/Intelligent/Multifunctional Labels, and Out of The Box.

The launch of #LABELicious follows the finding of the latest Finat Radar survey that discovered how challenging it is for the industry to attract a newly skilled next generation workforce. The competition also marks the association's 60th anniversary.

Finat plans to develop the project throughout 2018 and 2019. It will work with a wide range of partners including companies in the label industry, national associations, international media, and partners from vocational educational institutions and universities. Labels & Labeling and Labelexpo, along with The Label Academy, are strongly supporting #LABELicious.

The international winners of the competition will be announced during Labelexpo Europe 2019 where a #LABELicious pavilion will showcase all winning entries.



The space is 'the most modern narrow web flexo technical center' in Latin America

## Etirama inaugurates Technical Center

Brazilian press manufacturer Etirama has inaugurated its Technical Center at its facility in Socoraba, outside Sao Paulo. The space houses the company's commercial department and a showroom for its presses, as well as an auditorium for training and presentations, a bar and several lounges to receive visitors.

A number of presses will be kept on permanent display for demonstrations and training, while partner companies also have products stocked, including inks, doctor blades, self-adhesive materials and more.

A reception hosted on June 21, which brought together partner suppliers and customers, marked the official opening of the ETC.

Etirama sales director Ronnie Schroter said: 'The ETC is the most modern narrow web flexo technical center in Latin America. It is equipped with a complete showroom, which will host Etirama Academy training programs, and an auditorium for events and attractions. Several major global suppliers will be holding events in the space and we believe that in a short time it will become a benchmark for the whole region.'

## TLMI partners with SGP

TLMI will merge its LIFE (Label Initiative for the Environment) certification program with the Sustainable Green Printing (SGP) Partnership certification program.

Since 2007, LIFE has helped guide the North American label industry's environmental leadership by assisting converters and industry suppliers in prioritizing best sustainability practices and environmental stewardship.

SGP is a non-profit organization that certifies printing facilities' sustainability best practices.

SGP is supported by the Printing Industries of America, Flexographic Technical Association, Specialty Graphic Imaging Association, and the National Association of Print Ink Manufacturers. In addition, the SGP brand leaders program engages with printer buyers and retail brands.

'TLMI is the only association that single-handedly creates a credible sustainability program for the print community with the LIFE certification. There has long been a mutual collaboration and support of SGP and LIFE certification,' said Marci Kinter, chair of the SGP technical committee. 'Now with TLMI merging LIFE with SGP certification and joining the other industry leading associations as a SGP resource partner, we anticipate a stronger, more sustainable future with integration of LIFE certification in SGP.'

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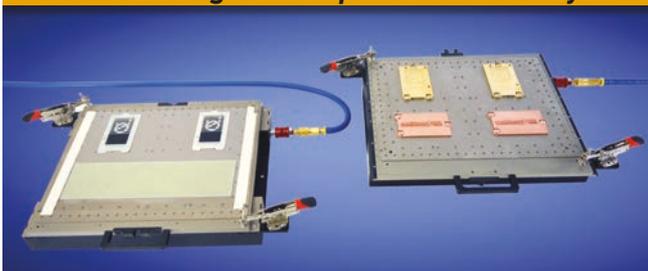
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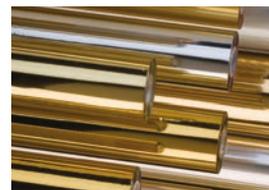
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# News

## News in brief

### Avery Dennison partners with Ocean Recovery Alliance

Avery Dennison and Ocean Recovery Alliance, founder of Plasticity Forum, have entered into a three-year agreement as part of the Plasticity Partner Program. Avery Dennison and Plasticity aim to collaborate across the industry to discover, connect and facilitate ideas to create prevention programs for plastic pollution.

### Sleeve market growing at 5.5 percent

Despite being a maturing technology, sleeve labeling continues to see an annual growth of 5.5 percent according to AWA's 'Global Sleeve Label Market Study 2018' report. This shows how strongly sleeve labeling has established itself in a relatively short time, now claiming around 18 percent of the overall global label market. As the study documents, most of the volumes are in heat shrink sleeves, representing around 88 percent of usage. Asia claims the highest volumes by far.

### Colordyne and Kao Collins partner

Colordyne Technologies and Kao Collins, a provider of ink formulations, have formed a partnership to offer UV inkjet ink options to new and existing Colordyne 3600 Series UV customers.

### Yazoo opens second manufacturing site

Yazoo Mills, a producer of 100 percent recycled paper tubes and cores, has completed its second manufacturing facility located in Hanover, Pennsylvania. The 90,000-square-foot site houses the newest manufacturing technology and provides increased winding capacity for consistent quality and fast turn-around times.

### ICAP-SIRA opens Singapore subsidiary

ICAP-SIRA Chemicals and Polymers has started activities in Asia through the opening of a subsidiary in Singapore, aiming to develop its pressure-sensitive adhesive business in the region.

### ICP opens production plant in Mexico

ICP Industrial has opened a production plant in Cuautitlán Izcalli (metropolitan area), Mexico, its first plant outside the US. The new site consists of 42,000 sq ft and an R&D laboratory. It produces water- and UV-based coatings, and will supply Mexico and Latin America.

### ITASA opens plant in Mexico

ITASA, a manufacturer of silicone liners, has begun construction of a production plant in Querétaro, Mexico. The new plant will serve the entire continent.

The construction of the facility, which will require an investment of 20 million euros, is the first time ITASA has built a new plant outside its headquarters in Spain. The estimated production capacity of the plant will be more than 150 million square meters.



A 6-color Edale FL3 will be installed at Fujifilm's US demonstration center

## Edale partners with Fujifilm

### Distribution deal in the Americas

Fujifilm North America is to begin distributing UK manufacturer Edale's range of flexographic label and packaging printing presses across North and South America, complementing its existing label and packaging product portfolio.

As part of this new arrangement, a 17in, 6-color Edale FL3 will be installed at Fujifilm's US demonstration center near Chicago.

Todd Zimmerman, Graphic Systems division president at Fujifilm North America, said: 'We chose Edale for our flexo printing platform because of its solid 60-year history in building state-of-the-art presses, and the ability to add value with Fujifilm's unique technology, provide compelling solutions for efficient package printing to our customers.'

Joining forces with Fujifilm means that Edale will be able to expand its offering to include Fujifilm's range of inks, plates, LED curing and imprinting technologies as part of a total package.

Edale managing director James Boughton said: 'We are confident that Fujifilm is well equipped to serve our clients. By combining the press with Fujifilm's extensive range of technologies and consumables, I believe that together we can now offer a unique and profitable and productive package for our customers.'

## Baldwin Vision Systems opens global headquarters

### Division formed in 2017 following acquisitions

Baldwin Vision Systems, a business division of Baldwin Technology Company, has opened new global headquarters in Wisconsin to create a formal focal point for their color management and inspection expertise. Baldwin Vision Systems division manufactures advanced control technology for the printing industry, specializing in automated color management and defect management. In December 2017, Baldwin Technology Company formed the new business division by acquiring the products and expertise of QuadTech, Web Printing Controls and PC Industries.

In addition to the Waukesha headquarters, the new Vision Systems business division has regional offices located in Amsterdam, Gandhinagar, Shanghai and Tokyo. Sales and service teams are located throughout the world, while manufacturing facilities have been consolidated in Fairfield, Illinois. Baldwin Vision Systems held a ribbon-cutting ceremony and grand opening celebration at its new headquarters on July 24.

Brent Becker, Baldwin Technology Company president, said: 'It can't be underestimated how much hard work went into this. QuadTech, PCI, WPC together have been solidified into Baldwin Vision Systems, and the team has really rallied around that. We were competitors before, now teammates with a common goal and a common message.'



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Andy Cave, CEO

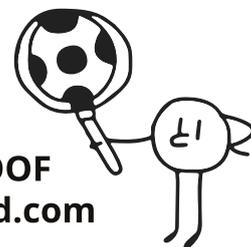
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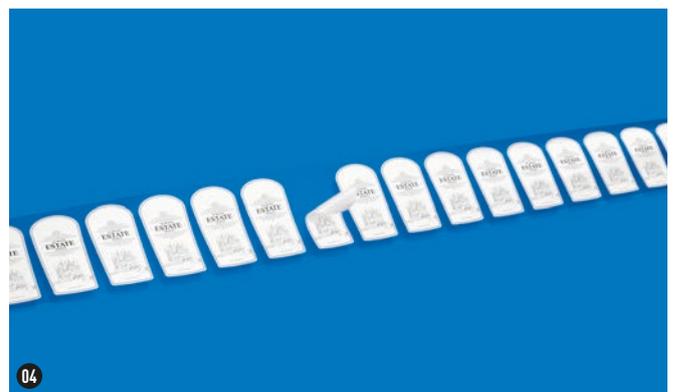
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# New Products



**01 Cloud**

*Winbosc*  
The hybrid label press combines inkjet and multiple conventional processes to meet current trends in the Chinese market. The hybrid line is available with printing widths of 110/220/330mm, with two speed modes – 50m/min (HD) and 76m/min (common). It can handle labels materials in a thickness range of 20-400mm. The inkjet element uses Konica Minolta printheads with a resolution of 600 x 600dpi achievable. Conventional processes include flexo printing, hot stamping, die-cutting and waste removal. Available on-press processes include unwind tension control, registration control, web cleaning and corona treatment. These combine to create a fully automatic production system from printing to finishing.

**02 SmartSpect**

*Laetus*  
The intelligent camera system combines a camera and high-performance image processing in one

single unit. The CMOS sensors used provide high-resolution images, even at high line speeds. The integrated Intel dual core embedded processor quickly processes the image data acquired and there is no need for an additional PC or controller.

**03 12oz PET bottle**

*Pretium Packaging*  
It has been engineered to mimic the look and feel of glass, providing a viable alternative for brands and their products, such as sauces, marinades, dressings and condiments, which had previously been unwilling to convert to PET. Additionally, for brand owners seeking to minimize use of virgin materials, the bottle can be made with up to 50 percent recycled PET.

**Metalvac G**

*Lecta*  
This extensive range of high substance papers has been designed for high-end graphic applications and premium packaging. The Metalvac G range

offers the possibility of creating exclusive packaging, especially for premium look envelopes and gift bags with Metalvac G 105g/sqm, and for board lamination for rigid boxes and prestige packaging with Metalvac G 115-170g/sqm.

**04 rPET liner**

*Avery Dennison*  
The new rPET liner uses carefully selected post-consumer waste and will be introduced commercially in Europe during October across a number of self-adhesive constructions. Jasper Zonnenberg, the supplier's global director for films, explained: 'As availability of suitable rPET is currently limited we will initially have a limited supply of our rPET liner. However, we will soon be able to scale up production significantly and we aim to have rPET as an option across all of our filmic and paper constructions.'

**Hop-Syn Go**

*HOP Industries*  
Environmentally-friendly and 100

percent recyclable, the Hop-Syn Go grade is a surface-treated, clay-coated, calendered polypropylene substrate. Its unique composition offers superb ink adhesion and high-quality graphic imaging unlike any other synthetic paper for the HP Indigo press, it is claimed. Hop-Syn Go is also 100 percent waterproof and is scuff resistant, and marketed as ideal for menus, identification cards, point of purchase signage, retail tags and more.

**05 miipCam Mini**

*miip*  
miipCam Mini, introduced at Labelexpo Americas 2018, has been engineered to make it practical to immediately send a replacement camera as needed and cut down installation time. Miniaturizing the web camera also increases portability and creates new product uses, according to miip. Features include: LED illumination that works on the most reflective surfaces; unlimited position and label row scan;

# New Products



05



06



07



08

distortion-free image quality; and remote control UI for easy operator mobility.

## NX1 for IIoT

Omron

The latest version of its NX1 series machine automation controller integrates machine control with information utilization, quality management and safety. The integration helps manufacturers collect and utilize data more effectively and improve overall productivity. It collects synchronized data from sensors, servo motors and other devices within the same fixed cycle time using a unique multicore technology that executes high-speed data processing tasks and machine control tasks simultaneously. The controller then sends all collected data to the host IT system while keeping control performance at the ideal level, it is claimed. This suits the Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) concept, which promises to revolutionize manufacturing by enabling the

acquisition and accessibility of far greater amounts of data, at far greater speeds.

## 06 Kiaro! QL-120

AstroNova

The release marks the company's expansion into the area of product identification. The Kiaro! QL-120 is built on the Kiaro! color label printer. QL-120 surpasses the Kiaro! with a faster print speed, new features and ease of use. Its fast printing speed of up to 300mm/s makes the QL-120 the fastest desktop color label printer in the QuickLabel series. Its 1200 dpi resolution ensures that small font sizes and images are printed sharply. The printer's water-based ink and its color range allow printing on a wide variety of materials. QL-120 offers greater durability as well as resistance to water, oil and solvents.

## 07 Color label printers

OKI Europe

OKI Europe is entering the label printer market with the launch of

the Pro Series 1040 and 1050. The narrow-format printers have been developed for the growing market of brands who need on-demand label printing that is easy to set up and requires minimal training to use. 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. The Pro1040 and Pro1050 can print on a wide range of media.

## 08 FVG POS 100/ekr 500

BST eltromat

The FVG POS 100 sensor positioner and ekr 500, a digital unit touch controller, feature a completely new commander for web guiding. The FVG POS 100 moves motor-driven sensors to the web edges and positions the webs using the measurement results provided by the sensors. ekr 500 consists of a controller

and a commander to operate the guiding device.

## ScreenPro 2.0

Global Graphics Software

The new version of the ultra-high-speed screening engine, tuned to smooth out imperfections in inkjet printing, introduces PrintFlat technology that mitigates the artifacts caused by variation within a head, between heads or wear on the head itself. It does this by being able to address every nozzle separately on any combination of head and electronics, to achieve very fine granularity. ScreenPro can be applied to any inkjet technology and print industry workflow and can be added to presses already on the market or incorporated into an inkjet press that's still on the drawing board.



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# Installations



## Screen Truepress Jet L350UV+

*Label Link, South Africa*

The UV inkjet press investment is supported by the purchase of a Rotocon Ecoline RDF 340 machine for digital label converting and finishing.

## Konica Minolta AccurioLabel 190

*Hora Art, India*

The AccurioLabel 190 operates at per-minute speeds of 18.9m, 13.5m and 9.45m, depending on the paper type. It can handle a wide range of media such as ordinary/matte paper, glossy paper, tack paper, synthetic paper, and film with paper thickness of 60-250 micron and maximum input width of 330mm. This is the supplier's first roll-to-roll digital label press installation in the country.

## Mark Andy Digital One PRX Print, US

Due to increasing demands, printed labels have become a larger part of the PRX Print product mix and the company has experienced aggressive growth in demand for cost-effective,

short-run digital labels with fast turnaround times. Trends toward 'just in time' ordering, small-quantity, multiple-version printing, coupled with often-changing label regulations and the need to contain costs, were key factors in driving this growth.

## Colordyne 3600 Series AQ Retrofits

*Versa-Tags, US*

The company is using its digital retrofit print engines to produce full color promotional tags and pressure-sensitive labels while exploring new applications that require digital print capabilities.

## ⑩ Gallus EMS 430 S

*Fine Webtech Label Solution System, South Korea*

The company produces products for the household, personal care, cosmetics and industry market segments. Its regular customers include brands like LG, Samsung and Amorepacific. This is its fourth Gallus EM 430 S.

## Nilpeter FB 4200

*Overnight Labels, US*

The company's new Nilpeter FB 4200, its 13th press, is an 8-color

machine with UV and hot air drying for UV and water-based inks. It can run labels, shrink sleeves and flexible packaging. It is Overnight Label's sixth Nilpeter press.

## ⑫ Edale FL3

*Uflex, India*

The narrow web flexo press for India's largest flexible packaging converter has a 350mm web width, 10 flexo color stations, IST UV drying system including three hot air dryers, motorized print impression, anilox pressure and cross register control system, a rail mounted peel and reveal module, and a vacuum delivery table. It will be used to produce security labels.

## ⑬ HP-Tresu folding carton line

*Kalas Packaging, UK*

The digital folding carton line, which it will use to introduce an online personalized gift bag and bottle box service for consumers, features an HP Indigo 30000 digital press integrated with a Tresu iCoat 30000 flexo coater. The integrated line has a maximum speed of up to 4600

sheets per hour (3450 in four colors), handling 750 x 550mm paperboard and 250-600-micron metallized boards. After coating, the automatically stacked sheets are manually transported to cutting and creasing equipment nearby. Kalas is also using the Tresu iCut 30000 digital sleeve cutter for fast, on-demand imaging of sleeves that are used on the coater.

## Heidelberg Primefire 106

*Warneke Paper Box, US*

The 7-color 40in/B1 industrial inkjet digital press will allow the packaging printer to expand its business by collaborating with customers on targeted short run packaging campaigns, in addition to providing added security to cartons through variable content. This is claimed as the first B1 format digital printing system in the US.

## ⑭ Roland 700 Evolution – Phu Thinh Printing, Vietnam

The company aims to expand into the label and packaging field and focus on the growing domestic market for plastic and foil printing. In order to meet the

# Installations



requirements of customers in the growing market for plastic and foil printing, which requires UV LED, the company decided to invest in the Roland 700 Evolution press with coating module.

**05 AB Graphic Digicon Series 3**

*Baker Labels, Windmill Tapes and Labels, UK*

Baker Labels and Windmill Tapes and Labels have both invested in AB Graphic's Digicon Series 3. Baker Labels has added two AB Graphic Digicon Series 3 finishing lines to satisfy the increasing label printing demands of trade customers. The investment made by Windmill Tapes and Labels in a Digicon Series 3 has been to 'keep pace with the ever-increasing demand for quality new products and shorter run lengths.' Meanwhile, Berkshire Labels has taken its fifth Digicon finishing line. 'Each Digicon we've bought is bigger than the last, and this one offers better efficiencies, and almost unlimited embellishment and finishing capabilities,' said Paul Roscoe, MD at Berkshire Labels.

**06 Esko CDI Crystal 4835 XPS**

*Schur Star Systems, Germany*

For more than a decade, Schur Star Systems has been working with Esko technology to produce flexo plates in-house. It chose Esko's CDI Crystal 4835 XPS to further automate pre-press. The system combines all the advantages of Crystal technology including ease of use, reliability, consistency and quality, with the popular 4835 format.

**07 Inspection and authentication**

*Reynders, Belgium*

An automated system from Lake Image Systems has been installed for inspecting and authenticating ScanTrust QR codes on anti-counterfeit packaging. ScanTrust, a secure cloud-based product authentication and supply chain traceability specialist, has developed a secure QR code containing a unique fingerprint pattern that cannot be copied. During printing of the ScanTrust QR code onto labels and packaging, Lake Image Systems has provided a real-time, camera-

based option to read, decode and validate the QR code, extract the unique fingerprint image and interrogate the ScanTrust cloud system to authenticate the code at the start of each job.

**08 Kroenert LabCo**

*Michelman, India*

The Michelman Innovation Centre for Coatings is a dedicated space for rapid prototyping of new innovative packaging structures. The LabCo coating system is designed as a two head coating line that can be used for different coating and laminating applications with convection drying and UV curing. The modular design of the system allows flexible handling. In addition to gravure and smooth roller applications for direct and indirect mode, it can also be used for reverse and forward coating processes. Substrates can either be coated on one side or simultaneously on both sides. Due to this multifunctional use many new trends and developments of the packaging film market can be realized, according to Kroenert. One of the key applications is the

functionalization of polymer films for the packaging industry.

**Atlas CW1040**

*Fujian Furong Technology Group, China*

Currently Fujian Furong Technology Group runs six Atlas CW1040 primary slitter rewinders, two at 8.3 meters and four at 8.7 meters. These machines are installed at three production sites in China: in Fuqing, Fujian Province; Guangzhou, Guangdong province; and Nantong, Jiangsu Province. The seventh machine is 10.4 meters wide.

**Mimaki UJF-3042FX**

*Harper Adams University, UK*

The printer was needed in order to teach undergraduates about packaging design. With limited budget and space, the Mimaki UJF-3042FX was installed within a photography suite and positioned at desktop level to enable effective teaching and easy access.

.....  
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- Could be stand-alone unit
- Adaptable to any existing presses

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# Appointments



**Mike Bacon**  
Sales director  
Grafotronic

He brings 17 years of experience to the role and is identified by Grafotronic as a key appointment as the company targets ambitious growth in North America.



**Pascale Wautelet**  
Global VP, R&D  
Avery Dennison LGM  
She has more than 20 years of experience across multiple functions in the chemical/petrochemical/plastic industry, including flexible packaging and labeling. Prior to joining Avery Dennison in 2017, she was global technology director at Jindal Films, overseeing corporate innovation and R&D across Europe and North America.



**Yuyatdi Purwonegoro**  
General manager  
Jet Technologies  
Indonesia

He is identified as a strong manager with a career in print who has built

his expertise over the years working in paper, label and packaging, previously as general manager at Pemara Labels Indonesia. He will lead the local Jet Technologies team and ensure service, implementation and support for local customers and partners.



**Otto Muskee**  
Sales director, EMEA  
MPS

Muskee has an educational background in export, marketing management and graphic technologies, coupled with years of industry experience in distribution management and sales channel development.



**Torsten Berding**  
Managing director  
Windmüller & Hölscher  
Sp.z.o.o.

Windmüller & Hölscher Sp.z.o.o. has been established as W&H seeks to strengthen its position in the country, identified as a growing market. Berding, W&H's sales director for northern Europe, has been appointed as managing director of the Polish daughter company. In the future, eight sales staff and service technicians will look after Polish customers.



**Andrea Campani**  
Sales manager, labels,  
Italy  
Omet

He has extensive sales experience in the printing industry, having worked for over ten years as a sales manager in the north of Italy representing sheet-fed machine companies. He also worked as country sales manager for CI flexo lines for 15 years. Recently, he gained experience as European dealer for flexo and converting machines and as area manager for Italy and Balkan countries for the flexo industry.



**Arlindo Cid**  
Aftersales service  
support  
Mark Andy

Following the appointment of Jean-Louis Pecarelo of Atypic France as sales agent in 2015, Mark Andy is now boosting its service team in the country. Arnaud Valentin, who has been responsible for France and Benelux, will now be joined by Arlindo Cid, based in Lisbon, with a brief to cover principally France and also Iberia for service and spare parts on both digital and flexo lines.



**John Danio**  
VP, sales and marketing  
Kernow North America

This newly created position will place an experienced and dedicated sales resource in the North American market to support Kernow's growth plans. Danio brings 19 years of industry experience to the role.

**Lauren Walsh**  
Director of operations  
TLMI

To date, Walsh has spent her career in the aviation industry, bringing 11 years of administrative management, accounting and customer service to her new role with TLMI. She will be immediately managing all administrative and accounting functions, and will be overseeing all facets of TLMI's day-to-day operations.

**Richard Thomas**  
Director  
Durst Image Technology  
US

He has been promoted to the new role of director of its North American digital business initiative for labels and package printing. This follows Durst and Omet forming a strategic partnership in North America that allows Omet exclusive access for sales of the Durst Tau product line.

**Dennis Moore**  
Production solutions  
supervisor  
Domino Digital  
Printing North America

He joined Domino in February 2015 as applications engineer. During this time, the emphasis of 'applications' has developed and evolved from installing and setting up the digital label press to a wider, value-added role of helping customers achieve their ROI and business goals.

**Oliver Hamann**  
Director of operations  
Miltec UV

He brings over 20 years of experience in systems engineering, opto-mechanical design and manufacturing, fiber optics, lasers, microscopy, computer vision, particle characterization and spectroscopy.



**Kirsti Morris and Arda Erdem**  
Avery UK

Morris joins as key account manager, while Erdem joins the company as sales director. Nico Jean-Jean, managing director, Avery Europe West region, said: 'They each bring with them a great deal of relevant knowledge and experience, which will be an asset to our already strong team.'

For more appointments, go to [labelsandlabeling.com/news/appointments](http://labelsandlabeling.com/news/appointments)



01



03



02



04

**AWA 2018 Sleeve Label Awards**

**01 Sleeved cans category**  
*Safety Seal Plastics, Canada*  
 'One Love' beer

**02 Heat TD shrink sleeves category**  
*Masterpress, Poland*  
 Stock Carbon Prestige vodka

**03 Environmental category**  
*Safety Seal Plastics, Canada*  
 Big Spruce Brewing

**04 Innovation category**  
*Phenix Label, USA*  
 Restless Spirits Distilling  
 'Gully Town' whiskey



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BLACKSTACK BREWING | Science Museum of Minnesota

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05

05 US converter Meyers created this label for Blackstack Brewing. Blackstack brewed its Thunder Lizard IPA in collaboration with the Science Museum of Minnesota for an event celebrating sales of the museum's classic Thunder Lizard sweatshirt. The sweatshirt saw a resurgence in popularity after it was worn by a character in the Netflix series *Stranger Things*.



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曝露@labelsandlabeling.com](mailto:label曝露@labelsandlabeling.com). We require a high resolution photograph and supporting text.



# DON'T OVERTHINK DIGITAL LABEL TECHNOLOGY



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When you clear away all the hype, techno-speak and confusing claims label press makers make, doesn't *profitable*, digital label production really boil down to one simple formula?

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## *The Mike Fairley column*

# *Label production at the forefront of printing industry change*

*Successful label production is now as much about software as hardware*

It's not so long ago that to be a successful, good quality label printer it was all about investing in the right printing and finishing hardware, and training skilled operators to produce error and fault-free results that consistently met brand owner requirements.

With the rise of digital printing, servo technology, sophisticated management information systems, color control, web inspection and, most recently, the introduction of increasing levels of management and workflow automation, success is becoming almost as much to do with software and IT solutions as it is with hardware.

Both office and production employees today need to be ever more familiar with computers, keyboards and key pads, with many different forms of mobile communications, with electronic data collection and data analysis, networks and networking. Every week or month there seems to be new solutions and opportunities evolving. Easy to understand and use by the younger generation, but perhaps not always easy to follow by some of the older workforce. Employers need to understand this and ensure everyone has the opportunity to learn and be mentored on where the industry is going for the future and the skills required.

Each Labelexpo show provides even newer MIS solutions and upgrades, that press and workflow automation become more sophisticated and focused, and that IT and artificial intelligence (AI) – automating decision making – will have an increasing prominence in label and flexible packaging plants of tomorrow. How far automation and AI will take the industry is still difficult to say at the moment. However, recent announcements from major equipment and systems suppliers suggest that there is certainly a lot more to come.

Esko's recent acquisition of Blue Software, for example, aims to bring their combined hardware and software solutions together to digitize, automate and connect label and packaging development and production workflow from virtual 3D design concepts all the way to printed finished packs, in-store displays and e-commerce imagery and content. Developments of this kind will enable faster and more accurate collaboration, with brands having the ability to launch new products much more frequently and cost effectively.

Enhanced ink management software from GSE now enables an operator to achieve repeatable quality and accurate cost estimates when printing a design, automatically determine the exact amount of color needed for printing, calculate the printed surface area covered by each color, and offer better traceability in label and package printing. All information can be instantly recalled for repeat orders, assuring identical color results.

In another development, Ricoh announced that they had made

## **“IT and artificial intelligence will have an increasing prominence in label and flexible packaging plants of tomorrow”**

'lights out' end-to-end print production a reality. Although not for labels or packaging at this stage (it's for personalized postcards), it nevertheless shows how software and digital technology are already working together to create a seamless end-to-end production process – imposing personalized print-ready PDF files, optimizing and automating workflow, scheduling jobs, managing print production on a digital color press, as well as organizing the complete business process. If this can already be done with postcards, then labels would seem to be a possibility in the not too distant future.

### **New skills**

There is little doubt that the label and package printing industry in just a few years will be very different to that of five years ago, or even of today.

It was therefore welcome to see Finat launching a competition to increase awareness among students and young professionals about the creative, technical and leadership skills involved in shaping tomorrow's labels and label sector. The goal is to educate students and young professionals about the exciting and challenging opportunities the industry offers and how their innovative spirits can make a difference.

This initiative will probably need to go much further in the future, finding ways to inform, encourage, stimulate and create a new generation of software, automation, AI and IT specialists who will see the label industry as being at the forefront of a printing and packaging industry revolution – almost seamless from order entry to dispatch and invoicing – that still has some way to go.

The future of the industry looks ever more exciting, but will only really succeed longer-term with the right people and skills in place. It's a challenge, but the initiatives are now underway.



For more Mike Fairley columns, go to [www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/michael-fairley](http://www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/michael-fairley)

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# Young managers – Jim Ji, Guangzhou Guangcai Label

Yolanda Wang interviews Jim Ji, 36-year-old owner of Guangzhou Guangcai Label



Jim Ji, owner of Guangzhou Guangcai Label

Eleven years ago, computer major Jim Ji set up Guangzhou Guangcai Label from scratch. Today his company is a touchstone of manufacturing efficiency and environmental awareness.

By chance, his first job after graduation was servicing barcode printers. 'I was fortunate to witness the golden age of barcode label printing in China from 2002 to 2004. I started to have a preliminary understanding of the label industry and decided to start my own business.' Jim Ji explains that he was born into a poor family, and as the eldest child was expected to finance his sister's education. So how was he to find start-up capital?

In 2004, the 'stubborn and unyielding' 22-year-old resigned his well-paying job and invested his energy into the new business despite having no technological knowledge, customers or funding. He contacted an OEM factory directly to get his first printing machine. 'Compared with the rural life, these difficulties are nothing,' asserts Jim Ji. In 2007 he registered Guangzhou Guangcai Label in a small 500sqm workshop.

Between 2007 and 2012, Guangcai Label's business grew rapidly, installing intermittent rotary, stack flexo and intermittent offset presses. 'I am not technically educated, but I was more and more obsessed by label printing and spent lots of time learning the technologies. But I was so busy coping with day to day demands, I took very little time to think about the direction of the industry or my company's future.'

Looking back, Jim Ji can see that this growth came – as well as from his own

## “Transformation from letterpress and offset doesn't mean simply purchasing new machines, but a revolution in training and management thinking”

efforts – from the overall growth of the Chinese label industry. 'At that time I was simply happy to be making good money.'

What sobered Jim Ji was one sentence from an industrial senior. 'He said there was no guaranteed market, or customer, and every industry has its development life-cycle.'

In 2013, clothing labels from one fast fashion brand, Forever21, accounted for 60 percent of Guangcai Label's work. 'To be frank, we were almost totally dependent on the Forever21 brand, and we even felt proud of it. However, the senior figure's observation made me realize that dependence on a handful of big customers was dangerous. If one customer's business went wrong, Guangcai Label as a downstream supplier would suffer a deadly blow.'

Jim Ji made the decision to transition away from the single product mix. In 2014, Guangcai Label moved into a bigger, 6,800sqm factory, and installed a Label Source letterpress and Zonten intermittent offset press, allowing the company to go after the FMCG market. This transition proved timely when in 2015 sales of Forever21 plummeted and the brand cut its label orders in half.

### Constant reinvention

Today Guangcai Label services a wide range of end use sectors – food and beverage, wine, household chemicals, healthcare products and anti-counterfeit labels. The company works for leading Chinese brands including Wong Lo Kat, Perfect, Haitian, Mengniu Dairy, Qomolangma Glacier, Luowa, Junlebao and Renhe Pharmacy.

Now understanding the saying 'In peace, prepare for war', Jim Ji took another hard

look at the company. 'Sales appeared to keep growing, but actually our profit was decreasing. The causes included vicious price competition from our peers, the growing cost of labor, materials and finance following the company's growth, and the cost of implementing environment protection measures. At the same time, the annual growth rate of the Chinese label industry almost halved to less than 10 percent from its previous 15-20 percent. Under these circumstances we needed to think rationally about our future development.'

By 2016, Jim Ji was ready for Guangcai Label's second transformation, this time into flexo and digital. 'Technology transformation from letterpress and offset doesn't mean simply purchasing new machines, but an overall revolution in professional training and in management thinking.'

Since 2016, Guangcai Label has purchased two Gallus ECS340 flexo presses, one HP Indigo 4500 digital press and an entire flexo platemaking system based on Esko color management and flexo CTP and a DuPont Fast thermal plate processor. In September this year, Guangcai Label installed the latest HP Indigo 6900 digital press and a third Gallus ECS340 press is on order.

'As well as environmental protection, the productivity of the flexo press was a key reason for choosing it,' says Jim Ji. 'Currently, the output of these two Gallus flexo presses accounts for 40 percent of our total productivity. I believe the ratio will rise after the third press is put into operation. I am very interested in digital printing, and I believe I can unlock its various possibilities in the future with my computer background and years of traditional label manufacturing experience.'

With these two transitions, Guangcai Label is an epitome of the development of the entire China label industry to date: from abnormally rapid expansion to 'regular' growth. As the Chinese label industry has gradually matured, enterprises are re-building themselves into businesses which are more efficient, environmentally sustainable and quality-oriented.



For more information about the Chinese label market visit [www.labelsandlabeling.com/features/latest/market-china](http://www.labelsandlabeling.com/features/latest/market-china)

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# Helping employees embrace change

*As you sell your business or enter a strategic partnership, your staff needs to be ready for change, writes Bob Cronin of The Open Approach*

**A**s a business owner, you understand the need for change. However, few employees — or management teams — understand its value or want it to happen at all. But change enables opportunity. It isn't only inevitable, it's imperative. To unlock growth and value, you must be willing to change.

In my previous positions as CEO of major print and label companies, change was always one of the most difficult issues to inspire and to manage. While people love to talk about exciting new industry dynamics, few actually go along with them. Most often, they enact barriers that not only defy change, but also make it arduous (and expensive) to implement.

Years ago, the company I ran wanted to replace an ailing product with a more contemporary offering. Our intent was to reconfigure our plant with new equipment, augmenting capabilities and capacity in more lucrative venues. We made the announcements and went to full rollout. Yet, despite our efforts, our launch never got off the ground. Our employees' reluctance trumped our work. They liked what we were doing previously, and didn't want to let it go. Our failure at demonstrating the need for change — and getting their buy-in — cost us. It didn't matter that the end customer and industry had already moved on from our old offering; our staff simply hadn't.

I've never made this mistake again. In fact, this is one of the first things we discuss with our clients. As you sell your business, recapitalize, or enter into a strategic partnership, your staff needs to be ready for change. Here are four areas to focus on:

**Awareness.** The first step to embracing change is being aware of the need for it. Good market or bad, you and your staff need to understand where you're at and what elements are holding you back. Today's hot market is tricky, as no company wants to admit it has any shortcomings. Equipment purchases tend to be extensions of current business. Capability changes are often made to accommodate existing clients. Thus, employees view actions as a natural evolution rather than a new trajectory — and not any commitment to change. Don't assume that everybody understands where the company needs to change or what growth measures will have value. Educate personnel on your initiatives. Explain where you're looking to head and how these changes will help get you there. Show examples of businesses that have successfully ventured out in new directions (think Amazon, Xerox, Apple, etc), and show some that haven't. Build excitement for the potential future to come.

**Contribution.** Even with the best game plans, you won't get there without the troops. Your staff will only accept change if they feel they're part of it. If you try to change without them, it won't work. Worse, you can develop a morale crisis and lose some great people. Organizational change initiatives fail at an alarming rate. This isn't

**“Your staff will only accept change if they feel they're part of it”**

necessarily because they were bad initiatives; it's because they didn't consider how changes affect staff or get them involved.

Secure your management team's input and commitment first. Then create a strategy. Look at who's affected most by the change, and get them on board early. If you get them committed, they'll gain the buy-in of others. They may also have some great ideas that will save you time and money. Remember to engage everyone in the process, as many changes occur from the bottom up.

**Response.** When I ran label companies, our best ideas for change and growth always came from our customers. We sought their opinions, and we showed that we cared and listened. Moreover, we responded to their suggestions, feedback, criticism, and response to any change. This way, we kept their business based on value provided, not just price. Because we had open dialogue, we were able to fine-tune changes for their best impact and result.

The stronger connections also facilitated communications between customers and staff. When concerns were raised, we all discussed how best to approach. Then, staffers could proudly let customers know how we were addressing — making both customer and staff a critical part of the change process.

**Reward.** An attractive payoff is perhaps the greatest way to get employees to embrace change. The reward can come in terms of greater job satisfaction (more intriguing work), new incentives or profit sharing (if you've established), increased professional development/learning opportunities, or simply feeling part of the accomplishment. By championing the hurdles of change, staff will also feel more engaged in the company — and more loyal. Plus, they'll be up for the next great challenge.

Our market is evolving. Are you, as the leader of your business, aware of what your customers want? More important, are you aligned with your greatest possible growth trajectory? A tenured advisor can be integral if you need support. Every successful business needs to adapt and change, and do so continuously. It isn't easy to continually reinvent your business, but the alternative can be a lot more difficult.



*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](http://www.theopenapproach.net), email [bobcronin@aol.com](mailto:bobcronin@aol.com), or call (001) 630 323 9700*



# Q&A

On April 1, 2018, Ryutaro Kotaki became president and CEO of Auto-ID specialist Sato. He had previously served as the company's executive vice president and chief operating officer, and had been guiding Sato Group in collaboration with his predecessor, Kaz Matsuyama, since 2016. Interview by David Pittman



Ryutaro Kotaki (center) has spent 24 years in the Sato Group

**Labels & Labeling (L&L): Please introduce Sato, its history and its products**

**RK:** Sato provides on-site solutions for customers by attaching identifiers to items and people to ensure accuracy and sustainability, save labor and resources, offer reassurance, and build emotional connections between consumers and brands. We are a trusted on-site Auto-ID technology partner for our customers with a global presence and a 78-year history of pioneering game-changing innovations to automate processes. We strive to continuously make life easier for customers with tagging solutions that reduce labor and streamline workflows.

**L&L: What is your current role and responsibilities at Sato?**

**RK:** As CEO, I aim to make Sato the leader and continuously most trusted and in-demand company in the Auto-ID solutions industry, by empowering our 5,000 strong workforce to engage in cross-border collaboration to exceed customer expectations. I want to maximize our strengths to establish sustainable growth and stable profits.

In order to drive our Auto-ID solutions business worldwide, I am also working to ensure we nurture next generation global leaders by investing in and training our personnel.

I am primarily focused on growing and evolving our Auto-ID solutions business worldwide, strengthening global alliances to grow business and commercializing our cutting edge DataLase solutions.

**L&L: What is your professional background?**

**RK:** I have spent 24 of my 30 years in the Sato Group directly and indirectly supporting sales in and around Tokyo. I oversaw our R&D and manufacturing units from 2012-2016 during which time I oversaw the development of our first IoT printer, the CL4NX. I also served as chief operating officer from 2016-2018.

**L&L: What trends do you see shaping the market?**

**RK:** I see concerns around food and patient safety and the growth of e-commerce as driving growth for our industry. IT breakthroughs like IoT, AI, robotics, big data and Industry 4.0 also offer huge potential. Our customers are striving to utilize these new technologies to take their businesses to new heights. However, they face various challenges on their frontlines of operation such as worker shortages, regulatory issues, security challenges and more. The result is a wide gap between what corporate management aims for and the reality of those on the ground.

**L&L: How will Sato react to these trends?**

**RK:** Our Auto-ID solutions can help bridge this gap and solve

challenges while delivering a win-win.

To make it happen, we seek to forge global technology partnerships and alliances to maximize value for customers and drive growth.

**L&L: What technologies will be central to the future of the industry and Sato?**

**RK:** Rather than focus on certain technologies, we take a customer-centric approach, visiting customers' sites of operation and identifying their needs to select the right technologies to use in solutions that provide the optimal value for the customer. That said, we do see high demand these days for RFID, location based services and direct marking technologies.

**L&L: Which investments is the company making to support its future?**

**RK:** We have identified several categories for investment in the medium-term to fulfill the current and anticipated needs of customers around identification and tagging. These include consumables production, the B2B2C business, the expansion of our Auto-ID solution services and RFID solution business to improve in-store customer experience, DataLase in-line digital printing solutions, global expansion of CRM tools, maintenance of an up-to-date ERP infrastructure and personnel training.

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**“We are currently focused on the development and commercialization of a new point-of-sale personalization system for restaurants and a high volume, high speed solution for the beverage industry by 2019”**

*Sato empowers wine cellar inventory management*

Sato has partnered with Tokyo Baycourt Club Hotel & Spa Resort on an RFID-enabled inventory management system for its wine cellar, optimizing the resort's stocktaking operations and boosting inventory management accuracy. This is the first system of its kind used by Japan's hotel industry. Stocktaking operations for the resort hotel's 5,000 bottles of wine for its restaurants, bars and lounges previously required sommeliers to carefully and laboriously handle each bottle separately and enter details manually into the purchasing system. The hotel sought a faster and more accurate system to streamline operations. After switching to RFID, Tokyo Baycourt Club can now scan multiple bottles with contactless operation and automatically register inventory in its purchasing system, drastically reducing time spent for stocktaking.



Ryutaro Kotaki (fifth from right) celebrates award success with colleagues

speed solution for the beverage industry by 2019. We are also developing multi-color technology with commercialization planned for 2021. These technologies will enable exciting new applications such as marketing campaigns with near real-time personalization to boost consumer engagement.

**L&L: What plans do you have for the future of the company?**

**RK:** With skilled worker shortages becoming more prevalent around the world and

businesses rushing to use technology to adapt, we see great potential to help customers streamline their operations with Auto-ID solutions. We will strengthen and expand this business as well as global technology partnerships and alliances to meet new customer needs.

Through our on-site troubleshooting expertise and technology alliances we are building our capabilities to enable total process optimization of customers' operations through a single warehouse

from receipt of goods to dispatch. Sato enables data collection through barcodes, RFID, sensors and more. The addition of our visual warehouse location tracking solution enables improved space efficiency and shortest picking route for significant labor savings. By integrating this with our strategic technology partner JDA's WLM – warehouse labor management – platform which boosts productivity and improves labor utilization, we believe we can further streamline the warehouse through the synergy of small data



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*'As CEO, I aim to make Sato the leader and most trusted and in-demand company in the Auto-ID solutions industry'*

collection and big data analysis to provide decision-makers with insight to make continuous improvements with confidence.

We are also focused on the development and commercialization of our DataLase business.

**L&L: Which principles and values underline Sato and all that it does?**

**RK:** Yo Sato founded the company with the goal of making difficult operations easier. We have always developed innovations by going

right to our customers' worksites to identify and solve their problems with unwavering persistence.

Our business style of going right on site to identify issues is what differentiates us, so it is imperative to train personnel that can execute and this is why we are working to instill our corporate values globally. At Sato, we see building people as essential to building business and we will grow our business with a diverse global workforce that embodies a shared set of values.

**L&L: How does the TEIHO system benefit the company and its employees?**

**RK:** We rejoice in small changes at Sato. Fundamental to the way we live our motto of 'Ceaseless Creativity' daily is our TEIHO system, in which employees submit simple daily reports and proposals to top management every day. Anything – from the latest information on competitor activities to suggestions about the open hours for the cafeteria – goes into these reports. Some 40 TEIHO reports are forwarded to me daily and reading them helps me understand what is happening in the field in real time. For individual employees, submitting TEIHO is a good opportunity to speak their mind and participate in the management of the company. This style of bottom-up management also contributes to our corporate governance.

**L&L: What activities do you enjoy as a pastime outside of work?**

**RK:** I like to switch into 'relax mode' by watching movies, shopping and going for a drive.



For more information on Sato, visit [www.satoworldwide.com](http://www.satoworldwide.com)



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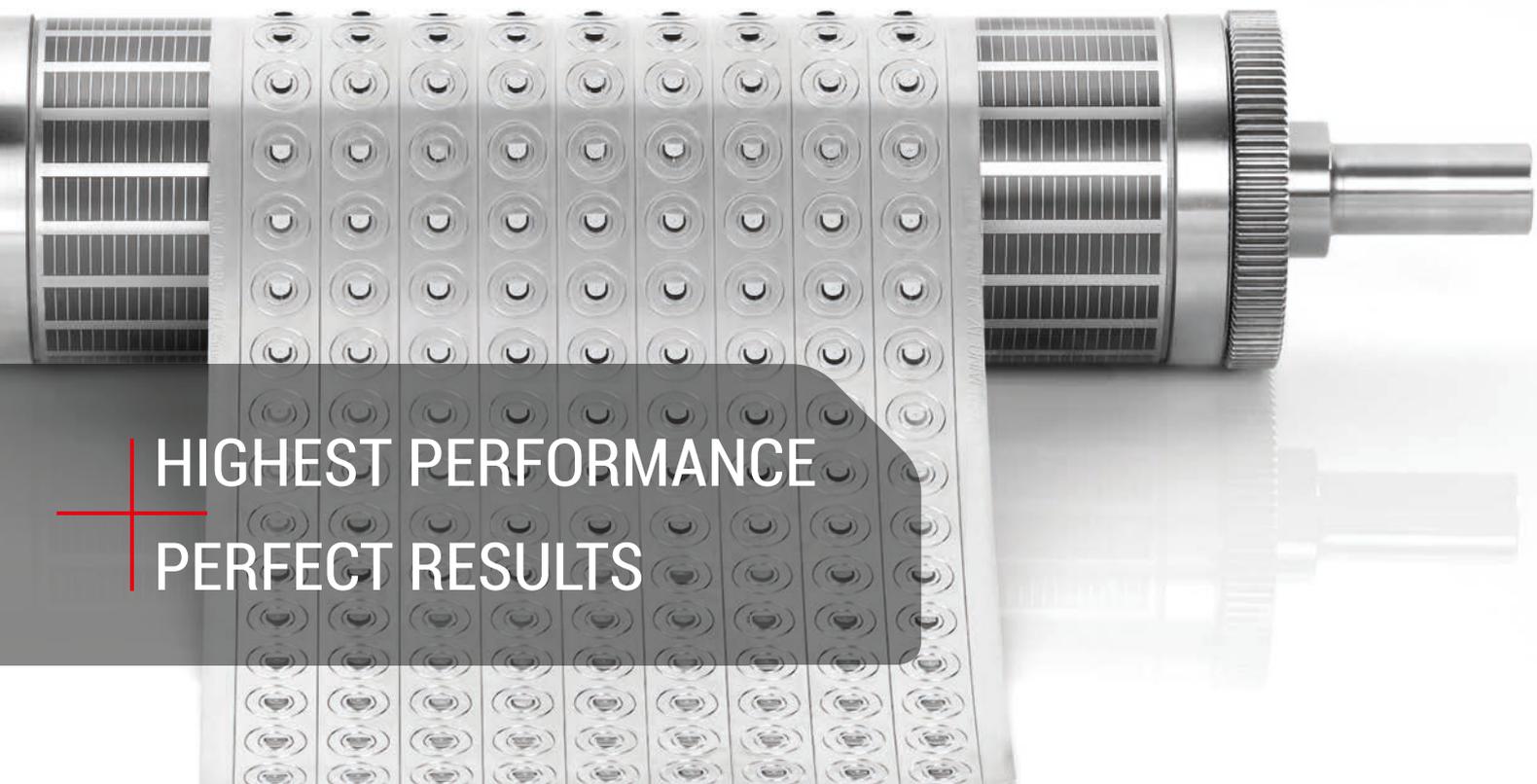
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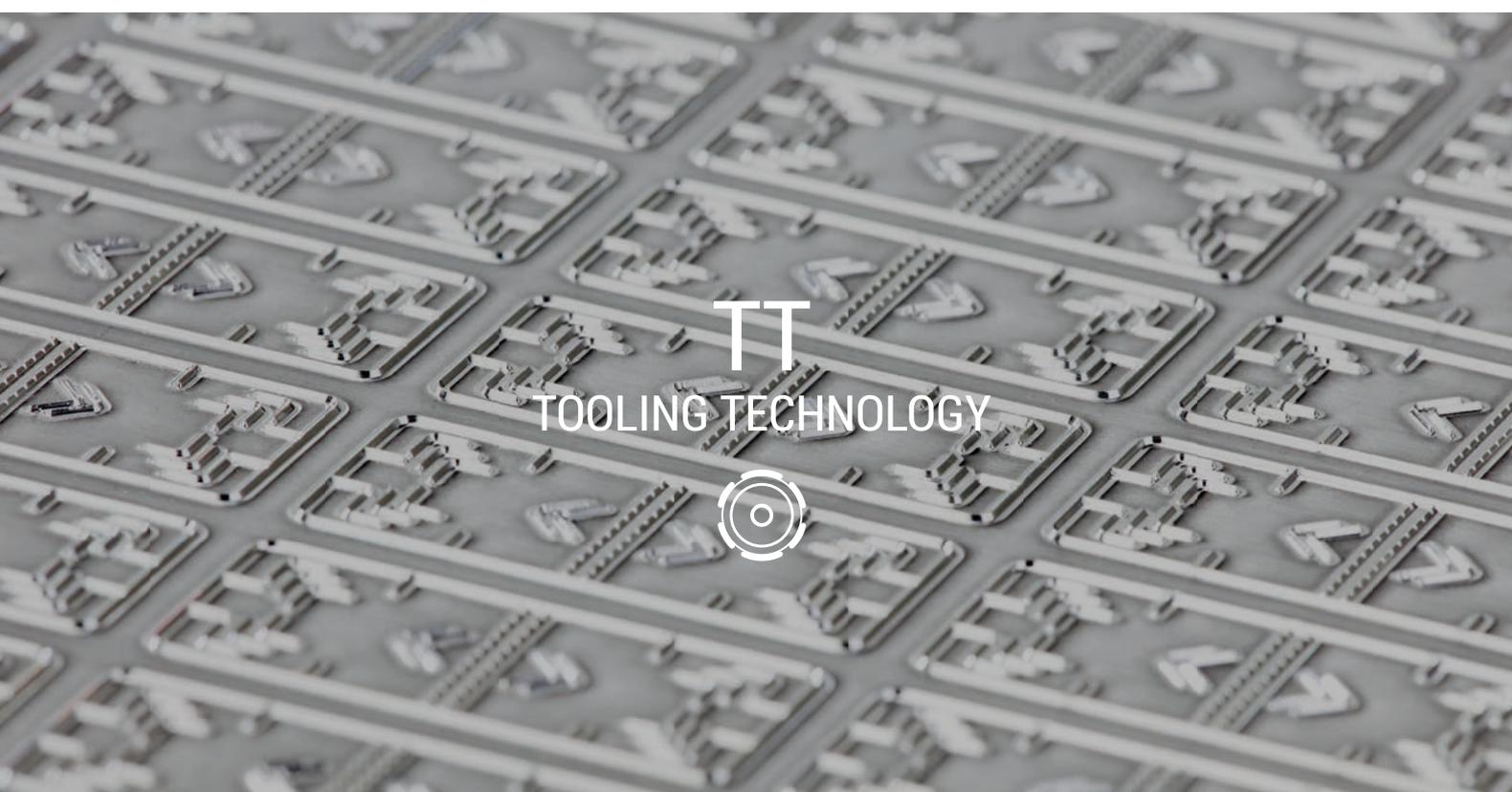
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A close-up photograph of a precision-machined metal tool, likely a roller or die, with a grid of small circular indentations. The tool is shown in a perspective view, with its reflection visible below. A semi-transparent dark grey shape is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text.

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A close-up photograph of a large quantity of small, intricate metal parts, possibly micro-machined components, arranged in a grid pattern. The parts are highly detailed and show various shapes and features.

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TOOLING TECHNOLOGY





Onsite at Desmedt's plant in Belgium are Bernd Schopferer of Martin Automatic (left) with Timo Donati of Mark Andy (right) and Henri Köhler of Desmedt

## Belgian converter revamps production

Belgian converter Desmedt Labels has revamped its production with a 7 million euro investment in equipment from Mark Andy and Martin Automatic. Nick Coombes reports

**B**elgian converter Desmedt Labels has completed a major investment program at its plant in Bornem, near Brussels, that involved two leading North American equipment suppliers: Mark Andy, for narrow web flexo presses, and Martin Automatic, for automated unwind/splicing and rewinding of rolls. The program has seen a complete reorganization of Desmedt's production floor, and a significant increase in productivity.

The project began back in 2016 with a major growth in label sales by Desmedt that highlighted a shortfall in production capacity on the company's existing flexo and digital presses. According to general manager Henri Köhler: 'We intended to buy one new 8-color UV flexo press and visited all of the major manufacturers to trial their latest machines on our own work – a mixture of self-adhesive and multi-layer labels and some screen work.'

### Impressed

Not an existing Mark Andy user, Köhler was

most surprised by the demonstration of the Performance Series press in the Warsaw showroom. 'We had taken a day's work with us and had run it off by lunchtime with our own operator, who had never used a Mark Andy before.'

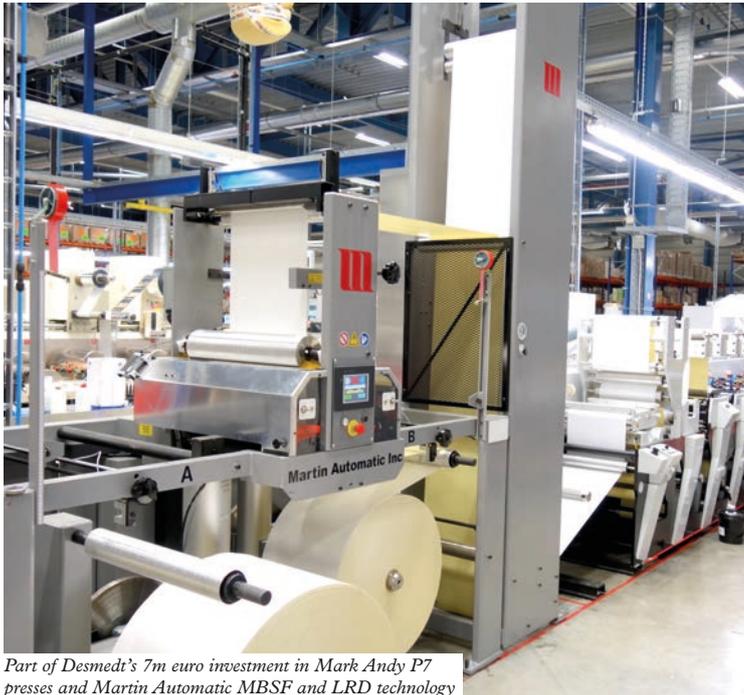
Desmedt placed particular emphasis on job changeover and make ready times, and were invited to visit other Mark Andy users, KDS in Poland and LariTryck in Sweden, to see similar presses in commercial operation. 'I was also very impressed with the Mark Andy company structure in the USA. It was obvious from their four-week lead time and the shipping of one press every two days that being a specialist in flexo technology has major benefits,' he adds.

So impressed was Desmedt by the Mark Andy press demonstrations that the company switched its entire strategy from a single press to a complete conversion of its print capacity. The result was an order for three of the second generation P7 Performance Series servo presses, two of which are 10-color and one is 12-color. All

have a 430mm (17in) web width, as well as being fitted with UV LED curing. Installation began in January 2017 with the first 10-color followed in April by an identical machine. These replaced existing 8- and 9-color flexo presses. The 12-color P7 was installed in September.

'More colors make for greater efficiency and higher quality on existing work, and we are already seeing how cold foil and the added productivity of UV LED is generating new work in the value-added markets,' says Köhler. Desmedt is in fact Mark Andy's

**"We had taken a day's work with us and had run it off by lunchtime with our own operator, who had never used a Mark Andy before"**



Part of Desmedt's 7m euro investment in Mark Andy P7 presses and Martin Automatic MBSF and LRD technology

largest UV LED narrow web installation to date, and its curing capability is allowing the company to run screen white at 110m/min, even with inexperienced operators. 'We know we can go faster, but we're keen to grow into the possibilities that it offers us with our existing cosmetics customers,'

he adds.

Speaking for Mark Andy, European sales manager Timo Donati comments: 'It was important for Desmedt to have a complete package of high-end performance equipment from a manufacturer that has the knowledge to realize the switch from UV to UV LED. Added to that, the company needed an organization that could support the installation with quality after sales service, and with our new European sales and service structure, Mark Andy was in the best position to supply.'

The majority of Desmedt's output at present is for the food market, but Köhler is keen to expand into automotive and household products, and other markets where legislation is demanding multi-layer labels. 'The two 10-color Mark Andy presses replaced three existing flexo presses and a digital line. We are using the 12-color for business development purposes,' he explains.

**Productivity**

But whether on existing business or new projects, Köhler is very positive about the beneficial effects that Martin Automatic non-stop roll changing technology has on Desmedt's business. 'We already had an MBSF unwind/splicer on each of our former flexo presses, and they made a huge difference to productivity, especially with the high number of job changes we need to accommodate with shrinking run lengths,' he says.

'These machines allowed us to maximize productivity with small and part-used rolls by incorporating them into



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**“So impressed was Desmedt by the Mark Andy press demonstrations that the company switched its entire strategy from a single press to a complete conversion of its print capacity. The result was an order for three P7 Performance Series servo presses”**

our non-stop production. While one spindle unwinds a roll, the operator can load a partial roll on the other spindle, then automatically splice into that roll without stopping the press. This has had a significant cost effect on substrate waste and effectively doubled the output on the presses.’

Also, at the conclusion of a press run, the operator can transfer out of the final roll of that job and into the first roll of the next job, without wasting any time. This increases the uptime of the press even if run lengths are short, or less than one roll.

To add to the existing Martin Automatic machines, Desmedt ordered two new MBSF auto splicers and an LRD automatic transfer rewinder to work with the new Mark Andy presses. The new machines, which were delivered straight from the Martin Automatic stand at Labelexpo Europe in Brussels, feature the latest models of MBSF unwind/splicers. The ‘F’ denotes mono film capability, and one of the new splicers is designed to operate at 300m/min on unsupported film to match the press speed. It has a servo motor to accelerate

the roll when splicing, which reduces the festoon capacity. All of Desmedt’s MBSF machines feature reverse-side-tape laser assistance, which helps align the tape with the web edge and eliminates any hand/eye coordination errors. This feature is especially helpful with the narrow matrix waste edges that Desmedt runs.

The new Martin LRD rewinder is a high-spec unit fitted with in-line slitting for edge trim and center slitting. It can handle large rolls up to 800mm in diameter, and those up to 410mm can be automatically ejected to a receiver on the operator side, without the standard ramp exit. Usefully, the LRD is fitted with Martin’s ‘Mobility Kit’, which aligns the unit on locating pins sunk into the production floor, and allows Desmedt to wheel it to whichever of the Mark Andy presses has a job that benefits from automatic rewind capability.

‘We estimate that the Martin units save us five minutes per job change. Based on our double-day shift work pattern, five days per week, this equates to a saving of 400 hours per machine in a year – or better still, 1,200 more hours of production across the three new presses – that’s big money,’ says Köhler, who also points out that continuous running has ‘invisible’ benefits, as it removes many of the old operator working practices that were disruptive to production and costly to productivity.



Read about Mark Andy’s new press launches at Labelexpo Americas 2018 on page 95

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# CS Labels plots its future

*A new facility is the embodiment of the UK converter's growth plans. David Pittman reports*



CS Labels managing director Simon Smith (left) and Adam James, the digital printer's operations director (right)

**U**K digital printer CS Labels has moved into a purpose-designed facility that will allow the company to continue its strong growth and achieve its ambitious aims.

The new 20,000 sq ft factory doubles the Xeikon press user's available manufacturing space and will enable it to improve productivity, both through equipment utilization and workforce output. Five Xeikon presses – four CX3 engines and a CX500 – have been orientated with the unwind units facing into a central area, for example. This provides a collaborative work environment for press operators. All finishing equipment is positioned off-line to allow maximum utilization of printing capabilities, although one CX3 is fitted with a buffer unit to allow it to handle longer run lengths. Finishing equipment is positioned adjacent to the presses and includes a screen printing unit, Ashe label inspection rewinders and Grafisk Maskinfabrik (GM) lines. One of these is a DC550 converting line for handling wider web widths, while another is a highly specified system for producing peel and reveal labels including an insert unit developed in collaboration between CS Labels and GM.

The physical building features offices that are spacious, comfortable and have aspect windows overlooking the production floor. The factory floor is similarly airy, with heating and lighting designed to foster a productive work environment as well as being highly energy efficient. Outside, a bike store allows employees to cycle to work.

Having only finalized its move in the weeks prior to Labels & Labeling's visit, the main factory floor offers CS Labels plenty of room to grow and is ready for installation of further equipment. This will include additional digital printing capacity, although the exact nature of this is unknown. Rather the printer is actively engaged with a number of projects that will shape its future growth and product mix. Inkjet is one possibility, as that technology continues to evolve and find new applications.

Simon Smith, managing director at CS Labels, says: 'Our strategy has always been for the company to evolve every few years, as standing still and just concentrating on trade work or single layer labels means you have to cut margins to protect your market. The

investment in this new building has been made with the future in mind and allows us the space and opportunity to grow and expand.'

## **Innovation in packaging**

Innovation is central to CS Labels' DNA. Take its work in flexible packaging as an example. For some years it has been working to find an option using Xeikon press technology to handle such pack formats and the materials involved. Smith identifies how its flexible packaging offer is now gaining traction, increasingly in non-food

**“It has to be about more than digital printing. You need to offer a digital solution. Anyone with a digital press can print a label, it's about how we differentiate ourselves, and understand the market and applications”**

## *Emerging markets*

CS Labels sees new and emerging markets as an exciting opportunity for growth. Those such as e-cigarettes, vaping and legal cannabis are burgeoning, but their often small and nimble supply chains place high demands on suppliers of labels and packaging. 'We are having to respond to the needs of markets that didn't exist five years ago,' says CS Labels managing director Simon Smith. 'There's a lot of markets that are being built on the internet or are driven by independent traders. This means there are a lot of companies out there who are looking to buy small volumes.'

markets. A project of note has been for hot tub aromatherapy crystals, with an order of 11,000 pouches across 20 SKUs. 'Non-food is an enormous market, but it's the type of job a traditional flexible packaging company wouldn't want,' says Smith.

To allow it tap into these markets, CS Labels is enhancing its own production to efficiently produce short runs of flexible packaging. Its old site is now home to its flexible packaging activities, in addition to its wider R&D work. A Xeikon 3500 digital press remains installed there, while the company will soon commission a bespoke pouch making line intended to streamline the production flow in short runs of flexible packaging.

'A big challenge we have is that we have no control over finishing and are beholden to their production schedules,' notes Smith. 'Despite our printing only taking around 10 days, ordering and converting can mean the lead time for flexible packaging can be up to 15 weeks. That is far too long.'

'With our production techniques using the Xeikon print process, solvent-free in-house laminating and new pouch making capability, we can be much more flexible with turnaround times – three to four weeks.'

### Innovation in labels

Innovation in labels is also ongoing. One such development has been a project in collaboration with Labelefx, where CS Labels has helped a customer to rethink its self-adhesive label ordering.

The customer required mass price point labeling, bi-annually. This saw orders from several departments from hundreds of stores collated in one file, then passed to the label provider for quote and production. The original process saw the orders printed on separate sheets which contain the same label of the same size. This resulted in a large proportion of waste labels, such as multiple £35 price labels on a sheet where a particular store might only need 50 percent of that sheet. CS Labels' answer was to combine laser cutting and vectorizer technology, along with software that interprets the master spreadsheet to process the job orders. The system prints a QR barcode into the waste area of the label material when there is a shape or store change. This is then scanned by the GM laser cutter and tells the laser which shape needs to be cut out. Using this technology, CS Labels can quickly print and cut a full range of self-adhesive labels with various designs, shapes and sorts on a single roll of material and then cut this into separate sheets for separate stores. Human intervention at this stage is removed, and the technology accurately does all of the work. The result for the customer was a



Four Xeikon CX3 presses and a CX500 have been installed at CS Labels' new site



Laser cutting has helped one CS Labels customer reduce its self-adhesive label order from 11 million to five million

reduction in the number of labels ordered, from 11 million to around five million.

Another innovation is a new cloud-based PDF workflow system that promises to streamline job generation. Powered by Ayelant's tFlow, the system creates a collaborative, real-time environment for artwork approval. This allows stakeholders to view, comment on and amend orders. The system automatically takes the sales order and PDF and uses data in them to create order-specific job sheets. It also carries out preflight checks and can correct file issues, such as ensuring the artwork is the right size and in the right color space, correcting bleeds and handling font problems.

These developments will help CS Labels serve a market that 'will change more over the next three to four years,' notes Smith. 'The high street will not be there as it is now as people buy more and more online.'

The industry needs to be changing its production processes to suit.'

He adds: 'There are some really interesting things that are being done with digital. We are talking to brands and designers to make sure they understand and can capitalize on the opportunities; to look beyond the unit price, at how you can add value and where the power of digital lies.'

'The industry hasn't always sold digital very well or its limitations. As such, it hasn't yet shown its full potential. It has to be about more than digital printing. You need to offer a digital solution. Anyone with a digital press can print a label, it's about how we differentiate ourselves, and understand the market and applications.'



See CS Labels' new home from this footage, shot before the company relocated <https://tinyurl.com/y7zqdsj>



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# Labelcraft upgrades digital capability with Trojan T4

*The integration of in-line finishing was central to the UK printer's latest investment decision. David Pittman reports*

UK printer Labelcraft has installed a TrojanLabel Trojan T4 as part of its continuing investment in digital technology to serve its clients in an ever-more efficient and cost-effective manner.

T4 is an all-in-one digital color label press with integrated finishing station that can print, laminate, cut and die-cut 4-color labels. The print engine can achieve a 1600 x 1600dpi resolution at a maximum speed of 60ft/min. A new formulation is claimed to reduce ink consumption by 50-70 percent compared to other printers on the market. Color and light resistance has also been improved, three-fold. Finishing options include laminating and die-cutting.

Labelcraft director John Norman identifies in-line finishing as key to the company's investment decision: 'We had been looking to invest in new digital printing technology for a couple of years and had looked at the likes of HP and Xeikon. These are geared to run 330mm, while we're set up for 10in. They print fantastically but then we'd have to invest in specific converting technology.

'When we saw the Trojan T4, we were impressed as it gave us what we were looking for in a format we were more comfortable with and where we could utilize our existing conventional finishing equipment. We did start looking at finishing to accompany the T2, but when we spoke with John Hammond at Nilpeter UK [which distributes Trojan printers in the UK] we were excited to hear about the T4 with integrated finishing. Being able to print full color and die-cut in one pass means we are now effectively running into finished labels.'

## Business benefits

The Trojan T4 is Labelcraft's latest addition to its equipment portfolio. This includes two web-fed 10in KDO flexo presses, Xerox toner-based digital printers for sheet work and a Roland DG wide format printer-cutter. Labelcraft also owns smaller table-top Memjet printers. These served as its gateway into digital and now provide a valuable tool for training staff on inkjet while continuing to serve some business applications.

'I would recommend printers to look at this type of machine as they really are



*Labelcraft has installed a Trojan T4 all-in-one digital color label press with integrated finishing station*

excellent,' states Norman. 'They allow you to take concepts and designs and turn them into tangible products. You can send out a few hundred of each and allow the customer to see the labels for themselves.

'We had a customer who was launching two products, each using full-color labels. That would have required a substantial outlay on plates to produce just 500 labels for each. With digital we were able to deliver these labels without such overheads. The client was happy with the products and service received and they came back to us with other work. Digital gave us a foot in the door.'

As well as full-color, decorative labels, Labelcraft produces functional labels to deliver information to customers in industries such as food service. In this industry, Labelcraft has also been able to use the Trojan T4 to the supply chain's advantage. One example is a customer for functional labels that has transitioned from buying multifunctional labels and overprinting them on the packaging line with variable data, to receiving a wider selection of finished labels.

'The thinking has been that the cost to set-up a job is built into the label unit price. To keep the cost down, labels are designed to be multifunctional, printed with static information then added to on the line. With digital, we are now able to offer all of the variable information printed directly on the label. Additional batch and expiry date information is inkjetted onto the carton.

'The customer has also expanded from 60 to 180 labels, which we have been able to cater to very easily. We are now talking

to them about introducing colored labels for specific product ranges as an indicator of things such as allergens.'

Norman does note that the service life on inkjet print engines must be factored into the unit cost price, as they are much shorter compared to a flexo line.

With the Trojan T4, the print module is replaceable meaning the machine can be upgraded with the newest printing technology as and when needed. The finishing station is also able to be maintained as a separate finishing line when the guts of the inkjet unit need replacing.

'From our experience with the sheet-fed machines we know that can be expensive and time-consuming. It was a motivation in specifying the Trojan T4; it was the best option for us,' notes Norman.

## The art of digital

'The art of printing has now changed to the art of making artwork,' opines Labelcraft director John Norman. 'In flexo, the skills lie in plate mounting, pressure, ink mixing and ink viscosity. To run a flexo press you need experience and technique. With digital, the skill lies in image make-ready and getting it to the machine. This has created demand for a new skill set at the beginning of the process. This is part of the evolution of label printing, which is exciting.'



Read page 64 of *Labels & Labeling* issue 3, 2018, for an update on finishing digitally printed labels

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Model	Web width	Max. Printing width	Thickness of printing material	Printing length	Printing speed
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<b>WJPS-450D</b>	450 mm	440 mm	80-350 g/m <sup>2</sup>	210-420 mm	30-150 prints/min
<b>WJPS-560</b>	560 mm	540 mm	80-350 g/m <sup>2</sup>	210-420 mm	30-150 prints/min
<b>WJPS-660</b>	660 mm	650 mm	80-350 g/m <sup>2</sup>	210-420 mm	30-150 prints/min

Note: The printing speed is subject to the length and quality of the printing material.

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# RotoMetrics celebrates an Exploration of Print

Nick Coombes reports from RotoMetrics UK's 2018 packaging event, where sustainability was a key theme



More than 30 manufacturers supported the event with table-top displays

RotoMetrics UK sales director Neil Lilly welcomed more than 300 converters to this year's two-day event in Aldridge, saying that to succeed in today's changing package print market, converters needed to react quickly to new trends and offer something more than their competition. Introducing a line-up of speakers that covered various market sectors, the noticeable thread running throughout was sustainability and the environment.

The program kicked off with a presentation by Nick Gilmore, CEO of IC3D Creative Edge Software, who illustrated how innovative technology was coming to the aid of the packaging industry. He traced the history of three-dimensional vision back 500 million years and highlighted its importance today in all manner of tasks from driving to filling a container with liquid. JIT marketing, advertising and cost reduction are the key driving factors in the development of 3D rendering software, which is expected to be worth around US\$3 billion by 2022 and shows an annual growth rate of 22 percent. The 3D technology market will hit US\$175 billion by 2020 – so its importance and value are unquestionable.

So, why is 3D visualization important? Because it delivers a visual effect that generates a perception of depth. This means that viewers get an enriched 360 degree viewing experience of the image, which helps prototyping because an accurate example of the real product can be seen in advance. By showing the product in physical form, any problems can be identified and resolved prior to production, which shortens time to market. This was highlighted by a graphic which compared a new design taken from brief to prototype in typically 33 days using outsourced 3D services, with the same job handled in-house in just 10 days. He concluded: '3D photo-realistic visuals are becoming the norm, and whether the packaging is glass, liquids, foils, bags, or cartons – they all look amazing. Any packaging designer can learn iC3D in just days, and it will save you and your client time and money – and even win new business.'

Joanna Stephenson, managing director of 'Women in Packaging UK' and MD of PHD Marketing, then outlined market trends. With UK/Ireland sales growth for 2018 predicted to be higher than the European average, with the pharma, beverage, health/beauty, and food sectors leading the way, she said there is room for optimism. Despite the growth, run lengths continue to decline and two distinct trends were noted: an interest in digital technology; and a willingness of narrow web converters to move into folding cartons. But while volumes are up, it seems loyalty is slipping, with many brands looking to source outside Western Europe.



L-R: Colin Phillips, Herma; Neil Lilly, RotoMetrics; Antony Cotton, Focus Label Machinery

She highlighted a number of examples of how smart technology is helping to boost market share through active involvement with the brand. The Pepsi Max #FutbolNow Blippar campaign, Nestlé's innovative use of cereal boxes as Augmented Reality, Share-a-Coke and Nutella Unica were all cited as examples, while the connectivity offered by IOT (Internet of Things) gives converters an opportunity to take the lead. Technology is also increasingly involved in the need to track and trace all packaging to assure product authenticity, and digital workflow is offering converters and brand owners alike a greater degree of security.

One of the greatest influences in today's retail market is the growth of e-commerce, more than 20 percent of which will be cross-border by 2020. This is requiring designers to rethink packaging to cater for the tech-savvy generation for whom ZMOT (Zero Moment of Truth) is more important than the traditional FMOT (First Moment of Truth). Packaging design needs to work both online and on-shelf, bearing in mind the former may be viewed on the small screen of a smartphone. The task of a designer becomes more complex with the need to satisfy a market that demands frustration-free packaging that includes a vast amount of data, is unique, personalized and sustainable.

Another area set to grow is the local/craft business, which offers opportunities to use unique stocks and added-value techniques to lift shelf appeal. This goes hand-in-hand with the demand for personalization at one end, and minimalism at the other, as consumers demand a return to the simplicity of 'real food'. Which brings the debate neatly round to environmental protection and the need to use more recyclable/compostable materials from renewable sources. Linerless is one obvious technology for the future, but the situation needs tackling from the

far end with better recycling of materials. The days of 'single-use' packaging are drawing rapidly to a close.

**Sustainable business**

With the environment in mind, Kevin Vyse of Marks & Spencer showed how from community projects in the 1990s the graph of progress towards a truly sustainable business by 2030 was being achieved. The end goal is a low carbon business that is circular, restorative and committed to well-being, equality and fairness. M&S embarked on what it calls Plan A in 2007 and last year moved into phase two. The aim is to have 100 percent of its packaging recycled by 2022 and to be using one polymer group only for plastic packaging (to ease recycling) by 2025, the need for which is being driven by the continued rise in world population, more urban living, and the growth of single use packaging, such as water bottles.

He explained that there are two types of economy: linear and circular. Linear follows the 'take, make, use, and dispose' concept, while circular follows the 'make, use, repair, re-use, and recycle'. Today, plastic packaging follows the linear route, and it needs to change by re-designing, re-using, and recycling more effectively. M&S has a



*After delivering his speech, Sir Ramulph Fiemmes signed copies of his latest book*

three-pronged strategy for this. It believes in maximizing resources by making efficient use of 'healthy' materials that can be renewed, recycled and are traceable. That customers and brands can be protected by optimizing packaging that is designed to minimize waste and maximize recovery and utilization and third, that supply should be secure by sourcing only from the greenest raw material suppliers and converters. As he

concluded, we have only one planet Earth, and we need to protect it.

Susan Wright, editorial director of Earth Island Publishing, gave an impassioned plea for environmental respect, saying that the market is demanding more than decoration for its packaging: the pressure for sustainability has switched from being an in-house ethic at the more 'green-minded' converters five years ago,

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**“The pressure for sustainability has switched from being an in-house ethic at the more ‘green-minded’ converters five years ago, to being driven by consumer demand today”**

to being driven by consumer demand today. This offers both an opportunity and a challenge. For converters using natural substrates, there is the chance to win back some lost ground by skillful design and the promotion of paper-based packaging as a the only sustainable option; for the plastic-based sector, a challenge to prove that it can gain maximum use and re-use with minimal harm from its fossil fuel-based products.

Citing the three current trends – a move towards digital production, the growth of smart packaging, and ‘green’ production – she said that most brand owners were now less concerned about how their printed packaging was produced than how creative it is, and whether it meets their corporate policy on sustainability. With the continued slide in average run lengths, which reflect not only the desire by brand managers to ring the changes on volume products, but also the growth in demand for short run packaging from artisanal businesses (think beer, wine, preserves etc), converters have a unique

opportunity to make a sea-change in how they produce and the materials they use.

**Opening the eyes of brands**

Sanjay Patel brought his vast experience in packaging to bear on the audience with an amusing but highly pertinent presentation on ‘Opening the eyes of brands’. Speaking with a Packaging Collective hat on, of which he is a founding partner, he explained that there are five fundamental design principles that all packaging needs to meet: protect, present, promote, position and provide. He speculated on the use of drones for delivery, but suggested that whatever lies ahead, it holds a challenge for printed packaging.

Moving on to discuss Marketing 4.0, a level to which most companies aspire but which relatively few attain, he said that marketing has moved from the early descriptive days where packaging needed to explain what the product did, to the second phase that required it to explain why it was better than its competitors, to phase three,

which saw freedom of choice and the need to find a way of making the customer feel special. The fourth level is relevance, and equating how the message can appeal to a wide audience for the same reason, but without identifying a specific product.

Looking ahead, he said that Marketing 5.0 is all about purpose and looks at ‘why are you here, and why should anyone care?’ It’s not just about ‘me’, it’s about creating a true ‘win-win’ situation that is all embracing, and requires the brand to grow almost organically.

The event was wrapped up by Sir Ranulph Fiennes who, in describing the various phases of his education and colorful military career, gave a motivational speech that stressed the need for perseverance. Illustrating his presentation with examples of his many global explorations, mostly at the North and South Poles, he emphasized the importance of being first at everything, irrespective of the hardship involved. In a witty and entertaining hour, ‘The World’s Greatest Living Explorer’, as he is described by The Guinness Book of Records, Sir Ranulph put into perspective the humdrum daily lives that most of us live.

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# Form + Function For Craft





Blue Label Digital Printing invested in an HP Indigo 8000 digital press at Labelexpo Europe 2017

# Automation at work at Blue Label Digital Printing

*US-based Blue Label Digital Printing has built its brand on providing high-quality digital labels in three to five business days. In order to do that, the company has invested in some impressive machinery and software. Chelsea McDougall reports*

**T**he way Andrew Boyd tells the story of Blue Label Digital Printing's initiation into the label market, it's as if the move was a happy accident.

The fourth-generation Ohio printer was launched in 1957, producing envelopes for church offerings, a business that still continues today as One Write Company and is ran by Boyd's father, Norm Boyd.

As with many printing companies, One Write began looking to diversify and in 2003 started an offshoot of the envelope company, One Write Digital, which produced short-run digital label jobs for flexographic printers.

A realization came to the younger Boyd at a 2012 Dscoop event for HP Indigo digital press users, when a fellow printer from a much larger business asked Boyd how his company entered the label market. He looked around and thought, 'Who, me?' It didn't occur to him that One Write Digital would be considered a label company.

It was with that epiphany that Boyd's company realized it was not on the sidelines of the label sector, but it was actively playing in the game.

'As I was talking to her I realized that we were already in a place that a lot of printers want to be. We just weren't capitalizing on it like we should have been,' Boyd recalls.

After that Dscoop, One Write Digital rebranded to Blue Label Digital Printing with Andrew at the helm as general manager.

The company added an HP Indigo WS6800 to its existing HP Indigo WS6600 digital printing unit, and at the same time invested

in an ABG Digicon Series 2 with hot foil stamping and embossing.

At Labelexpo Europe 2017, Blue Label Digital invested in an HP Indigo 8000 digital press. In 2018, Blue Label Digital added AB Graphic's Digicon Series 3 with a Fast Track module to keep up with the Indigo 8000's print production.

## All digital

Blue Label puts an emphasis on high-quality digital printing. In fact, no one on its 60-person staff has ever operated a flexographic press.

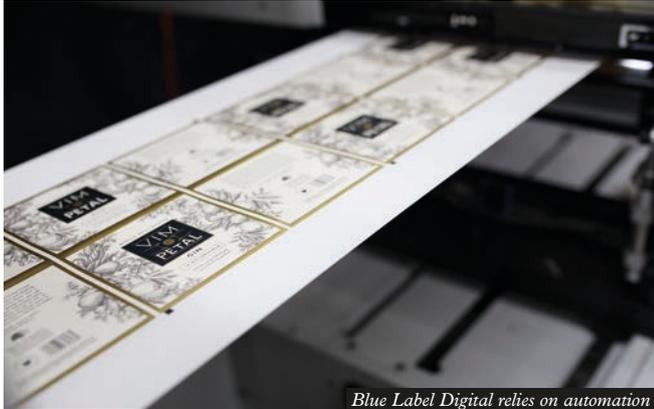
Craft beer and spirits make up the majority of Blue Label's customers, as the company represents a large number of US craft breweries. 'In the beginning we didn't have a single beer customer,' Boyd says. 'We mocked up our own labels and we just shipped them out to breweries. Now we serve over 1,000 breweries all over the US.'

Wine, home goods, e-juice, specialty foods and personal care round out Blue Label's primary markets, and the company has begun to play in the United States' burgeoning legal cannabis market.

'Whether the product is to be sold in a farmer's market or for a large brand on the shelf. We scale to our customers' needs,' Boyd says.

At Labelexpo Europe 2017 in Brussels, Blue Label acquired an HP Indigo 8000 digital press that offers speeds of up to 262 linear feet a minute (80m/min) and doubled the company's production capacity.

For a company that caters to craft, and focuses on digital production, Blue Label had to be prepared to be profitable with even the smallest jobs and the greatest number of SKUs, so the company turned to automating much of its production.



Blue Label Digital relies on automation

### Blue Label talks printing trends

Regardless of size or industry, custom bottle labels play a key part in making sure that people take note of the bottle and its contents, which is why companies are always trying to find new ways to attract consumers. Here are five beverage label printing trends for 2018, according to Blue Label Digital Printing.

**Big, simple and bold:** Brands shouldn't be afraid to go big and bold with their labels. Shoppers don't always have the time to read every piece of copy on a label, so some businesses gravitate toward designs that favor a simple, bold style that sticks to the basics. By minimizing supporting details and placing a clear emphasis on the critical content, you can ensure that shoppers will take note of what your product is and decide

quickly if it appeals to them.

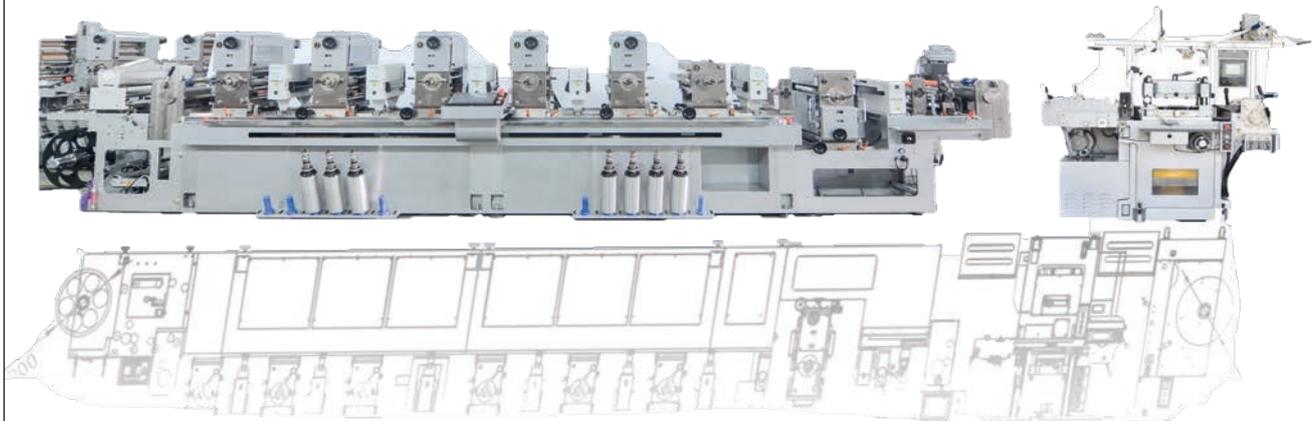
**Sustainable labels:** As consumers become more interested in eco-friendly packaging, businesses have made strides to ensure that their products are sustainable. That means investing in labels that are biodegradable and, if possible, made from recycled materials. This trend also impacts the look of certain labels. A natural paper labelstock looks more appealing to an eco-friendly customer rather than a more plasticky material on a recyclable bottle.

**Repeatable patterns:** Repeatable bottle label patterns are a big hit for many businesses because it helps them develop a strong identity without coming across as boring. Variable data printing allows businesses to personalize patterns to efficiently create labels that are customized for individual people or for specific products.

**Hand lettering:** Hand lettering isn't a new concept in design circles, but more businesses are starting to appreciate the effects it can have on their labels. When done right, hand lettering can add style, elegance and warmth to a label that digital fonts can't always achieve, which can be very appealing for customers who want a product that feels more natural and less corporate.

**Holographic effects:** More companies are turning to holographic details to add some eye-catching effects to their labels. Holographic foil stamping allows printers to add a metallic, three-dimensional look to their bottles that can enhance their design. For those who want to add brightness, flair and a touch of elegance to bottle labels, holographic effects will help the label pop off the shelf.

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'Like any digital printer, you have to have the infrastructure to handle all the SKUs if you're going to sell yourself on the benefits of digital printing, you have to be able to accommodate volume,' Boyd says. 'That requires a printer to make the non-value added tasks as cost-efficient as possible.'

**Automation and new technology**

Blue Label Digital Printing opted to integrate Cerm MIS with Hybrid's Cloudflow for an automated print production workflow.

The company decided to invest in a Cerm MIS because the flexibility of its database allowed Blue Label to select data the way they wanted to.

'As a smaller company, Cerm made it easier to let MIS work for us. It was also scalable,' Boyd says. 'Cerm allowed us to grow faster, with the goal to link up with our Hybrid Cloudflow production workflow.'

All the investments have paid off and led to an impressive 65 percent growth rate this year.

As for what's next for Blue Label, the company is exploring new opportunities, such as shrink sleeves, but it's not merely trying to get bigger.

'We want to expand our product



Andrew Boyd, president of Blue Label Digital Printing

offerings, but we want to look for things that we know we can do without sacrificing what people expect from us,' Boyd says. 'I would rather have a narrow focus and make customers really happy, than try to be everything to everybody.'



Blue Label Digital Printing prints labels for over 1,000 craft beer companies in the US. President Andrew Boyd discussed the craft beer label market in a feature in Labels & Labeling issue 3



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# Embellishments shine at Wright Global Graphics

*The North Carolina converter tells Chelsea McDougall how it helps its customers shine*

**M**uch of Wright Global Graphics' business is centered on what chief strategic officer Don Wright affectionally calls 'the sparkly stuff'.

The North Carolina-based label converter produces some labels that you have to turn over to see, while others are destined to jump from the shelves. In both instances, value added effects such as foils, embossing, debossing and tactile effects play a role in portraying a product as premium.

'We're always trying to figure out a new way to embellish a product,' Wright says.

Wright Global Graphics produces woven labels for the mattress and upholstery industries, as well as heat seal labels for floor covering. Additionally, the company creates pressure-sensitive prime labels for the food, wine, craft beverage and candle markets.

The second-generation print shop was started in 1961 in Thomasville, North Carolina, where today Wright Global Graphics operates three plants as well as a facility in Dalton, Georgia, close to many of the country's carpet mills. The company, run by brothers Don, Ron and Greg Wright, is celebrated as a small-town employer, as evidenced by a recent local TV news report that described the manufacturer as 'a staple of the downtown.'

Wright Global Graphics also has a facility in Hong Kong, though the company remains passionate about American manufacturing (see boxout).

Don Wright says: 'I truly believe our country was founded on manufacturing. As Americans, we love making products. That is what helped our country grow to prominence. And it's what makes our country great.'

## 'Sparkly stuff'

Embellishment is a large part of the value Wright offers to its label customers. The way Don Wright sees it, if the company's customers put the time, energy and money into making their products, that mentality should extend to the packaging.

'To cut yourself short at the point of contact with the customer is insanity to me,' he says. 'It makes absolutely no sense to drop the ball on packaging. The label should represent what's inside the bottle. It's a critical point of contact with the consumer, and it's the last place you should cut a corner.'

'At the end of the day, the sparkly stuff is what you want. If it's sparkly on a store shelf, I'm going to gravitate toward it. It attracts attention, and if the product is in an environment where it needs to stand out, foil is a really great way to do that.'

The paradoxes that exist at Wright Global Graphics are best demonstrated by its machinery. On the shop floor sits some of the oldest invented technology, alongside to the latest state-of-the-art equipment.

A powered fabric loom is used for the woven labels for floor covering, upholstery and mattress labels produced at Wright Global Graphics. The company also has a range of sheet-fed offset, flexo and digital technology for its labels.

A Mark Andy Performance Series P5 is the workhorse of Wright's flexo operations, alongside an HP Indigo 6800 with off-line AB Graphic Series 3 digital finishing unit. Wright uses Kluge foil stamp and embossing machines for fabric, paper and film substrates, and



*Wright Global Graphics uses a powered loom for its woven labels*

is a loyal customer of Kurz for foils.

Despite woven labels often not facing the customer, Don Wright says, they are anything but generic. In fact, the floor covering, upholstery and mattress labels are treated much like the prime labels produced at the company.

He explains: 'Customers purchasing rugs or mattresses still want to feel that their products are premium. It's an information label but it's the only other branding you have.'

'With any decorative rug, consumers are basically buying pattern, color and texture. Floor covering brands use the label on the back to communicate SKU, barcode, size etc. But it's also the only opportunity the manufacturer has to say "this is who we are". The rug doesn't have their logo on it. The label is the place for them to say "this is high end".'

## *Wright Global Graphics addresses manufacturing skills gap*

It's often said that in order to attract a younger workforce, the label industry should highlight its innovative technological advancements. But Don Wright is having success by tapping into the maker mentality of his younger employees: 'We're having a shift in our core personnel right now, and what's cool about the millennial crowd is that we're hiring these young people who pride themselves on being makers.'

Knowing that they played a part in creating the labels they can see in their local grocery store shelves is exciting to many in this demographic, he says.

'I'm a firm believer in a maker economy, and the millennials have realized this. They don't want to drink imported French vodka, but they want the spirits their buddy made in his local craft distillery. The beauty of the craft maker mentality is that it brings those crucial skill sets back to the local community. Couple that with technology, and I feel good about the future of our industry.'



For more information on Wright Global Graphics, go to [www.wrightglobalgraphics.com](http://www.wrightglobalgraphics.com)

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# Redesign amps up energy water brand

*Dynamic shrink sleeve labels printed by Hammer Packaging on Klöckner Pentaplast materials give Hydrive Energy Water renewed appeal on the shelf. Chelsea McDougall reports*

Consumers looking for healthy beverages never have had so many choices. While that's good for thirsty consumers, the hyper-crowded category poses challenges for marketers trying to deliver targeted brand messages.

Austin, Texas-based Big Red Group knows the space well. Bid Red owns and markets Hydrive Energy Water, a calorie-free drink with B vitamins and 160mg of caffeine. The brand attracts people seeking rehydration, flavor and energy, a message that was increasingly difficult to communicate on busy retail shelves. 'The original label color was lost on the shelf and in the cold vault,' says Jesse Coulter, Hydrive marketing manager. 'We needed something much brighter, cleaner, and eye-catching. We also wanted Hydrive to look and feel upscale and convey the healthier energy message.'

Big Red's solution was to revamp the Hydrive brand with new flavors, new bottles, and new shrink sleeve labels. 'What consumers want from an enhanced water is great flavor, zero calories, and an energy boost to suit their busy, on-the-go lifestyle,' says Thomas Oh, SVP of marketing. 'Hydrive Energy Water's new formula provides health-conscious consumers with the flavor and function they want without the calories and sugar that they don't.'

That brand promise was primarily communicated with redesigned packaging. 'We wanted a bottle that was unique and modern, a departure from the generic bottle used in the old line,' says Coulter. 'The new bottle shape is very favorable with consumers and fits easily in one hand – it's easy to grip. The shrink sleeve labels replaced roll-on labels and allowed us to make the packaging as sleek as possible with a clean finish.'

The updated packaging had to be clean, modern and unique to stand out. 'The incorporation of a water drop into our logo and on the packaging further drove home to consumers that we are an enhanced water,' says Coulter. 'A pearlescent finish and bright colors make the label pop on any shelf, and is much more eye-catching.'

**“Hammer Packaging worked closely with Klöckner Pentaplast to develop the high-gloss shrink sleeve film that allowed the pearlescent inks to shine through”**

## Run combinations for print efficiency

To get the graphic impact it wanted, Hydrive partnered with Hammer Packaging, based in Rochester, New York. 'The new label presented by Big Red was drastically changed to capture the consumer's attention,' says Lou Iovoli, vice president of strategic partnerships and marketing. 'This design utilized the smooth clean lines of a newly designed bottle in concert with a full body shrink sleeve. Additionally, the team chose a pearlescent ink for the top bell of the label design to generate a premium look.'

Hammer Packaging worked with Big Red to utilize run combinations of flavors across the web, thus reducing make-readies



*The relaunched Hydrive flavors and packaging made an immediate impression*

and cost. This required closely communication with the design team to keep special colors common when possible and minimize exclusive colors to create a workable ink set which takes advantage of web offset.

Accommodating future brand expansion and flavor changes was essential. 'Many brands launch a new design using alternative technologies such as gravure only to find out they have to invest a significant amount of capital every time they want to tweak the design due to the cost of cylinders which are unique to each color, and then each flavor,' says Iovoli. 'We made it easy to adapt. The beverage market in particular requires adaptability.'

The labels were printed on a variable sleeve offset press, which enabled plates to be custom made with every run. 'We went through multiple evolutions of the graphic without any additional cost to Big Red,' says Iovoli. 'Additionally, as the product becomes more successful, we can match the item volumes in combination and quickly respond to market demand. This design and press technology are a great marriage.'

As the design evolved it was important to test the transition of the pearlescent ink from low shrink to high shrink areas of the bottle. Hammer Packaging's lab presented variations of full-body mock-ups until the desired effect was approved by Big Red. Hammer Packaging worked closely with Klöckner Pentaplast, based in Gordonsville, Virginia, to develop the high-gloss shrink sleeve film that allowed the pearlescent inks to shine through.

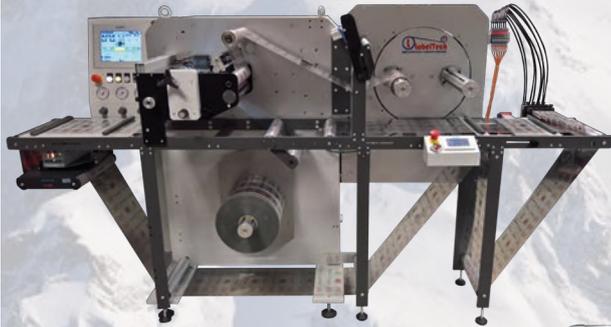
The relaunched Hydrive flavors and packaging made an immediate impression. 'Consumers were very receptive to the new branding, and loved our new logo and sleek bottle,' says Coulter. 'They associated Hydrive as an energy enhanced water – water with function.'



For more information about the companies involved in this case study, see [www.kpfilms.com](http://www.kpfilms.com), [www.hammerpackaging.com](http://www.hammerpackaging.com), [www.hydriveenergy.com](http://www.hydriveenergy.com)



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# QLM sets sights on Southeast Asia

The Australia-headquartered group is already active across the region, with more growth to come. David Pittman reports



QLM offers letterpress, flexo and other conventional processes alongside HP Indigo digital printing technology

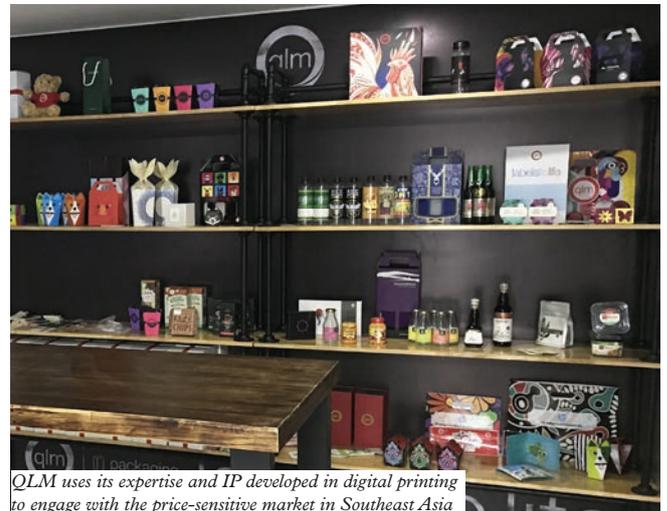
QLM Label Makers Group, headquartered in Brisbane, Australia, has set its sights on emerging markets across Southeast Asia, and beyond, as it looks to leverage its expertise and skill set developed in its home territory to open up profitable revenue streams.

QLM Label Makers was founded in 1973 by David and Del Pugh, and has since grown to become one of the Asia-Pacific region's leading label manufacturers. With operations in Australia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Cambodia, as well as Bangladesh and the UK, its services range from account management and sales, to graphic design and manufacturing, through to customer service and ongoing support.

Its most recent development is the opening of the plant in Cambodia that combines digital and conventional label printing equipment, including the country's first HP Indigo digital press, a ws4500.

Simon Pugh, QLM Group CEO, states that this investment in Southeast Asia is designed to give it a greater footprint in emerging markets. 'We have looked to Cambodia as a market with exciting growth potential and will be providing quality materials and converting equipment, something the market has been wanting for some time.'

**“We have looked to Cambodia as a market with exciting growth potential and will be providing quality materials and converting equipment, something the market has been wanting for some time”**



QLM uses its expertise and IP developed in digital printing to engage with the price-sensitive market in Southeast Asia

He continues: 'The time and effort it takes to set-up a business in these countries is outstanding. You have to be able to work through a minefield of legislation and red tape, although the payoff comes when you're in the line at a supermarket and see someone with your products in their basket.'

## Barriers to entry

QLM's journey to the business it is today has seen it adopt digital, through HP Indigo, across its operations. This has allowed it to benefit from the evolution of the technology, as well as changing market dynamics (see boxout). Pugh notes, however, that there are issues in adopting digital in regions such as Southeast Asia, namely price. 'You are competing against letterpress, which is a dominant technology in the region. The market is driven by price, so if you are comparing how cheaply you can produce 100,000 pieces on a digital press or using letterpress, the conventional process will always be cheaper.'

The sheer size and scale of Southeast Asia is another challenge. Pugh opines that HP Indigo probably has the highest market penetration in Australia, where close to 100 of its presses are installed to serve a population of 25 million people.

'Australia has a very low and fragmented population, as well as a high cost of labor. This makes the volume of manufacturing and number of SKUs a lot smaller.'

'Across Asia, the cost of labor is very low and there are high population densities. Vietnam, for instance, has a population in excess of 95 million people. And there is a higher volume of SKUs produced.'

'This means it is a question of math and the breakeven point when considering digital versus conventional production. It can be done, but if you just install a digital engine and try to compete, it will not work.'

QLM Label Makers marketing manager Lindsay Nutley speaks of keen interest in digital technology in Vietnam. In August, QLM Vietnam hosted the Digi Wow seminar in partnership with industry suppliers HP Indigo, Rieckermann and Esko. This attracted 120



QLM offers letterpress, flexo and other conventional processes alongside HP Indigo digital printing technology

attendees for presentations on the potential of digital. 'Few in Vietnam are using digital printing, so it's exciting to be able to educate brand owners and key industry figures on what the technology can do. It is an untapped area of the market,' says Nutley.

**IP**  
QLM offers letterpress, flexo and other conventional processes alongside HP

Indigo digital printing technology, which is identified as just another, albeit important, part of its offering. QLM has developed its own IP in relation to digital printing, which it uses when engaging in conversation with customers in established and new markets.

Pugh adds: 'We position our solution as market-leading technology, which is an attractive proposition to some who want to associate themselves with the best, cutting-edge technology. Digital is also a

cleaner, simpler production method, which carries a lot of value.

'We are adopting the IP developed in Australia and targeting customers in Southeast Asia with it. We endeavor to understand the pinch points being experienced in each market.'

As an example, QLM's strategic move into Cambodia has been based on external evaluations of the market, as well as its own evidence.

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'How many stickers are being produced in Cambodia,' asks Pugh, rhetorically. 'We have been operating across Asia for some time so are able to read markets and signals. In Cambodia, we have seen what is available and what is possible.'

'We also own the ws4500 and Phnom Penh [Cambodia] is located close to Ho Chi Minh City [Vietnam], so the risks are much lower.'

QLM has looked further afield too, to India for example, although Pugh makes clear that entry into any market, regardless of size and potential, must be the right fit for the company.

'Every business needs to work out its ability for stretch and to work locally. We have honed our proposition to ensure it is not just about making lots of products and making them super cheap.'

Pugh adds that this is one reason joint ventures are not an avenue QLM will look to exploit to enter new markets.

'If you have two people running it, you end up with no firm direction. Or your partner on the ground will be expecting to run it, and they might not do so to your requirements. Businesses are built on cultures, ethics, values and processes. It is very hard to find someone aligned in that thinking.'

He continues: 'We aren't looking to be a big multinational supplier, of which there

### Digital evolution

Lindsay Nutley, marketing manager at QLM Label Makers, identifies how the evolution of HP Indigo digital printing technology – such as the print engine – has tracked and met market demands, and even helped create new markets. 'Early adopters faced a number of challenges as the technology was new. They had to work through production issues to get great results. In addition, when digital was introduced it didn't really capitalize on its strengths. It was often pitched as an alternative production method to flexo or gravure. Trying to compete on those terms didn't capture what digital is good for.'

Growing demand for variation, customization and, increasingly, personalization has changed this, he adds.

'As the market and the lifecycle of labels and packaging has changed, so digital printing has come into its own,' says Nutley. 'Brands are looking for greater variation and customization, and there has been a boom in personalization. Digital is the only technology that can achieve these results. Advances in the technology under the hood have further helped digital move forward.'

'We have adopted HP Indigo technology across our business after it has gone through a number of iterations and is now able to compete for its own reasons and no longer going head-to-head with conventional processes. It is now a technology saying, "we can do it different, we can do it better".'

are many, but have worked out what works for QLM, the market and our customers. We deal with Fortune 500 type companies but no company is worth more than five percent of our turnover. Our customer profile sees no customer as more or less important than any other. The person spending AU\$100 on an order is spending the most important AU\$100 they will on labels today.

'We're making sure each job is treated with the gravitas it deserves and ensuring the channels are in place to make that job move through the company as efficiently and cost-effectively as the one for 25 million labels.'

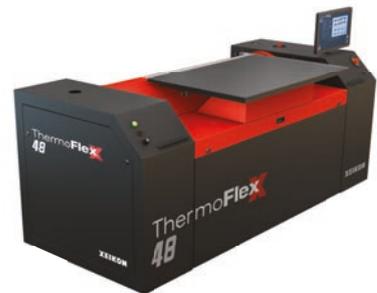


Read page 67 for more on the market in Southeast Asia

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# Mega Source spreads its wings

*The Taiwanese coated material supplier is seeing success in Southeast Asia and increasing its presence in India. Aakriti Agarwal reports*

**M**ega Source, a Taiwan-based company that offers top coating on synthetic paper, BOPP, PP and PET materials, has seen success in the Southeast Asian market after it started operations at its new factory in Bangkok in 2016.

Spread across an area of 188,000 sq ft, the Bangkok plant houses one coating machine and a slitter alongside other converting facilities. With space to install more machinery, the plant has the total capacity to produce 2,000 to 2,500 tons of coated material a month. The factory caters to label requirements mainly for the ASEAN region and has started exporting to other countries as well.

'People in the region are more inclined towards using packed items,' says Sandy Lin, president of Mega Source. 'We see a trend of packaging shifting from paper to films. Thailand and Malaysia are the biggest markets in the region for our company.'

'We are, however, focusing on increasing our reach worldwide and filling the capacity at our factories. We aim to gain greater market presence through innovation, strengthen customers' relationship and offer our coating materials directly to various OEMs, potential brand owners and distributors. This will enable us to utilize economies of scale, thereby lowering costs with our partners.'

## “We are focusing on increasing our reach worldwide”

Mega Source specializes in producing top coated paper and films, and facilitates other companies with limited resources to do it at their end by sourcing base film and paper, and coating it with soluble chemicals coating. 'We advocate sustainability in our business operations and work with eco-friendly coating materials and chemicals in our production. The chemicals used are toxin free and do not contain any heavy metal contents. Therefore, Mega Source synthetic papers are 100 percent recyclable and can be repeatedly recycled,' says Lin.

For the label industry, Mega Source offers several coated films such as transparent, white gloss, white matt, direct thermal, metallized, thermal transfer films are among others. These coated films are scratch proof and water resistant. 'We focus on providing quality coated films that could enhance performance on modern presses. With these attributes, Mega Source has successfully obtained several test certifications,' says Lin.

Mega Source gains competitive advantage by directly importing chemicals and customizing precise coating formulations based on each specific client's requirements. 'We formulate the right coating for specific requirement based on end use requirement. Besides tailoring our service to fulfil each clients' expectation, we offer complex coated materials for companies in small quantities which we believe is an exception in today's market,' informs Lin. 'It is because we have technology know-how that we can also fix any problem that may arise in the coated material, which is a unique service.'

All products undergo stringent quality checks. The company has a printing set-up to check the coated material for printability before it's shipped. Synthetic paper from Mega Source is a 3-star approved product is certified for printability by HP, Fuji Xerox and Konica Minolta. In addition, the company has achieved various certifications including ISO 9001:2015 and FDA.



L-R: Ajay Bhatia heads the Indian operation, with Shweta Chhabra and Anita Malhotra also in the team

### Indian operation

Mega Source is increasing its presence in India through a liaison office in New Delhi with dedicated team of Ajay Bhatia, Shweta Chhabra and Anita Malhotra.

The Indian market generates 100 to 150 tons of sales in synthetic paper each month. Mega Source perceives huge potential for quality synthetic papers from increasingly sophisticated consumers. Tapping into this growth, Mega Source has set an ambitious target of supplying the Indian market with 2,500 tons of coated synthetic paper a year. The company aims to increase its local footprint to a 50 percent market share.

The company pegs the Indian market at 2,500 tons per annum and is currently vying for 10 to 15 percent share. 'We are confident of achieving this goal in due time. With a local distributor, we will be able to supply to more companies that may need our material in smaller quantities. These steps will help us make a strong footprint in the country,' concludes Lin.

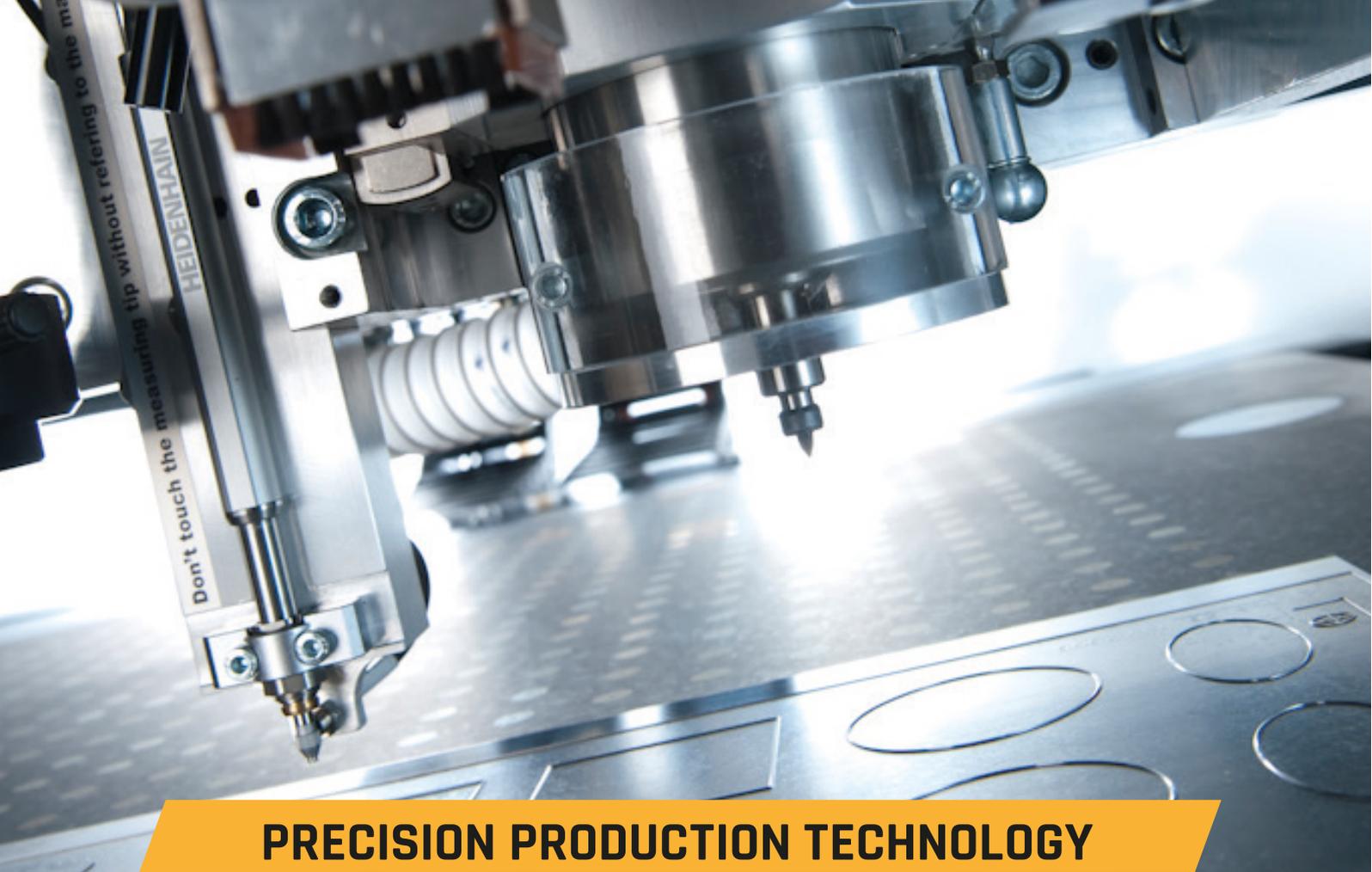
### Mega Source facilities

Mega Source was founded in Taiwan in 2007. The first plant houses three slitters and two coating machines that are integrated together. 'With a different production process, it allows us to do a lot more value addition as compared to other companies,' says Lin.

The machine width at both plants is 1.65m, so Mega Source can supply a maximum width of 1.6m. The Taiwanese plant, with a production capacity of 600 tons a month, also has sheeting machines for synthetic paper. It employs around 100 people at its factories in Taiwan, Thailand, India and the US.



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# Marks Emballage vies for leadership position

*The Indian converter is investing heavily in new equipment – including two Gallus Labelmaster presses – at its new plant. Aakriti Agarwal reports*

Indian label converter Marks Emballage has invested US\$6 million in new equipment, signing deals to install two Gallus Labelmaster 440 label printing presses, a Prati bi-directional finishing system and inspection slitter rewinder, a Pantec Rhino II hot foiling unit and AVT inspection, at its new plant in Baddi, which is under construction.

**“This investment is a natural progression from being a newcomer in the label printing industry to aiming at a leadership position”**

The Gallus presses are 8-color and 10-color; the Pantec and Prati machines have been customized, enabling the company to bring to market unique products at high production efficiency. 'The Gallus Labelmaster, with its short set-up times and high level of automation, offers the finest print quality at any speed, so it was a very convincing choice. Hence we added two Gallus Labelmasters and a Pantec Rhino II along with Prati finishing lines to give the best results to brand owners,' says Aadiya Kashyap, managing director at Marks Emballage.

Apart from presses and finishing lines, the company is also investing in industry standard pre-press workflow, color matching and proofing equipment, automated ink kitchen, a fully equipped quality lab, a robust ERP system, material handling equipment, material storage racking systems and efficient waste management ancillaries.

Expected to be ready by the fourth quarter of 2018, the 30,000 sq ft plant is ISO 9001:2008 certified. The company will add more quality processes and certifications for its new plant including OHSAS 18001 for Occupational Health & Safety, G7 master printer certification color management and print quality certification.

It also looking at ISO 14001 certification for Environmental Management, with the



*The Marks Emballage and Gallus teams sign a deal for two Labelmaster presses*

objective of improving control of processes and minimizing waste. Marks Emballage is working with some of the leading waste management consultants to come up with best-in-class industry practices. 'We are excited to work with partners in the industry including brands, labelstock manufacturers and paper recycling specialists on the liner recycling program. It is the need of the hour to become more environmentally responsible and achieve zero waste to landfill,' says Kashyap.

### Quality requirements

With these certifications and fresh equipment, the new plant is planned to exceed the upcoming stringent quality requirements in the pharma sector while also adhering to all required global print standards. 'This investment is a natural progression from being a newcomer in the label printing industry to aiming at a leadership position. Each piece of equipment was worthy of the role it played in our exciting journey and was right for the business at its time. Today, we are confident and are expanding our facility with the best equipment, increasing our ability to service bigger brands and even look at exports,'

says Chandrakant Gadhia, vice president at Marks Emballage.

In addition, the company is investing heavily in training and process standardization through expert consultants and industry partners. 'We are designing a skills training program for machine operators with a strong financial commitment to training facilities in the region. It's also going to be our continuous corporate social responsibility (CSR) program to contribute to the print and label industry by uplifting skills and thus the life of operators,' adds Kashyap.

With these investments and initiatives, Marks Emballage will enter new segments including cosmetics, personal care, FMCG, wine and spirits, automobile, agro chemical and industrial, while strengthening its existing pharma label business. 'Pharma happens to be our stronghold and we are focused on bringing some innovations to this segment such as smart labels for supply chain tracking. We are also working on offering a complete range of products from multi-layer labels, booklet labels, hanger labels, blood bag labels and child resistant labels. We will offer serialization, track and trace, temperature logging and other smart

features in due course. We are also going to have a research and development lab in our new plant to work on these products in partnership with some of the leading equipment and technology providers,' details Kashyap.

In addition, the company will now be able to offer embellishments such as rotary screen, hot and cold foil, registered hologram and lens inseting, micro embossing into a single combination label, multiple layer promotional labels, shrink sleeves and in-mold labels for bottles. 'To equally support the new hardware, we are investing in security design capabilities from leading technology companies. We are confident that we shall bring a fresh product price offering in the market which is only possible with automation and standardization,' explains Gadhia.

It is Marks' endeavor to focus on effective anti-counterfeiting and brand protection strategies as it believes that it is an essential part of any business plan. 'Consumer protection is very important and authentication solutions in integration with digital technologies can play a vital role. This is one of the biggest opportunities for the label sector. As per a recent statement by Authentication Solutions Providers



Aadiya Kashyap with Chandrakant Gadhia of Marks Emballage

Association (ASPA), the market for fakes are on a constant rise in India, and has surpassed Rs 40,000 crore (US\$5.8 billion) in the organized sector alone, as law enforcement remains weak and fraudsters freely make inroads into the market. There is a need for a high level of innovation which only a handful of companies are focusing on,' Kashyap says.

**Expansion**

Marks Emballage targets a US\$15 million turnover by 2020. It currently prints around

a million linear meters every month on existing Chinese and Bobst presses, and aims to grow its turnover by five times at its new plant. However, Gadhia clarifies: 'The new expansion is not an incremental upgrade of the existing plant but a completely new start for the company from a superior platform. The new facility is not only geared to print higher linear meters but also have better value where the meters are fewer. Its aim is to stand out in both capabilities and capacity, as our focus will be to achieve the correct

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balance between volume and value to offer a unique advantage to the brands in terms of price and embellishments. Our strategy and operations are being aligned to achieve this by product innovation, efficient production and great customer relationship management.'

The company is evaluating between investment in hybrid or digital equipment. 'While we do understand digital is the future, we strongly believe success in digital is all about getting the business model right. We are still studying the options,' reveals Kashyap.

He says the Indian label market's value is estimated to be around Rs 3,000-crore (US\$438 million) with a growth rate of 15 percent. 'This is a great opportunity for all printers. We are just aiming to make the best of this opportunity by investing in the right technologies and offering value addition to brands. We firmly believe that we should focus on building competence. Success shall follow,' concludes Kashyap.



For more insights on the Indian market, visit *Labelexpo India 2018* on November 22-25.

[www.labelexpo-india.com](http://www.labelexpo-india.com)



The Gallus Labelmaster

### Gallus Labelmaster

Aiming to become a significant player in the label industry, Marks Emballage was looking for cutting-edge technology. It opted for Gallus Labelmaster.

'We wanted the press to offer the best-in-class price performance ratio and help achieve the highest operational efficiency for Marks. The expanded width of 440mm gives us the opportunity to venture into new segments. The speed of 200m/min was another big consideration. In addition, the press offers short set-up time, gives substrate and configuration flexibility, uses lightweight aluminum printing cylinders to facilitate quick job changes, and features an optimized ink chamber that facilitates optimal ink transfer to anilox rollers with minimal splashing and foaming, thus producing premium print quality prints with high-end finishing and perfect register at all speeds.

'In addition, the Labelmaster offers a high level of automation that and the flexibility to work with different substrates such as labels, monofoils, shrink sleeves and lamitubes. It was one of the big plus-points for this machine. Also, since they have the latest generation designs, these machines shall remain in vogue for at least 10 years. Finally, having a competent local Gallus team in India sealed the deal in their favor,' explains Kashyap.



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# Labelexpo India previewed at successful overseas forums

*In the lead up to Labelexpo India, taking place in Greater Noida, Delhi, on November 22-25, Labelexpo organized a series of forums to preview the event. Aakriti Agarwal reports*



*Delegates at the forum in Colombo, Sri Lanka*

Labelexpo Global Series, the organizer of Labelexpo India, has hosted successful forum events in Colombo, Sri Lanka and Dhaka, Bangladesh, as part of efforts to reach out to offset printers who are thinking about diversifying their businesses into label and package printing.

Labelexpo India, the largest label and package printing event in South Asia, will run on November 22-25. With 250 industry-leading exhibitors, the show offers highly valuable networking opportunities for visitors and exhibitors alike, bringing together the entire supply chain with machinery, ancillaries, substrates and ink suppliers all under one roof.

A series of evening forums are being staged across South Asia during late August to late October in conjunction with several industry trade bodies representing the package printing industry. Held in India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, the Colombo event was the first of seven such events.

Jade Grace, Labelexpo India 2018 event director, said: 'We are delighted to offer almost double the number of similar regional events we hosted in the 2016 run-up to our last Labelexpo India, and across three countries. This is testament to the rapid development we have seen in the printing industry in South Asia over the last two years. As the appetite for labels and package printing continues undiminished and innovations in technology develop apace, it has become the biggest growth market. The forums are a unique opportunity to gain a taste of what Labelexpo India 2018 holds in store, and for printers across the region to learn from, and collaborate with the experts.'

## Colombo

The event in Colombo on August 24 attracted 75 attendees from both the offset printer and label converter communities. It was staged in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Association of Printers.

Giving the inaugural speech at that event, Pradeep



*Representatives of the Sri Lanka Association of Printers with Pradeep Saroha (second from right)*

Saroha, event manager of Labelexpo India, noted that labels and package printing is the highest growing sector in print with market size estimated at around US\$115 billion by the end of 2018. 'With commercial print in decline, we must start exploring opportunities in the labels and package printing market,' he said.

In his presentation, Saroha shared some interesting facts about the global packaging market and explained how commercial printers are switching to label printing. He said that in North America, the flexible packaging market is worth US\$23.5 billion, which accounts for 23 percent of the global market. The trend observed in North America is that commercial printers are making the switch to labels.

Saroha said that Southeast Asia is one of the fastest growing regions for label and package printing. A young local population is driving growth in the label industry through increased consumption of FMCG products. As for South Asia, Saroha said that it has a huge potential for growth, especially if one considers how the flexible packaging market in India is growing at around 15-17 percent per annum.

**“As for South Asia, Saroha said that it has a huge potential for growth, especially if one considers how the flexible packaging market in India is growing at around 15-17 percent per annum”**

Mahan Hazarika, editor of The Packman, presented a case study on Delhi-based Kwaliti Offset Printers, a specialist manufacturer of wet-glue and self-adhesive labels. When it was established in 1972, the company produced cartons and cups for the ice cream industry using letterpress machinery. A decade later it installed an offset press and entered the label printing business, producing beer labels. 'Since then the company has added flexo and digital technologies to its existing offset unit,' noted Hazarika. 'And all the

three technologies are currently being used at its plant to produce a wide range of labels to cater to various customer needs.'

Another speaker, Kishore Kumar PS of NBG Printographic Machinery Company, like Saroha, stressed that labels can be the next destination of a commercial printer to diversify. Kumar said: 'The most widely used labels are pressure-sensitive grades, mostly web-fed, which accounted for 64.6 percent of the market value in 2014, and 51.4 percent of the print volume.'

Rajesh Gandhi of Fujifilm Sericol gave a presentation on why one should switch to pressure-sensitive labels. Gandhi said: 'Back in the 1970s, only about five percent of all global labels were pressure-sensitive, while they represent approximately 65 percent of the market share today. However, if you look at the beverage label market from a global perspective – less than 15 percent of all labels are pressure-sensitive, with the majority still being glue-applied labels, mostly made from paper. Hence, there is a lot of room for growth in this segment.'

Another speaker, Manish Kapoor of Nilpeter, explained how a narrow web press can make a converter 'feel like a magician'. Kapoor said: 'Just by adding a few additional features on your narrow web press, you can print both wine labels and shrink labels on the same press.'

Saroha said: 'We are very happy with the success of our very first forum outside India, which provided an extremely valuable insight into this year's Labelexpo India. Attendee demand exceeded expectations and we have experienced a surge in enquiries from offset printers about attending Labelexpo India since the event. The themes explored at the forum will all be in evidence at

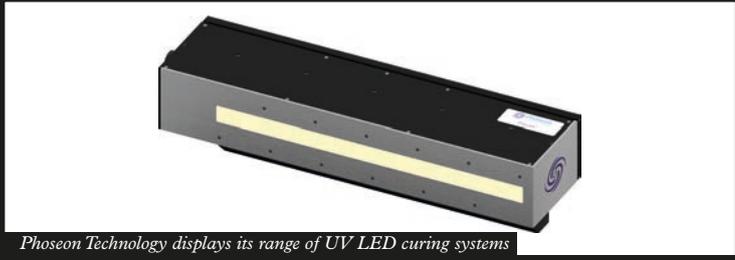
### On display at Labelexpo India 2018



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this year's Labelexpo India, which is set to be our biggest yet, with more exhibitors than ever before.'

Since the Colombo event, Labelexpo Global Series hosted a forum in Dhaka, Bangladesh, which attracted 170 attendees and generated strong interest in Labelexpo India 2018 and the potential for offset printers to move into label and package printing. Further forums took place in India in October: in Rajkot, Gujarat, India, in partnership with Rajkot Printing & Packaging Association; in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, in partnership with Ahmedabad Printing Press Association (APPA); in Kochin, Kerala, India, in partnership with Kerala Master Printers Association (KMPA); in Jammu, Jammu & Kashmir, in partnership with J&K Offset Printers Association (JKOPA); and in Pune, Maharashtra, in partnership with Poona Press Owners Association (PPOA).

**Brand Innovation Day**

Labelexpo India is hosting an exclusive Brand Innovation Day on-site on day one of the show.

Aimed at up to 50 brand owners and packaging designers in India, the purpose of the day is to equip delegates with expert insight into making the most out of their brand, how they can overcome key challenges on the path to future growth, and staying ahead of the competition in a fast-paced industry.

The day will include a short program of expert-led presentations, a hosted networking lunch, a panel discussion and Q&A, plus a tour of key suppliers at the show. This will highlight the latest technologies and give practical examples showing how brands can achieve stand-out product presence. Delegates will also have the



DPR shows Virgo, a compact desktop finishing system

**“The appetite for labels and package printing continues undiminished in India and it is now the biggest growth market, so it felt the right moment to offer this educational opportunity to brand owners and packaging designers at the show itself”**

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Weigang Machinery displays an 8-color ZJR-330 flexo press



Pantec displays flatbed hot foil embossing system Rhino IIS

option to attend the LMAI annual awards and network with peers and VIPs.

Labelexpo Global Series managing director Lisa Milburn, who will open the Brand Innovation Day, said: 'Our most commonly asked question at Labelexpo India is how brands can stand out from the competition. Given the success and popularity of our educational program for our other Labelexpo events including our upcoming Americas show in late September, we wanted to provide similar opportunities for Labelexpo India attendees. The appetite for labels and package printing continues undiminished in India and it is now the biggest growth market, so it felt the right moment to offer this educational opportunity to brand owners and packaging designers at the show itself.

'The Brand Innovation Day is a rare chance for them to gain industry insights into how a brand can be inspired to innovate, experience the highlights of Labelexpo India 2018, and learn the tricks of the trade from the experts.'

Schedule highlights include Andy Thomas-Emans, director of strategy for Labelexpo Global Series and Labels & Labeling magazine, who will chair a panel discussion on product decoration. Speakers include Chakravarthi AVPS, global ambassador for the World Packaging Organization, who will be speaking about global packaging trends and how to adapt to constantly changing consumer demands; Sukhdev Singh Saini, packaging lead AMEA, General Mills, who will speak about creating environmental awareness in the branding of a product including how to handle recycling of both raw materials and end use products; and Kanchan Bhargava, senior brand manager at Twinings, who will explore ways of leveraging packaging design and its role in brand building and increasing market share.

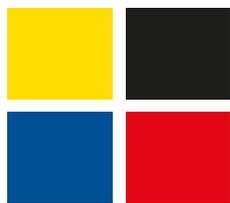
Chakravarthi AVPS said: 'India is one of the world's fastest emerging markets, which has created a fantastic opportunity for brands and packaging designers. We are seeing really exciting trends evolving in the region. However, for the industry to remain competitive and fresh, brands can't afford to be complacent, and need to be constantly updating their knowledge. Labelexpo India's Brand Innovation Day is an unmissable opportunity for them to do this.'

## Labelexpo India to host leading industry suppliers

Among some 250 exhibitors at the show, **Allied Speciality Papers** shows specialty paper product lines manufactured at its hot melt coating plant in Vasai, Maharashtra. HD flexo-certified **Alpha Flex** displays photopolymer plates. **Asahi** shows its AWP line of water-wash flexo plates. **Baldwin Vision Systems** demonstrates color management and print inspection technology. **Bobst** runs demos on its M5 servo-driven UV flexo press, able to process most substrates for label and packaging production. **Bostik** shows its ranges of adhesives. **BST Eltromat** displays TubeScan EagleView, its 100 percent defect detection and web viewing system for narrow web. **Capri Coating Solutions** will exhibit its range of products involving paper, filmic and specialty substrates with customized adhesives. **DPR** shows Virgo, a compact desktop finishing system. **Enercon** exhibits the CoronaMax corona treater for improved ink adhesion. **Esterlam** displays its synthetic doctor blades. **H.B. Fuller** showcases Swiftmelt 1918 hot melt adhesive. **IEEC** will display its corona treatment systems. **Imada** shows its pocket UV stroboscope with adjustable flash duration. **Konica Minolta** displays the AccurioLabel 190 digital label press. **Monotech Systems** shows its Jetsci industrial inkjet range, including the Colornovo UV inkjet press. **Nilpeter** demonstrates its new generation FB-Line, the FB-430 with 16in web width combining flexo, gravure, hot foil and cold foil, as well as its Gravure Unit and FP-4 unit for hot foil and embossing. **Pantec** displays flatbed hot foil embossing system Rhino IIS, and rotary high-speed hologram and lens inseting systems Swift and Cheetah. **PGI Technologies** shows a 5-color Preciflex Stallion flexo label press. **Phoseon Technology** displays its range of UV LED curing systems. **Polyart** displays its patented Tamper Evident film that allows for immediate delamination and easy printing with all TT ribbons, and introduces a new range of in-mold labeling films for blow-molded containers. **Precision Cutting Systems** shows Accudruck register control system. **Repro Poly Services** shows photopolymer flexo plates. **RK Machine Tool Industry**, a supplier of imported used machinery, shows a rotary garment label press. **Screen**, through local distributor Insight Print Communications, highlights the Truepress Jet 350UV+LM inkjet press. **Shree Lamipack** introduces self-adhesive labels on paper or polyester with various security features. **Spinks World Group** shows inks and coatings from Ruco Germany. **Standard Printers Providers** promotes Japanese company Taiyo Kikai's UV rotary flexo press. **Tresu** shows its range of ancillaries for OEMs and end users in the flexo, gravure and offset markets, including its Chamber Doctor Blade system. **Weigang Machinery** displays an 8-color ZJR-330 flexo press. **WorldPack Automation Systems** shows automatic self-adhesive labeling machines. **Xiamen Delish Automation Equipment** shows thermal transfer ribbons, hot stamping foils, and slitting and rewinding equipment. **Zeikon** shows its 3300 digital press in a roll-to-roll configuration for high quality production of self-adhesive and heat-transfer labels.



Labelexpo India 2018 will be held at the India Expo Centre in Greater Noida, Delhi from November 22-25. Go to [www.labelexpo-india.com](http://www.labelexpo-india.com) for more information



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MGI Jetvarnish 3D Evolution at Xuteng Label

# Digital finishing first for Xuteng Label

*Xuteng Label has invested in the first Konica Minolta-MGI digital post-press equipment in China, greatly strengthening its 'internet + label' platform. Yolanda Wang reports*

In January, Shanghai Xuteng Label Printing Co acquired the first MGI Jetvarnish 3D Evolution digital post-press machine to be sold in the Chinese label market. Robert Lu, founder and general manager of Xuteng Label, explains that the investment completes the company's 'internet + label' offering which combines added value label production with Big Data analysis.

Robert Lu used to work for Avery Dennison before starting his own business in 2009. Xuteng Label's production hall covers an area of 1,800 square meters with more than 20 employees, Xuteng's primary business is self-adhesive label products for a wide range of end use markets including clothing and wine labels.

As a small player in China's fiercely competitive label market, the question for Xuteng Label was how to find its own unique path to success. Based on his years accumulating technical industry experience, Robert Lu has his own understanding of the way the industry would develop in the future: "With the advent of the "internet plus" era, short run versions, digitization and personalization will become a growing trend in the future label market. We can develop quickly providing we can seize the initiative in digital printing."

## Digital post-press

Xuteng Label purchased an HP Indigo ws4500 digital press in 2014 to satisfy these growing variable data label demands. Along with its previously installed Bengraphic F3 flexo press, Xuteng Label achieved an annual turnover exceeding 16million Yuan (US\$2.33m). 'At present, 30 percent of our business is done with the digital press, and the proportion will increase in future,' says Lu.

Recent years have seen an increasing demand for higher quality finished labels in the Chinese market, especially in the health and beauty sector. Digital printing has up to now not been able to

satisfy the requirement for complex post-press processing, which is an important source of added value for label converters.

Explains Robert Lu: 'Post-press processing for labels improves the aesthetics and adds most value. The growing trend of industry digitalization will cover the whole manufacturing process, especially digital post-press.'

The MGI Jetvarnish 3D Evolution installed at Xuteng Label is claimed the first modular and field-upgradable digital UV inkjet coating and foil stamping system in the world.

Available in multiple widths (B1, B2), the Jetvarnish 3D Evolution can perform 2D/3D coating/varnishing and multi-color hot-stamping in up to five colors with variable data in one pass. There is no makeready, no plates, no screens or hot stamping dies.

Label rolls from the HP Indigo ws4500 are first sheeted then fed into the Jetvarnish 3D Evolution. The machine employs what MGI calls its Artificial Intelligence SmartScanner (AIS), using AI to create an automatic varnish and foil registration profile for the inkjet heads over the preprinted sheet. This effectively avoids any registration issues caused by overall or local sheet deformation, distortion or skewing.

The new equipment has allowed Xuteng Label to digitize the whole process of print and finishing, making the whole manufacturing process much more flexible. What's more important, it has both simplified the design process and brought a new range of tactile effects for the company's customers.

'Konica Minolta is one of the few suppliers in the world that has mastered the core technology of the inkjet head,' said Robert Lu. 'It manufactures heads with high accuracy, quality and durability, and French company MGI has strong capabilities in software system development. So the cooperation between Konica Minolta and MGI is a powerful mega-merger between software and hardware suppliers.'



HP Indigo ws4500

### 'Internet + label' platform

Although digital printing has become a new engine of growth for Xuteng Label, Robert Lu still keeps a cool head. 'The introduction of advanced equipment is only the start of the digital transformation – changing to a digital mindset is the key.'

Lu states clearly that digital printing does not merely refer to production processes but also to services. Converters need to create new business models – which includes making their labels more richly creative and tactile.

In 2016, Robert Lu started a partnership with internet expert Richie Yu, jointly establishing Shanghai Xuhe Network Technology. This combination of conventional label production and internet mindset has placed Xuteng Label at the leading frontier of the label industry.

Currently, Xuteng Label's 'internet + label' workflow covers everything from initial design options, to job specification, online design approval, product manufacturing and post-sales market monitoring and feedback for the client.

'The new services we can offer based on this crossover have helped us develop many new customers, and our customers have reached more consumers through this offering – and this in turn has greatly increased our sales,' says Richie Yu, deputy general manager of Shanghai Xuhe Network Technology.

Within the partnership Yu is primarily responsible for the development of the network and system data for the label operation, focusing on communication with customers and the design and control of the overall project.

Combining QR codes on the label with Big Data analysis has allowed Xuteng Label to offer value-added services such as anti-counterfeit, product tracking, channel protection and product promotion. This use of QR codes not only inspires consumer participation and improves their brand loyalty, but also facilitates brand owners'



Samples produced by MGI Jetvarnish 3D Evolution

## “Combining QR codes on the label with Big Data analysis has allowed Xuteng Label to offer value-added services such as anti-counterfeit, product tracking, channel protection and product promotion”

monitoring of product sales using real-time collection of consumer data. This allows brands to adjust their marketing in real time and effectively achieve a closed-loop sales system.

Explains Robert Lu: 'By virtue of its "internet + label" transformation, Xuteng Label is not oriented to be a manufacturing enterprise any more, but is devoted to providing label solutions for the whole industrial chain, and thereby improving the added-value of labels.'

### Beyond labels

Robert Lu is frank about the ROI on his new machine investment. 'From the equipment investment standpoint, we are taking on certain risks. Current potential customers and orders are not sufficient for this equipment.'

In the past half year, Xuteng Label has produced numerous product samples targeting growing applications such as personalized wine labels and VIP cards, aiming to demonstrate the equipment's limitless possibilities and provide as many product solutions for customers as possible.

In the future, Xuteng Label intends to enter the packaging market using this equipment. 'The Chinese packaging market is much larger than the adhesive label market, and this will be one of our future directions,' said Lu.

China is the second largest packaging

market in the world after the United States. However, according to the latest 2017 statistics, the average annual packaging consumption of Chinese people is 12 US dollars per person, which is only 3-4 percent of that of developed countries.

With continued economic development in China and the growth of middle class disposable income, overall national consumption of packaging will also rise, Lu points out. As a supporting service for the commodity market, the packaging industry will have a rapidly growing role to play in elaborating design, product diversification, and ensuring quality, safety and functional aspects are taken into account. In a word, the future potential of packaging market is immense.

'This immense sea allows fish to leap, and the vast sky lets birds fly freely,' quotes Robert Lu. 'We believe that Xuteng Label could not only meet customers' differentiation and functional requirements using the MGI digital post-press equipment, they can also accomplish the transition from labels to packaging under the guidance of our "internet plus" mindset and practice, then exploit more markets with this professional service offering.'



For more information on the MGI JetVarnish 3D, see *Labelexpo Americas* review in this edition of *L&L*



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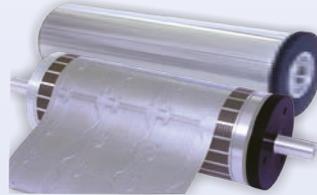


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The Omet XFlex X6 was installed by local distributor Currie Group earlier this year

# Australian converter makes impact with new Omet press

Brisbane-based Impact Labels has installed an Omet XFlex X6 press, in line with its founder's insistence on a plant equipped with the latest technology. Henry Mendelson reports

**A**fter 30 years in the same industry, a claim of expertise can well be justified.

Byron Hudghton's three-decade label love affair has taken the Impact Labels veteran to the top of the tree as one of Brisbane's best known and respected printing practitioners.

It all began with his straight-from-school start as a working hand at Perth's Supa Stick Labels before testing the waters at multi-branch Brisbane-headquartered QLM Label Makers.

Experience overseas, augmented by a series of stints in sales, meant moving from the press floor into management before the ultimate proprietorial move creating the Impact brand.

The early corporate world proved a tough testing ground, according to the then-fledgling entrepreneur, who at the same time was earning his stripes on the Brisbane cricket fields. One needs only to delve enough into the annals of Queensland amateur cricket before the name Hudghton will appear in the team statistics of the colorfully named Narangara Redbacks, who play in the State's Warehouse League. Its records list the name of Byron Hudghton and his impressive bowling and batting performances as well as his many seasons of weekend enthusiasm as a Redback.

Hudghton founded Impact Labels a decade ago and credits its success to his insistence on a machine room equipped with the latest technology. Since its early years, he has built the business on the strength of his practical experience in label printing and a strong reputation within the industry for supplying high quality labels and tags to the food, beverage and chemicals industries via local and several export markets.

As a label printer by trade, Hudghton prides himself on knowing how to extract optimum throughput from the firm's presses. As a senior Impact operative says: 'It helps the firm to grow when the boss knows how to run the presses.'

## Stepping stone

Having found himself pitched into the competitive label environment, Hudghton immersed himself into expanding Impact's coverage of the medium-to-long run label market. An important stepping stone has been the installation of a new Omet flexo label press.

Currie Group, the Australia-based distributor for a host of leading international label industry brands, supplied and installed the Omet

**"As a label printer by trade, Hudghton prides himself on knowing how to extract optimum throughput from the firm's presses. As a senior Impact operative says: 'It helps the firm to grow when the boss knows how to run the presses'"**

XFlex X6 label press earlier this year. Hudghton confirmed one of the main reasons for choosing Omet was the Currie network's on-the-ground support team of engineers throughout Australia.

The press is up and running and has already printed two million meters of film for wraparound labels, a category experiencing growth in demand. Beverage companies in particular are making the switch from self-adhesive labels to wraparound film.

'The industry is discovering these can be printed at half the cost, given the 38-micron PP material is thinner than self-adhesive label material,' says Hudghton, 'so more fits on a roll and it processes faster on the labeling machines, enabling higher production speeds.'

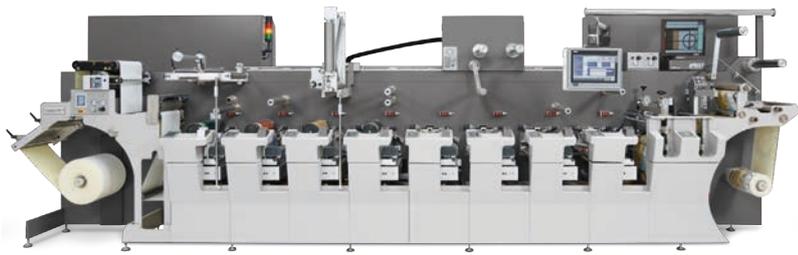
Impact Labels also bought an AB Graphic slitter rewinder from Currie Group to go with the Omet press, and plans to purchase another in the near future.

Impact Labels has also invested in what it calls 'the ultimate in intelligent solutions for print inspection' with what is claimed the first digital strobe inspection unit installed in the country.

'Our new kit guarantees consistency and quality,' affirms Hudghton. As a result, alongside the firm's Gallus 340, which he colorfully describes as 'the rock star of flexo presses', Impact's equipment is now state-of-the-art.



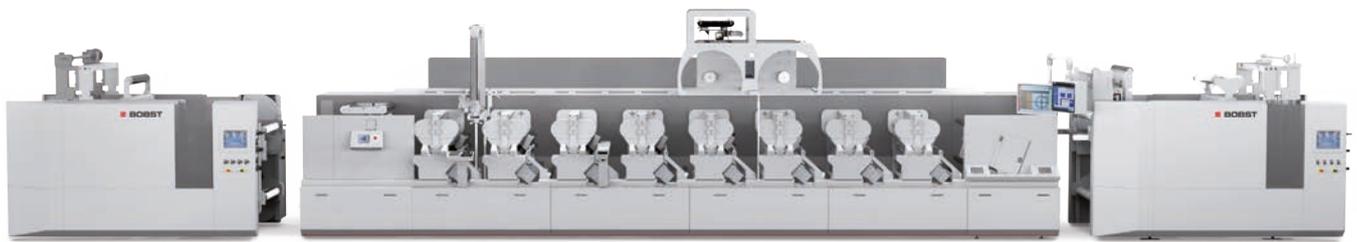
For more from Henry Mendelson on the Oceania market, go to [www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/henry-mendelson](http://www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/henry-mendelson)



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Melbourne was the location for the FPLMA congress

# FPLMA conference promotes Industry 4.0 vision

*Industry 4.0 'cyber assisted automation' is now becoming a reality in the labels and flexible packaging converting industry, but there remains obstacles to overcome. Andy Thomas-Emans reports*

The 2018 congress of the FPLMA (Flexible Packaging and Label Manufacturers Association), which took place in Melbourne, Australia, in August, focused on the practical implementation of Industry 4.0 automation technology in the package print industry.

The term 'Industry 4.0' refers to the fourth industrial revolution, which applies automation and data exchange to manufacturing technologies, where 'Cyber-physical systems', the Internet of Things and cloud computing combine to create a 'smart factory'.

Although this may appear rather abstract, we can already see its practical implementation in the label and package print converting industries and the exciting – and disruptive – shape of things to come.

A succession of speakers emphasized that the 'smart factory' concept is developing in separate 'pools' which then combine into wider systems which exponentially increase overall efficiencies. 'The integration of these technologies in our industry crosses paths with our direct customers and their MIS systems and that demand will only increase,' said FPLMA president Mark Easton.

Eric Hoendervangers, director at MPS, helped to spell out what this means in practice for press manufacturers and converters. MPS has been at the forefront of pushing automation in the narrow web sector, working closely with Tarsus Group and a range of industry suppliers to put on the Automation Arena at Labelexpo Europe and Americas. The key, said Hoendervangers, is to build systems that have open interfaces and 'hooks' to other suppliers' software.

'Automated machines will in the future "live" in a digital world,' Hoendervangers told delegates. 'This is already happening in the automotive industry, which has moved beyond simple automation to where every car produced can be unique. Aviation is a sector focused on 100 percent guaranteed safety, and this could not be achieved without automatically processing a mass of data knowledge to allow automated and centralized decision making.'

By contrast, the narrow web industry is still living in the 'craft' era with very little automation or integration.

'Pre-press is only involved in making plates. It is the operators who make choices of which tools to use and which press settings. On the average label press there are 40 adjustments the operator has to make manually on every job. Rewinding and post-press have hardly any connection. This now has to change.'

Hoendervangers said in the future the whole operation would be driven from pre-press.

'The pre-press operator and department will decide all the different

elements which go on the press, in which order and for what purpose. This will be a real time connection with no more job tickets. Pre-press will decide on platemaking and ink mixing and machine settings like tension and corona setting, UV and hot air.

'The print units will determine which set of tooling goes into which print station.'

Within this 'circle of connection' the master PDF file would drive the 100 percent inspection camera.

For management, real time data on all aspects of the factory operation is available on connected mobile devices, along with all KPAs. 'And when you connect machinery to your MIS you can also connect to the press manufacturer. He has all this data and knowledge and will know which part will break before it does. So you will develop an agreement on which activities are to be done pro-actively, and how.'

## Supply chain connectivity

Sajid Malik, VP sales for Asia-Pacific at BST Eltromat, explained how mining data from the substrate supplier using Industry 4.0 technologies could change the way we set up jobs on the press. For example, moisture information from the paper manufacturing process can help the converter solve ink transfer-related quality issues.

'Say there are four different reels with different moisture profiles in each reel, those different moisture levels affect print quality.' On a water-base press blistering might occur because the drying temperature of ink does not match the moisture profile of the reel.

'But now we can get that moisture profile from the manufacturer, we can decide to use, say, reels 1 and 4 with the same moisture profile and then 2 and 3 in order to ensure that changes required on the press are small as possible.' In addition, in-line spectrophotometric measurements taken at the paper production stage could be sent to the converter to help color management

'What is required to make this work is a standardized way of collecting data,' said Malik. 'To use information from the substrate manufacturer they must be using the same measurement parameters. There are exactly the same problems in measuring gloss, moisture etc.'

Although JDF has proven a robust means of communication between pre-press and press, Malik said JDF is rather complex and unwieldy. 'XJDF is the next step and we are part of that group. XJDF will make it easier for companies to use the data we are collecting.'

**“Although JDF has proven a robust means of communication between pre-press and press, JDF is rather complex and unwieldy. XJDF is the next step and will make it easier for companies to use the data we are collecting”**

#### Artwork automation

Yoav Lotan, HP Indigo labels business manager for Asia-Pacific and Japan, stressed the importance of automatic processing of masses of production data to give the converter a rapid and accurate insight into manufacturing efficiency. ‘You might call this Fitbit for manufacturing.’

The key measure is Overall Equipment Effectiveness (OEE), which measures the elements surrounding the press and shows in a simple display when a machine is actually productive.

‘For example, using OEE one converter realized they were spending too much time fetching substrates from a remote area, so now they keep materials by the machine. In another case a proper maintenance schedule solved an issue which the converter thought was due to spending too much time on set-up.’

Lotan looked at automating artwork creation, referencing HP’s Mosaic software. On the hardware side, HP is going down the route of fully digitized, tool-free print and decoration, with one file incorporating print and embellishment layers which is RIPPed inside the DFE. Smart, automated ganging of multiple jobs on press reduces waste and printing time by efficiently using all the real estate on the press.

#### End user perspective

Jason Goode of Simplot Australia looked at the potential of Industry 4.0 automation from the brand owner’s perspective. Many of Simplot’s brands, such as Birds Eye and John West, are manufactured on a global level, which makes managing packaging requirements a Herculean task. A key issue is that different retailers have different data requirements. ‘We have 600 products and made 8,000 label changes in the last six years covering materials, ingredients labeling, carbon footprint, nutrition information, GMO and ethical sourcing,’ said Goode. ‘And as retailers move products online, that same



Mark Easton, president of FPLMA

information has to follow.’

Industry 4.0 could help tackle many of these issues. ‘I will know that the right label is on the right packing line and providing all necessary information to customers for each product.’ The approval cycle would also be shortened.

The growing consumer focus on packaging recyclability is also having an impact. ‘People now want to know, or could ask for, the provenance of every component.’

Simplot was a founding member of REDcycle, a Melbourne-based project which encourages consumers to return their flexible packaging to retailers such as Woolworths and Coles. Up to two million units of Birds Eye flexible packaging have been returned since the project launched.

‘There are well over 100 recycling symbols, so we are looking at developing simplified symbols like “film, return to store”,’ said Goode. ‘But the lack of standards across the supply chain is the problem. We need to find ways of sharing information more efficiently.’

#### Automating LCA

Robert Taylor, director of sustainability at UPM Raflatac, explained how life cycle information can be automatically generated using UPM’s Label Life tools. ‘Although the label is only 5-10 percent of the pack footprint, its overall impact can be great.’ Label Life takes account of a wide range of up and downstream factors including sustainable forestry, post life of the label and raw materials saving from down-gauging.

‘The problem is that brands are using different data systems – so how can we get our information into their systems?’

Taylor also looked at the challenges of collecting process waste including trim and matrix as well as glassine/filmic liners. ‘Label waste is typically small volume and geographically scattered. With Rafcycle the user scans a QR code which tells us how



Tony Dalleore, general manager of FPLMA

much waste is available, and when a certain volume is reached UPM Raflatac collects it all and it goes to the recycling plant. We already have 120+ partners and are now rolling the program out to the Americas and APAC.’

Taylor warned about marking packaging as ‘compostable’ where there are no industrial composting systems available.

#### Pre-press automation

Speakers from Esko and Hybrid Software looked at automation of the pre-press process including the key approval cycle.

The approval cycle is a complex process involving multiple actors – packaging engineer, legal, R&D, marketing and printer, and in multiple languages. The standard way of handling these is by email and sending proofs is hugely inefficient.

Automation of the process not only cuts approval time dramatically, but also adds a complete edit trail with central synchronization of files, so there is no scope for misunderstanding.

‘Currently we have ‘islands of automation’ rather than true end-to-end integration, creating multiple possible points of failure.’

Trevor Crowley, general manager ANZ Digital Solutions Xeikon, looked at the ‘shape’ of an automated workflow, which includes optimized color management, standardization of substrates, grouping of orders based on substrate and finishing specifications.

Crowley stressed the importance of separator labels for better integration of finishing.

‘Generation of set up labels is also automatic and sets up the following processes such as die-cut or foiling.’ Header and footer labels are also generated automatically.

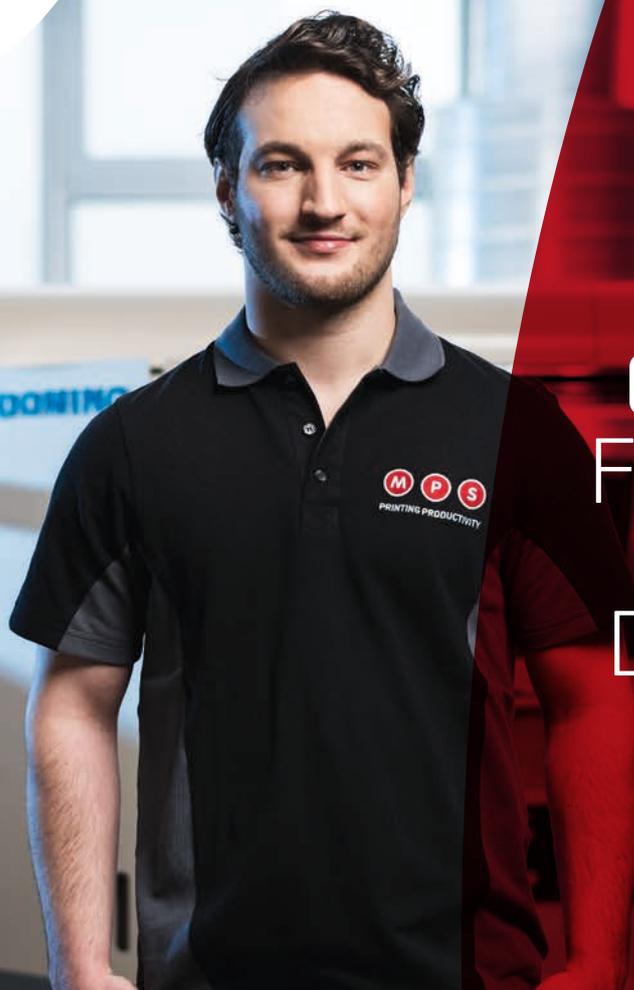
‘By minimizing set-up times in finishing, waste can be reduced by 30 percent.’



The FPLMA incorporates the former LATMA organization, which represents label converters in Australia. The organization holds an annual congress and awards event. See [www.fplma.org.au](http://www.fplma.org.au) for more information



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# LABELXPO AMERICAS 2018 REVIEW

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“There were 487 exhibitors on show, up from 455 in 2016, spread across 203,642sq ft of floor space – a record for Labelexpo Americas. Around 30 percent of exhibitors were new to this year’s event; there was a 95 percent increase in visitors from Latin America”



## KEY SHOW STATS

**16,413** ATTENDEES

**487** EXHIBITORS

**203,642 SQ FT** OF FLOOR SPACE

**30%** NEW EXHIBITORS

**83%** EXHIBITOR REBOOK

**95%** INCREASE IN LATIN AMERICAN VISITORS

Hybrid presses, automation and sustainability were key trends highlighted at Labelexpo Americas 2018. James Quirk, David Pittman, Chelsea McDougall and Andy Thomas-Emans report from the show floor

The 16th edition of Labelexpo Americas saw 16,413 label and package printing professionals descend on Rosemont's Donald E. Stephens Convention Center on September 25-27. There were 487 exhibitors on show, up from 455 in 2016, spread across 203,642sq ft of floor space – a record for Labelexpo Americas. Around 30 percent of exhibitors were new to this year's show. Visitors came from 86 different countries, and there was an impressive 95 percent increase in visitors from Latin America. Day three, traditionally a quieter day, saw an 11 percent increase in visitors compared to the same day in 2016. By the end of the show, a record-breaking 83 percent of exhibitors had rebooked for the event in 2020.

As well as a slew of new product introductions, the show was notable for its feature areas and educational forums. The Automation Arena – introduced at Labelexpo Europe last year – demonstrated for the first time a fully automated shrink sleeve workflow from design and proofing to seaming and inspection, all linked via a Cerm MIS. The Arena included two production lines, one digital and one conventional, and showed how they can be set up using a single workflow without manual intervention including converting, rewind and inspection.

Sustainability was a key theme. Not only were materials manufacturers demonstrating down-gauged and recycling friendly substrates, but in the TLMI-sponsored Ecovillage all matrix waste and printed materials were being collected and sent for recovery into energy pellets. TLMI also announced partnerships to develop promising new technology which can 'crack' mixed plastic waste back into monomer components, which can then be upcycled back into virgin plastics.

The show provided a range of educational resources including a comprehensive conference program running over the first two days and three well-attended Label Academy masterclasses on Shrink Sleeves, Automation, and Inks and Coatings. The conference sessions ranged widely over subjects such as mergers and acquisitions, opportunities in short run flexible packaging and managing brands' 360-degree print portfolios, while a CEO panel discussed industry trends at the highest level.

Among fringe events was the latest meeting of the UVFoodSafe group, which brings together all the key players in the narrow web conventional and digital press manufacturing industries along with key materials and ancillary suppliers to develop a best practice program for curing indirect food contact materials.

In terms of technology developments, hybrid printing, moves towards flexible packaging and automation dominated, as did the continued push of UV LED into the narrow web mainstream. Industry 4.0 technologies are driving the whole label converting supply chain towards greater efficiencies, integrating design, approval, factory management, print and finishing into one seamless operation.

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More than 300 people attended the Label Industry Global Awards

# Label Industry Global Awards

Three companies and a label industry pioneer were honored during the 15th annual Label Industry Global Awards. Chelsea McDougall reports



L-R Butch Schomber and Keith Laakko of RotoMetrics, and Guillaume Clement of Flint Group



Andy Cave of Hamillroad Software and Guillaume Clement of Flint Group



Nick Tucci of Avery Dennison and James Quirk of L&L



Alex Knott of Dow Chemical and Georges Gravamis of Avery Dennison

**R**otoMetrics, Hamillroad Software and Avery Dennison were honored for innovations and contributions to the label industry at the 15th annual Label Industry Global Awards. Alex Knott from Dow Chemical Company received his previously announced R Stanton Avery Pioneer of the Year award.

Hosted by Labelexpo Global Series on the first night of Labelexpo Americas 2018, the event brought together more than 300 guests.

Knott is a senior scientist at Dow Chemical and leader of a global team that has pioneered innovations in pressure-sensitive silicone release liner coating technology, including the introduction of Dow's Flat Release Systems.

The selection committee said that the technology has not only revolutionized high speed, low coating weight, high

performance and labelstock release liner production, but has also been a key factor in helping to drive down silicone coating costs. For the label converter and end-user, this has contributed to superior waste stripping performance at ever-increasing press running speeds, as well as enabling much higher label application line speeds on the latest automated product decoration systems. This work has helped build Knott's global reputation as a leading authority on silicone pressure-sensitive systems.

'It's a real honor,' Knott said of the award. 'I've been in this industry a long time, and it is really special to win this award. To be recognized by your peers in the industry – that's a good feeling. This industry really is at the cutting edge of science, which is why I've been so excited to stay in it all these years.'

The award, sponsored by Avery Dennison, honors the contribution an individual has

made which has impacted the label and package printing sector.

## Innovation and sustainability

Also at the Label Industry Global Awards, three companies were honored for innovation and sustainability.

The award for innovation for companies with more than 300 employees was presented to RotoMetrics for RotoRepel, a non-stick coating available on its solid and flexible cutting dies. Judges found that this technology minimizes adhesive pick-up and transfer and has resulted in significant benefits, including improved press efficiency, significant reduction in downtime and longer tool life.

The award for innovation for companies up to 300 employees was given to Hamillroad Software for Bellissima DMS, which has been developed specifically for flexo printing. Imaged at 4,000 DPI, Bellissima provides a high level of image reproduction (over 300 LPI equivalent), with no screen or content moiré, reduces printing press problems and waste, and increases press uptime.

Both the innovation awards were sponsored by Flint Group.

Avery Dennison won the award for sustainability, sponsored by Labels & Labeling. It partnered with EcoVadis to operate a dashboard providing sustainability ratings and performance improvement tools for Avery Dennison's global supply chain. The platform delivers scorecards to monitor supplier best practices.



Missed the awards? Follow the hashtag #LabelAwards for Tweets from the evening. See page 147 for more photos



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# Show floor sales

As ever, a host of deals for equipment sales were signed at Labelexpo Americas. The L&L team reports

Labelexpo shows are well-known for equipment orders being signed on the show floor, and Labelexpo Americas 2018 was no exception. Among the deals finalized at the show, Chilean wine label specialist Quintero Impresores ordered a **Cartes** GT364 WHSR finishing system. The deal represents Quintero Impresores' fifth Cartes machine.

**Dilli** sold the Neo Picasso UV inkjet press on its stand to a Mexican converter, its first sale to the Latin American region.

Wisconsin-based Heartland Label Printers installed the 22in ETI Cohesio on display on the **ETI Covering Equipment** stand following the show. The machine is equipped with two flexo printing stations; an adhesive coating station, featuring a coating head capable of applying as little as 12g of UV hotmelt adhesive/9g of regular hotmelt; silicone coating station; Pellicut die-cutting technology; equipment to produce linerless label products; heavy duty perforation station; and patent pending auto peel-off.

DeLeone Corporation purchased a DC330Mini from **Grafisk Maskinfabrik** (GM). The fourth generation of the DC330Mini converting system features spot UV varnish, semi-rotary die-cutting and quick set slitting. The line is also the first to have advanced IoT connectivity and online production dashboard and ultra-fast job recall for efficient label production. DeLeone will use the DC330mini to finish labels printed on its new Epson digital label press.

GM also confirmed the sale of two DC350 automated finishing lines. The first is going to Swedish printer Ettiketto and will run in-line with an HP Indigo 6900. The second line will be installed in-line with a Screen Truepress Jet L350UV at Belgian printer Digi-paq. The DC350 line features a unique in-line interface that allows the web to travel backwards into the press for automated calibration. Dashboard and online operator statistics are also included as standard as part of GM's strategy to promote IoT-enabled products.

Jet Label & Packaging, a converter in western Canada, invested in an **HP Indigo 8000** to double its digital capacity and print longer digital runs. CEO Darrell Friesen decided to expand the converter's capacity for digital printing as this is where the company is enjoying higher margins. 'Looking at the numbers the choice was easy,' he said. 'Digital is more profitable and that is why instead of investing in a new-generation flexo we are adding the high-volume narrow web HP Indigo 8000.' The color consistency from run to run delivered by HP Indigo is a key in maintaining the quality required by customers, Friesen noted. 'Quality is now the first concern. Number two is fast delivery and price is third.'

Kala Packaging, a Utah-based labels and packaging converter, purchased a second HP Indigo 20000 digital press. Maui Chai, Kala president and CEO, explained: 'The additional HP Indigo 20000 capacity supports our strategic move to expand heavily into digital flexible packaging, amid a sharp increase in our work.'

**LaserClean** sold an anilox roller cleaning system to Wisconsin-based Heartland Label Printers. The ALCS 1000 S off-line laser cleaning system for narrow web is suitable for label rollers and sleeves of up to 100cm and 25kg, with a diameter of 50-200mm.

**Lemorau** sold a CTA 1500 semi-automatic core cutter to US converter E Labels. The company became a Lemorau customer with the 2016 purchase of an EBR+ digital finishing machine.

US converter Adcraft Labels ordered a **Mark Andy** Digital Series HD press, among 15 digital and six flexo presses sold by Mark Andy at the show. The California-based converter bought its first Digital Series machine from Mark Andy at Labelexpo Americas 2016.

The Mark Andy Digital Series HD is hybrid press used to

manufacture pressure-sensitive labels by combining digital workflows and digital printing, with the capabilities of flexo including in-line decoration and converting all in a single pass.

**MPS** reported five press sales – four EF Symjet hybrid presses, which incorporate a digital printing unit from Domino, and an EF multi-substrate flexo press.

**PCMC** sold a 1700T Meridian anilox cleaner to Packaging Specialties in Fayetteville, Arkansas. With its patent-pending laser technology, the Meridian deeply cleans chrome and ceramic rolls of any line screen without causing surface wear, achieving like-new surface conditions at high speeds, many times increasing efficiency by 300 percent or more.

German manufacturer **Rosas Maschinenbau** sold table-top rewinders to QLM Label Makers of Brisbane, Australia, and Sapir Sprint Karmiel of Israel.



DeLeone Corporation purchased a DC330Mini from GM



Kala's Nikki Johnson (left) and Maui Chai (right) on the HP Indigo stand



US converter Adcraft Labels ordered a Mark Andy Digital Series HD press, among 15 digital and six flexo presses sold by Mark Andy at the show



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# Conventional, hybrid and digital presses

Hybrid presses dominated the show while flexo press technology showed impressive advances in automation and integration. Andy Thomas-Emans reports on conventional and digital press launches



Labelexpo Americas returned to Rosemont, Illinois, in September

**H**ybrid and automation were the two key themes of this year's Labelexpo Americas. The adoption and acceptance of hybrid printing in the label industry has been propelled by the decision of all the major conventional press manufacturers to harness digital engines to their own flexo press lines. Hybrid presses can either include fully fledged 4-7 color digital units – with white and even digital varnishing included – or rail-mounted mono units integrated onto flexo presses, typically replacing a screen or flexo white or a mono spot color or black.

Both approaches have been adopted by **Mark Andy**. The company has its own in-house digital integration team, which displayed the new Digital Series HD press. As well as an increased imaging resolution of 1200 DPI, the press is now driven by a powerful Global Graphics RIP for high throughput full color variable data applications at full press speed of 240ft/min.

Mark Andy demonstrated mono hybrid technology on its new enhanced Performance Series press, the P7E, launched at the show. This was shown with a rail-mounted Digital Screen station which, Mark Andy says, provides the opacity to fully replace a rotary screen unit. This press also featured semi-rotary die – switchable to full rotary – for added flexibility.

**Omet** and **Durst** announced a global partnership in the narrow web market, which sees Durst become an exclusive OEM product supplier to Omet and allows the company to showcase its technology at Omet demo facilities.

Introduced at the show was the hybrid Omet XJet which merges a Durst Tau 330 RSC print engine with modular components from the Omet XFlex X6 press range. Helmuth Munter, segment manager Labels & Package Printing at Durst Group, said this was the two companies' first joint product, but in the future there would be other 'engineering possibilities.' 'This is not a short-term co-operation but a long-term alliance, which benefits from the two companies being geographically close.'

The XJet runs at 78m/min with up to 8-colors using FujiFilm Samba G3L printheads imaging at 1200 x 1200 DPI native resolution with a 2pl drop size. Running White underprint slows the speed to 52m/min as the ink needs more time to flow. Multi-stage

inter-color pinning prevents bleeding and gives text a sharp definition, and nozzle compensation means missing or deviated nozzles get switched off and compensated with bigger drop from neighboring nozzles. The press is now at a beta customer site.

Marco Calcagni, sales director at Omet, explained the features of the X6 modules of the XJet including the Monotwin Cut die-cut unit, which uses a single cylinder for all formats but remains fully rotary, complete with auto pre-register. 'With semi-rotary you stretch the material when you transport the web – this approach allows much better registration.' Calcagni said the hybrid format of the XJet means 'far less waste and downtime' on the converting end compared to off-line finishing. The latest X6.0 print units now include auto pressure adjustment as part of a comprehensive Industry 4.0 automation package.

**Nilpeter** was demonstrating for the first time in the US its Panorama hybrid press fitted with the company's new semi-rotary die-cutting system. This same system is now being developed for the FA line. Automated press design 'for a new, younger generation of label printers' was a key theme. The new FA line, shown here for the first time, incorporates Nilpeter's 'Clean Hand' approach to press automation, implemented by seven direct drives on each print head. Automated systems now include pressure setting via torque measurement and auto register setting during makeready, with all parameters, including web tension, fully recallable.

Nilpeter made an important announcement about its global manufacturing operations. From now on its newly upgraded FB press line will be manufactured for global markets in India, rather than Cincinnati. The Cincinnati plant has now shifted to manufacturing the same FA and Panorama press lines manufactured in Denmark.

A new 9,300sqm factory has been purpose built in the 'Green' township of Mahindra World City in Chennai, employing 80 people. The FB line represents the 'entry level' Nilpeter series, and has been overhauled with new design and automation features – although tooling remains compatible with the older FB machines.

**Heidelberg** was present for the first time at a Labelexpo Americas, announcing the full integration of **Gallus** into its North American operations. Gallus users now have full access to

Heidelberg's national service network, including dedicated phone support based out of Kennesaw, Georgia.

Felix Mueller, president Heidelberg US, described how the LabelFire hybrid press sits alongside Heidelberg's other digital presses: the B1 PrimeFire B1 packaging press (with which LabelFire shares much technology), and the Omnifire direct-to-container inkjet press. 'We have combined both Gallus and Heidelberg R+D departments so technology transfer is a reality. And Heidelberg already has a strong basic presence to build on in the wet-glue label and IML sectors,' said Mueller.

Christof Naier, head of Business Unit Label at Heidelberg, confirmed that the hybrid LabelFire press is now available with an integrated Gallus Screeny unit in front of the digital module for laying down opaque whites, with the digital module followed by the new Digital Embellishment Unit (DEU). Digital cold foil will be an option by the end of the year and Gallus has now combined these technologies to create a metallic doming system, now in beta testing at a site in Germany.

In another example of product integration, Gallus' Screeny now comes bundled with the Heidelberg LED UV Phoenix platesetter.

Michael Ring, head of digital products at Gallus, explained the rationale behind the entry-level SmartFire press launched at the show, calling it 'A simple, easy solution for the lower end of the digital market.' The Memjet-based press comes with both digital plotter and semi-rotary die-cutting and Caldera Grand RIP. 'It plugs into a wall socket and installation takes just four hours,' said Ring.

Ring said the press would be promoted to Heidelberg's commercial customers who want to move into labels, label converters looking to print remotely at a customer site and in-plant operations. Because the press is water-based, it does require pretreated material, and Gallus is exploring development of its own coating technology.

**MPS'** stand featured its EF Symjet hybrid press, which combines the **Domino N610i** engine with the MPS EF-series flexo print and converting modules. MPS joint founder Bert van den Brink said the success of the hybrid line at the show, with multiple sales announced, demonstrated that the new generation of label converters wanted to dispense with the 'hassle' of flexo platemaking where multiple jobs are changed in a shift.

MPS also ran a fully loaded EF multi-substrate press in the Automation Arena printing shrink sleeves with 100 percent print automation on each print deck for both sleeve and anilox positioning. The MPS 'talk to me' connectivity platform was



MPS fully automated EF press converting shrink sleeves on Automation Arena



Nilpeter FA series (L) and Panorama hybrid (R)



Print unit from new Mark Andy P9E flexible packaging press

### Flexible packaging

With Labelexpo and TLMI surveys showing increased interest from label converters in moving into flexible packaging, there were some interesting flexpack developments at Labelexpo Americas, both conventional and digital.

**Mark Andy** showed a print unit from the new P9E, a 26in (670mm) press designed for efficient converting of shrink sleeves and flexible packaging. The press does not use sleeves, but rather traditional, albeit especially light-weighted, cylinders. The company's Sean Pullen told L&L this takes away any variability caused by sleeve compression and expansion. Pressure settings can be stored for future retrieval.

Expect a full review on this interesting press – which clearly recalls Mark Andy's Comco heritage – in a future edition of L&L.

**HP Indigo** demonstrated for the first time a complete shrink sleeve line from print to converting. A 20000 digital press was shown in line with the ILC760, a new 30in integrated top coating, slitting and rewinding unit developed by **AB Graphic**, capable of using industry standard water-based and UV coatings. The shrink sleeves were finished on a **Karlville** seaming and inspection machine. The press was using HP Indigo's low slip Premium White Electroink specially developed for shrink sleeves.



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Andy Clark, General Manager – MPH Fulfilment.



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Xeikon PX3000 aka Panther

shown in bi-directional interaction with the Cerm MIS, eliminating the need for manual inputting of job data in a demonstration of Industry 4.0 implementation.

**Bobst** is a company that has stood out against the hybrid press trend, concentrating instead on automation and IoT-integration of its flexo presses, which, it says, are highly competitive against digital even on short runs. At the show Bobst demonstrated zero-time job changeovers on its top-of-the-range M6 press line, configured to produce value-added applications including multi-layer labels, coupons and laminated tubes.

The M6 was equipped with the full range of Revo/Digital Flexo automation features, including simultaneous unloading and loading of plate cylinders in the same print unit followed by automated pressure and register setting for a fully 'hands-off' makeready with minimal waste.

Key to the Revo process is 7-color extended color gamut (ECG) printing, and Bobst and its Revo partners (Apex International, AVT, Bobst, DuPont, Esko, Flint Group, Saica Flex, Stora Enso, UPM Raflatac, X-Rite Pantone) held hour-long ECG masterclasses at the show.

The M6 was fitted with remote IoT connectivity allowing the exchange of data with an MIS to improve production efficiency, workflow and press room organization. Visitors were able to view the



Bobst M1 press connected live to IoT network

production data available on the presenter's mobile phone. Similar connectivity was demonstrated on an 'entry level' M1 in-line flexo press, claimed to be the first time a mechanical shaft-driven label press has been remote-connected. A number of web-based productivity apps and benchmark services were demonstrated.

**FujiFilm** took major strides towards becoming a central player in the narrow web industry with the announcement of a North American alliance with Edale. FujiFilm will now distribute and service the UK manufacturer's presses on the continent.

FujiFilm's stand contained both an Edale FL-3 press – with full AiIR automation package including automated pressure setting – and the GraphiumX hybrid press line. The latter incorporated the Graphium Printbar, a mono UV inkjet imprinting unit which makes use of Xaar's 1003 heads in either 1- or 2-up configuration (GS6 for fine detail or GS40 for coatings). This allows conventional presses to add VDP white, varnish or digital cold foil at any position. Maximum speed is 246ft/min, although high opacity white runs at 40m/min.

FujiFilm showed a complete flexographic

### Digital news in brief

**Dantex** demonstrated two UV inkjet presses – and sold both from the show floor. The PicoJet prints at a width of 13.78in at 250ft/min with a drop size of 2.5pl. This modular system can be configured to include pre/post white, varnish or additional colors along with multiple finishing options. The PicoColour press provides finished labels from a small footprint.

**Dilli** showed its Neo Picasso roll-to-roll UV inkjet press, and sold the machine to a Mexican converter – its first installation in Latin America. The Neo Picasso press has a web width of 350mm and can print CMYK+W. The press runs at 50m/min at 1200 DPI.

**Domino** showed its N610i UV inkjet press in roll-to-roll, in-line and near-line (with AB Graphic finishing) configurations. The company's K600i dual bar UV inkjet printer was integrated on a Delta ModTech, while the N610i integration engine was shown on both the CEI (BossJet) and MPS (SymJet) stands.

**Graphtec** showed Labelrobo LCX1000, which consists of a DLP1000 EP digital

label printer and a DLC1000 digital label finisher. The maximum printing resolution of DLP1000 is 600 x 2400 DPI and it has a maximum printing speed of 7.2m/min. DLC1000 features laminating, free size and shape cutting, waste matrix removal, slitting and rewinding.

**Lombardo Converting Machinery** made its Americas debut through KPG, its official partner for the US market, focusing on the modular Synchroline flexo line along with the Toro and Bravo finishing units.

**Rea Jet** showed inkjet coding and marking systems for backside numbering, unique 1D and 2D barcodes, data matrix codes, barcodes, alphanumeric codes and variable data customizations such as time, date, counter, shift code and database contents.

**Screen** showed the low migration (LM) variant of its established Truepress Jet L350UV label press alongside the now standard '+' model. The company also launched Screen Trust Network Services which combines real-time assistance, remote diagnosis and user maintenance support along with the Equios Art and UX digital-on-demand workflow.

**Shenzen Handway** demonstrated its LabStar330 drop-on-demand digital

press with a print speed of 100m/min and resolution of 1200 x 1200 DPI. The press is available in 4-7 colors including optional white and spot color.

**UniNet** showed a range of systems: the iColor 550 toner-based digital transfer printer for garments, cut-sheet labels and packaging; iColor 200 roll-to-roll desktop inkjet printer, operating with either dye- or pigment-based ink; iColor LF700+ compact finishing system with lamination, contour cutting, waste matrix removal, slitting and rewinding; and the iColor 700 LED toner-based press, with optional white, using low fuser temperature technology.

**Valloy and Arrow Systems** unveiled a new digital printer, The Bizpress, a 13-inch high resolution LED printer for high quality labels on demand using a specially designed Xerox engine. The Bizpress will be represented by Arrow Systems in North America, a long-time distributor for Valloy of South Korea. The Bizpress allows users to print in 1200 x 2400 DPI at up to 24 ft/min. Additionally, the Bizpress is able print on even the most fragile of materials such as polypropylene, polyethylene, and vinyl.

workflow for the FL-3, including water-wash platemaking technology and LED inks and curing systems. FujiFilm is also active in both conventional and digital color management through its Colorpath Sync eco system. Its Sync Align seeks to bring G7 standards into flexo, while Colorpath Sync for Digital allows the accurate simulation of spot colors on inkjet presses.

Despite the rise of hybrid presses and growing automation on the top end of flexo technology, there is still room for entry-level flexo presses, particularly in developing markets. Brazilian manufacturer Etirama, for example, successfully demonstrated a 6-color FIT model flexo press printing with Wikoff inks.

### Digital developments

Digital printing is, of course, now firmly established as a production technology in the label industry, and this Labelexpo showed the industry rapidly maturing.

Electrophotography remains the dominant technology, and both major players showed technology new to the US.

**HP Indigo's** 6900 digital press was shown along with the company's latest Pack Ready for Labels program, which gives added

robustness in industrial label applications where resistance to water, chemical and temperature exposure is critical.

HP Indigo also launched a brand protection kit for the 6900 which includes Invisible Yellow and Blue ElectroInk, which are only visible under UV light. Coupled with new software and cloud-based options, this allows converters to offer implementation of anti-counterfeiting marks, micro text fonts and protected track and trace. Also new was HP Indigo's ElectroInk Silver, which allows converters to produce variable metallic effects in a wide range of color shades.

HP Indigo has developed its own hybrid system with the GEM in-line digital embellishment unit, and at the show announced a new digital cold foil capability. Both Kurz and K Laser foils have been approved as compatible. Innovative Labeling Solutions (ILS) was announced as the first US beta customer for the GEM, which will operate in-line with the company's HP Indigo 6900.

HP has further developed its PrintOS Cloud-based operating system, which now includes Site Flow for Labels and Packaging, OEE (Overall Equipment Efficiency)

monitoring, EPM Analyzer and Marketplace. Christian Menegon, global business development manager at HP Indigo, said the system was open to compatible third party applications – for example AB Graphic was demonstrating a Cloud-based OEE app which monitors its finishing equipment.

HP also previewed SmartStream Collage, developed from HP SmartStream Mosaic, which allows automated manipulation of multiple graphic elements to create wholly new designs.

**Xeikon** launched an entry-level digital printing and converting system called Label Discovery, formed of a Xeikon 3030 press and entryDcoat compact converting line consisting of a varnish, semi-rotary die-cut and rewind station. It can be used either in- or off-line.

Xeikon also launched QB toner, which

### Print and production systems

Labelexpo Americas showcased a wide range of benchtop-style combined print and production systems.

**Afinia Label** unveiled three new label printers and a full-rotary digital label press. The L501 is a dual ink color label printer for low- to mid-volume printing with interchangeable dye and pigment inks. The Memjet-based L701 is a mid-volume printer designed for the production line, including multiple-printer installations. The Memjet-based L901 is designed with on-the-fly printhead servicing for in-line and high-volume continuous applications. The DLP-2100 is a full-rotary, die-based digital label press with the new L901 printer in-line. It allows the user to print, laminate, die-cut, slit, remove waste, and rewind labels to finished rolls.

**Anytron/Bitek** introduced the any-Jet digital print system using Memjet technology with 1600 x 1600 DPI CMYK print resolution. It is capable of roll to roll printing by attaching any-Cut I laser die-cutter. The any-Blade roll-to-roll digital die-cutter is an A3-sized plotter die-cutter with flatbed cutting engine supporting a 350mm cutting width. It can be connected to other equipment and used in-line. An auto job change function enables unattended job-changeover.

**AstroNova** business units QuickLabel and TrojanLabel demonstrated new systems. QuickLabel unveiled the Kiaro! QL-120, which builds on the Kiaro! color label inkjet printing platform. TrojanLabel premiered the Trojan T4, a compact digital label press and finishing system, for the first time at a US trade show.



Mark Andy Digital Series HD hybrid press



MPS SymJet hybrid press with Domino digital integration unit

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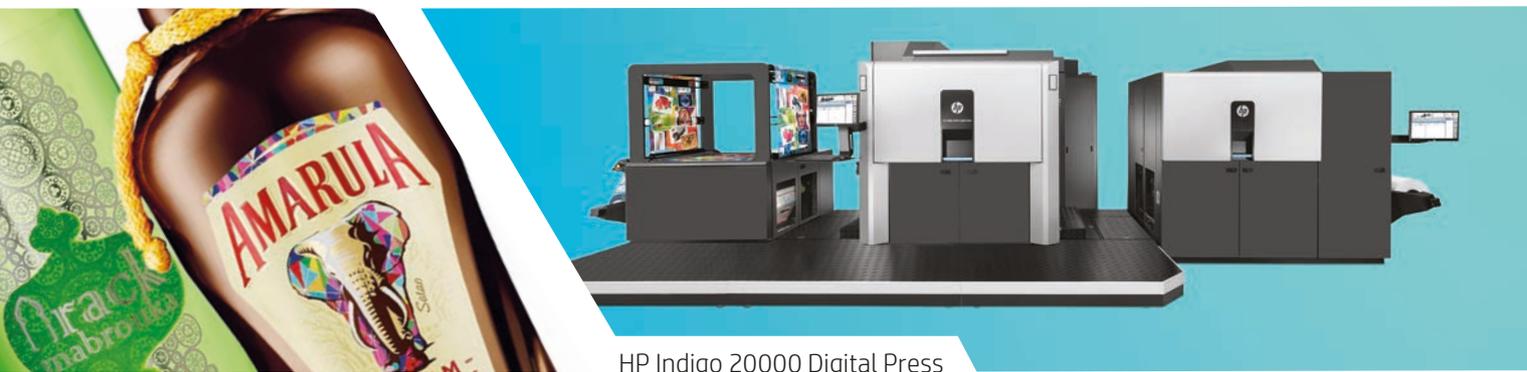
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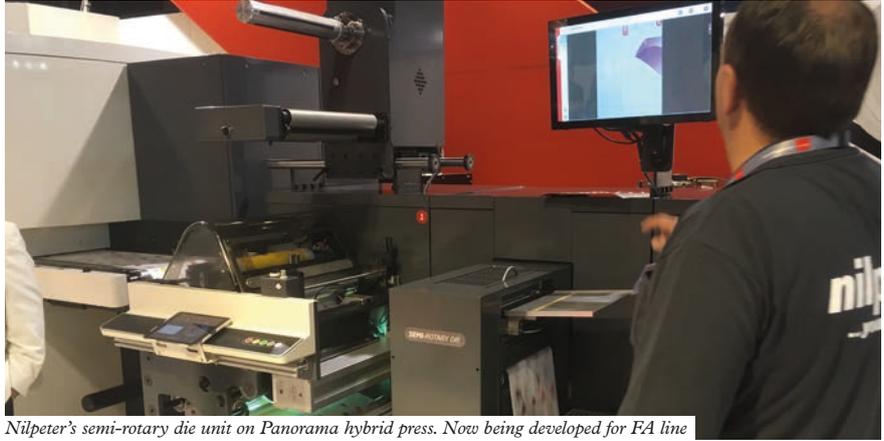
replaces the QA-I and ICE toners for the Xeikon 3000 series and Cheetah digital label presses, and like them is certified food safe. Existing customers will be able to upgrade in early 2019. There are different formulations for high (QB-I) and lower fusing temperatures (QB-IC and QB-CH). 'Xeikon has removed components from these new toners that could lead to misinterpretation, such as tin,' said company vice president of marketing Filip Weymans.

Other announcements included UL certification for Panther UV inkjet technology in combination with Flexcon pressure-sensitive films. PantherCure UV inks are used with Xeikon's PX3000 and PX2000 digital presses.

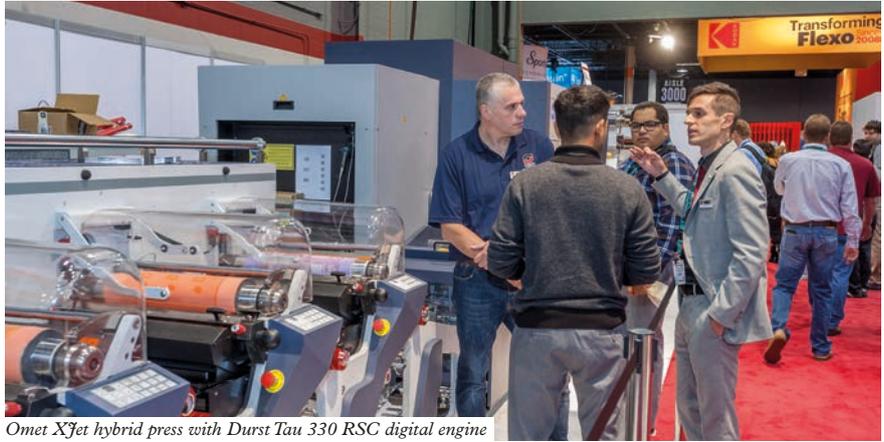
Xeikon also added a new OEE component to its aXelerate services program which automatically collects data from presses and peripheral equipment to show current productivity status.

The latest version of Xeikon's X-800 digital front end was announced, upgradable to all UV inkjet and Xeikon toner press models. X-800 v6.0 enhances automation processes, now including impositioning.

Xeikon also featured a press with in-line laser die-cutting on the Automation Arena stand as part of an Industry 4.0 presentation.



*Nilpeter's semi-rotary die unit on Panorama hybrid press. Now being developed for FA line*



*Omet XJet hybrid press with Durst Tau 330 RSC digital engine*

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### Inkjet moves

Turning to inkjet, **Bobst's** Mouvent digital division demonstrated the Cluster imaging technology behind its digital press systems. Built around the 1200 x 1200 DPI FujiFilm Samba printhead, the 3D-printed 'clusters' bring together imaging units, ink supply and alignment systems, so there is no ink supply behind the machine. Cluster width is 170mm and print speed up to 100m/min. The versatile clusters form the basis of both sheet- (under development) and web-fed press systems for applications ranging from textiles to labels and folding cartons. Promoted at the show were the L701 (170mm-wide) and 702 presses (340mm) using either UV or water-based inks and available in six colors plus white. Mouvent is now working with Bobst on developing in-line finishing. These presses will soon be joined by the LB705 for flexible packaging.

**Epson** launched the latest UV LED digital press in its SurePress line, the L-6534. The press is an upgraded version of the L-6034VW and increases web speed from 15 to 50m/min. The L-6534 is in all other respects identical to the L-6034. Both presses will stay available, and L-6034 presses are field upgradable to the new specification.

The L-6534 uses UV LED both for



*Epson's aqueous ink L-4533, successor to L-4033*

pinning and final cure, with a mercury UV lamp station available to be switched in as necessary. The press uses Epson's own PrecisionCore head technology and CMYK+White inks and includes an in-line LED-UV cured digital varnish station. Maximum print width is 13.39in and resolution 600 x 600 DPI.

Also on show was the L-4533AW aqueous inkjet press, successor to the highly successful L-4033, and this included a beta version of an in-line spectrophotometer and a robotic automated head cleaning system. Currently, spectrophotometric calibration

is carried out off-line. The new system will allow fully closed loop color management.

Epson additionally announced that all its SurePress machines are now compatible with the Wasatch RIP automated workflow. A customizable HTML interface allows customers to remotely submit print jobs via mobile devices and for factory managers to receive hourly status reports. The Load Balancer feature is designed for users with multiple presses, and automatically sends print jobs to the first available press.

**INX** launched its widest and most powerful UV inkjet press to date. The

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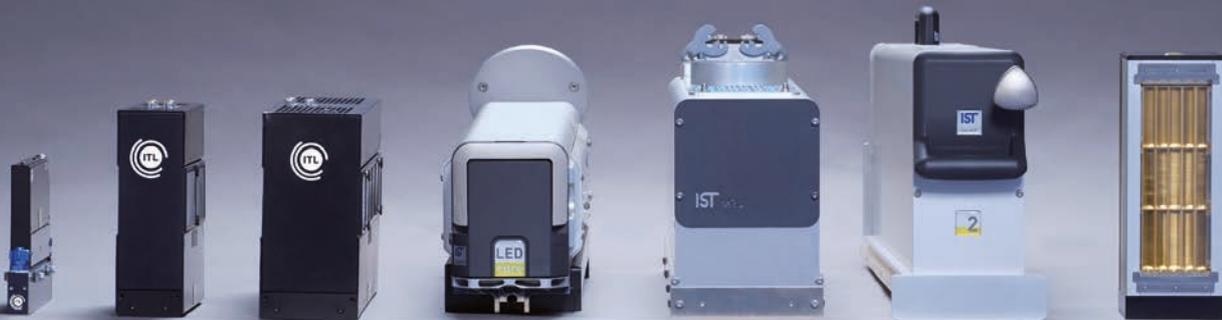
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NW340 has a web width of 340mm, imaging resolution of 1200 x 1200 DPI and speeds up to 300ft/min (90m/min). 'With the NW340, we've taken huge leaps from where we were,' said Jim Lambert, vice president of digital sales – ink and hardware, INX International Ink. 'We're now able to compete with offset very well.'

Lambert said INX is looking at how best to bring the press to market. 'As an ink company it can be difficult to sell hardware. We've done well penetrating our print engine into a number of platforms already, so I'm excited about where it sits and who could sell it.'

Lambert's colleague John Sweeterman added that a collaborative effort between INX and converters could help open doors at brands. 'We need to move upstream and take on the responsibility to educate the brands, and to go in as partners to really tell a story. Together we can go into the biggest brands, educate them and explain all benefits of the technology.'

**Konica Minolta Business Solutions USA** had announced a partnership with **Memjet** before Labelexpo, and used the show to display a range of equipment developed jointly by the two companies which Konica Minolta will sell to label converters.

The Precision Label Series 475i – shown together with the matching PKG-675L laminator – uses Memjet printhead technology to produce finished corrugated materials, including folding cartons, displays and traditional cardboard boxes. It allows



Gallus-Heidelberg launched the Smartfire entry level digital press



HP Indigo GEM digital embellishment unit in-line with 6900 press

short-run, customized and personalized packaging production for label converters looking to diversify.

Konica Minolta also demonstrated its AccurioLabel 190 dry-toner electrophotographic digital press, which prints CMYK at 1200 x 1200 DPI. The engine supports a new unwinder/rewinder design allowing larger diameter roll media to be used. The company promotes a GM finishing unit to partner the 190 but is looking with GM at options for fully in-line finishing.

**Colordyne** has made a successful business both with standalone digital presses and with bolt-on full-color digital units which turn flexo presses into fully fledged hybrid systems. At this show the company launched its 2800 Series Mini Laser Pro, a compact line which includes full color print, lamination and laser die-cutting in one pass.

Colordyne also announced plans for a second-generation 3600 Series AQ bolt-on module with long-time strategic partner Memjet. The plan is to roll out the first installations in the second half of 2019, and Colordyne is looking for additional sub-OEM partners and beta sites for the first engines.

The 3600 AQ units employ Memjet's latest DuraLink technology, which uses more durable pigmented aqueous inks at imaging resolutions of 1600 x 1585 DPI.

3600 Series AQ technology will be offered as a retrofit, a standalone unit and an engine integration kit.

Another new development for Colordyne was a partnership with UV ink developer Kao Collins. The intention is to offer bespoke new ink formulations to users of the 3600 Series UV-Retrofit unit. Benefits will include increased printhead life, improved durability and a wider color gamut.

**Utecto**, in partnership with **ebeam Technologies**, meanwhile continued its foray into the narrow web market, demonstrating the modular Gaia electron beam inkjet printer. The press offers food compliant short run print capability for the food and pharma markets and prints on a wide range of substrates including aluminum, paper and films at speeds up to 320ft/min. It can be configured up to 36 inches wide.

Utecto has also collaborated with Kodak to bring to market the 650mm-wide Sapphire Evo digital press for labels and flexible packaging. The press uses water-based inks to print on films and paper at speeds up to 900ft/min.



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Danaher Group companies AVT, Esko and X-Rite exhibited together

# Automation gains

The integration of increasingly automated workflow, color measurement and inspection systems was a key trend at Labelexpo Americas 2018. James Quirk reports

**T**he onset of Industry 4.0 is encouraging increasingly sophisticated workflow software to integrate and automate ever-more parts of the printing process.

As part of the Danaher Product Identification (PID) Platform, **AVT** – along with sister companies **X-Rite** and **Esko** – introduced several joint systems that streamline the workflow process, from brand owners to printers and back to brand owners. The platform's initial three points of integration were showcased: 1) Esko's Automation Engine connects to AVT's 100 percent inspection platforms (AutoSet), linking pre-press to inspection with close to zero set-up time or operator intervention. The result is greater production time per press, higher accuracy and fewer rejections. 2) X-Rite's ColorCert links to AVT's SpectraLab for in-line color measurement, generating color scorecard reports based on SpectraLab measurements and offering increased time savings, system accuracy and visibility. 3) Esko's Web Center also connects to X-Rite's ColorCert, automatically populating color-related specification fields for job creation, saving time and resources as well as increasing overall system accuracy.

**Baldwin Vision Systems'** ColorTrack 'color expert in a box' software for flexo and gravure packaging applications facilitates fast, accurate press-side correction of ink formulations. Advancements include options for customized 'out of tolerance' alerts, capabilities to reduce changeover time and leftover ink, precise calculation of required ink quantities during job set-up, per-job monitoring of real ink costs, and the ability to manage conditions across different processes, presses, and facilities to guarantee brand color fidelity.

**Cerm** introduced Live Monitor, which allows narrow web printers to

connect their machines and get live data streamed to configurable dashboards. Cerm's Live Monitor can be used for conventional presses, digital presses and finishing machines and gives real-time insight into the user's factory. Some of the streamed data include current machine status, current machine speed vs expected machine speed, totals produced (good/waste) and more. Live Monitor is accessible by browser, tablet and mobile device.

**Creative Edge Software** released iC3d v5.5, the latest version of its all-in-one packaging design software iC3D with major new features powered by real-time ray tracing technology. iC3D v5.5 introduced more carton folding capabilities, as well as new ray traced materials and editing features powered by the iC3D real-time ray tracing.

**Global Graphics** showed new workflows and digital front ends compatible with the ISO PDF 2.0 standard. The Harlequin RIP was the first major PDF RIP for production printing to offer compatibility with the PDF 2.0 standard. It supports all of the features of the new PDF 2.0 standard that are relevant for production printing.

**GMG** launched the new version of its OpenColor proofing system. GMG OpenColor is a proofing technology that precisely predicts the color appearance of printed inks, particularly 'overprints', without requiring

extensive fingerprinting. The new GMG OpenColor 2.2 incorporates automatic, spectral data-based optimization of measurement data.

**GSE** demonstrated its Ink Manager software for minimizing ink-related waste, enhanced reporting, improved ink yields and business planning, reduced set-up times and traceability. The software maximizes the reuse of inks returned from the press, by allowing them to be 'clustered' together into one component, which is connected to the dispenser and processed automatically. Alternatively, return inks may be reserved or prepared for specific, scheduled jobs.

**Hybrid Software** launched Variable Data Printing (VDP) for its PackZ PDF editor and Cloudflow workflow suite. The VDP Prepare option can be used to turn any PDF package or label design into a VDP design by simply indicating which elements (text, barcodes, images, colors, etc) are dynamic and linking them to a data source.

Integrated with **Label Traxx** MIS, Sitrine allows label-buyer customers to view their order history via a mobile device – and place orders – at any time of day. Orders placed online drop directly into Label Traxx MIS and queue up to be scheduled. Sitrine also includes a dedicated chat area for customer projects, helping service staff to manage customer interactions and track job status. The latest release of Label Traxx also includes tools for the flexible packaging market.

**Loftware's** new artwork management system, Smartflow is configurable, cloud-based workflow software designed to handle the complex processes involved in artwork design, review and approval – from product concept to launch. Smartflow streamlines the packaging concept-to-shelf process by bringing accountability and structure to lower costs, reduce mistakes, improve collaboration, ensure regulatory compliance and reduce time to market.

**Madiwor**, making its Labelexpo debut, launched an MIS designed specifically for label converters. Designed by a team with more than 30 years' expertise in the label industry, Madiwor Cloud MIS is a SaaS (software as a service) focused on the core business processes of a label converter. Key features include raw materials inventory, how intuitive and easy it is to update the production plan, estimating, dynamically generated technical specifications, dies management, and a B2B e-commerce module that provides brand owners access to a personalized account.

**Techkon USA's** SpectroVision is a new color measurement tool that can be installed on flexo and gravure presses for real time color measurements during the press run. Its highly accurate, full 31-point spectrophotometer is guided by a high-resolution digital camera to find the exact location of color patches, color bars, and specific in-image measurement locations. The spectrophotometer provides spectral, CIE Lab, density, and dot area information for color locations. The included Techkon ChromaQA color quality software allows users to create jobs that specify the exact measurement locations, color reference values, and customer specific tolerances.

**Tilia Labs** unveiled new features for its Phoenix 7.0 software for narrow web. Tilia Phoenix uses artificial intelligence in automating planning and imposition for all types of print and post-press applications. The system factors in parameters, such as job specifications (quantity, dimensions, colors, substrates), presses/print devices, post-press requirements, and delivery considerations,



*Cerm introduced Live Monitor, which allows narrow web printers to connect their machines and get live data streamed to configurable dashboards*

to deliver optimal layout options. When a final option has been selected, Tilia Phoenix generates print-ready layouts and JDF or die instructions, for all devices in the production chain.

**UpsSoftware** showed its SisPro PCP + KPI automatic planning and control software, which not only helps the user plan its production but also avoid wear and tear from repeated errors and achieve greater efficiency. Automation on the Factory floor is transforming various industry sectors, bringing more and better information to management and directors and allowing them to reach their targets and innovate their working processes

**X-Rite** and **Pantone** launched ColorCert QA, a new pressroom quality assurance software designed to helping manage pressroom standards more efficiently, optimize jobs on press and facilitate strong ink room integration. The new ColorCert QA module supports a non-job-based workflow, helping achieve color accuracy and consistency, especially when used in conjunction with an X-Rite eXact handheld spectrophotometer. ColorCert QA allows direct integration with PantoneLive.

### Inspection

**AVT** gave North American debuts to two 100 percent inspection systems: Helios S Turbo+ and Helios Turbo HD+. Each offers high-resolution capabilities, with 100 percent inspection performed at full press and rewinder speeds without sacrificing inspection quality and barcode verification.

AVT also showed Helios D, a high-end 100 percent print inspection system designed to meet the needs of digital printing in the label and narrow web markets. For inkjet press vendors, AVT offers Jet-IQ, a closed loop quality engine that works in synergy with press controllers to maintain print quality, offering full connectivity to all steps of inkjet printing.

**AB Graphic** showed six different fleyeVision 100 percent inspection cameras, including two mounted on slitter inspection rewinders. A new table-top rewinder was also shown (Omega Horizon) which is designed for inspection and re-working of single lanes.

ABG teamed up with Cerm so visitors could watch live production data from the beverage specification Digicon, the AutoSet glueless turret rewinder and an SRI slitter inspection rewinder. This is part of a much wider project the two companies have been working on to fully automate the finishing production process.

**Baldwin Vision Systems** (formerly QuadTech and PC Industries) showed Guardian RTM, a new real-time quality monitoring and reporting tool for the Guardian PQV 100 percent inspection system. Guardian RTM uses a central server to monitor, collect, and display real-time inspection data for multiple presses and jobs – and even across multiple plants – on a simple, uncluttered dashboard user interface.

Additional enhancements to the Guardian PQV include automated set-up and automated job changeover, limiting operator intervention for a more efficient and accurate inspection process. The system provides true 100



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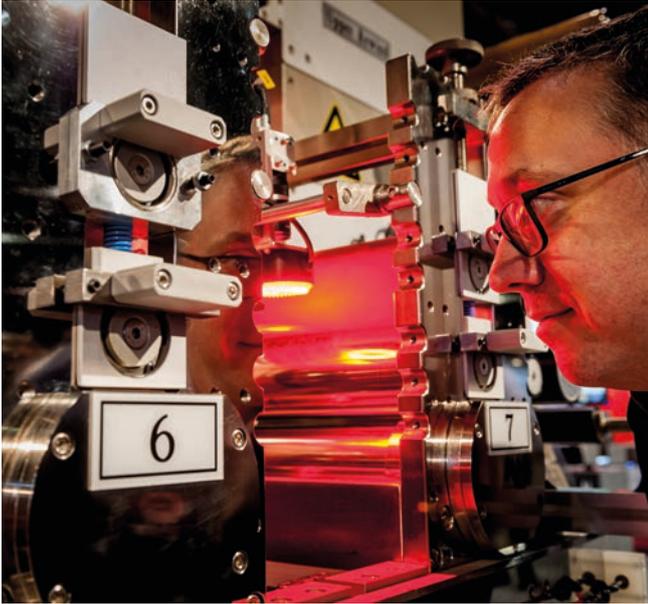
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percent print inspection for pharmaceutical, converting, label, flexo, wide and narrow web applications.

**BST North America** showed its new QLink workflow, aimed at enabling printers to reduce their costs and improve product quality. While the TubeScan is scanning for defects on the printing press, the printer uses the touch screen of the QLink editor to classify the defects as relevant or not relevant. The information is considered in the net count of the inspected goods. At any given time, the printer knows the net count and can run the press up to the exact production amount required.

**CC1** introduced updates to its camera-based mark-to-mark Automatic Register Control system. The company's DRC-6000L register control, designed for in-line flexo printers, which uses a proprietary register mark pattern, allows the system to consistently provide start-up material waste reduction ranging from 40-70 percent. For print jobs without marks, CC1's newest feature, TouchPoint, allows operators to use the DRC-6000L touchscreen to manually drag and drop print stations into register using a cross hair or other visual register reference point.

**Electromatic Equipment Company** showed the Checkline LS-3-LED stroboscope, which features a super-bright light source and adjustable controls, ideal for process and narrow web inspection in demanding production environments.

**Erhardt+Leimer** showed Smartscan, a camera-based quality assurance system. In addition to a video function with zoom, it also enables unique 200 percent print image inspection for reliable defect detection, splice detection and detection of missing labels and unremoved matrix.

Also on show was the ELScan OMS4 video system, which has received a recent makeover: the user interface can now be configured, making operation even easier; there's a joystick keypad with an integrated wheel for navigation and zooming and quick selection function buttons, and from now on ELScan comes with a more powerful computer, offering a range of additional functions.

**EyeC** demonstrated print sample testing on an EyeC Profiler 600 DT. This system's latest software combines print inspection and dimensional measurement capabilities. Pharma label converters can take advantage of EyeC's new pharma workflow offering improved data integrity, data security, and an easier audit trail review. EyeC also displayed the EyeC Profiler Graphic for automated PDF-checks at the pre-press stage. This system now includes optional Workflow Integration into existing workflow software such as the Esko Automation Engine.

An EyeC ProofRunner 100 percent print inspection system for

labels and flexible packaging was shown on a Rotoflex rewinder. This in-line inspection system checks the print quality of texts, graphics, color, and foil embossing over the entire production run.

**Grafikontrol** introduced new tools for efficiency such as automatic register for flexo presses and patented precision tracking systems. It presented Lynex-S, a 100 percent inspection system of the printed web, which enables automatic detection and classification of every defect.

**Isra Vision's** NarrowStar is tailored for narrow web, with compact dimensions that allow it to fit into any printing line. With a choice of three different sizes for web widths of 330, 440 or 660 mm, all components integrate into a single enclosure. The system uses camera components Isra designed specifically for print inspection applications and Isra-made lighting components.

**Novation's** AF3 WebFlagger is a safe and reliable means of applying pressure-sensitive flags to webs moving at speeds up to and above 4,000ft (1,200m) per minute. Novation's WebFlaggers have multiple inputs for manual buttons, machine signals such as splices, or for connection to any automatic web inspection system. They can also track defects from upstream locations on the line to the location of the flagger.

Unilux unveiled the new LED12 strobe, a powerful portable stroboscope for print inspection, reworked to incorporate the company's latest advances in user controls. Popular features make it easier to instantly synchronize the strobe flash rate and fine-tune the target inspection area for crisp, clear images anywhere on the press. Stationary LED2000 Series inspection systems with Smart Assist were also on display for the first time in North America.



VIDEO: AVT at Labelexpo Americas 2018 [tinyurl.com/ydaq4nsj](http://tinyurl.com/ydaq4nsj)  
AVT partnered with sister companies Esko and X-Rite at the show

## Web guiding

**Coast Controls** now offers electronic web guiding systems for the converting industry in conjunction with its All-Air web guide system.

**Erhardt+Leimer** showed the brushless, thus wear-free, ELGuider DRB 23 web guider. The compact DRB 23 is designed for Ethernet networking, making it possible to use web-based management.

**Re** showed its range of web guiding systems, including the new WG.705 web guide, a compact system with the electronics and keypad integrated in the frame.

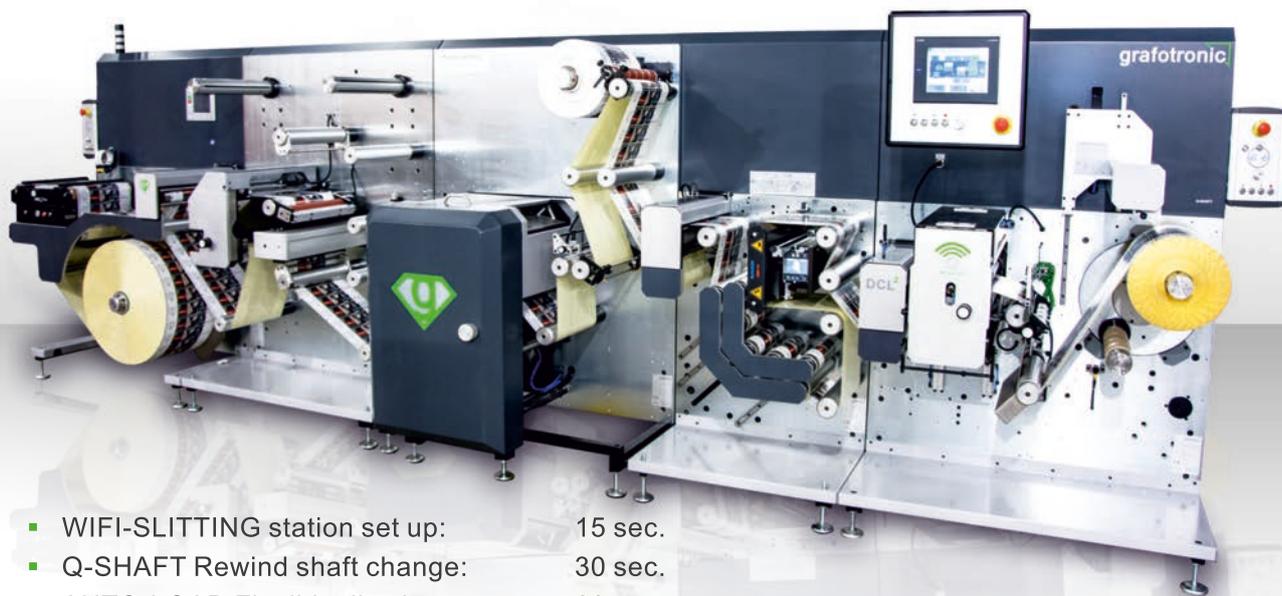
**Roll-2-Roll Technologies'** Web Guide Retrofit or Replacement Kit enables easy upgrade of any existing web guiding system with the next generation sensing and control technology.



Read Mike Fairley on the increasing automatization of the label industry at [www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/michael-fairley](http://www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/michael-fairley)

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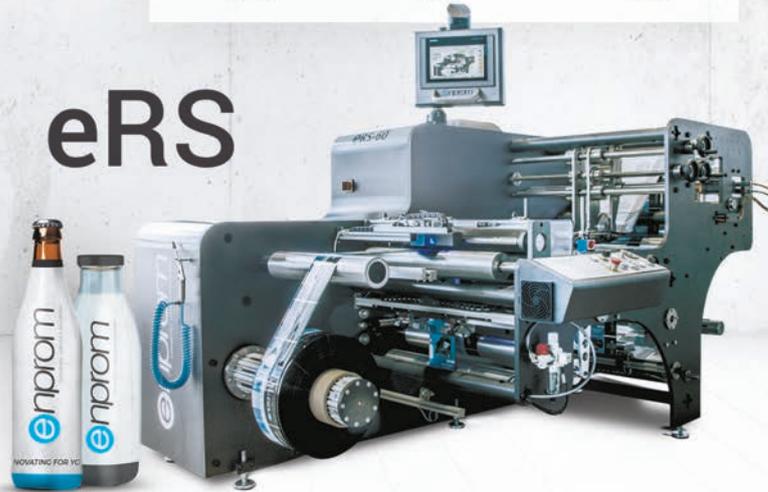
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# Plates and platemaking

Further advances in water-wash plate quality, new thermal plate and increased automation were key trends at the show. Andy Thomas-Emans reports



Kodak previewed new water-wash NX plate technology

**W**ater-wash flexo plates continued to build on their environmental advantages against solvent systems with advances in imaging quality and durability.

**FujiFilm** launched its Flexen FW-L2 platemaking technology with the C-Touch 2530 water-wash plate processor. These latest Flexen plates can image up to 200 line screens and hold

1 percent flat top dots, along with improved durability.

**Kodak** demonstrated its Flexcel NX Ultra water-based system, claimed to deliver a press-ready plate in less than an hour. Chris Payne, president, flexographic packaging division and VP Kodak, claimed: 'Our Ultra Clean technology has solved the fundamental challenge of inconsistency traditionally associated with aqueous processed flexo plates.'

The Flexcel NX Ultra 35 will be commercially available in Q1 2019 following an initial technology demonstration at drupa two years ago and extensive beta testing. Plates can be produced up to 35in x 48in (889mm x 1219.2mm).

**Dantex** showcased its DigiWash range of water-wash processors featuring a new operator interface, detachable post-exposure sections, automatic replenishment, and automatic brush height adjustment for different thicknesses. Also on show was the Aquaflex combination system for photopolymer plate production, for use with Torelief, Aquaflex and Rapidoflex plates.

**Asahi** showed examples of its new AWP-DEW water-wash plates imaged on an Esko Crystal XPS system with simultaneous UV main and back exposure.

Solvent system developments were also represented at the show. Glunz & Jensen introduced the FlexPro 360, a 36x47in format flexo plate processor/washer featuring

advances in solvent distribution, rotating and oscillating brush mechanics, and a rinse/wiping section optimizing production quality, including for flat-top dot and micro-screening applications. FlexPro 360 features a dedicated black mask wash section, isolating the carbon laden solvent from the primary washout solvent.

## CtP devices

Automation was a key feature of the plate imaging systems launched at the show. **Esko** focused on the narrow- to mid-web market with its XPS Crystal 4835 UV exposure unit and CDI Crystal 4835 imaging unit. The automated process is supported by Esko's new Print Control Wizard software. Automated flexo platemaking has also been integrated into the Esko Automation Engine workflow from RIPped plate files to the exposed plate on the Esko CDI.

**Zeikon Prepress** showed the ThermoFlexX 48-S flexo plate imager with fully automatic plate loading and unloading, giving a claimed productivity up to 6sqm/hr along with a choice of imaging resolutions up to 5080 DPI. Depending on the substrate, there is a choice between single and multipixel surface screening patterns, offering a smoother ink lay-down and increased solid ink density.

**MacDermid** showcased its new Lava NW-M thermal plate processing system with the latest Lux In-The-Plate (ITP) flat top dot product line. Lava NW-M is specifically designed for narrow web to mid web applications with a smaller footprint and ability to output press-ready plates in less than an hour. The Lux ITP Epic plate offers a micro-rough surface for enhanced ink transfer.

**Flint Group Flexographic Division** demonstrated its nyloflex Xpress thermal processor with the new nyloflex XVH Digital hard durometer plate with an 'inherently flat top surface', suitable for narrow web print

applications on all types of substrates. It can be further tailored with surface screening to provide enhanced detail.

Flint also showed its latest rotec ECO Bridge sleeve adapter, which uses a breathable metal ring to create an air 'pillow' around the circumference of the adapter to allow for easier mounting of sleeves. The design greatly reduces compressed air volume, resulting in significant noise reduction.

Turning to plate mounting, **JM Heaford** demonstrated its Label AutoMouter, with options including pre-register compatibility, plate and tape cutters and a sleeve exchange unit. Also on display was the FTS plate mouter with a plate cutter option, which allows savings on continuous print sleeves.

## Direct engraving

Direct flexo plate engraving has rather fallen out of favor in recent years – **FujiFilm**, for example, confirmed to L&L that it has stopped development of its Flexen direct engraving technology. But **AKK** bucked the trend by launching a flexo plate engraving system consisting of a two-beam fiber YAG laser capable of imaging up to 5,080 DPI (200 LPI). The system does not need external gas bottles, cutting down on running costs. A vacuum drum – optionally a magnetic vacuum drum – facilitates mounting of EPDM printing plates. The machine can engrave a range of different sleeve sizes. For Screen engraving, AKK has designed a 4- or 8-beam system, also with a resolution of 5,080dpi.

## Hamillroad rewarded

**Hamillroad Software** showed its Bellissima system, which combines the best-of-breed technologies of plate, anilox and screen. The system is a set of Digitally Modulated Screens (DMS), developed and optimized specifically for flexo. Imaged at 4,000 DPI, Bellissima provides a high level of image reproduction (over 300lpi equivalent), with no screen or content moiré. The company received a Global Label Industry Award for Innovation: read more on page 91.



Read news from the Labelexpo Americas 2018 show floor at [www.labelsandlabeling.com](http://www.labelsandlabeling.com)

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# Material suppliers respond to industry trends

Labelexpo Americas 2018 saw an increased focus from material suppliers on flexible packaging substrates, environmental sustainability and premiumization. Chelsea McDougall reports



Materials suppliers are taking notice of key trends in the label industry

**M**aterials suppliers are taking notice of key trends in the label industry and responding accordingly. Labelexpo Americas 2018 saw the emergence and further development of flexible packaging materials available to converters, as well as new products for durability, security, premium and sustainable labeling.

## Flexible packaging

Flexible packaging is widely regarded as the fastest-growing printed packaging segment. As shorter runs are disrupting that market and more food companies turning to flexible packaging, many label companies are seeing this as a natural transition. This was clear on the Labelexpo Americas show floor where exhibitors displayed a host of offerings marketed squarely to this emerging trend.

**Acpo** offered its visitors a step-by-step guide for producing flexible packaging on narrow web presses 'in four easy steps.' The guide was in response to questions from customers looking to play in an area traditionally dominated by wide web converters. 'Our answer is: yes, it's that simple,' said Acpo's international distribution manager Randy Ward. 'Our product allows our customers – the standard digital and flexo narrow web converters – to do the exact same thing as wide web, but only with smaller runs.'

**Avery Dennison** launched what it called the 'first-of-its-kind' heat sealable reclosure technology as part of its functional packaging range. The product, R1490, the only FDA-compliant direct food contact adhesive, and a heat-sealable film liner turns the release liner into a functional part of the final package. The heat sealable reclosure system provides direct adhesion of the entire construction to rigid containers, eliminating the need for flow wrapping, liner waste and clamshell lids.

**International Media Products** introduced the Z212 premium near-edge wax/resin formulation designed for high speed printing directly onto flexible packaging and thermal transfer overprinting that is compatible with Avery, TEC, Markem and Videojet printers.

**Jindal Films** showed its expanded Digi-lyte offerings with

coated metal facestocks for HP applications, and barrier and pouch materials for flexible packaging.

**Mactac**, in its North American debut with new parent company Lintec, debuted a re-latch portfolio featuring peel and reseal adhesives. The re-latch constructions include two types of acrylic adhesive based on seal strength (MP820 and M183A). Both options offer a smooth peel, non-water whitening adhesive and resistance to moisture, solvents and oils.

**QSPAC Industries** showed self-wound overlaminates and a line of clear and matte BOPP and PET self-wound films coated with clear emulsion acrylic adhesives, as well as UL recognized overlaminates for flexo, digital, extended content labels and flexible packaging applications.

**Repacorp**, a manufacturer of stock, custom, RFID, digital labels and shrink sleeves, was also promoting its new 10-color flexible packaging capabilities that is safe food contact packaging manufacturing.

Making its Labelexpo debut, **S-OneLP** showcased primer, substrate and coatings for HP Indigo digital presses and that are designed for narrow web label and flexible packaging producers. Products include in-line and off-line primers as well as customizable over-print varnishes. Clear, metallic and white pre-laminate flexible packaging films, a variety of thermal laminates and customizable films for flexible packaging were showcased in their booth, as the company offered ordering with no minimum quantities and delivered with quick turnaround times.

## Sustainability

As the conversation on sustainability has intensified, many label material suppliers had sustainability on their minds and in their booths.

**3M** launched its 3MTM wash-away label material FP0602. This product is FDA compliant for indirect food contact and features an acrylic adhesive combined with a polypropylene facestock, which can be cleanly removed with high-pressure water.

**Avery Dennison**, a gold sponsor of the TLMI Ecovillage and winner of the 2018 Label Industry Global Award for Sustainability, was transparent in its support for environmental initiatives. At its booth, Avery Dennison showed its Clear Intent portfolio, which includes hundreds of responsibly sourced facestocks and adhesives, as well as products that include recycled content and improve overall recyclability. The company's CleanFlake Adhesive Technology cleanly separates pressure-sensitive paper and film labels from the PET substrate during the recycling process, allowing recycled PET containers to be re-used in container applications.

**Mega Source** offered its synthetic paper coating that is tree-free, 100 percent recyclable, waterproof, high tear resistant and durable. The water-based formulated coating contains no toxins, no heavy metals, and is not harmful to the environment.

**Ritrama** exhibited with a special focus on direct thermal linerless products, which are continuous rolls of thermal paper with no liner (siliconized backing). The big news from Ritrama was its partnership with Omet to make new converting equipment available for Ritrama's Core linerless materials technology. Read more on page 131.



Avery Dennison launched new products and focused on sustainability

**Taghleef Industries** was showing its Nativa bio-based film line. These biodegradable films made from renewable resources (PLA bio-based resin).

**Security and durability**

When it comes to security and durability, material suppliers were eager to show their strength.

**Appvion** showcased its Résiste B550-3.1. This product offers 'robust performance' in humid environments, designed for weigh scale, food processing and retail applications. Appvion's Résiste products are top-coated, paper-based products ideal for

applications that require extended image life or resistance

**Ashland** introduced an all-temperature emulsion acrylic pressure-sensitive adhesive, Flexcryl SP-48. The PSA adhesive is designed for permanent paper and film applications that require aggressive adhesion, even at low temperatures.

**Taghleef Industries** offered its new PPFB and PPGP multi-layer barrier films for industrial labeling applications requiring extreme barrier to staining associated with tire, battery and candle labeling. PPFB and PPGP meet labeling requirements where extreme barrier properties are not



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A conference ran alongside the Labelexpo Americas 2018 exhibition

necessary.

**Tamerica** offered Dura-Pap synthetic paper with a matte finish that is water, grease and tear-resistant. It's dimensionally stable and can withstand temperatures of -60 to  $\pm 160$  deg F for difficult applications in hostile environments where printed items are exposed to contamination, heavy handling or extreme weather conditions.

#### Premium products

For those looking to add value to labels, there was plenty of eye-catching materials on display.

**API** launched TA-Plus cold foil that

offers fine detailing, the capability to cover large packaging surface areas, as well as outstanding over-printability.

**Arconvert** showcased its range of Manter and Adhoc branded self-adhesive products. The Manter range offering includes a selection of luxury label papers and films for high-value labeling applications printed on flexo and HP Indigo digital presses. The Adhoc collection is marketed for labeling food and drinks, vitamins and supplements, cosmetic and healthcare products, and other products that fall within the fast-moving consumer goods category.

**Arjobex** launched a range of

ice-resistant, synthetic materials aimed at the wine and craft beer label markets, with eight different texture and color combinations. The company also showed a blind-embossed Champagne label produced in partnership with UEI Group.

**K Laser Technology** debuted its GEMfoils specially formulated for the HP Indigo GEM, a fully digital one-pass printing press for embellishing with foil, screen, tactile, varnish and other special effects, using one workflow, one operator, and one design file without the need for tooling. GEMfoils are available in 28 metallic colors and over 48 holographic patterns in silver or transparent.

#### New companies and product launches

There was no shortage of things to see at Labelexpo Americas 2018, as several new companies exhibited for the first time, and established exhibitors launched new products.

**Actega** introduced at Labelexpo Americas an array of ink, coating, adhesive and primer technologies that functionally and aesthetically enhance label and packaging applications. The company launched two Aquaprint water-based, injection in-mold coating products that yield good appearance, proven value in the molding equipment and excellent scuff resistance.



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Actega also highlighted its ActDigi digital primers that work with in-line and near-line priming units for narrow web digital presses. The primers are designed to extend life of printing components and are FDA Indirect and California Proposition 65 compliant.

Actega featured its special effect coating line designed to give label printers and brand owners eye-catching shelf presence and tactile effects to enhance the consumer experience. This included the newest special effect product to the MotionCoat line.

**Appvion** introduced Triumph Digital Thermal Media, a direct thermal label and tag facestocks line that is compatible for use with water-based inkjet technology.

**Cyngient** debuted at Labelexpo with its Hypercure cold foil adhesive designed for shrink sleeve, PET, PVC, BOPP, paper and all treated films.

**Armor** introduced inkanto, the company's new branded product and services to the North American market. Inkanto is a complete range of wax, wax/resin and resin ribbons. Services include a lifetime warranty of the ribbons, a QR code on the labels embedding a certificate of conformity and a cleaning wipe to help maintain the print head.

**Dunmore** showed new polyolefin label materials, a BOPP-based direct thermal printable film that provides high optical density printing for superior barcode and text readability. Dunmore has also added aesthetics to polyolefin films with new metallized polyolefin films.

**DNP** showcased four new high-performance products. MP Mid highlights DNP's midrange lineup with a vast range of compatible substrates. M295HD combines high speed with dense, dark print for flexible packaging applications. R550 provides extreme resistance against chemicals commonly used in automotive, chemical, pharmaceutical and electronics industries.

**Dow Chemical Company** launched SYL-Off SL25 release modifier. SYL-Off SL25 is a solventless and olefin-free formulation. The performance profile of the pressure-sensitive construction can be tuned to meet the low release forces that enable high-speed matrix stripping operations, while simultaneously delivering the higher release forces needed at end use applications such as hand-peel. Dow also launched new Robond PS 7735, an all-temperature acrylic pressure-sensitive adhesive, representing the acrylic portion of the pressure-sensitive adhesives portfolios.

**Flexcon** showed its DPM UVIJ for narrow web UV inkjet printing, a pressure-sensitive product line available in white and clear polyester, available in roll and sheet form, and marketed to durable goods labeling applications.

**Hansol** launched two new top-coated label facestocks, TC CL 65 and TC CL 74. Both are recommended for retail, grocery and logistics applications and are highly sensitive and have excellent barcode readability and scuffing and environmental resistance.

**IIMAK** introduced iiColor Match thermal transfer ribbons, allowing converters to supply brand owners with thermal transfer ribbons (TTR) in any color. This custom color program delivers fast turnaround with low minimum orders. Color matching is available on IIMAK's range of 50 colors and ribbon grades, including wax, wax/resin and resin.

**Innovia** and **Treofan** exhibited together for the first time since parent company CCL acquired the latter company. Innovia says this merger allows a fuller portfolio and strengthens manufacturing capabilities in the Americas. Innovia's technical expertise now covers both 'bubble' and tenter films and allows Innovia to provide specialist products for PS, roll-fed wraparound, cut and stack wraparound and in-mold label applications.

**Jindal Films** introduced Platinum Thermal Printing Technology and added solid white face stocks to its range of coated and uncoated white and metal films for pressure-sensitive markets. Jindal Films also introduced two new Label-Lyte metal facestocks for the 'high sheen' graphic look, as well as ALOX and Sealough



Mactac debuted with new parent company Linetec



Panel discussion at the TLMI Ecovillage

technologies.

**ND Paper** introduced itself to the North American market, exhibiting for the first time since the company purchased two Catalyst paper mills in June. ND Paper presented its label and liner products including its Oxford C1S product line, Glide Graphics CCK release liner base papers, and Trident wet strength papers.

**Polyonics** showed its patent-pending ESD-Safe labels that are chemically engineered with static dissipative top surfaces and low-charging PSA and liners to protect sensitive ESDS devices from electrostatic charges. The PSA and liners generate less than 125 volts with removal or repositioning. The durable topcoats offer high and low temperature stability and chemical resistance. The materials comply with S20.20, IEC 61340 and JEDEC JESD625B standards for charged insulators used in the proximity of static sensitive devices.

**Yupo** was showing a range of IML products and, though not yet available, was discussing with visitors the upcoming launch of IML products for PET bottles.



Watch videos recorded live from the Labelexpo Americas show floor at [www.labelsandlabeling.com/video](http://www.labelsandlabeling.com/video)

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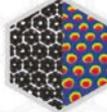
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Wikoff Color's new Photoflex LED inks were running on a 6-color Etirama Fit flexo press

## UV LED lights the way

Developments in UV inks and curing technology were a highlight of Labelexpo Americas 2018, with LED a particularly hot topic. David Pittman reports

According to research from Yole referenced by Keate Despain, vice president of marketing at Phoseon Technology, the market today for UV technology is worth around US\$700 million and is set to rise to US\$2 billion over the next five years.

Initiatives such as the UVFoodSafe industry group are doing their bit to facilitate this, while ink and curing specialists continue to enhance their UV offering with new technologies to provide a wider scope of application and increase adoption.

These could be seen first-hand at Labelexpo Americas 2018. **Actega North America's** next generation UV ink system, ActExact, is designed to offer a wider color gamut, improved press speeds and allow for crisper print details. **Magnum Inks & Coatings** has a new UV white ink for narrow web applications. Strong adhesion and flexibility make it suitable for shrink sleeve applications as well.

**Flint Group's** ink portfolio for short runs of food compliant flexible packaging includes new UV curable and water borne inks. **Zeller + Gmelin's** portfolio includes the 30, 32, 36 and 37 Series UV flexo inks for labels, packaging, cartons, shrink sleeves and low migration applications. **Siegwerk's** Sicura Flex Orbis ink series is another new generation of UV flexo ink, especially developed for pressure-sensitive paper and film labels as well as unsupported films and shrink sleeve applications. This series offers high color strength and low viscosity for improved print performance at higher speeds. It is a monochromatic base ink series, providing a wider expanded color gamut.

Alongside these new formulations, **GEW** has developed the E4C arc lamp, offering the highest power available

from the GEW range. E4C features optically tuned reflectors to maximize curing power but which are water-cooled to support the highest UV power whilst limiting heat transfer to the substrate. It features a compact E2C profile to fit the widest range of machines. Further, GEW's mUVm is a system that has been calibrated to monitor UV output with high accuracy, enabling the operator to ensure that undercured product does not reach the customer.

**“There are more and more LEDs in the market and the upward investment trend is accelerating”**

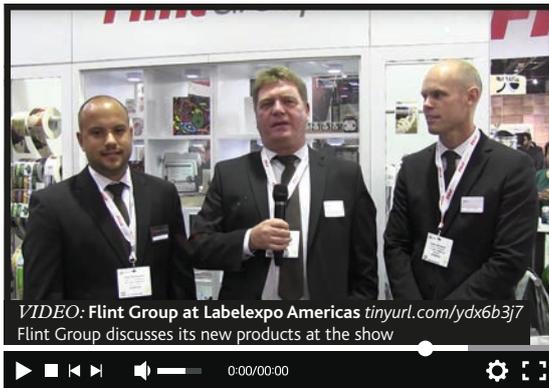
### LED gains

A far bigger driver for growth of the UV market however will be the rise of LED technology. Despain, again referencing statistics from Yole, notes that UV LED is growing at almost six times that of mercury-based technologies. Today, it's worth \$200 million of the US\$700 million market but will reach US\$1 billion by 2023.

Robert Rae, technology development manager at GEW, identifies a lower investment cost and greater availability of suitable products as changing the conversation when it comes to LED. 'With LED inks now widely available and the cost of LEDs reducing at quite a rate, there are more and more LEDs in the market and the upward investment trend is accelerating.'

Despain said: 'There's a huge market transition as we see a move away from mercury technology to UV LED. Inkjet is our single biggest market while the narrow web flexo market has been slow to adopt UV LED. That is changing and we are looking to push the flexo industry forward.'

To this end, **Phoseon Technology** has developed FireJet FJ605, a self-contained and air-cooled UV LED curing lamp for flexo applications. It is suitable for those that require speeds up to 1000ft/min (300m/min) in print widths of 600mm or 675mm, as well as advanced digital interface capabilities for tight process control, such as low-migration processes for food packaging.



Phoseon has also developed FireEdge FE100, a UV LED curing lamp for digital inkjet pinning. It has no internal fan and is cooled passively through natural convection. TargetSure is another new technology from Phoseon and detects if UV output is within the expected defined range and immediately notifies the user of UV output degradation and inconsistencies.

**Excelitas Technologies'** new OmniCure AC8-HD UV LED curing system features patented control technology for addressing individual UV LED modules to enable tight irradiation across the UV emitting length, as well as between heads. With three standard cure widths – 6in (150mm), 9in (225mm) and 12in (300mm) – these units can be adjoined to customize and achieve countless curing sizes without compromise of uniformity.

The Cobra Cure FX series from **ProPhotonix** is another configurable platform that is customizable

to user-specific UV curing applications. This platform includes compact, fan-cooled UV curing lamps at a range of power levels up to 16W/sq cm and delivers intensity and edge to edge uniformity. UV LED lamps can be configured for pinning or full curing applications.

**Ushio America's** new i150 III Series uses the company's proprietary Master Peak Technology to achieve 17.4 W/sq cm with a working distance of 5mm and is available at 395, 365, 385 and 405nm wavelengths. The i150 III series includes functions such as variable control output that ranges from 14-100 percent and features a user replaceable LED board.

#### Dual-cure

To maximize uptake of LED, a number of dual-cure technologies exist for printers to ease the transition from traditional technologies.

**Flint's** EkoCure XS is an ink for shrink sleeves with unique rheology and curing properties resulting in enhanced on-press performance, whether a conventional UV or UV LED press running at high speed. **Wikoff Color's** Photoflex LED is capable of running at speeds in excess of 750 ft/min on paper, paperboard and films. This durable set of process and mixing colors cures using 395nm LED lamp systems or traditional UV lamps.

**Eckart America** has new inks for label and folding carton applications, optimized as dual-cure systems. Silver foil-effect inks Ultrastar UV LED Select, Ultrashine UV LED Select and Topstar UV LED Select are alternatives to cold foil, hot foil stamping and metallized substrates in flexo, sheet-fed offset and offset, respectively.

Converters may also choose **GEW's** ArcLED system that allows use of a conventional UV mercury arc lamp or LED array on the same print unit, with Rae noting that both arc and LED technologies have benefits and negatives. 'Arc lamps perform better for curing hotmelt varnishes, for instance, achieving good gloss levels. LED varnishes are prone to yellowing. However, arc lamps are less controllable for a number of reasons. LED technology is digitally controllable and runs cool. They offer performance benefits in curing white

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Customers talk UV curing on the GEW stand with Marcus Greenbrook, director of international sales (second from right)

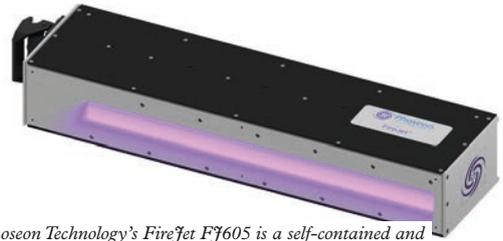
ink, screen inks and laminates.'

Another option is **Fujifilm's** Illumina UV LED retrofit curing system. This allows traditional UV and water-based flexo presses to be converted to UV LED curing. The compact design of the Illumina unit ensures it will fit easily onto most UV flexo presses of any width and will also mount directly onto any water-based flexo press without the need to add an extra roller. The Illumina Coldcure system generates almost no heat with the UV dosage below 140 degrees F, the temperature at which shrink films begins to shrink.

The UV LED curing lamp system is designed to operate with the Fujifilm 300 Series flexo ink system. Combined, Illumina and 300 Series inks are claimed to bring the benefits of low energy UV LED curing to traditional flexo presses through a fast and simple conversion process. The 300 Series ink range, featuring line and process colors, are compatible with all plates designed to work with UV-based inks.



Read issue 4, 2018 for more on GEW's mUVm multi-point UV monitoring system



Phoseon Technology's FireJet FJ605 is a self-contained and air-cooled UV LED curing lamp for flexo applications

### News in brief

INXhrc from **INX International Ink** is an extensive product offering of finished inks, blending bases, vehicles and coatings for flexo, gravure and offset applications. These inks are formulated to replace petro-chemically derived raw materials.

**Kao Collins's** latest Lunajet water-based inkjet inks feature a polyester binder and dispersion to provide enhanced rub fastness. They have been developed with medical applications in mind, although their application range is much wider.

**Kor-Chem's** Clear BL-99 is an inkjet receptive coating. It is typically used as a first down primer applied to the substrate to help anchor inkjet and other types of ink.

**Zeller + Gmelin** has a new strategy, Market Focus Plus, placing a focus on five market segments, over products and chemistry. It also has new water-based products, 41, 42 and 43 Series, in the Americas.

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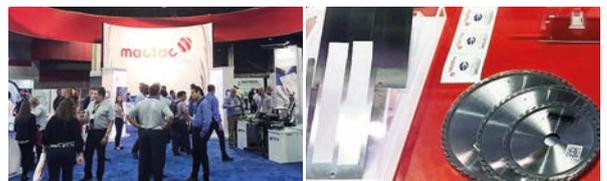


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# Die manufacturers on the cutting edge

Chelsea McDougall details what was seen from tool and die manufacturers at Labelexpo Americas 2018

**D**ie manufacturers grabbed plenty of headlines at Labelexpo Americas 2018.

**Kocher+Beck** launched the TecScreen Processing Unit, a compact and economical wash device for fully automated washing and drying process of all nickel based screen-printing plates. The company also offered a full range of screen fabrics, flexible dies including laser long life flexible dies and chrome coated dies, as well as UR Precision for nonstop feeding of materials to the printing and in-line converting process.

In the Automation Arena, a **Kocher+Beck** non-stop butt splicer was linked to a fully automated press and converting process to demonstrate how label and packaging will evolve over the next decade.

'The integration of our non-stop winding equipment at the Automation Arena at Labelexpo in Brussels has created a hype within our customer base and led to an overflow of orders toward the end of 2017, which still keeps up extremely busy today,' said the company's Karin Enderle.

The company showed in the booth its quick change die-cutting station, magnetic cylinders and flat bases, print cylinders, hot stamping cylinders, flexible cutting dies for the sheet-fed industry and KMS2 and KMS3 pressure gauges.

To say **RotoMetrics** was thrilled to win at the Label Industry Global Awards was an understatement. Keith Laako and Butch Schomber spoke excitedly with L&L after their win for the company's RotoRepel product, about which you can read more on page 91.

The company also showcased its Electro Optic die-cutting technology that enables enhanced die levelness, consistency and longevity for optimal performance on the thinnest films and the most abrasive materials. RotoMetrics also presented its online quoting and order website, myroto.com, that has enhanced features to better track and manage die library.

## New products

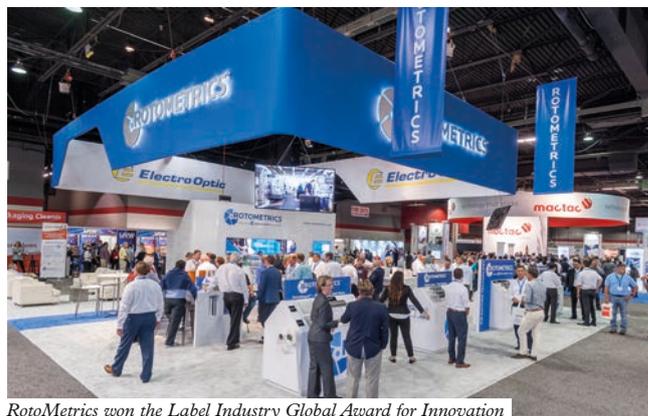
**Agergaard Graphic Supplies** presented AkeBoose chamber doctor blade systems to the American industry. These chamber systems are designed for high precision doctoring and easy, mostly tool-free handling.

**Alunetic** showed a re-engineered magnetic cylinder and a printing plate mounting device and demonstrated the weight difference between conventional magnetic cylinder and HMT magnetic cylinder.

**Applied Laser Engineering** featured laser engraved Functional Topography, which describes a surface that has functionality provided to the surface by the laser. This functionality could be to hold ink, for flexo, gravure or anilox rollers, or to create a surface used for embossing or imprinting a substrate.

**Daetwyler** offered everything that goes into maximizing print performance including doctor blades, anilox rollers and sleeves, end seals and other accessories, press set-up and troubleshooting, maintenance, and more.

**Harper Corporation of America** displayed its award-winning QD ink proofing and flatbed printing system, which uses flexo and gravure processes. The maximum travel speed is 150 ft/min (45



RotoMetrics won the Label Industry Global Award for Innovation

meter/min), and travel distance can be adjusted anywhere from 12 to 33 inches in one-inch increments. It is also available in either a 2.75-inch or 5-inch proofer width.

Harper also launched Performance Wash, a fast-acting, low foam, highly alkaline-based anilox roll cleaner that is effective at removing water-based, UV, and solvent inks and can penetrate through multiple layers of ink.

**Flexo Concepts** promoted its improved TruPoint Orange doctor blade. Featuring new MicroTip technology, Orange delivers high-precision metering and helps printers eliminate pressroom issues such as UV ink spitting, start-up waste, short blade life and operator injuries. Orange had been selected by a number of OEMs at the show, including AB Graphic, Cartes, Domino, Edale, Etirama, Fujifilm, Gonderflex, Kurz, MPS, Nilpeter and Tresu.

**Flxon** launched a new ink metering technology for metering white inks. A new smart blade option has been developed to resist blade and anilox wear at high speeds – even on white inks.

**Interflex Laser Engravers** showed high definition anilox engravings and custom cell engravings.

**Universal Engraving** showcased NW SpeedChase NXT system that improves die lock-up for engraved hot stamping and embossing flat dies and counter forces on a flatbed narrow web press. This system features quick, precision, magnetic mounting of the dies and counters so die changeover can be accomplished, on average, in one minute. The system works on existing presses.

**Wilson Manufacturing** exhibited a complete line of flexible dies designed specifically for aggressive adhesives.

**Wink** launched the SmartGap adjustable anvil system with the new digitally controlled touch version. The cylinder gap (clearance) can be adapted precisely to different liners and fluctuating liner thicknesses. The newly developed digital version SmartGap Touch is patent-pending system that allows for gap adjustments steps of only half a micron and comes with many enhanced digital features.

Wink also presented various SuperCut flexible die versions and finishing options for a wide range of label applications, and new ForceControl pressure gauges for optimum control of the die-cutting process.



To watch videos from RotoMetrics and Harper, recorded on the show floor, go to: [www.labelsandlabeling.com/video](http://www.labelsandlabeling.com/video)

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# Labelexpo highlights added-value converting

Next-generation technologies to finish and convert increasingly complex, high quality labels and packaging were on display at Labelexpo Americas. David Pittman reports



DPR debuted two desktop Virgo digital label finishing systems

As brand owners look to enhance their labels and packaging to secure a win at the 'Moment of Truth' and printers look to make their production faster and more efficient, so finishing and converting equipment manufacturers are responding.

From ETI's upgraded Cohesio line, the SEI Laser Labelmaster and DPR's new desktop Virgo digital label finishing systems, to Fix-a-Form's AF500 next-generation leaflet label machine, such systems are designed to offer the latest tools for high speed, high quality label production of all sorts.

The ETI Cohesio on show at Labelexpo Americas 2018 has been purchased by Heartland Label Printers to support the continued growth of its pressure-sensitive label business, while also being capable of producing linerless label products (see boxout). Laser engraving, micro-piercing and coding on the SEI Laser Labelmaster allow security elements and variable data to be added to labels. Berhalter's Label-light die-cutting tool for IML and polyester labels combines favorable tool costs and short lead times, coupled with the benefits of flatbed die-cutting, such as print-to-die registration and handling properties. The Enprom eRS 60 for heat shrink sleeve seaming converts a plastic sheet into a single sleeve label or multiple sleeve for promotional packages. It uses solvent-based



GM launched the fourth generation of its DC330Mini

**"We are not limited to the embellishment being the same on every label"**

welding that once placed on the final product conforms to the shape of the container and does not open when heat is applied.

Further developments have seen automation become increasingly prevalent, as with Grafotronic's Q-Load automatic side-loading system, and wider widths are now commonplace – AB Graphic has a growing finishing portfolio for mid web digital production, for example, while AF500 builds on Fix-a-Form's AF350 model, handling web widths of 70-500mm for leaflet labels from 20-280mm long.

## Embellishment

One of the biggest drivers of developments in finishing is the desire to add decorative details and features.

Pantec sees foil stamping as a popular and effective method of embellishment in the wine and spirits market. Demonstration of production of a three-foil rum label by Pantec at Labelexpo Americas 2018 gave a glimpse into what can be achieved through the use of its Rhino IIS 410 flatbed hot foil embossing system. Rhino IIS operates with a maximum embossing force of 60 tons, up to 30,000 strokes an hour and can accommodate a stamping tool up to 410 x 410mm. A multistroke process allows up to four foils to be applied to one label in one production run.

And while foiling is increasingly a standard finish for high quality



A Gemini 360 Series was the focal point on the Cartes stand

labels, advances by Pantec in micro- and nano-embossing, as well as lenses, raise the bar higher. These create holographic and spatial effects directly on labels and packaging. 'Luxury label printing, especially flatbed stamping, is an art, leaving a lot of space for creativity,' explains Pantec CEO Reinhard Braun.

Kromex from **Demak** is a patented technology for in-house manufacturing of 3D emblems and decals with chrome external finishing. Kromex can be used for cosmetics packaging, as well as in automotive, car aftermarket, motorcycle, farm tractor, marine, home appliance and sport emblem applications. Kromex emblems and logos are flexible and easily applied to both flat or curved surfaces. Special effects can be added using satin, matte and colored finishing, or even with the use of PU resins on top.

Embellishment has not escaped digitalization, either. The **MGI JETvarnish 3DW**, as shown by **Konica Minolta**, allows label printers to go digital for spot UV coating and embossed hot foiling without dies, screens or tooling on narrow webs up to 420mm. The



A Rhino IIS was demonstrated on the Pantec stand

JETvarnish 3DW is designed for both 2D (flat)/3D embossed spot coating over flexo, offset or digital web-fed printed output. Hot foiling can be added with metallic and colored foils to embellish label designs.

Through a Digicon Series 3 integrated with a new Jetfx digital embellishment module, **AB Graphic** has presented an off-line, fully digital system for creating varnish and foil effects. The embellishment module features two inkjet bars and overlamination to allow for cold foil effects.

**HP Indigo** introduced GEM, its one-pass digital embellishment system, last year but it has now been extended with compatibility with foils from **Kurz** and **K Laser**. ILS has now been named as the first in the US to install GEM, which it will run in-line with an HP Indigo 6900 digital press. Jay Dollries, ILS president and CEO, proclaimed: 'This latest cutting-edge innovation allows our business to be dynamic and responsive to deliver a broad range applications and creative capabilities. We are not limited to the embellishment being the same on every label, with the GEM also enabling variable embellishments.'





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Prati Digifast One



Matrix removal on a Delta ModTech Spectrum

### Compact and powerful

Systems are then being engineered to offer such capabilities on a small footprint. **Spartanics' Laser Lite** is a compact laser converting system integrated with the company's Fastline AI plug-in die line creation software and workflow application. It comes as standard with an unwinder, rewinder, scrap rewinder and laser die-cutting. Additional options include web guiding, self-wound laminate, a 250W, 10.2 micron carbon dioxide laser high speed option, barcode reading and knife slitting.

**Grafisk Maskinfabrik (GM)** launched the fourth generation of its DC330Mini converting machine. Redesigned with the help of an industrial engineer, this features new electronics, a newly-designed control panel and an updated user interface, which gives the operator a graphical representation of the machine as installed.

New from **DPR** are the VRG22PL and VRG14PL desktop digital label finishing systems. These build on its existing Virgo compact desktop finishing system to provide an option for label finishing over an even smaller footprint and at a lower investment cost.

The latest version of the **Martin Automatic MBS** splicer is claimed to have the smallest in-line footprint on the market. This is made possible by an integrated 90-degree turnbar.

### Linerless update

**Omet** and **Ritrama** have formed a partnership which will make new converting equipment available for Ritrama's Core Linerless Solution (CLS) materials technology. CLS makes use of a siliconized 12 micron PET liner, which is on the reverse side of a 30 micron face material. The converter prints the roll in the normal way. Omet's converting machine delaminates the multi-purpose liner, turns it over and laminates it to the top of the label using an activatable adhesive. This leaves the adhesive side of the face material exposed and encapsulates the print leaving the silicone surface on the top face. The 42 micron roll goes through a micro-perforation station – developed jointly with Spilker – then a slitter inspection rewind station. The Core linerless system requires a specialist application machine, which is manufactured by Italian company Ilti. Although only square/rectangular labels are possible, the labels can be die-cut with rounded corners. The key target market is primary product decoration, where Ritrama estimates 80 percent of face labels are square shaped and more than 90 percent of the back labels are square or rectangular.



Maan Engineering used VR to present its new hybrid lamination coating technology

**Maan Engineering** used VR to present its new hybrid lamination coating technology. This machine allows production of both laminated and linerless labels, and is engineered to maximize converters' equipment utilization. The basis of the hybrid technology is that when switching from laminate to linerless, the hotmelt coating station is rotated. In this way, both sides of the paper or foil strip can be coated with hotmelt. The switch takes just 15 minutes. A VR experience on the Maan Engineering stand transported interested parties to the company's manufacturing facility in Raalte, the Netherlands.

**Mühlbauer's PL light** is an RFID personalization system designed for low to medium volumes with a throughput of up to 18,000 units per hour. The process includes UHF chip encoding as well as printing variable data for graphical personalization. A maximum web width of 110mm can be processed. A modular design enables other processes to be integrated on request.

### Modular

The ability to upgrade such systems with different modules is a cornerstone of finishing and converting equipment suppliers.

Sheeting, foiling, embossing, laser die-cutting and conveyor modules are upgrades that can be made to **Delta ModTech's** systems. Further, Intelli-mod, as demonstrated on a Spectrum modular finishing machine at Labelexpo Americas 2018, allows complete control over each module and part of the converting process. Using proprietary HMI software and the use of individual servo motors, each die station and winding station can be adjusted



Brotech managing director Ramon Lee (left) and Rodrigo Arbelaez (second from left), from Colombia's Comarbel



BGM had machinery on the J&J Converting stand

independently, on the fly.

A **Cartes Gemini 360** in the configuration GE362ZL R-L highlights how customers can combine modules according to their needs. This includes flexo varnishing and laser converting. A new laser version in right to left configuration features Cartes' ILC module, which makes it possible to die-cut dark printed labels without white edges.

**Rotocontrol's** DT Series is a fully modular line, with a 340 model shown at Labelexpo Americas 2018 for finishing digitally pre-printed rolls of labels.

**Brotech's** SDF Plus modular label converting and finishing system features flatbed hot stamping (using a patented 90-degree rotatable stamping head), flatbed screen printing and flatbed die-cutting. It can be upgraded with a semi-rotary/rotary flexo printing unit, rotary die-cutting unit, IML/sheeting collection unit and other modules for efficient processing of digitally printed labels.

#### Digital-driven

Many of the finishing technologies on show at Labelexpo Americas



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## “Luxury label printing is an art”

2018 were presented for the growing need to convert digitally printed labels and packaging.

Debuting in the region with its new-look portfolio, **Grafotronic** showed a DCL2 digital finishing machine equipped with a flexo unit for high speed spot/full varnish, WiFi-slitting automatic knife positioning system and non-stop system for continuous running. It also featured GigaFast, its 160m/min semi-rotary die station.

The **Prati** Digifast One digital finishing system features semi-rotary printing and die-cutting at up to 90m/min in combination. Accuracy is recorded at  $\pm 0.10$ mm and set-up times are as short as eight minutes.

‘With the growing success of digital color printing and shorter runs there is demand for reliable, easy to set-up and affordable high-speed finishing,’ notes Dennis Kallaher, vice president of sales at **TCS Digital Solutions**. This has seen it develop Diamond, a desktop production class, semi-rotary label finishing system intended for commercial and in-plant printing operations.

**Rotoflex** launched the DF3 configurable off-line digital finishing and converting machine. It offers an array of off-line decoration and finishing for digital and hybrid printing. These include full and semi-rotary die-cutting lamination, foil decoration, rotary screen, waste removal and turnbars. It operates at up to 1000ft/min.

Demand for finishing of digitally printed packaging is growing too. **HP Indigo’s** Pack Ready technology is now available in multiple guises, notably Pack Ready Lamination. This technology allows immediate time-to-market for flexible packaging and the creation of high-quality, high-performance laminates for HP Indigo digitally

printed flexible packaging without the use of adhesives.

**AB Graphic’s** new ILC760 in-line coating machine debuted at Labelexpo Americas 2018 on the HP Indigo stand, where it was shown integrated with an HP Indigo 20000 digital press. ILC760 supports both water-based and UV coating. It supplements the Digicon 3000 in AB Graphic’s growing finishing portfolio for mid web digital production.

Tony Bell, sales director at AB Graphic, explained: ‘The demand for digitally printed packaging is growing well beyond the pressure-sensitive label market into areas such as sleeves, IML and various flexible packaging applications.’



VIDEO: GM launches new DC330Mini [tinyurl.com/yct8qgn9](http://tinyurl.com/yct8qgn9)  
Morten Toksvaerd, director, global sales and marketing, presents the company's fourth generation of its compact converting line



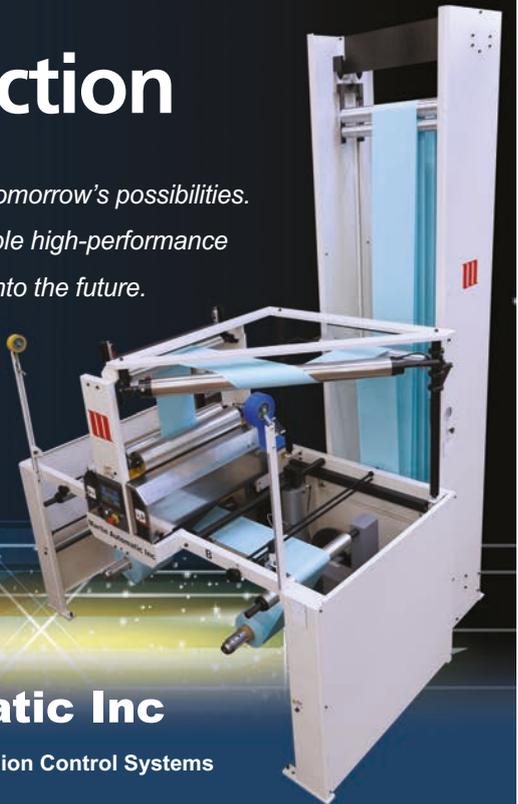
Read more on Grafotronic’s global growth ambitions in issue 4, 2018

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Flexo Wash launched a new system

# Ancillary equipment

The Labels & Labeling team rounds up other innovations launched at Labelexpo Americas 2018

**Alphasonics USA** showed technical advancements in its cleaning systems, designed with an emphasis on anilox control – the ability to clean a roll to 100 percent of its deliverable volume through medical-grade, advanced ultrasonics. The company introduced additions such as automatic dilution systems, hard chromed tanks for system longevity and self-diagnostic elements, which monitor quality of cleaning fluid and current. Alphasonics USA also showed its PCX plate cleaning system, alongside a new parts washing unit. The PW AGI is a unique cleaning system combining advanced ultrasonics with a special agitation system.

**Color-Dec** introduced Finedome for producing elegant metallic looking labels. No tooling, chemicals, PVCs or electro-forming are required.

**Dover Flexo Electronics** launched SteadyWeb6, a closed-loop automatic tension controller with a back-lit, color, touchscreen interface. It holds desired web tension constant to ensure better finished labels.

**Eaglewood Technologies**, a finalist for the Label Industry Global Award for innovation, showcased its Sitexo laser anilox cleaning technology. Advanced laser technology combined with software allows the user to easily clean ink and coating chemistry of all types. It can also clean multiple narrow web rolls or a combination of narrow and wide web rolls and sleeves.

**Flexo Wash** released its latest laser anilox cleaners, the FW 2000 and FW 3000. Flexo Wash also presented two Flexo Wash cleaning technologies: the liquid cleaner and the new laser cleaner.

**Imada** introduced improved IPTS 180-degree peel tester with new EL electro luminescent display and easy-to-use menus in eight languages to simplify the selection of units, speed and high or low set-points. This equipment can test samples up to 3.46in wide and 7.75in long.

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**Kroenert** showcased a roll-to-roll system on its existing coating unit for simultaneous double-sided siliconizing of a web. This coating unit can be included in new plants or retrofitted in existing facilities. The process of double-sided siliconizing is especially suitable for paper webs used as release liners for adhesive tapes and for graphic products. Laserclean introduced ALCS1000s laser cleaning machine. It enables cleaning of the engravings by removing pigments and burning away polymers. It can be used as a daily cleaner and does not use any chemicals. Laserclean sold a unit to Heartland Label Printers at the show.

**Lundberg Tech** showed the MatrixCompactor 140m, designed for removing and handling matrix and edge trim waste from label presses, increasing productivity and allowing non-stop production.

**Matho** showed its Cuttobag CB-100 as part of the Automation Arena. This unit was linked to the Xeikon/GM digital line and takes care of the cutting and extraction process of pressure sensitive matrix and edge trims. CB-10 includes an in-line cutting unit, vacuum fan, two piping silencers, an oil spray system to avoid blockages inside the piping system, an electronic control cabinet including a frequency converter to control the fan power, an intake funnel, and the material separator in a compact machine chassis (including sound absorption).

**Maxcess** showed Magpowr DLCA NET digital load cell amplifier that transmits calibrated values from 1 or 2 tension zones over dual port communications using Ethernet/IP, Modbus TCP/IP or Ethercat.

**Meech** presented its new Hyperion SmartControl. The SmartControl has been developed to allow easy communication between connected Meech Ionisers though either a LAN or WAN network. Through the SmartControl, connected Meech Hyperion equipment is able to be adjusted quickly and remotely through a



single online platform, reducing the need to monitor static control issues on site. Meech also showcases the new 971IPS-30 extra-long range pulsed DC ionizing bar from its Hyperion range. With an operating working distance of 200 to 1500mm, the 971IPS-30 suits very long-range applications. As with the previous version of the bar, the 24V DC supply removes the need for high voltage wiring.

**MoistTech** showed a range of sensors and gauges to measure moisture, oil and fat content as well as the thickness or coat weight of coatings, hot melts, glues, adhesives and printing.

**PCMC** showed its Meridian laser anilox cleaner, which was nominated for a Label Industry Global Award for Innovation. The unit deep cleans engravings of any line screen thoroughly in a single pass. The Meridian removes inks, adhesives, glazes, stiffeners, coatings, and varnishes from ceramic and chrome surfaces. Using auto-focus technology, it optimizes the laser's energy to pulverize any residue

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deposited on the engraved surface. It also features an automatic cleaning cycle, flip-up cleaning area access door and large cleaning area access opening, which offer enhanced ergonomics to the operator. PCMC reported at least two sales from the show floor.

**Prisco** offered PriscoFlex washers and cleaners designed to clean rollers and plates, including PriscoBond adhesives and PriscoFlex water-based and energy-curable coatings for the flexo market.

**Timmer** displayed glue pumps with electronic temperature control of the adhesive. The control system is optimized in such a way that the adhesive is quickly heated up and precisely adjusted to the set point without detrimental fluctuation of the temperature. Tower Products released its new UV flexo cleaning product, SmartFlex UV Flexo Cleaner. It cleans all UV flexographic ink from plates and machinery. The product will not swell photopolymer printing plates and can be applied by hand or used in an automatic plate cleaning unit. It can either be mixed with water or used full strength for all UV ink cleaning applications.

**Transcoat** unveiled its new patent pending technology designed for label printers to make their own laminate. The Transcoat labelstock laminator unwinds faceless rolls (consisting of adhesive and liner only) and laminates any face material (paper, film or other) to generate the final pressure-sensitive construction. Faceless rolls are offered in different width and adhesive technologies (hotmelt, UV acrylic or emulsion acrylics). This technology pairs with a digital press and it also allows printers to reverse print clear facestocks before lamination and can even double side print on opaque material.

**Valmet** discussed its IQ Converting Scanner with online measurements that enables the use of machine and cross direction controls for moisture, adhesive and silicone in converting machines. These control systems improve and stabilize the end-product quality,

decrease the amount of break and allow the operators to concentrate on quality management and production optimization.

**Vetaphone** showcased VE1A corona treaters and an iCorona generator designed for narrow web applications. These systems treat conductive and non-conductive substrates and are equipped with quick change electrode cartridges as standard. Vetaphone corona systems were working on narrow web presses on the show floor, including those on the Mark Andy, HP Indigo, Nilpeter, Bobst, Omet, AB Graphic, Domino, ETI and Screen stands. The company has also added web cleaning technology to its product portfolio, boosting its offering as a surface preparation specialist.

**Yazoo Mills** displayed its custom paper cores alongside one and two color cores with in-line printing capabilities.



For more information about Labelexpo Global Series events, go to [www.labelexpo.com](http://www.labelexpo.com)

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# Beyond a clean web

*Web cleaning delivers benefits beyond a clean web of material, says David Westwood, sales and marketing manager at KSM Superclean*



*Web cleaning system from KSM Superclean*

One of the main barriers to the printing-press specific overall equipment effectiveness (OEE) in the label printing industry is loose contamination present on the material to be printed. There are many sources of contamination, all of which are difficult to avoid. The three key sources are contamination that is already present on the new roll of material to be loaded on to the press, contamination that is introduced on to the web from the environment or printing press itself, and contamination that is generated by operator activity and movement that disturbs the 'dirty' air in the immediate vicinity of each print station. Whatever the source of contamination, the direct result can be a costly stoppage to production to clean down the press, or a requirement to re-print labelstock that has been identified as scrap.

While many technologies have been used over time to combat the issues of contamination, the technology known as Contact Cleaning has become the preferred method of contamination removal for many, as both customers and the label press manufacturers have integrated this solution in to their machines. Contact Cleaning uses a specially formulated cleaning roller which runs in direct contact with the moving web. This roller collects all particles down to the microscopic level from the web, and immediately transfers them on to a layer of adhesive which has been coated on to a roll of paper or plastic. As soon as this layer of adhesive is completely covered with the collected contamination, it can simply be removed from the roll, to reveal a new layer underneath. Web cleaning is, as its name suggests, a process that is dedicated to deliver a clean web for printing by the removal of contamination from the web. However there are numerous other benefits to a label printer which can be derived from the installation of an effective web cleaner.

## Long-term efficiency

A key component of any press is the anilox roll, whose performance is largely determined by the cleanliness of the cells. To clean contamination from the web removes one variable from the list of contaminants that can sit in the cells of the anilox roll.

Dust in the air, substrate fragments and other debris can all be carried into

the electrode assemblies of the corona treater. If they accumulate, they can eventually clog the exhaust path of the treater and reduce the air flow rate – all leading to inefficiency of operation and a need to clean the treater. Web cleaning can significantly contribute to the long-term efficiency of the corona treater.

The key benefit of the contact cleaning technology is the permanent collection of the contamination on the adhesive layer. This presents a label printer with the opportunity for analysis. By analyzing the contamination for type, size and frequency, a company can identify the source of the contamination and implement procedures both internally and with suppliers to eliminate or significantly reduce the problem at source. If managed effectively, this analysis can enable the implementation of process and material control measures which in turn delivers both operational and financial positive gains. An example of this might be the identification of a certain type of clothing worn by operators, the solution being to eliminate such clothing from the immediate environment around the press. Equally, fragments of particles from pallets or other media for transporting the reels of material found on the adhesive layer of the web cleaner might lead to a cost-effective change in materials used to transport the material.

The good news for any label printer who wishes to explore the potential for contact cleaning as an effective technology to capture and analyze contamination is that it can be evaluated by using simple hand-held cleaning units. KSM Superclean supplies a free ready-made kit to any printer to enable contact cleaning technology to be evaluated in the production environment on actual labelstock. The Superclean Particle Assessment Kit is designed to be simple and safe to use, and enables the printer to gain an immediate understanding of the function and effectiveness of the technology, not only as a web cleaner, but also as a provider of benefits to the label printer beyond a clean web of material.

**“Aside from a clean web, there are numerous other benefits to a label printer which can be derived from the installation of an effective web cleaner”**



*David Westwood has over 25 years' experience in the contact cleaning sector. Under the Superclean brand, KSM's portfolio of products remove surface contamination at the microscopic level from a wide range of materials. In 2016 KSM became part of Glasgow-based Rainbow Technology Systems. Visit [www.rainbow-technology.com/products/ksm-super-clean](http://www.rainbow-technology.com/products/ksm-super-clean) for more info*

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## The green column

# 'War on plastic' reaches packaging industry

*As brands make expansive sustainability declarations regarding their packaging, some print segments are bracing for a challenge while others are eyeing an opportunity. Chelsea McDougall reports*

**P**lastics in the world's oceans has today reached a global flashpoint. With eyes now turned to packaging, brands, retailers and packaging companies are taking notice.

At the World Economic Forum in Davos earlier this year, a growing list of companies announced sustainability goals aimed at reaching 100 percent reusable, recyclable or compostable packaging within the next decade. The companies – Amcor, Ecover, Evian, L'Oréal, Mars, Marks & Spencer, PepsiCo, The Coca-Cola Company, Unilever, Walmart and Werner & Mertz – together represent more than six million tonnes of plastic packaging per year. Kraft Heinz made a similar pledge in August.

'Consumers expect the brands they purchase from to be good corporate citizens and fully transparent about the sustainability of the product itself, and the labeling and packaging,' Georges Gravanis, president of Avery Dennison label and graphic materials group, said in a special Raconteur report. 'How the material is made is important, but more so is the impact it has on the overall recyclability of the package and its end of life. Consumers are increasing the pressure on brands to take responsibility and to create more sustainable designs.'

Today's environmentally-conscious consumers are holding brands accountable for their impact on the environment, and often doing so with their pocketbooks.

According to Forbes, Gen Z will make up more than 40 percent of all shoppers by 2020. Their millennial predecessors have already proven to prioritize social causes including sustainability, and brands are listening and responding to these new market demands (see boxout). While some print segments are pragmatic about the challenges that lie ahead, others are looking at it as an opportunity.

### Flexible packaging

The Flexible Packaging Association is at the forefront of advocacy on this topic. Its president, Alison Keane, said at a recent Global Pouch Forum that the association is fully engaged in addressing the sea change that's happening in today's packaging community.

She put it this way: 'More millennials today believe in climate

change than believe in God. That's a huge shift in thinking for a very big demographic. The challenges are pretty great with regard to plastic, there's definitely a war on plastic going on right now, whether it's from Europe or coming from our own states in North America.'

But the way Keane sees it, 'Plastic is not the issue, litter is the issue.' In other words, the plastic bag didn't walk itself to the beach, someone tossed it there.

It's important, she said, to advocate the environmental benefits of flexible packaging as these brands are making moves to reach their sustainability goals.

Before it gets to a consumer, flexible packaging requires less energy to produce, Keane said, and lighter-weight flexible packaging results in less transportation-related energy and fossil fuel consumption, and environmental pollution. Flexible plastics can also protect food from being wasted.

According to Popular Science magazine, agriculture – and especially livestock – is responsible for some 70 percent of the planet's freshwater usage and produces about 35 percent of all of our greenhouse gas emissions.

So that plastic film covering a cucumber or cheese – often pointed to as the definition of plastic waste – might not be as wasteful as it looks. It extends the life of those foods.

Producing food takes land, water, labor and other valuable resources. A report by the British Medical Journal says: 'The environmental impact of producing food is enormous, so waste contributes needlessly to climate change, loss of biodiversity, nitrogen and phosphorus loading, and use of scarce agricultural land and limited freshwater resources. To add insult to injury, food waste is a major source of greenhouse gases, mostly in the form of methane, a pollutant at least 25 times more potent than carbon dioxide.'

Still, the multi-laminate constructions of flexible packaging are too difficult to separate and recycle at most municipal facilities; the majority end up in the landfill.

It's with that in mind that Vancouver-based Associated Labels



Unilever uses Avery Dennison's CleanFlake white BOPP for its Love Beauty and Planet brand

### Unilever launches sustainable brand with CleanFlake

Unilever recently conducted a study that found that 33 percent of consumers are now choosing to buy from a brand they believe are doing social or environmental good. With that in mind, Unilever launched its new line of beauty products, Love Beauty and Planet.

Unilever packaging sustainability manager Julie Zaniewski said in a case study by Avery Dennison that she believes the eco-consciousness of the Love Beauty and Planet line will play well with today's environmentally aware consumers.

For the Love Beauty and Planet line, Unilever chose to label its bottles – which are made from 100 percent recycled PET – with Avery Dennison's CleanFlake material in a white BOPP.

CleanFlake uses a water-based adhesive that separates cleanly during the PET plastic recycling process. This results in pure PET flakes, the conservation of virgin PET resources, and less landfill waste.

'Like most people, we realize we only have one planet and it's up to us to take care of it. Our approach is a holistic one, encompassing the entire product life cycle and beyond: we've given careful thought to our ingredients, product packaging, and social partnerships. Committing these small acts of love for the planet can add up to a big difference.'

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## “Now that brands have made a declaration to join the sustainable commitment, this will be a win-win for the in-mold label market”

and Packaging has created what it calls North America’s first non-GMO, ‘backyard compostable’ stand-up pouch.

Associated Labels and Packaging says the ‘earth-friendly’ pouches start composting in sixty days, and depending in climate and conditions, will turn into compost within 180 days. The pouches are created with layers of eucalyptus trees and corn starch.

‘To empower consumers to divert their packaging waste from landfill to compost is a huge step in the right direction,’ says Associated Labels sustainability manager Jay Ashworth.

He says the product is popular with many socially and environmentally responsible companies.

Associated Labels and Packaging can run the substrate through its new HP Indigo 20000 digital press, and also has a variety of offset and gravure printing capabilities.

‘People are starting to become more aware of the impact packaging has on the environment,’ Ashworth says. ‘I think it’s been gaining momentum for a while now. Debating climate change is irrelevant; we just need to start doing what is right for the environment. And now people are willing to invest in material that won’t stay in a landfill forever.’

### In-mold labels

While flexible packaging has its own challenges, in-mold labeling suppliers are hoping that these recent environmental proclamations will be a boon for their business.

As an in-mold labeling supplier, Yupo sees this as what Bill Hewitt called an ‘aha moment’ and a ‘win-win.’

As brands move to reduce waste, or eliminate non-sustainable components on their packaging, Hewitt, Yupo marketing manager, believes companies will turn to in-mold labeling as the label and container are fused together, making the package fully recyclable. Further, like flexible packaging, in-mold labels are lighter and stackable, easing the transportation demands.

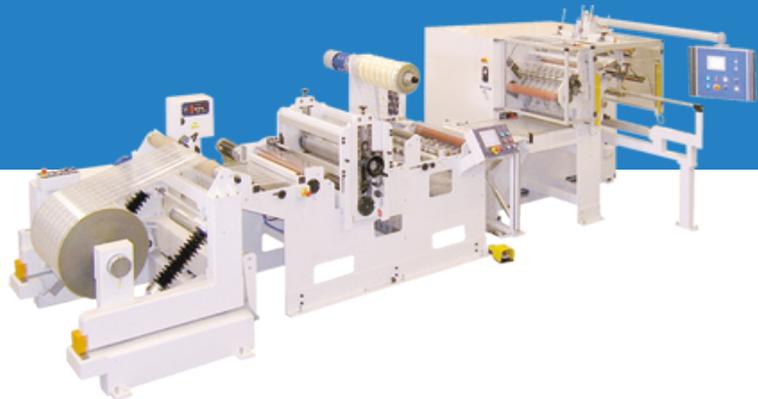
‘Now that brands have made a declaration to join the sustainable commitment, this will be a win-win for the in-mold label market,’ Hewitt says. ‘The industry is forever changing and being challenged. Whether it is about sustainability or another trend in the industry or another hot topic; there is always a curve ball thrown at you. There is not a single option available today that fits every criteria across the board. We hear it all the time. “Is it biodegradable”? “What is the impact on the landfill”? “But it’s plastic – how is that sustainable”? On and on. No, in-mold labeling is not the answer to all things. But out of all of the options to date, it is the best viable solution to meet the challenges we face today and the impact we have on the future.’



TLMI recently merged its Life sustainability program with the Sustainable Green Partnership. Read more in Labels & Labeling at <https://tinyurl.com/yayvqp77>

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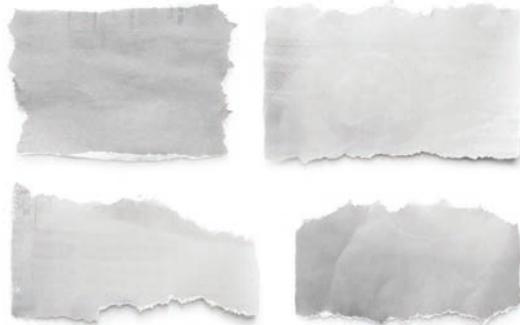
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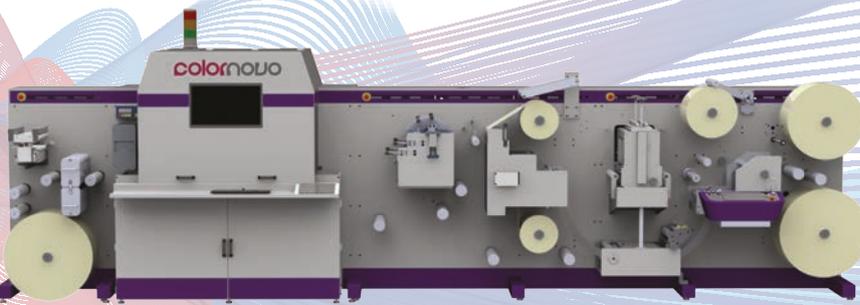
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# Label trends

European label market statistics from self-adhesive label association Finat's ELF 2018 event

## European label industry 2017



**10bn**  
euro turnover

**80-100,000**  
employed

**3,500**  
label converters

Running material waste  
**5-10%**

Paper PS rolls:  
**+4.1%**

Non-paper PS rolls:  
**+8.2%**

PS sheets:  
**-4.2%**

Overall PS growth:  
**4.7%**

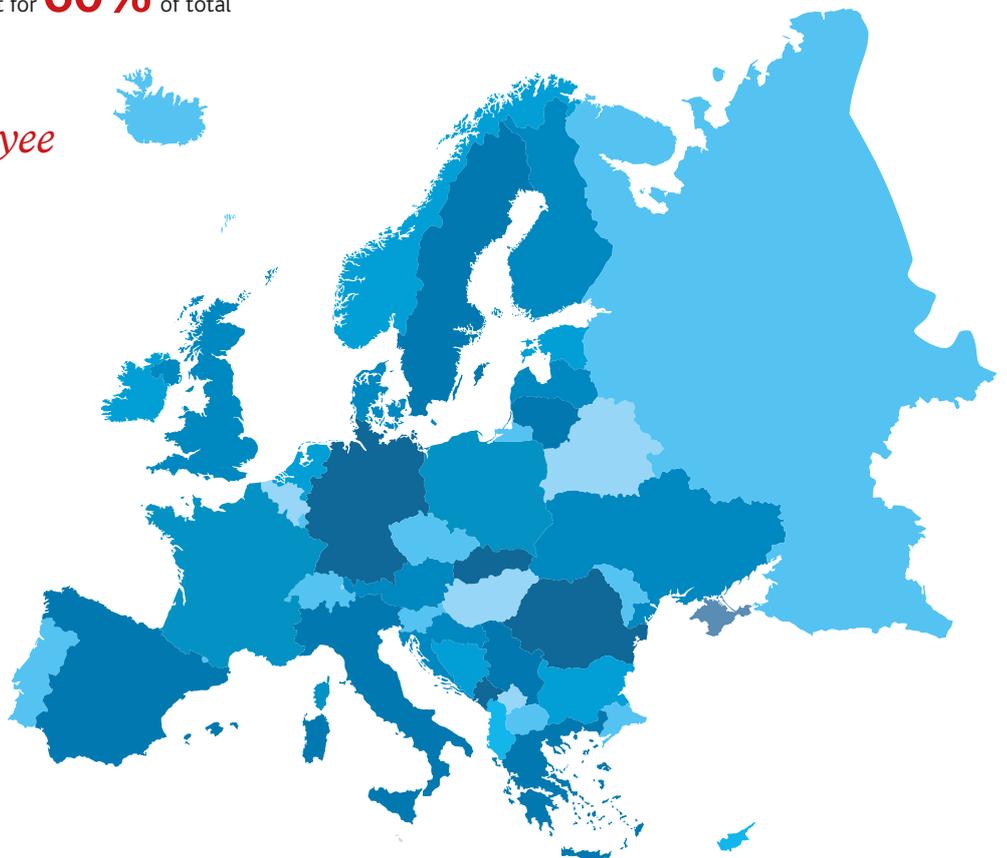
Europe added **1.66bn** sqm annual consumption between 2010-2017 **+28.6%**

Top **15** label markets in Europe account for **90%** of total

Top **5** label markets in Europe account for **60%** of total

### Turnover per employee (euros):

Scandinavia: 206,667  
 Central Europe: 202,273  
 UK & Ireland: 177,143  
 Southern Europe: 166,111  
 Eastern Europe: 110,000  
 Average: 173,857



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# Label SOCIETY

Photos from the Label Industry Global Awards, held during Labelexpo Americas 2018 in Rosemont, Illinois

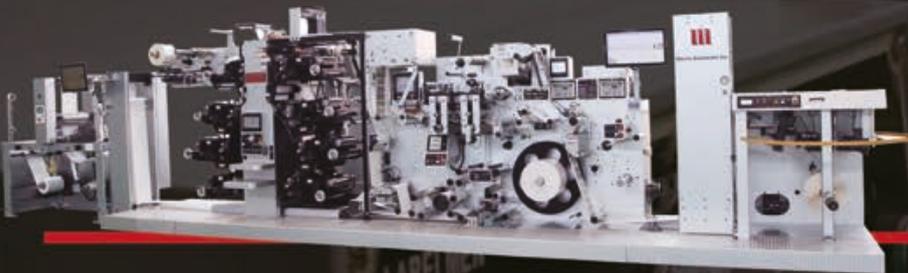
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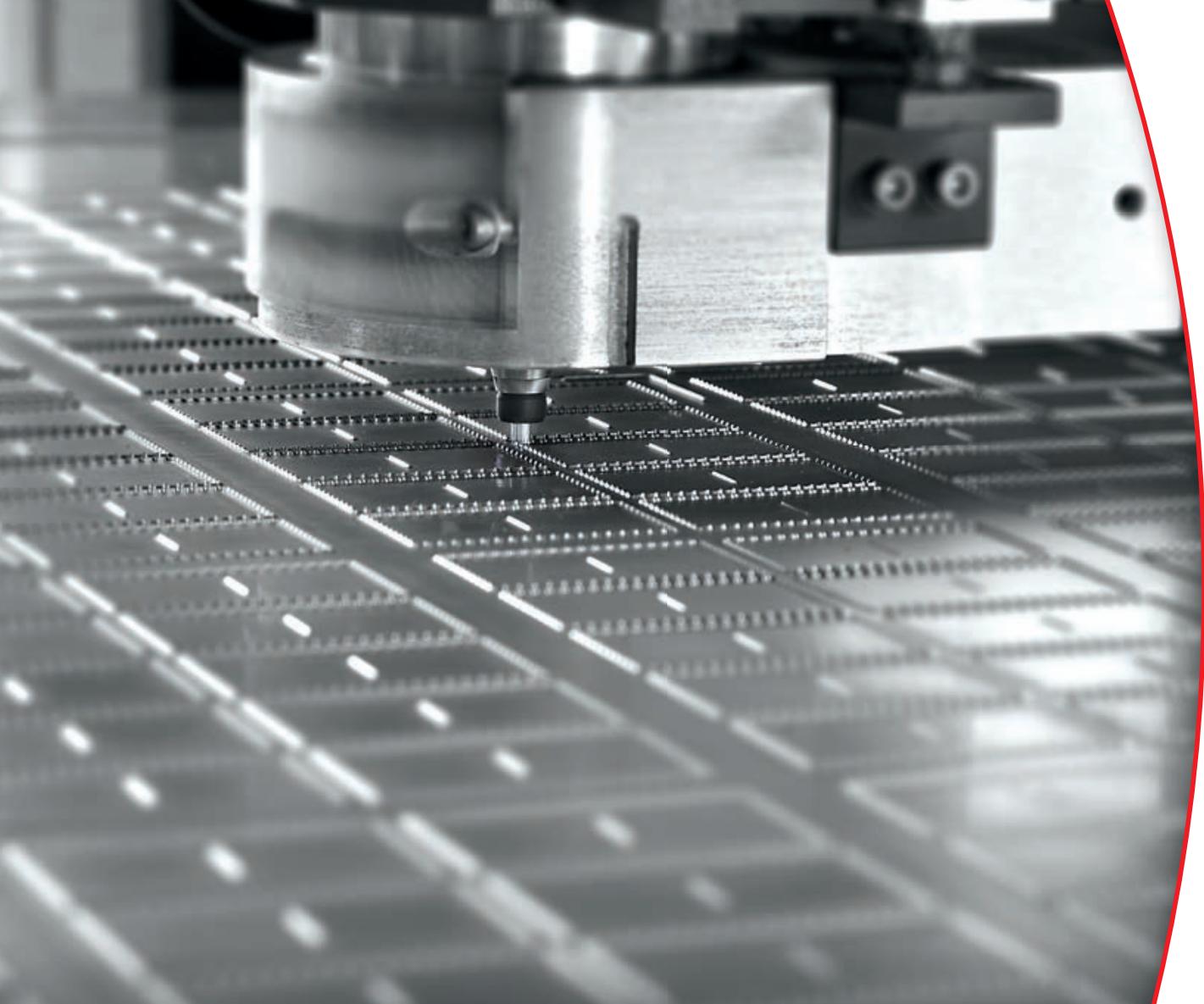
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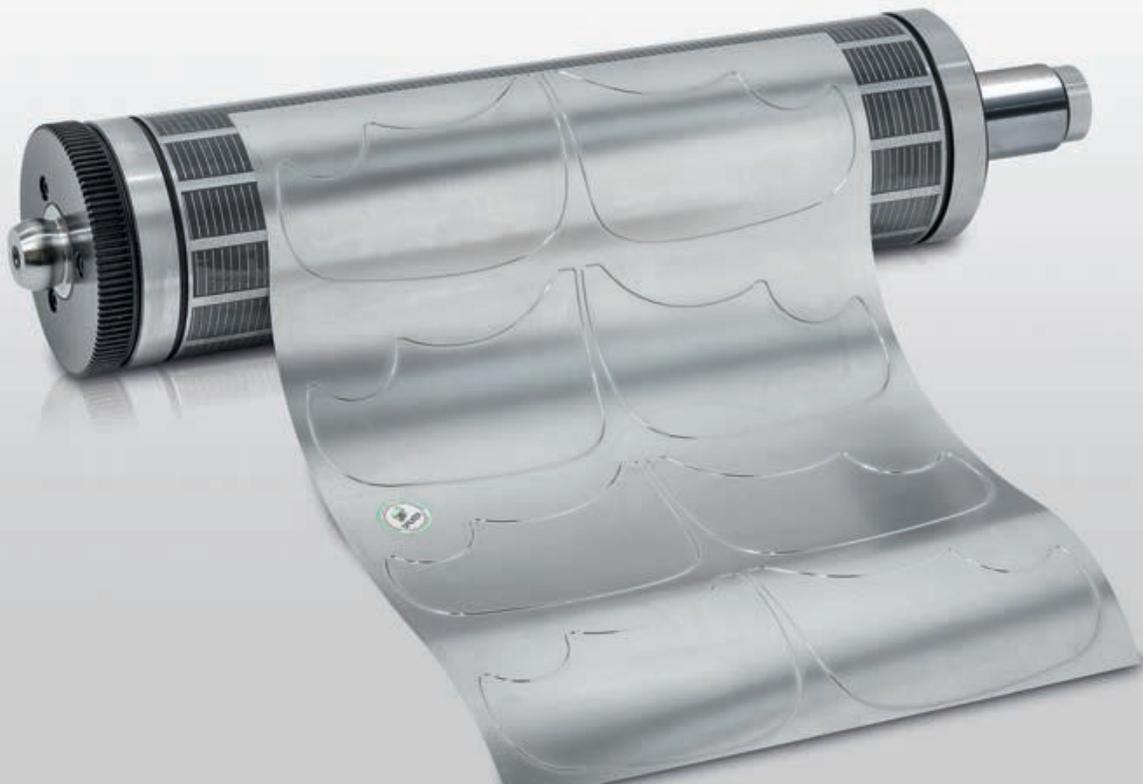


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# Passion for Precision

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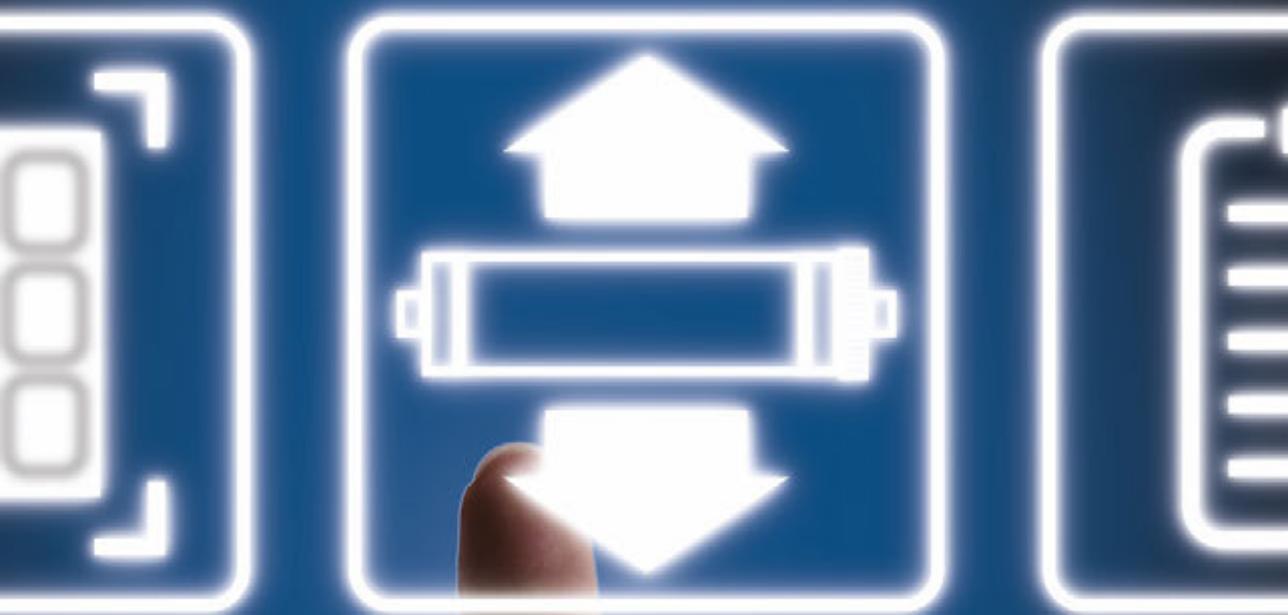
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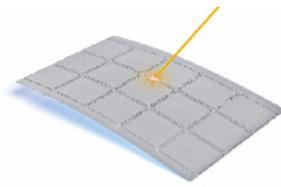


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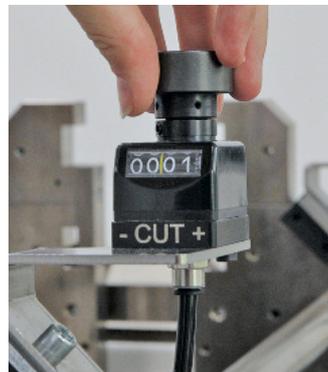
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