

— EST 1978 —

LABELS & LABELING

THE WORLD OF PACKAGE PRINTING

PUSHING FINISHING FORWARD

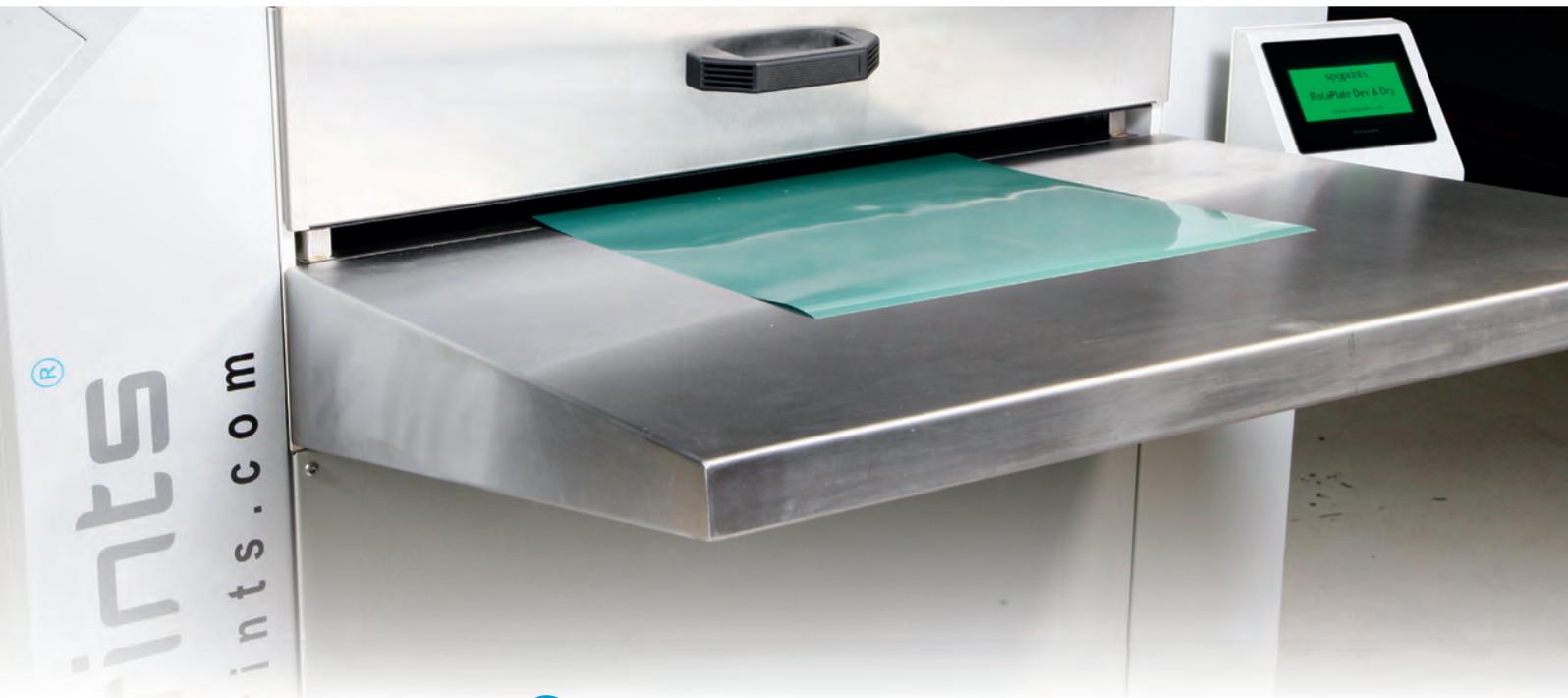
Productivity, efficiency and connectivity are on the roadmap for finishing equipment suppliers

COATING AND LAMINATION

Coating and lamination technology is vital to protect the surface of a label

DIVERSIFY FOR A SECURE FUTURE

Label converters can be successful by diversifying their product range



RotaPlate® Dev & Dry

The missing link in your Pre-press.

Standardise quality and accelerate throughput in your Pre-press workflow.

SPGPrints' RotaPlate Dev & Dry system provides a fast, ergonomic and automated means of developing and drying RotaPlate rotary screens, for narrow web applications, in a one-step, quality-assured process. RotaPlate Dev & Dry is an essential tool that completes your CtS system and also improves the quality having a conventional process. In a cycle lasting between three and four minutes, the exposed RotaPlate is thoroughly washed out with recyclable water, then automatically air-dried without manual intervention. Once the process is complete, the screen is immediately ready for final assembly.

Benefits

RotaPlate Dev & Dry is designed for RotaPlate meshes. The Dev & Dry comes with an intuitive human-machine interface that requires only the push of the touch-screen to activate. RotaPlate Dev & Dry is a complete, sustainable system that integrates with advanced imaging devices, to provide optimum quality rotary screens in a standardized workflow for repeatable, high-quality results.

- Time savings; the process is fully automated and up to 4 times faster
- Uniform and reproducible quality; no human interference
- No water spray in your pre-press room; the process is fully capsuled



Specifications:

- Power requirement 400V 50/60Hz 3-phase
- 2m² Footprint
- Suitable for RotaPlate specs
- Pre-settings for RotaPlate types

SPGPrints offers solutions that cover every step in the label printing workflow

Find out what we can do to innovate your business www.spgprints.com

WE DID IT AGAIN

We just added new Slitter Rewinder and Inspection Rewinder to the comprehensive GM portfolio

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- ✓ New platform
- ✓ New industry leading user interface
- ✓ Easy web access and maintenance with remote support

More options for the individual finishers are specified on our website



IR330 – Inspection / Rewinder



SR350 – Slitter / Rewinder



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Offering the industries best inkjet image quality at native 1200 dpi and fully integrating flexo printing processes, makes the Gallus Labelfire 340 a one of kind industrial-strength digital label converting solution.

L&L

– Meet the team

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



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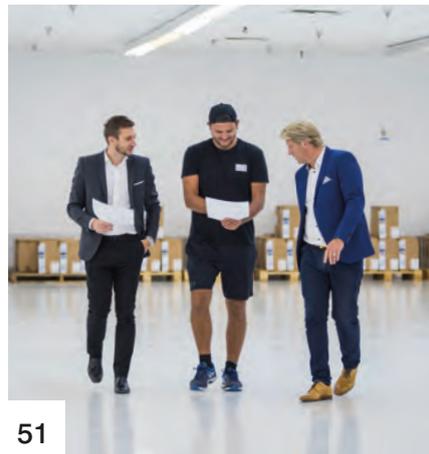
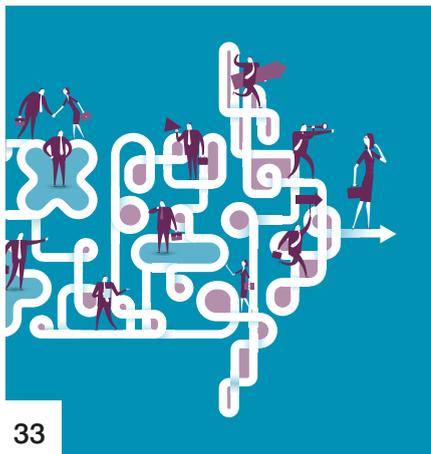
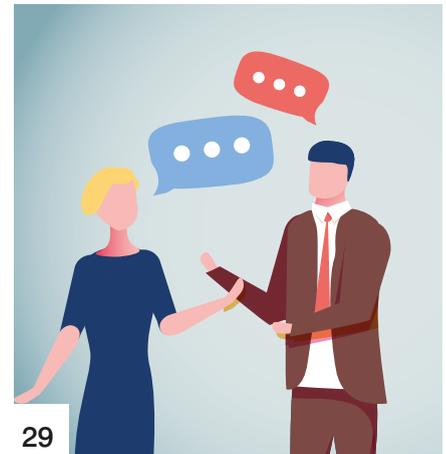
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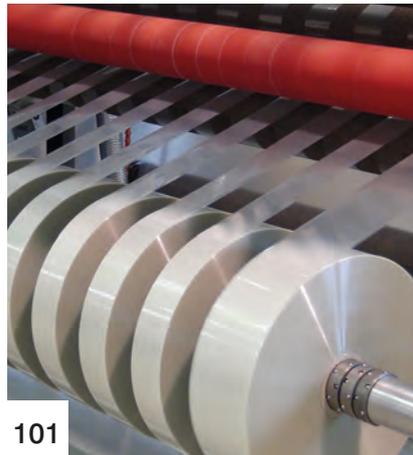
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labels&labeling.com

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



Yearbook (magazine)

Read the 2019 L&L Yearbook to understand the trends driving the global label and package printing market this year



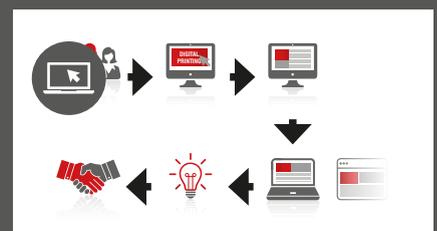
Germark and inkjet (video)

The combination of Domino's opaque white and vibrant colors has enabled Germark to transfer designs from screen printing to inkjet



In-line/off-line? (poll)

How is your print production configured?



Remarketing (advertising)

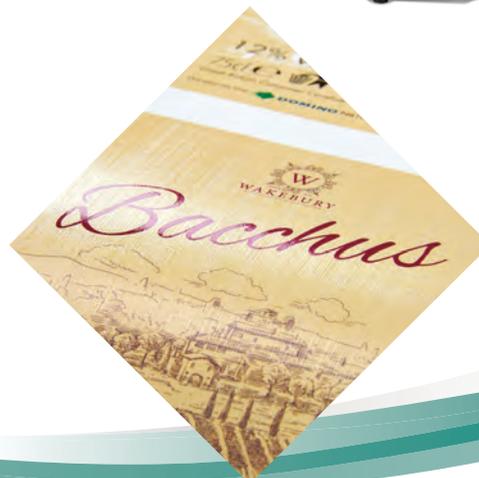
L&L's latest digital advertising initiative allows you to target your message to a tailored audience

Why the Domino N6 | 0i?

1. **Proven** - Over 600 global installations with this technology
2. **Reliable** - Surveys show ink jet is the most reliable digital technology
3. **Comprehensive global support** - Ink jet has been our core business for over 40 years
4. **Low cost** - Very competitive ink price, so more profit for you
5. **>90% Pantone range** - For printing more jobs with the most consistent print results
6. **Most opaque white** - Silkscreen-like quality at up to 70m/min (230ft/min)
7. **Industry standard workflow** - ESKO workflow as 'standard'
8. **Variable data printing** - Add more value with monochrome and colour VDP
9. **Highest digital productivity** - Up to 75m/min (246ft/min)
10. **Minimal waste** - Just 2m (6ft) of waste on substrate/job change with in-line finishing



Whether reel-to-reel, with near or in-line finishing, or as a full hybrid, base your next investment on the **world's best digital label press!**



<http://bit.ly/2Sdc5F8>

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



P12 The SLC Roll Label Computer Estimating System was reported as a tool to relieve the pressures being placed on label printers' estimating departments by the complex nature of producing roll labels at that time, involving substrates, inks, presses and press time, inspection and finishing. This was coupled with shortening production deadlines and decreasing run lengths.



P24 In the lead up to Labelexpo USA, Mike Fairley visited the Fasson operation in the US to assess how the company was meeting developments in the laminate and label use market. This included challenges brought by growth in filmic materials, and non-impact and electronic printing technologies that demanded materials that could be processed through variable information processing systems.



P50 In 15 years, UPM Raflatac had taken a major share of the worldwide laminate market, with further product development and capacity investments taking place. It had three manufacturing sites in Europe at the time, with another under construction in France. Mike Fairley visited the company in Finland to review the developments taking place and report on the PS material market in Europe.



P70 Vista Labels became the first in the UK to install a 6-color Mark Andy 2200 flexo label press. The modular press featured a QC quick make-ready system with pull-out inking system for quick changeovers. A color could be set-up in 20 minutes. After a few months, the printer had already moved a large portion of its work over to the new press due to its speed.

The digital value chain

Editor's note

I recently took part in the judging panel for the French Label Association Digital Label Awards in Paris and visited the HP Indigo VIP event in Tel Aviv, both of which demonstrated the creativity of digital print and how it is forging a complementary path to conventional printing.

This is good news, as it shows that digital is moving away from the 'short run flexo' model to forge its own value chain based on the key advantages of digital over conventional print: personalization/customization, rapid job turnaround and print on demand.

A key theme which emerged during the HP VIP event presentations was that small and medium-sized brands – rather than global brands – are the big driver of growth for digital printing, with some estimates suggesting that this segment is growing at up to 20

percent and accounting for over half of US consumer spending. These smaller brands tend to source locally and are adept at finding new market niches; they have no preconceived idea of what a 'traditional' packaging/marketing campaign may look like; they are tuned into the concerns of millennials and looking to draw these customers into a personal relationship based on shared concerns about sustainability and lifestyle choices, connecting through social media channels linked to the packaging.

Jack Knott, CEO of e-Pac – which has comprehensively disrupted the flexible packaging industry with a multi-plant all-digital model – explained that a digital sales force needs to be 'embedded' in the local community to spot and develop these promising start-ups.

And the global brands are taking notice. Presentations

“Digital is moving away from the ‘short run flexo’ model to forge its own value chain based on the key advantages of digital over conventional print: personalization/customization, rapid job turnaround and print on demand”

from both Nestlé Mexico and Danone at the VIP event demonstrated that big brands are 'thinking small' and starting to adopt similar strategies to their smaller competitors. 'Small is the new big', is how the speaker from Danone summed up today's market trends.

This plays directly into the hands of designers and converters looking to push digital printing into new creative channels using exciting

new tools such as HP's Mosaic and Collage software programs, which allow the creation of an infinite number of patterns based on set design elements.

Exciting times indeed.

Andy Thomas-Emans
Strategic director, L&L

News



'Black' the talking skull was a recent interactive label project by MCC in partnership with Talkin' Things

Multi-Color Corporation to be acquired

Platinum Equity affiliate – which also owns WS Packaging – to acquire MCC

Multi-Color Corporation has entered into a definitive merger agreement to be acquired by an affiliate of Platinum Equity, a leading private equity firm.

Under the terms of the agreement, which has been unanimously approved by Multi-Color Corporation's board of directors, Multi-Color Corporation shareholders will receive \$50 in cash for each share of common stock they own, in a transaction valued at \$2.5 billion USD including the assumption of \$1.5 billion USD of debt. The cash purchase price represents a premium of approximately 32 percent over Multi-Color Corporation's 30-day volume weighted average share price prior to January 22, 2019, the last trading day prior to media speculation regarding a potential transaction involving Multi-Color Corporation.

'We are pleased to reach this agreement with an affiliate of Platinum Equity,' said Nigel Vinecombe, executive chairman of Multi-Color Corporation. 'This transaction is the culmination of our board's review of strategic alternatives to maximize value for our shareholders. As a result of this process, our board, with the assistance of independent advisors, unanimously determined that this all-cash transaction will deliver immediate, significant and certain value to our shareholders and is in the best interest of our shareholders and our company.'

Louis Samson, partner, Platinum Equity, said: 'We have tremendous respect for Multi-Color Corporation, and believe that its capabilities and established position in the industry, when combined with our portfolio company WS Packaging Group, operational expertise and financial resources, will enable Multi-Color Corporation and WS Packaging Group to strengthen the value proposition for their customers. With a shared vision to deliver the highest quality label solutions to the world's most prominent brands, we are excited at the prospect of leveraging our resources to pursue new avenues for growth.'

The transaction is expected to be completed by the third quarter in 2019. Upon completion, Multi-Color Corporation will become a privately held company and shares of its common stock will no longer be listed on any public market. Constantia Flexibles Holding and affiliates of Diamond Castle Partners, who together currently own approximately 28.7 percent of Multi-Color Corporation's outstanding shares, have each separately entered into a voting and support agreement to vote in favor of the transaction.



The long-term ambition of the initiative is to enable stores to be entirely unstaffed

Japan to create 'convenience store of the future'

Avery Dennison RFID technology employed in huge national project

Avery Dennison is working with the Japanese government on an initiative that could make every convenience store in the country unmanned by 2025.

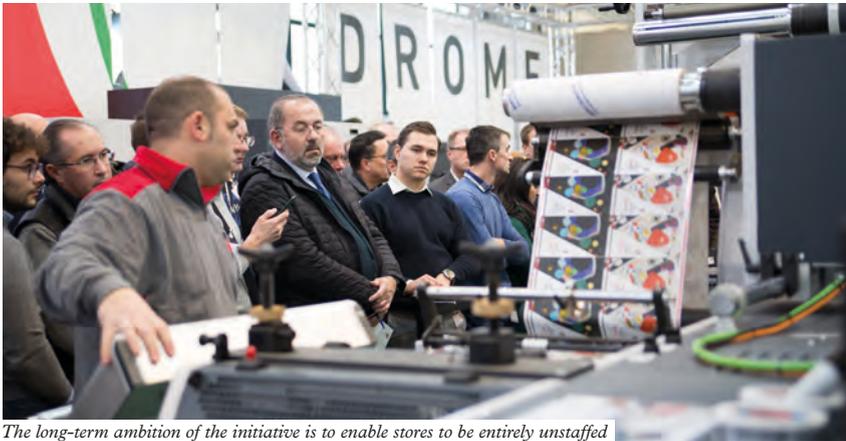
The Japanese government is seeking to bring about the 'convenience store of the future'. This is, in part, in response to a labor force crisis as a result of long-term declining birth rate, with the ageing population especially affecting the retail sector. This has seen the country's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) bring ecosystem partners together to address labor and supply chain challenges in the country's retail industry, and propose options to overcome these challenges. This saw METI launch a convenience and drug store RFID initiative in 2017 as a step towards addressing labor shortages and cost.

Following a successful pilot in which three convenience stores added RFID tags to products to improve item-level inventory monitoring, METI is now targeting full rollout across all stores in Japan by 2025. Retailers involved include Seven-Eleven Japan, FamilyMart, Lawson, Ministop, JR East Retail Net and Japan Association of Chain Drug Stores (JACDS). All products sold in their outlets will be tagged with smart labels.

The long-term ambition of the initiative is to enable stores to be entirely unstaffed, with RFID enabling customers to pay for their basket of goods automatically on leaving the store. The RFID rollout will also facilitate automated dynamic product pricing and advertising optimization. In a move to reduce food wastage, shelf-mounted RFID readers automatically scan the product tags, identify units that are approaching their 'best by' or 'use by' date, and credit the buyer with discounts on those items at the point of purchase. Meanwhile, shoppers who scan a product tag will be presented with additional product information via digital shelf signage.

Avery Dennison's microwaveable WaveSafe RFID technology is at the center of the initiative. The result of 10 years of research and development, the WaveSafe tag is able to safely withstand up to five minutes in a 950 watt microwave, opening up new market applications for RFID in the food industry as for the first time RFID can be integrated into packaging and labeling for food products that are microwaveable. Stores participating in the initiative will use WaveSafe RFID tags on microwaveable products and other non-microwaveable RFID options for other types of product.

News



The long-term ambition of the initiative is to enable stores to be entirely unstaffed

Omet hosts hybrid open house

New Drome demo center inaugurated during event

More than 250 people attended the Omet Hybrid Experience open house dedicated to the opportunities of hybrid printing technology in the label industry. Held on January 24-25 2019 at the new Omet Drome, the event was enriched by technical presentations, live demos and visits to the Omet production sites.

The event featured live demonstrations of the Omet XJet powered by Durst and the Omet iFlex, presented with hybrid curing configuration: UV and LED printing simultaneously.

A series of presentations focused on 'the future of label printing'. Paolo Grasso, Omet head of sales, Labels Business Unit, spoke about the advantages of the digital and flexo hybrid printing technology proposed by Omet in collaboration with Durst, and those offered by UV LED flexo printing shown on the iFlex at the event. Sergio Veneziani of Ritrama discussed the partnership between Omet and Ritrama for a new laminating module to produce linerless labels. Martin Leitner of Durst explained the potential and opportunities of inkjet technology.

Francesco Niorettini of Italgrafica Sistemi, the first Italian user of the XJet, spoke about his experience with the hybrid press. 'Our challenge is to go for bigger volumes through hybrid-digital. The Omet XJet is the solution that allowed us to break through previous barriers of very low figures. Being able to combine the best of Omet and Durst made my investment in innovation a game-changer that allows Italgrafica to raise the bar in the industry.'

Omet partnered with 15 suppliers who were present at the event with table-top stands: Apex, Asahi, Avery Dennison, Control Technique (Nidec Group), Erhardt + Leimer, GEW, Kurz, Italfinance, Ritrama, Rossini, RotoMetrics, Swedev, tesa, Vetaphone and Zeller + Gmelin.

Flint brings Vivo Colour Solutions to EMEA

Flint Group Narrow Web has introduced its Vivo Colour Solutions web-based ink color formulation search engine and support service into the EMEA region.

Vivo Colour Solutions is a family of products and services designed to ensure color recipes are tailored to each customer's unique selection of ink chemistry, variety of substrates and selection of aniloxes. Flint stated that Vivo Colour Solutions is a step above existing color management options, which are based upon one substrate and theoretically calculated formulations. The system is designed to increase the converter's color accuracy, press uptime and reduce substrate and ink waste.

Kelly Koliopoulos, global marketing director at Flint Group Narrow Web, said: 'Today, customers across seven countries in Europe are using Vivo Colour Solutions to generate ink color formulations, and their feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Customers tell us they get accurate ink formulations for new colors right away, their press utilization has increased, and their operators find the system easy to use. These qualitative reviews are backed up with quantitative results. On average, converters who use Vivo Colour Solutions for spot color formulation save two hours of press downtime and 100-300 linear meters of substrate waste per color match.'



The new terminal will supply converters in Sub-Saharan Africa

UPM Raflatac opens South Africa site

UPM Raflatac has opened a new slitting and distribution terminal in Johannesburg, South Africa. Operational since December 2018, the new Johannesburg terminal will supply label converters in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The opening of the new terminal was celebrated on February 7, with over 100 participants from around South Africa and the neighboring countries. Located in Germiston, the new terminal features both one- and two-meter-wide slitting capabilities. The introduction of two-meter slitting enhances UPM Raflatac's service offering to provide even more MEGA (net width) services.

Following the completion of the new terminal, the former Johannesburg and Durban terminal operations were relocated to the new facility, while the Durban sales office was relocated to a new address in the city. In addition to the new Johannesburg terminal and the sales office in Durban, UPM Raflatac has terminal operations in Cape Town.

Smag grows Americas presence

Smag Graphique has started operations in Canada and Colombia in order to provide commercial and technical support to customers in the Americas. The satellite office in Calgary, Canada, will offer support to customers in North America. The satellite office in Bogota, Colombia, will take care of the Latin American market.

The two new offices are managed by Sandro Cardoch, who is responsible for the company's presence in the Americas. 'We anticipate customers to have easier access to the company, faster responses and closer communication,' he said.

News

News in brief

Zonten Europe launched in Barcelona

Chinese press manufacturer Zonten has opened a subsidiary in Barcelona, Zonten Europe.

The European subsidiary will market machinery under its own brand. Since its creation, it has been structuring its European and American sales and marketing channels.

Zonten has around 15,000 machines installed worldwide, including 500 installations of its semi-rotary offset press.



Pierre Panel (left), export sales manager at Codimag, with Eduard Segarra, commercial director, narrow web, Lapeyra y Taltavull

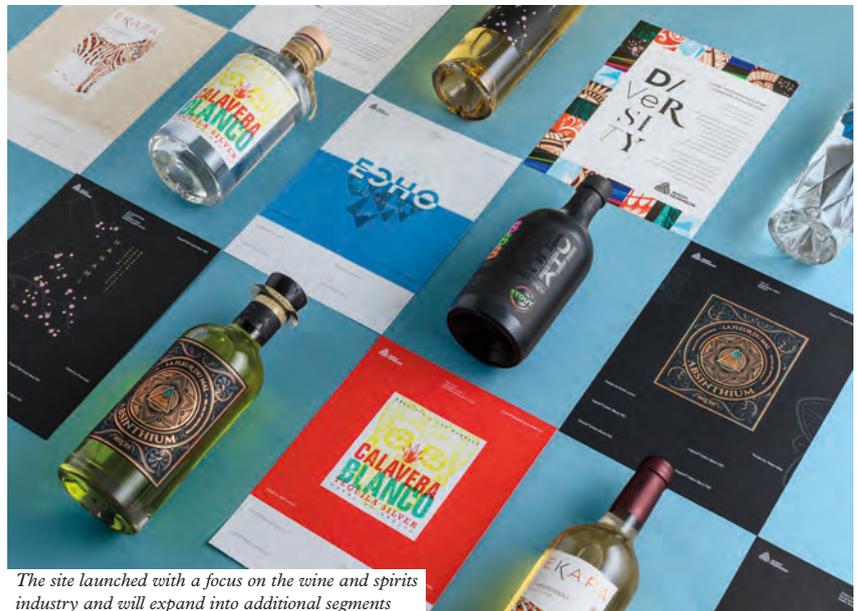
Codimag appoints Iberia agent

Codimag has named Lapeyra y Taltavull as its agent to represent its Aniflo printing technology in Spain and Portugal. Based in Barcelona, Lapeyra y Taltavull was established more than 80 years ago to supply packaging materials to the region's pharmaceutical industry. Four decades later, it began representing international suppliers in the printing and packaging markets, building long associations with major European press and auxiliary equipment manufacturers.

Ferrostaal Chile acquires Imagex

Ferrostaal Chile has acquired fellow Chilean graphic arts industry distributor Imagex, creating a new associate company, Ferrostaal Graphics SpA.

Imagex has served the Chilean graphic arts market for 33 years, and represents leading international suppliers such as HP Indigo, EFI, Mimaki and AB Graphic, among others, in the country. Ferrostaal Chile has been present in the country since 1949, and forms part of the Ferrostaal Group headquartered in Hamburg, Germany.



The site launched with a focus on the wine and spirits industry and will expand into additional segments

Avery Dennison launches M_use

Digital platform to inspire innovative design

Avery Dennison has launched M_use, a new digital platform to inspire innovative design for label and packaging designers and converters. M_use, short for 'materials in use', is a community where users can find inspiration as they experience the attributes of a label application – from technical to tactile – as well as discover more about the science behind the design.

'M_use combines inspirational design content with the materials science expertise of Avery Dennison. It's an easy-to-use interface that shows the magic of materials in use,' said Angus McGuffin, global creative director at Avery Dennison.

The site features an online library of materials. Users get a 360-degree perspective on the texture, color, tactility and printability. They also can access bespoke content created in collaboration with industry experts that covers insights, trends and creative design inspiration.

'We see M_use as a digital swatchbook for our converters as much as an inspirational resource for designers. Creatives can download and design on high-resolution images to see the material in use before ordering a sample,' said Ralph Olthoff, global marketing director for wine and spirits at Avery Dennison. 'Powered by Avery Dennison, M_use leverages our deep knowledge of materials science and our love and curiosity for design to bring an inspiration-to-production, full-circle experience to designers, brands, and label printers.'

The site launched with a focus on the wine and spirits industry and will expand into additional segments. To learn more, visit my-muse.com.

Xeikon signs agreement in Korea

S&I Systems takes on Xeikon's full portfolio of products

Xeikon has signed a new dealership agreement with S&I Systems in Korea. S&I Systems takes on Xeikon's full portfolio of products and will gradually assume full responsibility for local supply of services and supplies.

Bent Serritslev, Xeikon general manager for digital solutions in Asia, said: 'The Korean label and packaging market is one of the fastest-growing in Asia. To date we have successfully installed a large number of Xeikon dry toner presses, predominantly in the label field and serviced the customer base direct from the HQ in Belgium with both services and consumables. However, with the dynamics changing, we have decided to play a much more active role in in South Korea. To do that effectively we wanted to work with local expertise to supply quality services, readily available spare parts and consumables.'

M_use™



Fasson® Aqua Proof Silver

Where inspired design and materials science meet

my-muse.com
[@m_uselive](https://twitter.com/m_uselive)

M_use™ offers inspirational content on industry insights and future trends, and invites you to explore an interactive materials portfolio with the technical information you need to make an informed decision about your project.



News

Mühlbauer and PragmatIC partner for high-speed bonding of RFID inlays

Mühlbauer has qualified its TAL15000 system for high-speed bonding of PragmatIC flexible integrated circuits (FlexICs).

PragmatIC's FlexICs are said to offer a low-cost alternative to expensive silicon chips that are used in current RFID inlays. PragmatIC recently launched its first ConnectIC products focused on HF-RFID for smart packaging applications, including brand authentication and grey market avoidance.

Mühlbauer's extensive experience in inlay assembly has enabled it to develop practical options for FlexIC bonding on the pick-and-place machines that comprise the industry's largest installed base.

The companies have been working together since 2018, building on Mühlbauer's experience in inlay assembly to develop practical options for high-speed bonding of FlexICs. The TAL15000 is described as the industry benchmark system for flip-chip RFID inlay production, with a throughput of up to 13,000 inlays per hour and a global installed base of more than 300 machines.

Qualification of the TAL15000 for FlexIC assembly enables manufacturers to leverage their existing installed base to deliver dramatically lower cost RFID inlays. Coupled with the thin, flexible and robust nature of FlexICs, this unlocks the potential to extend RFID technology into a much wider range of mass market opportunities, the companies stated.

Primera Europe becomes DTM Print

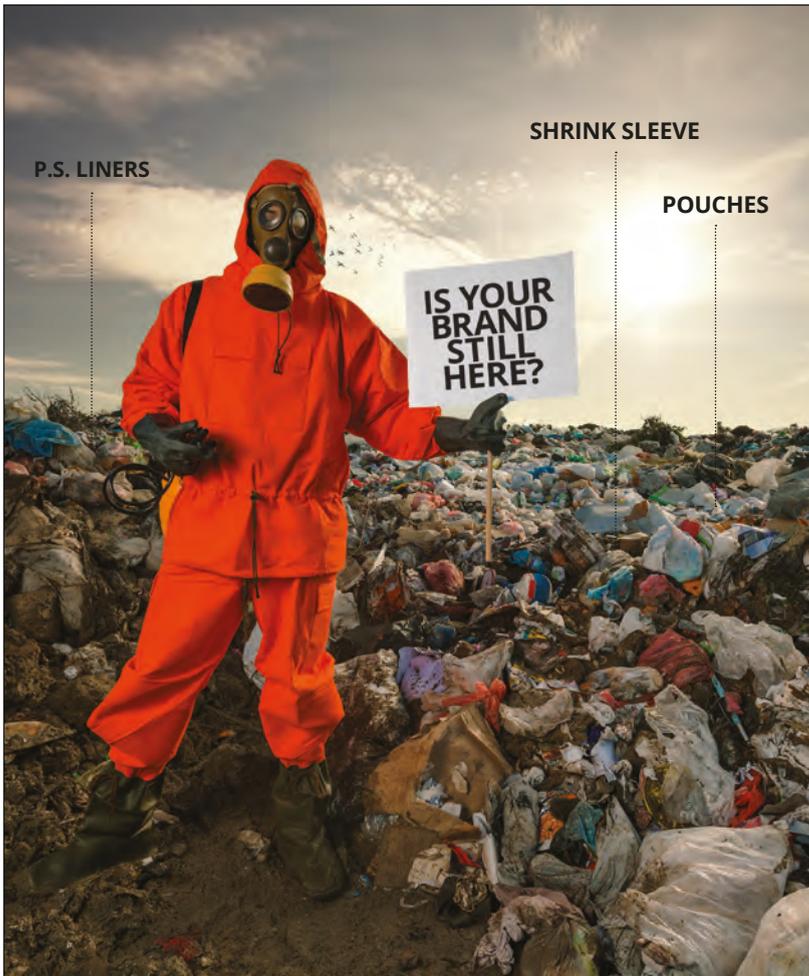
Primera Technology Europe, representative of the US company Primera Technology in EMEA for 18 years, has announced its new company name: DTM Print. DTM, an abbreviation for Data Technology Management, has been developing printing and computer systems since 1986. The DTM Group formally unites all of the group's subsidiaries together into a holding company under the header of DTM Holding.

SPGPrints appoints Vinsak as agent

SPGPrints has appointed Vinsak as a new distributor for its flexo pre-press portfolio, which includes Helios and Kronos direct laser engraving, variLex CtP laser exposing technologies and conventional pre-press equipment. Vinsak will handle sales and service for these products in the Indian sub-continent, Middle East and Africa. Stovec Industries will continue to handle the screen portfolio of SPG Prints including RotaLens.

New Canada dealer for GMG Color

Significans Automation is now a full dealer for the entire GMG Color portfolio of color management software in Canada and will also integrate the portfolio into its service offerings in the US, Mexico and Latin America.



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News

Biome Bioplastics and Futamura partner for compostable packaging

Biome Bioplastics and Futamura have partnered to demonstrate a range of bio-based and compostable multilayer films.

The compostable multilayer films are manufactured by combining Biome's range of biodegradable sealant resins with Futamura's compostable NatureFlex cellulose films to generate a range of laminated flexible structures. The bio-based content of the resultant materials ranges between 50-70 percent. The films are compliant to the European industrial composting standard EN13432, meaning that they disintegrate by 90 percent within 12 weeks and biodegrade by 90 percent to water, carbon dioxide and biomass within 180 days. The materials have also been tested and proved to be non-toxic to both soil and plant life.

The materials are claimed to offer 'competitive performance' while tackling the negative environmental impact of traditional oil-based, non-recyclable multilayer packaging.

Sustainable alternatives to challenging packaging formats such as multilayer pouches will be key to meeting the UK Plastics Pact target that 70 percent of plastic packaging is effectively recycled or composted by 2025.

Multilayer films can be used in packaging both fresh products and dry foods to extend shelf life in a cost-effective manner. However, their multilayer construction means that this type of packaging cannot be recycled and lacks a viable disposal route.



The materials are claimed to offer 'competitive performance'

Biome Bioplastics and Futamura have demonstrated how a viable compostable option can be achieved by creating a dry food pouch, which offers excellent oxygen barrier and good moisture barrier properties, as well as efficient sealability, it is claimed. The pouches can also be printed using both conventional and digital print processes. Additionally, the puncture resistance of the pouch is similar to products currently available on the market.



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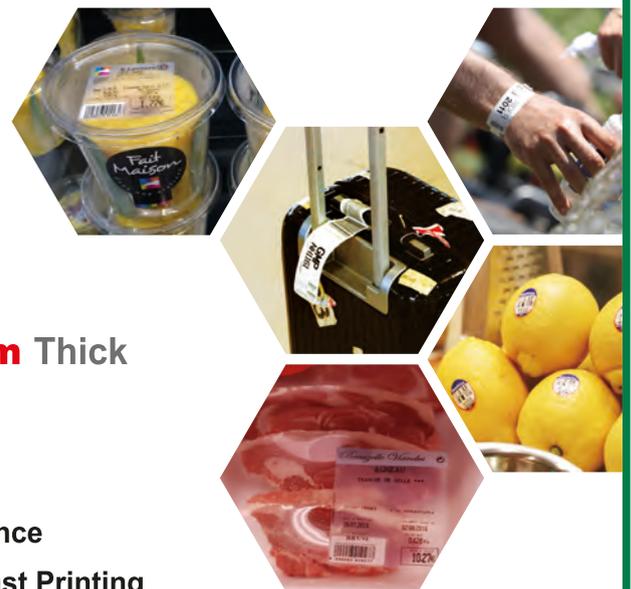
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New Products



01 **Tau 330 RSC E Durst**

The Tau 330 RSC E UV inkjet single-pass press is available with 330mm and 244mm print widths, and in 4-color or 4-color plus white configurations. Its native resolution is 1,200 x 1,200 dpi, with a drop size of two picoliters. A production capacity of 1,020sqm an hour is achievable with a printing speed of 52 linear m/min at full color including white. High pigmented inks reduce ink consumption by up to 20 percent per sqm, optimizing running costs to the lowest possible level, according to Durst. It has been launched to target more converters with 'affordable' digital production.

02 **PC16S-wave RS BST ProControl**

The reflection sensor measures the material web without contact using non-ionizing electromagnetic waves. The interaction of the non-ionizing electromagnetic waves with the

material includes the waves being absorbed. Depending on the basis weights and composition of the coating to be measured, the measurement signal is weakened. As the electromagnetic waves emitted by the sensor are reflected from the metallic substrate, the weakening takes place on the two-time passage of the waves through the coating that is being measured.

03 **Creaset HG HWS Lecta**

Creaset HG HWS is a high wet-strength, alkali-resistant high gloss paper. It is suitable for all types of reusable bottles where label removal will take place in a caustic soda bath. Creaset HG HWS is ideal for beer and wines, whose labels require high resistance to low temperatures and ice water. Creaset HG HWS guarantees a flawless aspect throughout their useful life. It also offers excellent performance on labeling lines, and prevents edge lift, blistering and wrinkling.

04 **UV/LED offset inks Siegwerk**

Siegwerk has joined forces with Ingede member Stora Enso, a provider of renewable products in packaging, biomaterials, wooden constructions and paper, to improve the deinkability of UV/LED cured prints. The first results of this cooperation have already marked a significant milestone towards more sustainable UV printing products in terms of deinkability in the paper recycling process. Based on these investigations Siegwerk has developed a new UV/LED offset ink system said to have 'impressive' deinking properties on various paper grades even comparable to the deinkability of conventional oil-based sheet-fed offset inks.

05 **ShiftSecure Schreiner ProTech**

Schreiner ProTech has enhanced its ShiftSecure product to include additional options and increased compatibility with conventional printing procedures. Aimed

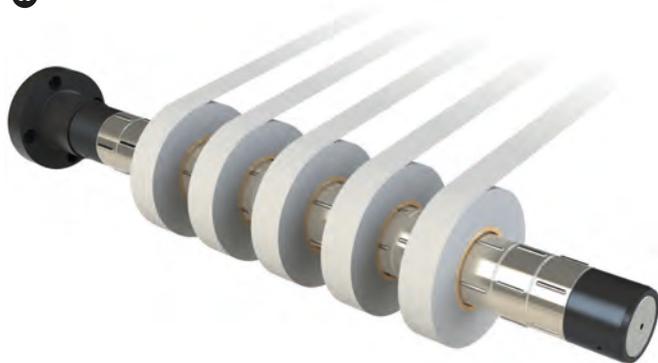
at heightening the product's attractiveness and maximizing its economic favorability, the new iterations of ShiftSecure come in an array of colors and expanded manufacturing options that extend beyond the original's anticounterfeiting benefits.

06 **Ultrastream-powered presses Uteco Converting**

Uteco Converting has signed an agreement with Kodak to purchase its latest inkjet printing systems featuring Ultrastream technology. Built on its Stream inkjet technology, Ultrastream has been designed to 'move production inkjet into the mainstream of commercial printing and packaging', according to Kodak. It features a smaller drop size and precise placement accuracy for higher resolution, clean lines and additional detailed definition. Ultrastream allows 600 x 1800 DPI resolution with production speeds of up to 150m/min. It uses water-based inks to print on both plastics and paper.

New Products

05



06



07



08



05 Friction shafts

Re SpA

These have been designed for slitter rewinders that need to control accurately multiple and independent reels after the cutting process. The shafts are available in 3in and 6in diameters. The friction rings are equipped with gripping rolls with a wide supporting surface to guarantee grip of the reel cores. This works with cardboard and plastic cores. Different size friction rings are available according to customer request.

06 ConnectIC PragmatIC

Developed using PragmatIC's unique platform of patented technologies, ConnectICs deliver connectivity claimed at the lowest cost point in the market. These FlexICs are ultra-thin and flexible, and are suitable for embedding into a wide range of substrates including paper and plastic. They reduce the complexity of inlays by using

single layer antennas, 'delivering a further step down in cost to brand owners and retailers', according to PragmatIC. The ConnectIC family is intended for use in high-volume FMCG and other mass market applications, with electronic connectivity no longer limited to high value, luxury items. The first products are the PR1101 and PR1102 FlexICs, designed for use in closed HF RFID systems.

Digital primers Wikoff Digital

These include three UV primers appropriate for UV inkjet applications – standard adhesion and high adhesion for non-absorbent substrates, plus a paper specific primer; two aqueous primers formulated for use with UV inkjet applications on both paper and film respectively; and one aqueous primer appropriate for water-based inkjet.

07 HP Indigo parts washer Graymills

Designed with input from

HP Indigo experts, this new product cleans press parts from HP Indigo digital presses – ink pumps, ink tanks, ink mixers, the press cleaning station and ink developers. It is constructed of rugged 16-gauge powder-coated steel and operates with HP's imaging oil. Key features include adjustable bi-level work shelves and an extra-long flexible metal flush hose for directed hands-free flushing action. This enables the press operator to lay down the part to be cleaned inside the parts washer, aim the hose and return in a few minutes' time.

08 Wave 3P Vianord

Wave 3P can handle a maximum plate size of 92 x 120cm (36 x 48in). It can process almost all plate types in the market from 1.14mm up to 2.84mm thickness, both digital and analog. It has been engineered to enhance the sustainability advantages offered by water washable flexo plates while safeguarding quality

washout and superior screenings. As such, an integrated water reclaim system does not require frequent water replacement and only needs to be topped up due to evaporation caused by its working temperature.

Laundry tag idTronic

The UHF RFID polyester laundry tag has been developed specifically for professional cleaning of linen and textiles. The label is flat and compact, with dimensions of 60 x 20mm and a depth of 2.1mm. It is marketed for many applications within laundries, textile cleaning services, hotels, cruise ships and hospitals. The label consists of 50 percent white cotton and 50 percent white polyester.

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

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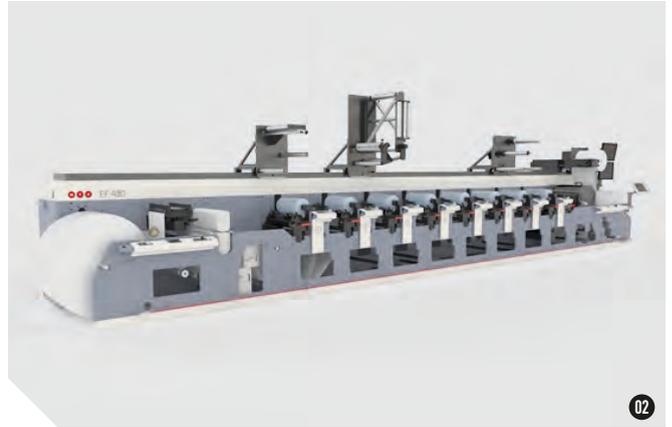


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Installations



**01 Omet XFlex X4
Top Print I-Labels
Technology, China**

The Chengdu-based company already offers digital, gravure, screen and offset printing. It has now added narrow web flexo in the form of an 8-color Omet XFlex X4 line. The 8-color press includes cold foil, twin die-cutting stations, web turnbars and delam/relam. The printer had looked at investing in a 10-color press but was unable to accommodate it in its current 1,200sqm facility that is split over four floors. The new press is expected to work to full capacity in the company's planned new 6,000sqm factory.

**02 MPS EF 430
Skipnes Etikett, Norway**

Its third MPS press, this is the first flexo machine installed in Norway with more than eight printing stations. Skipnes Etikett purchased its first MPS flexo press in 2004, its second in 2007 and a third more recently. A fourth has now been ordered.

**03 Konica Minolta
AccurioLabel 190
FlexOn, Poland**

This is the first full-digital toner press from Konica Minolta installed in Poland. FlexOn owner Michal Pabiasz commented: 'Some time ago we realized that about 90 percent of the inquiries we were receiving were for shorter label runs. We didn't want to give up these orders but we also could not afford the then-available roll digital machines. That is when we looked at Konica Minolta's solutions. Since then we have established a very good relationship and are very satisfied with its sales, after-sales and service services.'

**04 Wanjie WJPS 350-D
Coreti, Spain**

The company, one of Spain's largest self-adhesive label converters, has invested in a second semi-rotary offset press from Wanjie. It installed its first such machine at its La Coruña site, in the northwest of Spain, last year.

**AB Graphic Digicon Series 3
Abbey Labels, UK**

The company has ordered a Digicon 3 from AB Graphic which will operate in new space recently added to its factory. Two more machines are being considered for later in the year. The new AB Graphic machine will not only increase capacity but also offer hot foiling, embossing, de-bossing, web re-register, die-cutting and flexo overprinting.

**HP Indigo 6900
Harkwell Labels, UK**

HP Indigo 6600 and 6800 digital presses have been upgraded to 6900 status. The upgrade includes ElectroInk Silver for printing metallics and a full range of brand protection features, such as micro-text and invisible inks, along with SmartStream Mosaic and Collage software for variable data and automatic creation of unique designs. They run alongside the UK's first HP Indigo 8000.

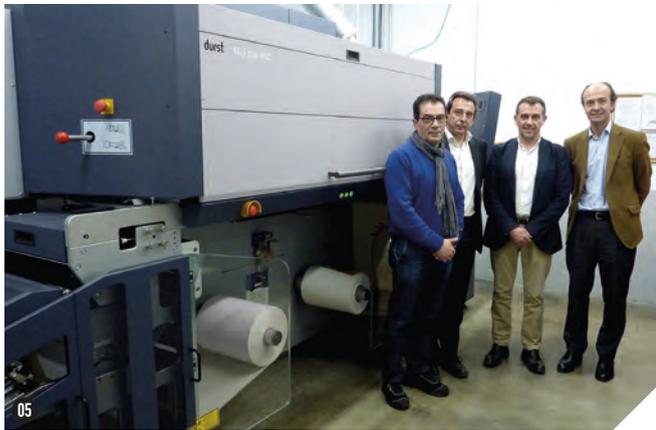
**Screen Truepress Jet L350UV
Unimax, New Zealand**

Unimax is a label printer specializing in the printing of agriculture, transportation, health, and food and beverage labels. It has more than 30 years of experience. Unimax was looking to offer more variety in the printing options available to customers, leading to the investment in digital printing.

**PCMC Meridian
Poly Print, US**

The Meridian laser anilox cleaner provides one-pass cleaning said to 'achieve like-new anilox surface conditions at unprecedented speeds', many times increasing efficiency by 300 percent or more. The Meridian does not require any chemicals, sodium bicarbonate, polymer beads, water or detergents, said to make it a sustainable cleaning option with a very low environmental impact.

Installations



05 Durst Tau 330 RSC
Adhesivos del Segura, Spain
 Printeos Group has invested in a Durst Tau 330 RSC single-pass inkjet press to drive digitalization at portfolio company Adhesivos del Segura. The European specialist in adhesive label production chose the system to transform production at the printer based in Murcia, Spain, which it acquired three years ago. Digital printing is set to play a key role in Printeos Group's medium and long-term strategy for the label market, which is why Adhesivos del Segura was chosen to spearhead growth in Spain.

Handway Labstar 330E
ACS Swan Express Print, Australia
 The Labstar 330E installed is in a W+CMYK configuration, offers a maximum print resolution of 1,200 x 600 DPI, a maximum print speed of 50m/min and a printing width of 330mm. It features the latest Kyocera drop-on-demand printhead technology.

Valloy Bizpress 13R
Samwoo P&S, Korea
 Samwoo P&S opted for the Bizpress 13R to produce various short run jobs like promotional wet-tissue labels and stickers. Media compatibility compared to engines from the likes of and Konica Minolta are cited as another reason for its investment choice.

06 CEI slitter rewinder
Revolution Print and Packing, US
 Five hundredth machine installed to boost rewind speed and upgrade tension control and capabilities with flexible packaging.

Uteco Sapphire Evo
Nuova Erreplast, Italy
 Sapphire Evo has a 650mm web width, a printing width of 622mm and can print at up to 300m/min. Uteco launched the Kodak Stream-powered Sapphire Evo in 2018 as a production inkjet system using water-based inks.

07 Edale FL3
iTek Packz, India
 iTek Packz is an existing customer of Edale with an FL5 with in-line flatbed die-cutting unit. The 9-color, 430mm-wide Edale FL3 boasts an array of options including Edale's EZ Die, which is a quick change full rotary die-cutting system that allows the user to change a tool in less than 60 seconds. Features of the EZ Die also include pre-registration of the die to print register mark in the web direction, a motorized cross register with pre-setting based on a job sheet and also automatic waste pick up of the matrix without operator input following a die change.

MGI JETvarnish 3D Web
Peerprint, Israel
 Peerprint has positioned itself as 'one-stop-shop', offering to manufacture all of the components needed to facilitate wine packaging production and promoting wines at the point of sale. This has seen it

invest in two roll-to-roll HP Indigo 6800 digital presses and a Komori sheet-to-sheet press. Its workshop for finishing offers embossing, hot foiling and screen printing through four finishing lines from GM, AB Graphic and Prati. This has now been augmented with the MGI JETvarnish 3D Web digital embellishment press.

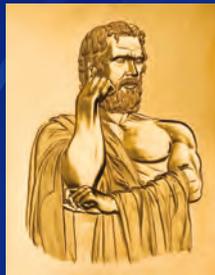
08 Tamarack RFID unit
Jet Label & Packaging, Canada
 Western Canada's largest label printer has installed a single-pass Tamarack RFID inserting system on an existing Mark Andy flexo press. Engineers from Mark Andy retrofitted the press to allow room for the Tamarack components.

Enprom e2TCA 140
Plásticos del Segura, Spain
 The automatic non-stop double turret slitter rewinder adds to two Enprom turret rewinders already in operation.



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Installations



09 Mark Andy UV LED press
HB Label Print, Ireland
 Dublin-based HB Label Print is the first narrow web converter in Ireland to install a Mark Andy press with UV LED curing. The new 8-color P4 Performance Series press is the third Mark Andy purchased by the company since it was established in 2002 and is the first 13in (330mm) at the plant – the two existing Mark Andy 2200 lines both have 10in (254mm) web width.

10 Ravenwood coater
Stickem, France
 French label converter Stickem has added Ravenwood's linerless technology to its product portfolio after investing in a Com500 Coater. The company, based in Normandy, is now an officially approved partner of Ravenwood for producing linerless labels. CEO Frédéric Leyva was attracted to the cost savings that linerless offered including the sustainability benefits for skin pack labeling and moving

away from labor-intensive carton board sleeve application. He said: 'As a business, we are looking to reduce our energy consumption and seeking ways to reduce and recycle our waste. The Com500 is easy to operate and all of the associated materials; paper, film, adhesive and silicone are easily accessible through Ravenwood's approved supplier network.'

11 Monotech Jetsci Colornovo inkjet press
Wonderpac, India
 Monotech Systems has installed the first Jetsci Colornovo UV inkjet label production press at Wonderpac India. Trilok Mittal, owner of Wonderpac India, said: 'We were looking for a digital label printing machine for almost two years to cater to short and medium run jobs, and selected the Jetsci Colornovo after extensive trials for quality, reliability and productivity. With Colornovo, we run almost every flexo label substrate without any major challenges. We deliver our jobs

in a short turnaround time with the help of specifically designed press which includes digital printing, post-flexo finishing and converting.'

12 Dantex PicoColour inkjet press
Hart Labels, UK
 UK printer Hart Labels has reported success since its installation of a Dantex PicoColour UV inkjet digital label press in December 2018. With a printing width of 210mm and running capacity of up to 35m/min, the 5-color Dantex PicoColour has already realized a digital profit at Hart Labels. The printer has also been able to reach out to new markets using the inkjet press, and has moved some existing flexo work that is better suited to digital. Hart Labels MD Tony Hanmer said: 'This has been an important step-up for us as a business. The PicoColour has made it so easy to be involved in the world of digital.'

Koenig & Bauer Rapida 106
TCPL Packaging, India
 Three more Rapida 106 presses are to be installed at TCPL's facilities this year. Once these additional presses are in place, TCPL will possess 10 high-end Rapida presses with a total of 85 printing units.

HP Indigo 12000
Ryan Printing, US
 While intended for commercial printing, this represents the 1,000th HP Indigo Series 4 press sold worldwide since their launch in 2012. Additionally, HP Indigo's narrow web Series 3 labels and packaging presses, including the HP Indigo 8000 and HP Indigo 6X00 series, have reached 1,500 installed units.

For more installations, go to www.labelsandlabeling.com/news/installations

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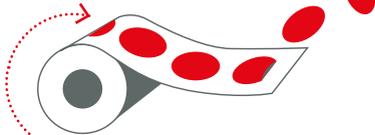
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Appointments



Tom Cavalco
Executive vice president
Mark Andy
 Previously managing director for Europe, Cavalco has taken on a role within the global structure of Mark Andy and is now responsible for sales in Europe, Latin America and Asia.

Thomas Obitz
Managing director
Atlantic Zeiser
 Previously commercial director, his promotion comes as Coesia Group has completed its acquisition of the card personalization and packaging divisions of the company.



Kyle Podolanko
Technical account manager
Harper Corporation of America
 Covering the US Southwest, he has acquired several years of experience in project management and continuous improvement projects based on the principles of the Milliken Performance System. Through his work, he has developed extensive knowledge of the entire cycle of flexographic printing from pre-press to finishing.

Pat Lindner
Consumer Packaging president
WestRock
 He joins WestRock from the privately held, \$3 billion USD sales, W.L. Gore & Associates, where he has served as its chief operating officer. Prior to this role, Lindner served as president of the \$6 billion USD sales performance materials group at DuPont.



Derek Wheeler
Vice president, sales
Quantum Design
 He has been with Quantum Design for over 12 years, starting in the shipping and receiving department before moving through sales, general management and into his new position. He will oversee all sales activity for the company's five product lines, including KTI and CTC.



Mike Riley
COO
LasX
 With experience in manufacturing and distribution, Riley will work with LasX president Ryan Falch and will play a key role in aligning the company to its long-term strategy of operational excellence.



Ryan Miles
Managing director
Heidelberg UK
 Miles will also serve as head of Cluster Northern Europe, a region which includes the UK, Sweden, Denmark and also South Africa. Miles is currently managing director of Heidelberg's operation in South Africa and will relocate to the UK with his family. He takes up his new post on April 1, 2019.

John Urban
Product manager
Colordyne Technologies
 With his in-depth knowledge of Colordyne's newest technology, he will continue to support development of the 3600 Series aqueous pigment engine while building a long-term vision and growth strategy for its Production Class line.

Daniel Frykestam
Managing director
PrimeBlade Sweden
 Allan Lunnerfjord will continue within PrimeBlade but focus more on new technologies and development of the doctor blades.

Dario De Meo
Export sales director
Smag Graphique
 In this position, he will consolidate the converting specialist's worldwide sales network and develop new markets and territory.



Dr Falco Paepenmüller
CTO
Windmüller & Hölscher
 The CTO role is a newly-created position and Paepenmüller has assumed responsibility for the three business units namely extrusion, printing and converting. He has held various management positions at W&H since 2007. Currently he is the head of the extrusion business unit.



Perry Stacks
Sales representative,
Rotoflex inks
Daetwyler
 He has been appointed sales representative for North America by Daetwyler, responsible for all sales and marketing activities of Rotoflex inks. He will focus on the market for solvent-based liquid inks and overprint varnishes for flexible packaging.

Arnoud de Jong
International business development manager
Flexo Concepts
 He will be responsible for growing and servicing the company's TruPoint doctor blade business in northern Europe.



Hendrik Kehl
Product manager
Herma Self-adhesive Materials
 He has been working for Herma since 2008, most recently in the domestic sales department, where he provided support to customers. In his new role, Kehl will ensure that the life-cycle of products from market maturity to withdrawal from the market will be planned, controlled, and monitored more closely in the future.



Hidetoshi Shinada
Chairperson
DataLase
 An international print specialist, he has joined DataLase from Sato to bring greater integration between the two companies and oversee strategic alignment and development.

Sunil Gupta
Board of directors
Memjet
 He has joined the Memjet board of directors as the company seeks to capitalize on growth opportunities presenting to the inkjet specialist.



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



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Diamond Pentaward

01 **Best of Show**
Auge Design, Italy

Platinum Pentaward

02 **Best of Beverages**
Shenzhen Lingyun Creative
Packaging Design, China

04 **Best of Body**
Studio Khuif, Netherlands

06 **Best of Luxury**
Seraire & Co, France

03 **Best of Food**
Frame, Japan

05 **Best of Other Markets**
Bold, Spain



Gold Pentaward

07 Beverages (Spirits)
Swig, USA

08 (Spices, oils and sauces)
Cabello X Mure, Spain

09 Body (Health care)
NX Creative, China

**10 Other Markets
(Home improvement
& decoration)**
Here Design, UK

11 Luxury (Spirits)
Partisan Du Sens, France



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Opinion –

What should you consider when deciding on in-line or off-line production?

'As one of the largest operators of Xeikon digital reel to reel presses in Europe, we have long considered the merits and pitfalls of operating in-line. It is only in the last six months we have moved one of the presses to operate in-line and this decision has been primarily driven by our desire to streamline our production workflow on larger runs.

'At CS we have increasingly moved away from short run digital to concentrate on providing digital solutions which invariably means that we will run jobs considerably in excess of 20,000 linear meters. Operating in-line can substantially improve productivity but needs to be weighed up against increased wastage, and the ability of the operator to watch both print and finishing. Experience has meant that we try to avoid using in-line on tight register or multiple across the web jobs, requiring multiple sorts.

'Although it definitely has its advantages, over 70 percent of jobs continue to be finished off-line as this ultimately provides greater flexibility of the type of finishing required.'

Simon Smith
Managing director, CS Labels

'The highest flexibility a printer can get is with digital printing: immediate change over, runs of one, versions, etc, are now becoming standard, but a printed substrate is not the finished product. For historical reasons of overall efficiency and volume production, printing and converting were traditionally mounted in-line and even if each process required some time and effort to be set, the overall productivity ended up being acceptable.

'With the ability for one of these processes (print) to change instantly, to produce very limited quantities, and even to print one, the viability of having a non-flexible set of tools connected in-line is very questionable.

'A few cases can be considered: 1) Where the post-printing steps are as flexible as digital printing – laser die-cutting or inkjet varnishes for labels – there is no concern as the whole machine being in-line makes sense. One pass, one operator, the product is done; 2) When the post-printing process does not need to be as variable as the print – flood varnish, same die-cut shape – finishing can be in-line. One pass, one operator, the product is done; and 3) When the print changes often and

the finishing needs to change accordingly – short runs of different jobs down to one, eventually – a typical converting line/process is not as flexible as digital printing, therefore to be in-line would penalize the whole productivity.

'As HP Indigo, we work with converting partners to make their machines as flexible as possible to allow a viable in-line connection, and therefore fit in option 1. But the technical reality does not always allow that level of flexibility and therefore we recommend opting for a configuration that allows both. Both machines are aligned and can be connected in-line by bypassing the rewinder of the printing and the unwinder of the converting. Depending on the job, the same configuration can be used off-line. Today, this is the best of both worlds.'

Christian Menegon
Worldwide business development manager, HP Indigo

'Working in-line is the traditional way the narrow web industry has developed. But is this the most efficient configuration as run lengths come down and decoration complexity increases? The more in-line processes involved, the longer the set-up time, the longer the print units stand idle and the more waste in registering the print to the downstream processes. And the theoretical top speed of the press is reduced to that of the slowest process.

'There are of course balancing factors. For longer runs, once the job is up and running it is easier to control; and there is less work in progress.

'But it does seem astonishing that conventional presses have not evolved off-line finishing options. The press could run at full speed; print-only changeovers are much faster with less waste; and printed reels can be moved to different finishing units depending on the complexity of finishing required.

'Digital, on the other hand, has evolved both as an in-line and off-line process. The benefits of finishing off-line this way on more complex, shorter run jobs are the same – potentially – as those outlined for conventional presses. So I wonder whether the off-line workflow created for digital will ever feed back to the conventional press?'

Andy Thomas-Emans
Strategic director, Labels & Labeling

'With in-line configurations, finishing runs the risk of becoming the bottleneck. When built together, it's always the weakest link that impacts the production speed. You might also be putting technologies together that are not compatible. Suppliers often talk about the benefits of being in-line, particularly automation and productivity. They should think twice, as that is not always true. Now, you run flexo and finishing off-line. Why? Because when you start and stop, you ruin the print. This issue is not solved by going in-line. When you stop printing, you ruin the print quality.'

Bjarke Nielsen
Founder and CTO, Refine Finishing



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The Mike Fairley column

Digital printing now growing beyond labels

Label converters still have time to leverage their digital expertise to find opportunities in flexible packaging and folding carton production

The label industry has been investing in digital printing presses for more than 20 years, initially with the toner technologies and then, more recently, with inkjet. Put together over that period, the label industry will have installed around 4,500 or so digital presses – of which more than two-thirds are the toner-based presses of HP Indigo (now more than 1,500 HP Indigo's narrow web Series 3 presses installed) or Xeikon.

Today, installation of digital label presses continues apace. Probably more than 800 new presses will be installed worldwide during 2019 and these are expected to be split nearly equally between the toner and inkjet technologies, added to by hybrid presses utilizing both analogue (predominately flexo) and inkjet in-line and incorporating complex finishing possibilities.

While the toner technologies will still dominate the installed base of digital label presses for some years, inkjet installations are nevertheless growing faster than toner. Of the inkjet installations, some three quarters are UV Inkjet; the remainder being aqueous inkjet. Printing speed and resolution of inkjet continue to improve, with more and more installations incorporating ever-more sophisticated in-line finishing.

Leading the growth of the digital inkjet label press market have been companies such as Domino, Durst, Epson, Screen and EFI, together with a multitude of smaller suppliers – all of which can now be seen at the Labelexpo shows in Europe and America.

By the end of 2020, the latest forecasts indicate that the annual value of digitally printed labels from all the installed digital presses is likely to be approaching \$9 billion USD. That's quite a market, and it's still growing.

It is perhaps easy to identify why the label industry has so rapidly adopted digital technology. It's a key supplier to the fast-moving consumer goods industry, with an ever-increasing demand for shorter runs, flexibility in operation, decreasing lead times, more versions and variations, personalization – and most labels are generally easy to fit across the web width of narrow web presses.

Experience

While the flexible packaging and carton printing sectors have more recently started to look at, and begin investing in, digital over the past two or three years, they are way behind the knowledge, understanding and utilization of digital presses in the world of labels. Indeed, most packaging converters are unlikely to have much, if any, experience of digital pre-press and digital printing.

These sectors may have the same demands from the consumer goods industries for shorter runs and versions, but the carton and bag images that require printing are mainly far too big to fit on narrow web presses. Much wider presses are required to meet the majority of package printing demands. These sectors also have different finishing requirements to those required of labels.

Now trying to catch up with the flexibility, performance and

opportunities offered by digital, new generations of wider web digital flexible packaging and B1 and B2 sheet-fed carton presses have started appearing in the market since 2014, and growing installations of such machines are now being made – between them utilizing both toner and inkjet technologies, as well as first generations of hybrid package printing presses.

“Leave it another few years and the package printing industry will have developed its own skills and knowledge and the opportunities will almost certainly diminish”

Digital presses designed and built for the carton printing and converting industry include toner machines manufactured by HP Indigo, Xeikon and Xerox, while inkjet and hybrid machines are now coming from Heidelberg, KBA, Konica Minolta, Landa and others. HP Indigo also has a flexible packaging toner press, while flexible packaging inkjet and hybrid models are now available from the likes of Uteco/Kodak, MPS and Omet.

Being bigger and wider, presses for digital package printing are likely to be two to three times the investment cost of a narrow web label press, and many purchasers will probably need to upgrade their pre-press systems as well. They will also have a higher volume and value throughput and, by the end of this year, could be accounting for up to 20 percent of digital label and package print value – raising the global value of digital label and package printed products to perhaps \$10 billion USD or so by 2020.

While some digital label converters are already producing sachets, pouches, pot lids etc on mid web presses and others are tackling smaller folding cartons, the opportunity and potential for the label industry to utilize and leverage its digital technology experience, market knowledge and expertise in the growing world of digital package printing is still immense. Even in joint venture developments. Leave it another few years and the package printing industry will have developed its own skills and knowledge and the opportunities will almost certainly diminish.

Who in the label industry will be brave enough to take on the opportunities?



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

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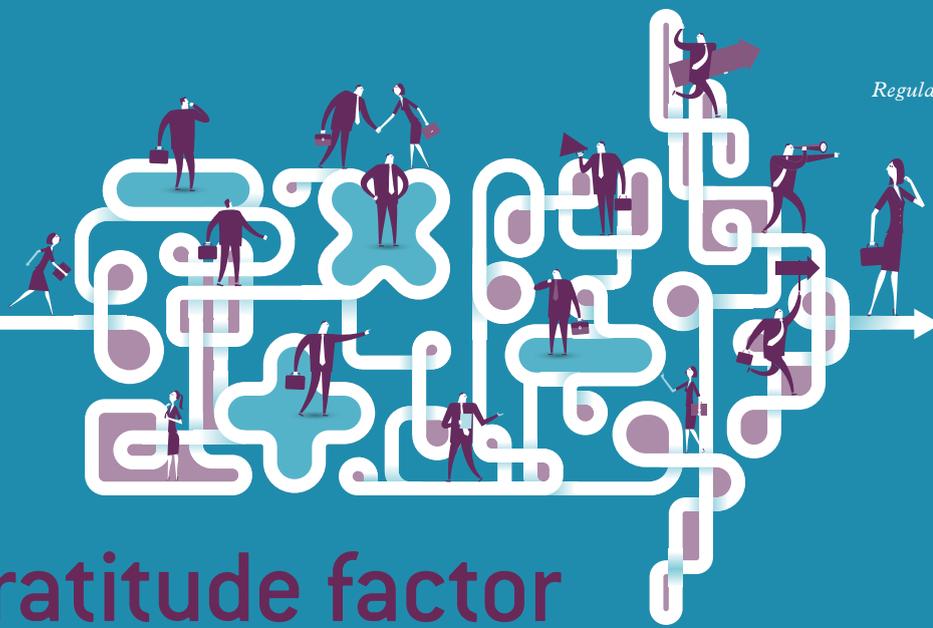
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The gratitude factor

Bob Cronin of The Open Approach outlines a new strategy to set your growth trajectory

As you approach mid-year, it's time to take heed of your business. Assess where you're at in achieving your goals. Evaluate arising competitive effects. Redefine sales and marketing initiatives.

It's also a good time to review what you're thankful for. While it sounds trite, this practice can be helpful as you map your long-term strategy. In fact, it's often at the crux of overall decision-making.

Every company will at some point be either buyer or seller. Even if you aren't 'ready' yet, it's an event you should always be preparing for. The things that make you the most 'grateful' can be helpful in delineating your position. Label and packaging companies have a lot to be thankful for. Let's take a look at four of these things and how they might affect your M&A plan.

1. The customer. There's nothing more important to a business's livelihood than the loyalty of its customers. In labels, it's our customers who drive our inventions.

Our clients aren't always wonderful to deal with, and their demands are often extreme, but where would we be without them? As you think through what you're grateful for in the customer category, assess your standing with them. Are you serving a base of loyal clients, or are you replacing business year after year? (A 7 percent turnover rate is a notable threshold.) Are customers awarding you deserved work, or are you more often competing on price? How much do your history, expertise and performance matter?

If you have a solid customer base with long tenure, prospective buyers will find this favorable and boost your valuation. While great customers can support a 'hold' strategy, new dynamics can change loyalty quickly. If you're thankful for loyal customers, you may be better off as a seller.

On the flip side, there are many label companies that run profitable businesses, but their customer turnover rates are high. While you may be happy that you can continually find new work, this is indicative of a void in your operation. Perhaps you lack needed capabilities? Or you're short on certain expertise? If you're missing a crucial element, you need to acquire it. And, when added and properly integrated, it can be even more influential to your company value or growth trajectory. So, at this point, you may be better off as a buyer.

2. The supplier. How thankful are you for your suppliers? Your standing with them speaks volumes. How well are you able to leverage relationships with equipment manufacturers, labelstock merchants, converters and others needed to create your products? Are they making you more successful or just billing you for their help? Their terms, presence and consultative availability are indicative of how they view your business. Remember that they also serve your competitors so they have the unique ability to measure

your company against those they think are the best in the business.

If your vendor relationships are strong, it shows acquirers that they can assume your business without rebalancing their supply chain. Moreover, strong relations show that you have at least some competitive influence or a reputation that commands respect. These things have an impact on how your company is perceived as a seller.

If you're still solidifying your supplier base, you may be better off as a buyer. Take the time you need to identify vendors who give you an edge. As you broaden your network, you'll increase your buying power and become a more attractive acquisition.

3. The employee. When you look at your leadership, CSRs, pressroom and accounting department, you see the individuals who bring your story to life. Certainly, you're thankful for your staff. But what in particular drives that gratitude? The depth of your management team is critical in your valuation as a seller. Private equity buyers want an adept leadership team to ensure the performance of their investment. This means having innovative, growth-directed problem-solvers in finance, account development, operations, and technology, as well as the rest of your company.

Prime buyers have different features. Many great companies harness a collaborative, slow-and-steady spirit. This culture can be very effective – and very profitable. This style may also be able to better integrate new additions and personnel. Either way, people are an asset.

4. The business. Finally, the business itself is a source of appreciation. Yet, ongoing consolidation is changing the landscape, and who knows how you will succeed in the next few years. Focusing on providing better products, becoming more efficient, and providing service that exceeds the competition are step one in ensuring success. The good news is that investors see us as being a segment with great opportunity.

Are you thankful for having stable products that give you a strong standing in core categories? Or are you excited for your innovations that are accelerating new revenue streams? Either situation can be parlayed into an M&A plan. The former could make you a prime buyer, as you can strategically select bolt-ons to add to your business. It could also provide attractive features as a seller.

The label industry indeed has much to be thankful for. It can be easy to think about this for its immediate value, but there's much to be said about how it carves out your future. The things that give you the greatest gratitude can be the roadmap to new opportunity.



Bob Cronin is managing partner of The Open Approach, an M&A consultancy focused on the world of print.

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Q&A

Ask many US label converters what keeps them up at night, and somewhere between higher raw material costs and shorter lead times, chances are pretty good you'll find someone to lament the labor market. To address the concerns of its members, TLMI has outlined workforce recruitment in its strategic plan, and retained Claudia St John of Affinity HR Group to consult with its workforce development committee on recruitment and labor issues facing its members. St John is president of Affinity Group and has more than 25 years in the industry. Interview by Chelsea McDougall



Claudia St. John is a keen hiker

Labels & Labeling (L&L): Tell us what you do and how you are involved in the label industry?

Claudia St. John (CSJ): I'm president of Affinity HR Group. We are a new member benefit for TLMI members – we provide human resources support, recruiting and headhunting, compensation and employee engagement and retention support to converters and suppliers.

I founded my company in partnership with a related printing association – Print Service Distributors Association – and have many label printing clients who belong to both TLMI and PSDA. We've been working in the industry for almost 10 years now.

With TLMI, we are already working with its Workforce Development Committee to develop tools and resources to help TLMI members with their hiring and retention needs, which is so important in this very tight labor market.

L&L: What is the work you do for TLMI and its members?

CSJ: As consultants, most of the work to date has been in recruiting and headhunting for sales professionals, account managers and operations professionals. We have also been reviewing and drafting employee handbooks and doing some executive coaching.

With TLMI, we hope to be an integral part of the Workforce Development Committee, developing the types of programs and tools that will make TLMI members both legally compliant and successful in creating productive and dynamic work environments.

L&L: What trends or challenges are affecting the job market and workforce today?

CSJ: The tight job market is a direct function of the strong economy in recent years. With the unemployment level so low (around 4 percent nationally and in many locations the unemployment rate is much lower), we are at full employment. Essentially, any skilled or even unskilled worker who wants a job can get one. Basically, everyone who can work is working. According to recent statistics, there are 1 million more job openings than there are people looking for work. This makes for a very challenging labor market for companies in virtually every industry and geography.

L&L: What advice do you have for companies managing a challenging labor market? How can employers be competitive when it comes to hiring and retaining employees?

CSJ: Well, first, make sure you don't lose good employees to competitors. If you haven't revisited your wages or compensation strategy, now's a good time to do it to make sure you're externally

competitive and have internal equity among employees. A focus on employee engagement is critical now. If you are looking to fill a position, our best advice is to headhunt. If all you do is throw an ad up on Indeed.com, you'll only get marginal results. Go out and find that talent and give them your strongest offer. And be willing to move fast – a strong candidate will not last long in this tight market.

L&L: You work with a lot of different agencies – how do the labor issues and concerns of the label industry compare with other manufacturing industries?

CSJ: We do work with many different industries and all of them face similar challenges – difficulty finding talented employees, an upcoming exodus of experienced baby-boomers, increasing pressure on wage growth. TLMI has the added challenge given that there are few younger workers entering the printing space. This is such a significant challenge that TLMI is working at the middle and high school levels to entice youth to pursue careers in the industry. This is pretty unique in our experience.

“All industries face similar challenges – difficulty finding talented employees, an upcoming exodus of experienced baby-boomers, increasing pressure on wage growth. TLMI has the added challenge that there are few younger workers entering the printing space”

Quick hits

Education: Bachelor's degree from American University, Master's degree from George Washington University.

Best career advice received? One piece of advice that always stuck with me was never to complain about a problem unless I've identified at least three solutions to my problem. The other was the more I elevate the people around me, the higher my boat will float.

First job: I started walking (dragging, actually), Fanny, the next-door neighbor's Basset Hound when I was seven. That was my worst job. From there I went on to babysitting. As soon as I got my work papers at age 13, I started working as a coat check and then a waitress in a local restaurant. Actually, I don't remember a time when I didn't have a job.

Dream career: I would have loved to have been a doctor. Alas, my dyslexia and my inability to pass Biology 101 put an end to that dream. So, I do human resources instead.

Hobbies or interests: I'm an avid sailor, gardener and reader. And I'm working on completing my second book. Other than that, I'm a dedicated couch potato.

“We encourage clients to look for non-traditional sources of candidates, such as the disabled community, ex-cons, returning veterans and even offering work visas to employees abroad”

L&L: Do you have any examples of companies or agencies that are getting creative when it comes to hiring and retention?

CSJ: Many converters and suppliers are being creative in how they structure their workday and the benefits they offer. Some are emphasizing a four/10 work week (where employees work 10 hours a day, four days straight), job share, telecommuting and other flexible workplace structures.

Others are offering strong sign-on bonus programs, employee referral programs and school-to-work opportunities such as internships and apprenticeships. We also encourage clients to look for non-traditional sources of candidates, such as the disabled community, ex-cons, returning veterans and even offering work visas to employees in other countries. Finally, we see members getting very creative and tech-savvy with their online presence to entice more Gen Y and Gen Z workers through revamped websites, creative videos and other ‘hip’ marketing efforts.

L&L: What does the labor outlook look like for the year ahead? What do employers need to prepare themselves for in 2019?

CSJ: Well, the bad news is that the labor market will continue to be very tight. Although a slight recession looks likely either this year or next, it does not look like it will have a significant impact on the labor market. The other bad news is that companies should be prepared for a serious increase in wages in 2019. Wages have been stagnant for almost a decade. That is changing. We are seeing new hires commanding wages that are 15 percent to 20 percent higher than our clients had



Claudia St John and her son, Charles

budgeted for. This is requiring that our clients look at their existing employees’ salaries as well. If a new hire is making \$20,000 USD more than an existing employee with two years of service, the employer has to re-evaluate all of the salaries to make sure the compensation structure is equitable. This is the big trend for 2019 – getting prepared for higher compensation costs.

The good news? Productivity is at an all-time high, so while you’re faced with

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paying higher wages, you're likely getting the most out of your workers.

L&L: We hear a lot about Industry 4.0, automation, robotics and other technology advancements that could replace some jobs. What advice do you have for workers to stay relevant and competitive in this changing employment landscape?

CSJ: We see that the drive to greater automation is more a factor of not being able to maintain adequate staffing levels than it is in replacing workers. As long as employees are engaged, productive and willing to be trained on operating and maintaining new technologies, there will continue to be more job opportunities than candidates for those in the label printing space for the foreseeable future.

L&L: What can the label industry do to attract a younger and more diverse workforce?

CSJ: There are so many cool aspects of the label converter space. Advances in technology mean younger workers are working on state-of-the-art machines using advanced IT systems. Promoting these aspects will be critical to creating pathways into the industry for young

people. The challenge is getting younger workers to work on older, less automated machinery. That said, older machines offer similar tactile satisfaction to those in the automotive mechanics space. Knowing what type of person would be best suited to your technology is a first step. Then creating pathways, whether through vocational schools, graphic arts, or mechanical engineering programs – wherever you are likely to find your ideal candidate – is critical to getting younger people in the door.

L&L: What are some practical steps companies can take to hire and retain employees?

CSJ: Here are some practical steps: 1) Know exactly what you're looking for before you start. And don't settle for less just because you're having a tough time finding talent. That never works out.

2) Make sure your website and candidate marketing efforts are as professional and up to date as your client marketing efforts. Use videos and provide tangible evidence of all the cool things you produce and how you produce them. And profile other young people in your company if you have them. It helps a potential candidate to picture themselves better if the person you're profiling looks more like them.

“Many converters and suppliers are being creative in how they structure their workday and the benefits they offer”

3) Look for alternative sources of candidates (schools, ex-cons, returning vets, work programs for those with disabilities, refugee populations, etc).

4) Don't wait for someone to apply for your job – be always on the lookout for talent and if you're actively looking and not getting any results, hire a headhunter or get someone to make calls to those who may be interested but are not currently looking for jobs. Everyone loves to know what opportunities are out there – you just need to reach out to them to let them know what you have to offer.



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HP event showcases digital advances

HP Indigo brought together printers and end users from around the world to share experiences across commercial and package printing spaces. Andy Thomas-Emans reports

HP Indigo's VIP event gave visitors from across the globe the opportunity to assess the company's future technology roadmap, while label converters were introduced to a new in-line digital cold foiling system developed with Kurz.

The Kurz DM-Liner module is integrated into the HP Indigo 6900 digital press. It sits, in-line, upstream of the press. The foil is laminated to the unprinted substrate using an inkjet-applied UV curing adhesive, with LED pinning to increase drop placement accuracy. A PET carrier is then removed and the substrate is transported to the 6900 for overprinting, producing full-color metallic effects, including variable print, in a single pass. The DM-Liner's production speed is up to 75m/min, which allows it to keep pace with the print engine, with a jetting resolution of 600 x 600 DPI on a 340mm web width.

“This disruptive, all-digital flexible packaging converter has been setting up plants across the US equipped with HP Indigo 20000 presses. CEO Jack Knott explained that the company is built on offering a maximum 10-day lead time from artwork to market with low minimum orders, compared with an industry standard lead time of 3-4 months”

The DM-Liner forms part of Kurz's Digital Metal eco-system which includes a wide range of customized high gloss holographic, diffractive and silver foils.

The DM-Liner is now being beta-tested in Europe and will be launched officially at Labelexpo Europe in September.

Disrupting flexpack

The VIP event saw a series of presentations delivered by HP Indigo customers covering a wide range of end use applications.

ePac will be a name familiar to L&L readers. This disruptive, all-digital flexible packaging converter has been setting up plants across the US equipped with HP Indigo 20000 presses. CEO Jack Knott explained that the company is built on offering a maximum 10-day lead time from artwork to market with low minimum orders, compared with an industry standard lead time of 3-4 months. This has attracted customers right across the size range from \$5m USD local brands to mid-sized \$25m USD operations and global brands.



Invisible ElectroInks show up under UV light



Detail of Kurz DM-Liner

'The globalization trend has meant consolidation and servicing only the biggest customers,' explained Knott. 'This means smaller customers cannot get their packaging to market in time, and this has become a major impediment to growth.'

Knott pointed out that millennial consumers looking for locally produced goods that match their lifestyle are driving the growth of smaller brands by up to 20 percent, a far higher rate than established brands.

'We embed our plants directly into local communities and our customers can come directly to us,' said Knott. 'We don't charge for plates or job setup and we print on demand instead of putting products in a warehouse and hoping they'll get used.'

By the end of this year ePac expects to have 15 plants across the US, with each plant taking just nine days to build. The company expects to hit \$61m USD revenue this year from a standing start of under \$3m USD in January last year.

'I traditionally built companies from the top down, which kills the innovation found in small to medium-sized businesses,' said Knott. 'The digital technology platform allowed us to turn this model on its head. We try not to hire people from the industry who say "you can't do it this way". The average age of our workforce is 25-26 and they bring their own entrepreneurial resources. Their job is to embed with their community and their customer base.'



Examples of mass customized sleeves



Nescafé Mexico promotional labels

“Digital printing became a global focus for Danone in 2017. We contacted HP Indigo at a global level to share knowledge throughout the company and with our print service providers, and within one year we did great things”

Small equals agile

Rob Daniels, third generation owner of Quality Tape and Label (QTL), explained that this less-than \$10m USD turnover converter is now 90 percent digital, using a combination of HP Indigo 20000, 6900 and 6800 machines. Around 84 percent of revenue in 2018 came from digital sales.

'Twelve years ago we were fully flexo, but now flexo is a very small part of our business,' said Daniels. The company has also diversified into filmic materials: 'The ability to finish on a 30in width to order has been a real game changer for flexible packaging and shrink sleeves.'

Daniels admitted that for a company his size, moving up to the 20000 press in 2016 was a 'big leap of faith'. But going to a wider format has paid off. 'Shrink sleeves and flexible packaging will be our next big growth areas. Labels is still 75 percent of what we do. But in 2016 flexible packaging accounted for less than 1 percent of sales – last year it was 15 percent.'

To begin with shrink sleeves were sent out for finishing, but this soon moved in-house with the support of both HP and Karlville. Pouching remains outsourced.

Continued Daniels: 'We have now run



Viewing platform on 20000 press demonstrating Pack Ready system

everything from aluminum foil and lidding film to folding cartons. What allows us to compete is changing the conversation with customers away from price to speed to market and lead time.'

The converter has made good use of HP Indigo's recent specialist ink developments, including digital silver, premium white and Day-Glo fluorescents.

Daniels said variable data printing is 'huge for us'. QTL was responsible for the world's first Collage project with the King of Pops natural frozen treats brand. 'Within eight business days of meeting HP, these wrappers were in store and sold out in a week. This demonstrates that price is not everything. This way you can get sticky with customers and they won't leave you.'

Echoing Jack Knott, Daniels said that with digital print, revenue 'is in the small and medium sized customers.'

Digital wins for brands

Monica Medina, packaging and design manager for Nestlé Mexico, delivered an excellent case study on marketing to millennials using a campaign which combined point of sale, digital label printing and e-commerce.

Nestlé claims more than an 80 percent share of the coffee market in Mexico, but had an image problem with millennials, who make up 29 percent of the population.

The 'Nescafé Resolutions' campaign was launched to bring the brand to life. The idea was to print the top 350 New Year resolutions of Mexican consumers onto 15 million jars. This was supported by TV adverts, posters on bus stops and a partnership with social networks. Mobile booths were set up where consumers could personalize labels and cups.

Consumers were encouraged to scan the digitally printed labels with a special app, leading to 20,000 interactions with the brand.

Danone is another end user which has revived established brands using digital print. Yves De Warrimont, sourcing manager, Printed Packaging Upstream at Danone, explained how the brand worked with HP Indigo for three years looking for new ways to innovate. A key challenge facing the global brands is the rise of the small local brand, now thought to account for over half of consumer spending.

'The new trends are that small is big; consumers want everything now; there is



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Kurz DM-Liner in-line with HP Indigo 6900 press

a trend to healthier eating; and there are new on-line purchasing and marketing channels along with smaller format supermarkets. Millennials are playing a key driving role.'

Danone's response was to 'activate' its brands using versioning, regional variation and links to events such as movies and sports. In terms of decoration this required new packaging formats and finishing effects to give a more premium feel.

Digital printing became a global focus for Danone in 2017. 'We contacted HP Indigo at a global level to share knowledge throughout the company and with our print service providers, and within one year we did great things.'

One brand which particularly benefited was Aqua d'Or water, using HP's SmartStream Mosaic software to create over 3 million unique label designs using variations on the geometric elements of earth and water, produced on HP 20000 presses. POD/POS elements were also used in the campaigns. Danone also made use of HP's new Collage software to create a unique Holiday edition which went from original concept to launch in 2.5 months with 100,000 unique labels. 'We are just scratching the surface,' said De Warrimont.

This project illustrates the trend towards increasing SKUs and decreasing product life-cycles. 'With digital we just print what we need, so it is sustainable. This reduces the cost of ownership to launch a product and speeds time to market, including fast prototyping.'

Technology highlights

HP's VIP events showcase developments across the full range of end use applications from commercial print to labels, flexible packaging and cartons. Because all HP Indigo presses use the same basic LEP imagine technology, new developments can move quickly between press formats and end use markets.

ElectroInks: The event saw the introduction of HP Indigo ElectroInk Easy Release for scratch-off applications such as lottery cards and gaming applications. New launches in the security and brand protection space included Invisible Yellow and Blue ElectroInks, which are only visible under UV light.

Software: Following on from the success of its Mosaic 'controlled randomization' software, HP demonstrated SmartStream Collage, which manipulates set elements like logos and symbols in random patterns. Collage projects are taken to press via PrintOS Composer, a cloud-based processing platform.

Industry 4.0: HP introduced its Service Edge program, designed to introduce converters to the Industry 4.0-related concepts of automated workflows, predictive maintenance, assisted operator learning, data mining and machine learning, all targeted at optimizing business performance.

Automatic Alert Agent (AAA) is a new tool that scans every print and compares it to the original file, enabling automatic reprinting

ElectroInk vs inkjet

With HP as a corporation being so strong in inkjet technology development, and with the increased impact of UV and water-based inkjet in the label segment, is there a long term future for HP Indigo's proprietary Liquid Electrophotographic (LEP) technology in the packaging print space? These questions were tackled during a presentation at HP Indigo's Kiryat Gat ElectroInk production center and R&D campus.

LEP is the imaging system that powers all HP Indigo presses across the packaging and commercial print spaces, and all use the same set of ElectroInks. The key challenge for packaging applications is the wide range of substrates encountered – porous and non-porous, structured, coated and non-coated, paper as well as film.

The key feature of the LEP process is that we are dealing with a film rather than a liquid from the heated blanket onwards. The heat melts the resin particles within the ElectroInk and the image is transferred to the substrate as a ready-dried film. The coolness of the substrate quickly solidifies the ink layer, which is transferred with almost no changes in dimension or shape of the image, conforming to any type of substrate surface.

This means absorption of ink by the substrate and drying heat are not issues for the LEP technology, and this has allowed converters to expand into heat-sensitive films such as shrink sleeves and IML. As with analog print, the ink layer transfers mechanically, not through the air, so the placement accuracy is maintained and is not affected by speed.

The ElectroInk particles are not dependent on pigment type, which has allowed HP Indigo chemists to encapsulate, for example, metallic flake for a silver ink and titanium dioxide for opaque white inks, key technologies for packaging decoration.

Another key advantage of the LEP technology for labels and packaging is compliance with (non-contact side) food regulations. HP Indigo says ElectroInks meets FDA, EU and Swiss packaging regulations and comply with the Nestle guidance notes on packaging inks, meeting 'the industry-accepted definition of low migration ink.'

HP Indigo says both water-based inkjet and UV inkjet have drawbacks in comparison with LEP. With water-based inkjet, each 100 percent coverage separation is adding water which has to be dried. 'So there is constant interaction between ink and substrate – you are having to dry the image without damaging the substrate.' UV inkjet's limitations are the thicker ink layers in high coverage areas – some five times thicker than the ElectroInk film. All these factors favor HP Indigo's continued development of LEP technology over inkjet in package print-related applications.

flagged jobs without reducing press speed.

PrintOS continues its development into an extensive modular workflow system. New modules launched at the event included PrintOS OEE (Overall Equipment Effectiveness), which helps uncover opportunities for improving operational efficiency, reducing overtime, and saving costs while increasing press utilization. PrintOS Color Beat is a module designed for automated color control.

Also announced at the event was the latest DFE version, HP SmartStream Production Pro 7.1, which supports these fully automated workflows and now includes a pixel-level viewer.



The Kurz DM-Liner in-line metallic decoration system will be launched at LabelExpo Europe 2019.
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'The Label Shop' is open for business

Norwegian converter Ellco has invested heavily in software and hardware to get the most out of its printing capabilities. David Pittman reports

Ellco has positioned itself as a forward-thinking and innovative company as it strives to be the best label printer in Norway.

Initially a letterpress specialist, Ellco added digital at the beginning of the 2000s through an HP Indigo ws4050 to augment its production in shorter runs. In 2015, the last of the letterpress machines were retired, with digital taking a prominent place on its shop floor. This sees two HP Indigo Series 3 presses – WS6600 and WS6800 models – supplemented by an EFI Jetrion 4900 inkjet press with in-line laser die-cutting. A 7-color Mark Andy P7 UV flexo press, equipped with hot foiling and screen module, in addition to delam/relam, offers capacity for long runs.

"We want to be the best label printer in Norway"

Two AB Graphic Digicon Series 3 finishing lines provide finishing capacity for the presses, while an AB Graphic Omega, installed in 1997, continues to operate. A Daco rewinder is also in action.

Ellco CEO Christian Egedius describes one of the Digicon Series 3 lines as a 'workhorse'. It includes one flexo station, semi-rotary Fast Track Die module and SGTR turret rewinder with automatic roll labeling. When the converted labels have been rolled up, the machine prints out closing labels with information about the job and attaches them to the rolls, completely automated. This Digicon allows high-speed die-cutting and winding and can produce finished rolls at up to 150m/min. As such, it can be used to produce blank labels as well.

The other Digicon Series 3 features two flexo stations, a Big Foot 50 ton module for hot foil stamping and embossing/debossing, screen printing module and varnishing. This second line is for 'luxury' finishing, says Egedius.

Software providing a service

Each major line has been equipped with Lundberg Tech waste handling technology, which serve as a mechanical representation of automation in action at Ellco. These systems capture and remove matrix waste and transport them away from the production environment. This, says Jarl-Andre Skarsten, Ellco quality and development manager, allows press operators to focus on the quality of the output from the presses and generates less downtime.

Label Traxx software provides a more conventional realization of automation through software. This includes Auto Traxx, providing actionable data directly from the machines to the operators. This efficiently captures data on the production floor, including label count, materials

used and running press speeds. As well as analysis of a job on the press, this allows jobs to be properly costed, machine performance to be calculated and effective stock management.

Egedius and Skarsten note stock management as a particular pain point for Ellco, especially with its growing number of short runs of digital labels. Production manager Espen Larsen, one of the company's founders and responsible for one of the Ls in Ellco, identifies that the company stocks around 300-400 types of material. Egedius – son of the founder responsible for the E in Ellco – notes that the company has previously tried to rationalize its stock of materials, but the demands of customers mean it must continue to exploit other ways to manage them.

This is one area where Label Traxx MIS software has been deployed to great success by Ellco. Rolls of material are monitored on press and closing labels are printed by label printers installed at each work station. These provide updated information on the material left on the roll, as well as information for when the roll is returned to the storage area. This area has been reorganized with numbered bays to make finding the required material easier. Quantities of commonly used stocks are even stored near to the presses in order to minimize the time press operators need to spend retrieving rolls from storage.



Ellco CEO Christian Egedius (left) and Keith Montgomery (right), business development manager at AB Graphic



Ellco is a label printer based in Norway

Creative thinking

Ellco has used social media to promote its Etikettbutikken ('The Label Shop') concept. This saw the company use its Facebook page to offer sports team a free order of 500 labels for engaging with its post. These labels are produced on an EFI Jetrion 4900 inkjet press with in-line laser die-cutting. 'This has proved a very popular campaign, and has introduced us to a new audience,' says Ellco CEO Christian Egedius. Another example of Ellco's creative mindset comes in the form of a project for clothing brand Dale of Norway that saw the use of shadow lines printed prior to embossing using the Big Foot 50 module on its Digicon finishing line. This helped highlight the finer details of the brand's name and logo on the label.

"Through deeper integration, we are looking to future-proof our production"

Ellco has been using Label Traxx since 2015. Since then, the two companies have worked closely to ensure effective implementation of MIS tools. Tim Hollins, business solutions manager at Label Traxx, was present at Ellco during L&L's visit, where he continued to receive feedback from press operators on how its system could be enhanced. One suggestion includes the ability to queue jobs when loading job data in preparation for printing on the HP Indigo presses.

'Such features are not native to the software as it was originally designed with conventional printing in mind,' notes Hollins. 'It is evolving as more and more printers are using digital presses so require different tools from their MIS.'

Hollins says a 'superuser', who serves as a sole point of contact and dedicated resource when looking to integrate MIS into a business, makes the process more manageable and streamlined.

In the case of Ellco, this job fell to Skarsten. He has served as the go-to person within the company when it comes to integrating and evolving Ellco's use of MIS and data. This extended from the implementation of Auto Traxx to the installation of wireless routers to ensure data is able to be shared around the building.

'Superusers understand the systems and issues, making it a lot easier to identify and resolve problems before they cause issues in production,' says Hollins. 'MIS touches each corner of a business and every member of staff will need to engage with it, so it's important that it is doing what your business needs it to be doing. A superuser ensures this.' Skarsten adds: 'As Label Traxx is an MIS designed for label printers, the support personnel understands our business and the pinch points that might occur, which its software can help us resolve.'

Ellco is now looking to use information to further automate production, with Label Traxx and AB Graphic working together on a project that will see data extracted from the MIS and fed to Ellco's Digicons to automate finishing. While still in its infancy, this project is set to bring additional benefits to the printer. 'Through deeper integration, we are looking to future-proof our production,' says Egedius.

Software providing a platform

Ellco has now started using Label Traxx Sitaline software to provide tools to make its front-end processes more efficient and productive.

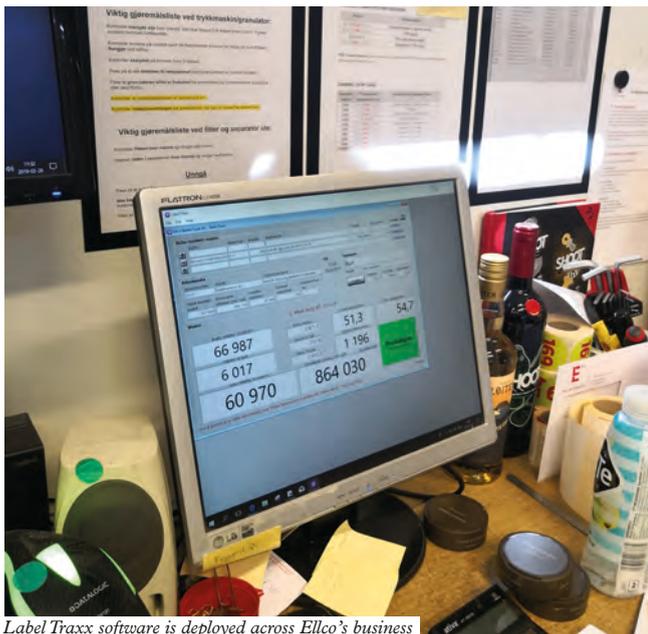
Sitaline is an online self-service system that allows labels and packaging customers to engage directly with a print business. The system allows customers to access their complete order history, access to custom labels and relevant stock labels for easy reordering, and other job-specific data. A new suite of collaboration tools are designed to drive efficiencies in customer interaction and service by allowing direct communication between stakeholders through a single interface.

'Since we introduced our "Customer Portal" last year we have had a good reaction to the platform,' notes Egedius, although Skarsten says: 'More customer should be using it.'

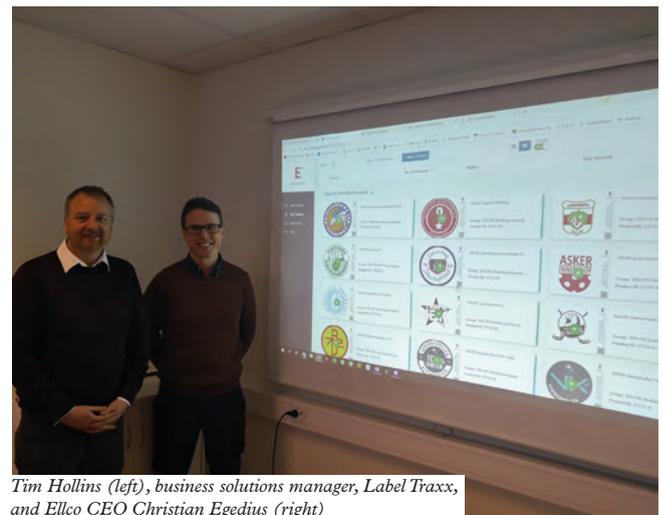
Going a step further, Ellco has launched Etikettbutikken ('The Label Shop'), a concept that allows new customers to directly order small batches of labels (see boxout). Built on Chili Publisher, the portal provides inspiration and access to simple editing/creation tools so direct customers can quickly and simply place orders to fulfill their printed label needs via the Ellco website, www.ellco.no.

Egedius notes that this has yet to gain much traction as the company has not been pushing it due to the portal requiring further development, but it will provide additional revenue streams for Ellco in the future.

'We want to be the best label printer in Norway and are investing in our tools and services to make this a reality,' concludes Egedius.



Label Traxx software is deployed across Ellco's business



Tim Hollins (left), business solutions manager, Label Traxx, and Ellco CEO Christian Egedius (right)

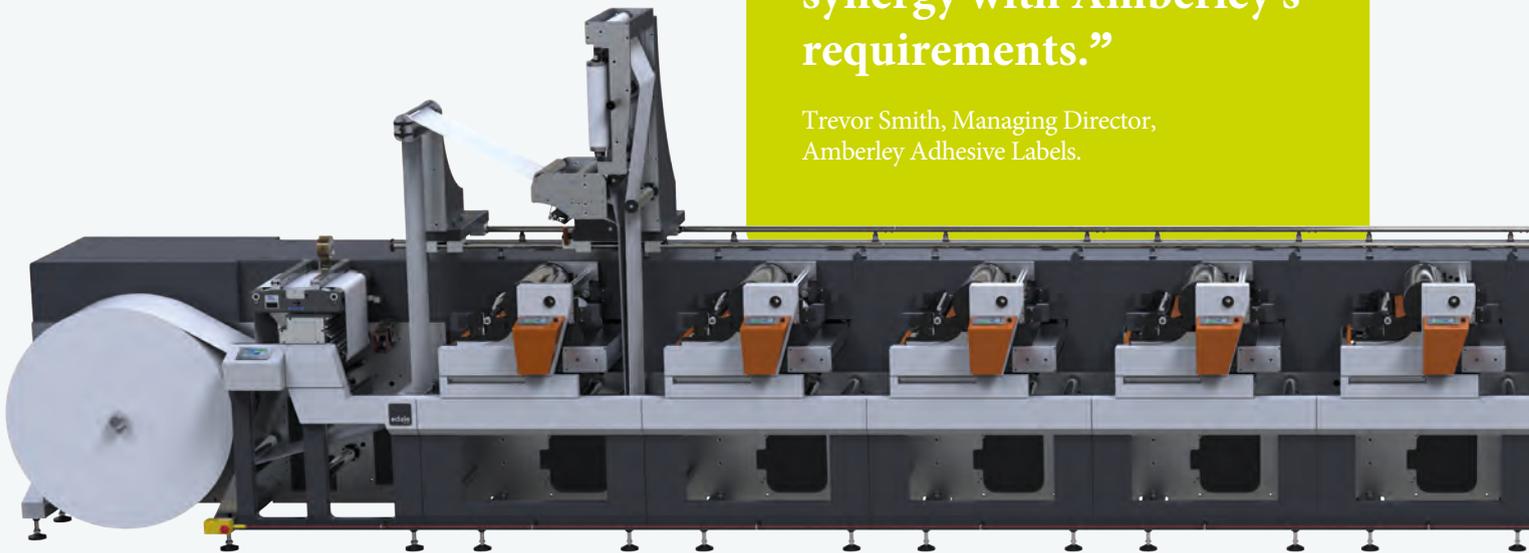


For more on finishing, read 'Pushing finishing forward' on page 101



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Coating your success

A Watershed moment

UK converter Watershed Packaging has set itself on a path to growth following a top-down restructure. David Pittman reports

Anna Wood, group director at Watershed Packaging, pulls no punches when she sets out her company's strategy for the future: 'We aim to become *the* brand in the flexible print and packaging industry across Europe.'

To deliver on this promise, the UK converter has reinvigorated its management structure to create a leaner, more agile business. This has seen it install a new management team and instigate a flatter organizational structure that puts responsibility for the company's success directly in the hands of the team.

'It is a fresh and new team,' says Wood. 'Many do not come from a printing background but it is a team hungry for success. It has been a huge cultural change to the business that is now bearing fruit.'

This drive for quality and success has been translated into investment in technology. MPS flexo presses form the backbone of Watershed Packaging's production. Three EF machines run at its headquarters in Leeds, producing long runs of shrink sleeves, lids and flexible packaging. Around them sit a Berhalter B 500 die-cutting machine for producing lids, a Koenig & Bauer laminator to build flexible packaging structures, and an Omet hybrid press combining litho offset, flexo and gravure for high quality shrink sleeves. Four further MPS flexo presses and finishing equipment produce labels in shorter runs at a satellite site in South Wales. The company runs Tharstern MIS, utilizes a suite of Esko pre-press software, uses GMG for color matching and makes all of its own HD flexo plates.

A range of ancillary equipment is offered to provide added value to the supply chain and allow its customers to enter new markets. This includes case erectors, pallet wrappers, palletizers, taping machines, checkweighers, label applicators, shrink sleeve applicators and steam tunnels.

'We've been in shrink sleeves for a number of years,' adds Wood. 'While the

European growth

Watershed Packaging is looking to take its growth international with a strategic acquisition in Germany. 'We export a lot to Europe and have big growth plans over the next few years,' says Watershed Packaging group director Anna Wood. 'We've had our busiest start to a year to date and hope for it to continue.'



Watershed Packaging uses MPS flexo press technology to produce labels

"We aim to become *the* brand in the flexible print and packaging industry across Europe"

Omet press has opened new doors for us, we are able to help our customers open new doors. If they're new to shrink sleeves, we can offer a whole package.'

Experiential

Alongside technology, Watershed Packaging has established a series of brand values to set the company on a path to growth. These include: 1) Customer-centric, with the customer experience governing decision-making at every level; 2) Innovation, to deal in creative solutions, not problems; 3) Investment, in people, technology, production and the community; and 4) Action, encouraging feedback, listening to it and acting on it.

The 'Watershed Experience' goes as far as an open-door policy at its headquarters in an enterprise zone on the outskirts of Leeds. This purpose-built facility is laid out in a way that allows Watershed to give access to the entire downstairs floor, excluding the BRC AA rated production area, to customers. A balcony provides a viewing platform across the production hall. Examples of events this is tailored to include offsite sales meetings and product development seminars. A fully functioning kitchen is available.

'We give it to customers for free. These whole-day experiences allow customers to gain a fully immersive experience of the

company. They can get to meet and know all our teams, understand our processes and production, and see and learn what it takes to make print.'

The company is now investing in the next generation of its workforce, partnering with BPIF and Leeds Trinity University to tap into a ready source of graduates that will benefit each of the company's different teams.

'We're bringing new people into the business to keep it going and moving forward. This is also pushing us to modernize our practices by bringing in flexible working hours. This wouldn't have happened under the old management structure.'

Such activities are helping Wood and the team at Watershed Packaging lay the foundations for future growth.

Woods concludes: 'We have permission to double our production space here in Leeds, which will allow us to grow the business. Our mission is to be the biggest and best flexo print and packaging company. We have big ambitions. We're all here for the long haul. We've only just got started really and we're building the foundations for the future.'

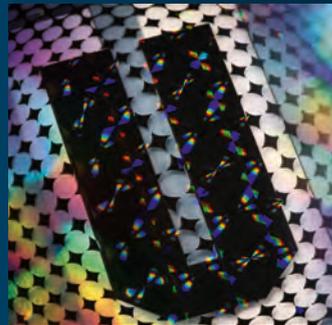


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The Catapult team includes Lewis, Ashley and Mark Cook

Catapult launches print forward

A new label company has launched in the US. Chelsea McDougall visits Catapult Print to learn about its aggressive plans for the North American market

Humor me for a second. Sit back and imagine if you started your company from scratch. What equipment would you choose? What markets would you cater to? What would you do differently with a blank slate? How would it compare to your current set-up?

That's exactly what's happening at Catapult Print, a new label start-up, where founder and CEO Mark Cook is building his dream company in a 56,000 sq ft central Florida playground.

Cook pairs the latest advancements in print technology and equipment with an 'all-under-one-roof' business model, which together he believes will raise the bar on label standards and has the potential to 'revolutionize' the US print industry.

History

Cook launched Catapult Print in Orlando in April 2018 on his own and without a single customer. 'When we had the idea to start a print business, it didn't simply come from nowhere,' he says. 'We saw an opportunity to help brands, retailers and manufacturers bring to life those incredible designs to communicate with their customers and to improve their shopping experience be it in a bricks and mortar store or online.'

Catapult caters to the fast-moving commercial goods market and offers pressure-sensitive, linerless and wraparound labels as well as flexible packaging.

Cook and the Catapult team – which also includes sons Ashley and Lewis, who serve as commercial director and VP of sales, respectively – have set out to be the

dynamic new player in the US label market.

Rapid turnaround times, quality labels and competitive prices are the hallmarks of a business strategy that Cook describes as 'redefining print.' Maximum efficiency, innovation, superior customer service and investments in the latest technology is how they'll get there.

'When we looked at the market, we thought there is an opportunity here to do something unique and different and stand out from the crowd,' Cook says. 'We know it's a competitive marketplace. So, from the very start we've had a customer focus, and concentrated on quality, service, lead times.'

After the first six months, Catapult reached \$3.5m USD in sales, and after the close of its first year, they're forecasting sales of around \$8.5m USD.

'We're the new kids on the block, so we have to work incredibly hard to land that initial job,' Cook says. 'Once that is out the door and the client can actually see the quality of the finish and have experienced our responsiveness, we win more work; which is testament not only to our model but our commitment to our customers.'

Twenty-five years in print

Cook, a British expat, spent 25 years at Paragon Print and Packaging, a UK print provider that he helped grow from \$2.5m USD in sales to a \$250m USD business. At Paragon, Cook started packing boxes, he worked as a rewinder, a press operator and eventually a salesman. Later, he became a shareholder.

He sold his stake in that business in 2014

"We have a vision to create a unique, customer-focused business that will force change across the US print industry"

when he became a partner at Equator, a packaging design agency with clients in the UK, European and US markets.

At Equator, Cook and both his sons worked with some of the biggest brand names in retail, including Sam's Club, Save-Mart, SEG, Aldi and Kraft. The Cooks helped grow the international packaging design agency to \$37m USD.

'I've seen what a good company looks like and I've seen how success is achieved,' Cook continues. 'I think having a customer focus and a never-say-never mentality is what keeps us on our toes each day. When you lose sight of that and the focus shifts to profits and EBITDAR, you've completely lost sight of the customer. That's not who we are or where we want to be.'

A background with the UK packaging market and working with top international brands has given Catapult a unique perspective. They understand the fast-moving commercial goods market and Cook says the focus on response times is becoming even more vital as retailers and brands compete to bring products to



Catapult Print invested in twin 8-color Nilpeter FA presses

“I’ve seen what a good company looks like and I’ve seen how success is achieved. I think having a customer focus and a never-say-never mentality is what keeps us on our toes each day. When you lose sight of that and the focus shifts to profits and EBITDAR, you’ve completely lost sight of the customer. That’s not who we are”

market faster in order to drive loyalty and increase sales.

‘We have a vision to create a unique, customer-focused business that will force change across the US print industry. Our team is aligned with this vision and will go out of their way to understand and deliver on our clients’ needs. We understand the pace of the FMCG market, as well as its specific demands. It’s called “fast-moving” for a reason, and so as a business, our service has to be equally agile and responsive to match the requirements of our customers.’

Technology

Twin 17.75 inch Nilpeter FA presses are at the heart of Catapult’s operation. Cook tells a great story about when he first looked at Nilpeter presses. He had just visited the press manufacturer’s Cincinnati, Ohio, showroom and had brought some brochures back to Chicago where he was visiting Lewis and Lewis’ new baby daughter.

He laughs as he recalls the story, saying: ‘Oh isn’t she beautiful? She’s so beautiful, isn’t she? Really a thing of beauty.’ Then Cook turns around to face his family, who realized he wasn’t cooing over the new baby, but was admiring the Nilpeter brochures.

‘I’d fallen in love with it,’ he says, adding that the child is, in fact, quite beautiful. ‘Buying this press was the best decision we’ve made. These are the Rolls-Royces of the label world. They’re unbelievable.’

Catapult installed two 8-color machines to run low-migration UV inks from INX. Catapult prints pressure-sensitive, wraparound and linerless labels (see boxout) as well as flexible packaging for food, beverage, automotive, health and beauty and household markets.

There is space to grow within the Orlando facility, and the goal is 10 more presses in Orlando and future plans for regional hubs in Pennsylvania, Washington and Texas.

Cook also enthuses over Catapult’s investment in Hamillroad

Software’s Bellissima Digitally Modulated Screening, for high-quality graphics. He describes it as ‘seeing the difference between standard definition and HD TV, it’s really incredible. Clients are guaranteed the crispest imaging achievable anywhere on the market today, delivering impressive packaging that catches eyes and wins customer loyalty.’

Last year Bellissima won a World Label Award for Innovation and FTA’s Technical Innovation Award for outstanding innovation. Catapult is the only printer in the US currently using the technology.

Catapult also has invested in a host of other technologies including Esko’s XPS Crystal CDI and Web Center, advanced photopolymer plate technology from MacDermid, as well as patented GTT anilox from Apex, automatic ink mixing from INX, an anilox cleaning system from FlexoMaid and Labeltraxx MIS system. Companies like UPM Raflatac and Avery Dennison have also been instrumental in the company’s early success, Cook says.

‘Our commitment to innovation runs throughout our entire product offering, something that sets us apart from the competition,’ Cook says. ‘Our family of technologies has been invested in with the customer in mind, to drive efficiencies and enable us to deliver at higher speed and lower cost than other vendors without ever compromising on quality.’

Catapult drives linerless in US market

Catapult is taking a lead in linerless label production, having purchased a Ravenwood Com500 coater, making it only the third US label converter to acquire such machinery (Hub Labels and WS Packaging are the others). Linerless is still an emerging technology in the US but one that is rapidly gaining in popularity, and Catapult is aiming capitalize from this niche market. ‘In terms of linerless, we are seeing this technology advancing and gaining momentum, with it fast becoming the label of choice for many food manufacturers and brand owners,’ says Cook. ‘Although not a particularly new innovation, linerless is becoming more relevant owing to its multitude of uses and the host of advantages it offers for certain markets.’

‘The growth pattern emerging in the US is mirroring what happened in the UK, especially when it comes to fresh and frozen foods. With linerless first being adopted by fish manufacturers, then meat suppliers. This could be said to be down to the increased adoption of food-safe packaging formats that reduce food spoilage.’



To take a virtual tour through Catapult Print & Packaging, go to: www.youtube.com/watch?v=igVdysZwkw0

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Looking for Print & Packaging Consultants

Label Summit Latin America 2019 previewed

The region's leading event for the label and package printing industry returns to Medellín, Colombia, in May. James Quirk reports

The conference program and speakers have been revealed for the forthcoming Label Summit Latin America 2019, with leading brands Colgate-Palmolive and Nutresa to speak at the end of the first day.

Taking place on May 14-15 at Plaza Mayor Medellín in Medellín, Colombia, the educational event aims to equip delegates with strategic insights into how they can help move the sector forward in Colombia and the wider region. With this in mind, the conference program has been designed with a strong business and strategy theme.

A key focus for day one is legislation and industry trends in Colombia, the wider region, and globally, alongside design and branding. Speaker highlights include Alexander Hernández, head of product

“Latin America has an especially young consumer audience, so label converters and brand owners alike would do as well to understand this growing market”

development at ICIPC, who will set out recent changes in Colombian legislation; Cesar Bernal, founder and managing director of Colombian converter Everest Printed Solutions, who will lead a session on the use of technologies to support start-ups, packaging design, and how sustainability and materials will shape this in the future; Diddier Solano, area sales director UPM Raflatac – gold sponsor of the event – will use his keynote session to touch on how a label can build a brand for the future; and Tatiana Duarte, executive president of Colombian trade association Andigraf, who will present key industry trends.

The second half of day one features sessions themed around design and branding. Guillermo Dufranc, graphic



A panel session at Label Summit Latin America last year in Guadalajara, Mexico

project manager at Tridimage, will speak on designing products for different generations. This will be followed by a panel featuring regional brand experts that will discuss creating products with stand-out presence. Confirmed panelists are Luis Arevalo, design and packaging director Latin America, Colgate-Palmolive; Catalina Botero Jr, brand development director, Grupo Familia; Luisa García, brand manager, Compañía Nacional de Chocolates (Grupo Nutresa); and Ader Cárdenas, design manager, Quala Nova.

New opportunities

Day two will focus on business markets, new opportunities and the current market trend for diversification. Juan Sebastián Estrada, Ideco CEO, will discuss business diversification. His own business has moved from commercial printing to folding cartons and labels.

A further highlight is returning speaker Fernando Gabel, executive vice president and general manager, Latin America at All4Labels Group, who will present on mergers and acquisitions. Drawing on his experience, he will share insight into how to best to overcome the challenges for a successful transition and how to form new business partnerships. Steinhäuser owner and president Tara Halpin will then examine how to implement a positive company culture to grow your business, for example through attracting fresh talent and maintaining staff loyalty. José Gutierrez, MCA North country manager, HP, will be part of a panel discussion that will examine the future of print – including intelligent products, and how the industry needs to respond to consumer expectations.

Other topics covered on day two include business diversification into labels and flexible packaging; automation and MIS implementation; and lean manufacturing and just-in-time production, from managing multiple operations and in different countries, exporting from Colombia and neighboring countries, and making manufacturing more environmentally sustainable.

As usual at Label Summit Latin America events, a table-top exposition complements the conference program, with more than 60 industry suppliers showcasing their latest products.

Tim Kirchen, senior vice president, Americas, UPM Raflatac, said: 'UPM Raflatac is honored to be a gold sponsor and to exhibit our innovative and sustainable labeling solutions at Label Summit Latin America 2019.'

Tridimage's Guillermo Dufranc said: 'Label Summit Latin America is an excellent platform for sharing experience and insight. Every generation has its own needs and expectations, and packaging design provides a whole range of possibilities to engage with consumers. Latin America, for instance, has an especially young consumer audience, so label converters and brand owners alike would do as well to understand this growing market. With this in mind, I will be showcasing successful packaging design strategies through engaging images, videos and music, which will reveal how to get right to the heart of your target.'



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Digital in-mold label products from Sunway

Chinese converters share digital experiences

Leading China-based converters Sunway, Jingyuan, Haoge and Jingyuan share their challenges, successes and future strategies for digital printing with L&L China editor Yolanda Wang

Today, digital printing accounts for less than 5 percent of label press installations in China. According to (admittedly incomplete) statistics, there are 250 digital presses installed in the Chinese market. What are Chinese converters' thoughts about digital technology? In what application areas are digital products used?

Dongguan Sunway: digital in-mold label

Established in 1998, Sunway now owns a workshop with an area exceeding 10,000sqm with approximately 300 employees. The company started out as a supplier of a range of consumables and software to label printers and officially entered the label printing industry in 2001. Now its main products are electronic tags.

In 2012, Sunway installed its first digital press, an HP Indigo ws4500. 'At that time, orders of less than 300 meters accounted for 25 percent of our total business volume,' says Weber Hu, Sunway general manager. 'Along with a higher demand for personalized products, the number of short orders continually increased. Our profit margin reduced considerably using conventional printing equipment, and we even lost money on those orders. What's worse, some orders carried a lead time reduced from two weeks to 2-3 days, and it's impossible to produce in that time frame with conventional presses.'

Following further business growth, Sunway purchased its second digital press in 2015, an HP Indigo 6800. The two digital presses

were producing 160 batches of small and diversified product orders a month, exceeding 2 million labels.

Sunway did encounter problems producing e-tag products on the digital press. E-tags are characterized by a wide range of product sizes and material types, and because they are constantly updated, there is an increased workload for pre-press, including document processing and typesetting. In addition, the substrates, printing inks and vanishes used in digital printing must pass strict electronic safety and security standards and tests before being put into use.

'We tried different varnishes and materials before we found the best combination of ink and varnish which finally met the e-tag test requirements regarding abrasive resistance, high temperature resistance and aging resistance,' adds Zeng Hongbin, Sunway marketing manager. Sunway is investing more than 1 million RMB a year in the certification of the digital manufacturing process for e-tags.

'But on the whole, the efficiency and cost advantages of digital printing have successfully saved us time that conventional presses wasted on manufacturing short and medium orders,' says Weber Hu. It has also optimized the company's production structure and greatly improved productivity. In 2016, Sunway's annual output value increased to 15m RMB.

As well as short notice and small run orders, Sunway has also explored new business opportunities in household chemical labels, where the company's digital label products have been successfully



Prizes and awards for Haoge

“Along with a higher demand for personalized products, the number of short orders continually increased. Our profit margin reduced considerably using conventional printing equipment, and we even lost money on those orders. What’s worse, some orders carried a lead time reduced from two weeks to 2-3 days, and it’s impossible to produce in that time frame with conventional presses”

applied in in-mold PP label production. 'Today this is still a local initiative and the products are mainly sold to overseas markets such as Japan,' says Weber Hu. 'But we believe domestic demand will gradually increase in the future.' The success of digital in-mold labels has strengthened Sunway's determination to pursue digital printing opportunities further.

Shenzhen Jingyuan: VIP + laser holography for security labels

'We were the first buyer of the HP Indigo 6900 digital press in China following its official launch in March 2018,' says Wu Shiyong, general manager of Shenzhen Jingyuan. The investment in this new digital press has had a great significance for Jingyuan's future development.

Established in 2001, Shenzhen Jingyuan is a laser hologram security product manufacturer. 'To be honest, the price of this new HP Indigo 6900 digital press was equivalent to the total price of all the other equipment in our company. Therefore many peers felt confused about our investment,' says Wu Yongshi. 'Though our laser holography security label belongs to the label market segment, up to now we actually have never been involved in the label printing field. This new HP digital press is a flag indicating that we will officially set foot in label printing.'

Laser holography originated in the United States at the beginning of the 1980s and entered China in the mid-1980s. It was being applied in the security and anti-counterfeit fields in China as early as 1988. After almost 30 years' development, laser holography has become a more mature technology and its security applications have been widely accepted.



HP Indigo 6900 at Xiushun

In recent years, variable data anti-counterfeit technology allied to the internet has attracted more and more attention. 'Supported by the internet, variable data anti-counterfeit will inevitably become a new kind of security technology, utilizing Big Data to include production, storage, distribution and so on,' says Wu Yongshi. 'Digital printing is the best way to realize these possibilities.'

In the first month after installation, the HP Indigo 6900 digital press accomplished more than 500,000 runs and produced almost 40,000sqm of labels with variable data. But that's not enough for Jingyuan. 'Our real target is to create a new security model, "Variable data + laser holography", which overlaps and integrates the new and old anti-counterfeit technologies.'

When L&L asked for an update on this project, Wu Yongshi says honestly: 'It's a great idea but we still need to solve some problems with technical integration. For example, we still lack digital printing experience. Less than two months after the installation of the HP Indigo 6900 we are still trying to familiarize ourselves with the materials and the manufacturing process. For example, the width of most laser holography materials is 170mm while that of the digital press is 340mm. And there are also issues when switching between the two print processes.

'I'm sure we will make breakthroughs which solve such problems and figure out our own growth path as the industry transitions to digital.'

Shenzhen Xiushun: separate small orders for higher yield

Established in 1998, Shenzhen Xiushun owns a workshop with a floor space of 2,600sqm and employs around 70 people. It mainly produces labels for the food industry, household chemicals, electronics, toys and medicines. It specializes in barcode labels, PET/PVC/ film labels, special high and low-temperature resistant labels and anti-counterfeit void labels.

Last June, Xiushun installed its first digital press, an HP Indigo 6900, and started its 'conventional + digital' production system. 'We chose the HP Indigo 6900 mainly because it will take on the current load of small and scattered purchase orders going through the business,' says Zhang Hongsheng, Xiushun founder and general manager.

As a traditional label manufacturer, these kinds of orders occupied almost 40 percent of Xiushun's total business volume. 'Some people may think it a kind of waste to produce these small orders with a high-end digital press,' says Zhang Hongsheng frankly.

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Wu Shiyong, general manager of Shenzhen Jingyuan



Zhang Xiancang, founder and general manager of Wenzhou Haoge

“The post-1990 generations are gradually becoming the main force of consumption. This is causing the Chinese label market to fragment, and along with fast-changing internet technology and a shorter product update cycle, will create opportunities for digital printing technology. These opportunities will be focused on small and multiple SKU orders, customized printing and variable data printing”

the future.’ This is the real reason that Xiushun purchased its digital press.

Up until October 2018, Xiushun’s HP Indigo 6900 has printed more than one million labels. The company increased output by at least 20 percent at its current facility because of savings made in time and labor costs by separating out the small orders. This flexible printing system will keep improving the company’s core competitiveness.

Wenzhou Haoge: timeliness and differential development

The founder and general manager of Wenzhou Haoge, Zhang Xiancang, says: ‘Established at the end of 2009, Haoge introduced its first digital press, an HP Indigo ws4500, in our second year. So you can say digital printing technology accompanied all our history and will be in our future growth plans.’

Currently, Haoge’s major products cover a wide range of applications including variable data anti-counterfeit labels, customized tamper-evident labels, multilayer labels, scratch off labels, scratch cards, vouchers and promotional gifts for domestic and foreign customers. Around 70 percent of the converter’s total business uses various types of PS labels.

Zhang Xiancang paid attention to digital press developments even before Haoge’s foundation. ‘I was engaged in platemaking and laser phototypesetting pre-press jobs before the establishment of Haoge, therefore I already knew well the demanding requirements in this industry. Especially at the stage of sample making before final production, customers may refer back to different design ideas and to alterations of previous designs. With a digital press, I realized we could save much time and provide a faster turnaround printing model.’ Zhang Xiancang explains that this ‘timeliness’ was the key reason they chose the digital press.

During its installation and operation, Haoge developed plenty of label concepts which fully played to the value of the digital press. ‘At present our digital press is mainly used for manufacturing variable data labels and differential label types which can’t be produced by a conventional press.’ Along with an increase in short and medium-run orders, Haoge has also moved products from the conventional to the digital press. Zhang Xiancang explains that this is not a straightforward process, as it means considering the customer’s acceptance of the print quality, how raw materials selection will be affected and what will be the difference in color gamut, lead time and post-press processing. ‘For our older

‘Most converters use digital presses for labels with high margins and high added-value, such as customized and variable QR code labels.

‘But our huge customer base is still influenced by traditional concepts, and such orders and consumer demands have not yet burst into our current market. If we dedicated the HP Indigo 6900 specifically to such orders, we are afraid it might be idle for most of the time.’

Indeed, this is a common reason many label converters give for hesitating to choose a digital press.

Zhang Hongsheng is one of the first batch of true Chinese label experts. He entered the label industry as early as 1993 and set up his company Shenzhen Xiushun in 1998. Then he purchased successively a Lintec letterpress machine, Weigang semi-rotary offset press and Gidue Combat M5 flexo press, among other machinery investments. ‘Frankly speaking, we have met challenges as the China label industry has transformed,’ says Zhang Hongsheng. ‘In my view, a converter can’t rely on any one piece of equipment, such as a digital press, which is merely a new production method. Company leaders should keep a keen eye on market trends and try to develop a plan for the next 3-5 years based on this.’

From the point of view of label end users, the post-1990, 2000s and even 2010s generations are gradually becoming the main force of consumption. This is causing the China label market to fragment into segments, and along with fast-changing internet technology and a shorter product update cycle, will create opportunities for digital printing technology. These opportunities will be focused on small and multiple SKU orders, customized printing and variable data printing. ‘Understanding these tendencies, we need to become familiar with digital technology now, then we will be well positioned to grab market share when these demands burst out in



Zeng Hongbin, Sunway marketing manager, and Weber Hu, Sunway general manager

“Frankly speaking, we have met challenges as the China label industry has transformed. In my view, a converter can’t rely on any one piece of equipment, such as a digital press, which is merely a new production method. Company leaders should keep a keen eye on market trends and try to develop a plan for the next 3-5 years”



Zhang Hongsheng, Xiushun founder and general manager, and Yolanda Wang, L&L China editor

and laminates as well as post-press processing looking for ways to improve the product’s performance.

As for the comparison between conventional and digital presses, Zhang Xiancang says: ‘The two processes use different inks and printing methods so the final printing result can’t be the same, and currently available technology will not change this. However, the overprinting accuracy and color stability of digital have been widely accepted by our customers.’ He also tells L&L that many customers are actively seeking to try the digital press.

So far, Haoge owns five HP Indigo digital presses, including one ws4500, two 4600s, one Indigo 5600 and one Indigo 6800. ‘Digital presses now contribute 35-40 percent of our total business,’ says Zhang Xiancang. ‘As we expand, Haoge will keep on paying attention to conventional and digital printing technologies to explore the unlimited potential it offers.’

customers their products have already established quality and test standards for conventional presses, and they have to renew the whole process when those labels are transferred to the digital press.’

He cites the example of one product owned by Yunnan Baiyao which was produced on a conventional press and later by digital. This required establishing new standards for the production process, appearance (color, overprinting etc), ink adhesion and so on. In the area of digital ink adhesiveness, Haoge tried different varnishes



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Liu Haifeng with a North American client

Great Printing innovates in China

Leading Chinese converting group Great Printing – which recently set up an operation in the US – has won a series of awards recognizing its quality management achievements. L&L China editor Yolanda Wang interviews general manager Liu Haifeng to discover the reasons behind this success

Tianjin Teda Great Printing Tech Development (Great Printing) recently won the excellence award for quality management in the sixth 'Luster Cup' Package Printing Prize as well as an award for its labels. Further, company general manager Liu Haifeng won an individual award for printing quality management. How did Great Printing come to achieve such notable success?

“We define ourselves as a comprehensive label service supplier. As automation advances, our dependency on labor during label production will lessen, and service innovation will become the key point of competitiveness”

The company was established in 2003 in the heart of the Teda-Tianjin economic-technological development area. It and is principally engaged in commercial label printing and application, but is also a franchise operation of the Tianjin Municipality, for which it prints barcode labels for the region's postal and other services.

Since its establishment in 2003, Great Printing has moved plant

three times as its business has grown. In 2017, the company set up a new packaging technology company in Shanghai and founded the FlyBear printing company in North America. Now it has started on a new project for the south China market.

The converter's key customers are mainly small and medium-sized enterprises with premium quality demands, and mainly focused in the pharmaceutical and food fields. Notable customers include Master Kong, MOTO, Samsung, Kraft, Nestle, Honeywell, Continental Automotive, Otis Elevator, John Diehl, Fuji Xerox, FAW Toyota, Boeing, Caterpillar, Dawn Computer, Bestore and Tianjin CIMC North Ocean Container (TNOG).

Great Printing is a council member of the Chinese printing association PEIAC and sits on the vice council of the Label & Special Printing Branch of PTAC. In these capacities it is both a sponsor and participant in drafting national standards for the Chinese printing industry.

Keep innovating

Great Printing's work has already been recognized on the world stage. Its Nestlé Ice Cream freezer labels obtained an Honorable Mention in the 2016 World Label Awards for offset labels, and a wine label led to another prize in the 2018 World Label Awards wine/spirits category.

'In terms of company scale, we are still an SME,' says Liu Haifeng. 'But we are walking at the forefront of innovation. For example, we took the lead in adopting ERP and MIS management systems, installing the first Sino-MV beta testing system. We have also pioneered UV LED drying systems, passed the G7 and GMI color management tests and obtained Environment Protection

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“China’s per capita label consumption is far below the world average level, and there are plenty real difficulties we face – ever-more restrictive environment protection policies, the rising cost of raw materials and increasingly fierce competition. China’s label converters need to grasp every opportunity, explore their potential and new forms of differentiated development”

accreditation.’ The company has also obtained dozens of post-press patents.

Liu Haifeng is an enthusiastic advocate of digital printing technology, pointing out that all the leading digital press suppliers, such as HP, Konica Minolta and Screen, have established professional demo and technical centers in China, which allow a full range of test services to be offered to speed the introduction of digital presses into Chinese print houses.

Great Printing also emphasizes innovation outside of manufacturing. Liu Haifeng explains: ‘We define ourselves as a comprehensive label service supplier. In my personal view, as automation technology advances, our dependency on labor during label production will lessen, and service innovation will become the key point of future competitiveness.’

In Liu Haifeng’s opinion, the integrated solutions model launched by RR Donnelley is something from which label converters can learn. The new company created in Shanghai by Great Printing follows this same management concept.

During the 2018 China Printing Innovation Conference, Liu Xiaokai, the printing and distribution division Chief of State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television of PR China, expressed his opinion that company leaders need to focus on employee growth as well as on wider social responsibilities.

As the founder and general manager of Great Printing, Liu Haifeng understands the requirements of corporate responsibility and social mission. As well as actively taking part in forums and professional exhibitions, he has successfully completed an ‘on-the-job’ MBA course at the Beijing Institute of Graphic Communication.

Labelexpo reflections

Reflecting on his visit to Labelexpo Americas 2018, Liu Haifeng says: ‘Compared with developed North American label enterprises, we saw where we need to catch up, but also found where we have some advantages. In the past, we have looked up to these international companies, where now I feel more confident in our software, information management and technical innovation. The innovation experience accumulated by international corporations for years was well worth our learning and studying, but I believe our management systems have already caught up and might exceed most of North American enterprises in the next five years.’

Liu Haifeng also learned a lot from Labelexpo India 2018 about the rapidly developing Indian label market, and the fast-emerging label enterprises which increased in number to more than 4,000 from approximately 600 six years ago.

Years of industrial experience and plenty of field surveys at home and abroad make the current status of the Chinese label market – and potential issues during its further development – clear to

Liu Haifeng.

For its future development, Great Printing has adopted the slogan ‘Growth by quality, differentiated by innovation’. Liu Haifeng has established a 5S



Great Printing’s owner Liu Haifeng

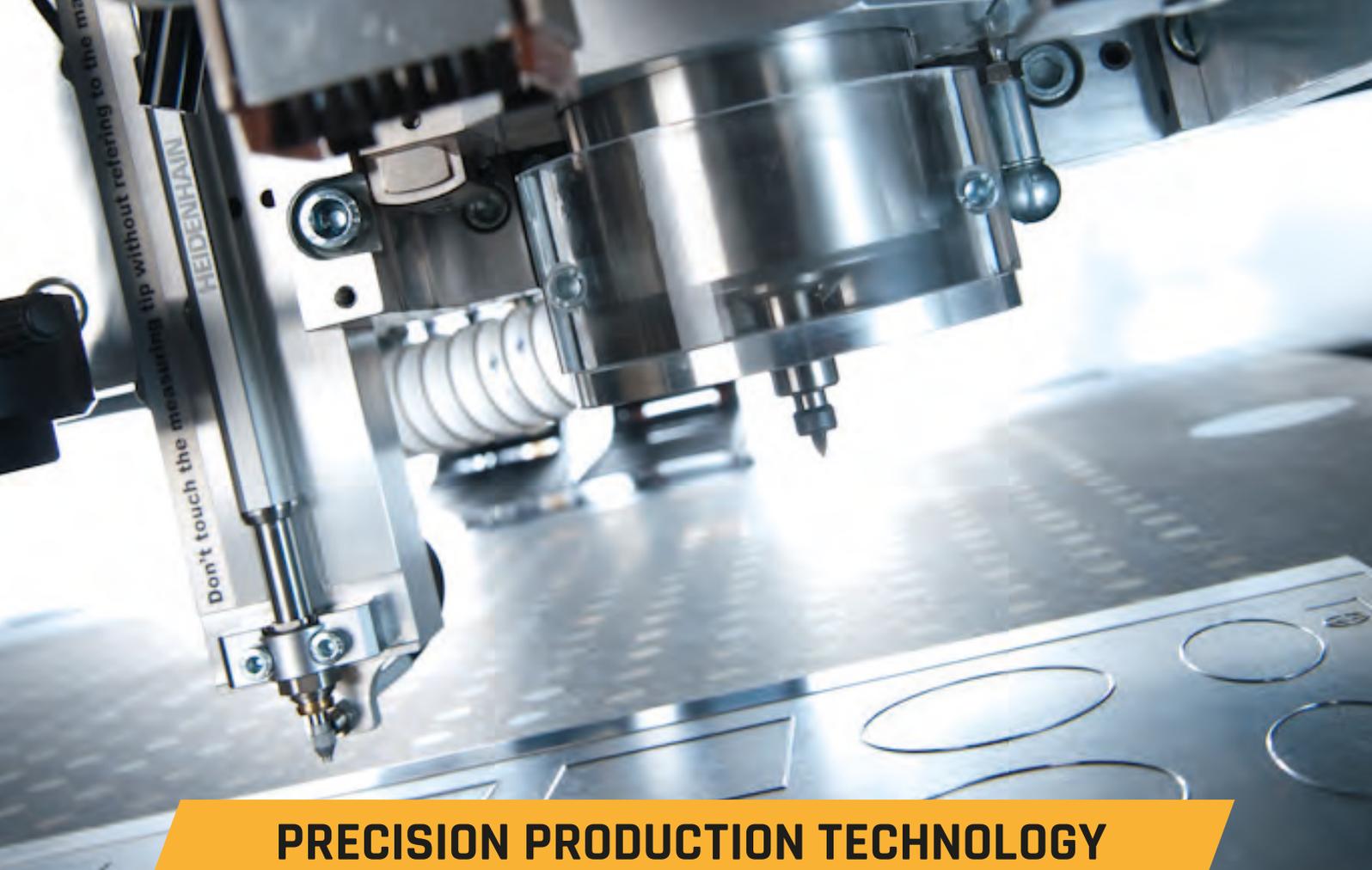
management philosophy with the following elements: Soul (developing the passion of employees for quality control); Service and sales (which means service first and sales second); Save (to focus on saving both time and energy); Share (to communicate openly with team members and industrial partners); Slow (to slow the pace and focus on steady growth). An example of that final ‘S’ concerns intelligent manufacturing, where a company needs to transition to automation from semi-automation, from information collection to data management and finally to intelligence-driven development. That is, by necessity, a progressive procedure.

Liu Haifeng concludes: ‘China’s per capita label consumption is far below the world average level, and there are plenty of real difficulties we face – ever-more restrictive environment protection policies, the rising cost of raw materials and increasingly fierce competition. Therefore, in the context of slowing economic growth, changing patterns of production and industrial restructuring, China’s label converters need to grasp every possible opportunity, explore their internal potential and break through conventional ways of thinking to seek new forms of differentiated development. This means researching new products and even creating new demands. Only in this way can China label companies gain wider development space.’

At the same time as focusing on the company’s development, he does not forget to give back: the company has donated two presses to the China Printing Museum, which agreed to archive them as industrial history. Great Printing has also donated two presses to the Beijing Institute of Graphic Communication to sponsor the construction of a practical teaching base.



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Nilpeter India open for global business

Nilpeter's FB-Line presses are now being built at its plant in Chennai, India, for global distribution. Andy Thomas-Emans reports

Nilpeter India is now a fully functioning global manufacturing hub for the company's FB-Line range of presses. When L&L visited the plant in February, presses were being assembled for converters as far afield as Brazil and Guatemala as well as India.

The company moved to its current location on the Mahindra World City private industrial estate in Chengalpattu, Chennai, last April, after outgrowing its old plant near the airport. 'The new factory is three times the size of the old plant but we are already running out of space,' says Alan Barretto, managing director of Nilpeter India.

The formation of Nilpeter India and the decision to move all FB production to Chennai forms part of a global reorganization of Nilpeter's manufacturing operations.

Originally the FB press was built in Cincinnati following the acquisition of the old Rotopress operation. The FA-Line presses were all built in Nilpeter's European headquarters in Denmark.

Nilpeter India, meanwhile, started life as a joint venture between Nilpeter and engineering group Proteck. The first Indian-built FB-3300S press was manufactured in 2009, but only for the Indian market. In 2017 US production of the FB-Line was stopped and the Indian

“The FB-Line has to be an entry-level press offering an attractive and cost-effective supplement to the FA-Line. The latest FB-350 press has to be compatible in tooling and spare parts with more than 1,000 FB-3300 presses installed worldwide”



Production floor at Nilpeter India

operation upgraded to manufacture the FB-Line globally. While still supporting the FB-Line, the US factory has been upgraded to produce the FA-Line to exactly the same specification as Denmark. The MO rotary offset press range is exclusively manufactured in Denmark.

FB evolution

Describing the evolution of the FB press line, Alan Barretto says: 'It has to be an entry-level press offering an attractive and cost-effective supplement to the FA. The latest FB-350 press has to be compatible in tooling and spare parts with more than 1,000 FB-3300 presses installed worldwide. So while we have shortened the web path and added some automation, the print head is still the same for compatibility.'

Despite the FB-Line being marketed as an entry-level machine, it is highly configurable. 'No two machines we produce are the same,' notes Barretto. Presses are

built in 13in and 16in widths.

Although the core design specifications of the original US-built FB-3300 have been retained, Alan Barretto and his highly innovative engineering team have added their own elements – notably an in-line gravure unit, first seen at Labelplex India 2014 mounted on a Chennai-built FB-3300S.

'Nilpeter is already producing a superior gravure unit in Denmark. Indian customers knew all about gravure and its advantages but wanted a lower cost version,' says Barretto. 'This is for very specific applications, such as metallics, solvent lamination, first down white on metallics or film, or primer. A typical example is the ice-cream cone industry where we are very big. This involves priming a metallized paper to use water-based inks.'

Other modules incorporated in the FB-Line presses include Stork screen units, hot and cold foil and embossing.

Operator training

One of the biggest problems facing the Indian label converting industry (and of course the global industry), is a shortage of highly trained flexo press operators. Alan Barretto tackles this issue in a practical way. The company takes on two trainees at a time and trains them up for six months. 'When customers ask us "can you recommend an operator", we say yes – our guys! Thus the trainees are almost guaranteed to leave Nilpeter India with a well-paid job.'

“Nilpeter is already producing a superior gravure unit in Denmark. Indian customers knew all about gravure and its advantages but wanted a lower cost version. This is for very specific applications, such as metallics, solvent lamination, first down white on metallics or film, or primer”

‘We are now looking to integrate other modules from Denmark,’ affirms Barretto. ‘At the last Labelexpo India it was the FP4 rotary flatbed hot foil-embossing unit, and next it will be QC (Quick Change) dies and high speed semi-rotary dies. QC reduces your changeover times and semi-rotary gives reduction in tooling costs, although there are limitations on the repeat range.’

The Chengalpattu plant employs over 70 people and has a current production capacity of 24 machines a year, with six presses on the floor at any one time. ‘We are looking to double that,’ says Barretto, pointing to unused land at the back of the factory. Spare parts for the global FB-Line press base are held onsite, and the next investment will be an automated parts store.

Market trends

As well as shipping FB-Line presses across the world, Nilpeter India handles sales of all Nilpeter presses in India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

‘We sell more FA presses than FB presses into the Indian market,’ notes Barretto. ‘We have three FAs coming into India this year, so it’s clear Indian printers are looking in that direction. The applications are mainly for tube laminates and other unsupported film materials. The FA is a very stable press for those jobs. Our customers are more focused now than just saying “I want an 8-color press”.’

Barretto believes hybrid (flexo-inkjet) presses are well-suited to the Indian print market, ‘but the price is stopping people. If we could get the price a little lower or people could invest for the longer term this hybrid press is ideal for the Indian printer. But the cost is in the digital side rather than the flexo side.’

Labelexpo India press

At Labelexpo India 2018 Nilpeter India displayed the latest iteration of the FB-Line press, the FB-350. The FB-350 has a redesigned frame featuring a shorter web path and increased automation. During the show, the press was printing wet-glue wine labels from the roll utilizing the FP-4 in-line flatbed foil-embossing unit with a starwheel stacker at the end of the press for automated finishing.



Technology Center and demo area



Alan Barretto, managing director of Nilpeter India

Before Labelexpo India 2018, Nilpeter took part in a series of roadshows organized by Labelexpo India event manager Pradeep Saroha in Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. ‘We found a lot of interest particularly in Sri Lanka, where more printers are looking to diversify out of tea production’.

Looking farther afield, Barretto sees big opportunities in east Africa, where most converters are Indian-owned. ‘They tend to buy presses and ancillary equipment from India, whereas in Nepal, they mostly buy from China.’

And looking at the potential of the India market, he remains optimistic, noting that self-adhesive label consumption at well under 1sqm per capita per year leaves huge room for growth.



For a full review of Nilpeter’s presence at Labelexpo India see L&L issue 1, 2019

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The SMI team with clients at the factory tour

SMI celebrates silver jubilee

Indian labelstock manufacturer SMI Coated Products marked its 25th anniversary by inviting label converters to its factory for the first time since its inception. Aakriti Agarwal reports

In an interview with Labels & Labeling in 2017, Ajay Mehta, managing director at SMI Coated Products, said: 'Focused business strategy along with implementing lean management systems builds efficiency in the system.' Touring his factory in Ambarnath, close to Mumbai, one realizes how Mehta has translated his vision to reality.

The company that started in 1993 with just 11 people in Daman on a 750sqm plot today has a team of more than 200 in Ambarnath. SMI Coated Products moved to its current location in 2008; it has been adding land and capacity to meet market demand – and growing at double digits – ever since. Its factory is now located on a 25,000sqm plot.

Mehta, along with his son and corporate director, Rohit Mehta, invited Indian label converters for the first time to demonstrate the state-of-the-art infrastructure that the company utilizes to manufacture 100 million sqm of labelstock every year.

During the tour, the duo led several groups, each of about 20 professionals from the Indian label industry, around the production floor, navigating their way through the raw material warehouse, slitting division and research and development centers.

“We try to offer the most practical and workable material to our customers by requesting they respond to seven questions on our mobile app”

This ISO 9001:2000 certified factory features a smart warehouse where each roll of raw material is code marked for easy and accurate access to its team. Clamp trucks handle rolls in another warehouse that are transported to the production floor, by any one of the designated team members, on recently placed tracks that facilitate almost effortless movement of material.



Ajay Mehta with SMI Coated Products' first coating machine for labelstock

It is then coated on one of the seven coating machines. This includes the latest addition of a 60m in-line silicone and coating machine with a web width of 1,350cm, the installation of which was completed in 2019. Other coating machines include two hot melt coating lines, two acrylic emulsion adhesive lines and two silicone coating lines. Six of the seven coating machines on SMI's factory floor have been made in India according to the company's requirements.

Ancillary equipment includes two rewinding machines and four slitters.

Indian label industry trends

'The size of the Indian label industry is pegged at 400 million sqm and growing at 15 percent per annum,' says Ajay Mehta. 'If we grow from the current per capita consumption of 0.35sqm to 3sqm in the next decade, that will be phenomenal. This will soon be a reality because brand owners understand that the label is not only a tool that imparts information, but also adds a lot more value to the product. Therefore, there is an evident shift from other technologies to pressure-sensitive labels.'

'To complement the growth, we see an increasing number of sophisticated presses being installed. Digital technology is gaining popularity, wider web presses are being sold and converters are becoming more innovative. The growth, is thus, being driven by label converters and end users together.'

Coated material is checked for quality on more than 30 parameters, such as peel adhesion, ageing test, temperature tolerance, conformability, heat resistance, printability and tamper evidence, among others.

Every approved roll is finally coded before it is dispatched to the customer. Any roll that does not meet all quality parameters is kept in a separate space in the factory, designated for faulty raw material or coated material.

Automated

This highly automated system is enabled by an ERP at the back-end that uses data to seamlessly connect all departments starting from receiving raw material to dispatch.

The impressive infrastructure resonates with the 'Make in India' sentiment catalyzed by the Indian government. SMI Coated Products attributes the successful expansion of its factory space to the demonetization announced by the government in November 2016. 'New systems led to a change in the way people operated. While many businesses adapted, several had to shut shops. In a similar development, we were offered to buy the land adjoining our factory, an opportunity we grabbed, that facilitated our current expansion of the production floor and has given us tremendous scope to expand in the future,' says Rohit Mehta.

The current infrastructure, with the latest investment in the new coating line, has brought the company's manufacturing capacity to 190 million sqm. SMI Coated Products exports to 22 countries, including the Middle East, Africa and Australia, which contributes to 50 percent of its turnover.

'Our focus now is to build on the current expansion and cater to industry requirements. SMI believes in growing with the industry and helping new as well as established converters with innovative solutions as well as small SKUs as low as 1,000sqm, if required,' says Ajay Mehta.

Explaining how SMI customizes requests to ensure

“Converters and brand owners are now looking at ways to make a positive impact on the environment and not at the cost alone”

customer satisfaction, Rohit Mehta says, 'We try to offer the most practical and workable material to our customers by requesting they respond to seven questions on our mobile app. These include understanding of application temperature, service temperature, curve diameter, finish of the label required, amongst others. We then perform a test in our laboratory to ensure the requirements are fulfilled and tweak the material, if required.'

SMI is thus well placed for future growth, which Ajay Mehta believes has started emerging from the surging middle class. 'We constantly upgrade our systems and technology to grow with the market and make new products to cater to customers,' he says.

With the emerging trend of variable data printing and emphasis on recycling and reusing products, some of the



New 60m in-line silicone and coating line installed this year. The tracks seen here move raw material around the factory

emerging requirements that the company sees in the Indian market include metallized films, wash-off labels and suitable labelstock for inkjet printing.

'Converters are also demanding thinner labelstock material and we see more prominent usage of filmic labels now,' says Ajay Mehta.

Sustainability

SMI has always been an advocate of sustainable business practices and reducing its impact on the environment. 'We continue to push the industry to look at sustainability in true light and go for thinner materials without necessarily expecting a low price,' explains Mehta. 'Thinner materials with complex configurations can sometimes be marginally higher priced than standard labelstock. Converters and brand owners are now looking at ways to make a positive impact on the environment and not at the cost alone.'

SMI also advocates the use of PE instead of PP material on squeezable labels on larger containers which, he says, offers three advantages. First, instead of 86gsm film, a 46gsm film is used which reduces the consumption of plastic material by 50 percent. Secondly, PP is a domestic film so supports the 'Make in India' movement, and thirdly, reduced grammage and different constitution of the film brings down the cost of the label as well.

Ajay Mehta further suggests usage of filmic label on lubricant containers to completely avoid the problem of bubbles. 'Paper labels contract in the day while the container expands and vice-versa at night. The paper contraction and expansion is based on the moisture and containers' heat. So, if replaced with film, it removes all problems of bubbles,' he explains.

As a step towards a greener future, SMI Coated Products is in the process of obtaining FSC certification. 'FSC certified raw material will be sourced and maintained separately. It is different from regular labelstock in the way that the raw material is accounted for and its usage can be tracked. Though the FSC material is marginally higher priced, we will work towards combining it with thinner material so the cost impact on our customers is the bare minimum,' assures Mehta.

LMAI training center

SMI Coated Products is further strengthening its commitment to the Indian label industry by opening an LMAI training center at its factory in Ambarnath. To be run by the Label Manufacturers' Association of India (LMAI), this center is expected to train operators on a flexographic press and produce skilled workers for Indian label converters. LMAI will also impart training on quality parameters of labelstock materials as well as inks. The association is in the process of forming a committee dedicated to starting and growing the center.



For photos from SMI Coated Products' Silver Jubilee celebrations, go to the Label society page at the end of this issue

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Total Print Solutions expands with Lombardi

Indian converter has enhanced its capabilities and capacity with a new Synchroline 430 press from Lombardi. Aakriti Agarwal reports

Total Print Solutions, a Mumbai-based converter founded in 2008, has installed a Lombardi Synchroline 430 press to expand its production capacity. The company has also opted for a 430mm-wide Vinsak USAR slitter rewinder to complement the press.

'With new machinery, we expect to double our labelstock consumption from the current 400,000 sqm,' said Sandeep Zaveri, managing director of Total Print Solutions.

Installed by Vinsak, the exclusive distributor of Lombardi presses in the Indian sub-continent, the 10-color press features the first Bravo screen unit in India, as well as cold foil, delam/relam, turnbar, web cleaner, chill drums, static eliminators, three die-cutting stations, sheeter and conveyor.

While Total Print is catering to the food and lubricant markets, the 17in wide Lombardi press will assist the company's growth into other segments as well as enhancing its capabilities in combination printing and added-value options such as Braille, booklet labels and lamination. With increased and enhanced production capabilities, Total Print intends to increase its overseas business from the current 15 percent to 50 percent in the future. It currently exports to the Middle East and Africa.

'Our focus is to expand our market reach with new capabilities, and print cartons, shrink sleeves and in-mold labels as well. We are doing many jobs with different exciting combinations. We successfully ran an 8-color job with cold foiling on Lombardi at 130m/min. The press can print up to 5-layer labels at a speed of 50m/min when using the Bavo screen unit,' said Zaveri. 'The advantage of the press is that a job can be set up with defined wastage and configuration. We are pleased with this investment as it is an easy-to-operate and flexible machine that gives us a lot of scope to grow.'

Comparing the Bravo screen unit to rotary screen, Zaveri said: 'Ink deposition is easier on a flatbed screen unit and it also enables easy changeover. Further, the screen can be made and exposed in-house at a relatively low cost and the quality remains great.'



Lombardi Synchroline 430 installed at Total Print Solution in Mumbai



Sandeep Zaveri, managing director at Total Print Solutions. Old ink cans decorate the factory walls

“It is an easy-to-operate and flexible machine that gives us scope to grow”

Smooth installation

Italy-based manufacturer Lombardi, deployed its engineers to train operators, while local distributor Vinsak continues to provide technical support.

Ranesh Bajaj, managing director at Vinsak, added: 'The Vinsak team is delighted to work with Total Print Solutions. The company enabled smooth installation and training process.'

While Total Print is focusing on getting maximum output from the new press, it is also utilizing its synergies for future expansion. The company has invested in a plot of land in Chakand MIDC Pune, a fast-developing industrial area close to Mumbai, for future growth.

'We continuously study the market. We are looking at another press with digital capabilities for the next phase of expansion in Pune, hopefully within the next two years,' informs Zaveri.

Gearing up for growth, Total Print has deployed an ERP system that has integrated all its departments and helped to improve efficiencies at the factory. 'Now, we record each step of the job from the time it comes to the plant to dispatch. This has enabled us to gauge loop holes in our working environment that were causing delays and thus has improved our efficiency by 50 percent,' says Zaveri.

With an eye on environmental sustainability, the company uses FSC-certified labelstock. 'It is a good

beginning to help the environment and be sustainable. Although it is tedious to get the certification, they ensure that we get in the habit of following its required norms. It is also important from the brands' point of view. Global brand Ikea, for instance, has made it mandatory to use FSC-certified labelstock for its labels,' says Zaveri.

Total Print is also working towards recycling its matrix waste efficiently to reduce its impact on the environment. 'We are working towards wastage being converted to electricity. All matrix waste including facestock, adhesive and silicone liner can be converted to another energy form efficiently. The only requirement is to separate the film and paper matrix. In partnership with another company, we are working on this recycling method because we believe this is truly the need of the hour,' Zaveri explains.

Equipment timeline

Total Print started label printing in 2008 with a 6-color Etirama CI press. This was followed by a 10in, 7-color Edale in 2010 and then a 13in, 8-color Multitec in 2015. Finishing equipment includes a Pulisi and three small slitting machines.



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Mark Andy users awarded in South Africa

Mark Andy users win multiple golds in South Africa's flexo awards, while elsewhere IML makes a breakthrough. Gill Loubser reports



Mark Andy's local partner, SArepco's Paul Bouwer (right), presented KB Labels' Bill Jordaan and Robert du Preez with a gold medal for the Nando's Lemon & Herb PS label



In the Gold Pack Awards, RPC Astrapak Marcom, Verstraete IML and Siqualo Foods scooped a joint gold medal for the Rama metallic IML tub



KB Labels' Nando's Lemon & Herb PS label

In South Africa's recent Print Excellence Awards, organized annually by the FTASA (Flexographic Technical Association of South Africa), five out of six of the gold medals winners in the various labeling categories were converters using Mark Andy narrow web presses.

For instance, one multiple award winner was First Impression Labels (FIL), whose Mark Andy P7 press contributed greatly to the company's success in garnering gold and silver for shrink labels for Absolut Vodka Khuli Chana and Go Nutz Gourmet Almond & Whey protein, as well as gold for the wraparound label for Clover Super M Chocolate – all using DuPont Cyrel plates and inks from Flint Group. A silver medal went to FIL for the wraparound label for BMS Smoked Viennas.

Also taking multiple awards using its Mark Andy 2200 press was SA Label Printers, receiving gold, silver and bronze medals for top-class labels, in all cases using DuPont Cyrel Easy plates and inks from Flint Group. The gold medal went to the PS label for RS-500 engine oil.

One of three joint gold winners in the shrink labels category was Multi-Color Corporation for Clover's promotional Christmas pack, printed on a Mark Andy.

KB Labels won gold for Nando's Lemon & Herb PS label, printed on a Mark Andy using DuPont Cyrel plates and inks from Flint Group.

Anatomy of a winner

Meanwhile, in the Gold Pack Awards (organized annually by the Institute of Packaging SA), where the focus is on recognizing packaging innovation and design, RPC Astrapak Marcom, Verstraete IML and Siqualo Foods scooped a joint gold medal in the competitive food packaging category for the Rama metallic in-mold label (IML) tub. This pack has also been named as a winner in this year's WPO WorldStar Awards.

Rama is South Africa's leading spread and a supermarket icon. Most consumers are familiar with the Rama brick that has been upgraded to a metallized foil wrapper and enjoys 60 percent of the country's spread sales. In a smart move to consolidate the branding, the tub version has also been upgraded to a metallic-look pack. Designed to woo affluent consumers, who appreciate the tub's convenience, the new pack sits comfortably alongside the shiny Rama brick.

This award marks a breakthrough for in-mold labeling. Until now, static electricity has stood in the way of the development of metallic in-mold labels. During the injection-molding process, static electricity is used to hold the label in place, but because metallic labels are conductive, the static charge is dissipated, creating

instability during melt flow injection. This in turn causes label misalignment and product defects. Under normal circumstances, therefore, metallic labels are not easy to process in standard molds.

In a joint venture between RPC Astrapak Marcom and Verstraete IML, a label was created using cold foil printing. The design parameters were amended to ensure the foiled area did not exceed a specified limit.

The result was a partially-foiled in-mold label. Although this means certain areas of the tub are not in fact foiled, to the naked eye the entire tub looks metallic – testament to the consummate skill of the development team.

Using this technology, static charges remain on the non-metallic part of the label, keeping it stable during the injection process. In addition, a standard, unmodified mold can be used, opening the way to metallized IML for a much larger market.

RPC Astrapak is an innovative pacemaker in design, development, technology and manufacturing of molded and formed packaging. RPC Astrapak Marcom is part of the molding division and falls within the rigid plastic packaging spectrum.

Verstraete IML is a world leader among IML label suppliers, with a daily production of over 50 million in-mold labels for numerous packaging segments.

In 2018, Remgro acquired Unilever's South African spreads business and renamed it Siqualo Foods.



For more from Gill Loubser go to <http://www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/gill-loubser>

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Meyers Printing handles logistics with software

US label and commercial printer has built a custom software that manages customers' inventory and allows for print on demand. Chelsea McDougall reports

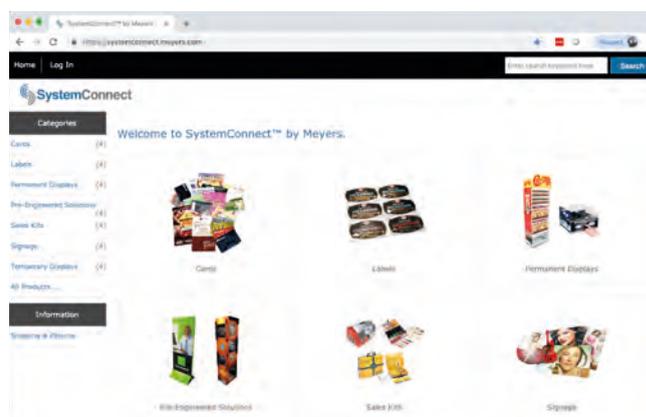
Sodexo, a leading food service company and cafeteria operator, in 2018 ordered 70 million labels for its locations across the US from Meyers Printing through a custom order management platform developed by the Minneapolis-based printer. Meyers Printing offers SystemConnect, an online management platform that allows its customers to manage inventory, order online and print on demand. Sodexo is one of about 10 customers who take advantage of Meyers' offering, through which accounts about US\$10m annual sales for Meyers.

SystemConnect is Meyers' answer to a shifting landscape in which more buyers are shopping online, and large number of label buyers expect their vendors to be nearby. According to a recently released TLMI study, more than half – 57 percent – of label buyers make it a requirement that their label vendors are within the same general region where the labels are applied (see boxout).

Through SystemConnect, Meyers Printing automates and manages the complex logistics of shipping labels for more than 800 different Sodexo products to its facilities throughout the country. Meyers also prints commercial items such as menus and tent cards, standing menus and more for Sodexo.

Emily Haskell, senior director of brand management at Sodexo, says: 'With locations across the country having a variety of signage and marketing material needs, along with a wide range of products and price points, managing our inventory has historically been a challenge. SystemConnect makes it simple for us to manage inventory, track the materials, and make smart decisions around future inventory needs. It saves us time and money, simplifies the ordering process, and allows us to realize the advantages of just-in-time delivery.'

SystemConnect can be customized for both large clients such as Sodexo, as well as smaller customers looking for the convenience of online ordering. Each iteration of SystemConnect is created specifically for the client that uses it, complete with custom branding and workflows. The platform helps companies with a widespread footprint maintain consistency of layouts while fulfilling the need for labels, signage and other materials at individual locations. Customizable templates allow users to create materials specific to the needs of each location, whether that be pricing information



SystemConnect allows Sodexo to print labels on demand

“With locations across the country having a variety of signage and marketing material needs, along with a wide range of products and price points, managing our inventory has historically been a challenge”

or other location-based requirements. The platform can also track inventory levels and alert team members when levels run low.

Order management

In the case of Sodexo, the food service company directly feeds to Meyers an updated list of its ingredients for items sold at its grab-and-go restaurants and cafeterias. The feed has more than 800 items – many, but not all, are labels – that are automatically synched daily so label changes are not an issue. The Sodexo employee purchasing the labels can log on to SystemConnect, choose the label size and format, pick the number that corresponds to that food item, set the price and hit print. This method prevents incorrect orders because only certain products appear for certain purchasers: a Sodexo label buyer in Manhattan wouldn't have the same options as one in Dallas.

Meyers aims to have the label printed within 48 hours. Located in the middle of the country, it can ship products with three-day service for most of the US.

Sodexo averages 70 orders a day from Meyers for any of its sites across the country. Mic Tienken, director of marketing and e-commerce at Meyers, says a system this sophisticated at a plant the size of Meyers is unique: 'Having SystemConnect allows us to do that volume of business. We couldn't do it otherwise.'

TLMI surveys label buyer, vendor dynamic

TLMI has released its latest Index & Trend report, which serves as a resource for members to forecast growth or declines as well as industry benchmarks. A key component of the report was a brand owner and packaging buyer survey, which analyzed the label buyer and label vendor dynamic.

The report asked participants how important proximity was when choosing a label vendor. While 57 percent of label buyers surveyed said that they demand their label vendors be located within the same general region of where the labels are applied, another 38 percent said it made no difference to them. Only 5 percent said they demand their label vendors to be within 250 miles of where the labels are applied, compared to 27 percent of survey respondents who said they demanded this in 2016.



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Study shows strong market for industrial labels

A recent study commissioned by PPG is the first of its kind that takes an in-depth look at the industrial labeling sector. Chelsea McDougall reports

Converters in North America are reporting significant growth in industrial labeling applications. Growth in some instances is outpacing the food and beverage sectors, according to a new, first-of-its-kind study commissioned by PPG.

PPG enlisted market researchers at LPC to study the industrial label market after the company began seeing growth in demand for its Teslin synthetic labelstock in the region.

While the PPG study provides a close-up view of the North American pressure-sensitive industrial label sector, researchers surveyed converters who serve both prime and non-prime label segments.

'Converters serving both the industrial and non-industrial segments are reporting that growth rates for their industrial labeling applications are outpacing growth for their prime labeling applications like food, beverage and personal care,' LPC researchers found.

Markets that are considered under the industrial label umbrella include: automotive, industrial chemicals, consumer and non-consumer durables, electronics and transportation logistics. Applications can range from labels for motor vehicles, machinery, housewares, building materials, firearms, toys, electronics and inventory labels.

It's not uncommon for these labels to have specific and rigorous demands on performance and functionality. Take, for example, two recent label jobs printed at Michigan-based Great Lakes Label for General Electric (both pictured). A safety label job required a permanent adhesive, while another demanded that the label be easily removed.

Both labels used Avery Dennison's Fasson semi-gloss material. The first was a UL-approved safety switch label printed for GE that had to communicate safety notices and operating instructions, so it was critically important that the label maintain its integrity over time. That label job was printed with ultralight fast ink to resist fading when exposed to light. The label is water-resistant to protect against the elements. Lastly, the label is applied with a permanent adhesive, ensuring that the label will last.

On the other side of the spectrum, Great Lakes Label created a steel case notice label printed also for GE that had to communicate instructions for installers. For this job, Great Lakes Label needed a material with a removable adhesive as label could be removed cleanly and in one piece from the product when the install was complete. The adhesive leaves no residue behind. It's not uncommon for converters like Great Lakes Label to offer a range of adhesive options and label constructions for its industrial label buyers.

“Converters are reporting that growth rates for their industrial labeling applications are outpacing that of their prime labeling work”

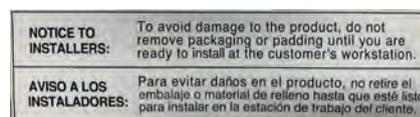
Growth rates and pain points

The North American label market is valued at \$13.2bn USD and for the past five years, growth rates have hovered around 0.5 percent to 1 percent above US GDP (2.3 percent).

Consumer durables offered the highest growth rates for converters in 2017, growing at 4.7 percent year-on-year. Non-consumer durables grew at 4.1 percent, electronics at 3.1 percent. Chemicals and transportation and logistics showed the slowest growth rates that year at 3 percent and 2.8 percent, respectively.

Converters were also asked to indicate their biggest pain points and found that lack of recyclability or biodegradability of materials, inkjet compatibility, ink adhesion and labelstock resilience remained challenges for this application.

'An improved housing market, low employment and higher wages have driven growth in the durables space and label converters serving this sector have reported high year-over-year growth rates compared to other industrial segments,' the study reads. 'As North American label converters increase their presence in these markets, it is more critical than ever that



Notice label printed at Great Lakes Label



Safety Switch label printed at Great Lakes Label for General Electric

these companies have access to labelstock constructions capable of withstand the most rigorous applications requirements, while still able to meet shifting sustainability and digital press performance requirements.'

Key questions

Paul Purdef, director of durables at Avery Dennison, lists the key questions to ask when considering industrial labels.

- What is the label sticking to?
- What type of application?
- What type of printing technology will you use?
- Is there an OEM spec requirement the label material needs to meet?
- Are there regulatory requirements?



To watch a PPG video on durable labels, visit <https://tinyurl.com/sywan528>

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Pulse Roll Label Products' PureFX rough texture matte varnish

Coating and lamination

Coating and lamination technology is vital to protect the surface of a label, writes Tony White, L&L's new technical editor

One are the days of the straightforward plain printed label. These days it is important not only to attract the consumer to the product on the shelf but to ask for what application the label is to be used. The simple label is one of the widest-used marketing tools that a brand owner can employ. In any supermarket, for example, the plethora of applications using labels is legion. For most brand owners it is important to differentiate their product from the competition.

The task of the label is not only to inform but in many cases also to meet legislative requirements which must be legible right through the life-cycle of the label. The label must also be capable of being used in high-speed labeling machines working at mind-bending speeds to satisfy consumer demand for everyday products. This is where the surface of the label needs protection, be it manufactured from paper or film substrates, and where coating and lamination technology is vital in performing these functions. Pretty straightforward you might think – but don't forget about disposal after its main function is completed: recycling is equally as important as the main use of the label.

This article looks at the different technologies which are used to protect or embellish labels and packaging along with a typical machine for applying the coating or laminate.

Coating technology

A coating is basically designed to protect a label from damage by scuffing or friction during its useful working life. In addition many different finishes can be applied to the label to enhance its appearance and attract the consumer. These specialist coatings can come in several surface finishes including gloss, matte, glitter and sensory applications etc. They can be used to highlight specific areas of a design by using spot varnish techniques. A practical application in the pharmaceutical industry is the provision of raised Braille characters. Other applications include adding covert security protection for high value products to prevent counterfeiting.

Two companies providing a wide range of coatings for the label industry are Lintec Corporation and Pulse Roll Label Products. Lintec offers coatings for a wide variety of uses including protection from damage during the life of the label and UV protection. It also produces a wide range of adhesive formulations which can be used in release liner production.

Narrow web ink specialist Pulse Roll Label Products manufactures coatings and varnishes for label printing to suit requirements which range from decoration and embellishment, to functionality and

compliance.

Complementing its flagship UV flexo ink system, PureTone, the company also formulates specialist UV flexo coatings and varnishes. These products include its well-established PurePeel peel and read release varnish, its PureFX rough texture matte varnish, launched at Labelexpo Europe 2017, and its PureFinish UV flexo varnishes formulated for the overprinting of digital inks.

Coatings for functionality

The market for peel and read labels has grown significantly over recent years, fueled by regulatory demands for extra information required on labels particularly in sectors such as pharma, healthcare, cosmetics and household and industrial products.

Multilayer labels are suitable for application on a wide range of packaging, containers and bottles, and provide additional surface area on a pack allowing extended content without sacrificing branding, graphics and shelf appeal. From a coating perspective, it is critical that the adhesive used on this type of label allows the layer to be easily peeled, released and resealed on a 'repeatable' basis.

Mikaela Harding, product manager, Pulse Roll Label Products, says: 'Our PurePeel UV flexo release varnish is used by narrow web printers worldwide and provides proven smooth, even and repeatable release properties. Ten years after its launch, this continues to be the release coating of choice for many leading label manufacturers.'

With the continued growth in digital label printing, UV flexo varnishes are often used for overprinting digital inks and require high resistant properties to protect the print underneath. Gloss and matte varnishes are widely used and other specialty varnishes are becoming increasingly popular as companies seek to embellish and finish digitally printed labels to create eye-catching and interesting effects.

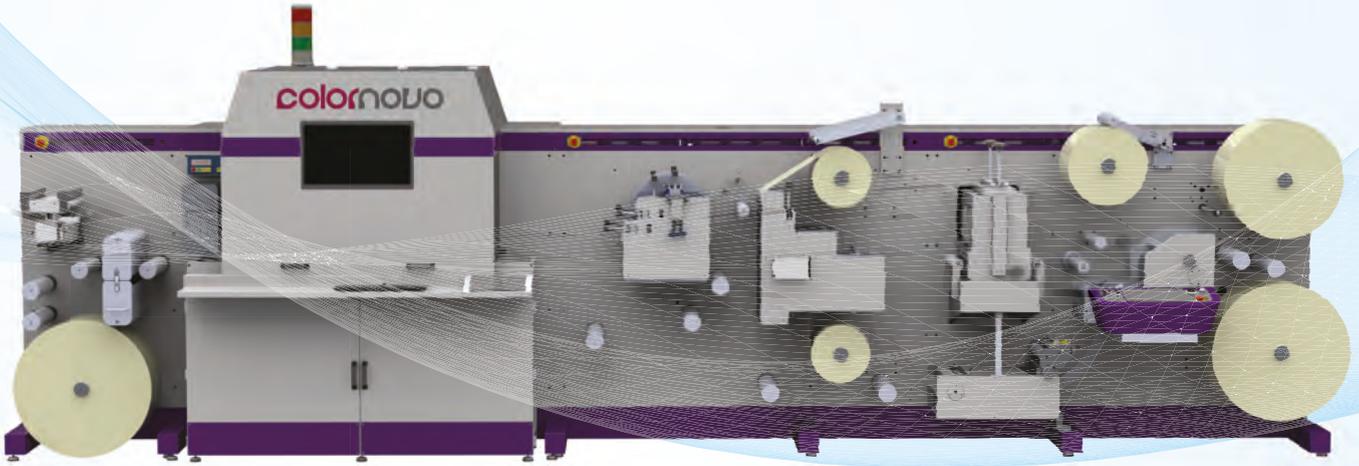
Coatings for premium effects

In addition to products developed primarily for functional purposes, advancements in varnish technology, press technology, plates and anilox rollers have enabled label coatings to become highly sophisticated in the way they are applied and the striking effects that can be achieved.

The days of a simple flood coat varnish on a label have been left far behind, with high quality products emerging today ranging from high gloss and super matte to soft touch and rough texture coatings. A combination of different spot varnishes, for example,



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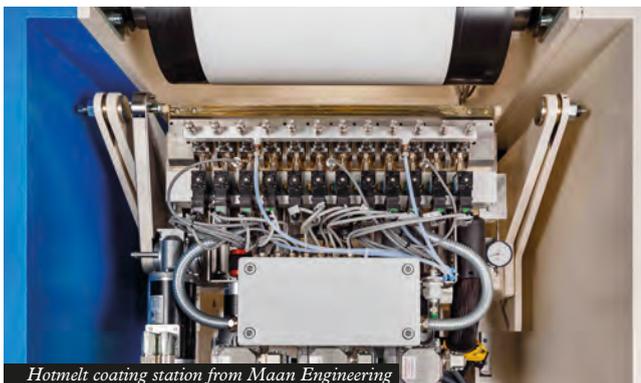
can create many contrasting and attractive effects, adding value to a brand by enhancing shelf appeal via its label. Increasingly, brand owners are differentiating their products by incorporating sensory packaging that engages with the consumer.

The growing popularity of craft beer and gin, artisan products and other specialty food and drink products, in particular, appears to have influenced the label industry trend towards the use of specialist varnishes and coatings for decorative and embellishment purposes. Sarah Harriman, marketing and communications manager, Pulse Roll Label Products, comments: 'We have seen a surge of interest in label varnishes and coatings which create premium visual and tactile effects. Specialist coatings are being used more

“Advancements in varnish technology, press technology, plates and anilox rollers have enabled label coatings to become highly sophisticated in the way they are applied and the striking effects that can be achieved”

and more to boost brand appeal and help to make a product stand out on the shelf. Tactile effects are proving particularly popular. Our PureFX UV flexo rough texture varnish was formulated to satisfy this need, as brand owners focus more on delivering a touch and feel experience to the consumer.'

Mikaela Harding adds: 'It's important for us to support our customers in delivering outstanding quality and optimal performance on press. To achieve this, when we develop a new coating or varnish, we work closely with other industry suppliers including anilox companies, repro houses and plate manufacturers. Our collaboration with industry experts such as Creation Reprographics and anilox manufacturer Sandon Global, for example, means that we can help to deliver the highest-standard print solutions for our customers and their customers, the brand owners



Hotmelt coating station from Maan Engineering

Coating equipment

Maan Engineering, a supplier of coating and converting machinery, introduced its Hybrid technology at Labelexpo Europe 2017. Last year, at Labelexpo Americas, the technology was introduced in a novel way by visitors using VR goggles. The coating line takes the best of the hotmelt and silicone coating technologies and offers converters the option of using one or both technologies in-line. How does this system work in practice? The simple yet innovative method means that the hotmelt coating station rotates so that both sides of the substrate can be coated in-line and the silicone coating can be applied simultaneously. It takes less than 15 minutes to switch applications. A high-speed option is available which means that the machine can be run at operating speeds up to 225m/min.

According to Sjoerd Jansen, general manager of Maan Engineering, there is a growing market for the production of linerless labels and for the in-house production of narrow web laminates. Maan Engineering's Hotmelt Coating Station and Silicone Coating Station meet these demands as stand-alone applications, but also serve as the basis for label converters to install linerless coating lines and lamination coating lines. The

integration of different coating and converting techniques into one line creates great added value. One roll of substrate can produce complete printed, laminated and wound material in one pass.

One of the crucial areas in any coating operation is coating weight of the final coated layer. With Maan's equipment, weight can be controlled accurately right to the edges of the web. The standard configuration for silicone coating is to use a 3-roller system which can be used for coating weights between 0.8gsm to 5gsm. However if an even more accurate control is required a 5-roller system can be installed giving complete control down to 0.5gsm. This means that any operation down-stream of the coating function can be carried out in complete confidence. When using a silicone coating which is cured by UV it is important that the application is carried out in an area in which the oxygen levels can be controlled which is achieved by using an inert nitrogen curtain.

The hotmelt station can handle coating weight down to 10gsm and has extremely accurate temperature control. The equipment can be used with various types of hotmelt coating materials including PSA, EVA and UV. With this versatile equipment two methods of coating can be used: a slot nozzle or by direct roller application. In both cases coating weights can be adjusted to suit the application.

Background coating is becoming more popular: the coated layer is used to enhance the usefulness of the label in the end use application. The ability to offer patterned coating at a speed of up to 80m/min to a width of 26in (660mm) is of special interest to medical and food applications and is gaining momentum.

As can be seen from the variety of options that can be built into a Maan Engineering coating line, flexibility is the key. With Labelexpo Europe looming, we can be sure that Maan Engineering – and others – will introduce more new developments to the narrow web industry.

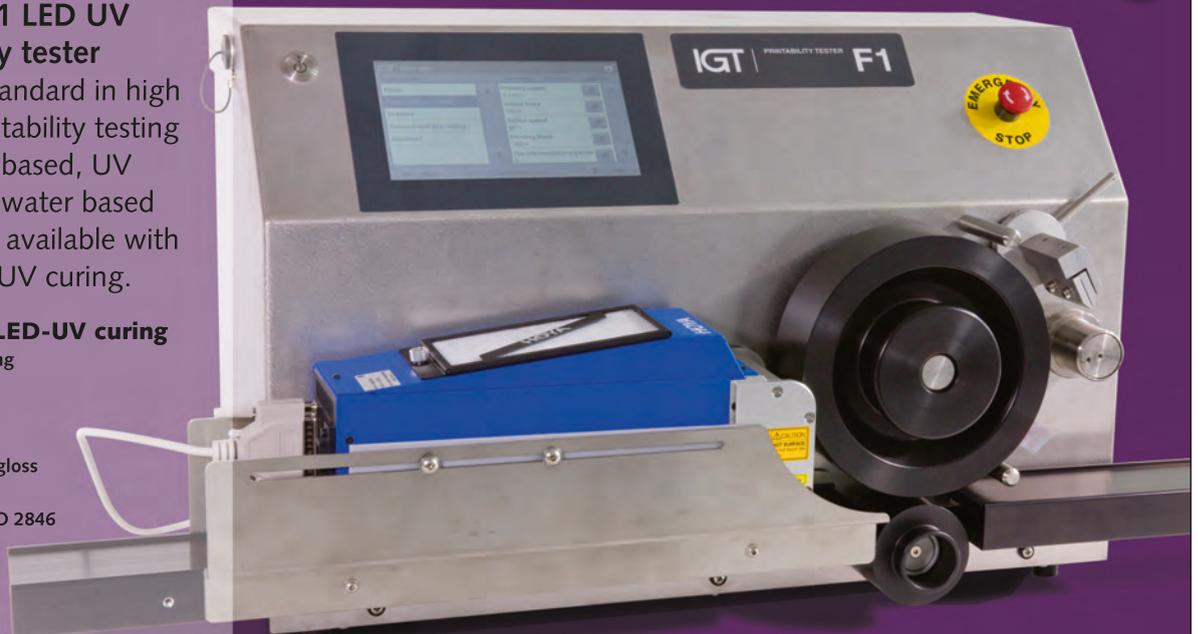
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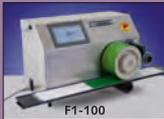
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As finishing technologies become increasingly advanced, one can expect to see further developments in high quality decorative label embellishments and the creative use of varnishes and coatings for increased brand appeal.

Lamination technology

Why laminate a label? What are the advantages? Lamination (or over-lamination) is normally associated with totally encapsulating a printed or non-printed label to offer robust protection against damage by friction, scuffing, aggressive liquids and challenging environments. No matter in which application segment the label is to be used, there will always be an element capable of damaging its surface. Take for example household products, where fairly aggressive liquids might be spilt on the label surface. Or cosmetic labels, which are subject to damp and moist conditions. In both cases the label must be protected from damage by wet hands or continuous attack by hot water. Then again, labels which are used outdoors need the most protection as they are exposed to intense UV radiation from the sun, heat in the summer and freezing conditions in the winter including snow and ice. Meanwhile, at all times during the life-cycle of the label important information must be preserved, such as conditions of use and safety information. All of this means that over lamination of a label with the correct final surface is crucial.

Most people are familiar with the domestic lamination equipment which can provide basic film protection for a poster or notice from damage and normally has a glossy finish. In the world of professional over-lamination many different surface finishes are available as well as various film qualities which have properties designed to protect the surface of the printed label as well as the actual printed information.

Methods of application of the laminate include: thermal lamination, where the laminate is bonded to the substrate using heat and pressure; aqueous adhesive, eliminating solvents from the coating area; silicone adhesives, when special release properties are required such as a peel and reseal; UV-cured adhesives; acrylic adhesives, for applications where a high level of adhesion is required or where overprinting of digital printing is important.

Polypropylene is currently the most popular lamination film and is the least expensive. It has excellent clarity and can be supplied in a 2mil thickness. The surface can be modified to improve ink adhesion of overprinting is required. The laminate provides an excellent solvent and abrasion finish.

Polyester is widely used and protects the label surface from abrasion, oils, chemicals and solvents. Again it can be supplied in a 2mil thickness using a pressure-sensitive adhesive. Thicker films are available which give improved dimensional stability and can even offer more protection for outdoor use. Other uses of polyester include top coating to accept thermal transfer printing and a special coating product designed to protect the label from high levels of UV experienced outdoors and subsequent fading.

The surfaces of both these laminate films can be supplied in clear or matte finishes and with the introduction of new super clear adhesives gives added clarity to the finished label. This clarity is extremely important so that barcodes at checkout tills can be read easily and quickly.

Summary

Almost gone are the days when a plain paper or film label can be seen on a typical supermarket shelf. Some form of protection has become necessary, beginning with the application in a fast-running labeling line through to transporting the tin or pack to the supermarket shelf. Who wants to buy a product with half the information about the product missing? Even when the customer takes the product off the shelf, deposits it in a metal shopping trolley, takes it home and stores it in a cupboard or uses it in the kitchen or bathroom, the vital information must still be legible. This is even more important with pharmaceutical products where information on the pack is vital.

The use of coating or laminating technology has become an integral part of everyday life. The label which has been enhanced by the use of discreet coating finishes often acts as persuader for making the purchasing decision. The future of both technologies is set to expand and develop with new applications and new barrier properties being offered.



Read more about Pulse Roll Label Products, Lintec and Maan Engineering at www.labelsandlabeling.com

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Securing the future of your business through diversification

Hans Poortinga, manager of the MPS Systems Technology & Expertise Center, looks at how label converters can be successful by diversifying their product range

For label and narrow/mid web converters looking at ways to diversify their business and open up new revenue streams, a number of opportunities present themselves.

From diversification within labels – smart/interactive, peel and reveal, shrink sleeves – to new packaging formats – flexibles, folding cartons and some lightweight corrugated – there’s an almost endless array of opportunities.

Next-generation flexo, digital and hybrid (flexo-digital) printing all offer your business enhanced capabilities to manufacture new products. Hybrid printing, as an example, presents new opportunities for the combination of digital and conventional for mainly smaller runs. Evolution in printing is supported by further developments in pre-press, consumables, finishing and ancillaries, all of which help open the door for printers looking to diversify.

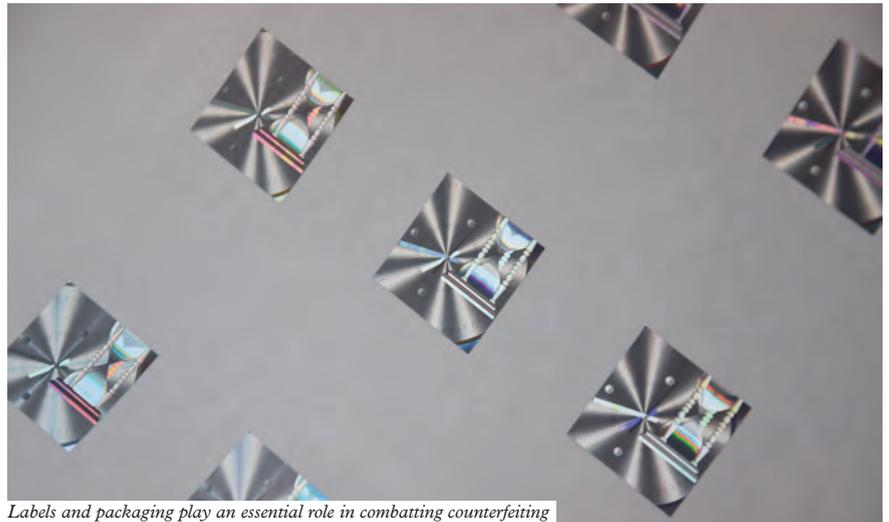
Why diversify?

The technical ability to diversify goes hand-in-hand with the need to do it. Diversification is important as there are many standard label converters entering the industry, such as sheet-fed offset printers that are adding labels as they look to diversify. To differentiate your business, you need to be looking to move into special label applications and different products like shrink sleeves and flexible packaging.

Flexible packaging has been a talking point in the industry for a number of years and is now a reality for many. Food, non-food, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, home and personal care, industrial chemicals – you name the product and more often than not, it is now available in some form of flexible packaging. While emerging product categories such as e-cigarettes and vaping have created new demand in non-food applications, food continues to dominate the flexible packaging conversation.

Those looking to offer food-safe flexible packaging must consider a number of factors that will help deliver a functional yet decorative product.

While labels are often applied to packaging that provides a functional barrier



Labels and packaging play an essential role in combatting counterfeiting

“The print process itself can also be used to build in anticounterfeiting elements”

– an absolute barrier in the case of metal and glass – as flexible packaging comes into contact directly with the product it must provide all the barrier properties necessary – light, oxygen, aroma. A further challenge emerges in that different types of product require different barriers, with dry goods, liquids, pastes, oils, etc, exhibiting different absorption characteristics, yet also need to allow some exchange of gases/moisture to ensure product integrity.

This makes materials integral to delivering food-safe flexible packaging. Often in a multi-layer construction to provide specific barrier characteristics, flexible packaging films feature a base layer made from PE, PP, PET, PVC or PLA polymers.

Some barrier properties of plastic can be obtained by biaxial orientation. BOPP films are known to have increased toughness, increased stiffness, enhanced clarity, and improved oil and grease resistance. Enhanced barrier properties with regard to oxygen transmission rate (OTR) and moisture vapor transmission rate (MVTR) are another benefit of biaxial orientation. OTR and MVTR are important characteristics of films as they allow the appropriate atmospheric exchange through

the packaging, extending shelf-life while preventing food spoilage. Topcoats are another way to modify films to achieve the appropriate barrier properties.

Substrate selection will impact other consumables used in production, such as inks and coatings. As flexible packaging is more often primary packaging, so the ingredients of ink are much more critical because of food contact and the implications of migration. As an example, UV flexo is commonplace in label production but in packaging remains a niche, albeit growing, option owing to concerns over safety from the migration of photoinitiators resulting from improper curing. Systems and tools to monitor UV dose and curing have been proposed and developed, with careful and considered testing recommended to ensure compliance. In the case of UV, the combination of inks with the different coatings that are used for flexible packaging must be tested.

Inks must also be correctly formulated to achieve color accuracy and consistency across the print run. Solvent- and water-based inks are most common, with energy curable options finding a home in certain applications. Flexible packaging inks

tend to have lower viscosity, making ink management an important tool in effective printing. Mixing stations, pumping units and automatic monitoring systems are among the tools that should be used to achieve and maintain the correct ink characteristics.

A laydown of white, sometimes double white, will be needed in order to achieve the correct opacity to print high quality graphics on flexible packaging films. When reverse printing, the printing ink must be formulated to be receptive to onward processing, such as metallizing or lamination.

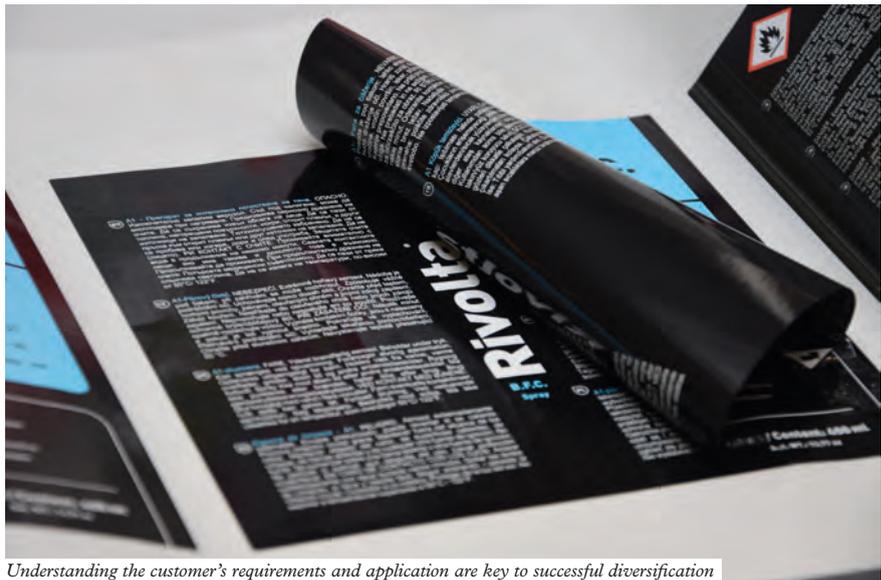
By their very nature, filmic materials tend to be thinner than fiber-based substrates, such as self-adhesive label papers that you might be used to handling. They are also more sensitive to stretch and heat, making their handling on-press more challenging.

Mid web central impression (CI) presses see the substrate supported around a single large diameter cylinder as it contacts a series of adjacent plate cylinders that lay down successive colors. This helps keep the substrate stable when running through the press. For in-line (stack) printing, where color stations are positioned in succession, careful tension control and chill rollers can be used to minimize the risk of excessive heating and stretching when pulling filmic materials through the press. Transverse movement of the web is an additional challenge. This causes issues with registration and can be managed through web guiding.

Printing brings further challenges, as most PP, PE and other plastics have chemically inert and nonporous surfaces with low surface tension. This causes issues in bonding with printing inks, coatings and adhesives. This means surface treatment is a necessity when running flexible packaging films. Corona and plasma treatment are the most common, with flame treatment also an option.



Special label applications, flexible packaging and shrink sleeves are all possibilities for diversification



Understanding the customer's requirements and application are key to successful diversification

“The narrow web industry is widely regarded as having much more experience with all kinds of additional applications compared to traditional wide web converters”

Security

Another growing area of interest for converters that want to diversify is security printing.

Estimates put the total value of counterfeiting globally on the way to topping \$1.8 trillion USD. Labels and packaging play an essential role in combatting counterfeiting. They can combine overt, semi-covert and covert technologies to deliver multi-layer security. This will then provide visual cues to consumers with holograms and the like, smart and intelligent packaging activations that feedback data to confirm the authenticity of a product, and RFID that allows enforcement officials to easily check provenance at ports and logistics hubs. Low-cost components are now being developed that will make RFID an increasingly accessible option.

For converters, this often translates to post-press embellishments, such as embossing, foiling, hot/cold stamping. Micro embossing, as an example, adds an extra level of anti-counterfeiting protection to print and packaging. Micro embossing dies feature a very small detail contained that is then translated into the foil on a printed item.

The print process itself can also be used to build in anticounterfeiting elements, such as digitally-printed variable/personalized data or offset rainbow printing. The rainbow coloring process used in offset printing can protect against color separation or copying by subtly merging colors into each

other, resulting in a gradual color change. The special print cannot be reproduced by photocopiers or scanners. Thermochromic inks – which exhibit a color change when exposed to a predefined temperature change – and those that are only visible under a specific light are likewise unable to be replicated or copied.

High definition flexo is facilitating developments too, with modern plates and platemaking allowing roll-fed lenticular printing, micro lines, micro text, guilloche patterns, and more. These are added directly to the plate using high resolution imaging technology as part of the effort to prevent forgery, counterfeiting or tampering.

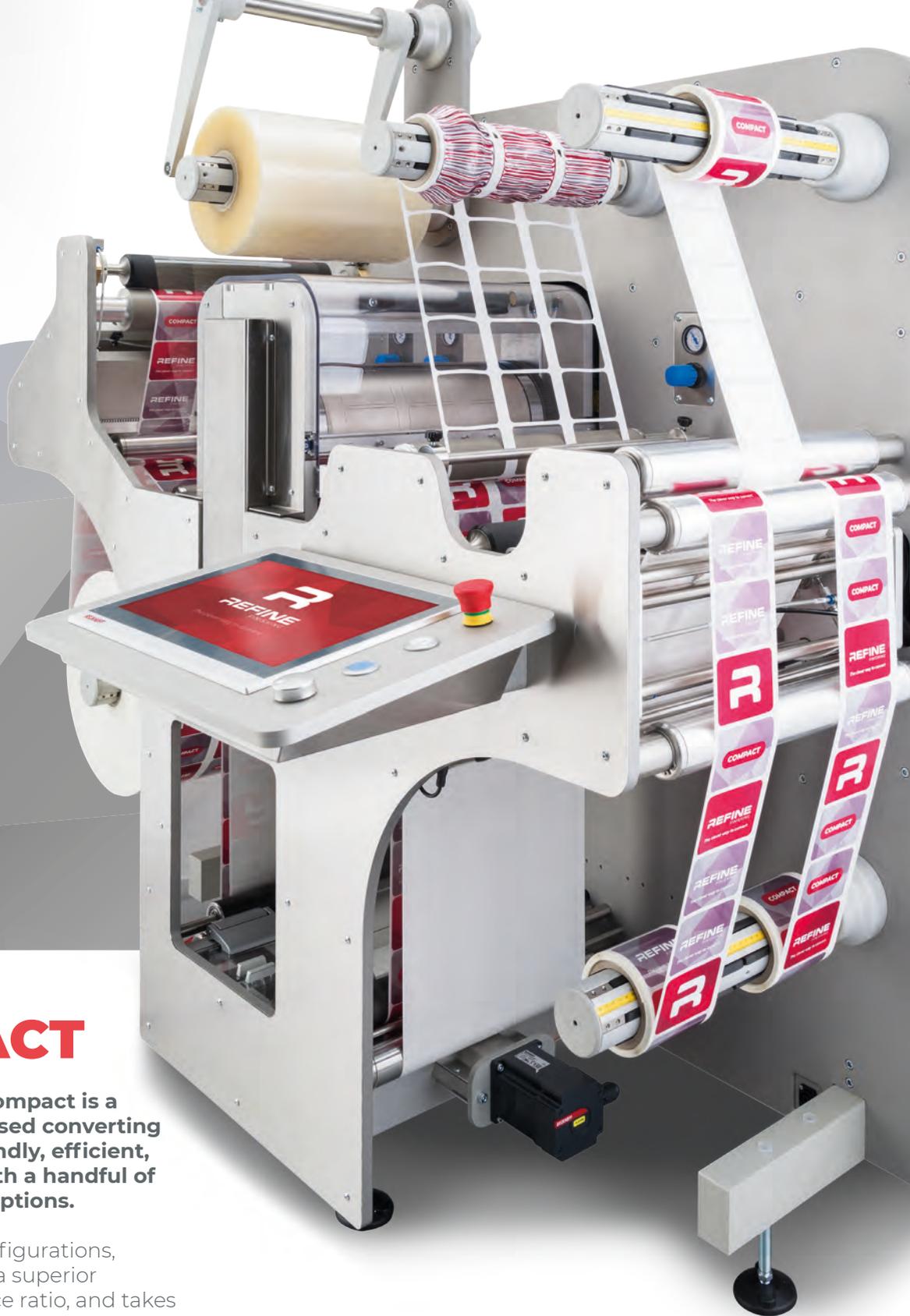
The result

In the above examples of flexible packaging and security printing, it is clear that understanding the customer's requirements and application are key to successful diversification, with pre-press, consumables, print process and finishing influencing each other and combining to produce the desired outcome.

This plays into the wheelhouse of label converters, as the narrow web industry is widely regarded as having much more experience with all kinds of additional applications compared to traditional wide web converters.



For more information about product diversification, contact Hans Poortinga at h.poortinga@mps4u.com



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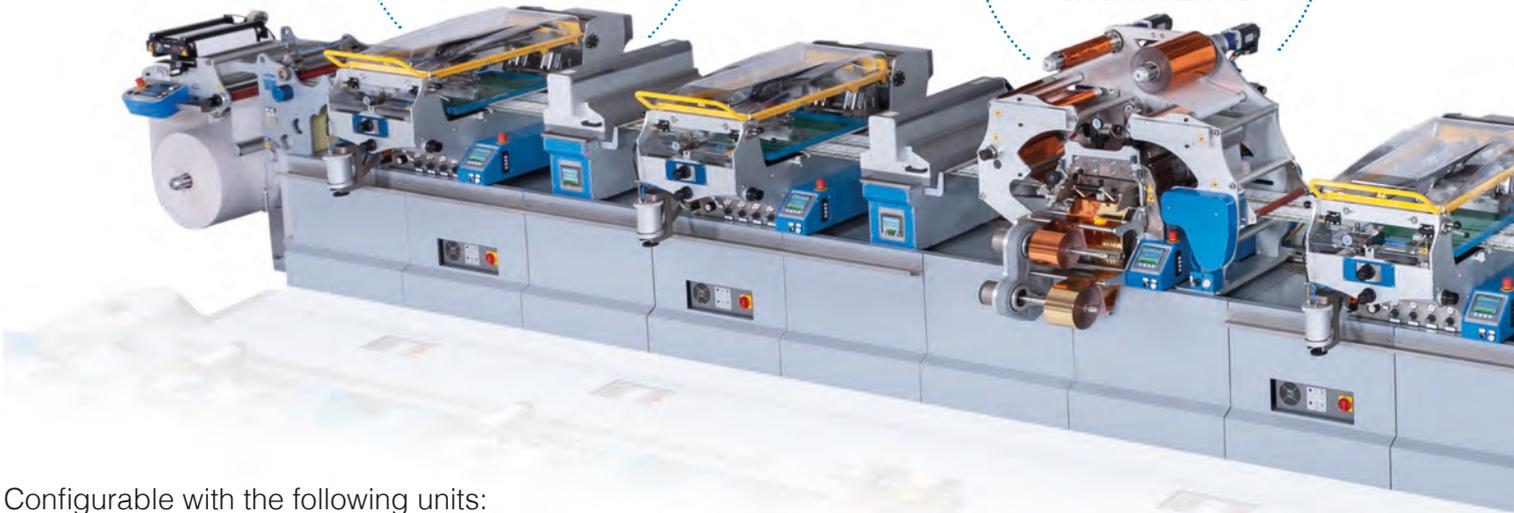
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A refined take on finishing

Denmark-based Werosys has been rebranded as Refine Finishing. David Pittman reports

In creating Refine Finishing out of Werosys, the men behind the company are seeking to inject new impetus into the market for smart, software-based converting technology.

This has been the foundation upon which Werosys was built, and which will continue to define Refine Finishing going forward.

Bjarke Nielsen, who founded Werosys and now serves as chief technology officer at Refine Finishing, explains: 'For us, software is everything. Then you build the mechanics to match. For a lot of companies in finishing, it is done the other way around. In other areas of the industry, there has been a shift away from mechanics to a focus on software – when you buy a digital press, it is mostly software driven. Of course the mechanics must be state-of the art, but if you're imposing software on to the mechanics it will be hard to maximize the potential.'

'We often see technology colliding, where finishing built from a mechanical mindset is holding back the printing technology, which is increasingly software-driven. To maximize the printing capabilities, finishing should be as smart and as automated as possible.'

“For us, software is everything”

This has previously been evidenced in the Werosys Compact/ Compact Ultra finishing lines, with automation and Industry 4.0 at their core. An example given is that of Denmark-based Limo Labels, which leveraged data to successfully integrate finishing into its existing ERP system. The printer was bringing rolls off its flexo presses into finishing, with manual input of data and set-up of the slitter rewinder accordingly. Using its existing electronic order management system, Refine Finishing (then Werosys) took key data and used barcodes added on the order note to automate this. By scanning the barcode directly on the finishing machine, the job is identified and the specifications used for set-up.

Nielsen explains: 'The machine reads the barcode to automatically pull data from the ERP system, which the operator accepts and the machine starts to set-up the job. This allows the operator to focus on loading the roll. By the time he's finished splicing the roll, the finishing line is ready. It is much more efficient for staff. This was not a big technical challenge and involved making data that already exists available to all machines.'

'There is a misconception that to automate you need to introduce a big workflow but you can start at a much simpler level. A lot of the data is already there. Whether you use an Excel



The new Compact product line will be produced based on forecasts



Bjarke Nielsen (left), CTO and founder, and Henrik Haagensen, managing director, Refine Finishing

spreadsheet or MIS system, the data is the same. The key is extracting it and using it in the correct way.'

Refined product portfolio

Such use of data will continue in Refine Finishing's machines: Compact, standard units with a basic configuration that will be built according to forecasts and available with a two-week lead time; Creative, modular systems that can be tailored to the customer's requirement; and Concept, fully customizable systems that are engineered on a project-by-project basis.

Of the idea behind the Compact series, Nielsen notes: 'A lot of machines have a similar configuration with a few minor adjustments before shipping. Previously, each machine was built to order and modular. By building to forecasts, we will be able to provide the short lead times that many customers want. When you move up to Creative, that is where the added value features come in. Concept models are for high-end converting applications where standard products are not suitable.'

Henrik Haagensen, Refine Finishing's first managing director, adds: 'A lot of technology has been taken over from the previous machines but they have been refined into a better-defined product portfolio based on the needs of the market, down to new look frames with more rounded edges.'

'Whenever I see a manual adjustment that is needed, I ask "can that be removed?",' continues Nielsen. 'Set-up is now almost entirely automated. This makes it much easier to view them as a package of software and hardware that provides a solution. They are so much more than just a machine that you buy. Machinery is a small part of the puzzle.'

Strategic partnership with Nilpeter

Alongside rebranding, product news and new hires, Refine Finishing has also entered into a strategic partnership with Nilpeter. A realization of this is the global expansion of Refine Finishing's sales and service network, with finishing equipment present in multiple Nilpeter showrooms across the globe and a worldwide team of service technicians on hand to assist current and future Refine Finishing equipment owners and users.



Along with its new identity, Refine Finishing has a new website at www.refinefinishing.com

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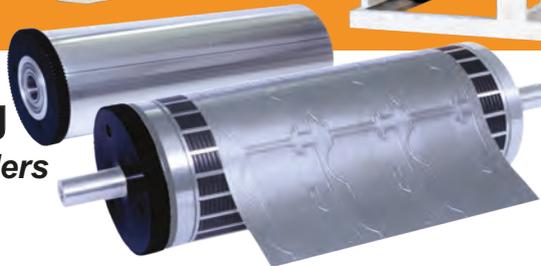
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Global Business Partners welcome

BGM, E+L unite for integrated inspection finishing system

The two suppliers have begun to offer an integrated package that combines their respective technologies. David Pittman reports

Finishing machinery manufacturer Bar Graphic Machinery (BGM) and web inspection and control specialist Erhardt+Leimer (E+L) are taking their combined technologies to market by integrating them into a single line.

This sees E+L's 200 percent SmartScan inspection system integrated with BGM's very latest iSR inspection slitter rewinder technology.

“It made sense to formally work on integration at a deeper level”

SmartScan is a camera system designed for inspection on printing and finishing machines for label and other narrow web applications. It features a special LED illumination concept that features reverse and front lighting to allow 100 percent inspection and detection on both sides of the substrate (hence '200 percent'). This enables detailed print image inspection, splice detection and detection of missing labels, unremoved matrix, etc. It is suitable for paper labels, transparent clear-on-clear and films.

SmartScan can operate at a maximum speed of 300m/min, matching the maximum operating speed of the BGM iSR. The label inspection slitter rewinder is claimed by BGM as 'the most cost-effective, compact and robust free-standing label inspection slitter rewinder currently available.' It features standard high specification features commonly found on more expensive slitter machines. By keying in the rewind shaft size, the machine will

Strategic growth

Bar Graphic Machinery is seeking to expand its footprint in key markets around the world, supported by new distributors representing its technology locally. 'We are actively looking to grow our distributor network,' explains Daniel Carr, sales manager at Bar Graphic Machinery.

automatically adjust the acceleration/ deceleration times optimizing productivity output. Other features include automatic unwind braking with adjustable roll end, reversible rewind and machine diagnostics. It is fast and highly energy-efficient, with speeds of up to 300m/min running on a simple 13-amp 230V plug.

Long-standing collaboration

The two companies have been working together for over a decade, explains Matthew Rust, managing director at E+L UK, collaborating to market each other's technology. E+L also provides web guiding and control technology to BGM.

Rust explains: 'There is an understanding and mutual respect between the two companies. Both companies are similar in size and have a similar mindset to developing cutting-edge, yet simple and intuitive technology.'

He continues: 'The integration of SmartScan into the iSR was an obvious extension of our working relationship. With many customers buying a finishing system, then fitting inspection technology, it made sense to formally work on integration at a deeper level to combine and maximize our technologies. We've had a positive response to this and sales have resulted for both companies as a result.'

BGM and E+L are now looking to spread the message about this integrated offer as they seek to provide customers with an optimized finishing system.

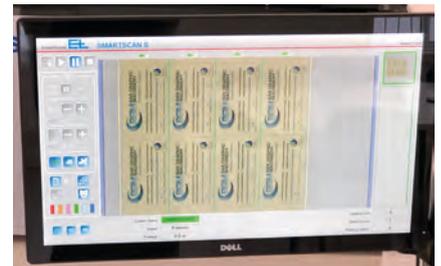
For BGM, this project also comes at an exciting time. It is now more than four years since it relocated into a new factory, providing additional manufacturing capacity and space for the company to grow. Growth has been such in that time that BGM is looking at options for further expansion of its facility.

'We're very busy,' notes Daniel Carr, sales manager at BGM. 'In the US, for example, there's lots of scope for growth. There's a lot of room for investment with legacy systems being upgraded to meet the requirements of modern manufacturing.'

In the US, BGM is represented by J&J Converting Machinery, with whom it reported a positive reaction to its technology at last year's Labelexpo Americas. J&J and BGM are now exploring a



The E+L SmartScan inspection system is now fully integrated with BGM's inspection slitter rewinder technology



E+L SmartScan is a camera system designed for inspection on printing and finishing machines

dedicated demonstration facility in the US to exploit the opportunities.

'It's a massive market for us already. We're shipping container loads of machines.'

Carr also sees strong business in markets across the Gulf region and Middle East, with 'good business going on in Israel,' he notes. 'The packaging market in the Gulf region is an area where we have identified big opportunities.'

Big projects are also going on nearer to home, with one UK customer having 30-plus machines and another who has six full servo flexible packaging machines built to its own exact bespoke requirements. A multi-station, bespoke system has recently shipped to another customer in Nottingham. This fully servo driven flexo re-registration converting line features four color stations, lamination, delam/relam, and a sheeter table. 'It's not the usual size of machine we build, but is a very interesting project and shows the depth and breadth of systems and engineering we can accomplish,' says Carr.



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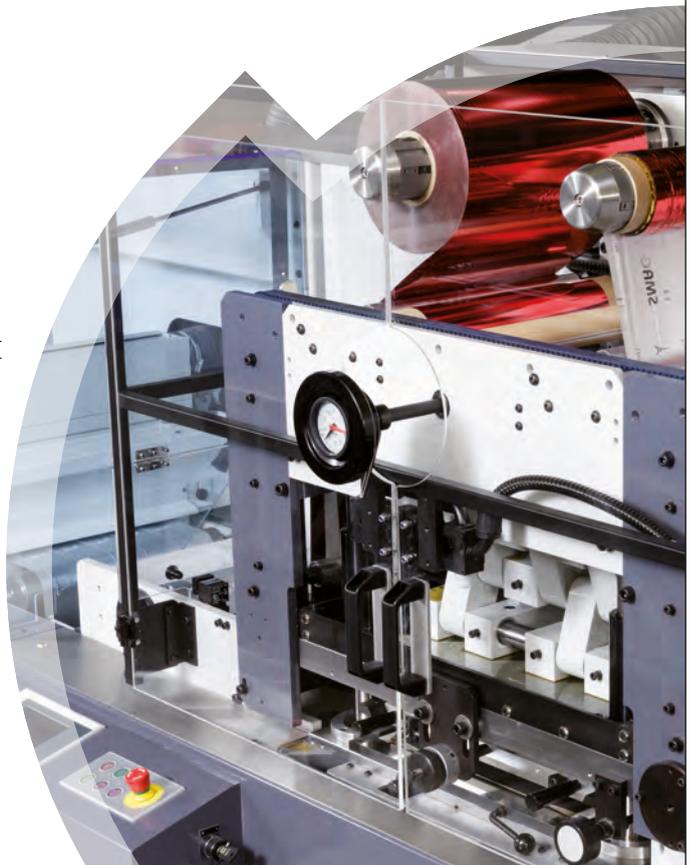
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Pushing finishing forward

Productivity and efficiency driven by connectivity are on the roadmap for finishing and converting equipment suppliers.
David Pittman reports

From slitters and rewinders, to full-blown converting lines, finishing equipment suppliers continue to enhance their products to meet the changing demands of printers.

For Gabriele D'Onofrio, general manager at Labeltech, this means requests for more complex and advanced machines such as modular converting systems to finish rolls from digital label printing machines. Luca Goldoni, sales manager at Cartes, says: 'Digital presses have certainly simplified, speed up and made the printing of labels more versatile, but they probably also have "flattened" the "artistic" result of the embellished label.'

At Lemorau, reacting to this evolution in the industry has centered largely on creating fast, efficient and affordable digital finishing systems. These entry-level (EBRM+) and modular (MEBR+) systems can provide options for customers either adding digital finishing or preparing for their future needs.

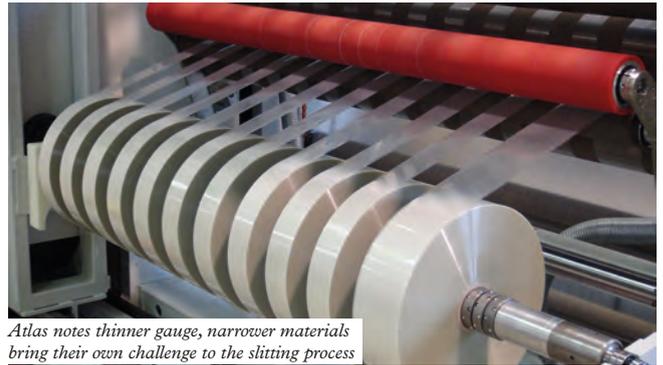
France-based Smag Graphique is working to extend its collaboration with the main digital and inkjet press manufacturers to propose finishing customization capabilities as standalone or integrated in-line hybrid systems. Smag has also focused on optimizing the development of its new generation finishing equipment to match high-speed requirements and increase workflow connectivity. Labeltech sees customers asking for bigger machines, able to handle bigger and wider rolls. Rotoflex's wider VLI-800, for example, has been designed to support the HP Indigo 20000 and growth in short runs of digitally printed labels and packaging.

Barrie Homewood, sales and marketing director at Atlas Converting Equipment, continues: 'We have many customers who utilize wide web roll-to-roll applications (800mm-plus) who are experiencing label materials becoming thinner in gauge and narrower in width. This brings its own challenge to the slitting process. It also means that efficiency is vital.'

Labeltech's Gabriele D'Onofrio adds: 'We are increasing the size and the solidity of our slitter rewinders, as well as developing new modules that are more versatile in converting.'

A smaller footprint Rotoflex DSI provides such versatility in converting by offering digital finishing and die-cutting, integrated with semi-rotary module. UV flexo print-cure, cold foil and lamination can be integrated too.

Cartes' Luca Goldoni says: 'Going back to 2012, the year in which the first GT360 series machine was launched, and making a comparison with what is requested and produced today, we are talking about different eras. Initially the configurations of the machines produced were limited to three or four units, nowadays the trend is to produce much more versatile and complex machines, with a potential of embellishing able to amaze the market. The challenge is based on automation, working in-line with other machines (digital and non-digital), and the possibility of making our GT360 and Gemini machines highly automated.' Goebel IMS group marketing manager Kerstin Stumpf-Trautmann notes how the company's customers are increasingly looking for optimized and highly efficient technologies. A new fully automatic MPW slitter rewinder with coreless winding is designed to facilitate more efficient production for those manufacturing and converting paper rolls with short running lengths. Coreless winding is realized through a modified winding process with specially designed rewind shafts.



Atlas notes thinner gauge, narrower materials bring their own challenge to the slitting process

“Initially the configurations of the machines produced were limited to three or four units, nowadays the trend is to produce much more versatile and complex machines, with a potential of embellishing able to amaze the market”

Further, the deepening strategic partnership between Goebel IMS and Laem Systems has expanded the machine portfolio for primary, secondary and converting industries as well as slitting and winding. This has created a complete portfolio of technology suitable for various applications along the value chain. The two companies are now jointly executing projects.

Software

David Grenwis, marketing manager at Delta ModTech, further notes that label finishers are 'always looking for ways to decrease downtime.'

To facilitate this, Delta ModTech has made advancements to its Intelli-mod control system to make the controls simple for the operator and automate steps where possible. On-screen instructions walk users through the set-up of the Spectrum finisher and machine settings can be stored as individual product recipes to be recalled.

Atlas' Barrie Homewood sees machines sharing information from upstream and downstream processes becoming standard in the future, which will increase the efficiencies of the complete manufacturing process for customers.

Lemorau's slitting rewinding and finishing machines come Industry 4.0 ready while Refine Finishing CTO Bjarke Nielsen notes how he has been talking about and representing Industry 4.0/ IoT through finishing equipment for a number of years. This will continue to be integral to the new-look Refine Finishing product portfolio, centered on its Compact series, to drive productivity and automation. Data will also be used to enable machine maintenance and remote support.

With Siemens' Industrial Edge FFS technology, analysis of



Cartes is working on making its Gemini machines highly automated

machine data helps to identify process errors automatically. Via frequency analysis and the comparison of frequencies with a reference list containing the mechanical data of all the machine components, the element causing the failure can be automatically identified.

Investing in slitting

PT Surya Multi Indopack has invested in a Universal X6VT slitter rewinder in order to reduce stoppage time and increase productivity. With dedicated factories for flexo and rotogravure printing. As part of its ongoing expansion, PTSMI needed additional slitting capacity with the flexibility to handle a wide range of substrates.

KTI product engineer Chris Plude envisions a future where the operator interface includes complete set-up and operating instructions for the machine. 'This puts everything the operator needs to know about the machine at his/her fingertips. It could also include a link to the factory production system for downloading and uploading job information. Technology provides us with some powerful tools to work with and the OEM needs to constantly explore new ways to leverage those tools.'

An example from elsewhere in the value chain is Siemens' near-AI LECO self-learning compensation technology, which is able to overcome the limits of mechanics and conventional control technology using digitalization and intelligent software to improve print accuracy. Grenwis identifies artificial intelligence in machine controls as already making Delta ModTech's machines smarter. 'The prevalence of Industry 4.0 will give finishers real time

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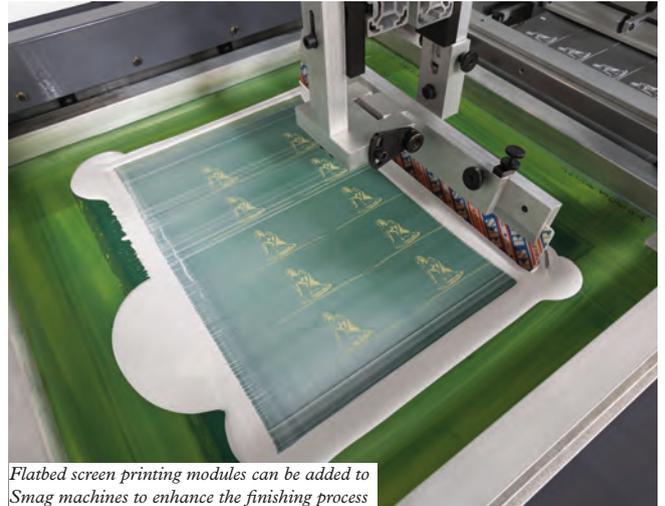
“We are increasing the size and the solidity of our slitter rewinders, as well as developing new modules that are more versatile in converting”

information on the status of their equipment and on the production and quality of their products. The ability to monitor all phases of your manufacturing allows you to stay ahead of issues that could slow production. For example, monitoring raw materials such as inks and substrates helps prevent shortages and waste. Real-time feedback on your machine's health allows you to plan for preventative maintenance and shorten downtime. Data logging of both pass/fail and critical tolerance dimensions, critical quality inspection data can be sent to the end user before the product reaches their shipping department, providing confidence in the product and decreasing delivery time.'

Hardware

On-machine, the increased access to and use of data has made modern systems highly automated. KTI' Chris Plude explains: 'There are a number of tasks traditionally performed by the operator on a turret rewriter and the good news is that the technology exists to automate many of those tasks. The bad news is that automation is expensive.'

Plude gives as an example KTI's new automatic core loading



Flatbed screen printing modules can be added to Smag machines to enhance the finishing process

Investing in rewinding

Spain-based Plásticos del Segura has installed an e2TCA 140 automatic non-stop double turret slitter rewriter from Enprom. The e2TCA 140 has been designed to be completed with an integrated laser cutting system to produce flexible packaging for the agro-food industry. The system's modular design allows in-line installation of processes such as micro-perforating, macro-perforating, laser cutting, semi-rotary die-cutting and inspection. The non-stop system allows the elimination of waste and subsequent work of reprocessing to clean reels.

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system, which has been developed to handle a broader range of core sizes at or below the price of feeder bowl systems, providing an improved ROI on the expense. Other tasks ripe for deeper automation include slitter positioning, finished roll closure, and finished roll removal and conveying.

The Labeltech Lavaredo automatic slitter posing unit is the result of such an appetite for automation. Recent upgrades have been made to speed up production and expand the unit's capabilities, such as compatibility with razor slitters, lateral adjustment monitoring and semi-automatic opposite slitter placement.

Stephane Rateau, general manager at Smag Graphique, says: 'Thanks to servo motors and automation, the machines are now able to register the jobs and provide automatic pre-setting features.'

Smag's portfolio includes the new table-top Vega 2 rewinder allowing the web to move forward and backwards in a continuous or step-by-step mode for control applications. The machine can be fitted with web guide, camera, and inkjet or laser printing option. Its modular finishing lines, Digital Galaxie and E-Cut Generation III, can integrate similar options to enhance the finishing process – from flatbed screen printing at 25m/min, and flatbed hot stamping and embossing at 45m/min, to web treatment, UV flexo module, spot varnish, cold foil, laminating, inspection, laser cutting and sheeting, as well as die-cutting at 70m/min in semi-rotary mode.

Rateau says: 'The best performance nowadays is achieved with semi-rotary die-cutting that provides an excellent cutting quality level coupled to low cost tooling at a standard speed of 60-70m/min. Magnetic plates are now easily and quickly delivered at very affordable prices.'

“The ability to monitor all phases of your manufacturing allows you to stay ahead of issues that could slow production”

Grafotronic's Q-Load is an automatic side-loading system for the quick change of magnetic die-cutting cylinders, while Rotoflex claims die changeovers are achieved in 30 seconds or less on its Rotoflex DF3 off-line converting option. DF3 uses semi rotary and rotary quick-change die-cutting technology in addition to flexo stations, which it says accelerates the finishing process.

R&D

For Atlas' Barrie Homewood, the technical demands of the label industry mean 'a continuous R&D program to find the most efficient and market leading ways of processing the wide range of materials used in different label applications.

Investing in digital finishing

Lithographic Printers from Jamaica has invested in a GM DC330Nano label finisher as an all-in-one finishing option for its HP Indigo narrow web press. The new GM semi-rotary die-cutting machine replaced a flatbed die-cutting machine, and has 'significantly' improved quality and efficiency. With investment in a digital roll-to-roll printer and finisher will allow Lithographic Printers to target local companies in the bottling, bakeries and pharmaceutical industries. Further, the printer's owners plan expansion in Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados and, in the future, smaller Caribbean islands.



Labeltech's Lavaredo automatic slitter posing unit is the result of the appetite for automation



MOD-Track machine vision inspection system can be added to any Delta ModTech machine

'These include PSA, shrink, wraparound, thermal and in-mold. These all require different handling through the slitting and rewinding process.'

Cartes' Luca Goldoni confirms the changes in end uses and market trends represent a continuous challenge, but sees this as an 'incentive to innovate'.

'Every market, every customer, every production environment, every sector, requires specific solutions to allow each label producer to express themselves at their best.'

For Labeltech's Gabriele D'Onofrio, this will result in future machines becoming more modular and standardized.

'Modularity will be extended to all our models to obtain smart solutions with few devices and give the customer the chance to adapt their machine to market changes years after purchasing.'

Lemorau's Susana Teixeira identifies future machines as being more compact, faster and efficient, a view Atlas' Barrie Homewood concurs with. He concludes: 'In the future, machines will be compact, fast, automated and solution-based.'

'Floor space is expensive, so naturally our customers want compact machines. We have to keep ahead of the upstream process, so speed is essential. A solution-based approach means that we are not just supplying a slitting machine, but a fully integrated solution which may incorporate additional equipment to provide a turnkey solution.'



Read more about the successful application of finishing technology at Norwegian printer Ellco on page 45



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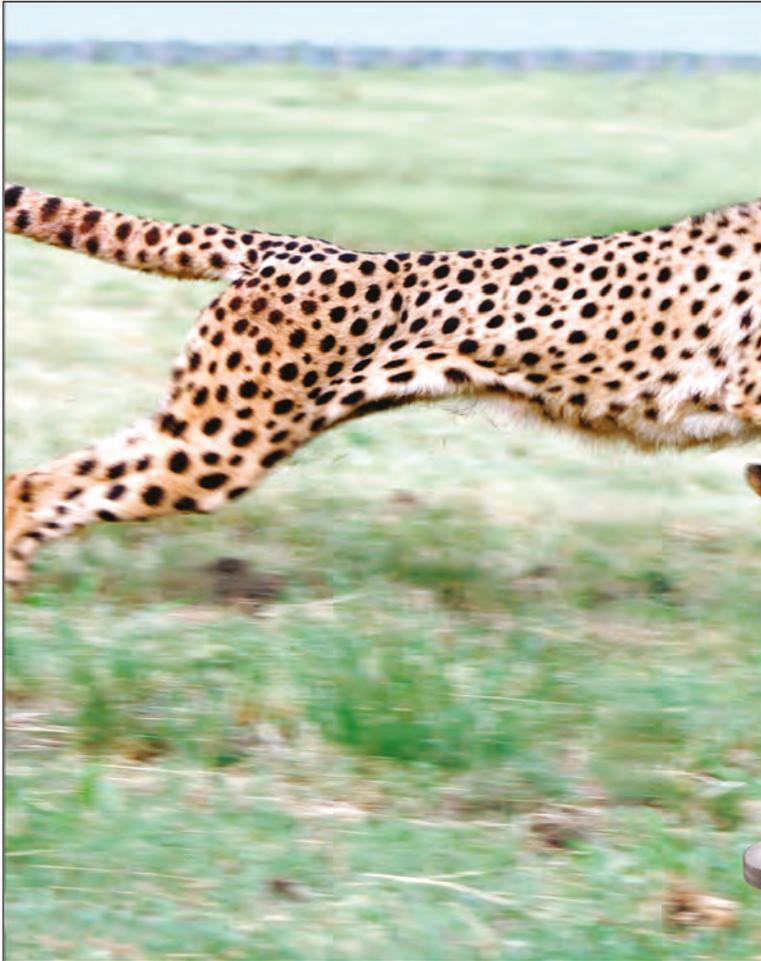
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Label trends

Statistics showing strong growth in the Indian label industry and wider economy



400 million sqm Labelstock consumed annually in India

15% Annual growth in Indian label industry

0.35sqm Per capita label consumption in India

Source: SMI Coated Products

25,940 tonnes Plastic waste generated daily

40% Which remains uncollected

Source: Uflex

547 million Size of middle class by 2026*

\$1,983 USD Per capita GDP in 2012†

\$3,273.85 USD Per capita GDP in 2023 (predicted)†

Sources: *NCAER, †IBEF

6.6% GDP growth 2017-18

8.2% GDP growth Apr-Jul quarter 2018

7.3% GDP growth 2018-19 (predicted)

Source: IBEF

Label SOCIETY



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Rohit Mehta, SMI in conversation with a client during a factory tour



Ajay Mehta with clients during SMI's 25th anniversary celebration



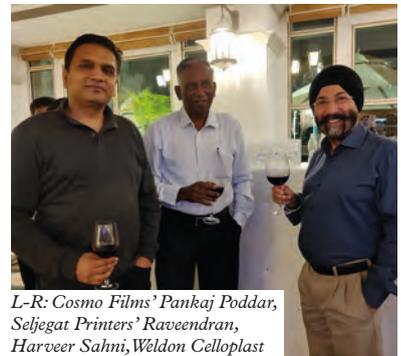
Pankaj Poddar, Cosmo Films, Ajay and Swati Mehta of SMI



R-L: Viral Vyas, AIDC Technologies Association, Rajiv Nair, Stallion Systems, Ajay and Swati Mehta, SMI



Ajay Mehta of SMI Coated Products with Vinesh Bhimani of Kimoha, Harveer Sahni of Weldon Celloplast, and family and friends at the silver jubilee celebrations of SMI



L-R: Cosmo Films' Pankaj Poddar, Selegat Printers' Raveendran, Harveer Sahni, Weldon Celloplast



The Mehta family with Uday Lodha of Barcom Industries



LMAI members with Ajay Mehta (fourth from left)



Kocher + Beck employees from the US, UK, Germany, Russia gathered for their recent Annual Technical Meeting, staged at the end of February in the UK



Tara Halpin (front row, far right) joins colleagues at US printer Steinhauser to celebrate the installation of its first MPS flexo press

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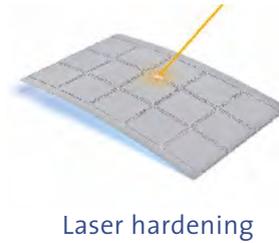


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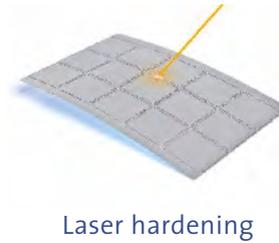
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