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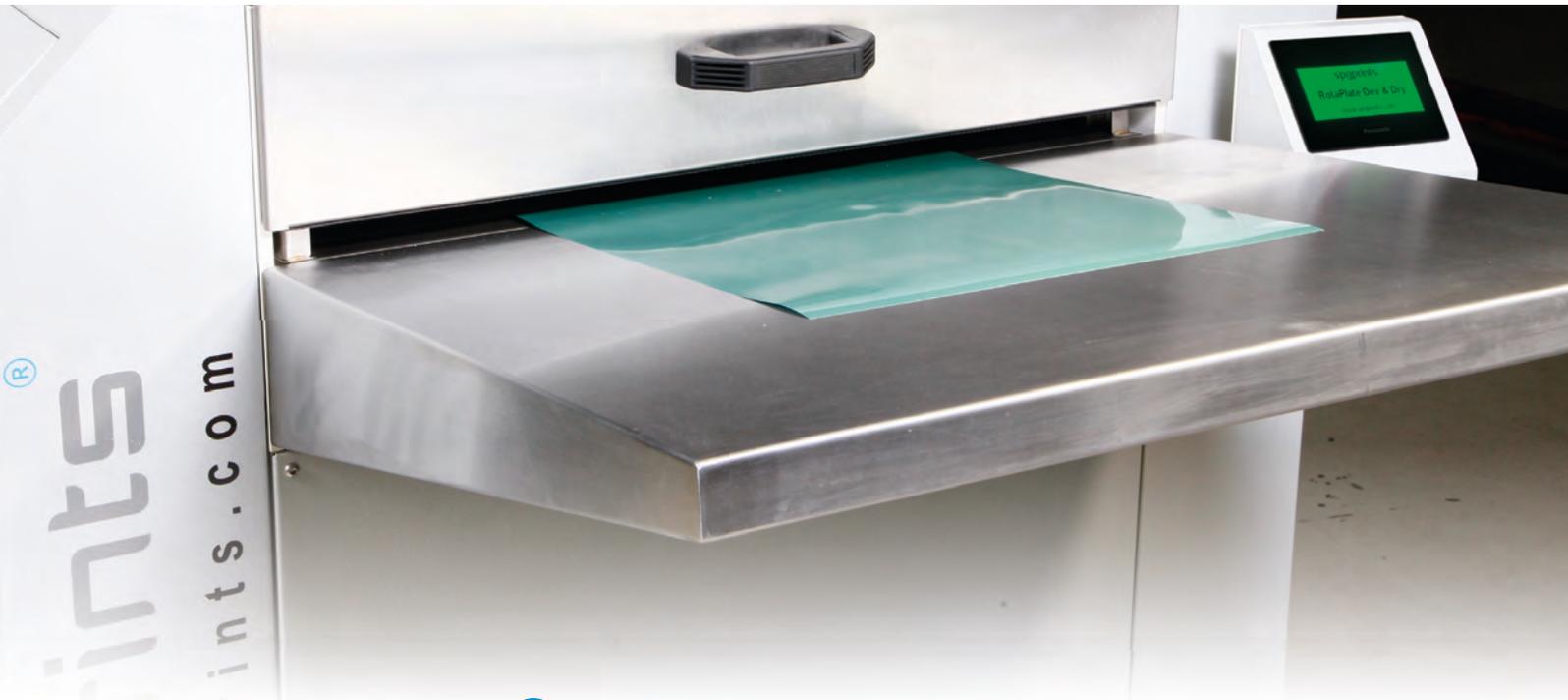
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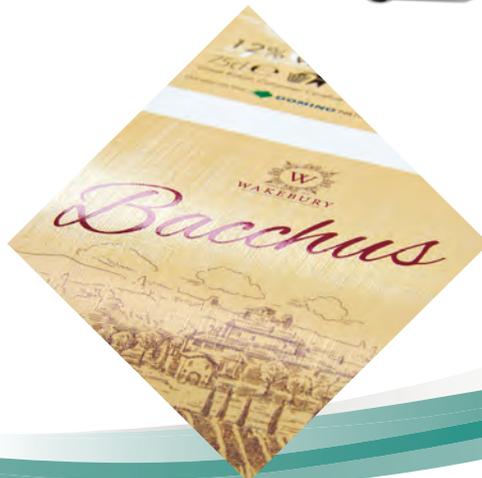
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– Meet the team

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James Quirk
Group managing editor



Andy Thomas-Emans
Strategic director



Mike Fairley
Strategic consultant



Tim Gordon
Publishing director



David Pittman
Deputy editor



Chelsea McDougall
North America editor



Aakriti Agarwal
India and Southeast Asia editor



Yolanda Wang
China editor



Kevin Liu
China project director



Keren Becerra
Latin America correspondent



Gill Loubser
Africa correspondent



Henry Mendelson
Oceania correspondent



Tony White
Technical editor



Danielle Jerschefske
Sustainability columnist



Bob Cronin
M&A columnist



Nick Coombes
Editorial consultant

Editorial

James Quirk, *Group managing editor*
Andy Thomas-Emans, *Strategic director*
Mike Fairley, *Strategic consultant*
David Pittman, *Deputy editor*
Chelsea McDougall, *North America editor*
Aakriti Agarwal, *India and Southeast Asia editor*
Yolanda Wang, *China editor*
Kevin Liu, *China project director*
Gill Loubser, *Africa correspondent*
Henry Mendelson, *Oceania correspondent*
Keren Becerra, *Latin America correspondent*
Tony White, *Technical editor*
Danielle Jerschefske, *Sustainability columnist*
Bob Cronin, *M&A columnist*
Nick Coombes, *Editorial consultant*
T: +44 (0)20 8846 2835
E: editorial@labelsandlabeling.com

Advertising

Randy Kessler, *Vice president of advertising sales*
Joerg Singer, *Account manager – Europe*
Mirco Mazzarella, *Account manager – EMEA and online*
Andrea Serna-Alvarez, *Account executive – Europe*
Pradeep Saroha, *Account executive – India*
Tina Wang, *Account executive – China*
Daniel Zhao, *Account executive – China*
T: +44 (0)20 8846 2818
E: advertising@labelsandlabeling.com

Design

Adam Evans, *Head Designer*
Laura Burns, *Designer*
Simon Taljaard, *Designer*
Victoria Bone, *Designer*

T: +44 (0)20 8846 2841
E: design@labelsandlabeling.com

Production

James Wenman, *Design & production manager*
Jamie Whittington, *Production executive*
T: +44 (0)20 8846 2833
E: production@labelsandlabeling.com

Marketing

Paul Connelly, *Marketing director*
Hannah O'Farrell, *Marketing manager*

T: +44 (0)20 8846 2825
E: marketing@labelsandlabeling.com

Management

Lisa Milburn, *Managing director*
Tim Gordon, *Publishing director*
T: +44 (0)20 8846 2818

Publishers

Tarsus Exhibitions and Publishing Ltd, Metro Building,
1 Butterwick, London, W6 8DL, United Kingdom
T: +44 (0)20 8846 2700 | F: +44 (0)20 8846 2801

Other offices

Tarsus Expositions Inc, 175 N Patrick Blvd,
Suite 180, Brookfield, WI 53045, United States
T: +1 262 782 1900 | F: +1 262 782 8474
Tarsus Exhibitions & Publishing Ltd. Room G, 29th
Floor, SIIC, 18 North Caoxi Rd, Xuhui District, Shanghai,
200030, China
T: +86-21-64686801 | F: +86-21-64279169
Tarsus Exhibitions & Publishing Ltd. O4U Centre, 649,
Office M-03, Phase-5, Udyog Vihar, Gurgaon, Haryana,
122001, India
T: +917244234434

Subscriptions

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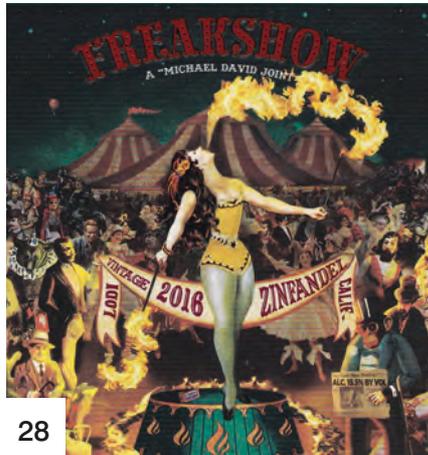
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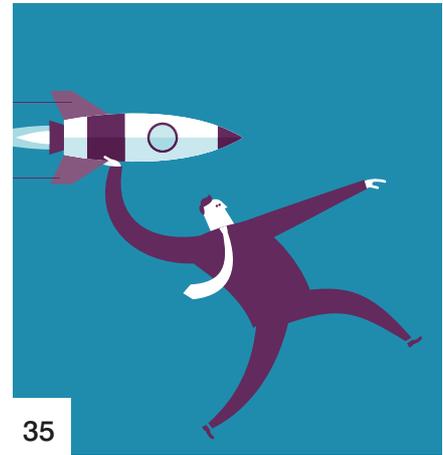
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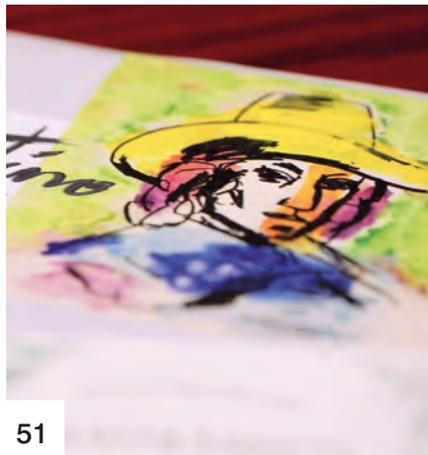
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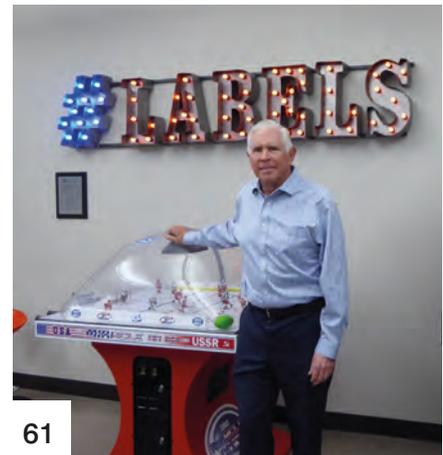
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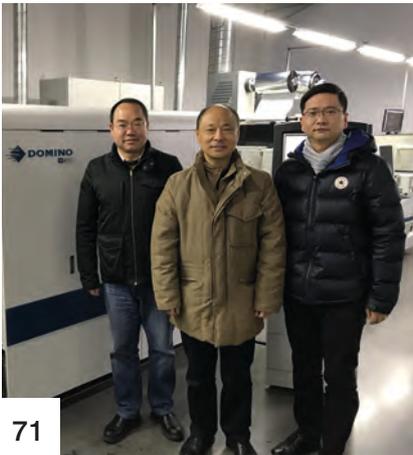
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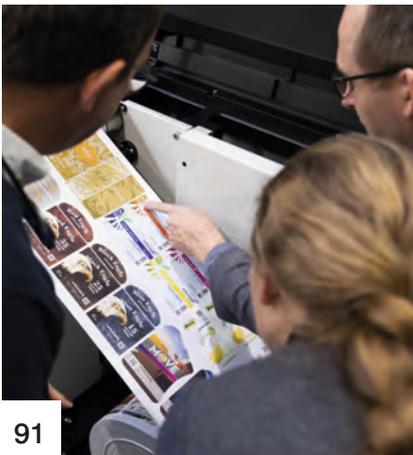
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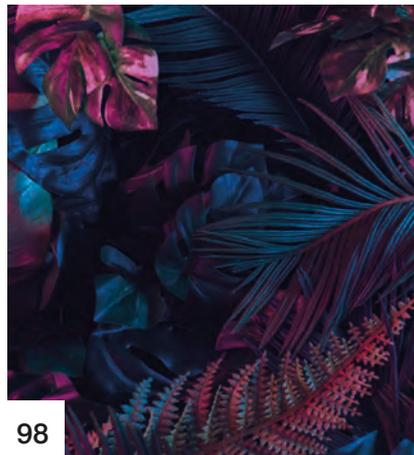
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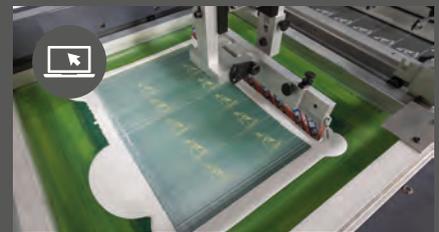
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labels&labeling.com

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



Race to the finish (feature)

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



On your marks (opinion)

Grupo Nutresa brand manager Luisa Garcia addresses trends and challenges in Latin America



Get set (video)

Phoseon shows flexo retrofit with UV LED



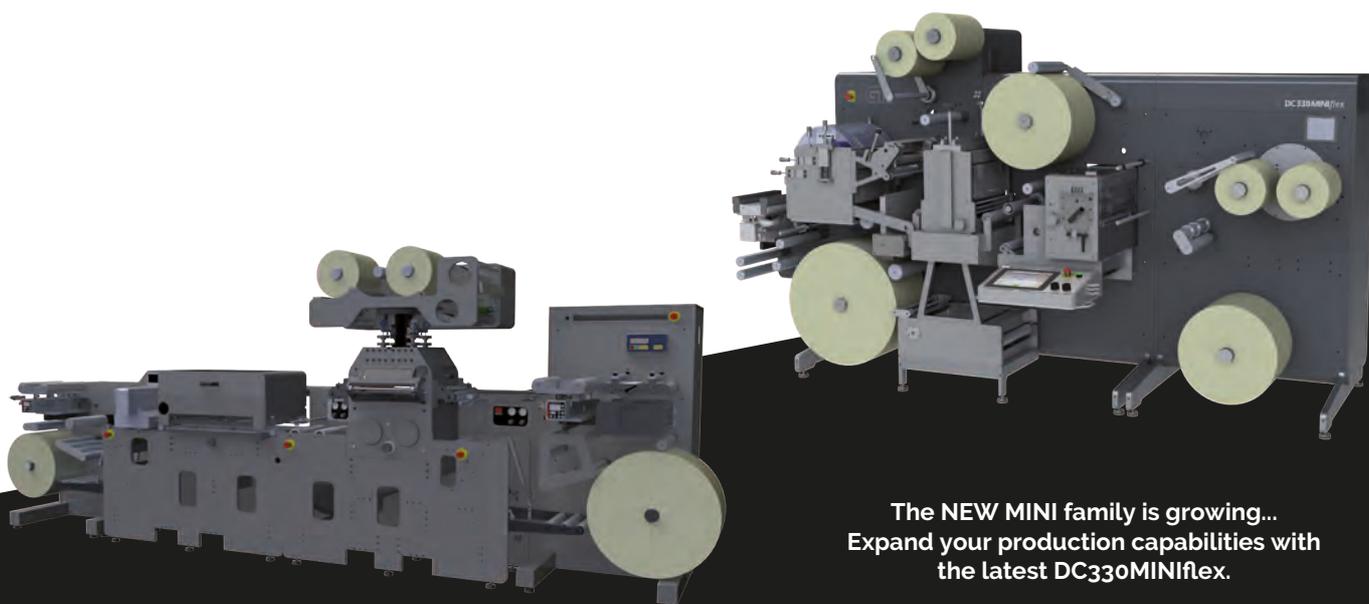
Go (events)

Find out about industry events from around the world in the L&L events diary

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Thirty years ago (L&L issue 3, 1989)



P13 Variable information printing was gaining acceptance. In previous years, a range of new variable information printing technologies had evolved for PS (and plain paper) label production. Mike Fairley visited companies in Germany and Switzerland to assess the development and latest installations of the GMC PrintRobot magnetographic printing system.



P24 For the first time in the history of the Fasson Self-Adhesive Awards, the categories devoted to labeling applications were targeted at market sectors in which self-adhesives are widely used, rather than at different production processes. NS Macfarlane won the food and beverage category for a label for Arthur Bell Connoisseur 12-year-old deluxe whisky.



P38 That year's Latma conference in Canberra welcomed delegates from Australia, Benelux, Denmark, England, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland and the US. For the first time at the convention, all major label associations were represented – TLMI (US), Finat (Europe), AJLPA (Japan) and Latma itself. The event also coincided with visits to plants in Sydney and Melbourne.



P42 An encounter at a European exhibition between Omet and Norprint International had proved significant for both companies. For the Italian company, which had yet to penetrate the UK market, this led to the sale of an Omet ET400 two-color flexo press. For Norprint, it was an addition to its computer label production machines that lived up to all its initial promise.

Trade association events – yes or no?

Editor's note

I am writing this leader column in the run-up to the Finat European Label Forum (ELF) in Copenhagen.

Finat has been making major efforts to ensure that both its ELF and annual technical conferences are relevant to label converters of all sizes. TLMI has also been pushing a number of initiatives and research programs of direct interest to label converters in an effort to convince the bulk of the label converting industry to attend – and not just the 'elite' and the suppliers who usually provide the backbone of industry association events.

So why are so many converters reluctant to attend association events? 'It takes up too much time' and 'costs too much' are common arguments. Many converters see 'high level' events as way beyond the realities of their everyday

“Getting away from the day-to-day professional coalface allows time to reflect and reassess business priorities and goals”

business concerns. There is also some nervousness that employees being pushed to be more and more productive may see a couple of days spent away from the plant as a 'management jolly'.

In addition, both association meetings and industry exhibitions are no longer seen as the only way to network and learn about new developments, with the ubiquity of the internet and more suppliers holding their own in-house events.

There is no doubt that these kinds of learning and networking experiences are

valuable and have a place in the overall education process.

But industry-wide association meetings and exhibitions retain a key role. Industry association agendas are now developed by highly focused teams of suppliers and converters laser-focused on content which will stick and is of direct business benefit. Getting away from the day-to-day professional coalface allows time to reflect and reassess business priorities and goals. If you come back with just one or two powerful ideas or learnings, then the investment in time and money can be easily

justified, and employees can see these effects clearly.

Our recent Label Summit Latin America – about which you can read more in the next issue of L&L – was the most successful of the three events we have organized in Colombia, and was all about the power of shared learning and networking experiences.

Likewise at Labelexpo, the ability to see and compare multiple suppliers' offerings during real-time demonstrations amongst industry peers is an experience that simply cannot be replicated by looking at YouTube videos.

James Quirk
Group managing editor

News



ePac prints flexible packaging on HP Indigo 20000 digital presses

ePac moves into Europe

Announcement follows opening of 15 US plants in three years

ePac Flexible Packaging is to expand its footprint internationally by establishing a direct presence in Europe.

The newly created ePac Holdings Europe will manage the expansion, with the first manufacturing location slated to be operational in the second half of 2019 in the UK. ePac UK is currently open for sales via www.epacflexibles.co.uk, with order fulfillment handled out of ePac's US locations until the plant is operational. This announcement builds on 15 ePac locations previously announced in the US.

ePac Holdings Europe will be managed by Johnny Hobeika. Hobeika has extensive experience in the flexible packaging industry in the UK and other European markets, having developed and managed successful manufacturing, sales and distribution centers. Hobeika will report to the board of ePac Holdings Europe.

ePac Flexible Packaging is a US-based specialist in fast time-to-market, short and medium run length finished pouches and rollstock. ePac is based entirely on digital printing technology from HP, specifically the Indigo 20000 model.

Focused primarily on food manufacturers and co-packers, ePac serves local, regional and national brands of all sizes with a unique service model geared to shipment of finished pouches in three weeks or less, and rollstock in under 10 business days. All ePac locations are full-service manufacturing plants with pre-press, digital printing, laminating and pouch-making performed in-house. In line with the EU movement toward sustainability, ePac offers recyclable film as an option.

Jack Knott, ePac Flexible Packaging CEO, commented: 'Our European operations will be based on the same business model we have developed in the US over the course of the past three years, where we have seen tremendous success.'

'With the number of countries and languages in Europe, the volume of SKUs a brand must bring to market can be expensive and time-consuming,' said Johnny Hobeika. 'The advantages ePac will bring to brands will be game-changing. Multi-SKU orders can be rapidly produced in the same print run without printing plates and minimal waste.'



Durst's new headquarters in Brixen, Italy

Durst opens new headquarters

Inauguration hosts 1,000 guests at new facility in Brixen, Italy

Durst has opened new headquarters and a customer experience center at its site in Brixen, northern Italy.

Described by the digital printing specialist as a 'watershed in its transformation into a highly integrated process service provider', the design of the new building was first presented more than 50 years ago but never realized. Architects Monovolume pursued the original concept and designed a flat, floating 'wing' with a six-story tower. The powder-coated metal façade has 850 multi-colored, luminous window elevations arranged in pixel-like fashion. The pixelated facade of Durst's new headquarters is also a pointer to the company's areas of business, as Durst is a manufacturer of high-performance printing systems from image data processing and printing to final product finishing. A new administrative block is connected directly with production facilities.

In the future, Durst will invite more of its international customers to the customer experience center in the 5,700sqm headquarters.

Durst Group CEO and co-owner Christoph Gamper commented: 'This is a very proud day in the long history of Durst. We do not fear the future. We are here to shape the future. We have the best employees, the best customers and the best technology. Driven by the mantra of innovation, Durst offers complete solutions from pixel to output.'

Customers, employees and business partners were among some 1,000 guests who attended an inauguration ceremony in early April. Speakers included Gamper, owner Harald Oberrauch, owner Christof Oberrauch, Mayor of Brixen Peter Brunner, Dean of Brixen Albert Pixner, Regional Council of South Tyrol representative Philipp Achammer, and Patrik Pedó and Juri Pobitzer from architects Monovolume.

Durst's history dates back more than 80 years and is closely associated with the Oberrauch family, which is now in the third generation of ownership. The management board recently underwent a change with Christof Oberrauch handing over the reins to his son, Harald Oberrauch. At the same time, Christoph Gamper was appointed CEO, and has now been given stronger ties to the long-established business through joint ownership.



Track ePac's history at
www.labelsandlabeling.com/search/site/epac

News



The technology center is located at Shanghai Publishing and Printing College

Flint opens Asia-Pacific technology center

Site in Shanghai for manufacturing, development and training

Flint Group has opened a new technology center (ATC) in Shanghai, allowing expansion of technical support and services in the Asia-Pacific region.

Located at Shanghai Publishing and Printing College (SPPC), the technology center provides a location for state-of-the-art development, plate manufacturing, training and education. It features nyloflex, nyloprint and ThermoFlexX plate processing equipment, as well as facilities for training, education and in-depth evaluation.

Flint has invested around €2 million EUR (\$2.3 million USD) in the technology center.

Friedrich von Rechteren, global commercial vice president at Flint Group, said: 'The ATC is an important milestone within our global innovation network to help our customers capturing the growth in the packaging market. We can not only showcase what can be done within the flexographic printing space, but more importantly provide a platform to develop solutions with and for our customers and the entire value chain.'

'hSPPC in Shanghai is a strategic choice for our technology center in the Asia-Pacific region, where we are committed to grow. Flint Group has now a unique facility in Asia-Pacific for teaching and testing excellence, incorporating a concept for the development of all kinds of future printing plates and plate processing solutions.'

Flint Group has previously established global and regional innovation centers such as its Global Innovation Center for paper and board in Malmö, Sweden; the Global Colour Center in Lodz, Poland; and the Flexographic Technical Center in Charlotte, North Carolina.

New name for Kodak's flexo packaging division

Miraclon has been founded as the new independent company to take Kodak's former flexo packaging division forward.

Eastman Kodak Company agreed late last year to sell its flexo packaging division to Montagu Private Equity.

This has resulted in the creation of Miraclon as a company to fully focus on developing and delivering innovative technologies that will 'drive the transformation' of flexo printing. Miraclon will concentrate on the development, production and sale of Kodak Flexcel technology, including the flagship Kodak Flexcel NX System.

Under Montagu's ownership, Miraclon is identified as being in a great position to leverage the strengths of the former Kodak flexo business, that include an experienced team, a strong patent portfolio and the trusted Kodak brand, coupled with a renewed focus, agility and investment to support customers throughout the world with a constant stream of innovation.

Chris Payne, who has been leading Kodak's flexographic packaging division since January 2015, is the new company's CEO.

News in brief

FTA to launch Women in Flexo initiative

FTA has launched a new, member-driven initiative in response to the growing trend of females entering the flexographic industry.

Initiative organizers Nona Woolbright of Clemson University and Katie Graham of Pamarco said: 'With the rise of women in leadership as well as skilled positions in the flexo industry, from pre-press to suppliers to production, there's a tremendous opportunity for FTA to provide a platform to specifically support women who wish to network, learn and grow within the industry.'

Toyo Ink Group opens Morocco office

Toyo Ink SC Holdings, the parent company of Toyo Ink Group of Japan, is to open a new sales subsidiary in Casablanca, Morocco, in preparation for a full-scale business launch into the African continent.

Toyo Ink North Africa will be engaged in developing business opportunities for a wide range of the group's products, such as commercial printing inks, liquid (flexo and gravure) inks and adhesives for food packaging, and can coatings. It will market existing group products while functioning as a market research hub to help promote products customized to the unique needs of local markets.

Coim begins flexible packaging ink production

From 1 January 2019, Italy-headquartered Coim group has started the production of inks for flexible packaging under brand name Coiminks. Coiminks inks and varnishes, produced at both the San Martino in Strada and Offanengo sites in Italy, are serving the EMEA market. The Vinhedo Sao Paulo plant in Brazil is running for production and sales in the NAFTA and South America areas.

Coim is already present in the flexible packaging industry with the Novacote line, aimed at food and pharmaceutical packaging manufacturers.

News



Blockchain offers 'transparency beyond the label'

Blockchain 'important to future of food and drink packaging'

New report from The Future Laboratory

Blockchain is a viable tool to make labeling data more robust, information transparency more accessible and, ultimately, empower consumers about their purchasing decisions, according to new research.

In partnership with Avery Dennison, The Future Laboratory has begun authoring a new monthly column providing insights on global drivers, macro and micro trends, and their impact on consumers, brands, and the label and packaging industry. The first article has now been published, which considers blockchain as a way to make labeling data more robust, information transparency more accessible and to empower consumers about their purchasing decisions.

'Product labels have many functions – to be eye-catching and attract attention on the shelf is one, but perhaps the most important function is to inform consumers,' noted researchers at The Future Laboratory. 'And yet in recent years, the data on labels has left many wanting. Almost half (48 percent) of consumers feel that they do not know enough about a product despite reading the label.'

The Future Laboratory identifies blockchain, as a distributed digital ledger, as offering transparency beyond the label. Unlike other digital databases, a blockchain entry cannot be changed once it is logged, giving it a high-trust value, noted researchers at The Future Laboratory. Moreover, blockchain-enabled products offer designers a chance to create engaging, immersive packaging that encourages customers to delve beyond the label and into a brand new world of transparency.

Amy White, vice president, communications and brand, Avery Dennison, said: 'When combined with emerging technologies, a product's labeling can empower consumers about their purchase decisions, offering new levels of transparency. As material science and technology pioneers, being up to date on these insights is essential.'

The column can be read via the M_use digital platform. Avery Dennison introduced M_use 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.



The Panorama product line consists of Nilpeter flexo units, Screen inkjet presses and Nilpeter converting technology that can be configured as needed

Nilpeter and Screen extend Panorama activities

Nilpeter USA and Screen Americas have aligned their activities for the Panorama digital label printing platform, providing end-to-end support to North American label converters.

The companies have established a comprehensive program to help label and packaging converters maximize the Panorama platform and profit from the synergy between the two companies.

The Panorama program includes market evaluation, utilization analyses and ROI data consulting, in addition to sales, service and supplies. It taps Nilpeter's 100-year heritage of service within the packaging industry for narrow web flexo printing, and Screen's 150-year history of scanning, pre-press workflow, color reproduction and print-on-demand inkjet development.

The Panorama product line consists of Nilpeter flexo units, Screen inkjet presses and Nilpeter converting technology that can be configured as needed. Panorama can operate as a stand-alone digital press, as a combined digital press and converting line, and as a hybrid press that integrates flexo units, the digital press and converting.

Phoseon opens subsidiary in China

Phoseon Technology, a manufacturer of LED curing systems, has formed a Wholly Foreign Owned Enterprise (WFOE) in China to better serve the Chinese and greater Asia-Pacific markets.

The new limited liability company reinforces Phoseon's commitment to the region and allows it to make investments and facilitate local sales and service transactions. The WFOE also enables Phoseon to source and potentially build local products for the domestic market.

'This enterprise will allow us to react quickly and make direct transactions with our customers, and facilitate our customer service process, in the China market,' said Bill Cortelyou, president and CEO of Phoseon. 'This commitment by Phoseon strengthening local support in China including invoicing locally and maintaining stock in local warehouses allows Phoseon to meet the high level of support our customers demand.'

Another benefit of the WFOE is the autonomy and control it provides, allowing Phoseon to quickly and flexibly implement its company-wide global strategy. Other advantages include more efficient operations and product development, direct transaction with local currency (RMB) and adapting optimal practices with the local Phoseon team.

The WFOE is considered the optimal structure for companies that plan to have long-term business interests in China, while at the same time maintain maximum control and flexibility in the decision-making process and enabling joint ventures or local acquisitions, Cortelyou said. 'Investing in this market is proof of our commitment to a long-term presence,' he concluded. 'It will give us greater control over our business venture in mainland China.'



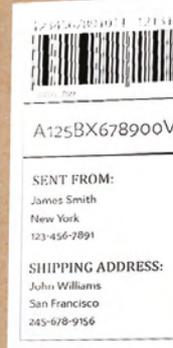
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Learn more about Avery Dennison TrueCut™ All-Temp Adhesive Technology at label.averydennison.com/truecut.



News



Robert Pulford has worked at Domino for 23 years

Domino appoints new CEO

Robert Pulford replaces the retired Nigel Bond

Following Nigel Bond's retirement at the end of March 2019, Domino Printing Sciences has appointed Robert Pulford as its new CEO.

Pulford has been working with the company for 23 years and as managing director of Domino's Digital Printing Solutions division for the previous six.

He has been responsible for driving the growth of digital printing products into the direct printing and label and packaging markets, as well as other industrial applications.

Nigel Bond said: 'I've had over 20 memorable years with Domino. I am proud to have led such a committed and talented team that has driven innovation and produced ground-breaking and award-winning technologies.'

'I'm delighted that Pulford will take over as Domino's new CEO. He is a strong leader with a proven track record of success both within and outside Domino.'

Pulford said: 'I'm honored to be taking up the position of CEO and look forward to carrying on Bond's legacy. My goal is to support the wider team to drive business growth in all areas and build on Domino's reputation as a leading provider of coding and marking and digital printing equipment.'

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News

NiceLabel launches partner program

Program to help channel partners meet customer demand

NiceLabel, a developer of label design software and label management systems, has launched its global partner program.

NiceLabel said it has designed the program to help channel partners meet customer demand for the digital transformation of on-demand label printing. The launch of the program is driven by the evolution of the labeling software industry, characterized by an increased demand from customers for streamlined, more agile and efficient ways of managing their labeling requirements.

The program brings together a large community of new and existing partners across the globe in a more collaborative way. Members of the partner program gain access to technical and marketing support to assist them in generating sales opportunities. Program members also enjoy product discounts, access to NiceLabel sales teams and the use of demo and trial licenses.

'The labeling software market is maturing to the point where a partner program is essential to bring structure, set expectations, and provide incentives and rewards,' explained Paul Vogt, channel marketing director, NiceLabel. 'We have an existing partner base stretching across the US, Europe and APAC and by formalizing this we are delivering on our promise to help our partners increase their margins and become more consultative.'

Siegwerk to open ink blending center in Bangladesh

Siegwerk is to open a new blending center in Bangladesh. With this expansion, Siegwerk is significantly strengthening its domestic business in the country while also extending its position across Asia overall. Siegwerk has been supplying inks to printers in Bangladesh since the mid-1990s. Presently, inks are imported from Siegwerk's plant in India. Going forward, the new center will blend solvent- and water-based inks, as well as UV and conventional offset inks directly in Bangladesh. The center in the Dhaka region is expected to start operation in the fourth quarter of 2019.

Lemu Group opens office in North America

Spain-based Lemu Group has opened a North American sales and marketing office for its high-speed turret rewinders. The new sales and marketing effort is led by label industry veteran Andre Beaudoin and is based in Connecticut.

Lemu Group's turret rewinders for the label industry are complemented by their automated, turnkey 'rewind to box' packaging systems, thus forming a non-stop, end-to-end packaging workflow. The company has also appointed Gibson Lopez International Services (GLIS) as its agent in Mexico and Central America.

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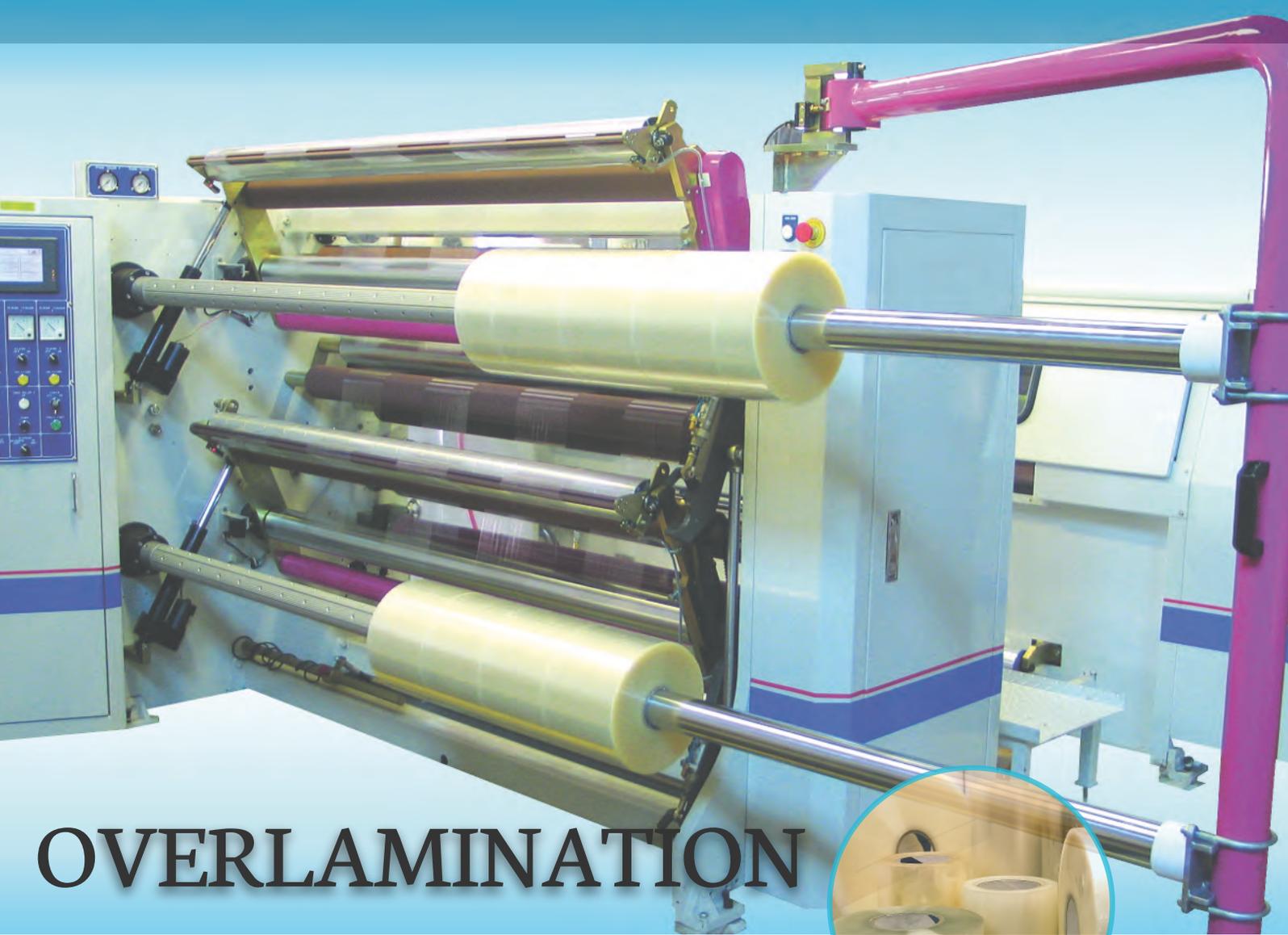
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New Products



01



02



03



04

01 Durable PS materials

Acucote
Four additional BS5609 Section 2 certified film products are now offered: Kimdura Inkjet Ultra, Kimdura DualTech, PPG Teslin 7 mil facestock and 2.6 mil matte white premium thermal transfer polypropylene. All are offered with Acucote adhesive P50, an aggressive acrylic with exceptional durability range (minus 30 deg F to 250 deg F). They expanded its portfolio of durable pressure-sensitive materials that can be printed on pigment and laser systems for chemical and industrial labeling applications.

02 NewV cure
hubergroup

The system has been developed for determining the curing degree of UV inks. While UV inks are gaining popularity and offer a high-speed curing process, hubergroup explained it has been difficult to determine quickly and definitively whether the print is properly cured. Due to the lack of

reliable methods, most operators check curing quality subjectively using physical tests such as wiping, scratching or a thumb, as well as chemical characterization. However, the curing degree affects hardness, robustness, migration behavior, and the ability for further processing of an ink film. In effect, improper curing negatively affects the usability and quality of the printed product, hubergroup stated.

PQT
Graymills

The new peristaltic pump to aid ink circulating and conditioning has a new physical appearance and smaller footprint than previous Graymills models. It can be mounted vertically or horizontally, and easily adjusted in the field. PQT features a quick-disconnect removable head that allows the pump head/tube changes to be accomplished in seconds without tools. Other features of the new pump include: a display that indicates rotational

speed; hose life and reverse timer; a predictive hose failure monitor with an adjustable life setpoint; and one-button reverse drain shutdown sequence with an adjustable timer and remote analog control (with available digital connectivity).

03 261
AstroNova

Made from grass, this new product provides an eco-friendly label material for organic product brand owners. This label is usable on a wide range of product types (foodstuff, cosmetics, wine, pet foods) and is particularly suitable for labeling clothing. It has a permanent adhesive for small surfaces on a variety of substrates. This general-purpose adhesive is approved for direct foodstuff contact and has been awarded ISEGA Institute certification. As an option, AstroNova can also provide an acrylic dispersion adhesive, which is removable without leaving residue, from a variety of substrates.

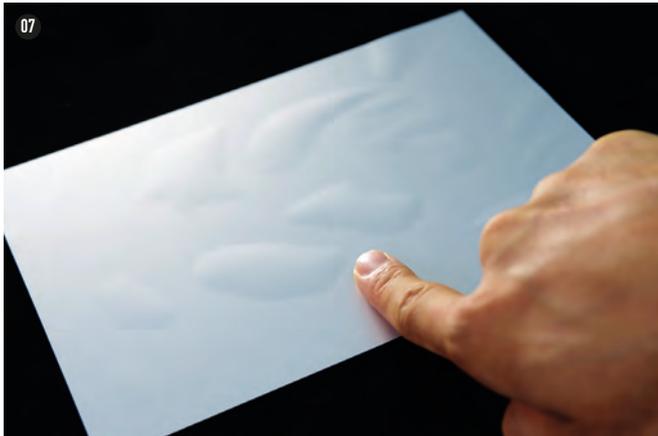
04 FireEdge FE410

Phoseon Technology
The newest version of its FireEdge line delivers up to 50 percent higher irradiance, power and dose than the original FireEdge FE400. This, according to the company, will help customers who need increased process speed for improved throughput but still prefer the small form factor of the FE400. With built-in intensity control options, the FireEdge FE410 can be used for both full cure and pinning applications such as inkjet pinning, 3D print and adhesives curing. With the segment control feature, FE410 can help users save energy and achieve more precise UV coverage when needed.

CatPak System
S-OneLP/CDA

This system is for coating and curing 30-inch flexible packaging films utilizing electron beam (EB) technology. EB is a finishing option for fast, clean, food-safe flex-pack films. CatPak brings all

New Products



the key components together in one system. The CatPak System includes the EB coater, corona treater and 30-inch web unwind and rewind modules integrated into the curing system base frame. The system can also be customized to include digital embellishing equipment.

05 AXRTX

Armor

This new grade of thermal transfer ribbon is dedicated to the printing of textile labels. And for the first time, Armor is supplementing the offering with a range of 10 print substrates: specially designed for the textiles market, they are made of nylon (three), polyester (two) and satin (five).

Durable PS materials

Acucote

Four additional BS5609 Section 2 certified film products are now offered: Kimdura Inkjet Ultra, Kimdura DualTech, PPG Teslin 7 mil facestock and 2.6 mil matte white premium thermal transfer

polypropylene. All are offered with Acucote adhesive P50, an aggressive acrylic with exceptional durability range (minus 30 deg F to 250 deg F). They expanded its portfolio of durable pressure-sensitive materials that can be printed on pigment and laser systems for chemical and industrial labeling applications.

06 Color-shifting foils

Fresnels Innovations

Scarab' reflects the iridescent colors of the eponymous beetle and 'Opal' takes its inspiration from the color effects seen in mineral gem stones. They follow the launch of the optically variable foil (OVF) Peacock stamping foil in 2018.

MetCal

Meteor Inkjet

MetCal runs Meteor's new nozzle-out compensation technology and automates the usage of PrintFlat, a tool that creates a unique calibration screen for each individual printer

and works together with an embedded version of ScreenPro to remove repeatable artefacts due to variations in performance within a printhead and in the stitch area between printheads.

07 Bubble-free labelstocks

Lintec

They feature a 'micro-canyon structure' that prevents the formation of air bubbles beneath the label upon application. The labelstock is claimed to be particularly effective for information labels on home appliances or electronic devices, as well as large labels in the graphics market that require a high level of air-release performance. A UL-recognized product, the labelstock is also resistant to blistering caused by outgassing emitted by certain plastic surfaces.

08 Shiny

Ritrama

The film in shiny silver metallic polyethylene is suitable for the

creation of labels with high visual impact for flexible containers for the personal care, cosmetic and food sectors. The 85 micron polyethylene face material ensures very high conformability, which Ritrama describes as 'an essential characteristic for labeling contoured and squeezable containers'. Being made of polyethylene, Shiny is completely recyclable if applied to containers of the same material, noted Ritrama. Shiny has been tested for print compatibility using the most common printing techniques (UV typography, UV screen printing, UV flexo, gravure, hot and cold stamping) and with different types of inks.

H+Opacity

Arconvert

The new range of self-adhesive papers has been specially designed by Fedrigoni's paper masters to preserve the label's initial opacity and maintain a premium brand image after ice bucket immersion.

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- ✓ Durable



Seawater-resistant labels made of HERMA material acc. to BS5609, Section 2 and 3



Coating your success

New Products



09 nyloflex FTH Flint Group

A solvent-processed plate with a smooth surface designed for use with surface screening, the new flexo digital plate for flexible packaging printing has been designed to provide high solid ink density and superb highlight performance for ultimate overall print results.

**Panther DuraCure
Xeikon**

This curing technology combines UV LED and conventional technologies to deliver optimal gloss effects in all colors. Working with the Xeikon Panther UV inkjet series of digital presses, the Panther DuraCure curing process operates in a number of ways. UV pinning of white keeps the ink from spreading and bleeding into the CMYK inks. This ensures that the quality of the CMYK image is kept at the highest level. UV pinning after black following

CMYK transfer means DuraCure 'freezes' all colors across the image and maintains a uniform optimal color brilliance and gloss. The use of UV LED curing, with its ability to go deep into the ink layers, combined with HG or mercury curing for lightly but effectively curing the surface of the UV ink, 'offers the best of both worlds', according to Xeikon, and takes it Panther UV inkjet series of digital presses 'to new levels of performance'.

**10 B-EX206-R-QM-S
Toshiba TEC**

Because it cuts labels on the fly and without interrupting the print process or the media feed, the B-EX206-R-QM-S cutter increases printer throughput of the company's B-EX6T1 printers.

**11 C8
Vetaphone**

The corona treatment unit is fitted with eight high-power

and high-efficiency ceramic electrodes, allowing more corona power to be discharged from a compact modular system. Having eight electrodes in the unit means the C8 can apply high power corona at high running speeds. Available in web widths from 362mm (14.25in) to 572mm (22.5in) and capable of treating at speeds in excess of 300m/min (985ft/min), the new C8 corona treater is both CE and UL approved. C8 has a robust design for an enhanced maintenance-friendly design, in addition to being fully corrosion proof.

**12 Proofer 900 DT
EyeC**

The Proofer DT Series of scanners are used in regular quality checks on the output of multiple machines during printing, as well as during incoming quality control. The system detects all relevant printing defects within a very short time and provides

traceable results, which are documented in a comprehensive report. Proofer 900 DT allows print sample testing on all types of printed products, such as leaflets, flexible packaging and printed sheets of folding boxes. EyeC Proofer 900 DT extends the range of scanner-based inspection systems for half-size formats of 915 x 635mm (36 x 25in).

**LTCNVP50
Mactac**

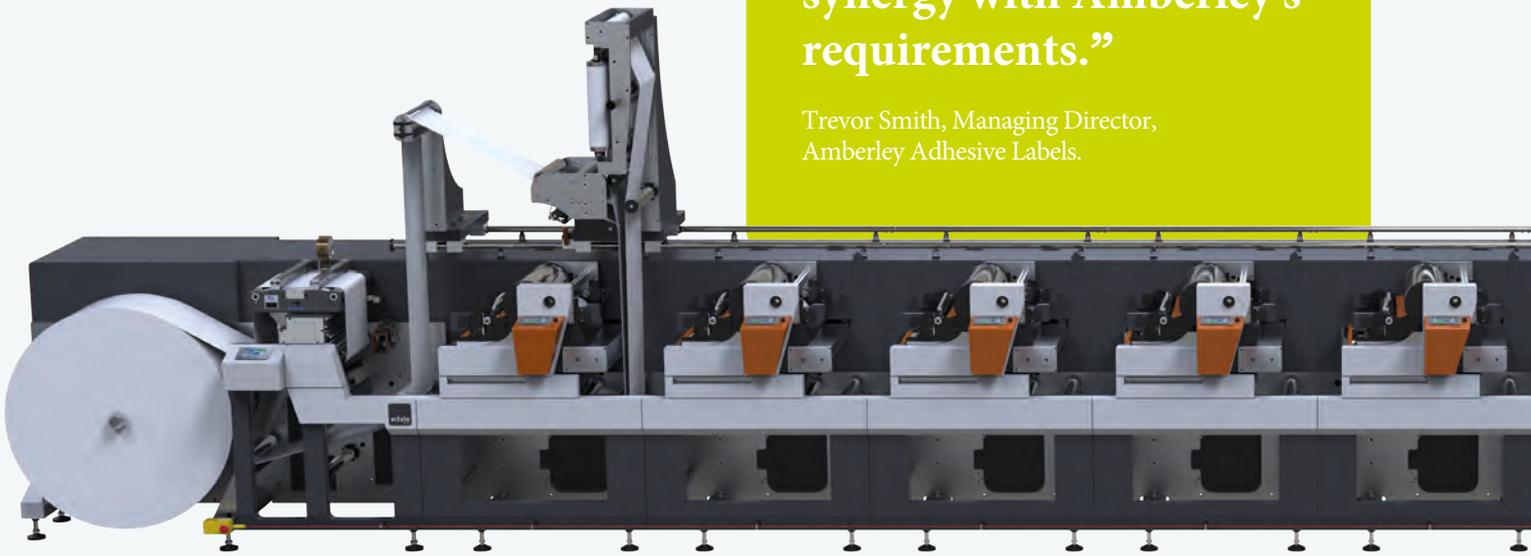
A non-PVC, destructible labelstock, the tamper-evident product has a unique balance of high tensile strength with low internal strength making it easy to convert on press, but extremely difficult to peel off or remove once applied.

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Trevor Smith, Managing Director,
Amberley Adhesive Labels.



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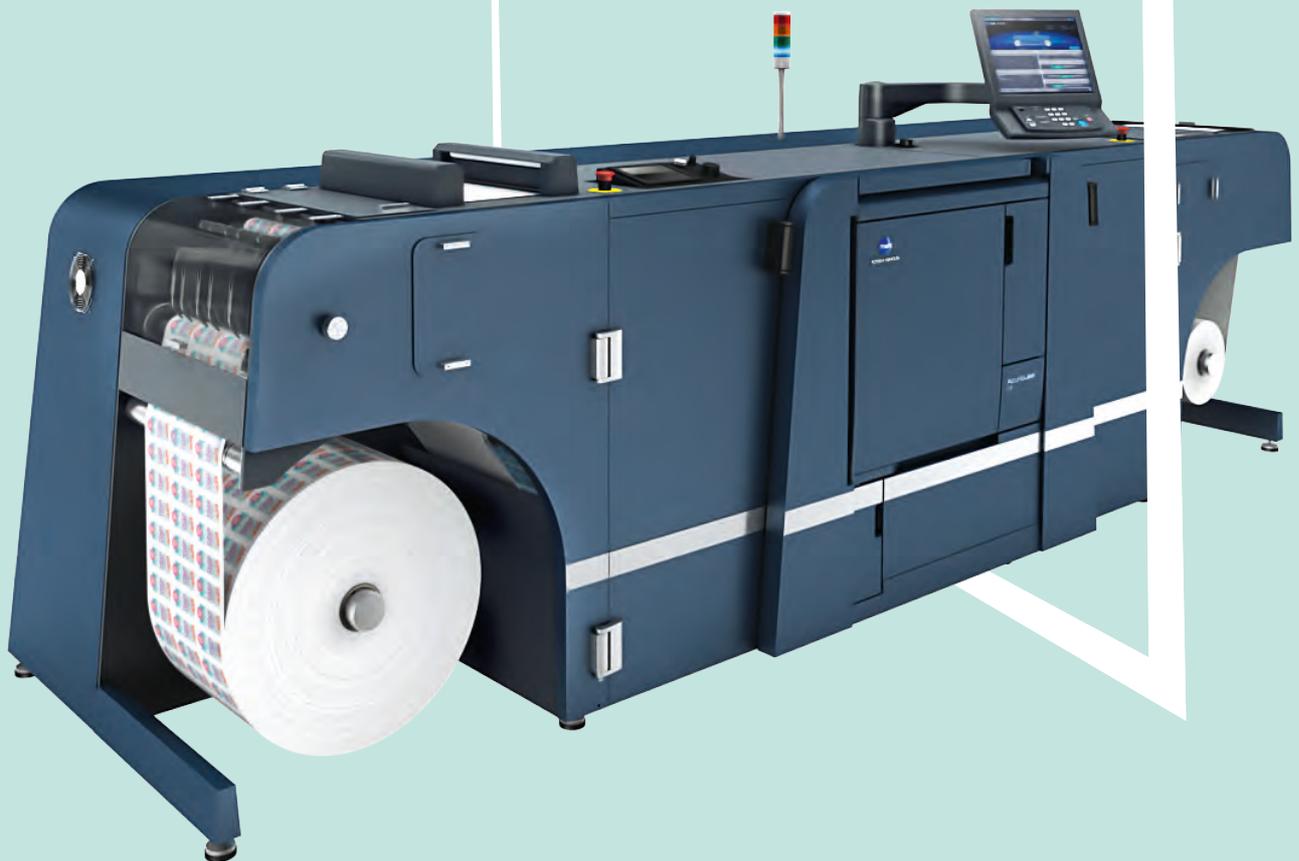


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Giving Shape to Ideas

Installations

01



02



03



04



HP Indigo digital presses
Barthel Group, Germany
 The group's first HP Indigo digital press was installed more than 10 years ago. It now operates a total of nine HP Indigo digital presses across the group, including two news 6900 models and a 20000. This investment is in line with current market developments in label production and will enable the company to increase its digital printing capacity significantly. It will further allow it to continue to shift print runs from offset to digital.

01 *Xeikon Label Discovery*
Willowbridge Labels, UK
 The printer is a part of the specialist print and labeling group, Denny Bros. The Xeikon 3030 entry-level press represents the company's first investment in a digital production press. It will join three flexo presses that will continue to be in use at the company. The Label Discovery system also includes an entryDcoat digital converting line.

02 *Durst Tau 330 E*
Label Image, Australia
 Durst Tau 330 E is coupled with the Durst Workflow Label system including variable data printing. It has enabled Label Image to bring the majority of its outsourced jobs back inhouse. For example, jobs that were either too short- to mid-range in length, had a tight turnaround time, required customization or personalization and multiple SKU applications.

SAM extrusion coating line
Loparex
 The new high-performance line from SAM will be operational in early 2020 and will double Loparex's manufacturing capacity in Europe for poly-coated release liners. The SAM machine will incorporate the latest printing, primer coating and extrusion technology. Loparex stated that the investment will enhance its capability to provide high quality release liner products to the market.

03 *Mark Andy P5E*
Norsk Etikett System, Norway
 The printer was founded in 1998 with the installation of two Mark Andy 2200 flexo presses. Having achieved success with Mark Andy flexo technology over the course of more than two decades, it opted to reinvest in Mark Andy's latest generation presses. P5E was introduced last year, alongside the P7E and P9E. P5E is designed to increase converter profitability for the simplest to most complex label applications. During trials on a difficult application with a particularly challenging shape, Norsk Etikett System was able to achieve speeds four times faster with their P5E over its legacy equipment courtesy of the advanced waste wind-up.

Ravenwood Com500 coater
ProPrint, UK
 The new coater will be installed at ProPrint's Wellingborough factory alongside a new state-of-the-art 10-color press, with a projected

print run in the region of 500,000 linerless labels per day. ProPrint is a 'non-plastic' supplier to the fresh food market through a diversified packaging and labeling product portfolio. As well as linerless, ProPrint's label offering includes self-adhesive, peel and reveal multi-page, foil, digital and retail promotional labels. Having rebranded in 2016, ProPrint also supplies cartons, produced from paper and board, in addition to labels.

04 *Gallus ECS 340*
Arvanitis, Greece
 Installed in November 2018, the 8-color UV flexo press features two screen printing units and a cold foil station to enable production of a variety of highly embellished self-adhesive labels. Two die-cutting units and the possibility for backside printing complement the conventional label press with a printing width of 340mm. A 100 percent BST eltromat TubeScan inspection system is integrated.

Installations



Flexo Wash PW82WR/ FW992XL
Flex Pack, Colombia
 It was with the advent of its second printing press in 2018 that Flex Pack realized the need to improve its overall production efficiency. Following a visit to Labelexpo Americas 2018 and a meeting with the Flexo Wash team, the decision was made to invest in a PW82WR plate washer and an FW992XL anilox washer. Since installation, they have helped reduce cleaning times and brought a degree of automation to the printer's production process. Further to improvements in print quality and production efficiency, Flex Pack has been able to re-deploy the staff who previously were dedicated to cleaning plates and anilox rolls to more productive tasks.

05 Koenig & Bauer Rapida 106 Grand Master, Armenia
 Since 2010, Grand Master has modernized its entire machinery base. Four Rapida 106 presses are

already in use at the company – a fifth is set to join them in May. Production start-up is scheduled for early summer. At that point, the business will have been switched fully to sheet-fed offset presses from Koenig & Bauer. With the exception of one 6-color press with coater and extended delivery, Grand Master has each time chosen an 8-color configuration with in-line coating facilities and fully automatic plate changing. This means it operates 43 Rapida 106 printing and finishing units.

06 Universal X6VT PT Surya Multi Indopack, Indonesia
 The slitter rewinder has been installed at the company's Rungkut rotogravure facility. The production plant is certified to conform to ISO 22000:2005; a standard requirement for suppliers of food packaging materials. The new X6VT is located in a clean room to ensure standards are maintained.

Comexi S1 DS Portco Packaging, US
 The slitter with integrated laser will be installed at Portco Packaging's Southwest Washington facility and will allow it to work efficiently with large and small output diameters rolls with a cost-performance ratio that is especially attractive. The integration of a laser-in-line processing system allows customization, differentiation and at the same time, performs a wide gamut of applications and finishing processes including: micro perforations, macro perforations, design windows, pre-cut adhesive labels, alphanumeric codes and barcodes, security systems and easy open applications.

07 Pulse PureTone FPC Telrol, the Netherlands
 As part of the Dutch printer's continuous improvement program, the switch to PureTone FPC inks took place at the end of February and was completed

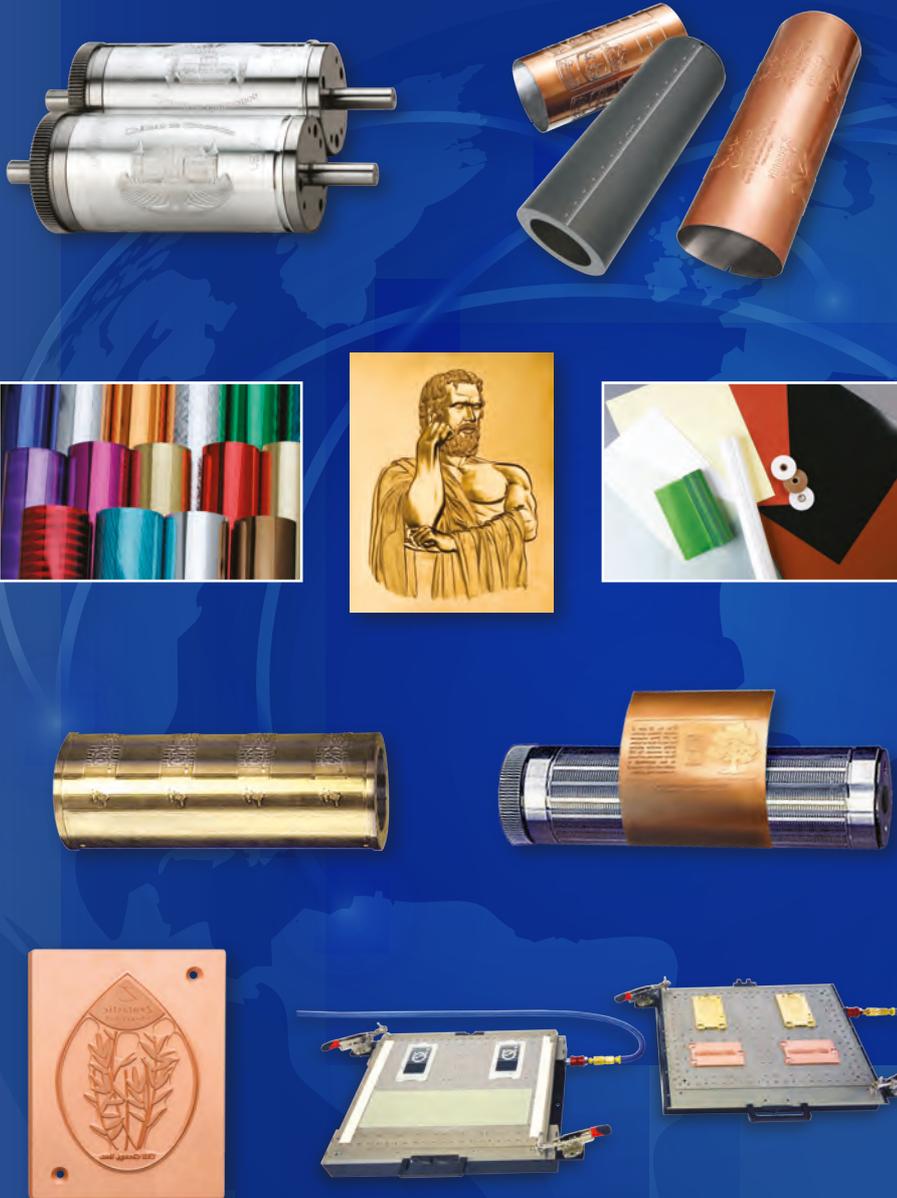
in less than one week. Full training and on-site technical support was provided as part of the changeover plan by Darren Gillespie, technical service manager, and Ben Howell, technical sales manager, export from Pulse Roll Label Products. Pulse's Benelux distribution partner, Beijersbergen & Partners, was also involved.

08 BST eltromat web guiding Heukäufer Folien, Germany
 The German printer has served as the beta test for BST eltromat's FVG POS 100 sensor positioner and ekr 500 digital unit touch controller. The web guiding systems are playing a key role in quality assurance, with the web center-line guiding, utilizing ultrasonic sensors, guiding the webs accurately through the machines for the manufacturer of sophisticated foil bags and carrier bags.



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Installations

09



10



11



12



ETI linerless line

R.R. Donnelley, US

A 26in linerless line has been installed, allowing it the printer to respond to the increasing demand for linerless labels at a very competitive price. This is the second ETI Converting machine installed by RRD.

09 *Daco PLR430*

Acorn Labels, UK

The UK printer has installed the finishing machine to complement its recent installation of a 3-color Focus e-Flex 430mm UV flexographic label press. Sam Heneker of Acorn Labels visited Daco Solutions to discuss its finishing options. The company had made the decision to move to a 430mm web width and existing rewinding equipment had a maximum web width of 350mm.

Printing and finishing equipment

Rotocon, South Africa

Rotocon confirmed 17 orders for label printing and finishing equipment during the recent

Propak Africa in Johannesburg, South Africa. Rotocon had a presence spread across three stands at the triennial Propak Africa, held this year on March 12-15. The 17 confirmed orders included: five Screen Truepress Jet L350UV+ series UV inkjet presses; five Rotocon Ecoline RDF 330 digital label converting lines and four Ecoline RSD 330 label die-cutting/inspection machines; an AVT Helios 100 percent automated in-line inspection system with WorkFlow Link; a Domino K600i digital printer; and an MPS EF 430 8-color press.

10 *Fujifilm Illumina*

Beau Labels, US

The New Jersey-based business has installed its third Illumina LED retrofit system from Fujifilm as it looks to further its margins and reduce costs. The Illumina UV LED system is an instant on/off process, lowering the energy usage and stress on lamp bulbs experienced in conventional 'always-on' UV mercury lamp

curing. Illumina converts any traditional UV or water-based flexo press to UV LED curing in one day or less.

11 *Esko XPS Crystal 5080*

Fotograbados Longo, Argentina

The Argentine packaging design and reprographics business has invested in South America's first XPS Crystal 5080 technology for optimum UV plate exposure from Esko. Having equipped itself with a range of Esko technology in recent years, the company has now acquired an Esko XPS Crystal 5080 to drive enhanced plate quality and consistency at its site in Avellaneda, near Buenos Aires.

Epson ColorWorks C831

Lubrizol, global

The specialist in specialty chemicals for the transportation, industrial and consumer markets has purchased and installed Epson ColorWorks C831 inkjet label printers in its global

facilities to increase efficiency and maintain globally harmonized system (GHS) compliance. The addition of the Epson ColorWorks printers allows the company to expand their on-demand color label printing offerings for customers in several businesses, including driveline, engine oils, viscosity modifiers, fuels, and industrial.

12 *Honeywell quality control Mitsubishi HiTec Paper*

As part of the company's new business development program, the new quality control system has been initiated on the CM 21 coating machine. The Honeywell quality control system includes several measuring frames of different equipment and system peripherals for precise process control.



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



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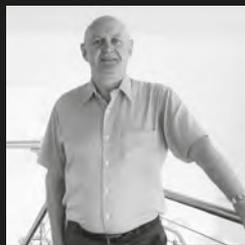


Akihiro Fujii
President
Screen Europe
 Akihiro Fujii has been with pre-press and inkjet printing specialist Screen in Japan for almost 30 years. He previously held senior positions at Screen Australia and Screen America and was deputy GM of the business management division in the Screen Japan.



Saverio Monopoli
Sales director, France
Smag
 Monopoli was previously co-owner of Graphic Evolution, distributor of Koenig & Bauer, Bobst and Smag product lines. Graphic Evolution has developed the market of Algeria, and consolidated the Tunisian and Moroccan markets. This has allowed Smag Graphique to develop its installations in these territories at the same time. Graphic Evolution remains the distributor of Smag Graphique in these countries with Pierre Monopoli as the main contact from today.

Klaus Nielsen
Director, Asia-Pacific
Xeikon
 Nielsen will oversee Xeikon's ongoing growth in the APAC region that includes Greater China, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. In the process, he will also build on existing successful partnerships and seek to establish additional collaborations.



Bent Serritslev
SVP, business development, APAC
Memjet
 In this role Serritslev will oversee sales and marketing activities designed to expand the adoption of Memjet technology among OEM partners in the region.



Laurent Lassus
Managing director
Sato Europe
 Deputy managing director, Detlev Müller, will work closely with Lassus to implement a number of organizational changes to the position Sato for further growth. Benoit Gourlay, previously European consumables and business development manager, replaces Lassus as general manager at Sato France.

David Birch
Business development manager
LasX Europe
 In addition to his strategic sales efforts, Birch will support LasX Europe's current distributors TLM Laser in the United Kingdom and Dr Wirth in Germany.

Matthew Jones
National web sales specialist
IST America
 Jones has more than 30 years of sales experience focused on the printing and converting markets. He worked for Bobst Group North America prior to joining IST. In his new role, Jones assumes responsibility for IST's UV and LED products in North America. He will focus on the narrow and wide web markets.

Hans-Peter Stockkamp
Global accounts director
AVT
 In this position, Stockkamp will be the key focal point for managing AVT's partnerships with key global players in the label and packaging converting markets.

James Thomas
UK sales manager
Xeikon
 'The chance to join Xeikon was too good an opportunity to turn down,' said Thomas. 'It was especially enticing when listening to where it sees itself both in the current market and in the future, with new products that are being developed. These are exciting times to be working with Xeikon, Flint Group and the digital print sector.'



Michael Ring
CEO
Mtex NS
 Michael Ring has a 30-year proven track record in management, sales, marketing and international business, working with the likes of Kodak, Xeikon and Gallus in his native North America and Europe. He will relocate to Porto, Portugal, for his new role with Mtex NS.

Paul Watson
COO
FFEI
 Watson joined FFEI in January 2019 and is well versed at operating within highly regulated environments, having previously worked at board level in the defense and aerospace sectors. He has significant experience of working in global corporations as well as privately owned SMEs. Prior to his new appointment at FFEI, Paul Watson was operations, quality and business improvement director at Kelvin Hughes, an international manufacturer of navigation, surveillance and security radar systems to the commercial and military sectors.



Alexander Stahl
Project sales manager
Vetaphone
 This position is one of a number of new project sales manager positions at Vetaphone and will see Stahl support existing and new German OEM customers that integrate corona and plasma products in their extrusion, printing, converting and coating systems, for both narrow and wide web applications. He will manage the whole project integration and sales process.



Henrik Haagensen
Managing director
Refine Finishing
 Refine Finishing has been born out of Werosys, with a new identity and product line (Read L&L issue 2, 2019 for more). Haagensen joins the company after an extensive career in the telecommunications industry, largely with Finnish giant Nokia.



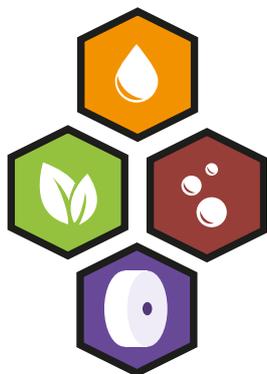
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Labels & packaging showcase



Flexible Packaging Association Achievement Awards (a selection)

01 ConAgra Slim Jim Premium Smoked Sticks

Silver, Printing & shelf impact; Packaging excellence

Bemis Company

02 Nutro Ultra Grain Free

Gold, Printing & shelf impact

Plastic Packaging Technologies

03 Before Brands SpoonfulOne Strawberry Puffs

Silver, Printing & shelf impact

CL&D Graphics

04 Amsoil Easy Pack

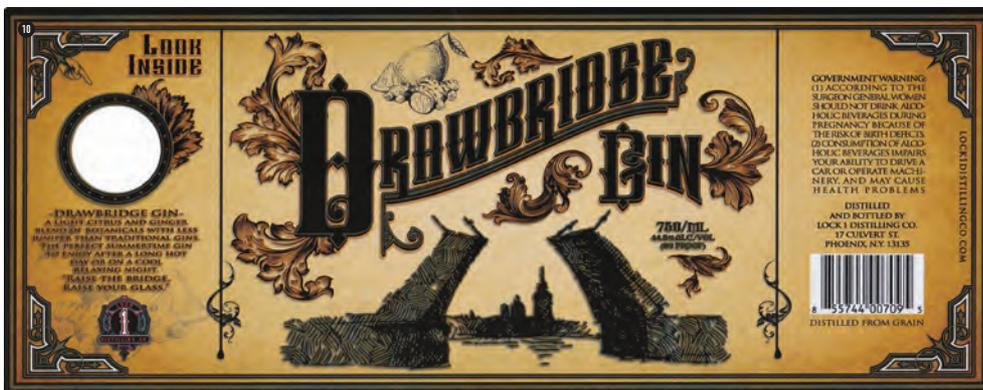
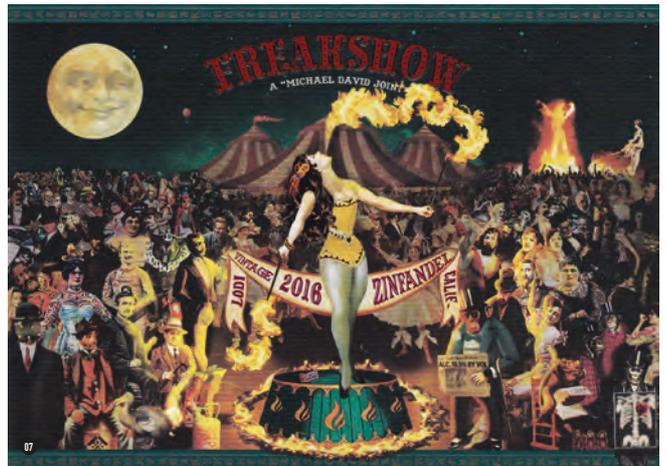
Silver, Printing & shelf impact

Amsoil

05 Green Giant Veggie Spirals PrimaPak Package

Silver, Expanding the use of flexible packaging, Technical innovation and packaging excellence

Sonoco Flexible Packaging



World Label Awards (a selection)

06 California Love
Winner, Flexo color process
Labeltronix (TLMI)

07 Freakshow Zinfandel
Winner, Flexo wine and spirits

Multicolor Corporation North America Wine & Spirits (TMLI)

08 Sidewinder Spirits
Honorable mention, Offset wine and spirits

Multi-Color Corporation North America Wines & Spirits (TLMI)

09 Drawbridge Gin
Winner, Digital wine and spirits
Syracuse Label & Surround Printing (TLMI)

10 Campari Chef Inspired
Winner, Booklets
Yerecic Label (TLMI)

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Opinion —

Digital finishing in the real world

Converters and manufacturers detail what the supply chain expects from modern digital finishing equipment

'We operate a Smag Digital Galaxie machine and Grafotronic DCL and DCL2 lines. The Smag system includes screen, hot foil, embossing, UV flexo varnish, lamination, semi-rotary die-cutting and rewind. The Grafotronic lines feature UV flexo varnish, lamination, semi-rotary/rotary die-cutting, laser die-cutting and turret rewinding. We use these to add value to digitally printed labels. Laser die-cutting allows us to make the kind of cutting impossible to do with mechanical die-cutting. Examples of a through-hole die-cut in the middle of a label without using any tool is remarkable.'

Iban Cid

Managing director, Germark

'We run two AB Graphic Digicon lines. Both machines are used for regular finishing of HP Indigo printed labels, which means about 90 percent of our Indigo jobs. One is used for value-added embellishment for wine and spirit labels, craft beer and other customers that want something extra to make their labels stand out. The other is used for high volume jobs that need the extra speed of the Fast Track Die unit, including blank labels, as well as finishing multiple roll jobs in the turret. The automation and general modern capacities of the machines make for less down time and better throughput. Our pair of Digicons make our offer very versatile. Both for high end embellishment labels, down to the simplest high volume logistics labels.'

Christian Egedius

General manager, Ellco Etikett

'We currently operate nine Grafisk Maskinfabrik finishing lines. The finishing lines complement five Xeikon presses. All but one operate off-line as we believe this offers greater flexibility, less wastage and less down time and possibility for errors. The line we operate in-line tends to concentrate on larger run lengths where simple cutting, varnishing or laminating is required. If spot varnishing or any form of embellishments are required we would always do this off-line in view of the complexity and set-up time required. Invariably this type of finishing will run slower than the speed of the Xeikon. In order to compete effectively against increasing competition in the short run market we have sought to differentiate our offer by concentrating on added value such as peel and reveal constructions, foiling, embossing and debossing, spot varnishes or textured finishes. The work we currently do with Northern Monk on peel and reveal labels for aluminum beer cans is an example where quality artwork, unique solutions such as metallic images on the inside pages and high end value finishes enables the client to differentiate their product from the mass market. It supports brand enhancement and enables their customers to connect with the brand in many different ways. In the case of Northern Monk, the labels ultimately become collector items for clients who are encouraged to collect samples of their labels in a company scrapbook.'

Simon Smith

Managing director, CS Labels

'Whichever technology printing companies are nowadays equipped with, customization has undoubtedly helped drive digital print up to being the main concern. Not only are converters racing to keep up with the changing technologies, but also to create change in their organizations that will allow them to have a competitive advantage and increase profitability. They have to align production processes in a smart, active and intelligent way to be able to respond to the brand owners who want to offer uniqueness to their packaging and create brand recognition.'

Stéphane Rateau

Managing director, Smag Graphique

'Label printers are looking at digital in different ways. They have to balance out their workload by run size, complexity of finished product, preferred delivery cycles, true required quality for each job, who is the customer/brand owner and, above all, how much someone is willing to pay for all this. Digital finishing equipment is better for applications that are more personalized and can finish different page counts within the same roll.'

Jason Schmitt

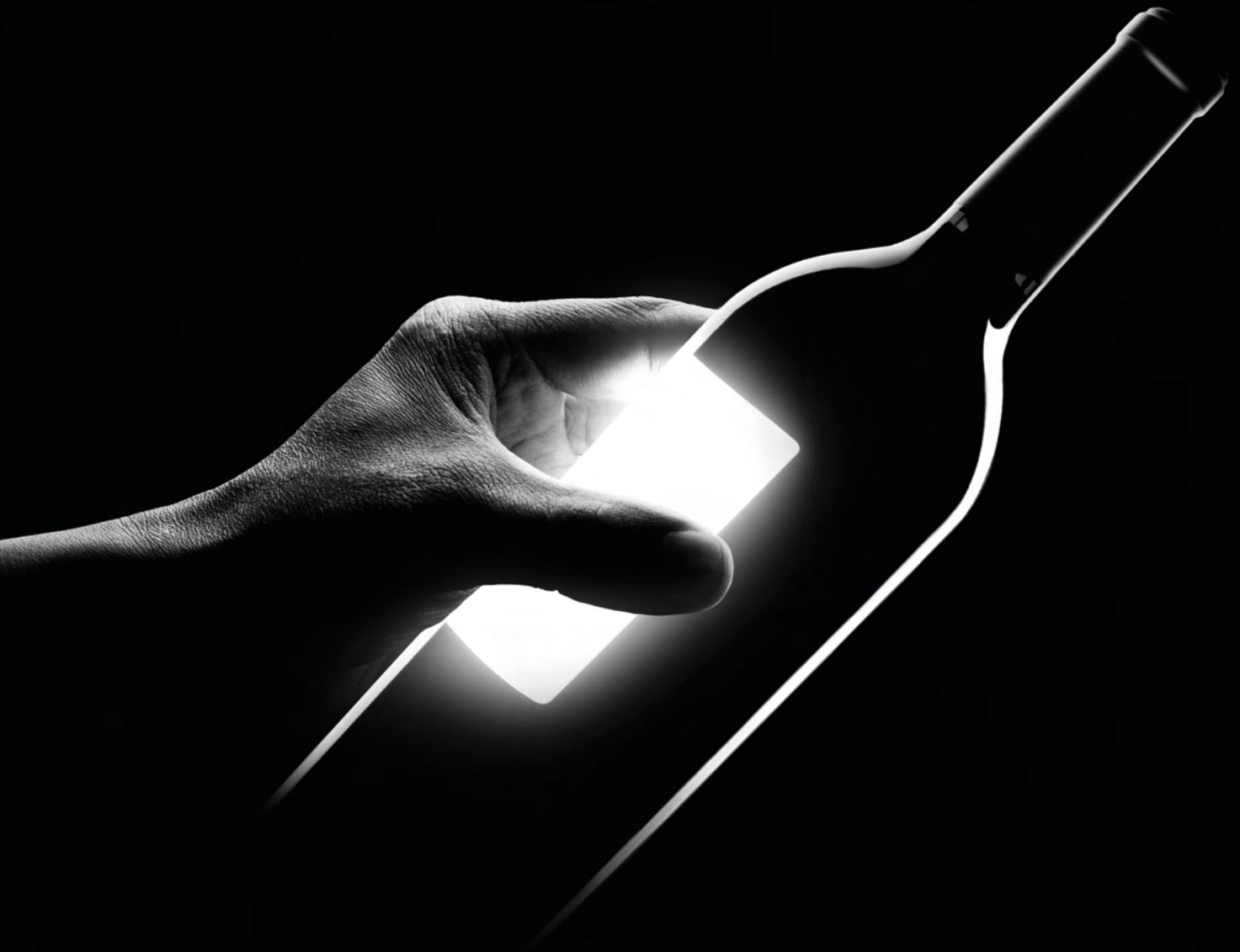
Eastern US regional sales manager, Rotocontrol



Go to page 98 for more on digital finishing



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The Mike Fairley column

Inkjet printing – evolution or revolution?

It may feel like a new, disruptive technology, but inkjet has been around since the 1970s

It is easy to regard digital inkjet printing as a new and disruptive technology that is only recently having an impact on the label and package printing sectors. In practice, inkjet printing was being used for producing address labels as far back as the early 1970s. By the late 1970s, through the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, new inkjet print head and press manufacturers were fast emerging.

Many of these start-ups were spin-offs from Cambridge Consultants in the UK, with a whole cluster of inkjet companies being formed in the Cambridge area, including Xaar, Domino, Epson, Danaher (Videojet, Elmjet, Willet), Linxs and Xennia. Names that are still at the forefront of inkjet evolution (perhaps revolution?) for the label and package printing markets.

Of these early inkjet companies, Elmjet was responsible for the development of the binary array, a curtain of droplets produced extremely fast by using hundreds of nozzles instead of just one.

Later came 'drop-on-demand' inkjet, developed by Xaar, in which ink was only squirted when it was needed. Certainly, a number of these pioneer inkjet companies in the 1980s were undertaking various market research projects (some in conjunction with Labels & Labelling Consultancy) to look at the applications for the use of digital inkjet printing for printing 'best before' dates, barcoding, variable text, garment labels and overprinting on label applicator lines. All this is at least 30 years ago.

By the 2000s, other key inkjet developments were taking place. Labelexpo in 2002 saw the introduction of the Chromas Argio single color inkjet system. Developed by the Digital Label Alliance, it printed labels with UV inkjet at 600 DPI. Mark Andy also showed the DT 2200, a combination of 6-color inkjet and flexo printing which used the Dot.Factory Spice (Single Pass Inkjet Color Engine) with Xaar inkjet heads. Both the Argio and Spice machine were installed in a number of beta label plants. Hybrid presses were already seen as having interesting potential for label production.

New generations of higher performance inkjet presses and combination machines, such as those from EFI Jettron, Atlantic Zeiser, Nilpeter/Caslon, Impika Solutions, SolarJet, Stork Prints, Konica Minolta, Mimaki Engineering and Xennia, all came into the label market in the period up to the end of 2009. That year also saw Durst and Domino – two of today's inkjet market leaders – enter the UV inkjet label press market. By 2012 the third generation of inkjet presses with a resolution of 600-720 DPI was being widely used.

Today

Today, inkjet label and package printing technology is growing faster than any of the other print technologies. It's getting ever closer to the running speeds of flexo presses – making hybrid presses easier to develop. Inkjet inks have improved considerably; color control and color management has been enhanced; resolution is getting steadily higher; web and print widths are getting wider; integration with ever-more sophisticated MIS, inspection and finishing requirements is taking place, and the quality and performance of the latest inkjet presses is close – if not equal to – flexo.

To understand the change in the world of inkjet it is useful to

look at the latest statistics. Since the emergence of inkjet label presses around 1,800 machines have been installed. This includes a few hundred hybrid flexo/inkjet presses. Still considerably lower than the installed base of 3,000 or so toner presses – but growing much faster. Over 90 percent of the inkjet presses currently installed use UV curing. Water-based inks make up the remainder, but may be seen to be more attractive in the growth of flexible packaging.

The industry is now seeing installations with an inkjet resolution of up to 1,200 DPI. A typical print head construction will contain the driver electronics, ink feed attachments, and at least one and usually hundreds of ink chambers leading to the inkjet nozzles themselves. These are simply holes in the nozzle plate. Each ink input channel is typically 20-50 micron. By comparison, a human hair is around 80 micron.

“Over 90 percent of the inkjet presses currently installed use UV curing. Water-based inks make up the remainder, but may be seen to be more attractive in the growth of flexible packaging”

In terms of operating speeds we can find inkjet label presses commonly running at 75 or 78 m/min, or even more. Web widths for inkjet label printing can be found up to 400mm. Many of the high-end inkjet presses are now currently available with CMYK + OGV + White as standard options.

Indeed, digital inkjet white can be used to create interesting textures on plain papers, while UL-approved inkjet inks for durable label applications have also become available. Spot varnish, matt and different gloss levels are also possible, as well as inkjet cold foiling and inkjet printable metallic inks.

It also provides the possibility to use standard flexo substrates without priming and varnishing, and the ability to run variable data printing at high speed. Being a non-contact printing process enables textured materials to be printed, with the texture being maintained.

Interesting to see in recent years has also been the capability to retrofit inkjet units to existing flexo presses to obtain low cost entry into digital printing, as well as the combining of inkjet and conventional technology into hybrid press lines.

Inkjet advances have been over a long period of innovative change (now almost 50 years), but has it been a revolution? Probably not.



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

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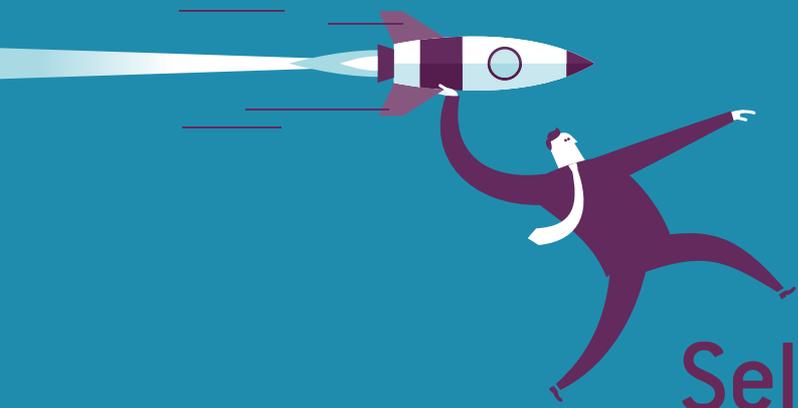
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Selling for top value

Bob Cronin of The Open Approach on how to leverage the six factors which accelerate buyer interest

Tradeshow season is always an exciting time. Not only can we view all the new technology, we also network with our colleagues and constituencies. While there are fewer new companies joining the label and packaging space, there are more players than ever. Venture capitalists, private equity firms and print strategics, to name a few, have moved into our category, and are hungry for acquisitions. This means ample opportunities to grow our businesses or exit them profitably. Indeed, the surge in investors – big and small – is adding an exciting new dimension to our landscape.

While global M&A declined in 1Q 2019, label and packaging transactions have remained steady – at attractive multiples. Good-performing companies are attaining a five to 12 multiple of adjusted EBITDA, depending on their segment and M&A advisor. And significant deals continue to be made.

So why is our industry in such great demand? Here are the top six we see as the most influential.

1. Industry fragmentation. The label and packaging industry remains highly fragmented. There are numerous small and medium-sized players spread out geographically, addressing different parts of the market. It's a universe where major players affect, but don't dominate, territories and regions. While relationships (and great local service) are still the key decision factors, customers will sway to competitors for a notable improvement in purchasing power or sourcing.

Fragmentation interests investors because of the rollup potential. With more investor money – and demand for strong returns – private equity firms are challenged to find actionable targets. Bringing together several good, small players can yield one significantly great operation. This model has proven to be successful for investors and acquired companies alike.

2. High growth rates. While you might not be impressed with label and packaging's average 2-7 percent annual growth rate (because you're used to it), it shines like a diamond when compared to other venues. The industry also boasts very attractive profitability.

What's more intriguing is that we're constantly innovating. And this innovation, and ensuing growth, is being propelled by multiple forces.

Pushed by customers, we're growing from more 'chain of custody' and compliance needs such as anti-tamper labeling and tracking. These entities also bring new business from brand extensions and personalized packaging (think Bud Light's 'team' cans and Frito-Lay's faces on potato chip bags). Then, advancements in manufacturing, such as those seen in digital and inkjet labels at Labelexpo shows) are creating new production efficiencies and game plans. All these elements fortify investor interest.

3. Resilience to market downturns. Another benefit of the label and packaging industry is that it has performed well during difficult times. When the economy has been under pressure, our space has demonstrated better statistical performance than overall markets. People still need to eat, drink and ship, regardless of economic scenario. This provides greater confidence in leveraging

the financing of the new entities. Those attributes are not available in most other investment segments.

4. Proven success. The last two decades have been extremely favorable for investors in our industry. Numerous lucrative plays have been made, and many more continue to prove out. Nothing is better than a proven thesis to generate additional interest. Call it 'bandwagon thinking' but we have more investors in our business than ever.

Since many larger plays have ultimately been wrapped up by a public entity, there are a lot of well-publicized stories. This helps deals perpetuate. With the ability to look at past successful models, new investors can replicate workable strategies and get their models off the ground quicker.

5. Synergies with platform companies and other investments. There are significant synergies based on scale, geography and buying power that can be gained through acquisition. During a recent due diligence project, we developed a list of synergies across multiple target platforms and forecast what could be accomplished by leveraging multiple smaller operations into the larger parent. The opportunities today are still valid within the correct market structure.

Investors in our businesses can also gain synergies they can put to work in the supply chains of their other portfolio companies that use labels and packaging. If they have wine, beverage, consumer goods or pharma investments, these synergies can be huge.

6. Customer demand. Every business grows alongside the demands of the consumer. The explosion of private label brands, allergy-sensitive and organic product surges, and more 'on-the-go' and single-serving-style offerings (part of the boom behind flexible packaging) are extending the possibilities for label and packaging players. Customer demands for information also are expanding our terrain. Innovations such as smart labels and new sustainable packaging materials are just a few of the growth paths.

Customers are always seeking new ideas and better ways to solve challenges. Count on even more products that will need to be packaged, decorated, labeled and shipped. And count on even more clever visual and tactile solutions (color-shifting foils, thermal transfer ribbon) to take shape.

As you examine these six drivers, it's obvious that none of them will abate any time soon. We can expect M&A activity to continue, and likely accelerate.

So what does that mean to you? Every company will ultimately be a buyer or a seller. Planning for that option now will ensure your future success. Consult with your leaders and advisors on your best trajectory, then plan steps to best lead you there.

Ours is truly an exceptional industry. But you sell your business only once. Embrace these six drivers as they lay out the new landscape. Then make the plan that leads you to your greatest reward.



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



Q&A

L&L contributor Nick Coombes has spent almost 40 years in the graphic arts industry and has been involved in the label industry since the first Labelexpo show in London in 1980. He discusses with Andy Thomas-Emans what changes he has seen in that time and predicts a renaissance for the mid-web format first developed in the 1980s and 1990s

L&L: When did you first start writing about the graphic arts industry?

Nick Coombes: I joined the industry in 1977 having worked for Anglia Television in London for four years – prior to that I was teaching at a school in Sevenoaks. I was appointed Advertising & Publicity Manager at Geliot Hurner Ewen (GHE) – one of a number of family owned and run agencies that were prominent in the post-war years. Edlon Machinery, Graphic Arts Equipment, Smyth-Horne, and Oscar Friedheim all fell into the same category of selling and servicing imported machinery for overseas manufacturers who were not directly represented in the UK. My first task was to coordinate GHE's participation at Drupa 77 – I had three months in which to do it, and at that stage had no idea what Drupa was nor what I'd let myself in for. By the way, next year will be my 11th (I swore I'd stop after 10), and a rough estimate tells me I've spent around four months of my life at that event over the past 42 years.

L&L: What are your main memories of those early days?

NC: Exhibiting at Drupa so early on proved a blessing, albeit an exhausting one. It showed me the whole industry in one place and gave a clear impression of how all the elements related to each other. Remember, we're talking about the time when litho had not long taken over from letterpress in the commercial print market, and flexo was not considered a quality print process at all. Digital, in the shape of Benny Landa's Indigo, was still 20 years away. GHE's manufacturing principals were mostly in the bookbinding and print finishing sectors and had sadly fallen the wrong side of the Iron Curtain in 1945. So, from 1977 until the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, I travelled frequently to East Germany to visit the Leipzig Trade Fairs and the Perfecta, Zirkon, Planeta, and Brehmer factories. The latter, under Communist rule was rebranded 'Leipzigerbuchbindereimaschinenwerke', or LBW for short, which of course meant something totally different to a cricketing Englishman. Those days of travel into the DDR were a revelation to anyone from the West. You knew you were always being watched and that your hotel room was bugged – and any misdemeanor would reflect badly on your business. You had to report to the police station on arrival and departure and stick to a pre-agreed travel itinerary throughout. I could write a book on this period in my life, such was the impact it made and appreciation it gave me for the freedom we enjoy and take for granted at home.

“Those days of travel into the DDR were a revelation to anyone from the West. You knew you were always being watched and that your hotel room was bugged – and any misdemeanor would reflect badly on your business”

L&L: How did the fall of the Berlin Wall change your direction in the industry?

NC: Initially, there was a mild euphoria at the new-found freedom that the DDR-based manufacturers would enjoy and this came to fruition at Drupa 90, when for the first time East and West German companies were able to co-exhibit on a supposedly equal footing. The joy was short-lived however, because the state subsidies that had featherbedded the manufacturers under communist rule were never likely to be sustained in the harsh reality of the capitalist West,

and although set up to protect the interests of the DDR companies and workers, the 'Treuhand' agency eventually sold most to their western competitors and closed down the old companies. From my point of view, having started my own consultancy business in 1979, it was clear that I needed to broaden my scope from the commercial market and move more into the package print field. I'd already begun this in the early 1980s, and prior to that had been in touch with the folding carton market through my association with Planeta, which became part of KBA, now Koenig & Bauer.

L&L: When did you first visit Labelexpo and become involved in the narrow web market?

NC: I attended the very first Labelexpo when it was held at The Horticultural Halls in London. It was about this time that I first started working with Gallus, who were represented in the UK by Edlon Machinery. This was the period when rotary letterpress reigned supreme in the quality label market, and any aspiring narrow web house had an R160B or similar. In those days, before Gallus acquired Arsoma, the Swiss company's flexo offer was the American brand Comco – more of which later, but from first-hand experience with both over many years I can scarcely imagine a less likely partnership. In fact, when Gallus set up its own operation in the UK at the beginning of the 1990s, having by this time taken over Arsoma as its flexo arm, both Comco and Edlon Machinery needed to fill a void and it was at this time that I began to work closely with the Cincinnati-based manufacturer, and carried on doing so until it was sold by its owner Mark Herrmann to Mark Andy in 2001.

L&L: When did you start to focus on narrow web and labels?

NC: I'm not sure there was an obvious start point. My work in print for packaging had become more time-consuming throughout the 1980s as my contacts with the bookbinding and print finishing markets declined and finally came to an end with the sad demise of GHE in 2003. By this time, most of the other aforementioned agencies had also disappeared or undergone major restructuring. Your question is interesting in that to many people at that time,



Nick Coombes in 1977 during his early days with GHE

narrow web equated to solely to labels. I was lucky working with Comco, because they could see, even at that stage, that the growth potential for self-adhesive work was limited, and diversified their production into other markets.

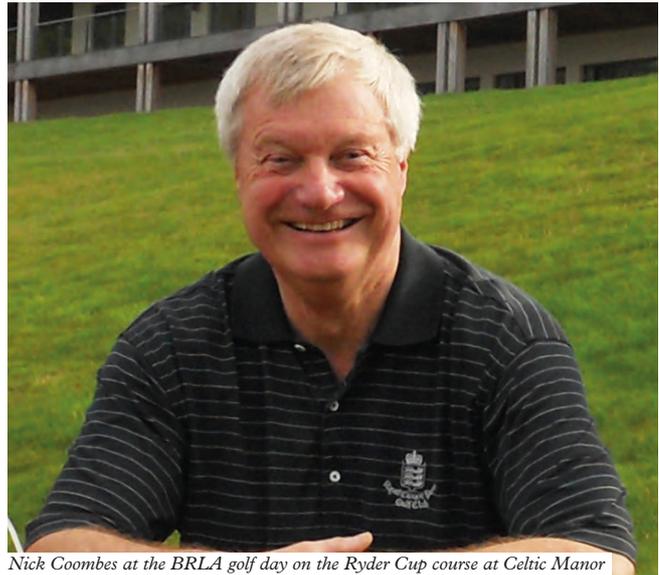
“As wide web press manufacturers develop narrower configurations, so the narrow web technology manufacturers look to go wider. What they are all searching for is maximum flexibility and cost-effectiveness, and the reason this is relevant to Labelexpo is that the potential growth in flexible packaging (and cartons) is far greater than for labels, however successful this market has been in its own right over the past 50 years”

L&L: Was there a clear distinction between labels and other printed packaging in those days?

NC: Absolutely. And not just between those two categories. There were very rigid demarcation lines between print techniques and the markets they served, with very little crossover. Remember, there was once a whole sector dedicated to business forms that doesn't exist anymore, and nor does much of its hardware. It was only when computer technology in all its facets became more commonplace that manufacturers realized the need to diversify their machine portfolios. Mark Herrmann saw this and moved his production into the field of flexible packaging and folding carton production. Initially adapting the Comco Commander series label press, and then after seeing how successful this was, developing it into the ProGlide MSP (Multi Substrate Press), he challenged both CI flexo technology and sheet-fed offset in one go – and enjoyed major success with both in the USA, where there are many ProGlides still in daily operation some 30 years after they were built.



Louise Coombes and golden retrievers Tetley and Boris – ‘the three loves of my life’



Nick Coombes at the BRLA golf day on the Ryder Cup course at Celtic Manor

L&L: Was this the beginning of mid-web for non-label applications?

NC: Yes. Up to this point we had seen a gradual increase in web width in the label market from typically 7in (180mm) when I started in the early 1980s, to a more usual 13in and 16in (330mm and 410mm) today. But these are still essentially narrow web, and while modern presses are way more sophisticated than their predecessors with all kinds of added value options and even more colors than before, the future growth as I see it will come from the next sector up in terms of size. The Comco ProGlides that were selling well in the 1980s and 1990s were mostly 26in (660mm) presses and wider, and this is the where I see the likes of Omet succeeding with their VariFlex series as a modern-day equivalent. It's interesting, that having virtually ignored that market sector for almost 20 years since it acquired Comco, Mark Andy is now making a determined effort to re-enter it with its P9 press. As the saying goes: 'What goes around – comes around.'

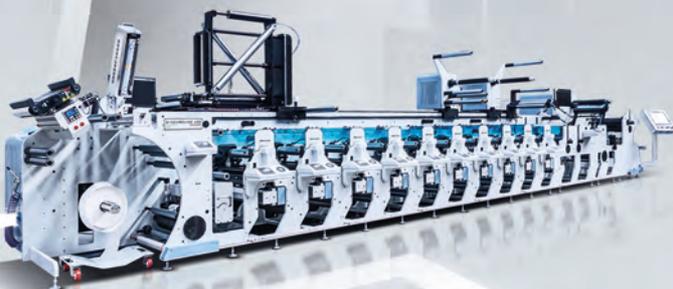
L&L: Why did it take so long for mid web presses to take off and now become mainstream at Labelexpo?

NC: I think there are a number of underlying points here and more than one question to answer. First of all, and this is something of a wild generalization, the European market has always been about quality and the US market about volume. So, rotary letterpress for labels and sheet-fed offset for cartons, with rotogravure for flexible packaging, was how we did it on this side of the pond. For many years, the American market was less interested in quality, so flexo, both CI and in-line, was an accepted and well-used print process. The advent of computerization in the form of CtP began to change all that, coming as it did with the advances made in ink technology, UV curing, anilox rolls, and all of the elements that together have brought flexo to the high-end production process that it is today. I hate to harp on, but Comco, with its HD Club, was doing much of this in the 1980s, and I feel has never been given the credit for being such a pioneer.

The reluctance of Europe, as the other main developed market, to accept in-line flexo for flexible packaging and folding cartons largely stems from its historic base of the major competitors in technology – CI flexo (think Fischer & Krecke and Windmüller & Hölscher to name but two in flexible packaging) and sheet-fed offset (Koenig & Bauer, MAN-Roland, and more recently Heidelberg for print, and Bobst with off-line converting). None of these was likely to concede market share without a fight, and in any case their technology was under a program of continual improvement and innovation, so in-line flexo was effectively trying to push water uphill.

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Nick Coombes with friend and colleague Tony White at Labelexpo in Chicago 2010

But I suspect it has been the change in consumer buying habits that has brought about a rethink among converters. Shorter run lengths and JIT delivery has had a major effect on the production floor of all who produce printed packaging, and the advent of digital print technology has acted as an accelerator. As wide web press manufacturers develop narrower configurations, so the narrow web

technology manufacturers look to go wider. What they are all searching for is maximum flexibility and cost-effectiveness, and the reason this is relevant to Labelexpo is that the potential growth in flexible packaging (and cartons) is far greater than for labels, however successful this market has been in its own right over the past 50 years. In fact, I've long believed that the Labelexpo brand is a double-edged sword – highly successful

but also limited by virtue of its name.

L&L: What do you think the future holds for narrow and mid-web label and package printing?

NC: A very bright future indeed. If you're going to be involved in any area of print these days, it has to be packaging. It's the only sector that has not been adversely affected by the internet, and in fact has benefitted hugely from online shopping (think Amazon). It doesn't matter whose stats you choose to illustrate the point, printed packaging is growing fast and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. Yes, we have issues with plastic pollution, and this is neither the place nor time to discuss the matter, save to say that the major problem is not the production of the product but its disposal/reuse, and that's where governments need to devote their resources. Think of how much of the global market is becoming brand-aware and moving into branded goods for the first time, and how large those populations are. One simple stat to make the point: the middle class in India, that is those with 'new' money to spend, outnumbers the entire population of the EU. I deliberately chose not to use China as an example – but you get my drift. Talking to the many



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“If you’re going to be involved in any area of print these days, it has to be packaging. It’s the only sector that has not been adversely affected by the internet, and in fact has benefitted hugely from online shopping (think Amazon). It doesn’t matter whose stats you choose to illustrate the point, printed packaging is growing fast and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future”

machinery manufacturers that I come across and work with, all are diverting their attention towards the developing markets because the likes of North America and Western Europe are mature, well stocked, and offer little real growth potential. In recent years I have seen and been involved in development work in Asia – and from the Middle East to China is one big area. In fact, of course, it’s far from one area, and this is where the astute manufacturers are learning to hone their products and marketing approach – what works in India won’t necessarily work in Malaysia or Indonesia, and China is a market all of

its own. And don’t forget the potential of countries in South America and Africa. True, they have their various issues, but they also have growing demand, which provides opportunities for technology manufacturers. I’m very optimistic about the future of package printing and would recommend any young person considering a job in commerce to look closely at what this industry can offer as a long-term career. I’ve thoroughly enjoyed my time in graphic arts – and still do.

L&L: And away from work?

NC: If you ask my wife, she’d say I don’t

have a life away from work. I’ve always been a keen sportsman, with cricket and golf as my main loves. These days I’m too unfit to play one and too busy to find time for the other, but in younger years both were great providers of exercise and social life. I’m still a member of MCC so enjoy my days at Lord’s cricket club, and also a member of Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club, which is only 10 minutes from my home and one of the best links courses in the UK, if not the world. Louise and I have two beautiful Golden Retrievers, Tetley and Boris, who provide us with the daily fresh air and exercise that we otherwise might not get. She and I were born and brought up in east Kent, so our recent house move to Ringwoud, between Deal and Dover, is more like coming home, and it’s been good to hook up with old friends. It’s also an L&L stronghold down here, with Mike Fairley and Andy Thomas-Emans both living within 10 miles of us.



Nick Coombes will be introducing the Flexible Packaging Arena at Labelexpo Europe 2019 featuring digital and conventional mid-web production of stand-up pouches. www.labelexpo-europe.com

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Converters talk digital

Leading converters from across the world talked about how they are leveraging digital print into profitable new avenues at HP Indigo's VIP event. Andy Thomas-Emans makes his second report from Tel Aviv

HP Indigo's annual VIP event brought together converters, end users and partner suppliers from across the world. Of particular interest were a number of converter-focused discussions covering a wide range of topics showing how digital is being used to develop new profit streams and enhance existing ones.

Digital cartons

Cartons is not an arena historically covered by L&L in depth, but digital printing is opening up new opportunities to disrupt the standard offset model. Nosco is one converter which has seized these opportunities, as John McKeough, senior VP operations, explained.

Nosco describes itself as a medium-sized converting group with six plants in the US and a \$120m USD turnover. Labels, cartons and inserts each represent around one third of the company's total output and key markets include pharma, nutraceuticals and health and beauty.

Nosco has been a strong development partner for HP Indigo in the US, beta-testing both the WS6000 in 2008 then the HP 30000 in 2013. Nosco was also a partner in HP Indigo's network for the Share-a-Coke campaign in the US. By 2018 the company had installed five WS6800 and two HP 30000 digital presses. The presses are run very efficiently, with an average 10 mins makeready and under 10 percent machine downtime.

Labels was the first production segment to be digitally transformed at Nosco. 'There were two big things we could do with digital – first exponentially change the delivery time for our customers, which used to be six weeks and then 5-10 days, and is now three days,' said McKeough. 'Serialization was the other big driver to more profit.' The 6000-series presses have also started absorbing more of Nosco's longer run work.

Why move to the 30000? 'We did do some cartons on the 6000 presses but it's really a label machine. We were running the 6000-series at the edge of what it could handle and we had no

“The consensus was that clients are happy to accept 4-7 color simulations of spot color on the digital press, and because actual samples can be sent there is no room for mis-communication about color”

downstream equipment for die-cutting. But we got our foot in the door and got our customers excited about what could be done with serialization and digital color on cartons, and that pushed us to the 30000.'

Among carton customers used to offset standards there was 'lots of trepidation' about digital color. 'We had to put them at ease, so we ran with the G7 color management system. This meant we could put their jobs on whatever format was good for us without worrying about the color consistency of the HP 30000 versus a Komori press. G7 is the key to that.

'Clients were also used to spot color, but we now have the bulk of our customers in the OTC and nutraceuticals markets used to 4-color – or 3-color is possible – which simulates spot color well. We made our own 6000-series pantone book so customers can see exactly the look they would get. That has served us well.'

Nosco's digital presses are located at a greenfield start-up operation just outside Philadelphia called the On-demand Solutions Center, usefully located close to key customers. 'The big selling point of the 30000 is that we could blow away the service model for many customers, moving from 4-week delivery time to on-demand. That was a great change for them.'



Examples of digitally printed cartons



Carton collation packs produced on HP 30000



Tel Aviv played host to HP Indigo's VIP event

higher, because commercial printers are starting to go into cartons and labels,' noted Adi Levy.

Trigon is a digital-only house with 95 employees housing an HP Indigo 6900, four Kodak Approvals and an Epson SurePress. Anil Namugade stresses that digital is 'both a technology and a mindset', which means focusing on the unique value digital can create, such as personalization.

Harkwell Labels is another digital-only house, employing 22 people and running two HP Indigo 6900s and an 8000.

Quality Tape and Label is a 38-strong company with a majority of digital over conventional presses including one WS6800, a 6900 and a 20000. 'Runs are getting shorter and SKUs increasing, and this year 90 percent of our work has been digital,' said Rob Daniels. 'We use our flexo press for varnishing shrink sleeves which come off the 20000.'

Adi Levy stressed the importance of working with HP Indigo's business development team, sharing case studies of what sells. 'Every time I need marketing help I get help from Indigo. We bought

“We did do some cartons on the 6000 presses but it's really a label machine. We were running the 6000 at the edge of what it could handle and we had no downstream equipment for die-cutting. But we got our foot in the door and got our customers excited about what could be done with serialization and digital color on cartons, and that pushed us to the 30000”

In terms of finishing, ABG is Nosco's partner for labels and Kama for cartons with its half-size die-cutter, along with a conventional folder-gluer.

Nosco has taken full advantage of HP Indigo's special ink developments. Invisible inks were an early success on labels, and Nosco has now trialed them on cartons on the 30000. Nosco also supplies the readers. 'This all helps get us out of the price conversation,' said McKeough. 'We have used HP's Silver on the labels side and this has been a nice win. Premium White we also use a lot. Many customers take serialization in-house but with this white we can show that the uptime on their lines is better if they let the experts do it for them.'

Indeed, 'advisory selling' has been key to Nosco's success. 'We have a better understanding of what causes downtime on a customer's line. For example we pre-attach medical inserts to cartons which speeds their line up and reduces waste and inventory – and ensures they buy their products from us. We call our sales people packaging advisors. It is a team sell – engineer, ops person and packaging advisor.'

Concluding, McKeough said digital has been 'a wonderful thing' for Nosco. 'And HP has been a great partner.'

Label converter panel

A label converter panel session saw the following leaders brought together: Jim Voltoline, operations manager at Consolidated Label; Adi Levy, CEO of Peer Print; Anil Namugade, director at Trigon Digital; Barry Halliday, managing director of Harkwell Labels; and Rob Daniels, president of Quality Tape & Label.

Consolidated Label is a medium-sized converter operating across a wide range of end use sectors and employing 240 people. Along with 17 conventional presses its digital complement includes two HP Indigo WS6800 presses and one 8000.

Peer Print employs 50 staff. The converter prints digitally with two WS6600s and one wide format digital press, and conventionally with a new sheet-fed Komori offset press. The company specializes in wine labels and cartons. 'In the sheet-fed business competition is

our first Indigo press in 2012 when we had a Gallus offset, but runs were becoming shorter and makeready was taking a lot of time. We didn't even tell customers we had replaced it with a digital press.'

Anil Namugade explained that Trigon started life specializing in prototyping/mocks up using its Epson equipment. 'We then wanted to bridge the gap between this and higher numbers of mock-ups, trying to supply a value in the customer's supply chain. Indigo helped us to go to these longer runs but we are still working as a smart innovation company. We have partners with conventional

Market analysis

Corey Reardon, president and CEO of AWA Consulting, looked at how global packaging trends are being impacted by – and are impacting – the development of digital print technology. Reardon noted that local and regional brands are growing at 2-3 times the rate of global brands, while customization, personalization and greater product variety are key trends supporting digital.

Reardon did note that glue-applied (cut & stack and wraparound) still accounts for over one third of the global label market, with sleeving at 19 percent. Although pressure-sensitive labels have a dominant share of overall label production, one half of that is accounted for by VIP/logistics. This means that if we focus simply on the prime label market, the share of PS is just 24 percent against 44 percent for glue-applied and 23 percent for shrink sleeves.

Much of the success of sleeves is accounted for by the Asia-Pacific market, particularly Japan, and that region continues to drive global label demand overall, with a 44 percent market share. This is followed by Europe at 25 percent and the US at 19 percent.

Flexible packaging continues to make inroads into the label sector, again led by Asia-Pacific at 52 percent, with Europe at 23 percent and North America 13 percent market share.



L-R: Jim Voltoline, operations manager at Consolidated Label; Adi Levy, CEO of Peer Print; Anil Namugade, director at Trigon Digital; Barry Halliday, managing director of Harkwell Labels; and Rob Daniels, president of Quality Tape & Label

“Customers now realize they can change label designs between jobs and are not afraid to do that, taking full advantage of different design elements. This would be a nightmare on flexo. Our digital operators are in their mid-20s with social media backgrounds and do not have to know about print at all”

equipment for longer runs.’

For Barry Halliday the challenge for digital is to understand what the customer needs. It is not a price conversation, because price per label is the same for shorter as longer runs. So, for example, we can offer five lots of 20,000 labels and not 100,000 labels which greatly reduces or eliminates inventory holding.’

Rob Daniels said one of QT+L’s models is to give brands an annual label price, but deliver labels as they are needed. ‘We did not tell people their labels were digital to begin with, but just showing them such a quick turnaround was the key. Our customers were throwing inventory away. You have to get to the marketing and brand managers and they will make the purchasing agent buy from us because that’s helps them move new products into the market. You have to find ways to get in front of customers. I once took a label off one product and put a shrink label onto the bottle and left it on the customer’s desk.’

Session moderator Christian Menegon asked what internal changes these converters had made to accommodate digital.

Jim Voltoline said Consolidated Label made big changes to its workflow and approach. ‘We did not have to find highly skilled people – just people who did well on our tests. Today we have four ABGs because we do a lot of decorative finishing and in prepress we have two artists dedicated to digital – that’s all they do – and nine on flexo.’

Adi Levy said the company’s workflow ‘changed completely.

It took a lot of heaviness off our operators.’

Barry Halliday said digital had prompted a complete reorganization of Harkwell’s artwork system. ‘Cerm and Esko are now integrated from quote through factory to DFE, so we have a fully automated workflow and we want to move this to finishing as well.

‘This really is needed. The number of jobs and levels of sophistication are increasing. Customers now realize they can change label designs between jobs and are not afraid to do that, taking full advantage of different design elements. This would be a nightmare on flexo. Our digital operators are in their mid-20s with social media backgrounds and do not have to know about print at all. We have two apprentices in the factory and in customer services.’

Rob Daniels explained how his company has reinvented its workflow after the installation of a LabelTraxx MIS. ‘We now have four graphic artists. We’re receiving 30 orders a day and with five SKUs per order this means 150 pieces of art each a day. We’ve now added a Hybrid Software system which is a game changer, especially for proofing. Now we can fully track when artwork is approved.’

How do these converters handle color management, particularly when running a hybrid digital/conventional press room? The consensus was that clients are happy to accept 4-7 color simulations of spot color on the digital press, and because actual samples can be sent there is no room for mis-communication about color.

‘We used to have color management issues and now we don’t,’ said Barry Halliday. ‘We use Esko color management software and X-Rite (color measurement) and with seven colors we can hit most pantones. We show that print sample to the customer and if they don’t like it we can tweak it.’

At Quality Tape + Label the standard color target when simulating pantones is delta2, and again an X-Rite measurement system is used on press. ‘This stops the operator having to make curves on the press. Now if changes have to be made the job goes back to prepress who make color for the press.’

For all the panelists digital embellishment is of great interest, and a clear future trend.



Further insight into brand owners perception of digital print can be gained by attending Labelexpo Europe’s Brand Innovation event. www.labelexpo-europe.com



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Zeikon confirms pouch production

The digital press manufacturer has formally advanced the application range of its dry toner technology in partnership with UK printer CS Labels. David Pittman reports

Digital press manufacturer Zeikon has formally confirmed its technology as suitable for producing pouches, as it seeks to take the use of its dry toner technology into new markets and applications adjacent to self-adhesive labels.

Zeikon's dry toner technology is long-established for a number of label, packaging and graphic arts applications, from pressure-sensitive labels, folding cartons and paper cups, to document production and wallpaper printing. With the addition of inkjet to its portfolio via its own Panther presses and the acquisition of the EFI Jetriion business, Zeikon has developed its technology to better serve existing end-use markets (durable and industrial), and expanded into additional applications such as glossy, tactile health and beauty and premium beer labels where the tough and tactile characteristics of UV inkjet lend themselves to these applications.

While the broader term of 'flexible packaging' has been previously served using dry toner, notes Filip Weymans, vice president of marketing at Zeikon, pouches have until now been a more challenging addition. The heat involved in fusing the toners has created a barrier to entry, as has the range of multilayer materials seen in pouch production. These are needed to ensure the appropriate barrier characteristics of the packaging but can be difficult to run through the press. Format and material compatibility have further curtailed its use.

Now though, Zeikon has collaborated with UK printer CS Labels to formally establish pouches as a viable option for dry toner using an indirect printing principle.



CS Labels has been a long-time user of Zeikon dry toner technology

“We have moved into flexible packaging as I believe the market is where the label market was in 2007, when we bought our first digital press”

Pouch production process

This has necessitated a modification to the digital press engine that allows printing on the reverse of a PET substrate, which becomes the outer layer of the pouch. This is then thermal laminated – a dry process – to the inner layer of the pouch completing the packaging structure. The inner layer can be a single or multilayer foil depending on the barrier requirements. This process simplifies the manufacturing by standardizing the substrate to be printed, with no need to 'full cure' the laminated construction, and having the flexibility to add any type of barrier without impacting

quality and performance.

Weymans explains: 'Pouch construction can be complicated, with aluminum layers commonplace and functional barriers essential. Such complexity is challenging to the print process.'

'The process that has been developed sees the pouch deconstructed, so simplifying the print process by having a standard type mono-material that needs to be reverse printed before the finished pouch is constructed.'

Simon Smith, managing director at CS Labels, notes: 'There are a number of challenges to overcome. Heat is one, as are creasing of the material, poor adhesion, material shrinkage and tension. Format size means there are a few jobs we can't touch with the available web width. Pouches also require a lot of ink coverage so the cost of inks need to be considered. Toner performance can cause issues with refusing and reforming during conversion. And there remain issues in sourcing materials in appropriate batch sizes and in short lead times.'

'We are still exploring the boundaries but our experience has allowed us to reach a point where we are able to offer a real

Panther DuraCure technology launched

Zeikon has developed Panther DuraCure, UV curing technology for use with Zeikon PantherCure UV inkjet inks. Panther DuraCure curing technology is a unique technique combining UV LED and conventional mercury technologies to deliver optimal gloss effects in all colors, as well as 'ultimate durability' for multiple applications across multiple sectors. Key benefits are identified as consistent curing performance, long-term durability, and the lowest possible energy consumption. UV pinning of white keeps the ink from spreading and bleeding into the CMYK inks. UV pinning after black following CMYK transfer means DuraCure 'freezes' all colors across the image and maintains a uniform optimal color brilliance and gloss.

solution to the market, using dry toner.'

CS Labels is a long-time user of Xeikon dry toner presses. It installed its first in 2007 and became an entirely digital printing house in 2012 when its last flexo press was shipped out.

It has achieved great success in labels and is now gearing up for future growth with an expanded portfolio of packaging structures available to its customers. This has included products for both food and non-food applications. It has won awards for these too, with pouches for customer Leisurechem's Hot Tub Nights aromatherapy crystals a notable triumphant project.

CS Labels runs a fleet of Xeikon CX3 presses, along with a Xeikon CX500, for which CS Labels served as a beta test site. Smith sees this press as integral to his company's ability to serve the market for digitally-printed pouches. 'The Xeikon CX500 was a "eureka" moment for us as we knew we could use the technology to develop our flexible packaging business. The beta testing we undertook was of a label press but we were really interested to expand our opportunities in printing flexible packaging.

'We have moved into flexible packaging as I believe the market is where the label market was in 2007, when we bought our first digital press. At that time, people questioned our investment, saying the technology was too costly, too slow and too unreliable to be successful with.

'People are saying similar things about digitally printed pouches. We see ourselves as a disrupter and want to challenge the conceptions. You can make a success of it, you just have to think about it differently.'

Partners

Xeikon and CS Labels have turned to other supply chain partners to help make pouches a reality. D&K for example, supplied the

“By designing and building our own converting line, we have been able to bring the whole process in-house. This has given us control of the process from origination to delivery of the final product”



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Pouches for CS Labels' customer Leisurechem's Hot Tub Nights aromatherapy crystals have won awards



A pouch sample printed using Zeikon dry toner technology

laminated that was reverse printed to provide samples shown by CS Labels at the recent Zeikon Café event in Europe. This was laminated to a PET structure supplied by Synthogra. Michelman provides the water-based thermal adhesive that is used to bond the laminate and the packaging structure. This is applied using a Zeikon UCoat.

CS Labels has worked with the converting supply chain to have a 6m-long converting line custom built. This allows it to convert pouches in-house, removing the previously necessary of outsourcing converting.

'By designing and building our own converting line, we have been able to bring the whole process in-house. This has given us control of the process from origination to delivery of the final product.'

This includes tackling lead times, which traditionally extend to 8-10 weeks using conventional flexible packaging processes.

'Dry thermal lamination helps achieve a fast turnaround time when converting the packaging,' confirms Weymans. 'With conventional processes you have to allow time for solvent-based laminates to fully cure. This contributes to a turnaround time of 8-10 weeks. This is not uncommon in conventional flexible packaging processes but to truly capitalize with digital printing that is too long.'

Smith continues: 'We are coming to market with a 4-6 week lead time, with the Zeikon CX500 press running at 30m/min and printing at 1200 DPI.'

Food-safe packaging is identified as another option using the dry toner process to create pouches.



For more on CS Labels and its use of Zeikon dry toner technology, see tinyurl.com/yxelpzvz3



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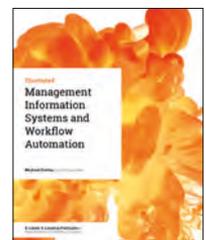
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Labelgrafic grows presence in Spanish wine label market

The printer based in the Rioja region is building its reputation with Codimag offset presses. Adrian Tippetts reports

Labelgrafic Industrias Gráficas, of Logroño in the Rioja region, boasts a clientele that reads as a roll-call of Spain's most prestigious wineries – no mean feat for a company that only added roll labels to its sheet-fed capabilities a few years ago.

With a workflow centered on two Codimag presses – one Viva waterless, one Viva Aniflo – plus a strong customer-focused ethic, Labelgrafic has built a reputation for providing innovative branding options, in short and long runs.

With a workforce of 60, Labelgrafic has a varied, 400-strong clientele, ranging from boutique estates to some of the most prestigious winemakers in Spain with bottle sales in the millions. Quite a step for a company that, until 2013, had no experience in self-adhesive labeling.

The wine collection at the reception of Labelgrafic's headquarters gives as good a first impression as any of the company's credentials and capabilities. The labels are all converted in the recently expanded facilities: metallic strokes evoke the heritage of Muga and Marqués de Murrieta, fine detail delicately depicts the historic Sierra Cantabria estate, while an opaque white lettering of Dmoreno – imposed upon a dark, varnished background – makes all the more impact for its contemporary simplicity.

Sheet-fed, wet-glue labels are still a significant, constant source

of business. Produced on a 5-color Heidelberg Speedmaster (see boxout), they are used in diverse markets including water, soft drinks, beer, food, dairy products as well as wine.

Enrique Desamparados, Labelgrafic's managing director, keenly emphasizes that high-performance technology alone is not enough to succeed, especially in wine markets where the label influences the buying decision, arguably to the greatest extent.

'The biggest mistake a label converter can make is to come here and just see big numbers on a spreadsheet,' he says. 'The leading winemakers come to us because we are dedicated to giving them something special that differentiates their wine in the market. We are prepared to take time developing unique labels, trialing papers, finishing processes and colors, sometimes with the wine producer at the press with us.'

Additional products

By the start of the current decade, members of the Labelgrafic board could see wet-glue declining at the expense of self-adhesive labels. A wider variety of sensually appealing facestocks, varnishes and foiling effects were being introduced. Labelgrafic's board of directors became convinced of the need to enter the self-adhesive label market as they saw market share of their core wine business fall.

'Customers were switching to competitors with roll-to-roll technology, which could include more added-value features in one pass, and produce more creative designs, cost-effectively and faster,' says Desamparados.

'We recognized that being only a wet-glue label supplier put us at a serious disadvantage, and it was time to adapt – and invest.'

While work began to extend the factory, the management team started researching available technologies. 'We decided against flexo because we felt it was too risky to switch to a technology we had no experience of. Furthermore, for wine labels there can be no compromise in quality, and in our experience, only offset could meet the demanding expectations of high definition, fine tonal gradation and vividness.'

Labelgrafic's directors observed the performance of various offset presses at label converters across Europe. Eventually, in 2012, they discovered Codimag. The technical team performed successful printing trials at Codimag's Bondoufle facility in France. And while other presses could produce quality labels, the Labelgrafic team felt that, in Codimag, they had a machine supplier willing to provide

“The biggest mistake a label converter can make is to come here and just see big numbers on a spreadsheet”



Labelgrafic general manager Enrique Desamparados with the company's Codimag Viva Aniflo press

History of Labelgrafic

Spanish printer Labelgrafic was founded in 1992 by former staff of Gráfica Gonzalez, one of the country's largest printing operations, which had collapsed the previous year. They pooled savings, equivalent to two million euros, to invest in a 5-color color Heidelberg Speedmaster and new premises – by no means a small risk, given the economic conditions at that time. After successful trials, the company won business from local wineries, and a reputation for quality soon spread.

the close ongoing technical assistance, and responsiveness that mirrored their approach to supporting customers. The company specified a 5-color Codimag Viva 340 waterless offset press as its first roll-to-roll press.

'We approached the investment with trepidation,' Desamparados reflects. 'We had no experience in either self-adhesive or with waterless offset. To begin with it was a great challenge, especially getting the tonal ranges correct with new inks, but Codimag provided the training and has always been available to solve technical problems fast.'

"Being only a wet-glue label supplier put us at a serious disadvantage"

Pierre Panel, export sales manager, Codimag, explains: 'The biggest challenge for a label converter adopting roll-fed technology for the first time is understanding the interactions between processes. For sheet-fed printers like Labelgrafic making this step, we have a specially adapted training program that covers issues like web guidance, tension and rewinding according to customer specifications. We also make a special effort to have them understand the fundamentals of combination printing, and the different processes involved, as most roll-fed presses have in-line finishing while sheet-fed is just offset printing.'

After careful selection of inks and stamping media, Labelgrafic performed trials that soon became contracts. A critical moment in establishing Labelgrafic's reputation in self-adhesive labels came when it was chosen to reproduce a 130-year-old label design for Marques de Murrieta, one of the region's most expensive wines. Orders soon came from across Spain and, by 2017, Labelgrafic's Viva waterless press was at full capacity, working two shifts, five days per week. Struggling to deliver on time, Desamparados realized a second press was essential.

Additional capacity

'At first we considered a digital press. But while it provided short runs and fast job changes, digital ink costs made it too expensive for longer runs. We were already convinced of Codimag as a reliable partner with knowledgeable staff and fast problem-solving, so naturally we seized the chance to do trials with its new Aniflo printing technology. We were impressed the faster speeds, the ease of operation, as well as the

quality. We saw it would fit perfectly with our production plans that included both short and relatively long runs of up to a million labels.'

Aniflo is an intermittent technology combining waterless offset ink and plates with a flexo system for supplying ink to the plate. Ink delivery includes a chamber doctor blade, anilox roll and rubber roller, which in turn delivers ink to the plate and on to the blanket. Each cylinder has the same diameter, ensuring that an exact controllable level of ink is delivered across the web, so exact color is achieved without ghosting. The anilox roll cells are adapted for viscous waterless ink. Ink density is regulated by a temperature control system. A semi-rotary system, Aniflo saves tooling costs because one cylinder can be used for all repeat sizes. It has a shorter web path than fully rotary presses, reducing material waste and manual input.

Labelgrafic's custom-built 340mm-wide Codimag Viva Aniflo includes six colors with varnishing and foiling. With six colors, Labelgrafic runs two direct colors in addition to CMYK, to achieve any specific customer color request.

Pre-press workflows are fast, taking about half an hour from receipt of the computer file to printing the first label. With stockholding reduced along the supply chain to cut costs, order placement is less predictable. In these circumstances, short set-up times and fast time-to-print are important advantages.

Desamparados says: 'Five years ago, three-week delivery terms from order placement were the norm. Now, it's just a week. In that time, you must buy the materials, perhaps reorder die-cutting tools, and have up to a million labels printed and dispatched. That's why we see ourselves as a service provider – not just a printing company.'

Rioja, like most Spanish wine regions, depends increasingly on export sales, with 108 million liters consumed outside Spain, including fast-growing markets such as Russia and China. Fast make-ready times on the Codimag Viva presses make it possible to change jobs frequently, for example to incorporate language variations, or information to meet national health and safety legislation.

On one occasion, Labelgrafic performed 16 jobs in four hours, totaling 7,600 linear meters, with two substrates and three varnish changes. The simplicity of the plate mounting, which requires no tape and automated register controls ensuring targets are reached with little start-up waste, make this flexibility viable.

The Viva Aniflo has a maximum speed of about 75m/min, making it possible to meet high output requirements at short notice,



Faustino Crianza 2016 Art Collection label produced by Labelgrafic on a Codimag Viva Aniflo 340 press



The Cune Rioja Crianza label features five colors, two foil-stamping processes and a flexo varnish, creating the tactile effect and color richness normally associated with screen printing



The label design of La Nieta Viñedos de Paganos for Sierra Cantabria is a reproduction of a 19th Century photograph of the winemaker's historic estate



Labelgrafic's diverse wine industry clientele is on display at the company's headquarters

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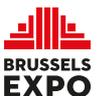
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“Five years ago, three-week delivery terms from order placement were the norm”

without excessive material costs. The high speed means Labelgrafic can meet the annual label requirements of CVNE, one of Spain's largest wineries. For example, design complexity is essential to reflect prestige of CVNE's many wines. The Cune Rioja Crianza label features five colors, two foil-stamping processes and a flexo varnish. The result achieves the tactile effect and color richness normally associated with screen printing.

'Codimag's Viva Aniflo gives us the flexibility of digital, the speed of flexo and the quality of offset,' continues Desamparados. 'That means we can maintain uptime when dealing with very short runs and promise short lead times when high output is required, while always being capable of delivering quality with the most challenging designs.'

The label design of La Nieta Viñedos de Párganos for Sierra Cantabria is a reproduction of a 19th century photograph of the winemaker's historic estate. More than a rebranding to highlight the wine's heritage, this was also a personal tribute by the present owner to his grandfather, whose role in cultivating the vineyards contributed to the winery's international standing.

'The precise registration and smooth tonal ranges achieved on the Codimag Viva Aniflo ensures the faithful representation of the photograph's finest detail,' says Desamparados. 'The owner was thrilled with the result, and for us, it was a chance to show the same care and respect for the production of the label, that is



Cartes screen printing as installed at Labelgrafic

evident in the production of the wine.'

Additional technology

Labelgrafic has kept screen printing as a near-line rather than in-line process, installing a Cartes printing press next to the Codimag machines for tactile effects and thick varnish coverage. An HP Indigo press, also recently installed, provides capacity for very short runs of labels for non-wine sectors, and variable data, applied to wine labels that are then printed on the Codimag presses. This use

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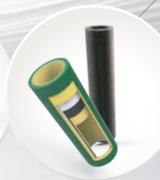


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Labelgrafic headquarters exterior shot in Logroño

of digital to complement analog enables Labelgrafic to meet a growing demand for personalized wine bottles, that may include the buyer's name or a serial number on the label. Attracting high margins, personalized bottles are typically filled from a 250-liter barrel, meaning a production run of approximately 240 labels.

While Labelgrafic was able to adapt to the Aniflo process relatively easily, Codimag and its Iberian agent, Lapeyra y Taltavull, are able to provide technical support and fast supply of consumables. An example is Codimag sourcing tools for creating

inside cut-outs on label designs.

'Rioja's top designers rely on us to produce the most difficult labels because they know our quality and dedication to achieve perfection,' says Desamparados. 'The Codimag presses have put us in an excellent position to achieve the desired creativity.'

Labelgrafic has formed a strategic partnership with another label converter in the region, Gráficas y Adhesivos Ezquerro in Lodosa, Navarra, which has seven flexo presses plus three wet-glue offset presses. While independent, the two companies achieve economies of scale when jointly purchasing materials. Together they offer both sheet and roll label options for all categories – with wine labels taking priority on Codimag presses.

With an in-house sales team and the support of the partner company Ezquerro, Labelgrafic is penetrating wine label markets in Andalusia, Galicia, Portugal and Bordeaux. Admittedly, the French label market is generally more traditional with a reluctance to diverge from protocols for referencing producer, estate, region, appellation and vintage year. Yet a small number of winemakers have seen sharp sales increases after relaunching with quirky, memorable brand names, and labels with innovative graphics and finishing effects. Their distinctive branding achieves better shelf-impact precisely because it breaks convention.

Desamparados concludes: 'When we installed our first Codimag press, we had no idea of how to print on a roll of paper. We never imagined that in five years, we would become the chosen supplier for some of Spain's most prestigious wines. Already, our customers are asking when the third press will be installed.'



Adrian Tippetts is a writer and PR consultant with 20 years' experience in the label industry

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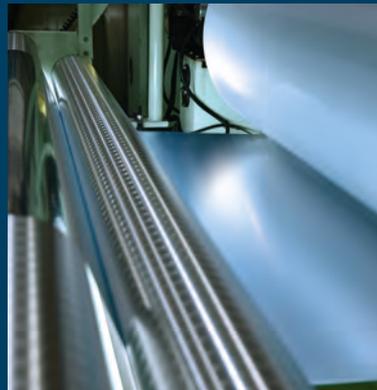
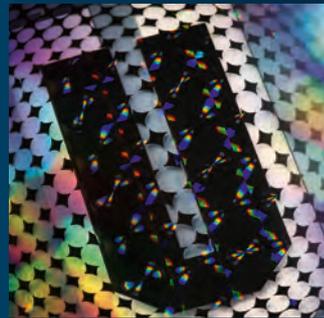
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Seated from left: Charlie MacLean, Marlene Raymond, Deanne Sinclair, Joseph Miller and Shem Szot

Canadian converters tackle tough issues

A wide-ranging label converter panel session at Graphics Canada addressed issues from automation to product diversification and an aging workforce. Andy Thomas-Emans reports

A panel session of leading Canadian converters chaired by L&L North America editor Chelsea McDougall covered a wide range of issues of interest to the global label community. The event was part of a Canadian Label and Packaging Printing Forum, hosted by Labelexpo and co-located at Graphics Canada tradeshow.

One stop shop?

The first question tackled by the panel was whether they are diversifying out of pressure-sensitive labels.

ASL PrintFX's bigger customers are increasingly looking for partners who will go further than just print, said president and CEO Charlie MacLean. 'They are asking: "What innovations do you have to make us unique?" Value adding is critical.'

On the other hand, MacLean is not sure a one-stop shop is the best strategy. 'We can't buy all that technology. Am I going to be focused on where I can make a difference – or an average player offering more?'

Shem Szot from Sticker You agreed: 'We can simplify our customers' purchase experience by recommending partners.'

Cambridge Label is a trade-only converter and works closely with print brokers. 'They are telling us now we have to get into shrink sleeves,' said managing director Deanne Sinclair. 'It seems simple as you don't have to die-cut, but it is actually very challenging – getting the right ink adhesion and ink shrinking at the proper rate. We have been outsourcing finishing and we will get that in-house next so we can also control the seaming.'

Joseph Miller at Kquality Labels is also looking at shrink sleeves. 'When we bought pre-press in this was a big consideration.'

What about flexible packaging?

Marlene Raymond at Design Graphics said her company had

already made the move. 'A series of our clients are in fruit and vegetables so need unsupported flexpack film and more recently pouches, and this seems to be our biggest area of growth at the moment. That market will grow.'

"A series of our clients are in fruit and vegetables so need unsupported flexpack film and more recently pouches, and this seems to be our biggest area of growth at the moment. That market will grow"

Szot agreed that it is his fresh food packaging customers who are asking for unsupported film.

Cambridge Label was approached by a co-packer asking if they could print on flexible packaging. 'It's a good market for growth but it is a whole other ball game,' said Sinclair. 'A major issue is the inflexibility of the materials supply chain. A minimum order is 30 business days delivery and 60,000 ft when I only need 5,000 ft.'

Miller asked: 'What can we do that makes sense with narrow web equipment and where can we offer value? This is the big value proposition we've been working our way through last year.'

Automation

Industry 4.0 and automation are industry buzz-words, but what is



A panel of digital press manufacturers featured Domino, Xeikon, HP, Mark Andy, Fujifilm and Epson

the reality on the ground? For Miller the automation conversation has to start with standardization. 'We are aiming to close the loop between pre-press and process control to make sure that what we proof is what we deliver.'

This directly impacts Kwalita Labels' training program. 'How can I take as much variability out of the process and then train individuals to a place where they can use their skills? In 10 years' time, two thirds of my printers will have retired so I have to make sure I am not prioritizing what will be obsolete in three years. So I prioritize learning.'

'For me automation is the most important thing,' chimed in Szot. 'I am pushing data to the cloud and doing this as much as I think about printing. The auto industry has adopted Six Sigma to make sure things are produced effectively and this will come to us. But these things are complicated and the skills gap is massive. You need a bachelor of engineering degree to automate. So, there are opportunities and challenges for the tech we are building.'

Cambridge Label's Sinclair also makes the link between automation and skills. 'We installed a new flexo press nine months ago and it is leaps and bounds ahead of machines five to 10 years old. Setting impression is now done by an iPad and you can measure and learn those settings, so automation makes training staff easier.'

Digital

All panelists agreed on the growing importance of digital printing, although MacLean brought up the issue of long-term ROI. 'Now we have to worry about obsolescence. The timescale is not 10-15 years any more, but six to seven years and what is the return on that asset over that time? But of course, digital is coming and we need to be playing, particularly as the speed of digital inkjet is increasing.'

Cambridge Labels installed its first digital press in 2013 and it was 'scary to jump in', recalls Sinclair. 'I was thinking I could convert a certain number of jobs to digital and now 50 percent of our work is printed digitally. A lot of our customers don't want to inventory any more, and that helps digital growth.'

For Miller it was the growth of long-run flexo work that drove digital adoption at Kwalita Labels. 'It means we have the right tool for the right job. What digital is doing is freeing up our flexo asset for flexo work. And now we have adopted expanded gamut we can match a color space whether digital or conventional.'

Influencing design decisions

The Q&A session raised the issue of how early the panelists get to see label designs, and whether they have any influence at the design stage.

MacLean said that in the wine and spirits sector the printer is traditionally the last in line. 'The worst thing is when you're working at designing the label on the press.' ASL PrintFX now offers a fast turnaround prototyping service. 'We don't do this at the conceptual stage. We try to get to a visual representation of a 90 percent print

Label conference returns to Toronto

Labelexpo and Labels & Labeling returned to Toronto for a co-located Label And Package Printing Conference at the Graphics Canada tradeshow.

The conference was the second iteration of a partnership with the Canadian print show, and was born out of a desire from the show's commercial print audience for more educational resources on the label market.

The Canadian Label and Package Printing Conference event featured educational sessions for the show's primarily commercial print market to learn more about the label industry.

It included a converter panel featuring Canadian business leaders, a discussion on North American and global market trends, and a presentation on the burgeoning cannabis market in Canada. There also were presentations from digital press manufacturers and a focus on label materials with Avery Dennison. Finally, discussions on software and workflow were held by Hybrid Software and color management by GMG Color.

ready label and that allows you to become an added-value player.'

With a background in graphics, Raymond can tell at an early stage when a job is going to be problematic, 'and you know that you are going to be fighting through prepress. I work with the client as early as possible to guide them.'

As a trade printer, Cambridge Labels only ever gets sent the print-ready files. 'If I try to make it better that meets with a lot of resistance,' said Sinclair.

Miller approaches the issue from a communications perspective. 'If we communicate using agreed words, the images attached to those words will be delivered as discussed. We are aligning our work standards around FIRST and ISO for flexo and if the print buyer is in that process too we can deliver our capabilities well up stream. We can help designers design with that end in mind.'

Aging workforce

Wherever L&L runs panel sessions across the world, the issue of attracting a younger workforce comes up, and this was no exception.

Szot comes at the problem from an interesting perspective. 'I have a background in operational systems where you engineer your processes to be consistent with the software you are using. This really reduces the need for training and enables us to bring people to our print shop that do not know the traditional skills.'

Miller at Kwalita Labels stresses the importance of a clear career progression. 'Is there a pathway to contribute to the plant so that every year there is a different focus? I have to know that I won't spend 12 years on the mounting table.'

Voice of experience

A final thought-provoking audience question asked the panelists what they would do differently if they could start again.

Charlie MacLean said he would definitely have brought in an advisory board. 'There is a lot of experience out there, not just inside our industry, but financial and legal. So, to have some sage advice from people who have been there and gone through it – trusted advisers who can help you avoid the obvious crazy mistakes. We tend to rely on our insular skillsets but think about meeting with these two to three people once a month – buy them some dinner and go through your experiences.'



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Joel Carmany, president of Consolidated Label, with his latest Nilpeter FA press

Strategies for success at Consolidated Label

As the leader of Florida-based Consolidated Label, Joel Carmany has built a successful growth strategy built on IT, infrastructure and investment. Chelsea McDougall reports

You've come a long way, Mr Carmany. Since buying a fledgling 1,200sq ft business off a Florida dirt road, Joel Carmany, the president of Consolidated Label, has built his Sanford-based business into one of the most prominent and profitable narrow web packaging companies in North America.

Consolidated Label, with Carmany at the helm, has consistently won TLMI's Eugene Singer Awards for best-managed companies. Seventeen, in fact (see boxout). Most recently, Carmany was named TLMI's Converter of the Year, capping 34 years of achievements and recognition by his industry peers.

History

Unlike many in the label business today, Carmany wasn't born with ink running through his veins and he didn't grow up on the print shop floor. For Carmany, an engineer by training, the label life is one he chose.

He left a 15-year career with General Electric in 1984 when he purchased Consolidated Label, which at that time was a modest company on the outskirts of Orlando. When Carmany took over, Consolidated had 'six employees and a couple thousand dollars in sales,' he says. The company's main application was hot stamped pressure-sensitive labels.

'What I liked about the company was the concept of labels,' he continues. 'It's a flow business, meaning that the customer orders once and assuming they're happy with the product, and they continue to sell their products, they have to keep ordering more labels. That business structure has allowed us to put in

infrastructure. It's what allowed us to build an employee base that we can count on, and the financial ability to predict where we're going to be.

'Success of any business is based upon the predictability of the business model.'

"Success of any business is based upon the predictability of the business model"

Consolidated Label has continued to expand as its sales volumes increased. First came a 7,000sq ft facility, which doubled a few years later. By 1995, Consolidated was ready to move to 32,000sq ft facility, which Carmany and crew again doubled a few years after that.

Today, Consolidated Label is a \$100m USD company with 320 employees and 170,000sq ft footprint that sits on 25 acres. Its sprawling shop floor is 70,000sq ft alone.

Consolidated Label spent \$13m USD to renovate its current plant, which is now a state-of-the-art, bright, clean and inviting facility. It's a shop that Carmany frequently opens to other label converters and TLMI members interested in absorbing his business acumen.

'I've been around for a while, and I'm past the point of it all being about me and all that we've accomplished here,' he explains. 'I have



A game room and fitness center are a few of the perks of working at Consolidated Label



Flexible packaging and shrink sleeves are the fastest growing segment at Consolidated Label

the opportunity to give back to my employees, or other converters and share things that I think truly can help people.'

TLMI president Dan Muenzer said at the time of Carmany's Converter of the Year honor: 'Since joining TLMI, Joel has had an open-door policy, hosting other TLMI converter members at his company in Florida and allowing them to see his operation up close. The list of converters who have visited Joel and benefited from spending time with him is long. He is well known for his candid and rare openness, and for being a gifted mentor and friend to any converter in need. Consolidated Label has become one of our industry's most-used synonyms for success, and I congratulate Joel for being awarded this well-deserved honor.'

Technology

As Consolidated Label expanded its physical footprint, the company added state-of-the-art label printing equipment and technology.

The shop floor at Consolidated Label features the latest label and packaging technology. Nilpeter can count the converter as one of its biggest US customers. Consolidated Label has 18 presses from the Danish press manufacturer, ranging from 10in wide machines to its latest installations: 22in and 16in width Nilpeter FA presses installed in 2018. The wider width machines will cater to Consolidated Label's growing shrink sleeve and flexible packaging pouch, sachet and packet applications.

'Flexible packaging and shrink are the fastest growing segments of our business,' Carmany says. 'There's a lot more added value for the customer. We've been in shrink about eight years now, but it's continued to grow way above the label business.'

The latest conventional press installations are full UV LED, as Consolidated Label makes steps to change its ink system for all presses, except water-based, to UV LED inks from Flint Group.

The decision to switch to LED curing came down to maintenance, Carmany explains: 'UV bulbs are problematic: even when they're still operating they can be giving off less UV light than is required to cure. It's easy to be under-cured and that causes you problems down the road. That's been our single most important decision from a maintenance standpoint and we're committed to moving to LED curing as we install new equipment. We just get more press uptime.'

Two HP Indigo 6800 presses and an HP Indigo 8000 are the heart of the company's digital label printing, with finishing completed near-line.

'At this stage, our most important piece of equipment is our digital press,' Carmany says. 'The market segmentation and SKU proliferation that has occurred over the last 10 to 15 years has made it very hard for flexo to make all those changeovers. Quite

frankly it's a lot easier with digital for your smaller runs.'

Consolidated Label has also prioritized quality control and has installed inspection systems from Baldwin Vision Systems (formerly PC Industries) and AVT on its presses and rewinding and finishing systems.

'From the customer side, the criticality has gone up quite a bit. They just do not want to deal with problems. They don't want to deal with your problems; they have their own, and they'll deal with those. The more error-free you can make production, the better off you are.'

The company relies on an MIS system developed in-house. Consolidated Label has set a precedent of IT investment, by building its IT staff and customer-facing systems.

Strategy

A key strategy for success at Consolidated Label has been continued investment in technology, IT infrastructure and employees. (A fitness facility and game room on site are just a few of the perks of working at Consolidated Label.)

'Our strategy has always been investing in people, investing in equipment, investing in customers and relationship building,' Carmany says.

Consolidated Label focuses on small- to mid-sized brands with a heavy emphasis on food, beverage and health and beauty markets.

'I've always been focused on the big picture and having a vision for where we want to go and then trying to get the right people, the right technology and the right customer base, because whatever your customer base is, that will determine your success,' he says.

The company was one of the earliest internet-based label providers. Joel and his son, David Carmany, who runs the company's Online Labels division, had the foresight to know that bringing ordering capability online – at a time when very few other label converters in the country were positioning themselves that way – would be an innovative and winning approach.

'We're always trying to evaluate where we need to be five years from now and how do we get there now?' Carmany says. 'That's why when you look at this facility and some of the equipment we have and some of the businesses that we're in, we're ahead of a lot of people. And that's because we've outspent them. I think you have to continue to invest rather than try to put it in your pocket.'



TLMI members took home 10 awards in the L9 World Label Awards, selected by the L9 group of international label associations. For the full list of winners, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/yyvskc6f>

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Turning to digital at Action Quality Printers

Boise, Idaho-based Action Quality Printers began its digital journey in 2016. Chelsea McDougall reports

“The company estimated the return on its investment would be reached in 12 to 18 months. It made it in three”

The story of how Action Quality Printers became a full-service label printer in 1998 is one that’s still being played out regularly in the industry today: a commercial printer sees a mature market, eyes growth in the label and package printing segment and decides to take a leap.

‘We needed to hitch our wagon to something that was in more of a growth market,’ says president and general manager Kevin Curtain. ‘Packaging and labels seemed to be a pretty good fit. Everything I was seeing and reading was that label and packaging had the potential for long-term growth in the printing industry, so I made the decision to move in that direction.’

This was 20 years ago, but it could have been said today.

Technology

Boise, Idaho-based Action Quality Printers began as an offset shop in 1968. The company first installed a Webtron press when it moved to the label segment in the late 1990s. Within three years, the company had divested itself of its commercial printing assets and was pegged as Idaho’s leading locally-owned label manufacturer.

Action Quality Printers ran an all-flexo shop until 2016 when the company acquired a 13-inch Epson SurePress L-4033AW press and entered the digital label market.

Curtain says the Epson press was affordable, robust enough to match the quality Action’s customers had come to expect, and versatile enough to serve the label converter’s diverse client base.

Curtain says: ‘It fit our market perfectly because of the price point – it was a more affordable option than we were previously had been able to find. And when I made a visit to the demo center down in California and saw the capabilities of the equipment, and how it fit in with what were we’re trying to achieve, it was a really good fit for us.’

The company also has four 8-color flexo presses. Digital finishing is done on



Tim Oos, digital press operator at Action Quality Printers

a semi-rotary die-cutting machine from Brotech, and Curtain cites Label Traxx and Esko workflow as key to his business success.

Local market

Boise, Idaho, has a population of 226,000 people, so Action Quality Printers worried that the local economy couldn’t support labels on its digital asset. The company estimated the return on its investment would be reached in 12 to 18 months. It made it in three.

‘Digital for us makes sense. Because we are in a smaller economic pool, there are many smaller-sized companies and startups who have small run jobs but want high quality and quicker turnaround times. For that, digital makes sense,’ Curtain explains.

‘We’re in a small market, we don’t have many large manufacturing facilities that are using millions of labels,’ Curtain says. ‘We’re focused on the local economy: the beer, wine and specialty food markets.’

The company is now printing 80 percent conventionally and 20 percent digitally. It has 17 employees and has increased sales revenue by 35 percent since installing its digital equipment.

‘I think digital is going to continue to grasp more and more market share because of versatility and because of number of vendors supplying machinery out there.’

Brands talk sustainability at American Packaging Summit

Labels & Labeling attended the American Packaging Summit, hosted April 16-17 in Chicago. Many of the topics at the two-day event centered on packaging sustainability as brands grapple with a public reckoning on plastic.

Chelsea McDougall moderated the closing session with panelists Andria Long from Johnsonville Sausage, Kelly Murosky from Seventh Generation and Joseph Hotchkiss, the retired director of the School of Packaging at Michigan State University. Brands such as Pepsi, Mondelez, Nestle Waters, AB InBev, L’Oreal and more were listed speakers; the likes of Procter & Gamble, Estee Lauder, MillerCoors and more were in attendance.

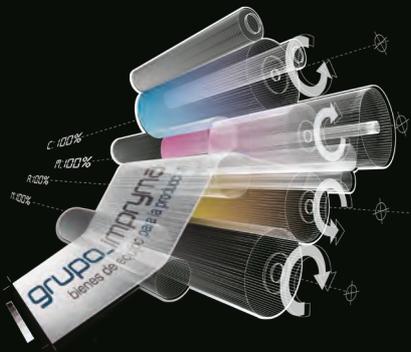
Computer manufacturer Dell spoke about retrieving ocean-bound plastic for use in its packaging, while sustainable consumer goods company Seventh Generation discussed bio-based plastics as other top brands discussed their sustainability targets for the next few years. Many other topics centered on sustainability, and what brands are doing to reach the environmental goals many set for themselves.

In his keynote address, Michael Okorafor, the vice president of global sustainability and packaging innovation at McCormick Spices, said that Gen Z, the generation born after millennials, will rule the economy in coming years. This demographic values transparency and honesty from the brands they support. They will see through gimmicks and not afraid to boycott those they don’t trust, Okorafor warned.

‘The biggest currency you have is trust,’ he said. ‘If you’re a brand and you’re not careful, all it takes is one person to take you out.’



To learn more about Action Quality Printers, visit www.actionquality.net



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WJPS-560	560 mm	540 mm	80-350 g/m ²	210-420 mm
WJPS-660	660 mm	650 mm	80-350 g/m ²	210-420 mm

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Canada outlines strict rules on cannabis packaging

The legal cannabis market in Canada was predicted to be a boon for the economy, but supply chain issues have scaled back the initial hype. Chelsea McDougall reports

When Canada rolled out countrywide legalization of cannabis for both recreational and medical purposes late last year, economists projected that sales would reach \$7 billion USD in 2019. However, just six months into the world's largest legal cannabis marketplace, that figure was scaled back by 30 percent.

So what happened? Many experts are pointing to regulatory ambiguity that is slowing down the supply chain, and packaging constraints that are squeezing the market.

'It's become quickly apparent that that \$7 billion mark isn't going to be met,' says

North American HP users visit Dscoop Edge

Dscoop hosted its 14th annual HP user's event in North America, this year in Orlando, Florida. The April event played host to 1,700 attendees from 650 companies. HP users and prospective customers saw the latest technology from across HP's portfolio of digital presses and its supply chain partners.

In addition to the showcase, there were 75 educational sessions covering a range of topics from digital finishing to flexible packaging applications, design trends and sales and marketing advice.

The event also recognized label and packaging products produced with HP digital printing technology. The winners were:

- Flexible packaging: Graphics and Converting Solution, Mexico, for Tresso Café. Digitally printed on an HP Indigo 20000.
- Labels/shrink sleeves: American Label, Salt Lake City, USA, for the Deviation Distillery gin label. Printed on the HP Indigo WS6800 digital press.
- HP Smart Stream Designer (Collage, Mosaic D4D): QTL of Georgia, USA, for HP Collage generated wrapper packaging for the King of Pops was the world's first HP Collage print run.
- Security: Nosco, USA, for the Isagenix serialized packaging campaign. Printed using the HP indigo 30000 digital press and HP Indigo WS6600.

"It's become apparent that that \$7 billion mark isn't going to be met. A lot of that is attributed to supply chain issues. And one of the main issues involved is packaging"

Andrew Wong of Jones Packaging. 'A lot of that is attributed to supply chain issues. And one of the main issues involved is packaging.'

Wong discussed cannabis packaging regulations and the challenges with this market during the Canadian Label and Package Printing Conference hosted by Labelexpo Global Series and L&L. The April event was co-located at the Graphics Canada tradeshow in Toronto.

Supply chain issues

Government regulations for cannabis packaging are complex and rapidly evolving, Wong says. There are limitations on nearly every aspect of the packaging, from selecting the right physical containers and including the right information on the outer packaging or label. And not all products are the same. There are different rules for dried cannabis, fresh cannabis, cannabis oils, plants and seeds.

London, Ontario-based Jones Packaging has a business unit dedicated to understanding these regulations, with Wong emerging as a prominent voice on the Canadian cannabis market.

The regulations exist, he says, to protect the consumer, to keep cannabis from minors and prevent substance abuse. However, the strict regulations on packaging are slowing down the entire supply chain. Time to market is severely impacted and achieving economies of scale are proving difficult.

The government in Canada has placed limits on the label and package's typeface (sans serif, no italics, regular weight and no bigger than the health warning) as well as branding (one image allowed and must be no bigger than the health warning). Fluorescent inks or other value added elements? Forget it. The result is a label that looks similar to those in the pharma sector.

The health warning is an entirely different story. It's a large yellow box that must be



An example of a cannabis label provided by Jones Packaging © Jones Packaging Inc, 2019

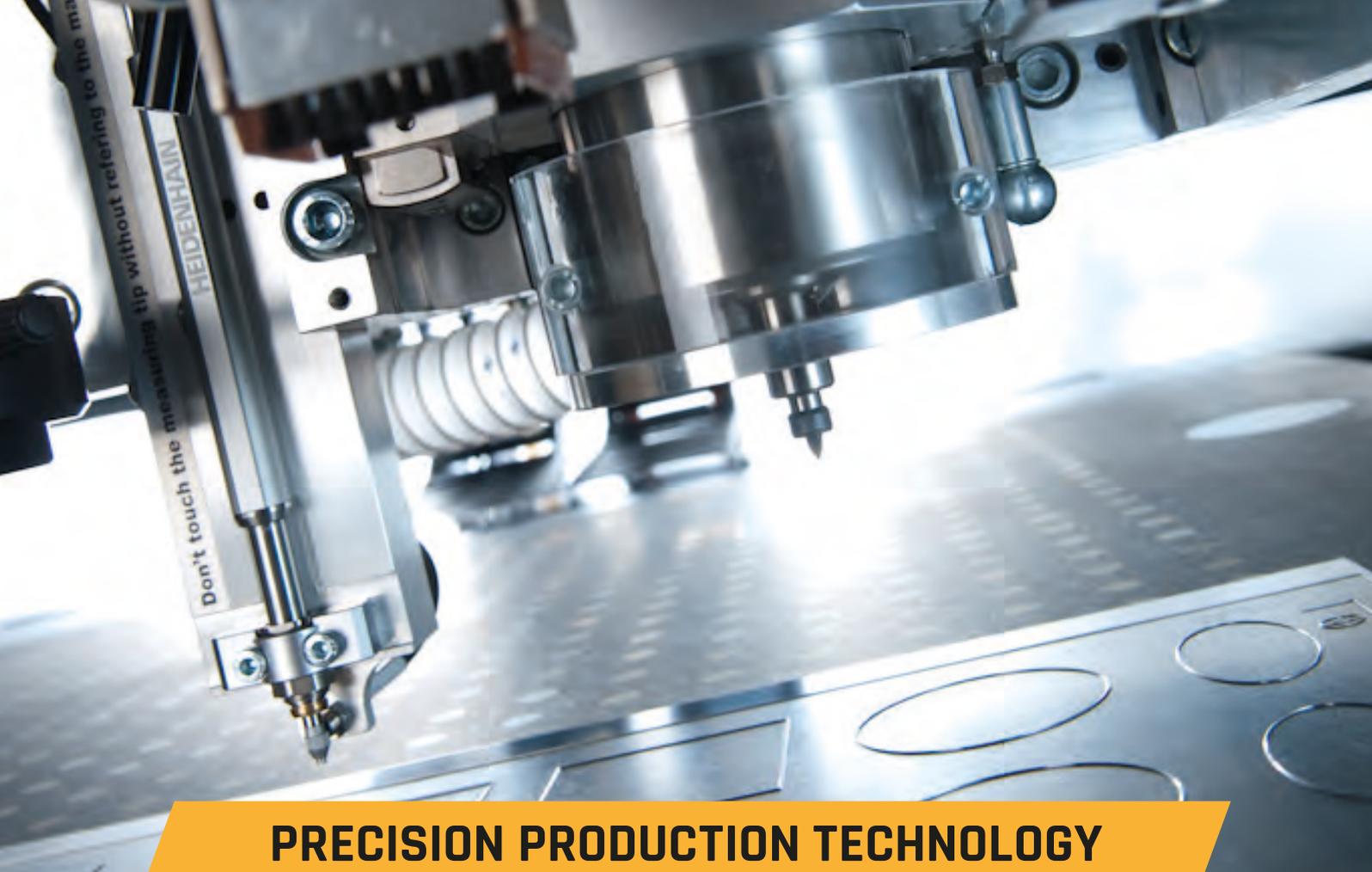
printed on each label or package, and has its own font and layout restrictions. The warning must be the largest image on the label or package. These warnings are often referred to as 'rotating warnings' because there are two sets of 14 warnings and each must be rotated so that a different message is displayed on equal numbers of containers for each brand name of cannabis product packaged.

These requirements create problems for long-run printing, but do provide opportunity for the label and packaging industry to create cost-effective workflows that address the 'unique challenges' of this market and 'maximize on its potential.'

'The market potential for cannabis still exists,' Wong says. 'The demand is very much there. But the supply hasn't been able to keep up and that's been largely due to the complexity of a highly regulated market. It's resulted in slower than expected packaging times. It's resulted in higher than expected packaging costs, and from the consumer and branding standpoint there's been a lot of complaints about over-packaging or excess packaging.'



For more information on cannabis packaging regulations in Canada, visit <http://bit.ly/cannabisregulations>. Wong recommends reading Part 7, titled *Packaging and Labelling*



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RotoMetrics opens flexible die plant in Brazil

RotoMetrics has opened a second plant in Brazil – dedicated exclusively to the manufacture of flexible dies. James Quirk reports



More than 200 attendees gathered for the new plant opening in São Paulo, Brazil

On March 21, RotoMetrics hosted the grand opening of the new RotoMetrics / MLC flexible die plant in São Paulo, Brazil.

More than 200 customers and industry representatives – from around 100 different companies – attended the event, and were able to tour the facility and see local production of premium flexible dies for the Brazilian and South American markets.

Representatives from industry supplier partners Avery Dennison, Coras, Etirama, Flint Group, MPS and Natalgraf were in attendance, as were converter clients such as Prakolar, Grafica Rami and Grif Rotulos.

RotoMetrics' new state-of-the-art

2,000sqm facility houses the new flexible die manufacturing plant of RotoMetrics' South American subsidiary MLC Facas de Precisão, the company's Brazilian operation which it acquired in 2015. Dedicated to flexible die production, the plant complements RotoMetrics' existing plant in São Paulo. It will be the first to combine the best practices of three organizations and will feature Electro Optic die-cutting technology for flexible dies.

'Integrating Electro Optic die-cutting technology, particularly as it applies to backgripping techniques for optimized die levelness and proprietary surface treatment processes, with RotoMetrics' exclusive manufacturing processes allows us to create the most consistent flexible dies in Brazil and for the South American market,' said Bob Spiller, CEO of RotoMetrics, at the inauguration. 'RotoMetrics is the only die manufacturer producing flexible dies globally at facilities in North America, UK, continental Europe, Australia, Asia and now South America. No other die manufacturer can say that.'

Growing demand

The new plant features technology and capacity to produce enough flexible dies to meet the growing demand in Brazil and

South America, according to the company. Additionally, RotoMetrics and MLC offer dedicated local sales, service and technical support to help customers transition to flexible die technology or consult on successfully converting demanding applications.

'One of our unique advantages is to have the ability to locate facilities and support in the places where our customers do business,' said Jorge Suarez, sales manager for Latin and South America. 'This helps us get our customers products faster and provide extra service and support. We know the South American market will provide our

“Having a major manufacturing facility on the continent that is capable of producing hundreds of flexible dies per day will enable converters to embrace and benefit from flexible die-cutting technology”

customers with tremendous opportunities in the future. Having a major manufacturing facility on the continent that is capable of producing hundreds of flexible dies per day will enable converters to embrace and benefit from flexible die-cutting technology to do things they couldn't do before.'

RotoMetrics says that the dedicated flexible die plant has maximized the automation of all production processes allowing for the fastest and most consistent flexible die production on the continent.

The new facility is located in Guarulhos, São Paulo, next to the city's main international airport.

Early signs of growth in Brazil

The opening of RotoMetrics' new plant took place during the Flexo & Labels trade show in São Paulo. On the show floor, there was optimism that the Brazilian label market had turned a corner following a few years of sluggish performance. 'The market is reacting well,' said Robson Lopes, vice director, RotoMetrics Brazil. 'Of course, it has ups and downs, but it is showing more growth compared to 2018.'



Read RotoMetrics' contribution to L&L's 40th anniversary issue at www.labelsandlabeling.com/opinion/roto-metrics-and-history-rotary-tooling

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Hyprint installs China's first Domino/Spande hybrid press

Domino and Chinese flexo press manufacturer Spande have developed a new hybrid press. Yolanda Wang reports on the first installation

In January 2019, Shanghai-based Hyprint installed the first Domino/Spande N610i IM hybrid label press in China. Hyprint is also the first user of the HP Indigo WS6000-series digital label press and Spande flexo press in the country – the company is an astute observer of market trends and intent on transforming itself after 26 years in the label business.

Shanghai Hungyuan Transfer Paper Co (Hyprint) was established in 1993 as an integrated supplier of high-quality labels. Today its products are used across a wide range of end use sectors including food and beverage, stationery and toys, household appliances, clothing and footwear, glass and metal products.

The converter has become an integrated label service provider for many high-end enterprises including Coca-Cola, Exxon Mobil, Nippon, M&G Stationery, Haier, Goodbaby, H& M, Zara, Adidas and Victoria's Secret.

Ju Jinyuan, general manager of Hyprint, says: 'In recent years, the Chinese label market has suffered multiple impacts, such as environmental pressures from national authorities, the rising cost of raw materials, and internet sourcing. These have lowered the profit rate for label converters at the same time as the demands from customers are increasing. Under such circumstance, label converters have had to upgrade or transform in order to seek new opportunities.

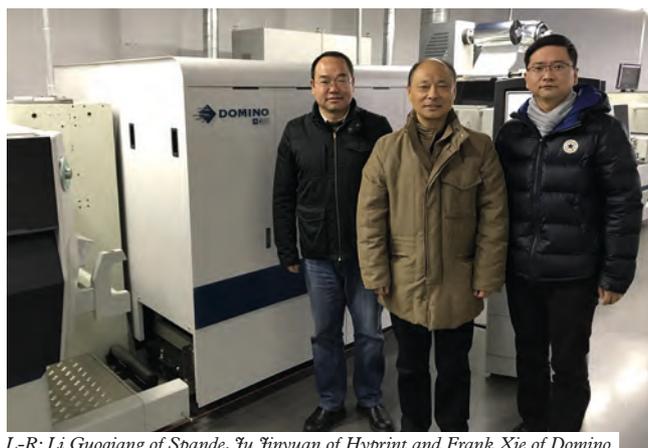
“In the future China's manufacturing base will gradually turn to the middle of the country, especially for enterprises based in Shanghai which are suffering pressures such as recruitment difficulty, high labor cost and stricter environment protection policies”

'We intend to focus on providing highly cost-efficient products through investment in innovative printing technology and a green production mode. We strive to be a leading company in respect of providing comprehensive label printing solutions in this industry.'

When Hyprint was established, there was a high demand for labels in China and profit margins were relatively high. The company opened plants in Shanghai, Chongqing, Hangzhou and Tianjin. 'I took charge of the Chongqing plant at that time, and our first product was a heat transfer label for shoes,' says Ju Jinyuan.

But it was more difficult for the Shanghai operation. In its first two years, it received few orders and generated little profit. In 1996 Ju Jinyuan took charge of both the Shanghai and Chongqing plants. 'We needed to explore new markets and product applications urgently at that time to turn the plant round.'

The management gathered the sales team and asked them to



L-R: Li Guoqiang of Spande, Ju Jinyuan of Hyprint and Frank Xie of Domino

suggest their top three brands or potential market applications. They then decided to target the motorcycle label market.

'After half a year carrying out research and improving our technology, we finally successfully applied silkscreen heat transfer labels onto the seat of a motorcycle. As a result the turnover of both the Shanghai and Chongqing companies nearly doubled that year,' says Ju Jinyuan. With the business now stable, Hyprint transferred ownership of its Tianjin and Hangzhou companies and focused its main business efforts on the Shanghai and Chongqing companies.

Later Hyprint developed a range of new products such as heat transfer stickers for children's products and pressure-sensitive labels for air external conditioner units. As demand for air conditioners increased in China, Hyprint's business doubled year on year, and the leading air conditioner brands including Haier, Chunlan and Changhong were all key customers. From 1998, Hyprint started growing quickly.

Technology update

There is a clear link between business growth and investment in both the facilities and new technology by Hyprint. After two years of market research, Hyprint successfully applied a gravure heat transfer label to Chunghwa pencils. In 1999, Hyprint introduced the first Shaanxi Beiren gravure printing machine. Five years later, Hyprint successively introduced three gravure production lines.

In 2000, the company moved to a new plant, increasing production space by five times to more than 5,000sqm. In 2003 professional R&D and technology application teams were established. The company integrated its best resources in 2005 and transferred ownership of Chongqing, focusing only on the Shanghai company.

In 2007, at least 90 percent of the pencil, pen and ballpoint pen brands being sold in China were customers of Hyprint, including Mitsubishi, TrueColor, Beifa and Changlong stationery.

'Our achievements were based on a sound external market environment,' recalls Ju Jinyuan. 'China has a huge population so there is a high consumer demand for large quantities of label products.' Statistics show that 10 years ago the average annual growth rate of the Chinese label market was consistently 15-20 percent, making it one of the world's fastest-growing. In 2009,



Hyprint's Ju Jinyuan shows print samples to Frank Xie of Domino

almost 1.8 billion labels were produced in China, with a total industrial output value of 14 billion RMB, up approximately 20 percent over 2008.

'We know that success comes from always keeping ahead, and that continuous innovation and transformation are the foundation for keeping a company alive and prosperous,' says Ju Jinyuan. 'As a label converter, we must own our key technology in order to achieve long term development amidst increasingly fierce market competition.'

2010 was a key year for the growth of Hyprint. 'We developed and launched our own adhesive coating technology which cut the cost of our self-adhesive labels by more than a half,' says Ju Jinyuan.

'At that time, letterpress and offset dominated China's label market, while flexo and digital printing had just got started in Europe. Hyprint's development strategy is to integrate with international market trends.'

Hyprint installed its first digital label press, an HP Indigo WS6000 (the first in China), and China's first ETI Converting flexo press. Subsequently, the company installed both flexo and flexo+gravure combination presses, constantly upgrading its technology.

Hybrid label press

With the new generation of consumers, the market increasingly demands short-run orders, personalized labels and multiple SKUs as the number of products increases. In addition, the increasing cost of raw materials and labor mean it is 'inevitable' that digital technology will be the future tendency of label printing, says Ju Jinyuan. 'Just like the automobile industry, vehicles previously driven by oil/diesel changed to hybrid then in the future to a pure electric mode. The label printing industry will also experience such a process. Hybrid formats will be an interim, combining the advantages of the two printing technologies and lowering the high



Domino N610i IM hybrid label press produced in partnership with Spande

cost of digital printing to a certain degree.'

In January 2019, Hyprint installed the first hybrid press jointly developed by Domino and Spande, the N610i IM.

'Besides the excellent printing performance, accurate color rendition and running stability which fully satisfy our industrial production requirements, we chose the N610i IM mainly because of the manufacturing concepts of these two companies,' explains Ju Jinyuan. 'Domino and Spande have the same understanding of printing technology and production quality as Hyprint. We also believe the cooperation of the international leading brand Domino and domestic brand Spande produces a superior effect than merely "one plus one".'

The hybrid press has a wide range of application possibilities, and is specified for a range of different substrates including PE, PP, PET, PVC, lamitube and paper. The post-press units include hot/cold stamping, die-cutting and silkscreen, and these can be used either in- or off-line. 'It's very helpful for improving both quality and efficiency of our company and thus to enhance our overall competitiveness.'

The turnover of Hyprint in 2018 exceeded 120 million RMB, of which export accounted for 20 percent. 'With the installation of the Domino and Spande hybrid press, we are expecting to raise our annual production value to 200 million RMB and increase our export volume, which will further raise our competitiveness in

“Besides the excellent printing performance, accurate color rendition and running stability which fully satisfy our industrial production requirements, we chose the N610i IM mainly because of the manufacturing concepts of these two companies”

international markets,' says Ju Jinyuan. Hyprint has also purchased a Spande 10-color flexo press which will be installed in June this year.

What's more, Hyprint is now building a plant in Chongqing. This new 20,000sqm manufacturing base was started in 2017. The first tranche of investment was 120 million RMB and it is estimated that construction will be finished in July 2019. The plant will be focused on production, with R&D, sales and management teams remaining in Shanghai.

'With the growth of the national road and railway network, the traffic advantage that coastal areas previously had is weakening,' points out Ju Jinyuan. 'In my view, in the future China's manufacturing base will gradually turn to the middle of the country, especially for enterprises based in Shanghai, which are suffering various pressures such as recruitment difficulty, high labor cost and stricter environment protection policies.'

The future of packaging, meanwhile, will be light-weighting. 'The product package displayed in-store will be quite different from the package consumers take home, with maybe only a small label indicating basic product information. The label's branding will gradually lessen while functionality will be enhanced, which is also Hyprint's future direction.'



For more from Yolanda Wang on the Chinese label market, go to www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/yolanda-wang



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Maximizing specialty film production

A new BOPP manufacturing line at Indian manufacturer Max Speciality Films has boosted capacity and new product development. Aakriti Agarwal reports

Max Speciality Films (MSF) increased its turnover by 35 percent last year – to \$142 million USD – thanks to a \$35.5m USD investment in a new, one-of-a-kind BOPP manufacturing line which will help the Indian manufacturer increase its label material production from 1 percent of its current portfolio to 20 percent within a year.

Ramneek Jain, CEO at Max Speciality Films, says: 'We have had a significant improvement in capacity which is reflected in our growth. The new line will bear sweeter fruit as we develop and commercialize more specialty products.'

The fifth BOPP manufacturing line has almost doubled the company's production capacity from 46.35 kilo tons per annum (KTPA) to 80.85 KTPA, while also reducing production cost per unit. Export to more than 45 countries contributes 30 percent of the company's turnover.

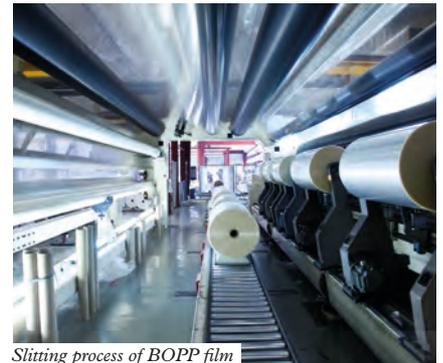
Installed mid last year, it is claimed to be the first BOPP manufacturing line in the world with in-line coating, allowing the company to not only be more efficient in its production but also to reduce waste and be energy-efficient. More significantly, it allows the technical team flexibility to alter the chemistry of the product, as per market demand.

'In-line coating is a key differentiator to this line,' says Jain. 'It is being done on polyester films but never on BOPP films. Thus, it opens new frontiers of possibilities for us. Coating on this line is different from the traditional process in the sense that it is done on the BOPP film in between machine direction orientation (MDO) and transverse direction orientation (TDO) sections and not on the melt. It therefore becomes an integral part of the chemistry of the product, making it a highly specialized product. Our films can be top-coated in-line without any further off-line coating.'

K Manohar, chief technical officer at Max Speciality Films, adds: 'Designed to manufacture high barrier films for specialty segments with better print receptivity and recyclability, this line clearly indicates that we are specialty-driven. The new investment enables us to produce 12 to 90 micron films and even higher to be able



Ramneek Jain, CEO at Max Speciality Films



Slitting process of BOPP film

“In-line coating is a key differentiator to this line. It opens new frontiers of possibilities for us”

to further cater to in-mold labeling and pressure-sensitive labeling segments.'

Another significant feature includes an in-line web inspection system so the entire roll of film gets inspected in real time. 'Quality is increasingly becoming critical for developed as well as emerging economies, so we have invested heavily in that direction,' Jain adds.

Production at MSF is supported by four BOPP manufacturing lines, three metallizers, two off-line coating lines and three thermal extrusion coating lines for thermal lamination.

According to Manohar, the estimated consumption of BOPP in India stands at 50 kilo tons per month or 600 KTPA, with industry growth estimated at 10 to 15 percent a year. 'Our share is around 10 percent, of which about 50 percent is specialty,' he says.

Innovation and sustainability

Further strengthening its foothold in the specialty segment, Max Speciality Films claims to be the first in the country to launch biaxially oriented polyethylene (BOPE) films. 'Being PE, these films have better printability, metallized layer and sealable layer,' says Jain. 'The properties and performance of BOPE can reduce a layer in packaging. We can offer the entire structure made of PE which is easy to recycle. This innovation is gaining traction in the global market and we are in the process of commercializing it soon.' MSF could look

at diversifying into shrink sleeves with this film owing to its good shrinkage properties.

The company houses a DSIR- and NABL-approved R&D lab with 15 dedicated people working at developing new products.

While developing new products and technologies, MSF is focused at continuing to develop and innovate its core product, wraparound films. 'The wraparound market is driven by innovations at high-speed bottling plants. The films undergo design improvement and requires to be sealed at lower temperatures. Some of these variables are driving this market,' says Manohar.

With the new line, MSF is offering films that are recyclable. 'We are manufacturing very high barrier films that replace aluminum foil, and thus makes a pack recyclable if all layers used are the same material,' says Manohar.

While Max Speciality is reducing the amount of waste it generates, it also has its own recycling plant. The company has established a process for in-house recycled plastics consumption and segregates waste based on product segments in which it can be reused. This ensures the company is recycling almost all in-house waste, including metallized BOPP.

Further, MSF is exploring a partnership with a company in the US that has two patents for pyrolysis.



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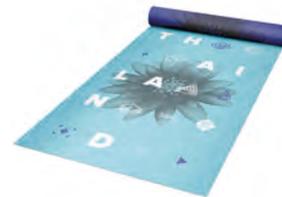
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Avery Dennison has inaugurated its first I.Lab in Asia. Aakriti Agarwal reports

Avery Dennison has opened its first intelligent label innovation space in the Asia Pacific and Sub Saharan Africa region.

The new Avery Dennison I.Lab, located in Pune, India, is an interactive facility that provides customers and partners with hands-on experiences, live demonstrations and technical support, to help converters and partners explore the opportunities surrounding intelligent labels and RFID adoption.

'We are thrilled to have the third global I.Lab – and first in Asia – in India,' said Pankaj Bhardwaj, senior director and general manager, South Asia, Label & Graphic Materials, Avery Dennison. 'Through I.Lab, we are well-positioned to advance the creation, delivery and adoption of intelligent label solutions for businesses in various industries. I.Lab is an important milestone because labels will get increasingly interactive and smarter and this technology will play a very critical role.'

“Tomorrow’s business requires smarter solutions that bring positive changes to the way we live, work and play. Therefore, RFID is an important area for us”

The I.Lab is integrated within the Avery Dennison Innovation and Knowledge Centre (ADIKC) that houses the company's R&D capabilities for the region. End user and converter training for flexo printing and graphics printing with the collaboration of 17 supplier partners are also conducted at there.

Modelled on the first concept lab in Oegstgeest, Netherlands, this new I.Lab demonstrates how Avery Dennison's intelligent labeling technology can bring any item to digital life, catering to multiple industries including aviation, apparel, beauty and food. By connecting the physical and digital world through unique item-level digital identities, businesses can benefit from improved inventory management and increased efficiencies throughout the supply chain.

Anil Sharma, vice president and general manager, South Asia Pacific and Sub Saharan Africa, Label & Graphic Materials, Avery Dennison, said: 'Tomorrow's business requires smarter solutions that bring positive changes to the way we live, work and play. Therefore, RFID is an important area for us. Over the last 25 years, we have done a lot of work in this space. Avery Dennison is now the world's largest producers of ultra-high frequency (UHF) RFID tags and owns more than 1,000 patents in this field.'

'We realized that we had to create the vision, to make a label intelligent and drive it forward as the future of the industry. RFID is the major technology that makes digital and physical connect possible. In the next 10 years, we expect to see a quantum shift in the way things will evolve in every market across the world.'

The shift, however, will be multi-generational and will happen in different phases, Sharma predicted. 'The first and current phase is to simplify supply chain by leveraging RFID and enabling a more efficient and accurate inventory management. The second phase will allow omni-channel trade by creating brand security in the



L-R: Pankaj Bhardwaj and Anil Sharma inaugurate the new slitting center in Kolkata

Avery Dennison opens new slitting center in Kolkata

Within two days of inaugurating Asia's first I.Lab, Avery Dennison opened its first slitting and distribution center in east India.

Spread across an area of more than 31,000 sq ft, close to Kolkata in Srijan Industrial Park, this is the company's fourth distribution center in the country after Gurgaon, Pune and Bengaluru.

The new center distributes rolls and sheet material as well as reflective products into not only the eastern part of the country but also neighboring countries Bangladesh and Nepal. It will soon start distributing graphic products from this facility too.

Addressing converters at the opening, Bhardwaj said 'This unit will serve 500 million people spread in eastern India and Bangladesh, which translates to almost 7 percent of the global population. With faster growth in eastern states and neighboring countries, I am confident of this center's extremely bright future.'

'This center offers three-fold advantage to our customers. Firstly, it helps us serve them faster and better with shorter lead times. In turn, customers can save on inventory, enabling them to work with better cash flows. Second, it enables our customers to better capture unplanned or unforeseen market opportunities way faster, bringing upside to their sales. Lastly, customer's technical requests will be responded to quicker and more efficiently.'

Sharma added: 'Avery Dennison has always been on the forefront of investing in emerging economies such as China, India, Korea, Malaysia, and Thailand. Alongside, we help our customers achieve the benefits of new technology by investing in business development resources, R&D centers, knowledge centers, technical services teams, customer and customer service organizations. The opening of new slitting and distribution center reflects more confidence in the growth of the market in India.'



The Avery Dennison management team at the I.Lab inauguration in Pune



Among other applications, the I.Lab in Pune caters to UHF RFID tags for apparel

“For an RFID label to have good readability and optimized performance, it is critical to know what material will the label be applied on”

value chain and smoother transactions. Lastly, RFID will give brand owners one-to-one connect with consumers. More devices will be able to read RFID tags in people’s houses and enable a company to have a hyper personalized message for each consumer.’

Bhardwaj added: ‘India is at the first stage of technology adoption, so we will hand-hold converters and develop markets along with them. It is not necessarily required for printers to invest upfront to supply smart labels. They can build the business and then choose to invest.’

Smart label trends

Detailing smart labeling trends worldwide, Jasper Zonnenberg, director global converter leverage, channel and aviation, Avery Dennison, said: ‘Originally, UHF or RFID tags were dominant in apparel. However, with the surge in volume, the cost of RFID tags has come down, enabling more segments such as beauty, food, aviation, medical and automotive to use this technology. In retail, RFID tags facilitate inventory management for better sales and reduced error. In food, it can be used for traceability, security, food safety, and reducing food waste.’

‘The International Air Transport Association (IATA) will soon mandate the use of RFID baggage tags to reduce the incidences of lost luggage. It is expected to bring down the cost of lost luggage by 10 percent, thereby, saving airlines globally a whopping \$270 million USD.’

While sharing details of RFID product portfolio and applications, Evelyn Ong, business development manager RFID, ASEAN & ANZ, Label & graphic Materials, Avery Dennison, cautioned the audience: ‘Converters need to understand for what application RFID is required. RFID antennas are uniquely designed for different materials. Therefore, for an RFID label to have good readability and optimized performance, it is critical to know what material the label be applied on.’

To further grow the market, Avery Dennison has made strategic technology investments and partnered with a semi-conductor company, Wiliot, for battery-free bluetooth sticker sensor technology, and with PragmatIC for printed RFID chips. ‘These developments, when ready, will considerably reduce the cost of smart labels. We are also working on RFID block-chain possibilities for traceability options for the future,’ assured Sharma.

The company also launched on-metal UHF RFID tags that have been optimized for performance when applied to objects containing metal, liquids and foil. Avery Dennison is the first company in

the world that developed RFID tags that do not spark fire in a microwave oven. Commonly used for managing inventory of ready prepared meals and smart fridges, these tags, as demonstrated at the I.Lab, can withstand five minutes of radiation in a microwave.

To gear itself for the expected surge in demand for smart labels, Avery Dennison will soon open sites in Europe and China to manufacture RFID inl

Trends in Southeast Asia

With a per capita label consumption of 1.2sqm, Southeast Asia is one of the fastest-growing markets in the world.

Avery Dennison’s Anil Sharma told L&L that while home and personal care, food and beverage are key markets in the region, the pharma sector is also seeing growth.

‘Driven by retail, logistics and e-commerce, China remains the biggest market for track and trace, however, variable information is gaining momentum in Southeast Asia due to the rise in e-commerce.’

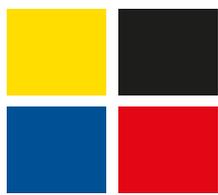
Shrink sleeves are losing market share in some segments but continue to grow in food and beverage. ‘The shrink sleeve industry needs to present a solution against PVC, which causes environmental concerns, and PET-G, which is not cost-efficient,’ he said.

With multinational companies entering the region with global sustainability practices and goals, Southeast Asia is beginning to embrace the environmental policies. However, it is a heterogeneous market with demand in Indonesia and the Philippines largely being driven by domestic consumption due to high population, and other countries, namely Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia and Vietnam, primarily depending on export business.

Avery Dennison has one distribution center each in Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. It is in the process of expanding capacity and investing in an asset in Thailand which is expected to finish by early next year.



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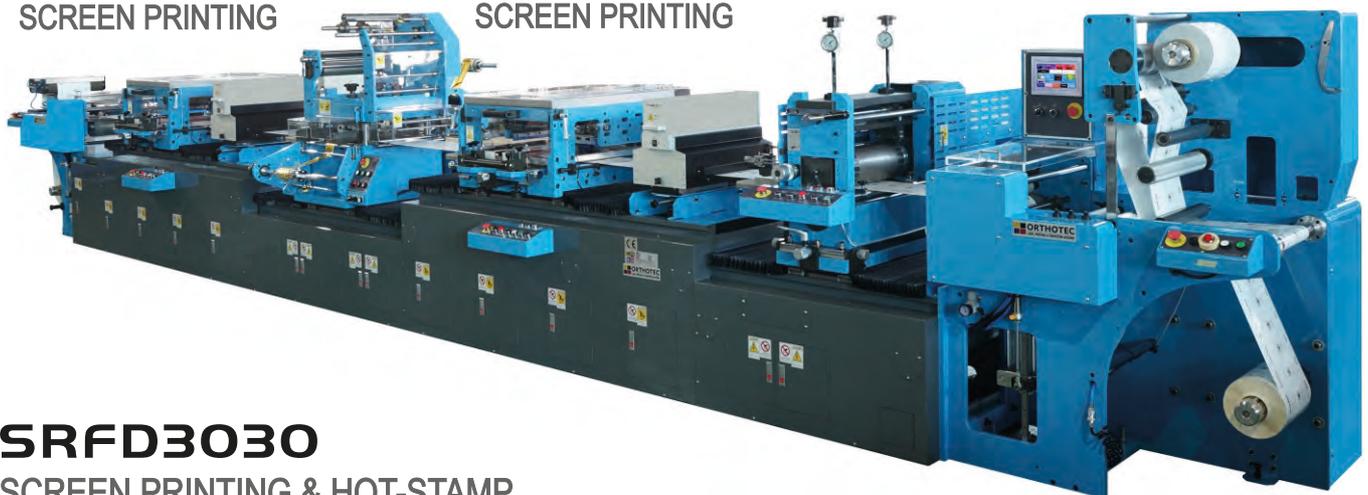
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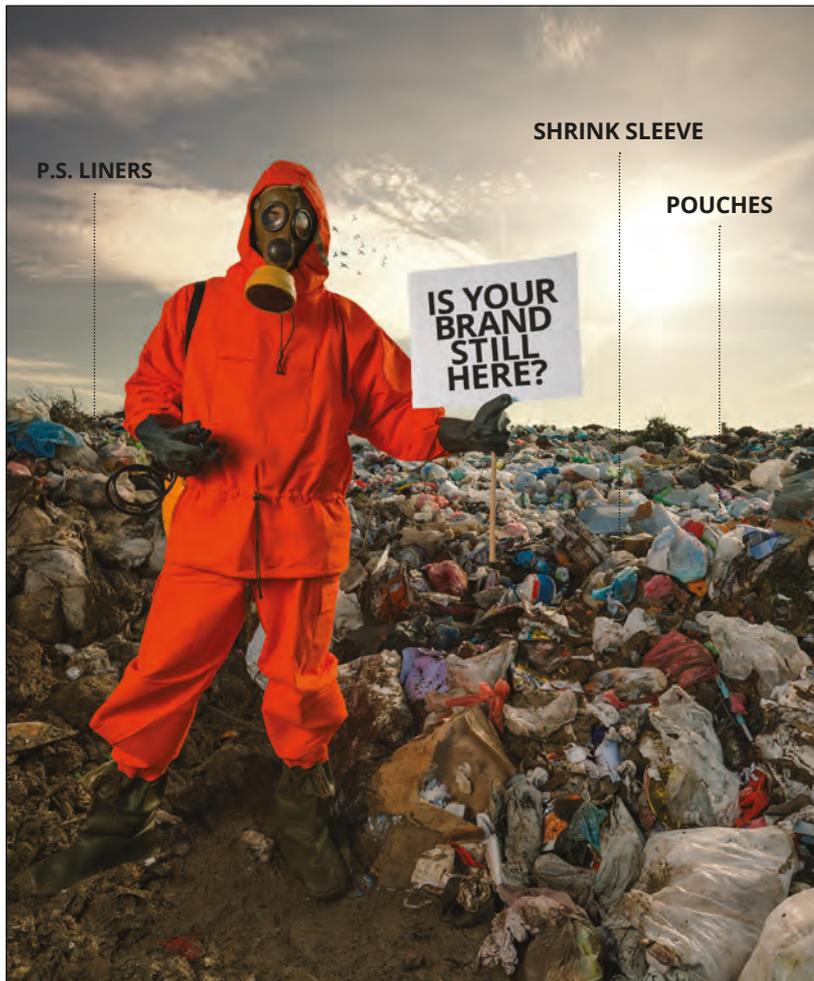
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Armor Asia celebrates 20 years

The regional subsidiary gears up for further growth with strategic investments and strong customer relationships. Aakriti Agarwal reports

Armor, the thermal transfer ribbon manufacturer headquartered in France, has marked the 20th anniversary of its Asia subsidiary with a celebration attended by its teams based in Singapore, China, India and Japan.

'For Armor Asia, it is time for maturity, expansion, ambitions, and to implement plans that we didn't think were possible before,' said Hubert de Boisredon, Armor's chairman and CEO, kicking off the celebrations in Singapore.

The company had invited its distributors to Armor Asia Technical Club (ATC), a conference which discussed its new products, customer challenges, and ways to grow together as well as market trends and opportunities. It was followed by a factory tour and a gala dinner.

Mark Day, global sales director at Armor, set the stage by revealing that the company grew by 11 percent in volume worldwide last year, of which 17 percent growth came from Asia, 13 percent from Americas, and 8 percent came from EMEA markets.

Wesley Alves, vice president and managing director for ASPAC (Asia-Pacific) at Armor, said: 'To support the surge in demand and growth, we will potentially have new slitting plants in the Asia-Pacific region. We are further investing strongly in people and continue to launch new breakthrough products such as the new AXRTX, a new grade of thermal transfer ribbon dedicated to the printing of textile labels.'

“We have planned another 100 million euros in investment between 2017 and 2022”

While colored ribbons form a small percentage of the entire product range, Armor recently launched silver and golden thermal transfer ribbons as well for luxury segment applications to complete its product portfolio.

Day said: 'With more food traceability and other government regulations being implemented around the world, we see customers demanding higher quality of thermal transfer ribbons. It brings opportunities in terms of volume and sometimes challenges for we have to develop new products to match the requirement. Our distributors ensure thermal transfer ribbons meet the requirements of end user. Growth is, thus, not driven by volume alone but also by value added products.'

Armor has also set up a new coating and slitting plant in China, mainly for the domestic market, to enable fast growth in the country.

'We see double digit growth in Asia led by huge amount of industrial activity moving here, and these investments will strengthen our position in the market. We target to supply 500 million sqm of thermal transfer ribbons in the region in the next two years,' added Alves.

'We continue to grow share in each region with 30 percent market share worldwide and working towards capturing 40 percent of the pie by means of acquisition, new slitting operations, innovation, support and service,' said Hubert de Boisredon.



L-R: Mark Day, Wesley Alves and Hubert de Boisredon celebrate the anniversary

Beyond ribbons

Armor is a member of the Global Compact program, run by the United Nations (UN), to promote sustainability. 'We are an active member so our goals are aligned with this program. It obliges us to do business responsibly by aligning our strategies and operations with ten principles on human rights, labor, environment and anti-corruption. There are a very few companies our size that are a part of that program,' said de Boisredon.

For its commitment to the environment, Armor Asia won a corporate sustainability award in 2017 in Singapore.

The company also publishes a white paper on sustainability every two years that records its footprint across all its seven subsidiaries. The public report covers all Armor's global activities, developments and new applications.

To recognize its efforts, Armor was invited to the G7 meeting of environmental ministers. 'There were 30 companies invited worldwide and Armor was representing France,' de Boisredon revealed. 'Our commitment to sustainability is in all businesses. We are promoting it in different applications all over the world including SEA.'

'We care for the environment and work towards being more sustainable every day. There is therefore a lot of value in our products because of all that we do,' said Alves.

The thermal transfer ribbon know-how at Armor supports the flexible photovoltaic film business, ASCA, a new generation of organic photo voltaic film. This new product is creating opportunities in the fields of construction and solar greenhouses and in automotive, aviation, railway and marine equipment, among others.

de Boisredon said: 'Armor is a leader in innovation. It is our core value in the company. Armor is the founder of carbon paper and now in thermal transfer ribbons and will soon be a leader in photo voltaic films. We continue to present new products in all our businesses which is a true innovation.'

'With all our activities, our aim really is to continue to improve the world.'

Growth strategy

Day further shared the company's investment plans in the next five years and its commitment to innovation and efficiency. 'From three plants, with one each in France, Singapore and the US in 2001, we today have 12 production plants and a total of 27 units including logistic sites dotted all over the world,' he said.

Armor widened its reach across the world by adding new slitting centers in Turkey, east Africa and Canada in 2018. It also acquired the thermal transfer business of Iconex last year, strengthening its position in the US market.

Explaining the growth strategy, de Boisredon said: 'We increase our footprint to be close to the customer. We want to find our customers instead of them finding us. Being close also ensures we give them good technical service which, in turn, gives us a strong hold on the market. It also enables us to support our customers with any new application.'

'We want to reduce lead times so supply chain and logistics are an important aspect for us. Lastly, the decision to open a new subsidiary is primarily driven by growth trend and demand surge in each region.'

To feed continuous expansion and fuel growth, Armor capitalizes on its research and development team. 'We invest around four percent of our turnover in R&D every year,' said Day. 'Alongside, we continue to invest in improving our efficiencies while also increasing our production capacity. Since the turn of the century, Armor has invested 130 million euros in the company.'

'We have planned another 100 million euros in investment between 2017 and 2022 towards a high-speed coating machine, worldwide slitting and packing robotization, automation of warehouses and logistics, new generation of ink grinding, more slitting sites, expansion of storage capacity, and for more solvent-free products to reduce our impact on environment.'

Stressing the company's efficient production, Day pointed out that while the number of slitting machines has increased over the years, Armor has reduced its coating machines despite the marked increase in production capacity. 'It is a price-sensitive market and we have adapted ourselves to remain efficient without it having any negative impact on jobs. The average growth of Armor year-on-year has been 10 percent, with the industry growing at 5 percent worldwide,' he said.

Automation

Efficient production at Armor can be credited to the automation and robotization that is developed and programmed in-house at all its plants.



The Armor team and customers in front of the palletization robot



Armor organized a tour of its Singapore facility for distributors and customers

“With more food traceability and other government regulations being implemented around the world, we see customers demanding higher quality of thermal transfer ribbons”

'Singapore, France and the US each house a team of software engineers who work towards making our systems more automated. Each plant shares its knowledge and developments with the other to be more efficient,' said Alves.

As for the automation in Singapore, the local team designed and programmed robotized palletization and a spare parts management system which is being rolled out to different plants worldwide. The local in-house engineers also developed a blackness level measurement system of the film on the whole roll that helps keep a stringent check on the quality of thermal transfer ribbon rolls.

'With more automation and robotization coming to various plants, we have started

transforming our factories and making them future-ready,' Alves said.

Attended by more than 40 customers from across the region, the event concluded its celebrations by engaging distributors through playing a board game in small groups, aimed at better understanding the company's product line.

'Armor is creating quality relationships with our partners so we can become one team and together grow our businesses,' de Boisredon assured.



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The green column

TerraCycle's Loop to shift single-use packaging paradigm

TerraCycle has launched a circular, durable packaging model for CPGs and their consumers interested in reducing single-use packaging waste streams, writes Danielle Jerschefske

Packaging and product manufacturers are well aware of the environmental impact of their companies, the negative press about single-use plastics in our oceans, consumer demand for more sustainable solutions, recycling rates with room for improvement and jam-packed landfills. TerraCycle, the globally known leader in recycling hard-to-recycle waste, such as laminated snack pouches, toothbrushes and polyurethane earplugs, is blazing yet another trail, this time wholly changing the way we think about products and consumption to support our value stream in reducing its reliance on single-use packaging.

This year TerraCycle has launched Loop, a circular packaging reuse solution that changes the existing model for fast moving consumer goods. Loop has created an infrastructure where the primary product containers are durable, designed for multiple uses. The containers are collected, cleaned, refilled and reused via e-commerce and retail, making reuse convenient and affordable to customers through virtual and physical shopping channels.

Today a package is considered a COGS (cost of goods sold), and its cost is fully allocated per fill. The cheaper the package the lower the cost per fill. In the Loop model, the package is property of the CPG company rather than the consumer. In this way, the manufacturer's allocation per fill is the cost divided by the number of uses it can bear. The more durable the package, the lower the cost per fill. By changing the concept around ownership, the demand for durability increases.

Rick Zultner, vice president of research and development at Loop, says: 'When the packaging is an asset to the brand, and made

"We'll need labels that remain appealing through multiple washing stages, but can be peeled off and removed without damaging the packaging and without leaving residue behind"

as durable as possible, the manufacturer can depreciate the cost over time. In the current model, single-use packaging is effectively hurting the bottom line, and there is more incentive to reduce the cost per unit as much as possible.'

The incentive to reduce the cost per unit is part of what makes hard-to-recycle laminated pouches so appealing, coupled with convenience and ease-of-use. Therefore, the underlying benefit to the Loop model is the economic structure with the ultimate incentive of eliminating single-use waste entirely. We have a long way to go before we start seeing a major shift, but there's no doubt that global consumers are eager for a viable, sustainable consumption option such as Loop.

Zultner continues: 'There is a healthy amount of market development being done, and we know that this model makes sense to better align the total life-cycle cost of a product with the finance objectives of the company manufacturing the products.'



Loop models: e-commerce and in-store

The circular Loop

Loop offers its reuse packaging system using two models. For e-commerce convenience, brands can integrate their product onto the Loop website. Loop executes all receiving, outbound distribution, inbound distribution and cleaning. The second option is to purchase products at Loop retail partners' brick and mortar locations. Once the consumer is finished with the product, they can return it to the retail store. The consumer will receive their deposit back, and the empties will be transported through the grocery store distribution network back to Loop for cleaning and refilling. For initial launch, only the e-commerce option is available.

In the US, UPS is Loop's logistics partner, handling delivery and reverse logistics. Together the partners custom-designed the foldable Loop tote to handle liquids, dry goods and personal care products with protective dividers inside, using materials that offer easy cleaning. The UPS Package Design and Test Lab identified ways to mitigate material breakdown, product leaks and exterior packaging materials that display dilapidation quickly. The tote eliminates the need for the ubiquitous corrugated boxes we have become so familiar with as e-commerce users.

The tote comes with a shipping label to place on the top of the tote when the containers are empty and ready to be returned. Users trigger return pick up and shipment through their account on the website.

Throwback 'milkman' designs

Loop assists product manufacturers with the selection of their primary container materials including aluminum, stainless steel, glass and engineered plastic. Zultner explains: 'We want to make sure the containers can be cleaned and effectively reused.'

Material selection is based on the product type and where in the household the product is used. For example, Love Beauty and Planet's shampoo bottles are aluminum because of the hazard associated with breaking. However, REN Clean Skincare's bottles are glass.

Designs from the 1950s have made a comeback with this paradigm shift, harking back to a time where there was no concept around single-use and disposal. For example, Mondelez's Milka brand is going back to a design more like a cookie tin from the post-war era.

Manufacturers are starting small and incubating their most prominent brands using the Loop circular opportunity. Most of the Loop participants have R&D lines to do the filling in-house, or the ability to contract with a specialty filler.

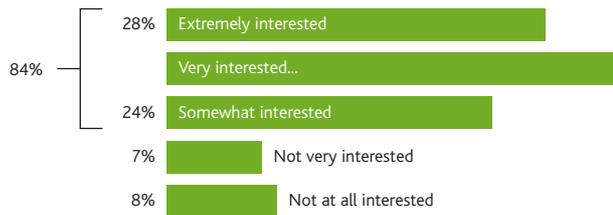
The objective is to design a primary container that can withstand 100 uses at a minimum. Explains Zultner: 'In a life-cycle analysis, depending on the type of package – if it can achieve five uses, it's considered better than single-use packaging, and any uses beyond that deliver both environmental and cost savings.'

Branding durable containers

Much of the growth in the label industry through the 1970s and 1980s can be attributed to the increasing demand for foods, beverages and beauty products in convenient, single-use packaging. According to Forbes, humans buy a million plastic bottles every minute; and it's estimated that over half a trillion plastic bottles will be sold in 2020.

Loop has officially launched in the greater Paris area, and New York state, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania – all locations within a one-day shipping zone. Should these regional consumers shift their buying power even a small percentage to Loop's reusable containers, the label industry will feel the contraction.

The Loop teams are actively researching the best decoration technologies to suit the purpose of reuse on these durable containers. Zultner says: 'We'll need labels that remain appealing through multiple washing stages, but can be peeled off and removed without damaging the packaging and without leaving residue behind.'



Consumer interest in Loop: multi-city survey, May-June 2018

Loop is looking to build a materials guide for its CPG partners, informing users on adhesive and material selection to meet their branding objectives. For instance, the adhesive and overall durability of a label on the front of the container might require more permanence than the back label, to accommodate more frequent ingredient changes during a reuse phase. Alternatively, the front of the container could incorporate direct print while only the ingredient label is pressure-sensitive and can be effectively removed frequently for updates.

'It's still important for brands to differentiate their products through the Loop platform,' Zultner says. 'And we'll be using our resources to help uncover the best ways of branding and labeling the primary containers used in the Loop infrastructure.'

Brand participation

The Clorox Company's Hidden Valley Ranch dressing, Unilever's Hellman's mayonnaise and Nestlé's Haagen-Dazs ice cream are among the participating food brands. Terracycle has targeted the largest food conglomerates to get involved. Says Zultner: 'It adds momentum to the initiative and can help change the entire market direction.' With the right brand participation, Loop can more rapidly gain authority and relevance in the marketplace.

Moreover, Unilever's power brands Dove, Axe, Love Beauty and Planet, REN Clean Skincare, and Seventh Generation are available through Loop. Procter & Gamble's influential brands Pantene, Tide, Cascade and Crest can be purchased with reusable packaging via Loop.

The opportunity TerraCycle's Loop offers is exciting and telling in many ways about the pivotal way packaging sustainability will evolve over the next 10-15 years, or sooner. So many consumers are already heavily entrenched in today's e-commerce infrastructure. It's only a matter of time before leading brands participating in Loop gain user traction, achieve growth and find renewed cost models that make their businesses more profitable.

In turn CPG shareholders will be more confident, and CPG customers happier about the economic and environmental decisions they're able to make when purchasing their favorite products. Wise label converters will pay attention to the moves their customers are making in the packaging reuse space, so they can continue servicing their needs in a 21st century milkman's world.

Unilever's reusable steel deodorant container

Dove, Rexona and Axe are launching with Loop using a refillable deodorant stick called minim. The product is designed to last on average one month, with the packaging designed to last at least 100 cycles. This means that each minim container is expected to last approximately eight years, with the potential to eliminate more than 100 single-use packages per user from inundating our waste streams. With over a billion users between the three brands, the potential for progressive waste reduction is huge.



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Focus takes aim at future trends

A recent open house by the UK-based printing equipment manufacturer and its partners showcased current and future trends in label printing. David Pittman reports

In late March, UK-based printing equipment manufacturer Focus Label Machinery opened its doors for an event that promised attendees a glimpse into the future of label printing.

Alongside the established trends of short run label production and variable data printing, this saw LED curing and multi-layer labels for extended content and peel and read applications looked at in more detail, both through hardware and the consumables involved.

A 6-color Focus Proflex 330SE servo-driven flexo press was shown with rail mounted delam/relam, cold foil and multi-layer label facility. This press was chosen for presentation to show high quality printing of complex labels on a mid-range flexo press, notes Antony Cotton, technical sales manager at Focus Label Machinery.

Another press on show was a Focus e-Flex 330 – also a 6-color, full servo flexo press – equipped with a Phoseon FireJet FJ601 LED drying system. This was on hand to show LED high opacity white + CMYK + spot color printing onto unsupported BOPP at up to 150m/min.

“This is a unique event with a great opportunity to informally network whilst seeing live equipment demonstrations”

The 2018 edition of the open house saw Focus present its first UV LED press, with an e-Flex equipped with Phoseon TargetCure technology, including on the white station. Focus Label Machinery has also previously partnered with Nazdar Ink Technologies in an effort to grow UV LED technology within the label converter market in the UK and EMEA. This sees the two businesses working closely together to demonstrate the efficiency of UV LED curing. With a mutual interest in the technology, both companies share an objective to showcase how – alongside traditional products – UV LED curing technology is a commercially-viable option for label and packaging producers.

Another trend to be seen at the 2019 Focus open house was hybrid printing. Readers of Labels & Labeling will have seen a number of articles in recent issues detailing the growth and potential in hybrid printing. It continues to be a hot topic in the industry and looks set to secure a greater share of the market in the future as the benefits of combining conventional and digital printing are realized.

Focus has capabilities in this area, and highlighted them by showing a d-Flex Hi-Q hybrid UV inkjet/flexo press with in-line finishing. This features Konica Minolta KM1800i printheads, printing at speeds up to 50m/min.

‘We chose this configuration to show the wide flexibility for combination variable data printing at production speeds up to 50m/min with digital and 120m/min in flexo,’ comments Cotton.

UK printer Last Bros is an existing customer for the d-Flex Hi-Q hybrid line and can pay testament to such productivity. Its press is configured with two flexo stations and a CMYK UV inkjet unit, as well as full finishing in-line, allowing production to be modelled to suit their varying products and applications.

Dean Latchford, frontline sales manager at Last Bros, says: ‘We were looking initially to bring work over from the existing label presses and also potentially migrate some of the litho and flat



Hybrid printing developments were on show

sheet digital side of the business. This has exceeded the initial expectations and I am pleased to say I have been able to bring in new contracts and customers because of the flexibility of the press and we are now running consistently over the working week which makes the ROI achievable, but in a quicker time.’

Latchford’s colleague Simon Foster, print room manager at Last Bros, adds: ‘Initially it came in to pick up some of the work of two other presses, but its increased speed has helped us keep up with the demand for shorter runs that is emerging in the market and bring in new work and offer different applications.’

Partners

Focus was joined at the open house by a number of supply chain partners, including Industrial Inkjet, Phoseon Technology, Herma UK, Flint Group, Meech International, Nazdar Ink Technologies, Lundberg Tech, Cheshire Anilox Technology and Business Asset Warranties. While much of the technology from these partners featured directly on the presses presented, Lundberg Tech had a WasteTech 80 matrix handling system working on an FS330 blank label converter/slitter rewinder. WasteTech 80 is an all-in-one system to capture, cut and collect waste matrix and edge-trim waste.

Cotton notes such partners as ‘extremely important’, saying: ‘We wanted to convey the importance of strong industry partnerships in order to provide the best possible packages, expert technical advice and solutions for our customers.’

He continues: ‘We would like to thank all our partners, suppliers and visitors who attended over the two days and helped make the event another great success. We were very pleased with the turnout and look forward to building on this and making the event a regular feature in the calendar. We believe that having multiple live demonstration models, along with the support of our partners and their respective technology, make this a unique event with a great opportunity to informally network whilst seeing live equipment demonstrations.’



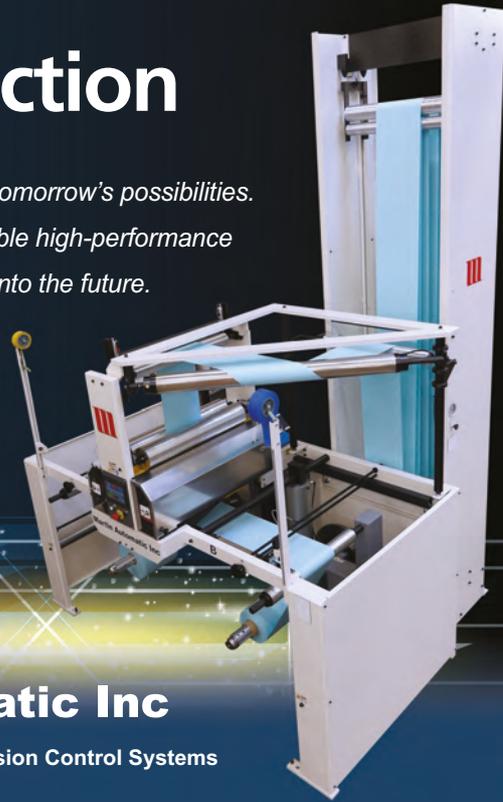
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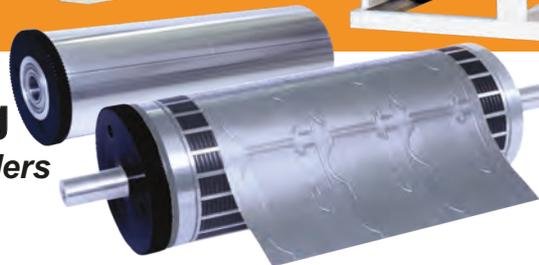
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Global Business Partners welcome

Bobst unveils innovations at open house

An open house in Florence, Italy, marked the launch of a raft of innovations, including a new ink-on-demand system. James Quirk reports

Bobst hosted a Label & Packaging Innovation event in April at its facility in Florence, Italy, attended by more than 600 customers, brand owners, supplier partners and journalists. The open house focused on three main themes: time-to-market, color consistency and food packaging safety.

The company and its Revo partners used the event to launch a series of innovations. Two of these were related to flexo inking and color matching: Ink-on-Demand (IoD) and DigiColor.

The IoD inking system replaces conventional inking reservoirs with a single rubber pipe that dispenses 30 grams of ink to the print unit. The system eliminates ink trays and chambered doctor blades.

DigiColor, a system for Revo Extended Color Gamut (ECG) printing, takes the IoD concept one step forward: the hue of the ink dispensed to the print unit can be digitally adjusted by mixing a darker and a lighter shade of each color in the proportion required to match the target Delta E value during printing. The digitalization of the process gives converters and brand owners the certainty of matching Delta E at any speed, on any substrate, with any operator, anywhere in the world. The IoD and DigiColor technologies were demonstrated on a Bobst M5 DigiFlexo press.

Michael Paulin, factory manager at Sweden-based Revo ECG printing user Lexit Group, said: 'It was a dream come true with Revo. Now we are able to print a difficult CMYK and Pantone label, knowing that the result will be the same in the printing press as the proof.'

Closed loop

Closed loop and traceability on Bobst DigiFlexo technology, meanwhile, was a world premiere. It combines Esko WebCenter platform managing production specification, approval and project life cycle, X-Rite ColorCert color communication system, AVT SpectraLab in-line spectral measurement and monitoring, and PantoneLive digital brand color management assets. It is a fully digitized and connected workflow enabling the traceability of every item of packaging, from the original file, to the press, to job validation and storage of the digital data



The innovations were unveiled at Bobst's facility in Florence



Color matching was a key theme of the open house

“It was a dream come true with Revo. Now we are able to print a difficult CMYK and Pantone label, knowing that the result will be the same in the printing press as the proof”

generated from the final printed job. It was presented live on an M6 DigiFlexo Press for flexible packaging.

The Bobst DigiFlexo presses in demonstrations were equipped with the latest technologies developed by the Revo partners: GTT 2.0 anilox rollers by Apex International delivered consistent ink laydown for uniform color consistency; workflow automation on color and register by AVT guaranteed digital control of color and print quality and on-the-fly adjustment capabilities; flexo plates by DuPont enabled 120L/cm print quality.

A range of new technologies addressed the safety of food packaging. The new generation of low migration UV inks from Flint Group are now integrated into the Revo process. To promote indirect contact food-safety, UV dose at the web surface is continuously monitored by the new GEW MultiPoint system, which allows the unique safety traceability of every meter of printed substrate.

UPM Raflatac introduced new food label substrates that support product safety and legal compliance.

Mouvent, the digital printing competence center of the Bobst Group, presented its LB702-UV digital label press in a 6-color set-up (CMYKOV) for the first time, showcasing digital ECG and spot color printing matching DigiFlexo ECG colors. Speeds of 100m/min were reached

during the live demonstrations, with 1,200 x 1,200 LPI achieved by Mouvent's inkjet heads. 'It was a great opportunity for us to present the unique features of our digital solutions, and the strong interest shown by visitors is the best sign that we're on the right track with our offer,' said Reto Simmen, Mouvent's chief business officer.

Visitors also saw the recently opened Revo Academy, installed in Bobst Firenze's new 1,000sqm Competence Center. Equipment includes the Esko Crystal CDI 4835 XPS ECG separation and imaging and Kongsberg X20 cutting table, and X-Rite I110 scanning table. The Revo Academy is open to converters worldwide for testing and training.

Bobst and Mouvent to release hybrid press

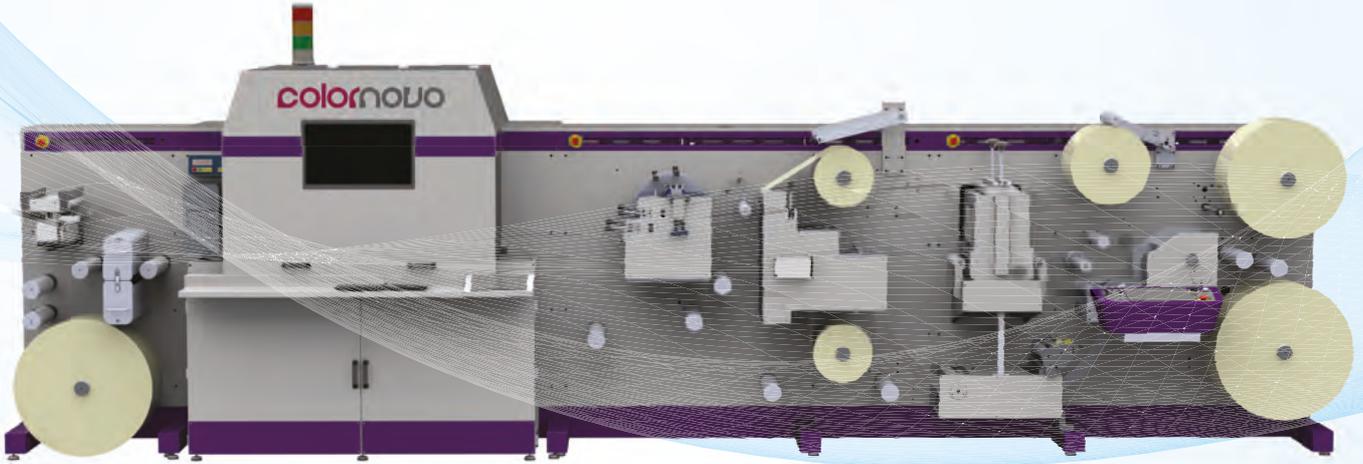
Bobst will launch a hybrid press incorporating a Mouvent inkjet unit at Labelexpo Europe 2019, said the company's Federico d'Annunzio, who has recently taken on the new job title of labels and packaging digital hybrid program manager. Read more in the next issue of L&L.



Read Federico d'Annunzio's take on color consistency on page 93



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Have we finally conquered color consistency?

The flexibility in color management traditionally enjoyed by digital converters is now available for flexo, says Federico d'Annunzio, sales director at Bobst Firenze

Brands spend millions on their logos, color schemes and packaging designs. Maintaining a consistent brand is strategic and critical for all of them. If a brand's colors are inconsistent across different packaging or customer touch points, it may suggest a lack of quality and can cause confusion and less brand loyalty.

Until recently, color consistency has remained challenging to implement. The sheer variety of printing processes, inks and substrates have created a significant challenge for brand owners and converters to achieve color consistency. Some substrates, such as paperboard and corrugated cardboard, are more absorbent, which can affect how the color of the substrate itself interacts with the ink and affects the color. Substrate isn't the only consideration – there are various printing processes and all use different types of inks.

This is becoming a real priority for brand owners. Until recently, there was only a little culture of color management within companies, but now it is growing and becoming strategic. And it is not enough anymore to have colors that appear to match with the naked eye. The industry has developed advanced instruments that can measure the precise Pantone color. There is nowhere to hide for converters on this issue, and it is our job as a supplier of equipment and services to find solutions through innovations.

ECG and beyond

Bobst recognized the urgency of the challenge years ago and put several initiatives in place. We founded the Revo project, an ambitious flexo industry initiative involving multiple partners, which aims to 'digitally' standardize and automate the flexo process from pre-press to print delivery. Color consistency is a major element of this.

The Revo 7-color Extended Color Gamut (ECG) printing, developed by the Revo Technology Team of leading industry suppliers, is now a well-established turnkey 'DigiFlexo' process that flows from pre-press through to production output. There are also other Bobst partnerships aiming to achieve optimal ECG printing, including smartECG, which is focused on flexible packaging.

ECG printing uses three additional ink colors – orange, green and violet (OGV) – on top of the conventional colors of cyan, magenta, yellow and black (CMYK), enabling a match with 90 percent plus of the Pantone book, compared with around 60 percent previously. This means there is no need to keep huge inventories of spot colors – the majority of color positions can be generated without having to use spot colors. But spot colors can still be added if required.

The digitalization of color matching has made color conformity with the job master request possible. With the new DigiColor system, brand owners can validate the colors through a digital version of the final product. It means that brand owners can have reassurance around the color matching of their packaging worldwide, irrespective of geography or operator ability.

If a converter uses a Revo package, they can start with ECG and be successful from day one. Because Revo packages contain in-line color measurement and standardization of all print elements including plate, anilox, inks, pre-press, substrates and inspection, this provides the consistency. We also provide support to converters so that adoption can be as smooth as possible.



The sheer variety of printing processes, inks and substrates have created a significant challenge for brand owners and converters to achieve color consistency

“With DigiColor, brand owners can validate the colors through a digital version of the final product”

Introducing DigiColor

Now Bobst introduces DigiColor, the first closed-loop color control system in the flexo industry. Color is measured in-line and adjusted on each print unit to match – in a few meters – the target color values. Each of the seven ECG inks is split into a darker and a lighter ink, which are mixed in-line to match the targeted Delta E. DigiColor can make subtle adjustments as needed while printing. For example, if the substrate absorbs a greater quantity of ink than expected, and the Delta E Target is not matched, the system will automatically adjust to utilize more dark ink, ensuring perfect tone accuracy and Delta E color matching. The flexibility in color management that was traditionally exclusive to digital printing and, partly, in offset, is now available to flexo printers.

DigiColor completes the Bobst path to full digitalization of the flexo process. Print pressure, register and now color are managed by digital automation (sensors, servo motors, artificial intelligence) making digital and digital flexo widely compatible and closer in performances, also on short runs.

For the first time it is possible to transform the final printed product from DigiFlexo back to a digital file to be able to compare it with the original digital native file. The printer extracts digital values from printed job, producing a 'digital twin' of the original file. This means that for the first time, brand owners can review a digital twin and validate the colors from the original digital file – no more guessing – just facts. This effectively 'closes the loop' starting with a digital file, utilizing digital automation to complete the job, and validating the output with another digital file.

This is a major evolution and I believe it will revolutionize color consistency management in the print and packaging industries.



DigiColor was launched at a Bobst open house in March. For more information, see article on preceding page



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Sihl advances position in packaging

Flexible packaging printed using aqueous inkjet is the target of Sihl's latest innovations. David Pittman reports

Sihl is introducing new products to expand the market for aqueous inkjet printing of flexible packaging.

The company's core competency lies in developing inkjet coatings for different applications. These are developed for all inkjet technologies, applied to numerous kinds of material, and are suitable for labels, tickets and tags, commercial printing, and other graphic arts applications.

Flexible packaging is a more recent addition to its portfolio, launched at the start of 2018.

The first grade of flexible packaging material suitable for aqueous inkjet printing was introduced in September last year.

David Radtke, head of group marketing at Sihl, comments: 'Our detailed analysis of market needs, our core competence in coating materials and our reliable network of external system partners enabled us to bring the packaging material, ink, printing head, hardware and software in line in order to create an innovation for narrow web converters.

'If you look at the likes of printing head manufacturers for aqueous inkjet in dye and in pigmented ink, we're getting to speed and quality levels where it's very interesting. We believe now is the right time.'

Ronny Kunze, Sihl's head of global business development, packaging, adds: 'We carried over our experience in how to coat and treat substrates to enable printability, and have applied and modified them to match the demands of flexible packaging. As a result, Sihl created a packaging film, printable via aqueous inkjet in best quality up to high speed with functional properties like barrier, sealability with heat



All of Sihl's flexible packaging products are sold by the company directly under the Artysio Packaging brand

“With aqueous inkjet, the opportunities are fantastic. With Artysio, we are aiming to open up the opportunities to an even wider audience of narrow web converters and end users”

or ultrasonic, tightness boost, flex-crack resistance, easy opening, and proven machineability on diverse packing and filling lines in both vertical and horizontal form-fill-seal machines.'

All of Sihl's flexible packaging products are sold by the company directly under the Artysio Packaging brand. They have been developed for direct contact with food and to Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) principles. The portfolio is being extended with new grades to include PET and OPP, in super white, transparent, metallized and barrier coated with suitable oxygen and water transmission rates (OTR/WTR). A pure PP product has also been developed.

All-in-one

An Artysio Packaging concept for narrow web print and pack has also been introduced. This all-in-one printing and packing system allows customers to enlarge their business models for gift and event packaging. Alongside this, time to market, waste and warehousing will also decrease to a minimum by printing and packing on demand.

Sihl has cooperated with various component manufacturers to create a system that allows small quantities of flexible packaging to be produced in custom designs. Press add-ons for converting facilitate end-to-end production for short runs, both at converters and for small-batch in-house production by end users. The system is configurable for a number of flexible packaging formats, and pitched as suitable for packaging for tea, coffee, snacks, nuts, confectionary, chocolate, pet food and detergents.

The first machines have been sold into the market and Kunze notes: 'Sihl supplies a new packaging material for the production of functional packaging solutions printed with an eco-friendly aqueous inkjet method. Thanks to an excellent market knowledge and a reliable network of partners it's possible to advise our customers on the process of aqueous inkjet printing and converting of flexible packaging.'

Sihl's recycling efforts

Sihl has developed a pure PP grade of flexible packaging material which allows it to be recycled. The independent auditing company Interseroh has confirmed the recyclability of single-material polypropylene packaging films from Sihl's Artysio range with the 'Made for Recycling' certificate. These products scored a maximum 20 out of 20 possible points in the audit.



Watch a video explaining the Artysio platform at tinyurl.com/y2wvsu8g

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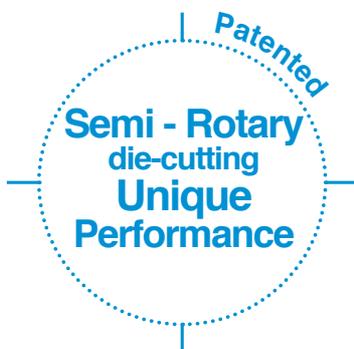
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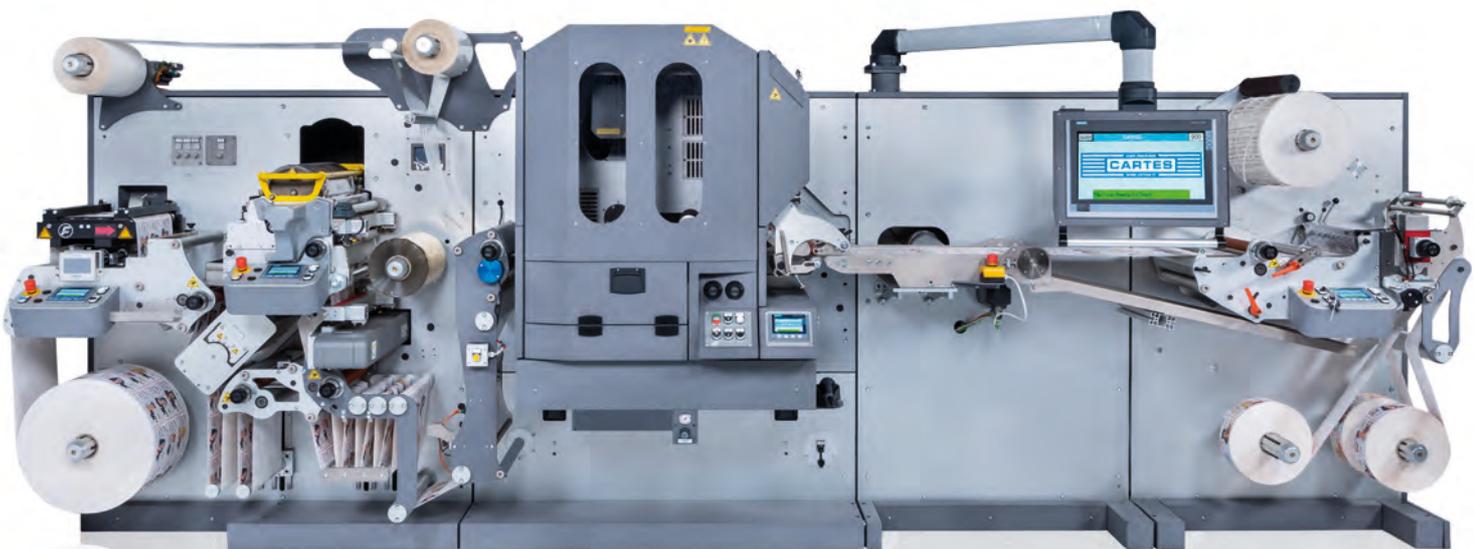
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TAKING DIGITAL FINISHING TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Post-press processes will play an important role in the growth of digital printing. David Pittman reports

As digital printing continues to grow in importance in the label and package printing market, so the processes and consumables pre and post the print engine take on ever-more importance.

In the design and origination phase, creating artwork specific to the characteristics of toner or inkjet, for example, ensures optimum output can be achieved on-press. Correct material specification and selection ensures suitability for the print process and that the finished product is fit for the application. Finishing 'completes the cycle of production for a sellable label,' opines Jason Schmitt, regional sales manager for the eastern US at Rotocontrol. 'If not done correctly to spec, the resources expended at the printing process can be totally lost.'

Matthias Marx, head of marketing at Gallus, says: 'A state-of-the-art digital label printing line has to fulfill the same requirements in finishing equipment as a conventional label press, like high print quality and flexibility. New is that the benefits of digital printing, like short run flexibility or variable data printing, have to be added to on top. Label printers and converters need short run flexibility especially for job orders with serialization and individualization as well as industrial data printing for meeting their customers' demands.'

Morten Toksværd, global sales and marketing director at GM, adds: 'The printing houses providing digital printing receive many orders for small series of labels. Their clients also expect fast delivery and of course high quality of the products. For this reason, they are looking for smart finishing equipment that may run short and ultra-short jobs without wasting a lot of substrate and the set-up of the machines is reduced to the minimum.'

For GM, this means the key capabilities of digital finishing equipment hinge on automation, efficiency, and embellishments and special effects.

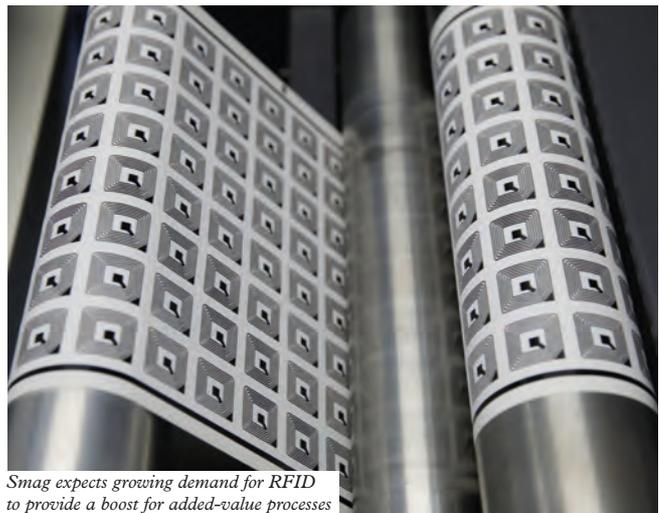
Matt Burton, sales director at AB Graphic, sees diversification as important as adding value and driving efficiency, often through automation. 'In our opinion, customers are looking for a combination of these three things. To improve their efficiency to provide more capacity and reduce production costs; diversify into new markets, such as shrink, pouches or folding cartons; and add more value to their digitally printed labels through embellishments or special processes.'

Kevin Gourlay, senior vice president at Rotoflex, identifies important value-added finishes as PMS spot colors, varnishes, laminates, top coating, rotary screen, embossing, semi-rotary die-cutting, adhesives for cold or hot foil. High production speeds and fast job changeovers, and configurability and modularity 'to expand capabilities as needed', are additional considerations for Gourlay.

Efficiency

Gourlay's colleague Artur Gondek, product and sales manager at Rotoflex Europe, has previously stated: 'With shorter runs and a mix of digital and conventional label production, you need fast job changeovers.'

Running finishing in an off-line configuration can speed up the overall process, according to Gondek. 'With high speed, highly-



Smag expects growing demand for RFID to provide a boost for added-value processes

“Finishing completes the cycle of production for a sellable label. If not done correctly to spec, the resources expended at the printing process can be totally lost”

configurable off-line converting and finishing solutions, much like the DF3 that offers semi-rotary and full rotary QCDC (quick change die-cut) and flexo stations, you can accelerate the finishing process for a roll-to-roll digital press.'

The Rotoflex DF3 can adopt to quick changing jobs from inks to plates to dies – with 50 percent faster changeovers claimed – and shorten production times with speeds of 228m/min (750ft/min). Customers have even shared examples of die changes that previously took 10-15 minutes now being changed in 30 seconds.

Labeltech general manager Gabriele D'Onofrio says: 'The first request that customers demand is fast changeover, to help the just-in-time production required by digital printing.'

He continues: 'As the discussion deepens, you realize that what customers really want is a low cost of interchangeable tools. Nowadays mostly all machines have a fast job set, but sometimes this will cause the tool cost to increase.'

AB Graphic has developed a new and improved version of its Fast Track Die semi-rotary die-cutting unit capable of running at up to 200m/min across a range of repeats. This, the company says, will enable customers to reduce the amount of finishing machines and overheads required when converting digitally printed materials.

Die-cutting at such higher speeds can present challenges with matrix stripping, which has led AB Graphic to develop a new system to overcome these issues and enable customers to run the machine consistently at highly productive levels.

'Die-cutting to tolerance is a must,' adds Schmitt. 'A die-cutter

“Embellishments and special effects play an increasingly important role for manufacturers as they elevate a label design, adding the finishing touch to enhance the presentation of their brands”

platform must have software for distortion, scaling and registration to ensure all labels appear uniform.’

Daco has reengineered the shuttle system and rewrote some of the software to increase the speed of its range of semi-rotary die-cutting machines to enable higher production speeds.

The Daco DF350SR semi-rotary die-cutting unit uses a 20in RotoMetrics 176T magnetic die cylinder for semi-rotary applications with a useable repeat length of 8-22 inches, running at a speed of 65m/min. The semi-rotary magnetic cylinder can be removed and replaced with rotary tooling from Daco or other manufacturers for full rotary applications, which pushes the production speed up to 175m/min. The flexo print/coating station (full rotary) utilizes servo drive technology, coupled with software written by Daco, to allow for quick and easy set-up. With the environment and paper costs in mind, the print-to-die register is accomplished with the use of very little substrate.

Bar Graphic Machinery’s (BGM) new Digiflex uses the very latest servo technology to ensure that accurate re-registration is maintained throughout all processes. A semi-rotary die station achieves ‘outstanding’ speeds while fully automated rapid slit system allows for precise positioning of slitting blades.

Efficiency focused developments at GM include: Smart Loading, an automatic flexible die plate changing system to reduce changeover times and to ensure an accurate die mounting in seconds; the Smart Stripping waste matrix stripping and rewinding system with servo-controlled tension, which sees the waste matrix peeled off around an idle rubber roller and immediately transferred to the rewinder; and Smart Crush, an ultra-quick set knives system allowing fast and precise setting of each crush knife even while running.

Further, GM sees one of the greatest tools for improving efficiency as laser die-cutting, offering zero changeover time and no die plate cost. It’s LC330 Compact Laser is an economic and fully digital laser finishing machine. It is set using the electronic file from the pre-press department. This ties in with GM’s vision for deeper JDF/JMF integration in the future, with the same data file used by different

systems. Such deep integration with MIS will greatly facilitate and speed up the workflow in printing houses, proposes the company.

Smag Graphique has included increased workflow connection in the development of its new generation of finishing equipment. Refine Finishing has previously gone on record to state its view that software is integral to the development of hardware. Bjarke Nielsen, chief technology officer at Refine Finishing, says: ‘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.’

Diversification

Diversification as an umbrella topic has been ongoing in the label printing industry for a number of years. More recently, it has been realized with a growing number of narrow web printers and converters adding flexible packaging to their product mix. This includes those printed digitally, as in the case of UK printer CS Labels and its award-winning work with Xeikon’s dry toner technology (see page 47).

Multilayer labels offer another new business opportunity. ‘They offer the perfect solution when the surface of a traditional self-adhesive label is not sufficient to communicate all information about the product,’ says Toksværd. ‘On the extra layers of the label you can put additional information about the product, add an advert or provide the information in several languages. Multilayer labels are often used for pharmaceutical and medical label applications – especially when government regulations require product information to remain intact with the product.’

Such applications and regulatory demands make digital an excellent tool to print such labels, typically produced in smaller batches, meaning the finishing equipment must be a match. CS Labels uses GM’s SmartLam module to convert digitally-printed peel and reveal labels. This undertakes lamination in register, as opposed to using a cross-over unit, meaning, the full web width is utilized. This doubles the production capacity and allows for full flexibility in the label design and

Digital converting news in brief

Off-line to support digital print

Artur Gondek, product and sales manager at Rotoflex Europe, sees off-line finishing as an optimum way to support digital print. ‘Embellishments can be PMS spot colors, varnishes, laminates, top coating, rotary screen, embossing, semi-rotary die-cutting, adhesives for cold or hot foil, and more. But other finishing options such as cutting, unwinding, rewinding and inspection also need consideration from a productivity stance for the print providers. Brand owners now seek equivalent finishing on both conventional and digital techniques, and on the same substrates. Finishing digitally printed labels off-line offers big advantages.’

Read his full thoughts at <https://tinyurl.com/y2ftmx94>

Allen, AstroNova partner

Allen Datagraph Systems and AstroNova have partnered to offer the market in North America end-to-end digital label production options. The partnership has been spurred on by average job sizes continuing to decrease year over year, with converters looking for economical ways to print small runs without tying up conventional presses or making huge capital investments.

Big business in South Africa

Rotocon confirmed 17 orders for label printing and finishing equipment during this year’s Propak Africa in Johannesburg, South Africa. Orders confirmed at the event included five Screen Truepress Jet L350UV+ series UV inkjet presses, five Rotocon Ecoline RDF 330 digital label converting lines, and four Ecoline RSD 330 label die-cutting/inspection machines.

L&L online poll

Finishing technology and digital printing lead the way by number of responses in a poll via the L&L website, asking ‘which products/technologies will your next investment involve?’. Have your say at <https://tinyurl.com/y2ktru4y>.

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DPR Virgo

“You realize that what customers really want is a low cost of interchangeable tools”

size. GM's in-line register unit is compatible with all GM DC330 modular finishing machines.

Grafotronic has recently introduced a version of its DCL2 modular converting machine for multilayer labels. This features the company's new MLL module for multilayer labels featuring precise lamination.

As a caveat, Burton notes digital printing as being, potentially, a 'very level platform' that can make it difficult to diversify. However, he adds: 'High end finishing solutions and creative techniques can give customers the diversification they need to stand out from the crowd.'

AB Graphic offers a number of finishing options for digitally printed packaging and labels, such as shrink sleeves, pouches and folding cartons.

Added value

These developments will be presented at Labelexpo Europe 2019 later this year, and

include digital embellishment units for spot varnishes, cold foiling and tactile varnishes to add value to pre-printed labels.

A further development is new doming technology that combines low cost flatbed screen and hot foil technology. This is described by AB Graphic as 'giving packaging converters the edge' and producing 'stunning results'.

'Embellishments and special effects play an increasingly important role for manufacturers as they elevate a label design, adding the finishing touch to enhance the presentation of their brands,' says Toksværd. 'The techniques that our clients ask for are hot foiling, cold foiling, lamination, cast and cure, embossing, screen, and flood and spot coating.'

GM's LC330 can be configured with flexo varnish, spot varnish, lamination, cold foil and automatic slitting stations. The company's 330FB features screen printing, embossing and hot foil finishing. The DC330Mini and Miniflex label finishers can

be equipped with flexo varnish, spot varnish, lamination, cold foil, die-cutting, automatic slitting and turret rewinder.

The flexographic print station of the BGM Digiflex can be used as a spot register/flood coating station with the option of single or multiple colors using the automatic re-register multiple pass option. Additional options include cold foiling and a lamination unit. Daco's DF350SR can be configured with an optional laminating station to give flexibility for digital finishing applications, and be used to apply spot or flood coat UV varnishes.

Smag expects growing demand for RFID to provide a boost for added-value processes. RFID-enabled products are used for marketing purpose, traceability and/or logistic functions. With Smag having an established position in cosmetic and wine labels, it has now engineered dedicated converting technology for security labels, combining RFID insertion with data management. This has seen it partner with Avery Dennison and Nordic ID for an in-line option for inserting, encoding and control of RFID tags.

Screen and Rotocontrol partner for hybrid label press

Digital label printing specialist Screen and finishing expert Rotocontrol have introduced a label production system combining their respective technologies to enable end-to-end hybrid label printing and finishing.

Built with extensive modularity, the integrated platform consists of Screen Truepress Jet L350UV+ inkjet digital printing technology and Rotocontrol's DT 340 finishing line. This system has been developed to offer printers 'advanced options' in combining digital and flexo print, UV LED curing and label embellishments.

Global Graphics unveils latest version of Harlequin RIP

Global Graphics Software has launched the latest version of its Harlequin RIP software, V12.1, which introduces additional features for labels and packaging workflows, notably support for the new ISO standard for processing technical marks, and expanded support for systems requiring multiple RIP instances to handle high data throughput requirements.

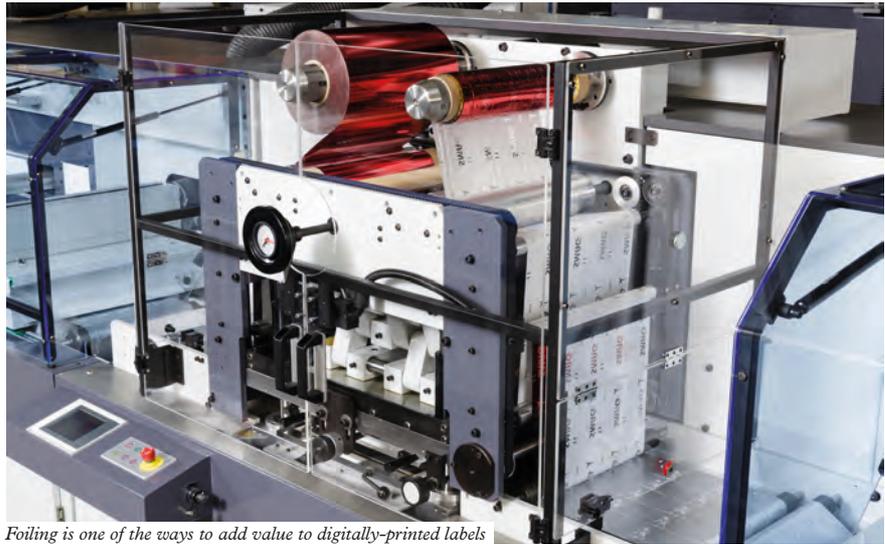
PDF Processing Steps (ISO 19593-1) is a new industry standard designed for labels and packaging workflows, that specifies a standard way of encoding processing steps such as die and fold lines or dimensions into a PDF file.

It provides an unambiguous way of marking the technical content that's required in the finishing step of the production workflow but not intended to be printed.

LasX spots opportunities in Europe

LasX Industries managing director William Dinauer sees big opportunities for the application of laser technologies in Europe, leading to the appointment of David Birch as the company's new business development manager in the region.

LasX established its Frankfurt-based sales and service company LasX Europe in 2017. In addition to his sales efforts, Birch will support LasX Europe's current distributors TLM Laser in the UK and Dr Wirth in Germany.



Foiling is one of the ways to add value to digitally-printed labels

"A die-cutter platform must have software for distortion, scaling and registration to ensure all labels appear uniform"

Modular

Schmitt identifies modularity as key to ensuring digital finishing systems grow with printers and the market. This is a 'must', he says: 'You cannot go out and buy another finisher each time new opportunities evolve that require additional finishing capabilities. Adding a module simply, quickly and inexpensively is key.'

The Daco DF350SR is a fully modular system. Such flexibility enables a converting line to be configured for most digital finishing applications. An inkjet module is available, with systems from Inkjet Solutions and Domino recently fitted, as well as those from other manufacturers.

The BGM Digiflex is similarly fully modular, as are Grafotronic's range of finishing lines. Lemorau has developed MEBR+ as a modular concept with a vast variety of configurations. EBRM+ is a simpler version of MEBR+. It is an affordable table-top digital finishing machine that can coat, die cut, slit and rewind digital printed webs.

Rotocontrol's systems, such as the DT and RCF lines, rely on a modular construction, 100 percent servo-driven with individual module electronics to allow for easy add-on/future machine growth. Other notable elements include: semi-rotary or rotary die-cutting in the same module, reducing overall system length and cost; and a simple turret that can be integrated to allow for processing/handling of ganged production runs and multiple jobs produced on one roll, 'not uncommon in the world of digital', says Schmitt.

Smag is set to unveil a new modular and multi-process platform design at Labelexpo

Europe 2019 that, combined with its automation experience through powerful servo high speed modules, will mean label manufacturers can take advantage of greater flexibility and reduced tooling costs. They can also achieve 'comfortable' running speeds and benefit from high-end value-adding modules for special effects like opacity, relief varnish and 3D effects.

DPR's Virgo machines are compact finishing systems that offer modules for unwinding, lamination, knife cutting, waste matrix removal, slitting, and rewinding to finished rolls. DPR markets these as providing all the tools necessary to professionally cut and finish labels. The system uses cutting plotter technology to provide accurate label finishing. This allows different types of materials and shapes to be cut on the fly without the added cost of dies. This allows full flexibility and limitless variations in label design, the company notes.

Labeltech's Stelvio system can be equipped with a flexo unit for varnish, spot varnish and cold foil, as well as a semi-rotary/rotary die-cutting unit, corona treatment, variable data printing, inspection, manual or automatic slitting unit, one or two rewinders, and semi-automatic turret rewriter.

Refine Finishing's portfolio includes the Creative line of modular systems that can be tailored to the customer's requirement, while Concept machines are fully customizable systems that are engineered on a project-by-project basis.

Prati's Digifast One is a state-of-the-art digital finishing machine processing at speeds of up to 80m/min. Available in L-R or

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“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”

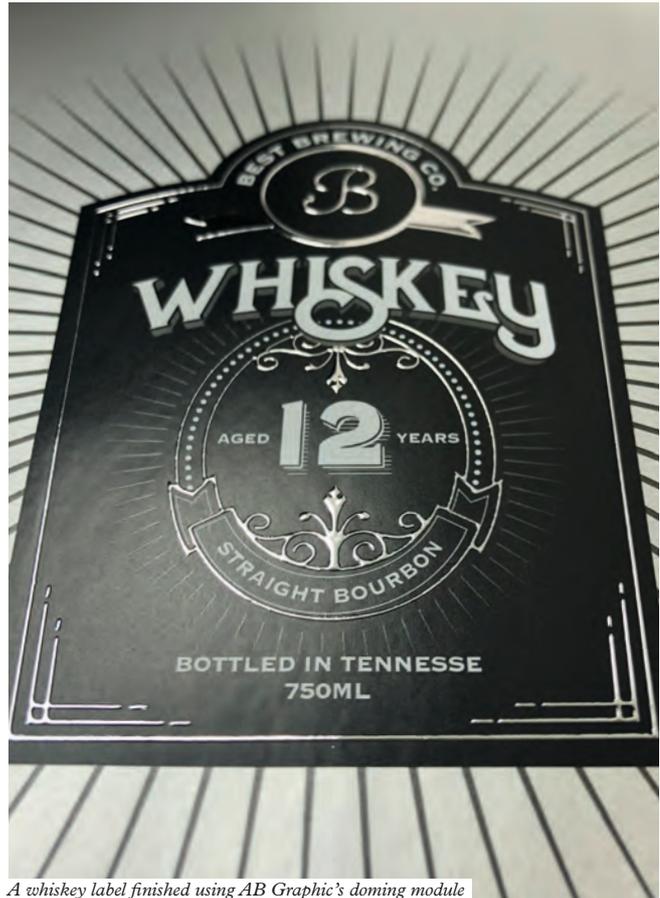
R-L configurations, it can feature all of the options you'd expect, as well as inkjet for front and/or back printing.

Integration

In some instances, suppliers are capitalizing on modularity to integrate digital print and finishing technologies at a deeper level. A variation of the 'hybrid' phenomenon, largely realized by the combination of the flexo and inkjet print processes, such in-line configurations offer a number of benefits.

Smag has extended its collaboration with the main press manufacturers to propose finishing customization capabilities as standalone or integrated in-line hybrid systems. Grafotronic has recently hosted an open house in Poland, Digital Finishing Days, where it showcased its DCL digital finishing hardware configured as a hybrid line with Domino N610i UV inkjet printing technology.

The Gallus Labelfire combines digital inkjet printing and



A whiskey label finished using AB Graphic's doming module



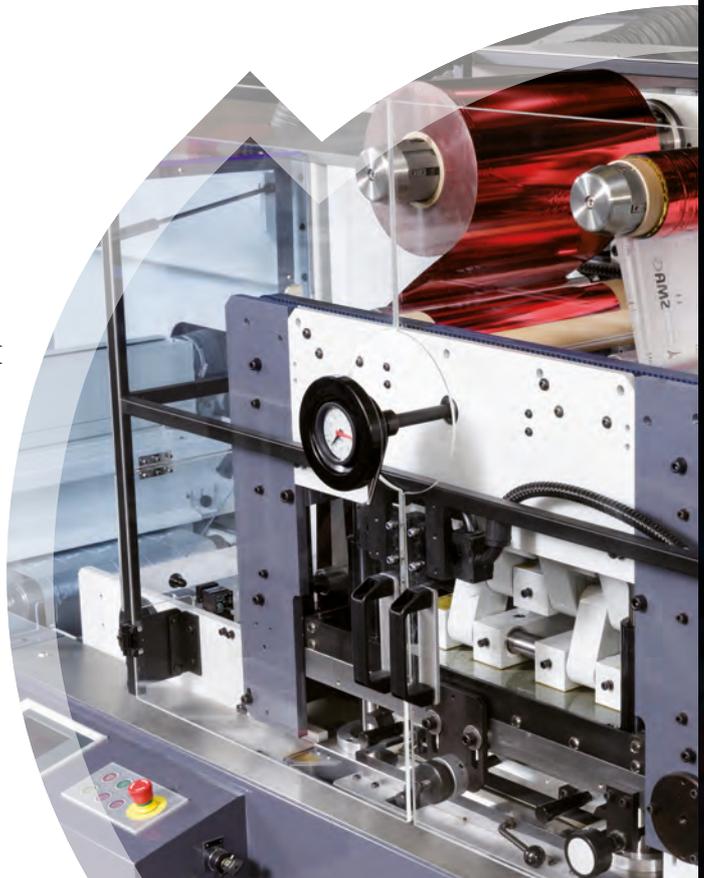
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“You cannot go out and buy another finisher each time new opportunities evolve that require additional finishing capabilities. Adding a module simply, quickly and inexpensively is key”

conventional processes such as flexo or screen. Labels can be varnished, laminated, embellished with cold foil and die-cut in a single operation. The conventional printing functions deliver additional finishing options and in-line processing like varnishing, laminating and die-cutting. A screen printing unit is fully integrated. A new option, digital embellishment Unit (DEU), can produce gloss and matte spot coatings and tactile relief effects in various thicknesses in a single pass.

‘In general, we see a growing demand for hybrid label presses for producing a variety of new label solutions and applications, for future narrow web application we might currently not even think of,’ comments Marx. ‘Brand owners are asking for more creative, luxury looks. A digital-only or flexo-only press is no longer good enough. With a hybrid press, like the Gallus Labelfire 340, label printing companies are able to meet exactly these demands: single pass printing, digital embellishment possibilities, short run flexibility, high print quality, the ability to produce new label applications and – maybe most relevant – the flexibility to react quickly to new market trends.’

The Rotocontrol RCF is a custom finishing line designed to

support those investing in a hybrid press, offering in-line finishing and digital transport, booklet label production and more. It can be configured with: a second rewind station; rotary die-cutting; lamination; RFID and NFC label dispenser; RFID/NFC control and mark unit; web control with ultrasonic sensor for detection of transparent material; piece counter for transparent materials including holder; preparation friction shafts; laydown roller for winding shaft with pneumatic lifter; razor knife unit including three knife holders with blade; razor knife holder including blade; a 150mm rewind shaft; electronically regulated wastepaper rewind mounted on the machine; turret rewinder; core glue system; automatic core loader; and high-speed tail label roll closure system with printer.

Rotocontrol’s Schmitt says: ‘In-line and hybrid digital presses allow some or all of the processes required to be completed with just one pass and possibly just one machine operator. Shorter runs with complex set-ups usually provide label converters the highest dollar per label opportunity, but can be very costly to produce if multiple manpower and production cycles are required.’

Gondek concludes: ‘These days, the most visible growing trend is digital label production. In some geographies it can be 30-40 percent of label production.’

‘A shared ultimate goal of both the brand owner and print providers is to get the label noticed. An absolute must is to create pizzazz and elevate the label – this is where finishing enters the picture.’



For more on digital finishing, read this issue’s Opinion article on page 31



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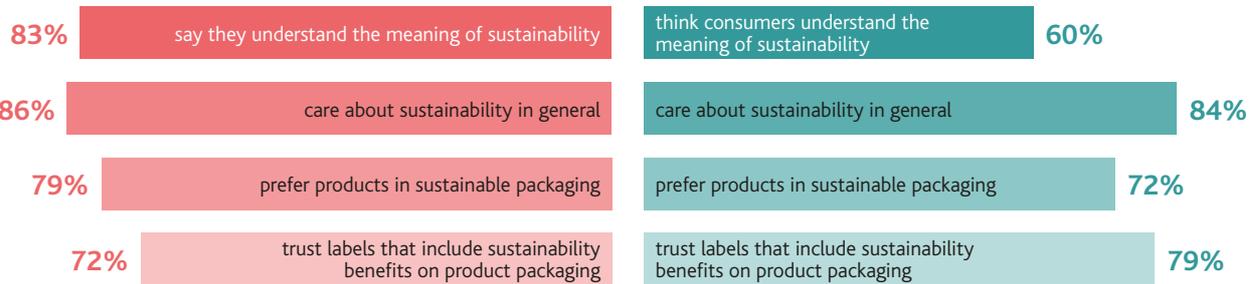
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Label trends

Why brand owners need to amplify the communication of specific beneficial lifecycle impacts of flexible packaging



Consumers Brand owners



24% of consumers say transportation efficiency describes sustainability

81% think it's at least somewhat important that product packaging has been transported efficiently

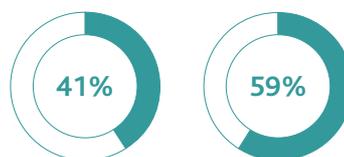
Believe flexible packaging is sustainable



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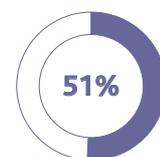
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Source: Flexible Packaging Association

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Lynn Higgs of Fortis Solutions Group with Patrick and Heidi Potter from Flexo Wash



Charlie MacLean of ASL PrintFX, Claudia St John of Affinity HR, John and Pam Attayek of Inovar Packaging Group and Lisa Giannini of ASL PrintFX



Randy Kessler of L&L with Emily Kessler, and Winn Eckert and Troy Eckert of Yazoo Mills



Steve Schulte and Chris Kaestener of Mark Andy, Devane Wall of Creative Labels of Vermont, Tasha Ventimiglia of Labelexpo and Jeffrey and Ginny Dowd of Belmark



Jeffrey and Ginny Dowd of Belmark and Steve Schulte and Chris Kaestener of Mark Andy



Jeff Feeney and Elizabeth Pecha-Poelker of PrintFlex Graphics with John Trail of Labeltronix



Eugene Singer Award Winners Sandy Petersen of Digital Label Solutions, Lori Campbell of The Label Printers, James Voltoline of Consolidated Label and Dave Greiner of Precision Label



Chelsea McDougall of Labels & Labeling, Deanne Sinclair of Cambridge Label, Tasha Ventimiglia and Erin Dandridge of Labelexpo



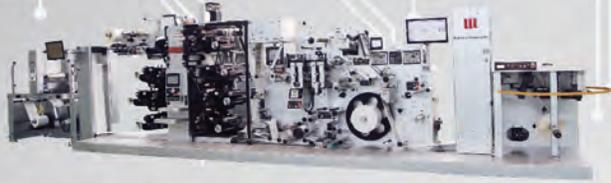
Mark and Dana Elsbernd of Epson



Tara Halpin of Steinhauser and speaker Kevin Brown at the TLMI converter meeting, which Halpin hosted

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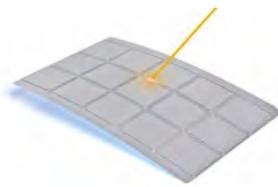
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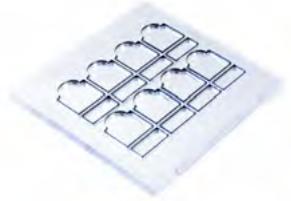
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