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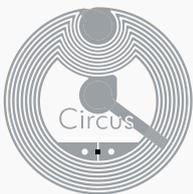
- + In praise of label industry's essential workers
- + Adapting to a 'new normal'
- + e-Commerce boom
- + US converters emerge as helpers

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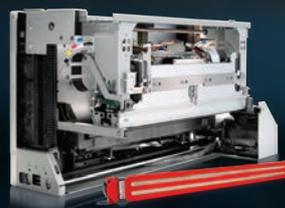


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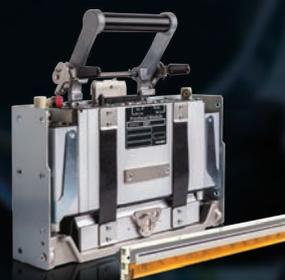
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# L&L

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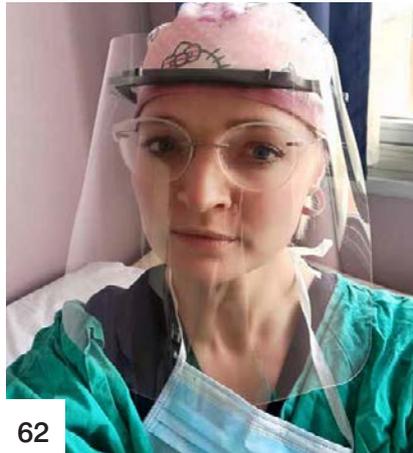
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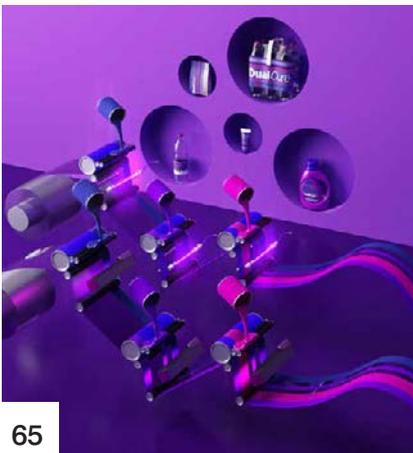
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*Technology*

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*labels&labeling.com*



*Ink systems (features)*  
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*TLMI addresses Covid-19 crisis (video)*  
TLMI president Dan Muenzer discusses the pandemic impact



*Read L&L issue 2 online (magazine)*  
Previous issue of L&L is now available to read online



*Young managers – Matthias Völlherbst (video)*  
Full interview with the managing owner of Völlherbst Labels

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## L&L looks back (*L&L issue 3, 1989*)



**P13** Mike Fairley visited companies in Germany and Switzerland to assess the development and latest installations of the GMC PrintRobot. It was one of the first magnetographic printing systems to utilize non-impact technology to combine both fixed and variable data printing including barcodes, printing directly from a computer on a wide range of substrates.



**P22** As part of a major expansion program involving a move to an extensive new purpose-built factory and the installation of additional production facilities, Label Centre provided a significant milestone for Ko-Pack UK with the purchase of the 100th Ko-Pack narrow web press to be installed in the UK and Ireland at the time.



**P34** L&L published a comprehensive review of Labelexpo USA. With more than 5,000 visitors at the four-day show, plus a delegate attendance at the associated two-day conference which exceeded 350, the US exhibition drew rave reviews from every source – and achieved sales for exhibitors which ran into many millions of dollars.



**P42** L&L reported on the installation of an Omet ET400 2-color flexographic press at British labeling giant Norprint International. It was a significant installation for the Italian manufacturer, which at the time was trying to penetrate the UK market, and a chance encounter for Norprint, which spotted the new machine at a European exhibition.

## In praise of label industry essential workers

### Editor's note

Since the lockdown was implemented in the UK in March, a 'clap for carers' has seen people step into gardens and onto balconies in their droves to applaud National Health Service staff and other key workers every Thursday night at 8pm. Millions are reported to have taken part.

The phenomenon of people cheering in the evenings began in mid-January in the shut-down Chinese city of Wuhan. It took off in Italy, with people emerging to bang on pots and pans and play accordions. Similar initiatives – including standing ovations and singing – have become commonplace around the world: Paris, Madrid, Atlanta, Buenos Aires, Istanbul and many more.

In this issue of Labels & Labeling, allow us to pay tribute to those in our industry who have continued to work in such

difficult conditions – a written 'clap for converters', so to speak.

As Mike Fairley sets out in his column, the label industry has been largely overlooked in its key role of supplying all those necessary label products and components that enable manufacturing, distribution, tracking and tracing of essential medical or hospital goods, food and household products. The global supply chain relies on labels of many different kinds to convey all sorts of information, as well as protect against counterfeiting. In collaboration with Finat – which, alongside other associations around the world, has worked diligently to support converters and lobby on behalf of the industry – he outlines which labels should be classified as essential supplies for manufacturing and distribution.

In the United States and

**“The label industry has shown tremendous resilience in responding to these challenging conditions”**

South Africa, we report on industry suppliers' and converters' efforts to keep production going, as well as highlighting some of the numerous cases of companies retooling production lines to support healthcare, first responders and other front-line workers with critical personal protection equipment (PPE).

Elsewhere in the issue, branding and design columnist Vicki Strull considers what impact the coronavirus-induced boom in e-commerce might have on the label and packaging sector, while Andy Thomas-Emans looks at how

converters have adapted to the situation, and which of these new measures might become commonplace even after the pandemic subsides.

The label industry has shown tremendous resilience in responding to these challenging conditions. Its response has been highly impressive and deserves much praise.

James Quirk  
Group managing editor

# News



## Finat supports label community during pandemic

*Association develops dedicated Covid-19 website*

Finat has been supporting its members with information and resources to help them contain risks associated with staff well-being, business continuity plans and supply chain monitoring during the Covid-19 crisis.

Labels and labeling technology are an essential feature for the food and medical supply chain. They provide primary product information on the supermarket shelf and in the consumer household after purchase, they offer pharmaceutical companies and doctors the opportunity to provide customized information for individual patients, and they facilitate the tracking and tracing of goods along the value chain.

Finat also endorses statements from various industry bodies calling for the uninterrupted cross-border transport of raw materials, goods and packaging, as well as the continued availability of essential raw materials and chemicals.

'Several countries have explicitly or implicitly declared labels and packaging as essential part of the critical infrastructure for the food and medical supply chain,' said Jules Lejeune, Finat's managing director. 'We also welcome the EU Commission's new Guidelines for Border Management, implementing Green Lanes for essential freight transport. We however look forward to even more concerted measures on a European level to contain the economic impact of this crisis. In Europe, governments, industries and workers alike, we are all in this together.'

'The European label and narrow web industry is strongly committed to playing its part in the critical infrastructure. Presently, however, the European label value chain is facing considerable challenges, as businesses are struggling to keep up with excessive short-term demand due to hoarding, while at the same time, companies are coping with labor shortages and restrictions on the availability of critical raw materials and chemicals in the manufacturing process.'



## ABG to sell Actega Metal Print's EcoLeaf technology

*Metallization technology integrated into Digicon Series 3*

Actega Metal Print has partnered with AB Graphic to manage direct sales, marketing and customer service for its sustainable metallization technology, EcoLeaf, starting in Europe.

When sold through ABG, it will be installed on new Digicon Series 3 digital finishing presses or retrofitted to existing presses in the field.

'We regard EcoLeaf as a new category of metallization, that will enable our customers to differentiate themselves with new and exciting print embellishments,' said Matt Burton, sales director for AB Graphic. 'As it should do, sustainability remains a high priority for businesses, and EcoLeaf is expected to make a huge and positive contribution towards that. As such, we consider the Actega technology to be a perfect complement to our product portfolio, and as a cost competitive solution for high-end decorations, one that will deliver economic value to our customers.'

Jan Franz Allerkamp, managing director at Actega Metal Print, commented: 'With over 65 years of print finishing expertise in the label industry, 11,000 product installations and 2,500 customers, ABG is clearly a great partner for us. What's more, we're thrilled that they not only see a big opportunity with EcoLeaf, but that they share our vision for a more sustainable print market. Hot on the heels of our recent first beta site announcement at Kolbe-Coloco, the appointment of ABG is a key component of our rollout plan.'

Designed for a variety of markets, EcoLeaf is a new digital technology enabling metallization embellishments onto self-adhesive labels. The basis of this technology is a silver pigment that can be overprinted, resulting in a rainbow of metallic colors, including gold. Using only the precise amount of metal required for the printed area, it replaces the use of hot and cold foil rolls and their subsequent high impact on waste, as well as reduces the cost of metallic embellishments. Read more on page 39.

## Delga Group launches Delga Labels

Delga Group has launched a new business division, Delga Labels, which will join the current group of print and packaging companies and will be based in Rochester, UK alongside Delga Press. Using the HP Indigo 6900 press, Delga Labels will be able to produce a wide range of bespoke labels for its customer base.

'This addition means we now offer full, in-house, all-encompassing print and packaging capabilities to our customers.'

The manufacturing of labels was the final piece in our jigsaw, and further enhances our value-added services,' said Ian Conetta, MD of Delga Group. 'The selection of the HP Indigo 6900 was relatively easy for us. We already use a suite of HP digital presses in other areas of our business and are fully aware of their flexibility and extremely high-quality print.'

# News



## Colordyne launches innovation division

*Focus on print engine development and integration partners*

Colordyne Technologies has launched a new division to focus on print engine development and innovation and target strategic integration partners (SPI) interested in adding inkjet to their technologies.

Prior to Labelexpo Europe 2019, the company announced several partnerships with SIPs to integrate Colordyne's inkjet print engine technology into their printers and presses. Based on the strong response from SIPs and other press manufacturers, the company decided to develop a new division dedicated to this focus.

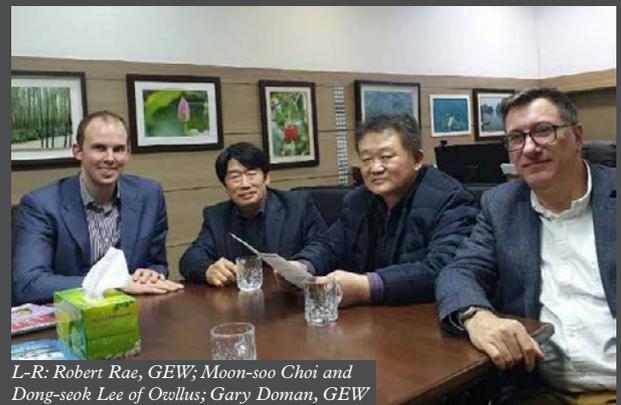
'We are excited to launch this new division of our company,' said Andy Matter, president of Colordyne. 'Part of the differentiation process is creating a separate brand for the division. The unit will be identified as Colordyne, without "Technologies", and our print engines are branded as ChromaPlex. We've also launched a separate website focused on our print engines and targeting SIPs to offer a tailored online experience for these customers.'

'The benefit for SIPs is not just the engine technology. Colordyne brings 10 years of expertise in the inkjet industry, allowing us to deliver rapid, low-cost development and integration services. Our focus has always been on inkjet and remains on innovating with inkjet technologies, but now we are able to help more companies take advantage of digital printing and deliver it to a wider range of markets,' concluded Matter.

## Brook & Whittle acquires shrink label facility

Brook & Whittle has expanded its shrink sleeve capabilities with the recent acquisition of a label converting facility in Croydon, Pennsylvania, which manufactures shrink sleeves for consumer and healthcare markets supplying many of the leading customers and brands in North America.

The acquisition enhances Brook & Whittle's position in the supply of shrink sleeve labels in North America, while also providing additional capacity to support its growing pressure-sensitive film label business. The Croydon facility, formerly known as Gilbreth Packaging Solutions, helped pioneer the shrink sleeve label market over 40 years ago as one of the first to introduce gravure printing on shrink film.



*L-R: Robert Rae, GEW; Moon-soo Choi and Dong-seok Lee of Owllus; Gary Doman, GEW*

## GEW appoints South Korean distributor

GEW has appointed Owllus as its South Korean partner to distribute curing systems locally, across label, narrow web and sheet-fed offset applications. Owllus, based in Gyeonggi-do, close to Seoul, has worked with leading brands such as Heidelberg and Gallus in South Korea for many years.

'The GEW sales contact at Owllus, Moon-soo Choi, is renowned in South Korea's printing industry, having previously worked at Heidelberg Korea for some 20 years. His broad experience encompasses both narrow web and sheet-fed offset printing,' said GEW's Robert Rae. 'Having worked for many years in a service and technical support capacity on a wide variety of presses, including Gallus, Omet, Soma, Smag, Codimag and Heidelberg, Choi is highly qualified to offer professional and comprehensive sales advice. His knowledge of UV curing technology is second to none.'

## Grafotronic opens Bangkok office

Grafotronic continues to grow its presence around the world with a new office and demonstration facility in Bangkok, Thailand. Rungthiwa Irving is managing the operation and is responsible for the domestic market as well as the wider Southeast Asian market and local Grafotronic distributors.

## Cartes appoints agents

Cartes has appointed Weldon Celloplast as its exclusive agent for the Indian subcontinent, and extended its partnership with Chilean equipment supplier Davis Graphis for distribution of its products in South America.

## Rotocontrol names LatAm agent

Rotocontrol has appointed Davis Graphics as the local distributor for the Southern Cone region including Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay.

## Edale appoints distributors

Edale has appointed Croatia-based Imagus to sell the FL range of products in the Balkans, and Moscow-based Salnikoff to represent the company in the Russian market.

# New Products

01



02



03



04



**01 CX300 digital label press**  
**Xeikon**

Xeikon's new digital press is based on next-generation Cheetah 2.0 technology, offering shorter lead times and more product diversification. The CX300 is a 330mm (13in) press that can offer production capacity of over 50,000sqm per month in a single shift operation. It can reach printing speeds of up to 30m/min (98ft/min) and web width between 220mm (8.6in) and 512mm (20.3in) wide using a LED imaging head operating at 1200 x 3600 DPI. The full-color press is equipped with five print stations, including CMYK and single-pass opaque white but can also support color gamut expansion, custom or security colors.

**02 XJet hybrid press**  
**Omet**

Omet's XJet hybrid press powered by Durst offers faster speeds, wider width and higher print quality in a more compact form with automatic register

and control. The XJet press combines Omet flexo and Durst inkjet technology, plus exclusive converting units to obtain the final product in one single pass. Additionally, Omet flexo stations enable primers and special varnishes application, pantone or metallized color printing. Printers can choose the most convenient combination of technologies at every run, adapting the production to changeable market trends like personalization, just-in-time deliveries and final product valorization. Latest developments implemented on the XJet include faster speed (80m/min up to 100m/min), wider options (330-420-510mm printing width), and an automatic nozzle compensation system.

**03 Digicon automation modules for HP Indigo V12**  
**AB Graphic**

AB Graphic is developing Digicon automation modules to deliver high-speed finishing in both near-line and in-line

configurations for the recently launched HP Indigo V12 digital press. The new ABG Digicon Series 3 modules are being developed especially for the newly announced HP Indigo V12 digital press, which runs at 120 meters per minute. All modules focus on automation, allowing for continuous production, whilst promoting quality and efficiency. 'A key to ABC's leadership in the print finishing market is our ongoing relationship with HP Indigo. With over 1,000 installations worldwide, our Digicon series has changed the face of print finishing,' said Matt Burton, ABC's sales director. The integrated modules will include an auto die-cassette system that can load up to 10 die plates, keeping efficiency, high due to automation of the die-loading process, reducing downtime and unnecessary manual intervention. This module will also offer automatic pre-positioning of the die-cut, contributing to a substantial waste reduction.

**04 2800 Series AP - Retrofit**  
**Colordyne**

The entry-level digital print module features a wider width and high print quality for use with analog presses, web handling or finishing equipment and production lines running under 150ft/min (45m/min). It is a compact, single-pass inkjet engine that allows existing analog equipment to incorporate the benefits of digital printing while maintaining original functionality. Other benefits include faster turnaround times, on-demand production and affordable short run printing. The new engine is powered by Memjet's DuraFlex technology and uses aqueous pigment inkjet. It has a wider print width of 12.75in (324mm) from a single A3+ printhead. Using aqueous pigment inkjet inks, it delivers greater water fastness, light fastness and rub resistance while maintaining the qualities of water-based inkjet, like food and beverage safety.



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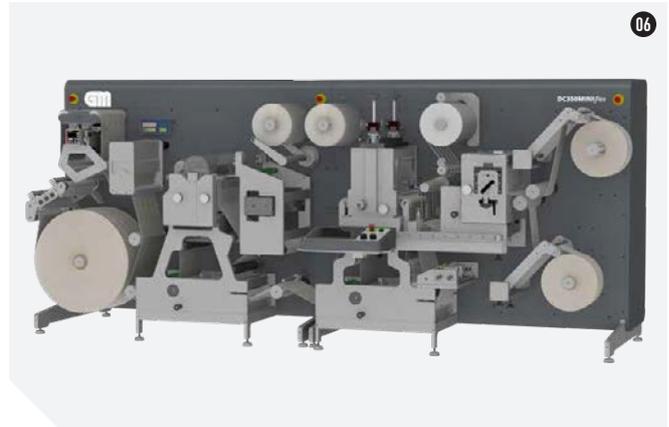
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# New Products

05



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08



**05 APR1 line of thermal ribbons**  
**Armor**

The French thermal transfer specialist has introduced APR1, a new wax-resin ribbon developed for flat-head printers offering an entry-level, affordable technology with up to 12 percent plastic waste reduction. The APR1 features a unique formulation of high-density black ink, excellent print sharpness and uses the next generation, four microns PET film. 'All along the APR1 development 11 technicians and engineers conducted more than 450 ink formulation trials at Armor laboratories to reach the defined specifications. The challenge was to develop a good, but competitive product without any compromise on the usual Armor quality and clearly our extended tests show that APR1 meets all these criteria,' said Pierre Poullouec, laboratory manager at Armor.

The new line is suitable for all paper and synthetic label materials, especially for logistics, distribution, clothing, retail and

pharmaceutical sectors, and comes with a lifetime guarantee, free printhead cleaning wipes and individual certificate of conformity.

**06 DC350Miniflex**  
**Grafisk Maskinfabrik**  
Grafisk Maskinfabrik (GM) has added the DC350Miniflex to its portfolio, bridging DC350 and DC330Miniflex lines. The new machine is an efficient and economical compact finisher with components of the DC350 premium finishing line. It is also a natural continuation of DC330Miniflex and at the same time the new member of DC350 line. The new DC350Miniflex has been designed with semi-rotation in varnish, die-cutting, slitting and dual rewind as standard and can be upgraded with options such as spot varnish, cold foil, lamination, SmartSlit or SmartCrush slitting and SmartStrip.

**07 Recycled content PP label material**  
**UPM Raflatac**

UPM Raflatac has launched a PP label film manufactured from post-consumer recycled (PCR) plastic using Sabic's TruCircle technology for certified circular PP products. PP PCR Clear and White products are made with a chemical recycling technology that uses mass-balance approach to deliver virgin-like resin feedstock. With the same properties as standard PP films, these PP PCR films can be used in different label applications, including rigid food packaging.

**08 Rayoface mBoss film**  
**Innovia Films**

Innovia Films, a division of CCL Industries, has launched Rayoface mBoss, a new BOPP film that has been engineered to offer long-lasting premium embossing performance. Richard Southward, global product manager, said: 'It offers increased shelf appeal and consumer engagement through bold tactile features as well as

the eye-catching print and foiling capability of the paper-like surface. At 130 microns, it has a premium feel and offers high conversion and labeling efficiencies due to its exceptional dimensional stability.' Rayoface mBoss has a high level of opacity, even when wet, and is suitable for use with a wide range of inks and foils as well as textured varnishes.

*Expanded Cascade inkjet material line*

**Spinnaker Coating**  
Spinnaker Coating has unveiled three new removable product options to its water-based inkjet product line. The Cascade product line includes matte and gloss options for both paper and film facestock. The new removable options include gloss paper, premium matte paper, as well as gloss white BOPP.

.....  
 For more new products, go to [www.labelsandlabeling.com/news/new-products](http://www.labelsandlabeling.com/news/new-products)

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# Installations



**01 Mark Andy Evolution Colorado Etiquettes, France**  
Colorado Etiquettes has installed the first Mark Andy Evolution press in Europe. The 6-color, full UV flexo press was launched at Labelexpo Europe 2019 to complement Mark Andy's Performance Series. It is built around the all-servo P7 platform and can be designed in any configuration to suit current work and modified later as demand changes. The Evolution installed at Colorado Etiquettes is a 6-color, full UV press with a 13in (330mm) web width. It is fitted with turnbars, a double die station, closed-loop tension control, auto and pre-register features, and servo unwind and rewind.

**02 Xeikon CX300 Interket, Sweden**  
Interket has invested in the recently-launched Xeikon CX300 press to introduce digital printing capabilities and diversify the production of its Swedish

plant, which currently operates only conventional presses. 'This machine will complement our existing plant which only includes conventional presses that are excellent for medium to long run work,' said Stefan Gustafsson, MD of Interket. 'However, to meet the needs of our market and provide a diverse platform, we investigated the potential benefits digital would give us for short run work, including variable designs and the opportunity to personalize or build in promotional campaigns for our customers across a multitude of markets.'

**03 Omet XFlex X6 Carlucci Etichette, Italy**  
Carlucci Etichette has invested in two Omet XFlex X6 presses equipped with screen units to increase productivity and diversify its production capabilities. Fernando Staino Giocondi, CEO, said: 'We purchased two machines because our runs have increased and Omet offers superior quality and stability. We were already

using Omet machines to produce conventional labels for the pharmaceutical market.'

**04 AB Graphic Digicon Series 3 Geostick, Netherlands**  
Geostick Group has ordered five Digicon Series 3 finishing machines from AB Graphic to increase productivity and keep pace with customer demand. All machines will provide high levels of automation, including connections to Cerm MIS. Cees Schouten, operations director, said: 'We chose ABG because of their belief in automation and quality. The new Digicons will allow us to continue to grow whilst creating the high-quality products our customers expect. ABG has been our chosen finishing equipment partner for over two decades.'

**Screen L350UV+ Astrografe, Portugal**  
After five years using Screen's L350 label system, Portuguese converter Astrografe has installed

the L350UV+LM system. 'We replaced our first Screen inkjet system with the newest, innovative L350UV+LM to meet our customers' demand for specialized labels, such as certified low migration food labels for the organic food industry,' said Marco Cardoso, manager of Astrografe. 'Since installation, we've found that this new system has helped us open new markets, and even win new customers while other companies are struggling to survive. During these challenging times, it's even more important for customers to be flexible and run short print runs to adjust to fast-changing circumstances. And this is exactly what the L350UV+LM system allows us to do.'

**05 Daco FLX350 AM Labels, UK**  
AM Labels has installed a new Daco FLX350 flexo press. The press incorporates servo control of the printing and cutting stations and touch screen computer

# Installations



control of most of its functions. The machine can deliver high volume print jobs with the cut-to-register facility that enables black mark labels to be produced with an accuracy of 0.25mm.

**05 Gallus Labelmaster Elloflex, Brazil**

Elloflex has installed a Gallus Labelmaster to increase its production efficiency and to diversify into new markets. The Labelmaster includes eight flexo printing stations, cold foil and a further unit for rotary screen. With a printing width of 440mm, it is the first Gallus press for Elloflex and the second Gallus Labelmaster in Brazil. 'We chose Gallus because it is a durable and stable running machine which guarantees reliable results which we can really achieve during daily production. Now, more than one year after the installation, we can say that we increased the efficiency of sleeve production and were able to conquer

new markets thanks to this investment,' said Rafael Polessi Rampazzo, commercial director at Elloflex.

**06 Domino N610i Abbott Label, USA**

Abbott Label has installed a Domino N610i UV inkjet press. 'Digital is a necessity in today's market,' said John Abbott, president. 'We learned about Domino in 2013, which is when we first started seriously investigating digital printing. We were very impressed with the technology, but a little unsure as there were not many units installed in the US at that time. We have had an HP Indigo WS6600 in production since 2014, and we have been completely satisfied with the HP, but we wanted to jump into the inkjet market as we believe it better serves the markets we sell into. Our costing models with the Domino have led us to believe we can be extremely competitive on consecutive barcode work.'

**07 MPS and AB Graphic Fast Track Die**

**Abbey Labels, UK**  
Abbey Labels has worked closely with MPS to develop a die-cutting solution combining AB Graphic's Fast Track Die and flexo technology from MPS. The project is the first integration of this sort in the world. Tom Allum, Abbey Labels chairman, explained: 'The Fast Track Die was demonstrated as an in-line solution for a digital press when we first saw it in action. My immediate reaction was that it would be a better fit on a flexo press, which prints at much higher speeds and so could take full advantage of this super-fast die-cutting capability.' 'When Abbey Labels introduced the idea, we had a few reservations in terms of what it would involve,' said Nick Tyrer, sales director at MPS UK. 'However, our past collaborations with ABG had gone very well, so we decided to give the customer exactly what they wanted.'

**08 Bobst Nova M1**

**Shree Lamipack, India**  
Ghaziabad-based printer Shree Lamipack has installed a new Bobst Nova M1 label press. Equipped with in-line inspection, tension control and registration on each unit, the new press features cold foil, delam/relam, slitting, two unwinding units and three die-cutting units. Deepak Gupta, CEO, said: 'With this investment, we expect to catalyze our growth in high value-addition and innovative labels. We have further installed a machine to offer doming effect on labels, an inkjet numbering unit as well as enhanced capability to produce label-on-label for premium segments. These machines will facilitate our expansion in pharma and FMCG companies that is essential for growth in these trying times.'

Go to [www.labelsandlabeling.com/news/installations](http://www.labelsandlabeling.com/news/installations) for more installation news

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# Appointments



**Hassan H. Rmaile**  
*Vice president and general manager, Avery Dennison, LGM Europe, the Middle East and North Africa*  
 Rmaile will replace Jeroen Diderich, who has moved to the US as vice president and general manager of LGM North America.



**Dr Frank Schaum**  
*Head of Gallus, Label division, Heidelberg*  
 He has replaced Christof Naier, who left the company at the end of March 2020. His aim is to evolve the brand Gallus with products and services in the growing label market.



**Tai Nizawa**  
*Managing director Konica Minolta India*  
 He brings 30 years' experience in the printing industry to further strengthen the company's position in the Indian market.



**Cleo Nomikos**  
*Sales director, Europe INX International Ink*  
 Nomikos will lead all sales activities for the sheet-fed, solvent liquid and water-based ink divisions. With 11 years' printing industry experience, he joins INX after serving as the regional sales director of sheet-fed division for Siegwirk.



**Chris Evans**  
*Sales manager, Yazoo Mills*  
 He will be responsible for driving and expanding business by directing the sales team.



**Mike Barry**  
*Key account and OEM manager, North America, Domino*  
 Prior to joining Domino, he was with Fujifilm for seven years where his roles included business development, product marketing management, and sales support.

**Scott Begbie**  
*Sales manager Repacorp*  
 He will oversee and grow Repacorp's sales team and North America territory. Begbie has been tasked with tailoring the company's offerings and services to better serve resellers.



**Curt Begle**  
*Chairperson Flexible Packaging Association*  
 FPA announced the election of its 2020 board of directors with Curt Begle, president of the Health, Hygiene, and Specialties Division of Berry Global, continuing as chairperson, and Kathy Bolhous, CEO of Charter NEX Films, elected as executive vice chairperson.



**Brad Wills**  
*Senior vice president and general manager, MacDermid Graphics Solutions*  
 He is responsible for the global graphics solutions business and joins MacDermid after a 26-year career at Schawk, SGK, and Matthews companies.



**Darin Lyon**  
*President and CEO Anderson & Vreeland*  
 Formerly president, Lyon has held various executive roles at the company since 2003. In this expanded role, Lyon will hold the title of president and CEO.



**Benjamin Piau**  
*Service director, Codimag*  
 He replaces Armindo Alves, who has retired following 35 years of service.

**Anne Godfrey**  
*CEO, GS1 UK*  
 She will maximize GS1's influence globally. GS1 UK has a strong culture of collaboration, which is aligned to Godfrey's belief as to how to build successful membership-based organizations.

**Ron Ducharme**  
*Vice president, Covectra*  
 Ducharme will lead marketing, sales and overall new business development worldwide. He will help to spread the company's serialized barcode and high-security label technologies as well as the growing number of product offerings in brand protection and serialization.



**Rob Schellekens**  
*Sales director, DG Press*  
 Schellekens takes over commercial responsibilities from director Remko Koolbergen, who will focus on technical matters and general policy.



**Sam Aloschi**  
*Managing director, Asia-Pacific Ravenwood Packaging*  
 He brings more than 24 years of experience in the food packaging sector to and joins the company's board of directors.

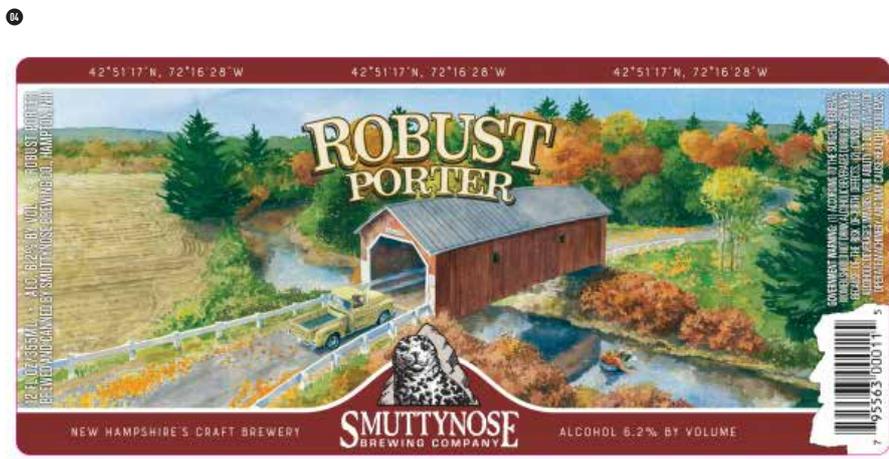


**Peter Washner**  
*CEO, Sihl Group*  
 Washner has extensive industry experience having previously served as the CEO of the Infiana Group, a producer of specialty films.



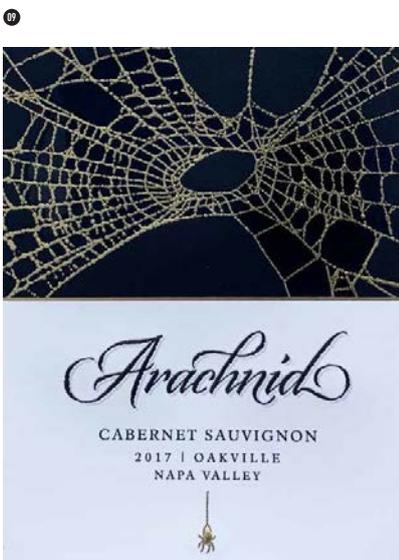
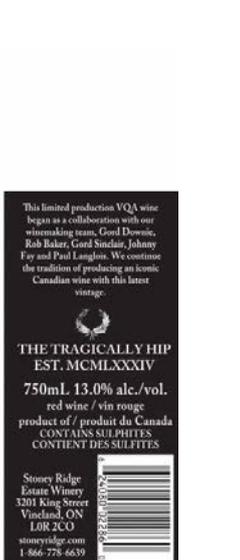
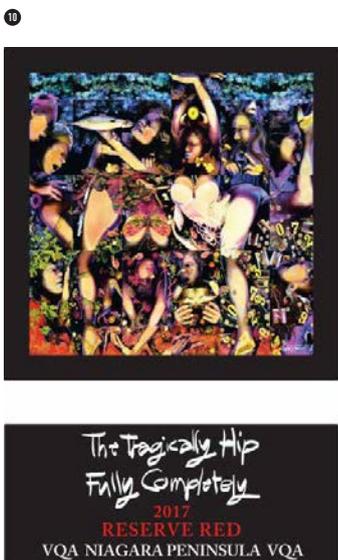
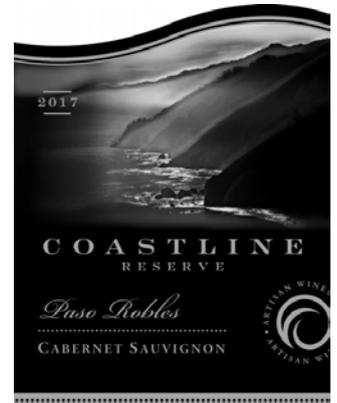
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# Label & packaging showcase



## FTA 2020 Excellence in Flexography Awards

- 01** Gold: Narrow web, line, film  
**'Collagen Plus Label'**  
McDowell Label
- 02** Silver: Narrow web, line, film  
**'C4 Extreme Pre-Workout Dietary Performance Sleeve'**  
Phenix Label
- 03** Bronze: Narrow web, screen, film  
**'ProSupps Mr Hyde Blue Razz Pre-Workout Dietary Supplement Label'**  
Inovar Packaging Group
- 04** Gold: Narrow web, process, film  
**'Smuttnose Brewing Company Robust Porter Label'**  
Label Tech
- 05** Silver: Narrow web, process, film  
**'Olly Bedtime Beauty Gummies Label'**  
AWT Labels
- 06** Gold: Narrow web, process, metallized  
**'Ketogenics Detox Dietary Supplement Label'**  
Bay Tech Label



07 Gold: Narrow web, screen, coated paper  
**'Coastline Reserve 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon Label'**  
 Labeltronix

08 Bronze: Narrow web, line, uncoated paper  
**'Arachnid Oakville 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon Label'**  
 Vintage 99 Label

09 Silver: Narrow web, process, uncoated paper  
**'Tragically Hip Reserve Red Label'**  
 Artcraft Label

10 Bronze: Narrow web, process, metallized  
**'Athena Label'**  
 McDowell Label

11 Gold: Narrow web, line, uncoated paper  
**'Mujuen Ai Lite Label'**  
 Labeltronix



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## The Mike Fairley column

# Coronavirus: suggested guidelines on the role of labels

The Label Academy and Finat have compiled suggested guidelines on the role of labels in the essential supply chain

The label industry has been largely overlooked in its key role of supplying all those necessary label products and components that enable manufacturing, distribution, tracking and tracing of essential medical or hospital goods, and in enabling the day-to-day infrastructure that society needs to continue to be supported and supplied with necessary medicines, food and household products.

The crucial role played by labels, and the materials and technology to produce them, needs to be fully recognized as essential supplies/suppliers if feeding, treating and supporting front-line medical and care employees, and all global consumers, continues, otherwise global measures taken against coronavirus will rapidly falter.

So what labels should ideally be classified as essential supplies for manufacturing and distribution during the pandemic?

### Medical and hospital labels

Labels are widely used throughout the medical and hospital chain for the identification, tracking, tracing and processing of everything from patient and medical product identification and subsequent tracking, through to sample identification and testing, prescription issuing, warehousing, storage and issuing of supplies, blood bag identification, autoclaving and sterilization, etc.

Many of these labels may also need to be overprinted with patient name, details, barcodes or sequential codes or numbers in the medical or hospital environment using computerized inkjet or thermal printer technology, with special ink cartridges or thermal ribbons. Without these labels and facilities, whole identification or testing procedures may come to a halt.

### Pharmaceutical labels

The global pharmaceutical supply chain from manufacturer, through distribution, pharmacy handling and the final prescribing of individual patient prescriptions is totally dependent on the use of labels. Three main types of labels are required to make this chain of supply and prescribing work: 1) Track and trace labels that enable the supply chain of medicines and medical products to be followed from source to consumer; 2) Product labels on medical products that meet national and international pharmaceutical legislation requirements; 3) Prescription labels that have to be issued by each individual pharmacy when dispensing medicines to the patient. These labels are usually part printed with the pharmacy name and then overprinted in the pharmacy or hospital with individual patient names and prescription details.

### Logistics, distribution warehouse labels

The world of supply and distribution is today automated using computerized systems to print everything from address and shipping labels, through barcoded automated monitoring and checking stages, using scanners to read labels in warehouses, at each loading, unloading or delivery stage, and on to the retailer, pharmacy,

hospital or consumer end-user for monitoring the progress, tracking and tracing of almost everything that today moves by road, rail, sea or air. Without such labels national and global supply chains would most likely come to a complete halt, or very severe delays introduced, with goods being lost, increased theft, and significantly reduced accountability.

### Food and drink labels

Almost all food and drink product labels have to carry legislative information that enables the items to meet the necessary requirements in terms of contents, specific ingredients, storage or use by information, health or safety requirements, manufacturer or supplier, possible country of origin, or other data.

If labels are not able to be produced and supplied to food or drinks product manufacturers for labeling purposes, then their products cannot be distributed or sold. The consumer or product legislation requirements are mandatory. If not labeled, goods will not be available in retailers or available to the public. Even in the basic of senses, labels for all food or drinks products sold to the public are therefore a mandatory requirement and should be regarded as essential for manufacturing purposes.

Other food labels are used by pre-packers during the weighing and labeling of products such as fresh meat, fish, fruit, vegetables, bakery products, sliced meats, cheeses. These products need to carry weight/price information which is generated at the point of wrapping or packing using thermal label materials and ribbons.

### Household and consumer goods labels

The labeling of products for use by consumers in their daily household life is an essential requirement under a range of national and international consumer legislation that covers contents, safety and health requirements, usage instructions, handling, storage, disposal and much more. It applies to under-the-sink products, hair care products, shower gels, cleansers, polishes, washing-up or washing machine products, sprays, soaps and detergents, etc. Indeed, pretty well every consumer and household product required on a day-to-day basis.

### Industrial manufacturing

While not all industrial manufacturing is currently necessary or required, the labeling of products urgently being manufactured for the hospital/medical markets, such as respirators, beds, screens, ventilators, masks, sanitizer sprays, etc, is obviously a current essential priority, together with all the required warehousing, distribution and shipping labels.



Disclaimer: These are suggested guidelines and are a work in progress. Read the full article on [www.labelsandlabeling.com](http://www.labelsandlabeling.com)



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## The Andy Thomas-Emans column

### Converters adapt to 'new normal'

*Social distancing and hygiene measures will become the 'new normal' for the foreseeable future*

**A**s the global Covid-19 pandemic shows no signs of easing, and a vaccine remains a long way off, what many label converters first assumed would be emergency social distancing and hygiene measures will now need to become the 'new normal' for the foreseeable future. Due to their status as essential workers during the pandemic, label and packaging converters have been in the front line of working out how industrialized operations can continue in the face of a highly infectious and lethal virus. Speaking to a few label converters about their experiences up to now, key issues to address are starting to emerge.

**Customer facing:** No face to face meetings by sales teams and customer service reps with clients or prospective clients will change the way the approval cycle works. It will likely accelerate the replacement of hard copy contract proofs with secure online proofing portals, since client approval teams are unlikely to be working from a centralized office. Sales teams will need to find new ways of contacting potential clients when they no longer have access to headquarters buildings.

**Machinery operation:** Older presses and other machinery requiring two or more operators will present problems for social distancing, particularly in the typically crowded space of label workshop aisles. This is where more modern automated presses really help, with single operators able to run one or even multiple presses from a location remote from the press, and with automated machine monitoring and servo adjustment taking over from manual monitoring.

**Tooling:** Delivery of tooling to the press, and from press to cleaning stations, will need to be on a 'non-contact' basis (like a takeaway restaurant) – the tooling parts will need to be left at a location near the press for collection by press and then cleaning crews.

**Machine and operator monitoring:** We are trying to avoid more people than necessary walking the shop floor. Remote monitoring of machinery systems (presses, rewinders etc) avoids the need for supervisors to walk around the factory floor.

**Secure networks:** 'White collar' staff – from accounts to design – working away from the office will need to link seamlessly and securely into all work systems. This means, for example, that customer service reps need access to files on the pre-press system, and this in turn requires a robust digital asset management system.

**Management Information Systems:** now is the time to invest if you have not already. As mentioned above, a good MIS will reduce the amount of time an individual needs to be on the shop floor or in the warehouse performing stock takes on materials, ink, anilox and die inventories, or keeping track of stock and tooling assets.

**Digital job bags:** These will continue to replace physical job bags to reduce as far as possible the number of 'touch points' where more than one employee is handling the same item. The same is true for all paperwork which needs to be passed around, signed and countersigned.

**Disinfection and cleaning regimes:** They will need to come closer to those in place for BRC/IOP food-grade certification. And there are other areas of concern. Take rubber gloves as an example. Their function up to now has been to protect workers from potentially harmful fluids, but these same gloves can become carriers of virus between shifts, so also need to be rigorously disinfected or changed.

**Common areas:** Canteens, changing rooms and reception areas will need one-way systems in place, with 2m distancing between eating or changing stations, staggered arrival/leaving times and break times.

**“The label industry has proved extraordinarily resilient throughout this crisis”**

#### Business prospects

As we have noted already, the label industry has proved extraordinarily resilient throughout this crisis, not just at the label converter but also through the whole supply chain.

For most label converters business has remained strong because of the surge in demand for pandemic-related products like pharmaceuticals and sanitizing products, food and beverages.

But we need to face the fact that major economies are already entering recession and this historically has led to a reduction in demand in label volume. How should label converters respond?

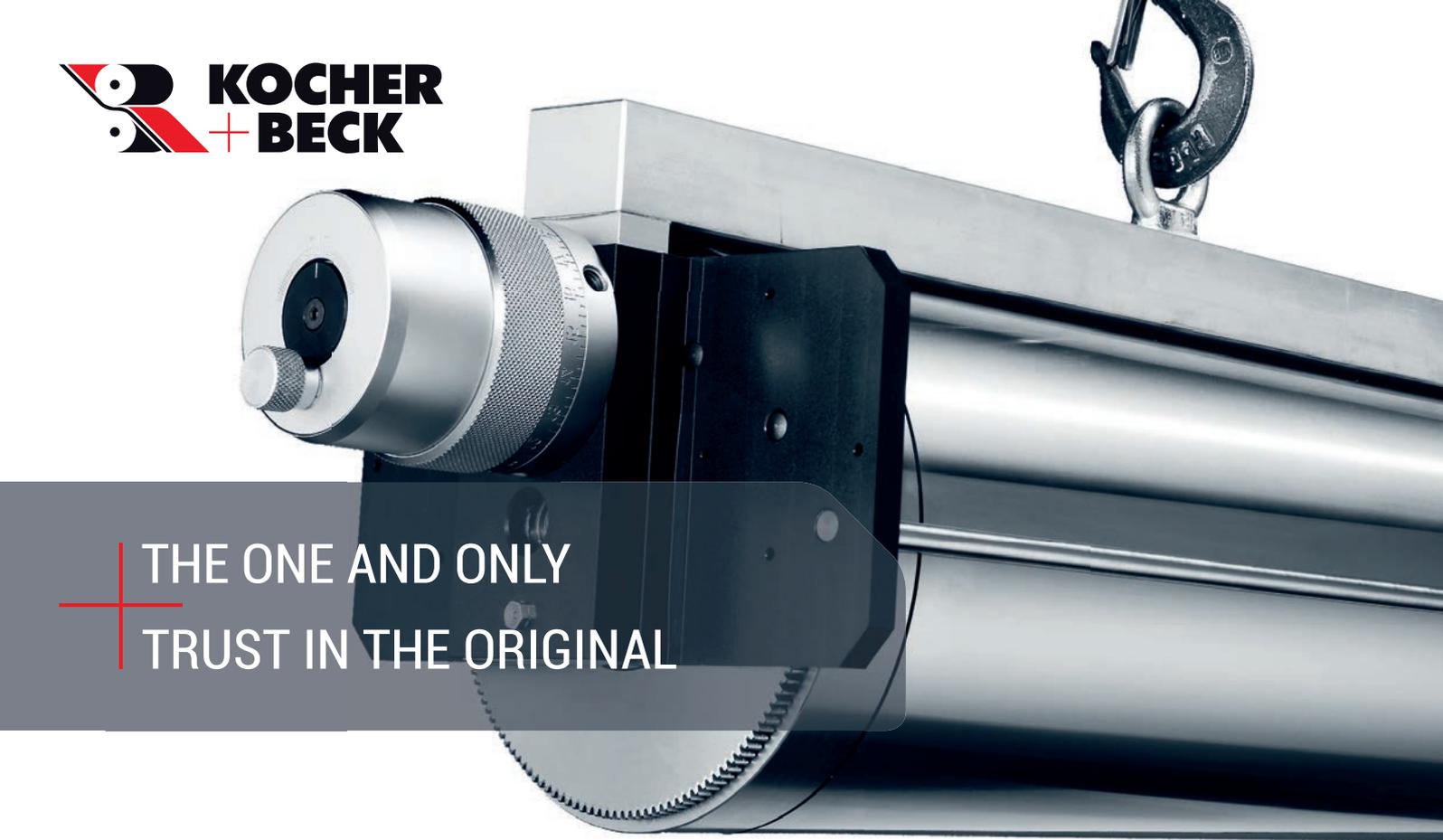
Firstly, as in all periods of intense disruption, new opportunities will open up. Brand protection, for example, is emerging as vitally important as criminal gangs infiltrate supply chains with lethal counterfeit medical equipment. One possible solution has been launched by Avery Dennison. Its Smartrac division has partnered with blockchain start-up Suku to launch a digital verification system to authenticate Covid-19 testing kits and personal protective equipment (PPE). The NFC-powered platform enables instant verification of authenticity and provides end-to-end supply chain transparency.

Secondly, rising e-commerce sales open up new opportunities not only in logistics and track and trace labeling, but also in the development of more engaging transit and protective packaging and of personalized packaging linked to browser-based digital store fronts.

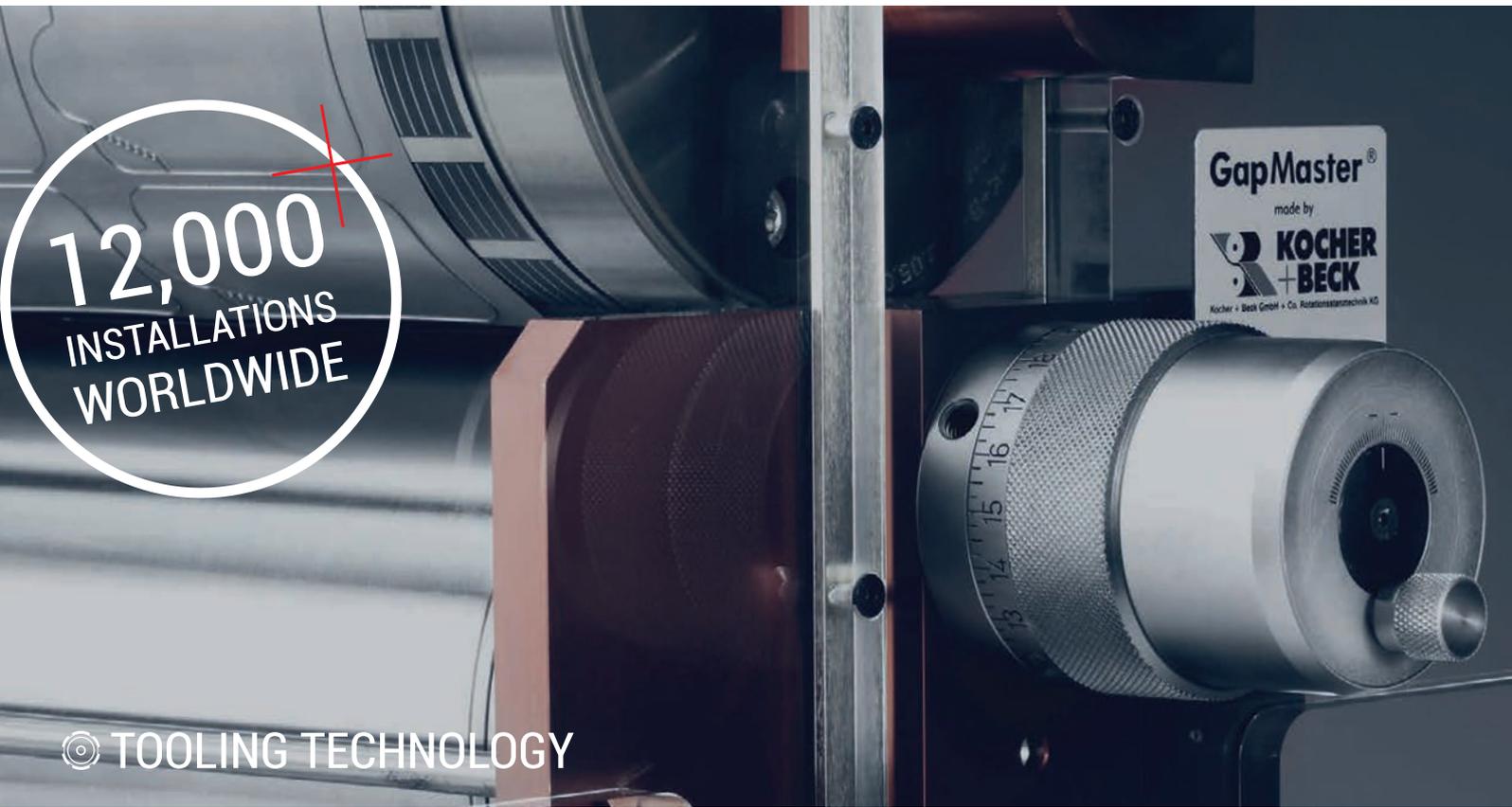
Terrible as the pandemic has been, the label industry should continue to thrive, providing employment for those dependent on it and solutions to a range of emerging end user challenges.



For more from Andy Thomas-Emans, go to [www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/andy-thomas](http://www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/andy-thomas)



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# Branding and design: Delivery is just the beginning



Coronavirus concerns have dramatically increased e-commerce consumption. Branding and design columnist Vicki Strull examines what that means for packaging

In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, e-commerce has become the primary method of shopping. According to an April survey of 8,200 consumers conducted by Prosper Insights and Analytics, 72 percent of consumers defined as 'concerned' have significantly reduced their in-store shopping (compared to 24 percent who said so in March).

It's a trend that began in early March, even before most US states ordered 'shelter-in-place' restrictions. The March data shows e-commerce sales in the US up nearly 40 percent year-over-year, and Rakuten Intelligence reports that digital grocery shopping rose more than 200 percent over a three-day period in mid-March. With such a dramatic shift in shopping – and shipping – packaging has become more critical than ever as an extension of your brand.

**“You might think that once a package arrives at your doorstep, the e-commerce transaction has concluded. On the contrary, delivery is just the beginning of packaging’s potential”**

You might think that once a package arrives at your doorstep, the e-commerce transaction has concluded. On the contrary, delivery is just the beginning of packaging's potential. Yes, an e-commerce package's primary responsibility is to ensure your goods arrive in good shape. In fact, off-line shipping is what makes online shopping even possible. And that's true whether the shipping container is the primary packaging (the product package that we'd see on the retail shelf), or if the shipping container is a secondary or tertiary package. In every instance, the main goal of the shipping container is durability – protecting the product inside.

However, durability isn't memorable. It's not typically part of a brand's 'story'. And when it comes to e-commerce, packaging has the ability to extend a brand's story and create a memorable, enticing customer experience. And not just for that purchase – for repeat purchases, too. Conversely, if packaged poorly, and the product arrives damaged, it has the opposite effect on our experience: we may not order from that brand again.

## The power of packaging on the customer experience

Products that are packaged thoughtfully, with the consumer experience in mind, have the power to make us feel so good about the brand that we assign even more value to the purchase we made. In other words, our brand experience is intrinsic in the packaging.

This is all very subliminal when we're shopping in-store. That's because we're able to touch, feel and assess the product through its packaging (an experience none of us will take for granted again). But when we're shopping online, we assess the product through photographs, descriptions and reviews.

When the product arrives, it must meet our expectations from the moment we lay eyes on it. Does the package match the promise? Does it have the same level of simplicity or luxury or authenticity as the product inside? Does it make us feel confident about the product's quality and the credibility of the company?

From a design perspective, it's important to remember that every piece of packaging, including the shipping container, is an extension of the brand. Color, logo, typography, images, materials – they must all support the product inside the packaging and match the brand's positioning and story.

This cohesion, from the images and messages we see on Instagram to the imagery and headlines on a website to the package we receive at our doorstep, builds brand equity and value. When designed and aligned this way, packaging has the potential to significantly influence our experience, our repeat orders, our reviews, even our return rates.

When we're holding a package in our hands, we're subconsciously asking: How does it feel? How does it look? Does it reflect the quality of the item I purchased? Is it worth the money I spent? And although we've already purchased the product, the e-commerce packaging can impact whether or not we keep the product, return the product, or buy the product again.

And therein lies the power of packaging: does it build brand loyalty, create superfans, or does it become just another forgettable, online transaction?

## Sustainability: reputation, responsibility and revenue

Another feature that is essential to e-commerce packaging is sustainability. More than half of consumers say they would pay more for brands that design sustainable, reusable and/or recyclable products, according to an Accenture survey. That desire extends to a brand's e-commerce packaging, too.

In the past few years, many brands have instituted sustainability



*These shipping boxes leverage the exterior for branding while the inside becomes an explosion of color, surprise and delight*

policies and goals. In addition to protecting the planet, brands do this to encourage and deepen consumer loyalty. Research shows that consumers will choose a brand that is environmentally responsible over one that is not. That's a significant realization: consumers will switch brands, and thereby brands will lose customers if they are not actively participating in protecting the environment.

## **“E-commerce packaging can impact whether or not we keep the product, return the product, or buy the product again”**

When shopping, consumers ask themselves: Is the packaging recyclable or reusable? Is it renewable and responsibly sourced? And especially during this period of high-volume e-commerce, consumers ask: is the size of the package congruent with the size of what's inside? Or is there so much packaging that it feels wasteful? (You may have heard about the backlash from environmentally-conscious consumers regarding delivery meal kits.) For brands, e-commerce packaging is about reputation, responsibility and revenue.

Which brings me to personalization. We know through research and focus groups that every demographic is looking for that personal touch, a VIP exclusive brand experience, or super-targeted relevancy.

According to an Infogroup survey of 1,500 consumers, 44 percent said they would switch to a brand that better personalizes its marketing message. Marketers have seen the results: 88 percent of marketers say they have seen an increase in business from personalization. Personalization is no longer a nice-to-have, it's a must-have. And it's not just about personalizing the product; here again, e-commerce packaging is a powerful point of personalization.

No demographic craves customization more than millennials, who are now stuck at home, on their phones and tablets, e-buying and wanting brands to get to know them, understand them and cater to their preferences.

Fortunately, digital print means package personalization is absolutely practical on web-to-print, in targeted, omni-channel marketing campaigns and for subscription services. Still, it's an opportunity that not many brands are taking advantage of – yet.

For example, if I subscribe to StitchFix or Birch Box or even Amazon's recurring purchases for various goods and sundries, the brand that services my subscription knows they're sending me a package every month (or every week or six weeks – whatever the subscription term). Why not, then, create a box specifically for me, perhaps with an image that relates to previous purchases or an interest I've expressed in some declared data, or even a package with my name on it? Just one simple personalization can vastly improve my unboxing experience. It can influence me to snap a picture, post it on social media, tell my friends, write a review and ultimately drive me to be a loyal fan or a superfan. And all it took was customizing my e-commerce packaging. In that context, the added effort and unit cost is well worth the investment.

Next, consider the opportunity of cross-selling that is inherent in online purchases. The brand already knows what I'm interested in as a purchaser, particularly as a subscription customer. If I'm a subscriber, the brand has ample advance notice that it will be shipping my selected purchase to me. In addition to personalizing the outside of the packaging, why not also personalize the inside? For example, insert samples from other brand products or partners; pack the package with complementary products from sister companies to drive cross-brand awareness; tuck in a personalized note from a brand influencer or company founder. Research shows not only do consumers appreciate this kind of relevant personalization, they have come to expect it.

### **Can a package increase loyalty?**

According to a retail survey by Segment, personalization leads to customer loyalty: 44 percent of consumers surveyed said they would likely make a repeat purchase after a personalized experience. Customer loyalty, in turn, leads to increased revenue: nearly 50 percent of consumers surveyed said they made an impulse buy and/or purchased something more expensive due to a personalized experience. And finally, personalization increases brand value, because when done well, customers feel understood; they feel known, special, exclusive. And first-party data is gold to brands; it enables them to build even more personalized experiences, which in turn drives greater brand affinity and, you guessed it, increased revenue.

Note to remember: done responsibly, consumers believe that the information they've provided to the brand gives them a return of value that negates any concerns about privacy.

As onsite retail shopping plummeted almost overnight due to 'shelter-at-home' orders, thousands of 'unessential' brick-and-mortar retailers were forced to close. The unprecedented shift from in-store purchasing to online shopping is likely to become part of our 'new normal,' even after the pandemic eases.

With many people feeling isolated, anxious or bored, receiving a package is the highlight of their day. Now is the time for brands and their packaging partners to elevate the e-commerce package and deliver an exceptional receiving experience.



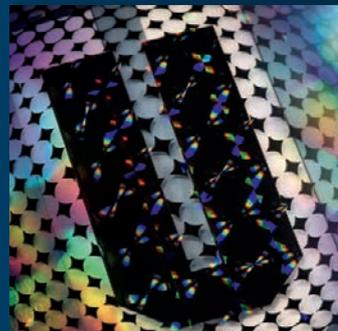
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# How to evaluate an acquisition: Part II

The second in a series of three articles analyzing acquisitions looks at market position, sales organization and customers. By Bob Cronin of The Open Approach

**T**imes of change are times of opportunity. In recent years, the behemoths had an upper hand in executing acquisitions, often overleveraging themselves in doing so. While this was not an issue a few months ago, the global pandemic has virtually eliminated easy-money lending and made managing debt a lot trickier. Now, these larger players are more concerned with trimming down (and surviving) than adding another business to the books. This means less competition – and potentially better deals – for those in a position to purchase.

Still, rosy times or not, there are essentials for evaluating an acquisition. In our first installment on due diligence (in L&L's April-May 2020 issue), we covered ownership structure and financials, which are the foundation for any transaction. If your target matches these preliminary criteria, you can then move to the second set of considerations: market positioning, sales organization, and customers. Examining these areas will help you better discern how a company can blend in with yours.

**Market positioning.** Most label and packaging companies cater to a specific segment – or are most profitable in one. It's important to understand the primary niche. Does the entity focus on healthcare, consumer packaged goods, food and beverage? What types of products does it run in these areas? Certainly, it's good to ensure the acquisition is well positioned in growth markets, but the product types also must be attractive – and remain so amid the changing climate. Segments such as food and beverage, personal care/hygiene, nutrition, cleaning supplies, and logistics are seeing a spike from Covid-19. And products with sustainability or anti-counterfeiting features are also growing. With the global digital color label and packaging market already slated to see a CAGR of 13 percent before the effects of the outbreak, according to a report by Technavio, these segments could be even more lucrative now.

The other aspect of market position is whether the acquisition is a good match for your operations. You'll want to make sure the entities are complementary and that the aggregate equipment and capabilities will help you achieve your strategic vision. Combined companies may not realize

both entities' total revenues because of redundancies. Consider all avenues that can possibly open — and close — with the acquisition. The goal with M&A is  $1+1=3$ . Make sure the deal will get you there.

**Sales organization.** An agile sales organization is an expected. But you'll need to look at three key issues to ensure congruity with your business model. First, what is the go-to-market strategy? Are the target's products sold via catalogs, a direct sales force, print partners, brokers, or a little bit of all of those? It's extremely difficult to change a sales approach without losing customers. Make sure your organization can effectively assume existing activities, at least in the near term.

Second, take a look at territories. Will there be significant (and meaningful) overlap in combining your current business with the target? Namely, will you have multiple top performers in the same areas? Don't fret over 'assigned coverage' in regions where you don't truly have penetration. But make sure you understand exactly which customers may be affected and how any overlap can be handled to ensure you retain them.

**“There is less competition – and potentially better deals – for those in a position to purchase”**

Third, review the sales compensation plans, estimating operations, forecasting history, and close rates. Also find out if the sales representatives have non-competes, and whether they are enforceable in your various geographic areas. Determine the power players at the target acquisition and their formal and informal roles and whether there will be a conflict with your current structure. It's important to be able to manage or adjust the team's expectations.

**Customers.** Customers represent your cash flow and business stability, and should be scrutinized extremely carefully. Securing 5m USD in sales from a single, newer

customer is far different from generating the same dollars across ten clients for years. Contracts are attractive, but they must be able to be transferred during ownership change. Though on paper you are buying a company, you are actually buying its transactions and customers.

There is always some attrition post-acquisition – employees, salespeople, customers, and suppliers. You'll also likely have to make cuts of your own. Make sure either won't be significant or difficult.

Due diligence is an extremely important component of M&A. There are an enormous amount of details and scenarios to sift through. The more you can consider these factors ahead of time, the better off you'll be. Many companies utilize the skills of tenured M&A advisories like The Open Approach to assist them in this. The process of acquiring, and integrating, a business can be extremely challenging. Ask every and any question. Look at issues from many angles. And dig deep. By analyzing all data, you can make a better-informed decision on the impacts of the change of ownership and whether this indeed will be a lucrative acquisition for you.



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

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## Young managers – Matthias Vollherbst

Matthias Vollherbst, managing owner of German converter Vollherbst Labels, discusses the importance of company culture and his involvement in Finat's Young Professionals Network. Interview by Piotr Wnuk



Matthias Vollherbst, managing owner, Vollherbst Labels

I studied business at the University of Mannheim in Germany, but also had a chance to enjoy part of my studies abroad: half a year in each of Spain and Poland. This experience strongly shaped my interest in foreign cultures. After finishing the course, I joined the HayGroup in Frankfurt where I worked as a trainee for a year and a half. This position was important as I wanted to experience being an entry-level employee rather than coming back to my family business straight after finishing university. The skills which I learnt there became important later during my career and helped me in leading people.

Then, seven years ago, my father suggested I join Vollherbst. I felt it was the right time to make this move and I took a sales director position responsible for marketing and sales, which I studied at university.

When I joined the company, I focused on implementing a modern, youthful culture. At that time, we produced great labels and were successful in the market. But I didn't perceive the company as being especially innovative or having a fully open culture. I wanted to see a change and create an environment where we discuss our successes

**“I wanted to see a change and create an environment where we discuss our successes and learn from our mistakes in an open forum”**

and learn from our mistakes in an open forum. This is what we have achieved in the last seven years as we tried to be as open as possible with each other, with a very modern culture.

My main rule is to be totally honest and 100 percent open with staff, clients and suppliers. It filters down to every aspect of the company. When we discuss client projects, the hierarchy is not important – the solution is. It is about the best idea and this approach often leads to results that can set us apart from other businesses.

We are running a customer-centric business. We always try to step into the shoes of our customers and try to help them by understanding their challenges.

Another area where we focus strongly is innovation, as we feel there are several new technologies that can elevate and differentiate brands and help them to create a product which will



Matthias Vollherbst joined the family business seven years ago

stand out on the shop shelves. For instance, three years ago we developed a concept that we called craftLabel, where we brought natural ingredients like soil, ash and slate from vineyards into the label through screen printing and a high build varnish technology. Developing a new concept such as this one is something that really drives me personally.

We have been also working on augmented reality for the past few years. Our pre-press department converts its designs of labels and bottles in 3D, so that clients can see a digital prototype before production. Two years ago we developed our first augmented reality labels for a South African client, a big brand owner from the wine sector. This technology will not suddenly have a million more people buying the product, but it is all about understanding new technologies and understanding the digital space that can elevate the role of labels by adding a third dimension to the user experience.

### Young Professionals Network

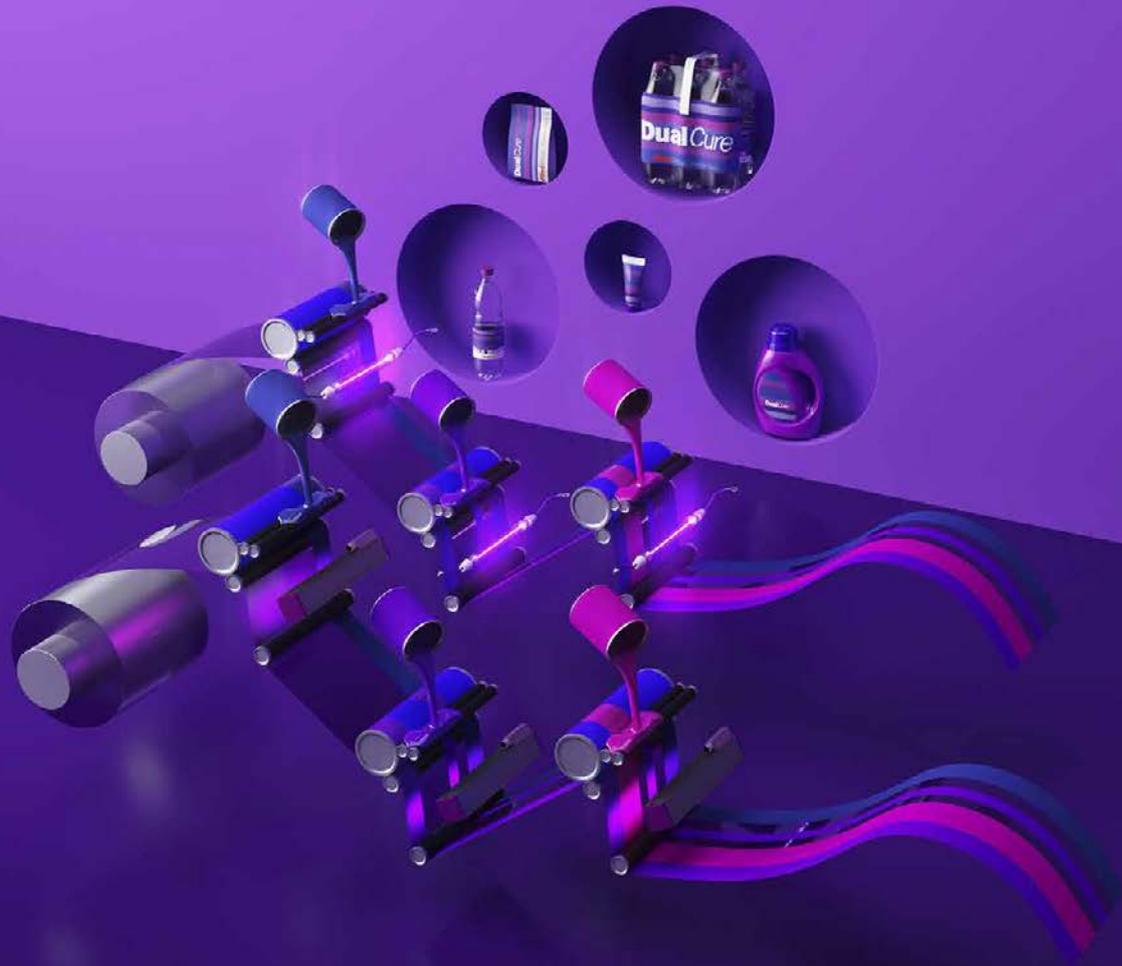
I was interested in building an international network of contacts in the printing area. We were well linked in the German label and printing industry, but not on European or worldwide scale. I heard about Finat's Young Professionals Network (YPN) and decided to join its meeting in Budapest. From the first minute I realized how open YPN is and by the time the meeting in Hungary was over, I had already formed good and close friendships.

Then one of my closest friends in the YPN, Chris Jones, asked me if I would be interested to join the team and to become a member of the board. I immediately said yes. Within the YPN I am responsible for our events, which we really want to push in the future. My role is to take care that these events have interesting content and will lead to interesting results for the industry.

It is so rewarding to be a part of the group. Our main challenge is to reshape the group and to make it a really relevant part of the label industry in Europe. We must develop interesting content and show interesting perspectives that maybe the older generations in the industry don't have. Secondly, we must disrupt and develop the culture of the industry. We love the concept of 'mistake nights' where we all share mistakes that we made, and this helps us to understand how to solve them in the future. I think that this is what an industry network should be about.



For more information about Finat's Young Professionals Network, go to [www.finat.com/about/ypn](http://www.finat.com/about/ypn)



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# Actega Metal Print begins EcoLeaf beta testing

*The innovative metallization technology, which potentially offers zero waste, is beta-tested at German converter Kolbe-Coloco. Piotr Wrnuk reports*

**A**ctega Metal Print, a German division of the Altana Group, is preparing for commercialization of its new EcoLeaf metallization technology, with the start of beta testing at local converter Kolbe-Coloco.

The innovative metallization method was introduced at drupa 2016 by the Israel-based Landa Labs as Nano Metallography – a process designed to produce zero waste at less than half the cost of foil. In February 2017, Actega Metal Print acquired the technology and rebranded it EcoLeaf. Behind glass, it then previewed beverage label samples at Labelexpo Europe 2019.

Actega Metal Print, founded specifically to accelerate this project, is a start-up style company with an entrepreneurial spirit at its core. It currently employs 25 full time staff with an additional 25 contributing to the project – this also includes Benny Landa, chairman and CEO of Landa Labs.

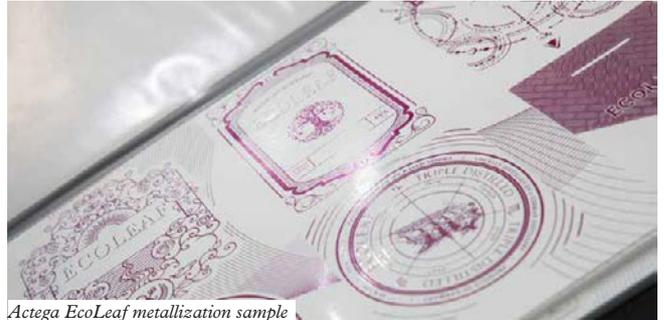
The process uses a printed trigger image before passing into the application unit, where a silicone-coated donor roll carries the fine flakes of metal pigment from a reservoir to the concealed image. Only those flakes that are in contact with the trigger image are used, the remainder return to the reservoir for future rotations. The silver metal particles are ultra-thin and, combined with the trigger image, can offer very high-resolution coverage.

After the metallic effect is applied and cured using a conventional UV lamp, the silver image can be overprinted to create any color or effect required. Potentially, this characteristic opens up new opportunities for metallic effects that have previously not been possible.

'We can approach markets and applications where it has not previously made sense to apply foils,' says Jan Franz Allerkamp, managing director of Actega Metal Print. As the foil is nonconductive it is safe to use in microwave ovens, which means that the packaging can be used for in-mold labels and even food packaging.

For the last two years, the company has been testing different methods of laying down the trigger image at its labs, using an Omet X6, Gallus Labelmaster and ABG Digicon Series 3.

'The wide range of technologies available to lay down the trigger image opens several options for our customers. Flexo will be best to achieve higher speeds and resolution, screen printing will produce a more tactile effect and inkjet will allow the use of variable data,' adds Dario Urbinati, chief sales and marketing officer at Actega Metal Print.



*Actega EcoLeaf metallization sample*

**“We can approach markets and applications where it has not previously made sense to apply foils”**

#### **'Massive step forward'**

The company is now ready to move forward with its commercialization plan. The first beta site to take part in the project is Kolbe-Coloco, a German converter based in Versmold near Bielefeld.

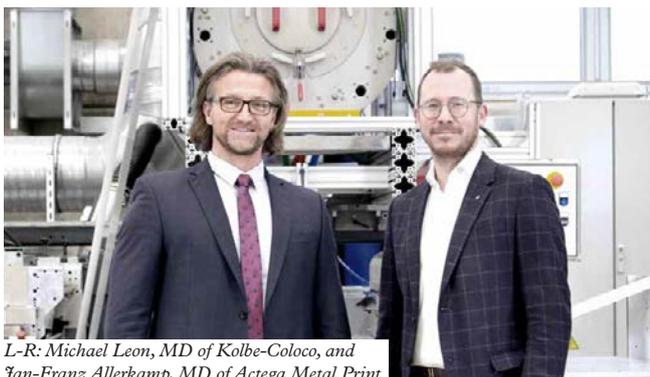
'We are frequently asked by our customers about sustainability; therefore, we are very excited to trial the EcoLeaf technology at our plant in Versmold. It is a massive step forward in minimizing waste, but also has enormous potential when it comes to the cost saving aspects of our production,' says Michael Leon, managing director of Kolbe-Coloco.

'Our business is focused on print services that create a greater connection between a brand and the consumer, to ultimately aid sales. We do that by employing some of the best print technologies on the market, and EcoLeaf is a perfect example of this.

'Eradicating foil is a huge and incredibly important milestone in our industry, and this technology looks poised to support that. For this reason, we have no doubt that our customers will embrace EcoLeaf with open arms, but we also know that they will love the opportunity to add cost effective and amazing metallization to their jobs too – this solution has the potential to be a serious game changer.'

'In Kolbe-Coloco we've found a likeminded and very innovation-driven business,' says Allerkamp. 'One that operates an automated, clean and very professional environment, but a company that has already proved itself to be a real change-maker. We look forward to working closely with them over the coming weeks and months, and to seeing EcoLeaf's positive impact on their business.'

Actega Metal Print will now focus on its second stage of research – expanding the technology to different platforms and applications including flexible packaging, film substrates and cartons. It will also test many combinations of material and inks that might be required by the market.



*L-R: Michael Leon, MD of Kolbe-Coloco, and Jan-Franz Allerkamp, MD of Actega Metal Print*



Read more about methods to decorate products in the *Product Decoration Technologies* book from the *Label Academy* series. [www.label-academy.com](http://www.label-academy.com)

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# Semi-rotary offset success for Zonten Europe

*Founded last year, Zonten Europe – backed by experienced founders and a burgeoning network of distributors – is seeing strong interest in its semi-rotary offset press. James Quirk reports*

**Z**onten Europe is seeing success since its inauguration last year with its semi-rotary offset press, as the technology continues to carve out an important niche within the label market.

The Sant Quirze del Vallés, Barcelona-headquartered company has installed more than 20 Zonten Multiprint ZTJ 330/520 presses since celebrating the official opening of its offices and demo center – attended by around 200 people – in April 2019. It has also appointed a raft of agents across Europe as well as setting up a local office in Buenos Aires.

**“At Labelexpo Europe 2019, we demonstrated that within just seven minutes you can set up the press and be printing at 60m/min”**

The company is the brainchild of Jordi Quera and Eduardo Sá, who each boast more than 30 years’ experience in the label sector. Quera worked for Kodak in the 1990s before spending 14 years with Esko and three with Rotatek – where semi-rotary offset presses were part of the portfolio. He has been president of Spanish association Graphispac for the last seven years. Sa is CEO and founder of Spanish company Esagraf, a distributor for many leading international suppliers including Nilpeter, Prati and Pantec, and which is also serving as Zonten Europe’s distributor for Spain and Portugal.

‘We saw there was a niche in the market for semi-rotary offset technology, which can compete with digital for short runs because of its quality, flexibility and fast changeovers,’ says Quera. A tour of press manufacturers in Asia led them to Zonten, which has more than 15,000 installations of its equipment worldwide, including 500 of its semi-rotary offset press.

Zonten Europe, an independent company rather than a subsidiary, now has exclusive rights to the Zonten’s semi-rotary offset press in Europe and Latin America. ‘We have improved the product and made it more competitive for the European market,’ explains Quera. ‘The version of the machine available through Zonten Europe is more advanced – featuring for example hot stamping, screen printing and semi-rotary die-cutting. The press is more complete. And, crucially, we offer high-level technical support.’

## *Zonten Europe spreads wings*

Zonten Europe opened an office in Buenos Aires, Argentina, last year, headed by Osvaldo Balzano and offering local training and technical support. Balzano has more than 25 years’ experience in the label sector, having worked previously for Nilpeter and MPS. ‘We believe there is lots of potential for semi-rotary offset in Latin America, particularly in the big wine label markets of Argentina and Chile,’ says Jordi Quera.



*Jordi Quera is vice president of sales and marketing for Zonten Europe*

The Zonten Multiprint ZTJ 330/520 has an automatic pre-registration system with tension control, a web width of 330mm or 520mm, independent servo-driven offset units and semi-automatic plate changing that reduces changeover times. The presses are manufactured in China, where there is a dedicated area of Zonten’s factory which builds the presses destined for Zonten Europe’s customers in Europe and Latin America. A Zonten Europe technician is on hand to ensure the machines meet European CE certification requirements.

The presses have been selling quickly, with customers already in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Austria and Mexico. Among them is Gráficas Varias, a leading Spanish converter which recently celebrated its 100th anniversary. Meanwhile, Zonten Europe has been building its team in Spain and appointing agents throughout Europe. ‘We have agents covering Spain, Portugal, Italy, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Benelux, Scandinavia. We can cover everywhere except the Balkans,’ says Quera. ‘Each agent can offer local technical support and service.’

## **Seven-minute changeover**

Zonten Europe exhibited at Labelexpo Europe last year and had ‘a great show’, according to Quera. ‘We received a lot of leads, many which have been converted into sales. At the event, we demonstrated that within just seven minutes you can set up the press – removing the old plates and adding new ones, adjusting the settings – and be printing at 60m/min. Visitors were able to compare the color matching of the same job printed earlier, and could see it was exactly the same.’

The press has a basic configuration of five semi-rotary offset units, one flexo unit for varnish, and one semi-rotary die-cutting unit. But the machine is highly flexible, and can be customized according to the customer’s needs to incorporate more printing units and in-line options such as screen printing, hot stamping, embossing, cold foil, relam/delam and more. ‘Wine label converters tend to opt for the complete configuration,’ reports Quera, ‘but the basic version is also popular because it is cost-effective, allows you to run many different materials, and can achieve high speeds and fast changeovers.’

‘Offset has the highest quality of all the print processes. And semi-rotary offset has found a niche within the market, competing with digital for short runs for a lower investment.’



Go to [www.zonten-europe.com](http://www.zonten-europe.com) for more information



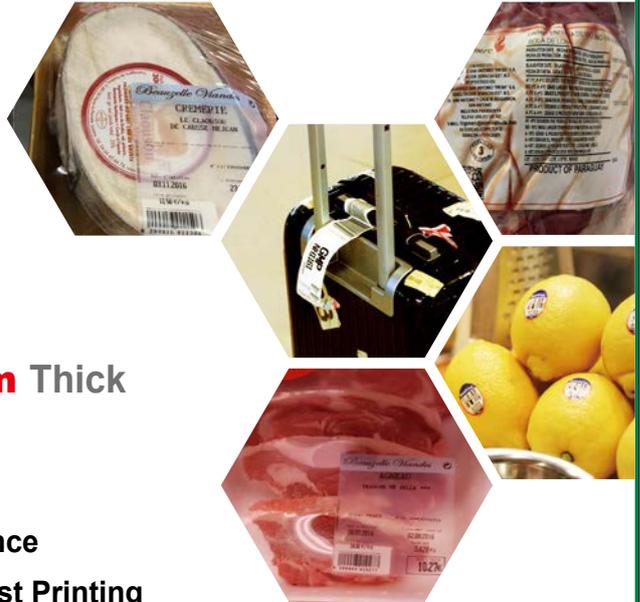
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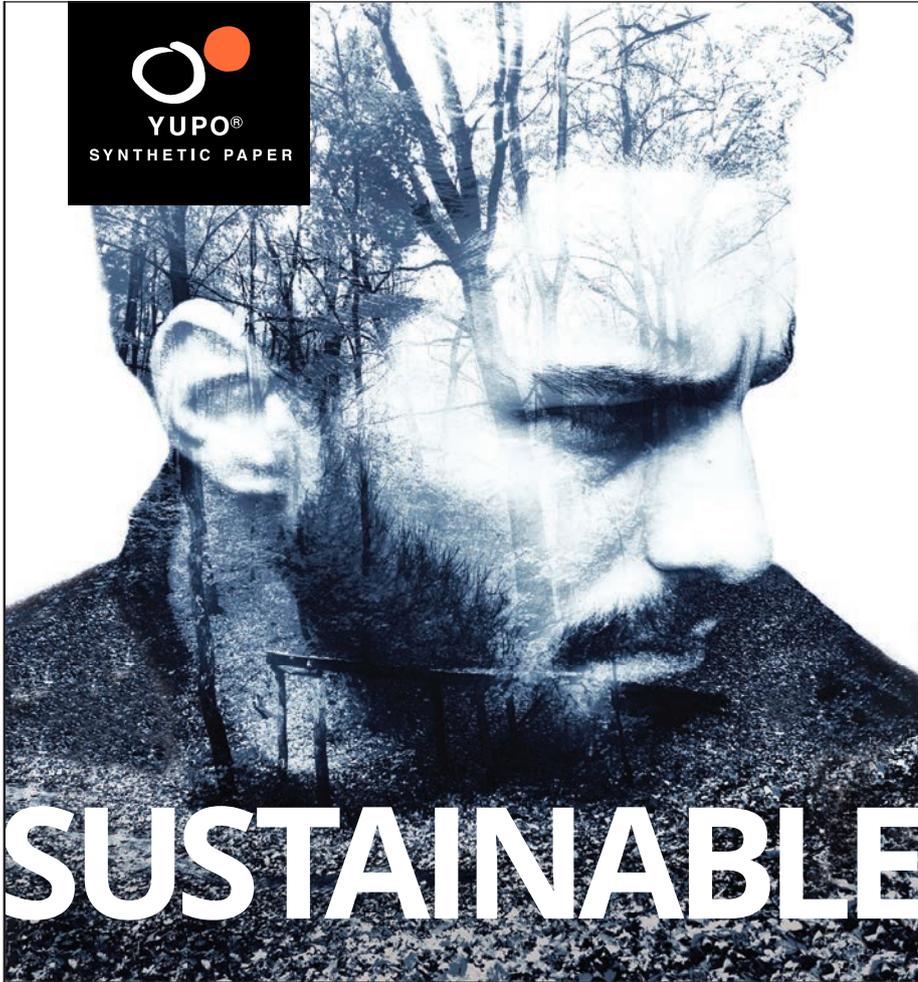
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# Grafical's wine labels boosted by Cartes

The installation of a Cartes GT360 line two years ago has allowed Italian converter Grafical to offer more added value options to its wine label customers. James Quirk reports

**F**actories are not often set amid such bucolic beauty. Based just outside Verona in northern Italy, Grafical's facility is surrounded by vineyards on three sides. There are some 250 in the local area. Many of them are the converter's clients.

The company was founded in 1984 by Andrea Lonardi as a sheet-fed offset printer of business cards and labels, and moved to its current facility in 1998. Twenty percent of production remains sheet-fed today. A 6-color Heidelberg Speedmaster with in-line cold foil and a Komori Lithrone G40 have recently been joined by a HP Indigo 7900 digital sheet-fed press. They produce posters, flyers, brochures and business cards, cartons for cosmetics and coffee capsules, as well as wet-glue wine labels. Finishing takes place on foiling, stamping and die-cutting machines from Heidelberg, and folding equipment from Stahl.

Self-adhesive label production began in 2002, and now represents 80 percent of the business. Ninety percent of self-adhesive label production is dedicated to wine labels. 'Around the year 2000, vineyards were beginning to transition to self-adhesive labels from wet-glue,' says Sebastiano Lonardi, Andrea's son and manager of the business, who joined the family company just over 10 years ago. Responding to the trend, Grafical moved into roll-to-roll with the installation of two Gallus TCS 250 presses, equipped with five offset units, semi-rotary hot foil, flexo varnish, screen and die-cutting.

These were followed by an HP Indigo digital press – the company now runs two HP Indigo 6800s – and Nilpeter MO4 offset presses installed in 2012 and 2014. The latter machines feature five offset units, a Pantec Rhino hot foil system, and flexo and screen units.

A wide array of finishing equipment includes two AB Graphic Digicon Series 2 and a Digicon Series 3; a Smag Galaxie flatbed screen, die-cutting and varnishing system; two Prati Saturn slitter rewinders with BST eltomat inspection systems; overprinting systems from Cartes and Berra; a Cartes laser die-cutting system; and Lundberg waste stripping units. Production is completed by pre-press equipment from Kodak and SPGPrints, and a Cerm MIS integrated with Esko software. An ink lab features IGT Testing Systems equipment and Vale Tech ink dispensing systems.

## Added value finishing

In the last five years, Grafical has invested heavily in new technology, including upgrades to the HP Indigo and Gallus presses; adding Martin Automatic non-stop unwind/rewind units to both Nilpeter presses; the AB Graphic systems, and – two years ago – in



L-R: Tim Gordon, L&L; Luca Goldoni, Cartes; Sebastiano Lonardi, Grafical; Ivan Spina, Cartes; and Enrica Lodi, Cartes, in front of the Cartes GT360

**“Design agencies are always looking for new tools, and the Cartes GT360 machine can provide all these advanced finishing options”**

a Cartes GT360 line equipped with four silkscreen units, two hot stamping units, varnishing, and semi-rotary die-cutting.

'Grafical's relationship with Cartes began more than ten years ago. We tested multiple machines but the Cartes GT360 offers great consistency and flexibility, with multiple configurations possible,' says Sebastiano Lonardi. 'It is equipped with four screen printing units, which is a big advantage. We use it more for printing than finishing – its register is absolutely perfect.'

According to Lonardi, there is increasing desire from Grafical's vineyard customers for added value finishing options. 'Varnish is now a must,' he reports. 'Customers require more added value finishing such as screen, varnishing and embossing. Thanks to the Cartes machine, we can offer glitter effects through screen inks; metal doming, created by overprinting foil on top of screen; and multi-layer labels – not booklet, but to provide extra thickness and the impression of quality. Design agencies are always looking for new tools, and the Cartes GT360 machine can provide all these advanced finishing options.'

For high quality wine labels, materials also play a key role. Grafical sources some 65 percent of its substrates from Avery Dennison. Arconvert and UPM Raflatac are also key suppliers, while smaller amounts come from Ritrama and Italnastri. Foils are bought from a local distributor which represents manufacturers in Japan, as well as API Foils and Foilco in the UK.

The majority of Grafical's clients are local vineyards, though 3 percent of production is exported, mainly to a Danish customer. Eighty staff run two shifts, down from three thanks to increased efficiency following the raft of investments in new equipment.



Wine labels printed by Grafical



Read about another Italian wine label converter – Labelit – in the next issue of L&L



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Vellamo's bottle is designed to look like a block of ice, reflecting the blue hue of the glacier

## Environment as a stakeholder

*Vellamo, a new mineral water brand from Finland which uses materials from UPM Raflatac, shows how environmental responsibility can be organically woven into a product and corporate culture. Piotr Wnuk reports*

Insights from several companies specializing in market research such as Accenture and McKinsey show that more than half of consumers globally will pay more for a sustainable product, and sustainably marketed products are growing more than five times faster than conventionally marketed products, says Vicki Strull, L&L's branding and sustainability columnist.

A Finnish company, Ice Age Water, seems to be doing just that, by selling its unique natural mineral water from the last Ice Age under Vellamo brand (pronounced 'vel-emo', its name originates from the goddess spirit of water in Finnish mythology). The brand is all about nature and sustainability, from origin to design and packaging.

### Building the brand

'Vellamo is one of Mother Nature's perfect creations,' says Petteri Ahonen, CEO of Ice Age Water. 'We have taken great measures to ensure its unique taste, purity, and sustainability for the health of our customers and planet by achieving a neutral carbon footprint across production, packaging and logistics.'

'At the beginning of the design process, I laid out a substantial amount of information in front of myself and the co-designer, Aki Vänni,' says Markus Heinonen, Vellamo's marketing manager. 'The first thing was to find key points important for the brand. One of them, and also a differential factor, was the minerality. Vellamo water draws its minerals from deep under the Finnish ground, where it makes its journey through a 30km long underground canyon. The objective was to translate that journey and the canyon into the Vellamo bottle design. Therefore we decided to shape it as block of ice, choosing a blue translucent reflecting hue visible on glaciers as a statement of its purity. When the bottle is placed face down on its side, you can find the canyon. On top of that, with a little bit of imagination, you can find a goddess-like figure in the flowing water.'

'The whole design is meant to honor this rare water originating from the last Ice Age, which was another key point of the design and an important factor for the brand development. We knew that

we have something unique in our hands and we tried to treat the brand the way it deserved to be treated, with respect. After the bottle design was finalized, we passed it on to our 3D artist, Sami Fiander, who brought our ideas to life. The brand development journey has been a long but very rewarding process.'

Since the launch in 2017, Vellamo has received international recognition for its taste and design, including the German Design Award 2020, Red Dot Design Award 2019, Fine Waters Design Award 2019 Gold, and 2019 InnoBev Taste Award. Moreover, a Global Water Study by Unesco and World Water Council has ranked Finland's ground water as Cleanest and Purest Drinking Water.

### Finding sustainable partners

Like the water from 10,000 years ago, completely pure and unique in taste with perfectly balanced minerals and containing no environmental pollution, the label needed to fit with the brand

**"Vellamo only partners with companies that have industry leading sustainability programs, which we also openly share with our customers"**

story. So the Vellamo team moved on to researching and selecting products available on the market from companies for which sustainability is equally important.

'Vellamo only partners with companies that have industry-leading sustainability programs, which we also openly share with our customers,' adds Petteri Ahonen. 'We actively seek new



Personal care products using UPM Raflatac Forest Film

technologies that can further improve our carbon footprint. We found that the Forest Film developed by UPM Raflatac was one-of-a-kind and represented the perfect match to our core values.'

'We are labeling a smarter future beyond fossils,' comments Daryl Northcott, director of the film business at UPM Raflatac Americas. 'In practice, this means we aim to replace non-renewable materials with renewable and recyclable alternatives. Forest Film is this "beyond fossils" message brought to life. As the world's first polypropylene film label material derived entirely from wood-based sources based on mass balance approach, Forest Film answers customers' and brand owners' needs for using renewable instead of fossil-based raw materials.'

Forest Film was developed in close collaboration with UPM Raflatac's sister company, UPM Biofuels. 'After a number of discussions with them, we saw the opportunity to create a product that the pressure-sensitive labeling industry has never before seen,' says Northcott.

UPM Biofuels converts pulp production residue from sustainably managed forests into renewable naphtha, a drop-in raw material for the chemical industry. This product, called UPM BioVerno, is then sent to a resin supplier and a film supplier to convert it into the filmic face material. Then the company coats it and pairs with the liner material to create Forest Film.

Forest Film is an International Sustainability and Carbon Certification (ISCC) Plus-certified product. ISCC Plus certified plastic film is produced by using sustainable resources to replace an equivalent amount of fossil resources in the production process (known as a mass balance approach).

'The performance of Forest Film and traditional plastic films is identical. As a drop-in alternative to fossil-based polypropylene film label materials, Forest Film offers companies an efficient and impactful way to reach beyond their sustainability goals without compromising on quality, design or product performance. It is available in both clear and white films, it is suited for a variety of end-uses, including home and personal care, food, and, of course, beverage as you see with our collaboration with Vellamo,' says Northcott.

#### Interactive reassurance

Vellamo is an ambitious brand, with a goal to be the world's most sustainable bottled water company by reducing the CO<sub>2</sub> generated within the lifecycle of the product and processes to zero. All manufacturing and sub-supply chain is integrated into the full

## "Being environmentally responsible is also profitable – the two are not mutually exclusive"

sustainability process, including bottling operations, which uses only renewable energy including solar and geothermal technology.

'By the second quarter of 2020, Vellamo will be one of the only water companies announcing their real-time carbon footprint live via its website. Our new production facility is powered by geothermal and solar energy to reach carbon neutrality and we only partner with companies that have industry leading sustainability programs,' says Petteri Ahonen commenting on the company's extensive sustainability program.

As a part of its sustainability transparency the brand has decided to add RafMore technology, also developed by UPM Raflatac, to its packaging. 'RafMore is UPM Raflatac's innovative, smart label solution that gives individual product unique digital identities and connects them to the web,' comments Daryl Northcott. 'Users scan the packaging in the retail or home setting with a mobile device, and the smart label links them with engaging and relevant information.'

In the case of Vellamo, users scan the label – unique to every bottle – and access real-time product lifecycle and carbon footprint data. This allows them to learn the sustainability story of the label material on the water bottle in their hands.

#### Sustainability and profitability

'As consumers have demanded from brands more corporate responsibility for the environment, brands have answered those demands with policies and designs that reduce waste, plastic and their carbon footprint,' comments Vicki Strull. 'Whereas today's level of social consciousness for the environment may be new for many established brands, smaller brands and start-ups don't carry that legacy. Instead, many are founded on the concept of "doing well by doing good".'

'That's very compelling evidence for a new brand to start with the environment as a stakeholder. This data also satisfies investors and sales growth objectives. In other words, being environmentally responsible is also profitable – the two are not mutually exclusive.'

According to Vicki Strull, instead of retrofitting a manufacturing process that has already damaged the environment, new companies can make intentional choices with their carbon footprint in mind. While large, established brands are leading the way for mitigation and change, smaller brands, which are not encumbered by that legacy, are entering the market with a social conscience as part of their platform and stealing market share along the way.

'Any new company entering the market is certainly aware of the research and response we have for brands that have sustainability as an integral part of their core culture. And because today's consumers can sniff out inauthenticity, and are quick to share it on social media, I believe it is difficult for start-up brands to fake their commitment to Planet Earth,' concludes Vicki Strull.

Indeed, the sustainable road might be a difficult one for many new brands and companies rethinking their approach to the environment. But smaller brands entering the market, such as Vellamo, have the benefit of building a new product where environmental responsibility can be woven into its concept, its manufacturing process, its marketing, its design. More importantly, it becomes an organic part of the corporate culture.



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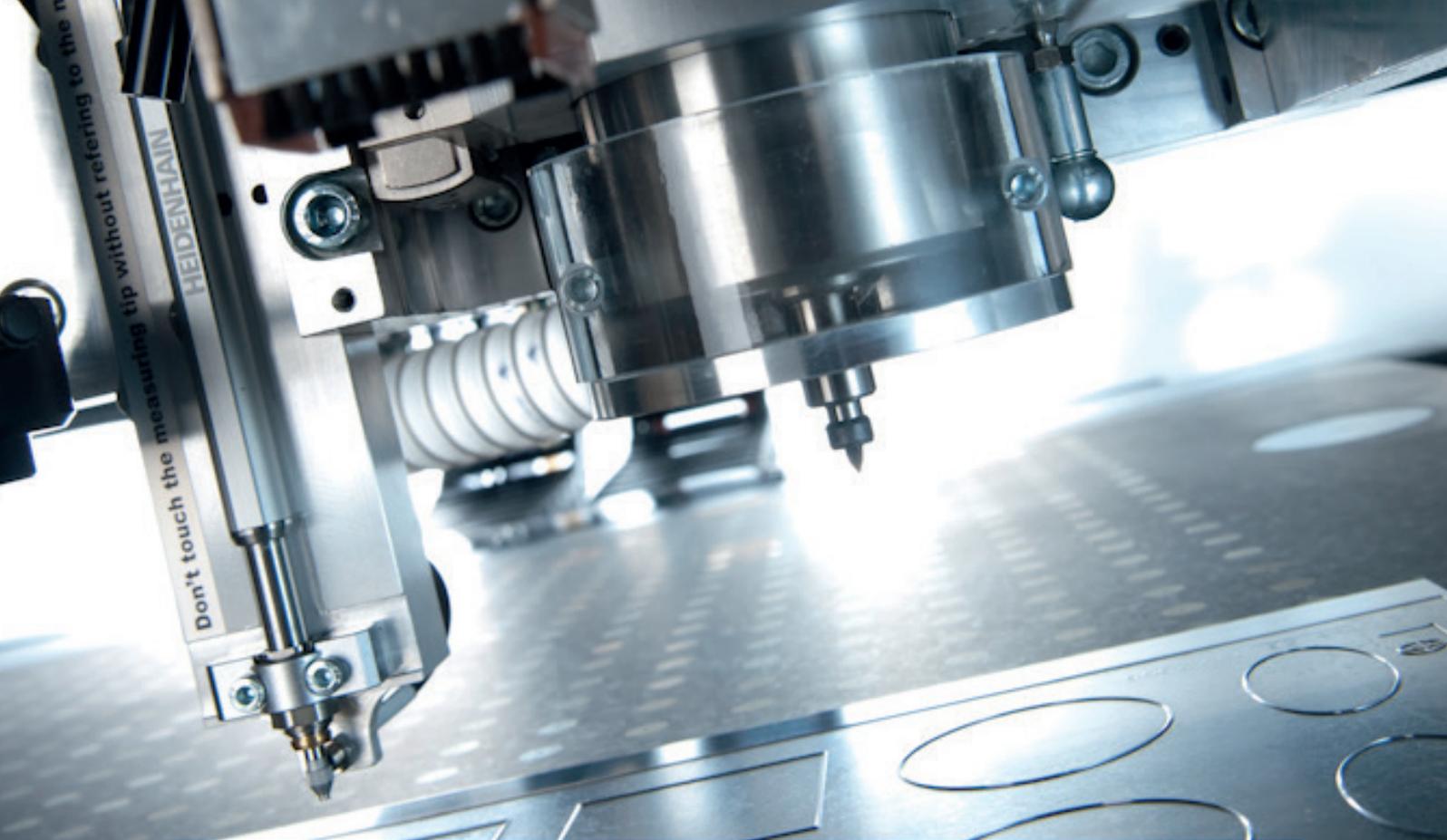
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# Legal cannabis market matures

*The legal cannabis market in presenting challenges and opportunities for label and packaging suppliers. Chelsea McDougall reports*

A few years ago this magazine reported on the legal cannabis market as a new packaging opportunity that had popped up practically overnight.

The value of the legal cannabis market was growing faster than dot-com boom in the early 2000s, we reported; a time that was marked by more US states eyeing legalization and Canada on the cusp of country-wide rollout.

What seemed just two years ago to be a new cash cow for the packaging industry is today facing supply chain issues, a muddy regulatory environment and a still-thriving black market, and is proving to be a market that needs careful consideration before entering. All that being said, bright spots exist in the market as it matures.

## Market value

Globally, the legal cannabis market is expected to reach 73.6bn USD by 2027, with the US making up more than 85 percent of that, according to Grandview Research. More US states in 2019 moved toward a governmental regulated medical and recreational marketplace, and the Farm Bill, a piece of US legislation, paved the way for CBD products to be sold in retail stores across the country. (CBD is a non-psychoactive compound that doesn't produce the same 'high' associated with THC, which is found in cannabis plants.)

In the US, 38 states and Washington, DC, allow some form of legalized cannabis,

## “Whether the US will move towards full legalization is the million-dollar question”

but it's still illegal federally and listed as a Schedule 1 drug (alongside heroin, acid and LSD), meaning it's prohibited in states without cannabis laws on the books.

Ron Basak-Smith is CEO and co-owner of Colorado-based Sana Packaging, a company that has developed cannabis packaging such as tubes, containers and jars, that are made from 100 percent plant-based hemp plastic, reclaimed ocean plastic and other materials.

The sustainability message at Sana Packaging plays well in appealing to a consumer base that tends to be more sustainability minded.

“When we started Sana Packaging, we thought this industry must have a better way to package these products,” Basak-Smith says. “We really believe that single-use packaging is the biggest issue facing this industry. We believe the world of cannabis is moving towards developing business models that meet the needs of the future: more local, regional manufacturing systems and a circular economy.”

Basak-Smith, who has worked in the cannabis industry since 2017, describes the market using the analogy of human development: “Cannabis a couple years was in the very early stages. It was a baby, and no one really knew what the baby would be like, or if it would even survive. A lot of care

was needed, and there was a lot of learning going on,” he says. “Right now, the cannabis industry is coming into its teens, and that's a very disruptive time. There was a growth spurt that occurred a little early, and in some ways the market didn't mature fast enough. It's kind of like a kid that's too big for its body.”

“A lot of money came in to play with the hopes that federal legalization would come quickly, or that these companies could go and establish in legal markets,” Basak-Smith continues. “The thing that is most critical to remember is that each state is operating like its own country. So, if I have a business, and I'm going to go out and do 39 different countries, many people would say that's a very bad business plan.”

## Regulatory landscape

In the US, the path to profitability in the legal cannabis market isn't always a straight line. Without federal standards for labels, packaging and distribution, each US state decides its own rules, making it difficult to operate cannabis businesses across state lines. That's coupled with expensive licensing and high taxes on cannabis companies, meaning they are operating on razor-thin margins while trying to navigate complex or evolving regulations.



Acucote has added more label materials to its cannabis portfolio

### Acucote expands cannabis label portfolio

Acucote has added more label materials to its cannabis portfolio, including a new environmentally-friendly facestock made of hemp and post-consumer wood.

'Increasing legalization of cannabis for medical as well as adult-use is fueling an outstanding growth curve in this market,' said Melissa Harton, marketing manager at Acucote. 'We created a portfolio of stocked cannabis facestocks, adhesives and liners so that our customers can quickly and easily meet the needs of dispensaries and attract consumer attention.'

The portfolio features a new environmentally friendly facestock, 60# hemp paper made from 25 percent hemp and 75 percent post-consumer wood in addition to clear and white gloss films, prime papers, foil and silver metalized paper. Acucote also offers tamper-evident materials, material for plant lifecycle labels and digitally top coated materials.

Seven different adhesives are also included, including P2000 (durable rubber resin for plant life cycle), P50 (durable acrylic for plant life cycle), CP1 (environmental rubber resin with biodegradable components), SX780 (tackified acrylic for tamper-evident applications), GPX (general purpose permanent acrylic), GPX Blockout (black opaque permanent acrylic) and 31PB (tackified acrylic for tight mandrel applications).

Many state laws regarding packaging are vague, so the label and packaging supplier who can navigate the landscape is more likely to be successful.

Jim Andrasic is the former owner of American Pouch Converters, and after rolling his company into the Advanced Converting Works, he is now director of child-resistant packaging for ACW's global operations. ACW is a supplier of pouches to many of the top cannabis brands. American Pouch Converters was the first US company to provide a child resistant pouch to the cannabis industry.

Andrasic not only knows packaging, he knows the cannabis market. Advanced Converting Works averages about 5 to 10 million cannabis pouches a month. 'There are over 38 markets in which we [packaging suppliers] have to operate in and each one of those markets can have its own set of regulations and compliance mandates,' he says. 'This makes it not only difficult for us to navigate, but even more so for the cannabis brand. That is why cannabis brands rely on companies like American Pouch Converters.'

'For the most part, cannabis brands do not have packaging engineers on staff, nor do they want to at this point,' he continues. 'For first-time customers or new brands, I tell them to start planning their packaging with us when the first seed or clone goes into the soil. Existing customers usually see a turnaround in two to four weeks.'

Further complicating the bottom line, the legal cannabis market

**“A lot of companies are assessing the market. There is a lot of uncertainty, but there is also a lot of opportunity ahead”**

is heavily taxed as many states look at cannabis to salvage their budgets. A key driver for proponents of legalization is the additional tax base the drug could bring in. Illinois, for example, which opened the legal market in January, brought in 10.4m USD in tax revenue in the first two months of 2020, according to news reports.

That also means legal cannabis tends to be more expensive, so the black market is still alive and well.

The US market is markedly different than in its Canadian neighbor, which rolled out country-wide legalization in 2018. In Canada, cannabis is heavily regulated across the board, and packaging is no exception. There are limitations on nearly every aspect of cannabis 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. Supply chain issues emerged early on. It's estimated that Canada's cannabis tax revenues were 66m USD in 2019.

### Bright spots

In the US, proponents of legalization say it will add billions of dollars to the economy, create jobs and free up public resources from marijuana enforcement.

There is still significant money coming in from cannabis investors in the hope that federal legalization is on the horizon. The label and packaging supply chain is watching closely.

Thermal transfer ribbon supplier Armor is preparing for such a scenario. The company has a full range of ribbons for the cannabis industry, from short shelf-life labels to high durability products. Its APX FH+ in particular is a ribbon that many players use, from seeds to sales. 'Because this industry is so fresh, the opportunities are seemingly endless,' says Armor's communications specialist Jensen Harris. 'This market continues to grow and it's not stopping anytime soon. The label supplying industry will ramp up its ability to produce results that meet all the standards that are put in place. The variety of applications within the cannabis industry, from growing to resell, is huge, with multiple needs requiring various label types.'

'This industry as a whole combines labeling needs currently seen in the horticulture, pharmaceutical, cosmetics and retail industries,' he continues. 'States and nations that allow the growing and sales of cannabis and derivative products are imposing strict regulations, and even though these regulations create hurdles and lack uniformity, they can be followed correctly, creating thriving opportunities for the labeling players.'

Whether the US will move towards full legalization is the million-dollar question. It is an election year and US president Donald Trump has signaled he prefers letting the states decide, while presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden supports federal legalization.

'A lot of companies are assessing the market over the past three years and looking at the future path to success and profitability,' Andrasic says. 'There is a lot of uncertainty, but there is also a lot of opportunity ahead.'



To read previous L&L articles on the cannabis market, visit [link.labelsandlabeling.com/abu9](http://link.labelsandlabeling.com/abu9) and [link.labelsandlabeling.com/men](http://link.labelsandlabeling.com/men)

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Employees at Metalcraft in Mason City, Iowa, work to assemble critical PPE

# US label industry emerges as ‘helpers’

*Converters and suppliers alike are joining forces to help with the Covid-19 response efforts. Chelsea McDougall reports*

**F**red Rogers, the beloved host of American children’s show TV ‘Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood’, has a now-famous quote for soothing children frightened by world events.

‘When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news,’ Rogers told his neighbors, ‘my mother would say to me, “Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.”’

Rogers’ quote resonates today as the printing community emerges as ‘helpers’ as the deadly coronavirus grinds much of the world to a halt.

## At capacity

In the US, label converters are mobilizing to deliver printed products that are in high demand during the Covid-19 health crisis. Hammer Packaging, the New York-based label converter, reported a new production milestone.

‘Not one thousand. Not one million. We shipped one billion labels in the last two weeks,’ Hammer Packaging revealed on LinkedIn. ‘That’s almost one billion products ready to replenish the shelves. Sanitizer labels, food labels, cleaning product labels, we’re firing on all press cylinders to make sure customers can keep products on the shelves.’

Nosco of Gurnee, Illinois, supplies folding cartons, labels and flexible packaging focused heavily on pharmaceutical and healthcare, is using multiple HP Indigo digital label presses 24/7 to produce packaging testing kits, drug products, syringes for hospitals, face masks, and hand sanitizer. The company says millions of labels have already been produced and production will continue to support the needs of the pharma and healthcare market.

Likewise, Custom Label of California is a supplier with designated ‘essential business’ status producing products for healthcare, food and more. As a result of a spike in orders, HP has shipped emergency ink supplies the same day to the site to ensure no disruption in production.

‘One of the largest increases in incremental volume is for packaging for ready-to-eat food due to the shift from dining out to

making food at home,’ says Lars Ho-Tseung, president and CEO of Custom Label. ‘Volume is also increasing for labels and packaging for over-the-counter drug products for flu symptoms.’

Some industry experts believe much of the increased production was driven by consumers panic-shopping in the early days of the crisis, and many label converters don’t expect the boom to last.

But as the orders are coming in, label converters across the US are working with limited staff, adhering to health regulations from the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control and applying for government assistance in the form of loans, grants and credits that are offered to small businesses.

Many US label converters are muddling through remote work scenarios and doing everything to limit interaction between the essential workers still reporting for work. Some companies have added a voluntary third shift to reduce contact between employees, while other are implementing 7.5 hour workdays (and paying for eight hours) to avoid interaction at shift change over.

**“One of the largest increases in incremental volume is for packaging for ready-to-eat food due to the shift from dining out to making food at home”**

## PPE

While many converting companies are working around the clock churning out labels for critical products, other are retooling production lines to support healthcare, first responders and other front-line workers with critical personal protection equipment (PPE).

Michigan-based MacArthur Corp, a label supplier to the automotive industry, is working on several fronts to support the

### Video series: L&L writers discuss coronavirus impact

In the video section of [labelsandlabeling.com](http://labelsandlabeling.com), as well as through L&L's social media channels, you can watch a series of videos of L&L writers interviewing industry experts about the impact of the coronavirus on the label industry: James Quirk talking to L&L strategic director Andy Thomas-Ernans; Chelsea MacDougall interviewing TLMI president Dan Muenzer; and Aakriti Agarwal in discussion with LMAI president Kuldip Goel, among others.

fight against Covid-19.

The company is working with General Motors and medical device supplier Ventec Life Systems on the ramp-up of ventilator production in Kokomo, Indiana. MacArthur is manufacturing several labels for this project and has been working around the clock since mid-March on urgent part launches and production needs.

Additionally, engineers at MacArthur have prototyped three designs for disposable face shields using more commonly available material stock, as traditional medical material supply chains have become more scarce. The company is providing face shields to its employees and identifying other front-line workers in its community to distribute further.

'We have a great team of employees and suppliers that have jumped through hoops to support an accelerated timeline to get these complex devices to those in need,' says MacArthur CEO Christie Wong Barrett. 'To rapidly design, manufacture and launch products when there is no time for mistakes, we needed to coordinate across a strong set of supplier partners to ensure everything was done right the first time. We are fortunate to have a great group of supplier partners involved in this project providing their technical expertise, delivery capabilities, and the agility to escalate focus on this life-saving initiative.'

Mason City, Iowa-based Metalcraft shifted its focus from RFID tags and barcode labels to PPE, using a 3D printer to produce headbands and face shields for the medical community.

'We have a 3D printer that can do about 10 halo portions of that shield a day. We're looking at giving those away as donations,' says Kyle Bermel, COO at Metalcraft. 'We wanted to get involved to help out our local hospitals. We live in north Iowa and that isn't a huge city. We wanted to make sure that the people around us were protected.'

The project started with face shields supplied to its local hospital, but Metalcraft has already been receiving requests from hospitals and individual emergency workers and other agencies throughout Iowa.

Similarly, Duggal Visual Solutions, a New York City-based provider of commercial print and labels, has retooled its production facility to produce face shields for medical staff and first responders in New York City, which has emerged as the epicenter of the Covid-19 crisis in the US.

'Over the past week, we assembled a task force to address the shortage in health care safety equipment and immediately saw we could quickly produce face shields,' reveals Marc Lovci, vice president at Duggal. 'Over 150 volunteers are coming to work to make this life-saving equipment, producing 120,000 units in the first week, with a total order of 360,000 units.'

Suppliers are also getting involved. Wausau Coated is helping to produce face shields and skin-contact thermometer labels.

Wausau Coated is creating material for new face shields and sending it to a national converter to complete and assemble the masks. The shields will go to medical workers or other front-line workers, said Jim Sheibley, executive VP of sales and marketing.

Wausau Coated has also hand-assembled more than 1,200

shields for its regional health and safety professionals.

The company is also manufacturing materials for labels that get printed with thermochromatic ink. The skin-contact friendly material will be used for single-use fever indication labels that change color when a person's body temperature is above normal.

'There are lots of people around the country that are moving on this,' Sheibley told his local newspaper. 'There is plenty of good being done and lots of creative ideas for helping people stay safe and healthy.'

### Sanitizer labels

Across the country, many distilleries are pivoting to make alcohol-based hand sanitizer that's in short supply. Many label companies have donated the labels or printed them at cost to these projects, including Sticker Giant in Longmont, Colorado, Steinhauser in Newport, Kentucky, and Sheetlabels.com in Queensbury, New York.

'We have printed more sanitizer labels than I could ever imagine in the last couple of weeks, and most are for distillers and brewers that have converted their business over,' Sheetlabels.com president Adam Gray says. 'These local distilleries were impacted significantly, and this is one way they were able to stay in business while also helping the community. We had a lot of local community support behind the projects.'

**"We wanted to get involved to help out our local hospitals. We live in north Iowa and that isn't a huge city. We wanted to make sure that the people around us were protected"**

Steinhauser partnered with Eureka! Ranch and Brain Brew, who were making hand sanitizer to give to those who need it most. Steinhauser printed 10,000 labels for the project.

Tara Halpin, Steinhauser CEO, said: 'Their CEO was so touched that he gave us a shout out on the local radio station and some of my team heard it – just so cool. They were very grateful for everyone who helped them make their project possible. That is what it is all about!'

Steinhauser is keeping its employees motivated with weekly lunches for staff, donuts and even a family dinner for each of the team using restaurants in the City of Newport in support of its local community. Halpin's mother-in-law even made masks for the team and for an employee's family veterinary office.

'Everyone is pitching to help those who need it,' Halpin says. 'I feel so blessed to be able to operate my business with no layoffs and I want to be able to do whatever we can to help our team, their families, our customers and our community.'

StickerGiant has also seen local beverage companies pivot to manufacturing hand sanitizers and donated custom labels for their production.

'We have seen our business portfolio drastically change in the response to this pandemic,' says Jesse Frietas, marketing director at Sticker Giant. 'The stories we are telling with our custom stickers and labels are all in response to businesses whose goal is to keep the world running while people remain apart.'



For regular updates on how the coronavirus is affecting the label industry, go to [www.labelsandlabeling.com](http://www.labelsandlabeling.com)



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# New Avery Dennison VP takes up position in North America

*Jeroen Diderich, Avery Dennison's new VP and general manager of label and graphic materials in North America, discusses how the material supplier is managing the Covid-19 crisis. Chelsea McDougall reports*

Avery Dennison has named Jeroen Diderich to the role of vice president and general manager for label and graphic materials, North America. Diderich previously held a similar position for Europe, Middle East and Africa. He assumed the role and moved to the US just as the world was entering the Covid-19 induced lockdown, so the first few weeks in the role were spent responding to an increased demand from the label sector.

'We are seeing a huge peak in demand for the essential business, like food, e-commerce also for pharmaceutical products and food and beverage,' Diderich says. 'Together with our customers we are trying to manage this order intake while still providing exceptional service. During these times with the coronavirus, there's a lot of volatility in the industry and a lot of demand, particularly for the essential businesses. Right now, reliable and quality service is of critical importance for us and for our customers.'

The graphics side of Avery Dennison's portfolio is seeing a slowdown, as the segment is largely seen as a more discretionary spend. As Diderich says: 'These are not the days that car wrapping is



*Jeroen Diderich, vice president and general manager, label and graphic materials, Avery Dennison*

essential, so we are seeing a reduction of demand there.'

Research and development has also slowed as the company manages increased demand in other areas. 'The development of specialty projects came to a little bit of a slowdown,' Diderich says. 'This is not the time to experiment and do tests with new innovative products. We continue to prioritize strategic innovations, particularly in areas of sustainability, and we expect that those will ramp up as soon as we get into more normalized conditions.'

To support its label customers, Avery Dennison has reallocated

**“Diderich assumed the role and moved to the US just as the world was entering the Covid-19 induced lockdown”**

assets and production to handle an increase in label demand. The company has ramped up capacity at its Greenfield, Indiana, facility, as well as added temporary employees, while at the same time prioritizing the health and safety of its staff and adjusting to many employees now working from home as the company manages orders and production.

In his new role, Diderich will drive strategic development and provide leadership and strategic vision for the North America region. He will report directly to Avery Dennison chairman, president and CEO Mitch Butier.

Diderich joined Avery Dennison in 2003 as a supply chain director and later served as the vice president for supply chain and operations, and vice president of sales and customer service for Label and Graphic Materials EMEA. He is a member of Avery Dennison's sustainability council and a trustee of the Avery Dennison foundation. He studied business economics at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam, and he participated in executive development programs at International Institute for Management Development (IMD) and Wharton Business School.

## *Avery Dennison supplies face shields for medical professionals*

Avery Dennison Medical, based in Mentor, Ohio, has adapted its manufacturing lines to produce vital disposable plastic face shields for healthcare professionals and people who require additional protective equipment in their line of work.

The disposable plastic face shield is a protective clear anti-fog coated polyester plastic sheet that can be used two different ways. Its design allows the user to wear it using the integrated adjustable plastic headband, or the shield can be applied directly to the forehead or an article of clothing using the repositionable adhesive tape strip. The face shield is designed with user comfort in mind and accommodates the wearing of face masks or respirators.

Avery Dennison will produce 500,000 face shields, which will be donated to US medical and healthcare facilities most in need. Initial donations will be made to Ohio hospitals including the Cleveland Clinic and Lake Health Hospital System, and many other hospitals and organizations nationwide.



*Avery Dennison Medical is created disposable plastic face shields for medical workers*



To watch the full video interview with Jeroen Diderich, visit <https://link.labelsandlabeling.com/646y>

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# Leading with standardization and automation

Indian pre-press house Veepee Graphics has set high benchmarks for quality, standardization and automation. Aakriti Agarwal reports

Over the years this 25-year old flexo trade shop has always pushed hard to stay at the cutting edge. Jaichandra, director at Veepee Graphic Solutions, believes in a two-pronged strategy to success

The first is the importance of having a great team. Jaichandra, popularly known as JC, says: 'You can invest in the best equipment and infrastructure, but the business can never be efficient if you don't have the right people. It is the production teams that deliver commitment to quality which in turn establishes and maintains good client relationships.'

Known for being employee centric, Veepee Graphics provides a positive work environment. It runs an employee recognition program to keep staff motivated and runs regular training to enhance skills and ensure safety. It was the first flexo tradeshop in the country to be Sedex and Disney certified in 2018.

'You throw peanuts, you get monkeys! I strongly believe in this statement,' says Jaichandra. 'It takes a long gestation period to train people to the highest level and to keep them motivated we need to ensure that they are given a good remuneration and an excellent work environment. You need good, efficient and loyal people, rather than just technology, to run a business.'

The second strategy is adopting technology and processes that keeps it ahead of the curve. In 2005, the company took the first major step of going paperless and today with the Veepee App, live status of jobs can be tracked until plates are delivered to the customer. 'We want to differentiate ourselves from the competition and the only way to do this is evaluate, update and upgrade. This is one of the reasons why we are a preferred beta-testing site for some of our vendors. Our feedback and evaluations are taken seriously,' says Jaichandra.

Not only does Veepee Graphics get to understand technology not yet available in the wider market, it allows the company to be an early adopter which in turn justifies the charging of a small premium while maintaining internal efficiencies.

## Ensuring printer efficiency

Before printers send their respective jobs to Veepee Graphics, Jaichandra visits their



Jaichandra, director of Veepee Graphic Solutions, at his office in Bengaluru

**“If we offer a solution to our customer, we can charge a premium. That is how the cycle should be across the entire supply chain: people need to be more confident about what they are selling. Brand owners pay when they see value”**

factory and 'fingerprints' their presses for standardization. 'We started doing this back in 2005. I travel a lot not for marketing, but for technical support and standardization. I personally create the profile for clients and set standards in my office. Only then it is passed to my staff for them to manage it,' says Jaichandra. Fingerprinting implies standardizing all press variables such as substrates, ink and anilox rollers to make error-free and high-quality plates. 'On average five profiles per press are made, one for each substrate. We then customize our pre-press according to the machine and request the printer not to change any settings without prior dialog. This scientific approach allows our customers to get high-quality predictable prints, first time, without any errors,' he explains.

He insists that managing variables in flexo printing is possible with standardization: 'With fewer variables compared to other methods of printing, flexo is one of the easiest and versatile printing technologies available in the market today.'

When it comes to gravure-to-flexo conversion, according to Jaichandra, 'It is possible to get to 85 to 90 percent of the print quality, but here the marketing pitch should be about providing sustainable packaging solutions with lower cost and faster turnaround, and encapsulate the advantage of printing on certain materials which are difficult to print in gravure.'

Veepee, while ensuring the standardization of printers' presses, offering high-quality plates, good customer service



Jaichandra and Nalini Chandra of Veepee Graphics launched their mobile app at Labelexpo India 2018

### Partnerships

In 2002, Veepee Graphics began investing in Esko and DuPont technologies and the company believes in strong relationships with its partners.

'Relationships matter when it comes to developing a vendor. As a company policy we do not change suppliers unless there is a huge gap in quality and service. DuPont and Esko are like my extended family,' says Jaichandra.

Veepee is now evaluating investment in new technology and software upgrades to continue its leadership position in the market, but with the present economic conditions due to the coronavirus pandemic, new investment projects are likely to be postponed to 2021.

and technical support, demands a premium on the platemaking. In a market where most of the players, at large, succumb to price pressure, Jaichandra has carved a niche.

'If we offer a solution to our customer, we can charge a premium. In return, printers and brand owners earn way more by making their businesses efficient. That is how the cycle should be across the entire supply chain: people need to be more confident about what they are selling. Brand owners pay when they see value,' he says.

**“You can invest in the best equipment and infrastructure, but the business can never be efficient if you don't have the right people”**

### Automating in-house efficiency

One of the key factors to successfully implementing automation while enhancing output quality was putting in place stringent quality checks at each stage. 'We have streamlined operations at all our three plants in Bengaluru, Pune, and Colombo, Sri Lanka. We follow systems and processes and try our best to ensure all jobs that leave our facility are error-free,' says Jaichandra.

The company has a cause and preventive action (CAPA) form that has to be generated whenever there is an error anywhere in the process. 'The CAPA evaluation is carried out with the team every week and is part of our internal training process. In case we see repeated mistakes of the same nature, necessary changes are done in our ERP to ensure the corrective action becomes a part of the workflow to eliminate such errors again.

The ERP identifies each job with a unique number. The job is then routed to pre-press followed by quality checks, customer reviews and finally plate-making.'

Veepee even lets customers track the status of their respective jobs with a customer friendly mobile application launched at Labelexpo India 2018.

'The mobile app and the ERP together have automated each step at our facility. The ERP, through the mobile application, sends a notification to the customer's mobile and email from the time we receive the file till the plates are delivered. We have continued to make a comprehensive and interactive ERP system that is continuously evolving with a lot of controls.'

Jaichandra explains that mature markets are highly design focused because customers buy what looks appealing, especially when they want to try something new. 'In most of the flexible packaging in countries like Australia where flexographic printing is widely popular, printing is of acceptable quality. The importance is given to the design and attractiveness of the product on the shelf. That is because customers either know exactly which product they want or they choose a pack based on the design aesthetic or key information,' he elaborates.

'Of late, with the increasing demand for added value and embellishments in the folding carton segment, and with brand owners pushing for just-in-time supply, it is opening up a new opportunity for the flexo industry. Understanding the process and printing technology makes all the difference,' Jaichandra concludes.



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# Waterless offset boosts green production

Waterless offset-produced labels printed on a Codimag press now account for 60 percent of Shenma's label business. Yolanda Wang reports

**S**henma Packing, owned by Changyu Group, is focused on all areas of wine bottle packaging – including the labels. Shenma actually has three subsidiaries, respectively producing oak barrels, paper products and a printing subsidiary.

The oak barrel subsidiary produces different sizes and specifications of oak barrels and wooden wine boxes; the paper products subsidiary mainly produces paper-based wine box cartons; and the printing subsidiary produces labels for a variety of products including wine boxes, handbags and gift boxes.

Shenma Packing's label business is carried out by its printing subsidiary, which was started in 2011. Its key business is mainly all kinds of wine labels for the Changyu Group companies, with only a few labeling orders going to other social enterprise companies.

## Investing in waterless offset

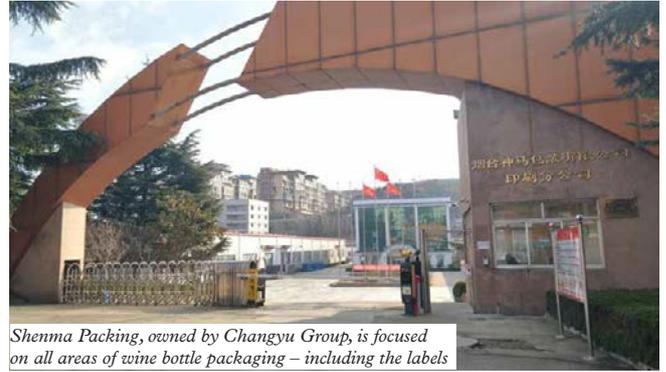
Currently, printing machinery in Shenma includes offset, flexo, screen printing and inkjet printing technologies, with offset accounting for the most of the company's business.

The central piece of production equipment at Shenma is a Codimag waterless offset press installed in October 2017. 'Since then, we have accumulated plenty of practical experience and quality and productivity have completely exceeded our expectations,' says Lv Guoqing, Shenma's general manager.

Why choose the Codimag waterless offset press? 'Our existing presses were not able to meet our development needs at that time, so we made many market surveys and finally selected the Codimag waterless offset press mainly because it's highly automated and the color could be simply adjusted,' says Lv Guoqing. 'With less need for human intervention, quality, consistency and stability are much easier to achieve.'

A major advantage is fast job changeover. Shenma mainly produces short runs of wine labels, and the increasing number of small orders means job changeover becomes more and more frequent. On its existing machinery, this meant an unacceptable increase in waste and production time lost. 'The Codimag waterless offset press has very simple and easy job changeover, with no need for water and ink adjustment. This has significantly cut both downtime and raw material waste caused by job changeovers, thus improving the efficiency of the whole production line.'

Perhaps surprisingly, waterless offset printing is not so popular in the Chinese label printing market, so Shenma also needed to



Shenma Packing, owned by Changyu Group, is focused on all areas of wine bottle packaging – including the labels

**“It is an important part of Shenma's green development plan to invest in waterless offset technology”**

consider whether its printing performance would be accepted by customers or not. 'At the beginning of the installation, clients knew little about this technology. There was also color difference in our initial production. After making adjustments and technical training by Codimag engineers, we solved this in a very short time. As our operators' familiarity and experience accumulated, the production quality of this waterless offset press has been constantly improving and now it's been accepted by a great many customers.'

Using Japanese Toray waterless offset plates, this machine is also equipped with multiple finishing units including hot/cold stamping, embossing and die-cutting. Today 60 percent of the converter's label business is produced by this one machine, which has become the main production force at Shenma.

The whole Chinese label printing industry is facing the pressures of increasingly complying with the government's increasingly severe environment protection policies. In the long term, sustainable printing methods will undoubtedly become a mainstream trend in label printing.

It is an important part of Shenma's green development plan to invest in waterless offset technology. The biggest feature of waterless offset printing is that there is no need for fountain solution, which significantly reduces the discharge of VOCs. Compared with water-based offset, waterless offset reduces VOC emissions by 60 to 80 percent, making it an environmentally friendly printing method. Other aspects of Shenma's sustainable production strategy includes investing in nationally certified environment-friendly materials and inks.

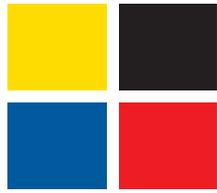
Lv told L&L that even though there was a slight decline in Shenma's business in 2019, its profit margins actually increased, which is thanks to the company principle of 'keep improving productivity, and stick to green growth'.



Codimag waterless offset press installed at Shenma



For more from Yolanda Wang on the Chinese market, go to [www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/yolanda-wang](http://www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/yolanda-wang)



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# Biaoyin creates a brand for the future

*As a new label converter in the crowded south China market, Guangdong Biaoyin is bringing proactive innovation to its FMCG customers. Yolanda Wang reports*

Since its establishment in November 2019, Guangdong Biaoyin has invested in two Label Source in-line multi-process flexo presses and one Zhongtian 5+1 offset press along with die-cutting, quality inspection and finishing equipment. Today the company occupies a 3,000sqm workshop and has 18 employees. At the time of L&L's interview, the total investment by Guangdong Biaoyin had already exceeded 10 million RMB (1.4m USD). Despite the impact of Covid-19, its business has continued on an upward curve.

While Guangdong Biaoyin is a new company, its founder Wu Zifeng worked in this industry for nearly 18 years. Since moving into labels in 2002, Wu Zifeng has worked in a variety of roles, including pre-press design, color management, production management and sales.

His final job before founding Guangdong Biaoyin was as a salesman, exploring label applications in the FMCG market. 'With so many years of industrial working experience, I am optimistic for label products progressing in the Chinese market,' explains Wu Zifeng. 'As the founder, I will try my best to create a model label printing company based in south China but serving all of the Chinese market. This is also the origin of our company name – Biaoyin.'

With this business strategy in mind, he registered the company in November 2019 and installed one Label Source 12-color in-line flexo press, one Label Source 10-color flexo press and inspection and die-cutting/finishing equipment in little less than half a year, putting the company on the right track for growth.

For the choice of equipment, Wu Zifeng had his own considerations. 'As a smaller private company, my first priority is that the cost/performance ratio must be high. Taking the Label Source in-line flexo press, for example: I had contacted them quite a long time ago, and been satisfied with both their product quality and service system. In particular, Label Source engineers can communicate with me to make improvements without any delay whenever I raise some special production requirements.'

As to the Covid-19 epidemic, Wu Zifeng says the company has not suffered too much. Indeed, the 'suspended' status of

the bulk of China's industrial production allowed Guangdong Biaoyin time to prepare, including planning the workshop, recruitment of employees, purchasing new facilities and equipment, exploring new business opportunities and implementing an efficient batch production system, all making optimal use of its 10 million RMB investment.

As production has resumed in China, Guangdong Biaoyin has been able to launch its business proposition at full speed. Its third Label Source press and one Zhongtian 5+1 intermittent offset press were scheduled to be installed as L&L went to press, enhancing significantly the company's productivity.

## Target the right market

Statistics show that China's label printing industry has passed the period of rapid growth. Taken together with the 'new normal' development rate of the overall economy and increasingly fierce market competition, the annual growth rate of the domestic label printing industry has fallen to around 10 percent.

In addition, the implementation of stringent national environment protection policies means the whole label printing industry is undergoing a transition towards sustainability, digitization and intelligence.

As a new brand in the label industry, the appearance of Guangdong Biaoyin might seem badly timed. However, Wu Zifeng disagrees: 'Market demand for label products has never decreased. For any label printer, as long as he can capture the right market and supply high quality products for customers, there will be a bright future.'

Guangdong Biaoyin has a clear product line and business scope. Its key products include labels for bottled water, milk, beverage and spices in the FMCG market. 'FMCG growth in the Chinese market is very promising, especially when the new generation becomes the main consumer. They have huge demands for bottled water and milk products, so the needs for label products will correspondingly increase. I have been exploring these market trends for years and have guided customers and provided them with personalized FMCG solutions. Now we have these established customer supply chains which form the



Label Source in-line flexo press at Biaoyin

## "FMCG growth in the China market is very promising"

basis of our business.'

Moving from simply supplying labels which satisfy customers' existing needs, to proactively recommending innovative label solutions for customers is what Wu Zifeng thinks will move the converter to the leading edge of the label industry.

As for Guangdong Biaoyin's future business plans, it will add two more presses later this year, and total production value for 2020 is expected to reach 40-50 million RMB (7m USD).

Your correspondent noticed several calls coming to Wu's cellphone during the interview, and he also reported that he has a very full schedule, visiting or receiving customers until late every day.

During L&L's visit, the whole company seemed busy, with both workers and machines running non-stop. Wu's confidence in his business model seems well-placed, and looks set to bring new vitality to the local label market.



For more from Yolanda Wang on the Chinese market, go to [www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/yolanda-wang](http://www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/yolanda-wang)

# Their finest hour

South Africa's packaging converters are stepping up to the plate, managing demand under almost war-like conditions, writes L&L's Africa correspondent, Gill Loubser

Undoubtedly South Africa's stringent lockdown regulations have brought, and will continue to bring, a new dynamic to every link in the country's complex packaging chain – from suppliers of printing and converting equipment, printing consumables, substrates and raw packaging materials, right through to the tenacious packaging converters who, as frontline suppliers, are helping to keep their customers' goods moving safely, particularly food and healthcare products.

Each part of the network is experiencing its own set of challenges and finding fresh ways to overcome them, even uncovering some hidden opportunities – for instance, diversifying into the production of masks and shields.

It's not unexpected to learn that multinational converters operating in this country are well placed to meet such challenges, thanks to their global footprints, strong financial profiles, and approved suppliers located around the globe. Prime examples are groups such as Amcor, Berry Astrapak and Constantia Flexibles Afripack. As producers of packaging for vital goods, these converters are deemed to provide 'essential services' and have permits to continue operations, albeit with fewer shifts, and the enforcement of strict hygiene measures and physical distancing.

But not only are the multinationals on the front line, so are myriad independent operations, many family owned. Just one example is Durban-based label converter



Press operator at Durban's Siyakha Imperial Printing

**“Each part of the network is experiencing its own set of challenges and finding fresh ways to overcome them, even uncovering some hidden opportunities”**

Siyakha Imperial Printing. 'In this critical period, providing labels for essential goods such as food and pharmaceuticals is more important than ever,' comments CEO, Rajesh Lutchman. 'We're helping our customers to supply these goods to the public in a swift and safe manner. We understand our responsibility to help prevent and slow the spread of Covid-19 and have refined our business response plan to combat all forms of transmission in and around our working environment.'

### Packaging expertise transferred to PPE

Also evident is the diversion of typical packaging substrates into the personal protection equipment (PPE) market. Among protection methods against the spread of Covid-19, for example, is the 'sneeze screen'. Erected between health workers and patients, these screens are manufactured from acrylic, polycarbonate or polyester.

At the forefront of material supply for such prevention campaigns is Maizey Plastics, the South African distributor of Plexiglas acrylic, Impex polycarbonate, Lumex PET/PETG, and other plastics. With the backing of these professional brands, Maizey's management moved swiftly and rose to the challenge.

'We're busy fielding enquiries and our suppliers have provided support every step of the way,' comments Wessel van der Merwe, CEO of Maizey Plastics. 'What has been truly amazing is the innovative ways in which our customers have converted clear plastic sheeting to make screens and masks as quickly and cost-effectively as possible. We're supplying fabricators, hospitals, major retail chains, the police service and even the military.'

Also playing a role is Berry Astrapak, whose packaging operations around the country have not only ensured stringent cleaning and sanitizing regimes in the production of packaging for critical goods, but is also engaged in the bid to protect health workers against the virus.

For example, Berry's Thermopac division, in Cape Town, typically extrudes its own sheet requirements for the manufacture of food-grade plastics packaging, but recently identified an opportunity to produce APET plastic sheeting to fulfil an order for plastic visors, required for use in the medical field.

And in Durban, the group's Spec Tool & Die operation recently completed urgent tooling to meet increased demand for sanitizer bottles, producing molds for flip-top closures to fit Boston round bottles



Deputy Minister of Environment, Forestry & Fisheries, Maggie Sotyu (left), oversees the distribution of food vouchers to Vaalpark residents

used for hand sanitizers.

Similarly, JJ Precision, also based in Durban, is manufacturing closures for a number of essential products, including hand sanitizers.

**“In this critical period, providing labels for essential goods such as food and pharmaceuticals is more important than ever”**

**Support for waste reclaimers**

Then there’s the human aspect – truly heart-warming actions have helped citizens in dire need.

Industry bodies and government, for instance, have jointly provided food vouchers for waste pickers and reclaimers whose livelihoods were threatened during the first five weeks of lockdown, when recycling was not deemed an essential service, and their incomes dried up.

According to plastics industry body PlasticsSA, South Africa has close to 60,000 waste pickers who play a pivotal role in the country’s waste management industry. As part of the country’s informal waste sector, they help recover recyclables from household waste streams, as well as waste materials sent to landfill sites. With the country in lockdown, they unexpectedly

found themselves unable to put food on the table.

‘It’s clear that South Africa not only faces a global health pandemic but increasingly the possibility of a humanitarian crisis,’ notes Anton Hanekom, executive director of PlasticsSA.

In response to a request made by Packaging SA (the packaging industry umbrella body) and working in close partnership with the Department of Environment, Forestry & Fisheries (DEFF), the associations representing waste pickers/reclaimers (the SA Waste Pickers Association and African Reclaimers Organisation), and a number of PROs (Producer Responsibility Organisations), some 780,000 ZAR (42,334 USD) has been raised. These funds will assist almost 4,000 pickers who will receive 200 ZAR (10.85 USD) vouchers for essential food.

Aside from supporting their families, these informal waste reclaimers provide valuable plastic feedstock to buyback centers and recycling plants. They form the backbone of South Africa’s recycling economy and enable the country to achieve exceptional recycling rates.

These efforts are exemplified by donations to co-operative members in Vaalpark (Gauteng).

‘Owing to the lockdown and the exclusion of recycling as an essential service for health and safety reasons, these co-operative members and many other reclaimers in the vicinity are experiencing extreme hardship with no source of income,’ explains Cheri Scholtz, CEO of PETCO (PET Recycling Co). This donation is one of many being coordinated under the



Typical plastic packaging substrates are used in innovative ways to make screens and masks with the Rotocon Ecoline RDF 330 digital label converting machine

umbrella of Packaging SA and DEFF.’

SAWPA chairman Simon Mbatha confirms that such donations will help alleviate some of the hardships being experienced by reclaimers. ‘I believe by working together we can find solutions that will alleviate poverty for those working in the waste value chain,’ he comments.

*Editor’s note: at the time of writing, the ban on recycling has just been lifted, as coronavirus-related restrictions have been marginally relaxed.*



For more from Gill Loubser on the African market, go to [www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/gill-loubser](http://www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/gill-loubser)

*South Africa’s Ecoline sales go global*

Among Southern Africa’s narrow web fraternity, the name Rotocon has become front-of-mind when they’re considering technology investments.

Not only representing major press manufacturers such as MPS and Screen, Rotocon also represents a raft of overseas suppliers of printing and converting ancillaries, including RotoControl, with which it shares a family connection: heading up the team in South Africa is Michael Aengenvoort, assisted by twin sons, Pascal and Patrick; and completing the family portrait is eldest son, Marco, based in Germany, CEO of RotoControl.

Enjoying stellar sales among Rotocon’s army of products is the Ecoline series of finishing machines. Initially launched in 2013 for Southern Africa’s label converters, Ecoline is today a reputable brand with over 100 installations across Southern Africa, Mauritius, Europe, Australia and the US.

Among a myriad recent examples of South African sales are Durban-based VR Print’s latest investments in a Screen Truepress Jet L350UV+ digital press and Ecoline RDF 330 digital label converting and finishing machine, enabling VR Print to provide the pharmaceutical market with variable data printing.

Similarly, Avvo Labels, also in Durban, recently commissioned a



Hilton van Rensburg of VR Print and Michael Aengenvoort of Rotocon with the Rotocon Ecoline RDF 330 digital label converting machine

Screen Truepress Jet L350UV+ complemented by an Ecoline RDF 330 line.

Both installations underline the compatibility of the Screen Truepress Jet with Ecoline’s digital label converting technology when it comes to digitally-printed labels.

With the recent extension of the Ecoline brand into Europe and North America through the RotoControl connection in Germany, the brand is set to become increasingly popular outside South Africa.

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UV LED offers long-term improvements to the label converter's bottom line

# 'Dual Cure' smoothens switch to UV LED

*The arrival of 'Dual Cure' inks that also perform under conventional lamps enable converters to switch to LED gradually and with less risk, writes John Pogatschnik, product manager, Flint Group – Narrow Web Division*

Nearly a decade after their introduction, UV LED curable inks are being adopted at an accelerated pace by label converters. The ink's benefits over 'conventional' mercury UV inks – better and faster curing, improved sustainability and lower running costs – are becoming more widely understood. Additionally, the technology is becoming more easily accessible as press manufacturers offer to include a wider range of long-life lamps on their lines.

Moreover, there is a greater incentive for converters to consider switching to LED, because the risks and costs of doing so are reducing. This is being facilitated by the arrival of a new generation of 'dual cure' inks and coatings that can be run under both LED and mercury lamps, allowing converters to adopt the technology in steps, rather than abruptly.

The main difference between a conventional mercury lamp and an LED lamp is the wavelengths emitted for curing to take place. The mercury-vapor lamp radiates energy across a spectrum between 220 and 400 nanometers (nm), while LED lamps have a narrower wavelength between about 375nm and 410nm and peaking at around 395nm.

UV LED inks are cured in the same way as conventional UV inks, but are sensitive to a narrow wavelength of light. They differ from each other, therefore, by the group of photoinitiators used to initiate the curing reaction; the pigments, oligomers and monomers used are the same.

UV LED curing offers strong environmental, quality, and safety advantages over conventional curing. The process uses no mercury or ozone, so no extraction system is needed to remove ozone from around the printing press.

It offers long-term efficiencies too. The LED lamp can be turned on and off with no need for warm-up or cool-down time, providing optimum performance from the moment it is switched on. There is no need for shutters to protect the substrate if the lamp is switched off.

Energy costs of UV LED are lower: it has no infra-red emission

**“There is a greater incentive for converters to consider switching to LED, because the risks and costs of doing so are reducing”**

and thus produces less heat as a byproduct, making lower heat management costs possible, as no heat-reducing measures are needed to protect the substrate during production. The lower heat emission is a major contributing factor to the longer life of LED lamp components: some LED lamp manufacturers claim lifespans of up to 20,000 hours, while a mercury lamp may function for around 2,000 hours. It also enables thinner filmic substrates to be run without risk of warping.

While a mercury UV lamp cures from the surface downwards, LED achieves a thorough and faster cure, because its energy penetrates through the ink, initiating the cure at the substrate interface where the bond is crucial to anchorage. This is advantageous for migration-restrictive applications like food and pharmaceutical packaging: the more thorough the cure, the less the migration potential. The thorough 'bottom-up' cure overcomes problems experienced with curing dark blue, black and opaque colors – notably whites – under conventional lamps.

More effective curing opens up the possibility of faster production speeds, especially for pure flexo applications where there is no die-cutting, such as shrink sleeves and flexible packaging. High curing speeds have also helped drive greater market acceptance. We see UV LED flexo inks performing at up to 1,000ft/min, and at Flint Group, we validate at test speeds of 750ft/min.

#### Converting to pure UV LED ink

With this strong combination of benefits, UV LED offers long-term improvements to the label converter's bottom line. Even so, many

label converters still find the prospect of switching to UV LED daunting, because of the disruption it may cause.

The concern is justified, if one switches to an ink set that only cures under LED, as it would mean an abrupt switch, requiring significant upfront costs and planning to coordinate the changes. The most obvious considerations would be the cost of a complete lamp conversion on each flexo station, and the lost output due to press downtime during the conversion. Also, depleting and replacing ink stocks in a short time-frame would mean a surge in logistics, especially in warehousing, procurement and the ink kitchen, where turning over the dispenser will result in disposing unused old ink. A steep learning curve would be needed as operators seek to achieve identical color targets.

The transition from conventional cure to UV LED, therefore, is an important strategic decision for our customers. That is why we have worked to reduce the risk associated with that transition, by developing an ink set that works with their current and future capabilities.

Our strategy has been to reformulate our complete program of narrow web inks, so that they fully cure under LED or mercury lamps. By carefully choosing the mix of photoinitiators to initiate the curing process in both situations, our chemists have developed a 'Dual Cure' ink range. It covers process and Pantone colors, plus the vast majority of coatings, tested and qualified on many application-specific substrates.

Coming under our EkoCure brand, these are formulated at the same strength as their conventional counterparts, making color-matching simple. EkoCure F is suited for printing on almost all film and paper labelstocks, as well as cartons and tags. EkoCure XS is specifically for shrink sleeve labels, and can shrink by up to 70 percent without deterioration of the printed image. For the most stringent food contact applications, EkoCure Ancora complies with the Swiss Ordinance list and is manufactured in accordance with EuPIA good manufacturing processes.

The chemistry of a Dual Cure ink is much the same as one cured by a mercury lamp. Once cured, the ink behaves similarly to a conventionally cured ink on the substrate. This makes it possible to

## “UV LED curing offers strong environmental, quality, and safety advantages over conventional curing”

run the ink alongside conventionally cured inks in the same pass – and on a single printing station if desired, without compromising quality.

With this versatility, Dual Cure ink gives the converter the freedom to switch to UV LED at a speed that fits their business – one color or one press at a time, perhaps – without the prohibitive expense of needing to install a new LED lamp on every station.

Some converters have gained their first experience of LED by installing a lamp on a single station, for example to test a specific color, without needing to carry a dual inventory. In this way, the transition can stretch over a period of time, enabling the operators to become accustomed to handling the new ink, avoid a total press shutdown, and also see productivity improvements.

For instance, running a dual-cure black ink after the CMY positions is an effective way of appreciating the technology's benefits: cured from the bottom up, adhesion is achieved more effectively in a shorter time, allowing the printer to achieve faster line speeds. Many lamp manufacturers offer to retrofit an LED lamp for trialing purposes, reducing the risk of investment.



Mark Andy P5 8-color 10in press installed by Flint Group at its R&D facility in Rogers, USA

Our technical team works with customers to help them manage the risk of their transitions, from planning to validation. We help customers choose the investment in time, materials and learning that is right for them. With our printing and plate-making division we are able to conduct testing on the converter's behalf, enabling a seamless transition without the risk of remakes.

### R&D focus

Our research and development teams continue their work in expanding and optimizing the range of UV LED inks and coatings, also supporting customers that seek a solution for a specific application. Products are validated in our laboratory, on a test press using lamps from leading manufacturers, using a wide range of film and paper laminates found in the market.

Through internal testing at our R&D sites in Rogers, USA, and Trelleborg, Sweden, and in real life situations with our customers, we have gained significant practical knowledge around formulation, behavior on press, ink room challenges and performance in numerous applications. Our team members, several of whom have decades of experience to draw on, collaborate with co-suppliers to access new technologies and research conducted in other industries, such as automotive, to find solutions to our customers' challenges.

The advance in the performance of UV LED coatings, applied after the printing process, is one example. Aided by supply systems for better viscosity control, flexo printers are turning to new UV coatings that enhance visual and tactile appeal in innovative ways, for instance with the velvet touch and metallic effects. Using new photoinitiators on the market, we have reformulated our LED-curable coatings so they offer improved clarity, ensuring that the color of the underlying graphic remains unchanged throughout the label's working life – without the risk of 'yellowing'.

In our experience, successful transitions to UV LED are 'evolution,' rather than 'revolution,' with printing lines upgraded in logical phases that allow for learning along the way without jeopardizing delivery to customers, before moving on to a full conversion. Taking that journey in stages with a Dual Cure ink, the converter can better manage its ink inventory through the transition, with fewer quality claims, reduced material scrap, no need to waste ink, and no risk of downtime through running the wrong ink on their press or station.

With an ink supplier with a wide program of inks and coatings, including specialty products, and the capability to provide comprehensive support, including ongoing R&D collaboration, the converter is best placed to achieve the transition smoothly.



Read an extract from the Label Academy book 'Inks, Coatings and Varnishes' in L&L issue 2, 2020, and on [labelsandlabeling.com](http://labelsandlabeling.com). Go to [www.label-academy.com](http://www.label-academy.com) to buy the book

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# Inspecting variable data

*The current pandemic has thrust even more pressure on printing accurate labels first time and eliminating waste. Tony White reports*



*Omron has launched the V/F400 and V/F300 Series smart cameras, the latest additions to its MicroHawk line*

## *Omron launches new MicroHawk smart camera range*

Industrial automation specialist Omron Automation Americas has launched the V/F400 and V/F300 Series smart cameras, the latest additions to its MicroHawk line that combines code reading and vision inspection capabilities into a single device.

Omron designed the new products especially for manufacturers who are looking to simplify their product inspections. The new MicroHawk V/F400 and V/F300 Series smart cameras are powerful devices that combine code reading and vision inspection into a single, highly compact form.

By bundling multiple capabilities in one, the new cameras will lower hardware costs and minimize the work required for commissioning and maintenance. Powerful technologies such as liquid lens autofocus, and a high-resolution 5-megapixel color camera ensure precision while promoting greater flexibility in production line layouts.

The autofocus technology ensures that the camera can reliably inspect products that vary in size, shape, or desired inspection type. Additionally, Omron's advanced X-Mode algorithms can read any code on any surface, including curved, shiny or otherwise textured materials, minimizing downtime and keeping production moving smoothly.

The compact size of the V/F400 and V/F300 Series makes it easy to embed them within space-constrained equipment and offers wide variety of supported communication interfaces include Ethernet/IP and Profinet for added flexibility.

**P**roducing a high quality label effectively and efficiently has always been and always will be the ultimate aim of any label converter. Getting it right first time and eliminating waste is the main principle that should determine their working practices.

Over recent years JIT workflows have been at the forefront of the way in which production and deliveries are planned. However, the current pandemic has thrust even more pressure on getting labels to the product manufacturer, especially in the food and pharmaceutical sectors which have seen vast increases in volumes in order to support the supply chain of products to the supermarket sector in particular.

**“Figures from a recent Finat survey show that there was an increase of almost 7 percent in the demand for labels in the first quarter of this year compared with 2019”**

Figures from a recent Finat survey of members show that there was an increase of almost 7 percent in the demand for labels in the first quarter of this year compared with 2019. The current and future quarter results are forecast to be severely impacted by the Covid-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdowns in countries around Europe since March.

This short term demand for critical supplies to the food, pharmaceutical and medical markets has increased considerably and been caused by the start of a stockpiling philosophy in anticipation of prolonged lockdown periods and consumer hoarding.

In view of this uncharacteristic behavior, it should be no surprise that lead times for self-adhesive materials, especially for non-critical goods, have increased substantially. Apart from the availability of raw materials (not only self-adhesive materials but also critical chemicals for the manufacture of consumables such as inks, adhesives and silicones), label converters

are facing the impact of lockdowns through the reduced availability of staff on the shop floor. This has meant adjustments to working practices necessary to comply with tightened operational safety and health measures (OSHA), and cashflow issues related to unilateral extension of payment terms by customers. (compiled from the Finat Q1 report on the state of the European label industry).

All of this means that it is vital that converters, whilst working to ever shorter delivery times, are confident that their output is right first time and waste is kept to an absolute minimum.

### **Web inspection**

In the past we have discussed web inspection from the point of view of the finished, printed label. In this article we discuss the verification of the added variable data which can be so important to the end user, especially in the food, pharmaceutical, security and anti-counterfeit sectors where incorrect or missing information data can be vital to the end user or consumer. Whilst many label converters use a narrow web, single width roll to print labels, to maintain production levels in these times of high demand and to meet the requirement to print several SKUs simultaneously, converters are using multi-lane production methods. This makes the task of inspecting several tracks of labels with different images very demanding, especially when variable data is involved.

For variable data labels it is important to inspect every label and code and verify that it is correct against the original data file. It is also important to ensure that the quality and security features are accurate. Lake Image Systems recently introduced its Discovery Label Integrity Manager (LIM) which consists of an automated inspection system for verifying variable data which is printed on high-speed, multi-lane label presses. The LIM automates the finishing of the individual rolls whilst building in integrity, control, reporting and management to high levels of reliability.

Automating the inspection of the variable data components of a label printed using multi-lane technology when compared to single web production brings several significant benefits to the converter. This has been proved in practice at least two sites, one a major European security printer and the other a global security printer. The

### GrafiSoft to represent Rotocontrol in Chile and Ecuador

Rotocontrol has appointed GrafiSoft as its local distributor in Chile and Ecuador for its range of high-speed label and digital hybrid finishing machines.

GrafiSoft's managing director and president Francisco Fernández along with business development director Francisco Javier Fernández and technical support specialist Pablo Despiau Burgos will play a vital role in supporting this region alongside Francisco Soto, director of sales Latin America for Rotocontrol.

Established in 2000, GrafiSoft brings 20 years' experience and strong presence in the region and is backed by a well-established service team. GrafiSoft specializes in integrated technology that increase productivity, improve quality and reduce costs by automating processes,

representing AVT, Domino, Esko, and X-Rite among others in its portfolio.

'GrafiSoft's strong print knowledge and established industry presence with label printers, supported by an experienced local service team will serve the Rotocontrol brand well in Chile and Ecuador,' said Soto. 'Rotocontrol's broad range of label finishing solutions are an ideal offering for their diverse market needs, from low-cost to highly modular machines for roll to roll label inspection/ slitting, booklets, in-mold labels, die-cutting, and digital label finishing and embellishments.'

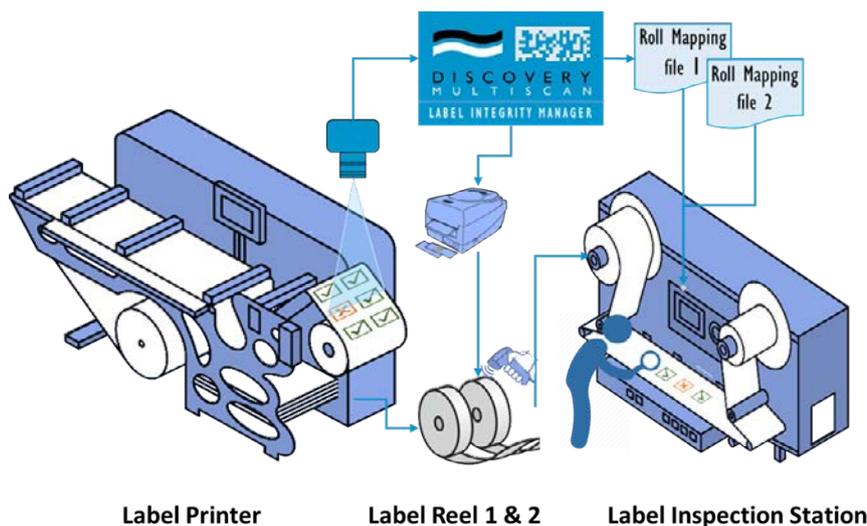
GrafiSoft is headquartered in Chile and has a local office in Ecuador.

### Seb. Wolf installs Rotocontrol Ecoline

German label converter Seb.Wolf has ordered another Rotocontrol Ecoline

inspection slitter rewinder for its premium wine label finishing. Based in Eltville, near the Rhine and world-class wine producers, the company produces high-quality wine, sparkling wine and spirit labels. 'The new Rotocontrol Ecoline RSI will greatly contribute to the final finishing step of our labels,' said Nicoletta Compagni, managing director of Seb.Wolf. 'We were particularly impressed by the user-friendly design in combination with components for inspection. The slitting and rewinding from the RSI will also ensure that customers receive the maximum quality they are used to from Seb.Wolf.'

The Ecoline RSI sold to the internationally operating label specialist features roll-to-roll label inspection, slitting and rewinding in a 340mm web width for its premium label finishing.



Label Printer

Label Reel 1 & 2

Label Inspection Station

Lake Image Systems recently introduced its Discovery Label Integrity Manager (LIM)

challenge was to ensure that the integrity of every reel was intact and the whole process to be automated. Benefits include increased label production rates – an increase of around 20 percent at the two sites.

Slitting the parent rolls into single webs has proved to be more cost effective and produce less waste. Automating the inspection process has significantly reduced the time and labor costs of the QA function. Using automated inspection eliminates the human error element greatly, reducing the chance of reprinting and reruns. Up to 15 percent less scrap has been experienced at the two client sites.

One more benefit is the automatic production of an error log which can prove

invaluable when removing defective labels with incorrect or missing data. This is achieved by producing a mapping file with each reel, which in turn provides a closure report indicating any errors which have occurred during the production of the reel including breakages, unreadable or missing labels.

The result is a quality audit of each individual reel and the opportunity to mark defective labels as void using an integrated inkjet printer.

Overall this automation is a good fit with Industry 4.0, which requires automation of inspection (and other processes) and can integrate seamlessly into an automated production workflow for the Industry 4.0 protocol. It also means that

the label converter is able to monitor the print quality of their output in real time. This allows converters to calibrate their printing systems, be they conventional or digital when (or if) an error is detected. This enables the converter to operate a zero defects protocol, for pharmaceutical or security labels for example, and thereby meet these end users' most stringent quality standards.

**“For variable data labels it is important to inspect every label and code and verify that it is correct against the original data file”**

Modern inspection systems can also be set up to communicate with MIS systems connected to a pharmaceutical or security track and trace system.

Automated inspection systems also offer environmental benefits which means that costly reprinting and is avoided and significant less waste of substrate, ink is produced and a saving in production time is achieved.

For more articles by L&L technical editor Tony White, go to [www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/tony-white](http://www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/tony-white)



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# Zero-defect production

*Marschall Etiketten + Drucksysteme, one of the oldest family run printers in Germany, has transformed its business into zero-defect production thanks to BST eltromat's TubeScan inspection system. Piotr Wnuk reports*

**M**arschall Etiketten, based in northern Germany, is one of the oldest printers in the region. Its traditions go back to 1924 when it was established by Alfred Marschall in Minden. The company was taken over by the Sellmann family in 1965, which relocated the business to Porta Westfalica to allow for future expansion, and is currently lead by Friedel Sellmann, the second generation of the family.

The business has developed significantly over the years and in 1981 the company started producing its own labels. Currently Marschall employs around 25 people and operates five production lines using Mark Andy and Nilpeter presses as well as a wide range finishing equipment including machines from Prati.

'We provide our services for a wide spectrum of clients, from automotive suppliers, construction and chemical companies, through electrical and electronics, food and beverage and IT, to cosmetics and logistics,' says Friedel Sellmann.

Many label products leaving Marschall's production lines are complex and prone to irregularities. Their intricacy often includes detailed graphics and logos, consecutive numbering and barcodes, but also challenging blank labels where error detection is difficult to achieve manually. 'The requirements and customers' expectations are growing constantly, therefore we felt there was a need to introduce a system which would add yet another layer of reassurance to our clients about the quality of our products,' confirms Sellmann. 'Manual comparison of the printed labels with the PDF files from the pre-press stage sometimes creates bottlenecks in the production process, one that could be eliminated with the PDF comparison directly in the printing machines.'

## Quality assurance

The company turned to BST eltromat, based just a few miles away from Marschall's headquarters and known for its 100 percent inspection systems. 'Customers come to us with all sorts of issues,' says Eckart Schmieding, area sales manager at BST eltromat who is directly involved with Marschall. 'Their production sometimes suffers from irregularities, unnecessary waste, but most of all they want to reassure their clients and themselves that the product



*BST eltromat's TubeScan system added to a Prati Saturn slitter rewinder*

**“Our operators can see immediately if defects are emerging and take action to remedy them”**

which leaves their factory is as perfect as possible. We are not just an equipment supplier, we deliver solutions and always form relationships with our customers.'

BST eltromat analyzed the company's equipment and came up with a retrofit system which would not only introduce 100 percent inspection to the production line, but concurrently contribute to a significant increase in productivity and reduction of waste.

'When changing systems in quality assurance, it's important to keep the machine operators on board and show them the benefits of this innovative technology. Now they no longer need to scan proofs and then compare them with the specifications from the pre-press stage. That saves them a trip to the scanner and the time that this step of the process takes. This way the production process is much faster,' says the deputy production manager about the new option.

The analysis by BST eltromat showed that TubeScan technology from Nyquist Systems, a member of the BST Group since 2019, were the best option for Marschall. These systems for 100 percent inspection and web monitoring can be used on printing machines or on rewinders. They immediately sound the alarm in the event of deviations from pre-defined target printing values and transfer the data on defects to the rewinders. This enables machine operators to remove the defective labels from the process quickly and in a targeted manner during assembly and packaging. This ensures

that only perfect labels are delivered to customers. Costly complaints and refunds can then be all but ruled out.

'When printing, the TubeScan systems allow us to produce the required quality in a more relaxed manner and let our machines run without worries as long as the TubeScan lights are green. There are still occasional surprises when our machine operators find defects using the TubeScan systems that they wouldn't otherwise have found,' comments the deputy production manager.

'With 100 percent inspection in printing, we're also minimizing our waste. Our operators can see immediately if defects are emerging and take action to remedy them. We produce the desired quality in a more deliberate manner and, thanks to the counters integrated into the TubeScan systems, we make precisely the needed quantities of labels,' concludes Friedel Sellmann.

Since the equipment installation the company has been able to avoid reputational damage that would have inevitably resulted from deliveries of imperfect labels to its customers. Minimizing waste, producing desired quality in precise quantities have been also two important factors that have increased the productivity and profitability of label manufacturing at Marschall Etiketten.



For more information about Marschall Etiketten go to [www.marschall-pw.de](http://www.marschall-pw.de)



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# AWA hosts global release liner conference

*Ann Hirst-Smith reports from one of the last events held before lockdown*

The annual Global Release Liner Industry Conference and Exhibition, hosted by AWA Alexander Watson Associates, was one of the last industry events to take place this spring, before the coronavirus lockdown. It took place in Amsterdam in late February and attracted around 180 delegates who spanned the broad release liner supply chain and end-use markets. The program addressed the major items of interest, and concern, surrounding this industry.

Indeed, the opening session focused on opportunities and growth in key release liner markets. AWA Alexander Watson Associates' president and CEO, Corey Reardon, opened the event with an overview of current market status. Still dominated by labelstock, the market segments in which release liner takes a role also include hygiene, medical, industrial, envelope, tapes, and food and bakery applications among others. In such a broad-based industry, innovation is mostly seen in coating, or surface treatment, of release base, as well as in nanotechnology and biomaterials.

Glassine and SCK paper are still the first choice for release base, with a 36 percent share of the market, with PET film – with a 16 percent share – now claiming second place. Asia remains the fastest-growing regional market, followed by the now developing market in Africa and the Middle East.

The value chain as a whole has, as AWA research shows, also experienced extensive merger and acquisition activity which has led many companies to consider themselves within the 'global' bracket.

One of the areas of concern in recent years in the pressure-sensitive label industry has been recycling – particularly of release liner by-products. As Corey Reardon showed, there is today much activity in this arena. Seventy-four percent of companies approached by AWA researchers now have a working recycling program, and the packaging industry as a whole now has access to appropriate recycling facilities which are, for release liner, offering real 'second life' opportunities for the substrate. Other ongoing areas for concern, however, are increasing costs – particularly for transportation and energy.

The impact of the increasing demands for transparency on material sourcing in the label industry, with particular emphasis on the need for sustainability, was the topic addressed by Robyn Buma, vice president, global procurement, Avery Dennison. 'Sustainability,' she said, 'is not just a hot trend or buzzword – it is a shift in global behavior'. She detailed the positive sustainability trends being exemplified by major brands, including Procter & Gamble, Nestlé, Danone, Nike, and Coca-Cola, and moved on to examine how the value chain is reacting to the challenges these initiatives present – for both converters and suppliers. It is, she underlined, essential for the industry to respond positively. 'It's from our materials, and from the contributions of the bold innovators behind them, that we're creating solutions to the sustainability challenges that matter most – and ensuring a thriving future for our business.'

## Leadership panel

An panel discussion moderated by Corey Reardon featured Loparex CEO Simon Medley; Dow's VP, global commercial and customer experience Massimo Rebolini; and Panoval CEO Wilco Van Zwieten, who between them explored the real-life impact of many of the current business challenges round the world – from Covid-19 to

Brexit, US/China trade relations, and the need to attract, and retain, young graduate professionals to this industry.

Then it was the turn of Arthur Erdem, head of group sustainability for the group around the companies Engelhardt, Töpfer, Walcher, and Goelz, to pair the already-identified circularity and innovation agenda with that for transformation and transition – in other words, to adapt to future conditions, redefine the business purpose, and survive as an industry, delivering 'measurable, sustainable results.' He highlighted the EU Commission's Product Environmental Footprint (PEFCR) – a method for measuring sustainability performance, from raw material procurement to disposal – which is being developed in co-operation with companies and experts, and which, he said, will 'become the currency from 2025 onwards'.

## Market focuses

The agenda for the afternoon was divided into two pathways, devoted to presentations on different market focuses: tape and industrial, and label and graphic arts, each with its own program of expert speakers.

With 12 percent and 14 percent of the global market respectively, tapes and industrial applications are today an important outlet for release liner, as AWA senior consultant Sarah Rigby explained, introducing Ian Grace, vice chairman of the technical committee for Afera, the European tape association, and business development manager, Loparex. He delved into the extensive current checklist of trends and drivers in this sector, from clean energy and electric cars to the product 'must haves' of the millennial generation. Along with circularity and 'dismantlability', the specific drivers of today's manufacturing industries are the regulations – Reach, solvents-related BREF STS, and the new European Green Deal, which aims to boost the efficient use of resources by moving to a circular economy, restore biodiversity, and cut pollution. He urged delegates to stay ahead of all the legislation, manage their production, supply chain and sources, and customer support, but warned that in this new environment 'there will be casualties'.

The session moved on to the technical agenda for industrial and tape usage, firstly with an examination of the way in which release liners influence die-cutting in the medical and hygiene sectors from Butch Schomber, global innovation manager, RotoMetrics. Predicting the suitability of a release liner for specialty tape use employing today's advanced database building and management techniques, was the topic addressed by Lohmann's head of research and development for technical products, Dr Evert Smit. Finally, the latest developments in coating technologies for pressure-sensitive materials were pinpointed by Markus Schlütter, area sales manager, film and paper, Polytype Converting.

The agenda for the label and graphic arts session was prefaced by AWA associate Anum Javed Beg's market overview. Pressure-sensitive labels, she said, claim no less than 48 percent of the global market, and Jules Lejeune, managing director of the European self-adhesive labeling association Finat, detailed trends and developments, both in markets and materials and in the association's strong activity in the field of recycling and sustainability. Going beyond self-adhesive labels, he indicated, many label converters today are also printing flexible packaging, shrink sleeves, and wraparound labels to broaden their offering to the brand

## “Asia remains the fastest-growing market, followed by the Africa and the Middle East”

owners – whose agenda also demands of converters shorter print runs, fast turnaround, and the ability to print variable-information logistics labels.

Jan 't Hart, senior director, innovation, sustainability and compliance, Avery Dennison Label & Packaging Materials Europe, detailed current and future processing of liner by-products – mainly glassine papers but also, increasingly film release base. 'It will take all of us to solve the challenge', he said, and detailed Avery Dennison's pursuit of success through its strong, active recycling partnership with Cycle4Green, Lenzing Papier, Ecor, and Romei Replastics.

What paper can do in terms of design for recycling in label applications was discussed, with a case study on curling control, by UPM Specialty Papers' director, business intelligence and development, Mikko Rissanen. More value from release liner can be gained through a combination of improved paper yield, lower raw material costs in silicone coating, improved processing, and higher efficiency in downstream converting and customer service – in other words, from 'technical and environmental expertise'.

The voice of the customer was heard in the last presentation, from The Coca-Cola Company. Jerome Labie, R&D innovation manager, EMEA, discussed consumer trends and packaging sustainability, and how the company views both as innovation opportunities. Smart packaging, premiumization, and consumer engagement with packaging, are all fields where Coca-Cola and

other beverage manufacturers have actively experimented with on-shelf product visibility to promote sales.

The next day's agenda opened with two more parallel sessions – this time on the hygiene and medical and composites and electronics markets. Hygiene and medical applications may be small market sectors for release liner, with an 8 percent and 3 percent share of the global market respectively, but in hygiene and medical applications release liners have important and demanding roles to play, as AWA associate Catalina Steenbakkers Galindo explained.

RotoMetrics' Butch Schomber discussed the important specific implications for die-cutting in this sector, and the challenges involved in converting medical and hygiene products using rotary die-cutting.

Dr Stefan P Stadtmueller, vice president, head surface technologies interface and performance for Evonik Nutrition and Care, addressed the way in which co-operation along the complex value chain promotes efficient, effective performance from the silicone elements in the production of release liner for the growing market in diaper and feminine hygiene products.

Meeting the evolving quality performance requirements and expectations in the hygiene release liner market was then summarized by Michael Slamanig, group head of quality, Mondi. Judged finally on quality by the consumer purchaser, hygiene products are, he underlined, very much influenced by product and process innovations; recyclability; hygiene standards and regulatory compliance; printed liner graphics for brand identification – and, of course, by the power of the media.

For composites and electronics, AWA associate Qiwen Shen introduced a wide-ranging marketplace for release liner, from computers and smart phones to aeroplanes and wind turbines,

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which nevertheless still represents only a combined 5 percent of the global release liner market.

Nicolas Vandencastele, operations and business development manager, CPI, introduced the company's innovative Ximofilm thin, film-based release liners with extremely low silicone content and environmental impact. It employs a plasma-gas-deposited release coating on a liner substrate, which requires no solvent or drying steps. At present only available on films, it delivers release liner for composites, pressure-sensitive adhesives, and film casting – particularly in applications requiring ultra-low levels of contamination.

Focusing on composites, Sébastien Marrot, technical service manager, release coatings, for Elkem Silicones, mapped the various market segments – with particular reference to the role of release liner in pre-preg manufacture and lay-up – and detailed the range of release coatings, and differential release performance required to meet the multiple needs of this particular market.

Roll-to-roll processing for composites and printed electronics such as RFID/NFC with a functional release liner, emphasizing the complex property needs and the available application processes, were the theme of the final paper in this section, from Andrea Glawe, regional sales director, Kroenert. She identified new process and machinery solutions, and looked towards future sustainable solutions that go 'beyond hardware'.

#### Business matters

All the delegates came together then for a thought-provoking final plenary session focussed on business concerns, which opened with an exploration of mergers and acquisitions as a catalyst for change in the release liner industry. Jonathan White, MD of Mazzone &

Associates, detailed M&A activity past and present, and showed how, despite upstream and downstream activity over the last five years, 'release liners remain a market with several leading players (commercial and in-house) yet none with a dominant position.'

An executive leadership panel came together to expand on the subject, moderated by Jonathan White, and involving Matt Gilmore, head of Specialty Materials Investment Banking; Paul Grzebielucha, president, Industrial Solutions Group; and Nick Mockett, MD, Moorgate Capital. Together, the panel participants delivered expert advice from their specialist viewpoint to the delegates on the many diversification options that are available, of which consolidation is only one; on the elements influencing a company's success today – profitability, of course, and becoming a multinational or expanding the product offering; managing relationships with private equity companies; and current market concerns, including the coronavirus pandemic. For release liners, it was agreed that the medical/healthcare, pharmaceuticals, hygiene, and composites markets are the premium, robust, and growing opportunity markets today.

The formal conference program was complemented throughout by a well-supported table-top exhibition and extensive networking opportunities, including cocktails and canapés on the first evening, during which Corey Reardon presented the AWA Release Liner Industry Leadership Award, given annually to an individual who has demonstrated singular dedication, service, and leadership to the release liner industry. Alex Knott of Dow was declared this year's winner, to much congratulation from the audience.



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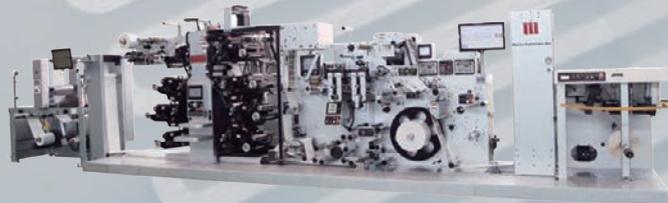


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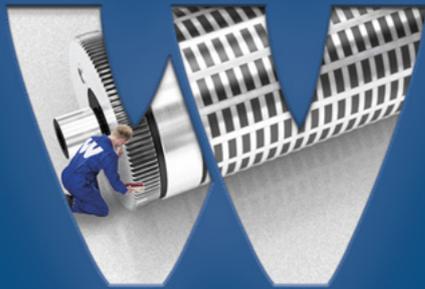


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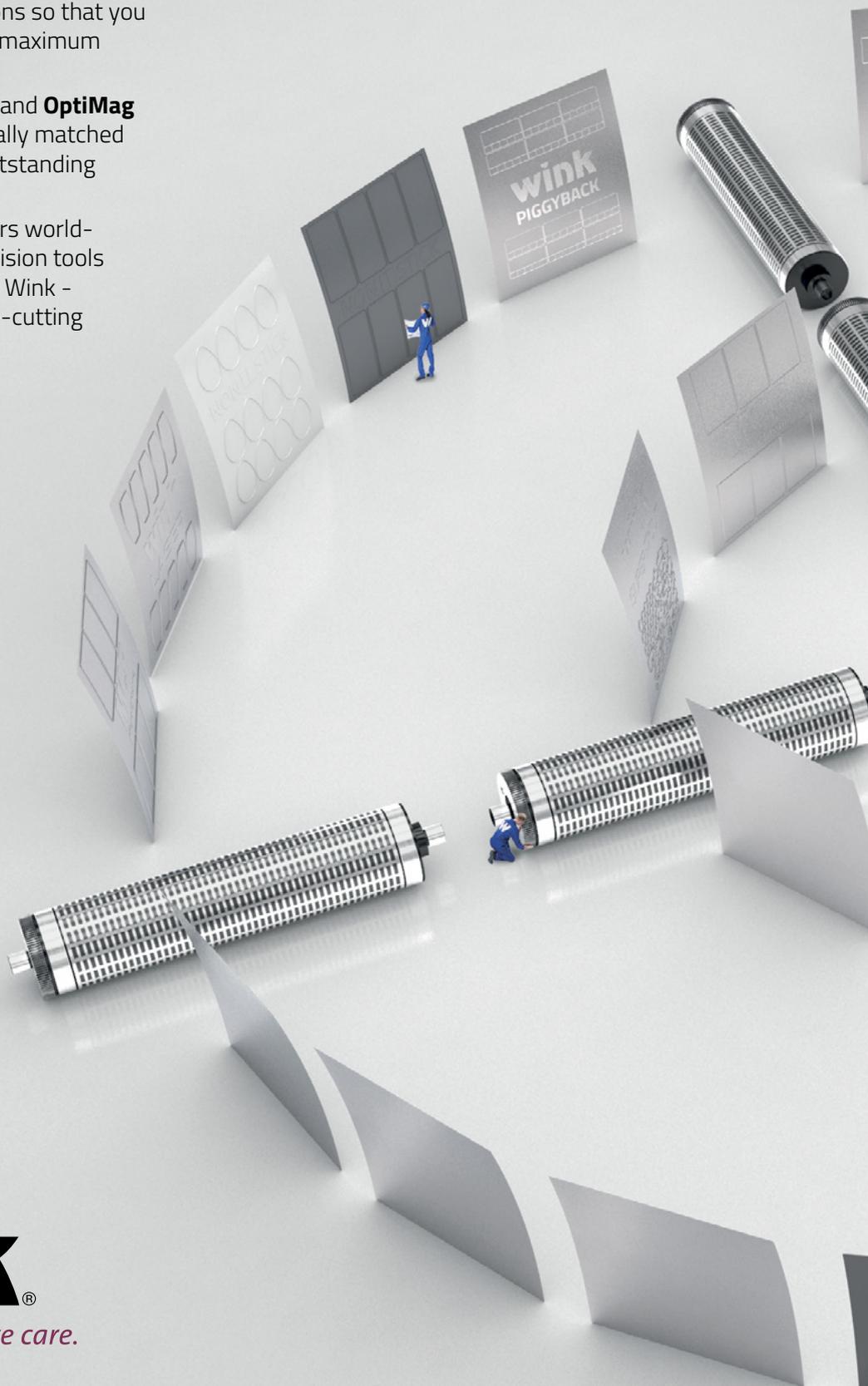
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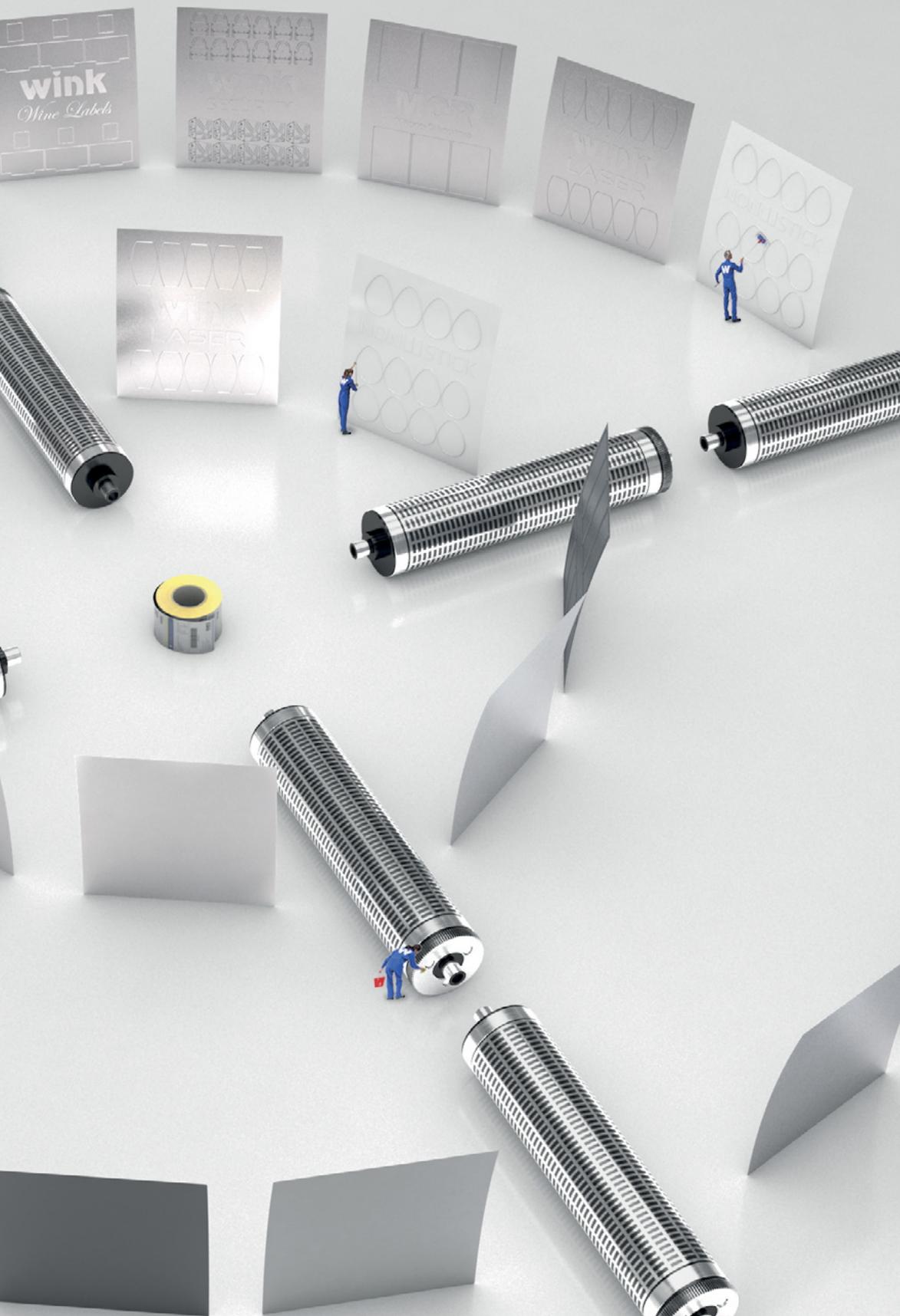
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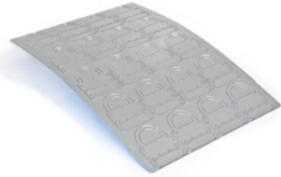
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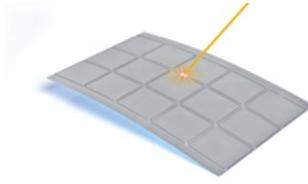
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# MAXIMUM DIE-CUTTING PERFORMANCE



SuperCut Flexible Dies



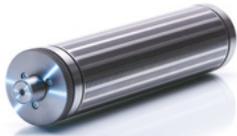
Laser Hardening



MCR MicroChrome



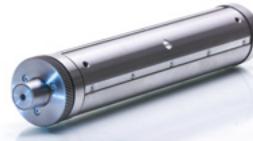
Flatbed Dies



OptiMag Magnetic Cylinders



PowerCut® Solid Dies



Sheeter Cylinders



Print Cylinders

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Simply smart – the leading system for adjusting the cylinder gap. Thanks to innovative technology and easy operation, you will raise your production efficiency to a new level. Whichever version you choose – with the SmartGap® you are perfectly equipped for the future of rotary die-cutting.

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SmartGap® Advance



SmartGap® Touch



SmartGap® AutoControl



Perfect die-cutting

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Maximum efficiency

Longer run times, shorter job changes, less waste



No limitations

Stable even when cutting through and at highest speeds



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Simple upgrade to digital version possible at any time

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