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- EST 1978 -

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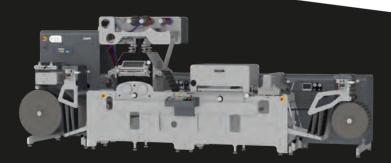
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# L&L

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### Contents















### Regulars

- 9 Editor's welcome
- 10 News
- 15 New products
- 21 Installations
- 27 Appointments
- 29 Andy Thomas-Emans column
- 31 Branding and design
- 33 M&A
- 107 Label trends
- 112 Label society

### **Trends**

### 43 Finat Radar report

Analysis of Finat's annual Radar converter survey shows impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the European label industry

49 All4Labels continues expansion Global converting group adds shrink sleeve specialist through acquisition of GPS-Rotomet

### 67 Holography in India

Investment in materials and technologies is driving growth for holography in India, says Dr Paul Dunn, chair of the International Hologram Manufacturers Association

### 79 Virtual Label Summit

Review of Labelexpo's first Virtual Label Summit, which featured leading industry experts from around the world

### 81 Logistics labeling

The label is key to resolving modern logistics challenges and the recipe for successful delivery and full transparency

### Features

- 34 Rewarding innovation
- Federico d'Annunzio wins R. Stanton Avery Global Achievement Award
- 39 Label Industry Global Awards Winners of Label Industry Global Awards 2020 announced at virtual event
- 51 Ravenwood prepares for global growth

Ravenwood Packaging has established an office in Australia

- 55 Steinhauser celebrates 115 years US converter sees record growth amid the pandemic
- 57 Garino celebrates 100th anniversary

The Uruguayan converter is run by the founder's grandsons

59 Leftech's foil adventure New foiling project from Argentine distributor leads it to set up facility in Brazil









### **Technology**

61 Madiwor makes it work Argentine converter Symbar benefits from Madiwor's workflow software

63 Pakistan Paper Products continues to expand Pakistan Paper Products on growth during the Covid-19 pandemic

### 65 UV Graphic sees rising demand

Indian manufacturer sees surge in demand for its presses

- 71 Hebei Weiyuan's digital path User of first Konica Minolta AccurioLabel 190 in China relates experience
- 75 Huangjin eyes digital future Shanghai Huangjin plans to install a third Epson water-based inkjet press
- 77 Labelexpo South China Preview of the inaugural Labelexpo South China in Shenzhen in December

87 RFID tags plug Reynolds stock gap

UK food retailer turns to RFID to manage deliveries

89 Adding value with connected packaging

Consumer packaging must be beautiful and smart, writes Jay Sperry of Digimarc

92 Die-cutting and tooling Die accuracy is crucial in production of a quality self-adhesive label

95 Let the work flow Multi-device connectivity and data exchange is the way forward

### 100 Efficient job planning and scheduling

Extract from Label Academy book 'MIS and Workflow Automation' looks at planning jobs and managing production

# Online contents

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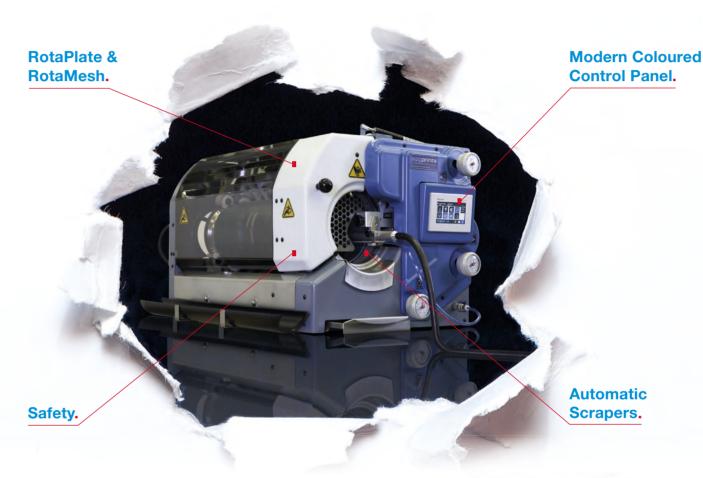
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### L&L looks back (L&L issue 5, 1988)



p14 Mike Fairley investigated new technology developed in the laboratories of British company Elmjet in Cambridge. This new form of continuous inkjet printing offered exciting possibilities to roll-label printers who had long been looking for an ideal way of adding variable information such as barcodes and graphics to labels and tags at normal running speeds on the printing press.



p20 Mike Fairley visited French label producer A et A, which was then pioneering labeling wine bottles using self-adhesive technologies, a trend which had been often discussed by label printers and laminate suppliers in France and Germany and heightened by Australian wine makers already using self-adhesives for front, back and neck labeling.



*p30* Mark Andy had made significant changes in its production capacity and international sales by expanding its production plant in Chesterfield, Missouri, to allow the assembly of up to 50 new printing presses at a time. The 140,000 sq ft facility housed sophisticated production equipment with anticipated output of 300 narrow web converting systems a year.



p56 L&L looked at significant changes at British company Edale, which in 1988 was set to grow rapidly with a new management team, new marketing and sales structure coming into operation in Europe, new international distribution network, a fully equipped showroom set-up and plans to build new offices at the company's manufacturing site in Romsey, UK.

# Let's not lose the entrepreneurial spirit

### Editor's note

he entrepreneurial spirit of the label industry is rightly celebrated. The industry has historically been driven by small companies founded by innovative individuals. A large majority of label converters today continue to fit this profile, and the pages of every issue of L&L are awash with their stories.

According to the consultancy LPC, of the 2,000-2,200 label converters in the US, 85 percent have a turnover of under 10m USD. L&L and Labelexpo's own database shows 80 percent of converters globally have a turnover of below 3-5m USD.

This profile has its advantages. Decision-making, unencumbered by multiple layers of management structure, can be agile; being embedded in local communities allows personal relationships to drive success.

But as global brands increasingly seek label suppliers who can offer the same quality of production and excellence of service to their customers around the world, it is natural that mergers and acquisitions accelerate, creating global converting groups with huge international footprints and turnovers to match.

When I was based in Argentina, covering the Latin American market for this magazine, it was a frequently cited dream of many converters I visited to be acquired by a global converting group. It was seen as the ultimate vindication of their professional success, and would provide a bumper pay day to be enjoyed in retirement. Fernando Aravena, the Chilean label industry entrepreneur, was regarded as a local hero for founding and then selling so many converting operations it was almost impossible to keep track.

As Andy Thomas-Emans points out in his column in this issue, most smaller converters

"It was a frequently cited dream of many Latin American converters I visited to be acquired by a global converting group"

are successful precisely because of the personal business relationships their owners and managers have built up, often on a hyper local level. 'Simply adding them to a bigger group may make them more efficient - by allowing pooling of procurement for example but if the founders are let go, those personal relationships can no longer simply be taken

for granted by a new team of corporate customer relationship managers.'

Converter consolidation continues apace. But it is interesting to note that the new generation of converting groups being established in recent years – such as All4Labels Group and Optimum Group – are leveraging, as Thomas-Emans writes, 'the advantages of global scale with those of local engagement, where customers continue to engage with known and trusted sales teams'.

Global scale and local engagement. When it comes to mergers and acquisitions, this seems to be the recipe for success.

James Quirk Group managing editor

# News



Digital watermarks are imperceptible codes covering the packaging surface

### Digital watermarks for smart packaging recycling

Group of companies assesses use of technology to aid recycling

Under the patronage of AIM, the European Brands Association, more than 85 companies and organizations from the packaging value chain have joined forces with the ambitious goal to assess whether a pioneering digital watermark technology can enable better sorting and higher-quality recycling rates for packaging in the EU.

One of the most pressing challenges in achieving a circular economy for packaging is to better sort post-consumer waste by accurately identifying packaging, resulting in more efficient and higher-quality recycling. Digital watermarks may have the potential to improve the way packaging is sorted in the waste management system, as it opens new possibilities that are currently not feasible with existing technologies.

The discovery was made under the New Plastics Economy program of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, which investigated different innovations to improve post-consumer recycling. Digital watermarks were found to be the most promising technology, gathering support among the majority of stakeholders and passing a basic proof of concept on a test sorting line.

The branded goods industry has now stepped in to facilitate the next phase, which will take place on a much greater scale and scope. This will include the launch of an industrial pilot in order to prove the viability of digital watermark technologies for more accurate sorting of packaging and high-quality recycling, as well as the business case at large scale.

Digital watermarks are imperceptible codes, the size of a postage stamp, covering the surface of a consumer goods packaging. They can carry a wide range of attributes such as manufacturer, SKU, type of plastics used and composition for multilayer objects, and food vs non-food usage. Once the packaging has entered a waste sorting facility, the digital watermark can be detected and decoded by a standard high-resolution camera on the sorting line, which then, based on the transferred attributes, is able to sort the packaging into corresponding streams. This results in better and more accurate sorting streams, and high quality recyclates, benefiting the complete packaging value chain. Digital watermarks also have the potential to be used in other areas such as consumer engagement, supply chain visibility and retail operations.



Read more about digital watermark technology on page 89



### Avery Dennison launches matrix recycling program

Partnership with RoadRunner recycling

Avery Dennison Label and Packaging Materials has launched a scalable matrix recycling program with RoadRunner Recycling to help label converters achieve their zero waste-to-landfill goals. Through a venture investment in RoadRunner Recycling's Series C round, Avery Dennison is expanding the accessibility of matrix recycling and leveraging RoadRunner's technology to optimize matrix collection and recycling processes.

The pilot program focuses on the economics and logistics associated with collecting matrix waste, while identifying recycling opportunities to enable efficient future matrix circularity. The pilot is available in the Maryland, Chicago, New Jersey and Southern Pennsylvania markets.

'Through the launch of this program, we are proud to lead the way in enabling our customers – and the industry – to address the issue of matrix waste more effectively and sustainably,' said Jeroen Diderich, vice president and general manager for Avery Dennison Label and Graphic Materials North America.

RoadRunner Recycling is a growing provider of custom recycling options. The company has developed an innovative technology platform that includes machine learning algorithms that analyze waste volumes to increase recycling rates. The pilot will enable to grow the knowledge base that enhances the performance of the machine learning algorithms as more material is recycled. Additionally, the program will explore alternatives to waste-toenergy for recycled matrix waste.

### Domino acquires Lake Image Systems

Domino Printing Sciences has acquired Lake Image Systems, a producer of automated, vision-based inspection systems for quality control and data verification. Lake Image Systems' product range includes high-tech camera and lighting applications, and image data management software, which combine to produce intelligent vision systems for quality control and data verification purposes. Lake Image Systems was founded in 1994, by Martin Keats, Paul Smith, and Paul Stinson, all of whom will remain within the business as a subsidiary of Domino.

Our acquisition of Lake Image Systems will expand our coding and marking hardware and software portfolio and further enhance our ability to deliver high-performance, integrated coding solutions,' said Robert Pulford, CEO at Domino.

# News



### Cerm gains independence from Heidelberg

Management buyout at MIS specialist

The management of Cerm, a global provider of MIS software, has acquired full independence through a management buyout from Heidelberg. With this autonomous positioning of the Cerm software and brand, the company management aspires to boost the worldwide expansion of its automation technologies for labels and packaging printers.

'Our software has proven expertise in increasing the service, quality, and efficiency levels of label and packaging printers globally,' said Geert Van Damme, CEO of Cerm and one of the managers involved in the management buyout. 'We are constantly focusing on existing and new customer needs and technological evolution. To explore our full potential and fuel that growth, we needed to regain independence, and welcome additional distribution and support channels.

'We highly value the cooperation throughout the years and will continue to collaborate with Heidelberg sales and service units. We are also looking forward to expanding our deep industry expertise, offering in the label and packaging market as an independent, innovative, and an agile niche player through additional sales and service channels.'

Heidelberg and Cerm will continue to develop and distribute the company's software as Prinect Business Manager for the commercial print segment. All existing Heidelberg customer contracts and support channels will remain in place.

### Delta ModTech moves into new headquarters

US-based converting machinery manufacturer Delta ModTech has moved into its new headquarters in Ramsey, Minnesota. The company broke ground for its new site less than a year ago. Located seven miles from the previous site and set on a 43-acre lot, the new Ramsey location gives Delta additional manufacturing capacity and room for growth.

'This state-of-the-art facility has an efficient layout with Delta ModTech's customers in mind. An expansive production floor, enhanced training amenities, engineering and inspection laboratories, and larger machine demonstration area to support future innovation and allow us to better serve our customers,' noted Evan Schiebout, COO and owner of Delta ModTech.

### News in brief

### ePac expands into continental Europe

ePac Holdings Europe has established two new locations for its digital-only production plants in Lyon in France and Wrocław in Poland, in line with its previously announced expansion plans into continental Europe.

### Flint Group invests in Russia

Flint Group has invested in a new packaging inks manufacturing site located southwest of Moscow in the Kaluga region. The site will become the base for the entire Russian Flint Group Packaging Inks team, including laboratory facilities alongside technical and customer service functions. It will also be supported by the Flint Group Global Colour Centre and Flint Group Global Innovation Centre, located in Poland and Sweden respectively, which provide color and technical support to the company's customers in Russia and eastern Europe.

### I.D. Images acquires Kieran Label

I.D. Images, a pressure-sensitive label converter with headquarters in Brunswick, Ohio, has acquired Kieran Label Corporation, based in San Diego, California. Kieran Label Corporation, founded in 1979 by Kieran F. Vanier, also the founder of Vanier Graphics Corporation, specializes in pressure-sensitive labels and works in agriculture, food and beverage, health care, medical devices, cosmetic and logistics

### Frankston acquires Paco Label Systems

Frankston Packaging Company has acquired Paco Label Systems. Based in Tyler, Texas, Paco produces flexible packaging and pressure-sensitive labels, serving customers in the food and beverage, commercial packaging, and industrial products industries across the southwestern region of the US. It will continue operating in its Tyler facility, 26 miles from Frankston Packaging's headquarters in Frankston, Texas.

### Avery Dennison BOPP films certified

Avery Dennison's BOPP film portfolio has been certified to comply with the Association of Plastic Recyclers (APR) Critical Guidance for HDPE recycling. Avery Dennison is the first label manufacturer to achieve certification in accordance with the new guidelines.

### MBO at DataLase

DataLase, a coding and marking specialist, has acquired full independence through a management buyout from Sato, one of the leading global providers of auto-ID technologies. Based in Cheshire, UK, DataLase was acquired by Sato in December 2016. The change in direction is centered on Sato's aim to focus resources on its auto-ID business, while DataLase looks to push forward with increased technological advancement and to further develop its photonic printing offering.



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# News



### SC Etiketten joins Optimum Group

Optimum Group adds 13th converter

German label converter SC Etiketten is the latest printer to become a part of Optimum Group, which now consists of 13 member companies based in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Denmark.

The addition of SC Etiketten further strengthens the position of the group as one of the leading labels and flexible packaging players in Europe. The group now consists of 13 converters, with each member company having its own product and market combination.

'SC Etiketten has developed well in recent years, in which we have achieved significant growth based on a strong and dedicated team of employees and by investing in more capacity,' said Ralf Christoffer, managing director of SC Etiketten.

The current management of SC Etiketten will remain in place. By joining the group, the German converter will benefit from increased capacity, a wider range of self-adhesive labels and flexible packaging products, and increased supply reliability.

Marc van Rijswijk, CFO, and André Prophitius, CMO of Optimum Group, added: 'We are excited about the collaboration and convinced of the value that SC Etiketten will bring to Optimum Group.

'In terms of culture, there is a great fit between SC Etiketten and the Optimum Group, and we are confident about the future prospects of the combined group.'

The acquisition of SC Etiketten is the sixth by the Optimum Group since 2018, including most recently added members such as Denmark-based converter FlexoPrint Group, and Netherlands-based converters Telrol, Kolibri Labels and Megaflex, among others.

# Univacco starts construction of Taiwan warehouse

Foil manufacturer Univacco has marked the start of construction work on a new automatic warehouse center in Tainan, Taiwan. It is due to be completed in late 2021.

The new warehouse center will support the manufacturer's global distribution network and employ intelligent production lines aimed at improving production and lead times.

# News



Screen and Lintec have partnered to ensure their technologies work smoothly together, producing food and pharma labels in accordance with the highest regulatory standards

# Screen and Lintec partner for food packaging safety

Companies partner for low migration labels and adhesives

Screen has teamed up with adhesives specialist Lintec to enhance the availability of low migration labels and adhesives in response to the growing demand for technology that protects packaged food from toxic substances.

'We consider food packaging safety a responsibility of the entire supply chain. We therefore work with partners whenever possible to enhance the availability of safe and low migration packaging,' said Taishi Motoshige, sales and operations manager at Screen Europe. 'Interest in our low migration label print technology remains strong, even in corona times.'

Screen launched Truepress JetL350UV+ LM, low migration label printer three years ago. It uses low migration inks to offer enhanced safety by using a nitrogen purge mechanism for accelerating the curing of UV inks. Although low-migration labels are crucial for food packaging safety, the choice of adhesives used to stick the labels to packaging is equally important, therefore Lintec has been investing in R&D to improve its ultra-low migration adhesives. Now, Screen and Lintec have partnered to ensure their technologies work smoothly together, producing food and pharmaceutical labels in accordance with the highest regulatory standards.

'Safety issues related to the migration of ink and adhesive components throughout the food and pharmaceutical supply chain, as well as the potential health hazards that they could pose to end-users, are causes of concern for brand owners and manufacturers,' added Kazuya Katoh, general manager of administration department, R&D division at Lintec. 'Therefore, label and packaging suppliers face growing demand for solutions that ensure products are protected from contamination caused by inks and adhesives.'

### Lintec Europe opens office in Spain

Lintec Europe has opened an office in Barcelona, Spain, headed by Andrés Blanco Flores, to provide local support to customers. Andy Voss, MD of Lintec Europe (UK) said: 'We are delighted to have Andrés on board, heading up and overseeing the Spanish market.'



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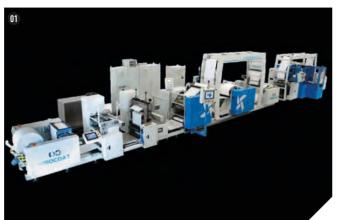
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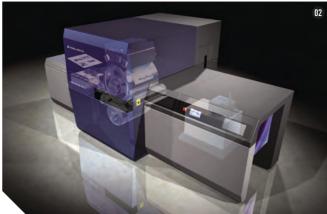






# New Products











### • Procoat system

### Maan Engineering and LemuGroup

Maan Engineering and LemuGroup have launched their new Procoat series of coating and converting systems - developed jointly – to supply the label industry with an all-in-one system for high-quality label production lines. The Procoat series consists of a range of three options for customizable label production lines, offering printing, siliconizing, hotmelt coating and converting units, all integrated in a single production line. This portfolio offers label manufacturers a choice between standard PS material coating and lamination, linerless material production or a hybrid that allows for the manufacture of both products.

### FireJet One

### Phoseon

Phoseon Technology has introduced FireJet One, claimed to be the industry's smallest, highest-powered member of

their air-cooled product line. FireJet One lamps are premium 20W/cm2 UV LED curing lamps designed primarily for the inkjet, flexographic and screen printing markets where high power in a compact form factor, is a key requirement.

### Accuriofet KM-1e sheet-fed inkjet press

### Konica Minolta

UV inkjet technology allows the AccurioJet KM-1e to print, without pre-coating, on a wide range of media including plastic substrates, foiled and embossed paper, metallic media and synthetic substrates. It will accept paper stocks in a thickness range between 0.06mm and 0.6mm. The press prints at a resolution of 1200 x 1200 DPI at 3,000 B2+ (585 x 750mm) sheets/hour, with automatic duplex printing at 1,500 s/h. An exciting development on the KM-1e is a new online interface allowing direct connection to third party post processing

lines. Konica Minolta is working closely with partner MGI on integrating MGI's JetVarnish digital embellishment equipment with the KM1-e, including digital varnishing, digital cold foil and laser cutting. A tape inserter further improves work efficiency in post-processing.

### 1 PicoJet 254 digital press Dantex

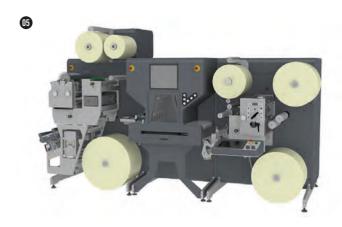
Dantex Digital has launched a new digital label press offering 5-color reel-to-reel UV system with up to 10in print width. The PicoJet 254, which can operate at speeds up to 75/min (250ft/min), is built for high volume printing capability offering production in excess of eight million linear meters per year. Thanks to the 2.5pl dot size and an effective resolution at 1200 x 1200 DPI, it is capable of printing micro text and the smallest of text point size. The software can also restrict the outline of the text, enabling readability even on the smallest

Web Stream Technology, an automatic web reverse function minimizing waste between jobs, as well as the Automatic Splice Recognition allowing the print-heads to move away from the splice during reel changes.

### **№** *LF140e label finishing system* DTM Print

The DTM LF140e is a compact system for simple label processing on-site. It can be used to handle unwinding, laminating and digital contour cutting, waste matrix removing, slitting and rewinding the finished rolls. Pre-printed rolls with a media width between 100mm (3.94in) and 140mm (5.51in) and a maximum roll diameter of 200mm (7.87in) can be processed making it suitable for the majority of roll printers, including the inkjet printer LX2000e from Primera Technology or the toner-based LED printer OKI Pro 1050. The optical black mark registration of details. The system incorporates through an integrated camera

# New Products









and LED spotlight enables an accurate repetitive precision. The control unit includes an integrated 11.6in touch screen for operating all functions and processes. The LF140e also included numerous connections such as USB, Ethernet and wireless connectivity for accessing external cutting jobs.

### **15** *LC350* compact laser finishing unit

### Grafisk Maskinfabrik

The LC350 joins GM's expanding portfolio of 350mm web width converting lines and is a compact and fully digital laser finishing machine offering varnishing and spot varnishing with the SmartFlexo semi-rotary module, as well as lamination, cold foil, web slitting and dual rewind. Other options include corona treater, a SmartSlit slitting module with automatic knife positioning system and a barcode reader for fast job change or quick recall of existing jobs. The LC350 is built on the foundation of its predecessor,

the LC330, with the new wider width and more powerful laser heads, available in 250 and 350W versions. It also features a new electronic platform and a larger touchscreen.

### M N730i digital label press Domino

Domino Printing Sciences has launched a N730i press, the 'most significant' product the company has launched since it started in the digital label press business. It is also the first press to use new Generation 7 inkjet platform. The N730i incorporates new features including the Brother Bitstart 1,200 DPI piezo print head, the SunLight graphical user interface, and the latest automated Domino i-Tech intelligent technology featuring i-Tech SetAlign and i-Tech CleanCap2. The new press is designed to print all jobs, including the 'silk-screen-like' white at 70m/min (230ft/min) with consistent print quality. The N730i is available with

optional flexo stations for priming to facilitate consistent quality even on challenging media types, and for spot colors or varnishing, or for reverse white for shrink sleeve applications.

### @ eRS2T3 sleeve seaming equipment

### **Enprom**

The new machine features a non-stop three-shaft turret rewinder and is based on Enprom's patented Smart Wheel innovation – a motorized roller solvent application system providing high seaming reliability. It is driven by eight servo motors and includes two independent tension controls on both the unwinder and rewinder to avoid errors and alterations in the width of the labels. Designed to perform splices at 500m/min (1,640ft/min), the time required to perform a reel discharge cycle is reduced by almost 50 percent, thereby enabling high speed functionality controlled by a single operator. Moreover,

the eRS2T3 includes advanced ergonomics and provides an increased focus on safety, incorporating an infrared optical barrier to safeguard operators.

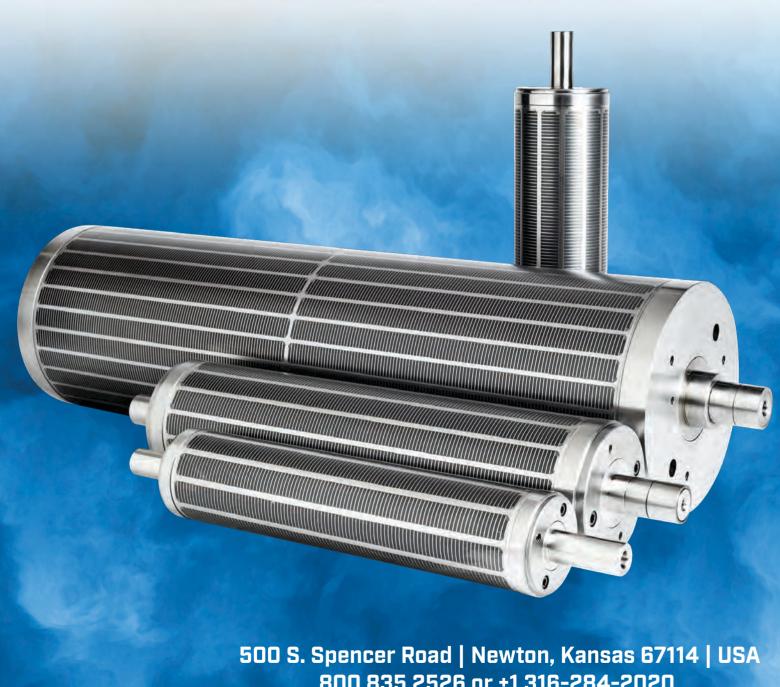
**6** 

### 1 2002 printhead

Designed to deliver 720 DPI print and performance across a range of applications including ceramics, glass, packaging and labels, the new Xaar 2002 has been developed specifically to provide fast and easy integration and is ready to use straight out of the box. Using drop-in printhead alignment, mechanical tolerance improvements allow the printheads to be dropped into the printbar more easily, enabling faster set-up times. Thanks to its new Tuned Actuator Manufacturing – TAM2 – and Xaar AcuChp technology, the new printhead also delivers improved color uniformity across the width of the printhead, further reducing installation times and maximizing uptime.



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# New Products









 Floor graphic products for roll label market

### Mactac

Mactac has launched interior floor graphic products for roll label converters, including the company's Rebel multi-print media with Permacolor Permaflex overlaminates. The new narrow web format floor graphic products can be used for social distancing, safety signage on a wide variety of indoor surfaces, such as standard tile, vinyl, linoleum, terrazzo, ceramic tile, smooth sealed concrete, and hardwood floors. Rebel multi-print is a 3.0-mil versatile, high-quality media designed to provide high performance and functionality for interior floor graphic applications. It features a removable acrylic pressure-sensitive adhesive and is supported with a 90# polycoated liner. A non-topcoated vinyl technology is available with a gloss or matte white finish and is suitable for flexo and digital printing. The range has an indoor durability of up to five years.

### **10** VTI and DF1 digital finishers Rotoflex

Rotoflex has launched two off-line digital finishers, DF1 and VTI Series. The DF1 is a semi-rotary off-line converting machine designed for short run labels. It is built on a robust platform with finishing speed up to 750 ft/min (228.6 m/min) for full-rotary and 250 ft/min (76.2 m/min) for semi-rotary, with accurate semi-rotary die-cutting functionality. The quick set-up and dynamic operation allows converters to decorate, die-cut, slit, and strip labels in a single step. According to Rotoflex, the new DF1 offers high production speed and 50 percent faster changeovers than conventional systems. The new VTI Series is an advanced table-top finishing machine developed to meet stringent regulations of the pharma and high-security packaging industries. It features an advanced inspection and finishing option

### **1** Carbon neutral label film Innovia

Innovia Films has launched Encore C45cn, claimed to be the first carbon neutral. ISCC certified BOPP label film contribute to reducing carbon footprint and the use of fossil resources. Stephen Weber, key account director, labels, at Innovia, said: 'In addition to being carbon neutral Encore C45cn is a high MD stiffness 45um BOPP bubble film for automatic label dispensing performance. This could allow the replacement of standard 50um films giving a further 10 percent material saving.'

### 1 ScanSure barcode verification tool

### Toshiba Tec

The new technology incorporates DataLogic intelligent 2D scanner and has been developed for use with the Toshiba Tec B-EX range of 4 and 6-in industrial printers. It offers two operating modes. In fast mode, it uses checks

based on ISO 15416 and ISO 15415 to ensure that the barcode on a printed label is accurate and perfectly readable to the specified ANSI grade. If it detects an issue, it provides an immediate alert. In void mode, it additionally automatically rewinds the label roll, scores out the defective label, and re-prints a replacement if needed.

### ColorProof Go

### GMG Color

ColorProof Go enables users run and manage jobs via a web browser or smartphone for greater flexibility and control in proofing. It offers an intuitive user interface with simple actions such as drag and drop into the appropriate folders. All connected proof systems are controlled and managed via a web browser.



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

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# Installations









1 26 HP Indigo 25K

ePac Flexible Packaging, US All-digital flexible packaging converter ePac will be the first printer in the world to install the new HP Indigo 25K digital press, as it expands into additional locations in North America, Europe and Asia-Pacific. The agreement to supply 26 HP Indigo 25K digital presses will create a 76-press global fleet by 2021. A new ePac site in Sacramento, California, will serve as the first installation of the new HP Indigo 25K. 'ePac is completely changing the way small and medium size businesses around the world can access new markets and level the playing field with fast, top quality flexible packaging,' said Jack Knott, CEO of ePac Flexible Packaging.

Kodak Flexcel NX Acme, South Africa Acme Graphics has purchased the system for its flexo plate manufacturing facility in Cape Town to complement its

Johannesburg and Durban sites. 'The system gives us the biggest range of plate choices in the South African market. We can process conventional digital plates, flat-top dot plates with or without surface engineering, and Kodak Flexcel NX plates with ink-saving DigiCap technology,' said Hauke Liefferink, managing director of Acme Graphics.

 Nilpeter FA-17 Macfarlane Labels, UK Macfarlane has seen growing demand for labeling and packaging products, leading to the acquisition of a new 10-color Nilpeter FA-17. The new press joins a fleet of five other Nilpeter presses at Macfarlane. 'This significant investment for our label business in Kilmarnock, Scotland, is in response to increasing and changing demands from our customers and their consumers,' commented Angela Campbell, resealable labels director at Macfarlane Labels. 'This latest technology in

printing produces the highest label quality to ensure that our customers' brands are perfectly presented. The press allows us to meet our customers' ever changing needs and demands, led by innovative marketing trends.'

Xeikon PX3000

Premier Markings, Canada The Mississauga-based converter has installed the new press to combine UV inkjet technology with its existing Xeikon dry toner machine and further develop its digital label printing business. 'It was a tough decision to choose what type of inkjet press to go for, as there are several alternatives to the Panther (PX3000) from Xeikon. Eventually, an impressive demo at the Xeikon Chicago Innovation Center as well as having the very reliable team at hand made the difference, and we opted for the PX3000,' said Gary Moody, owner of Premier Markings. 'Furthermore, the fact that the PX3000 uses the Xeikon X-800 as the digital front-end was a big factor. It is an

invaluable tool in our business to make the most of digital printing and the fact that all our presses are driven by that same front-end is a big advantage.'

**™** MPS EFA+

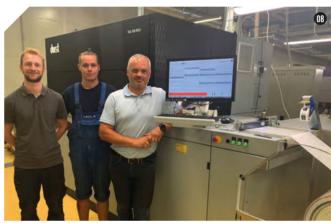
Etpa Packaging, Greece The EFA+ installed at Etpa Packaging is a fully automated multi-substrate flexo press designed for label production and flexible packaging printing on various substrates. It enables operators to maximize press performance, thanks to its high level of automation. The press also features MPS' 'Talk to me' connectivity platform for data exchange, performance monitoring, pre-loading of job settings and remote support. 'The MPS presses in my production facility allow me to sleep well at night,' said Giannis Sfatkidis, production manager at Etpa Packaging. 'MPS has been always quick to take care of any issues and has proven to deliver very reliable machines.'

# Installations









6 Konica Minolta AccurioLabel 230

Direct Labels, UK During the Covid-19 pandemic, Direct Labels has seen demand for more flexibility, with customers reducing the number of labels in each order but ordering more frequently. 'Out of adversity comes opportunity, and we are taking that opportunity and extending our offering to cover all possible label needs of our customers, whether they are small start-ups or bigger companies,' said Chris Eveson, MD of Direct Labels UK. 'We can now take on very small jobs that we would previously not have been able to look at, because it is so cost-efficient to print on the AccurioLabel 230. We are also moving work over to the press simply because of how

Esko CDI Crystal 5080 XPS reprocentret, Denmark The specialist in platemaking for flexible packaging and labels has

quick it is to run the jobs on it.'

installed an Esko CDI Crystal 5080 accommodate everything from XPS, the fourth such machine at its facility in Vejle, Denmark. 'reprocentret will immediately benefit from significant quality and efficiency gains from the CDI Crystal XPS, as it uses LEDs that require no warm-up time and emit even light to deliver highly consistent plate exposure,' said James Mason, regional business director, EMEA North at Esko.

6 Gallus RCS 430

Fortis Solutions Group, US The converter has installed the new press from Heidelberg at its Napa, California, production facility to further expand its ability to execute intricate wine and spirits label designs. 'The RCS 430 definitely has a niche for the market we are in,' said Brendan Kinzie, president of wine and spirits at Fortis Solutions Group. 'We work with many talented creative agencies and designers, and their pursuit of excellence in design means that we need to offer a platform that can

offset and flexo to digital, all with the highest level of execution. This press allows us to receive a job and adjust the press to the label design to create exactly what our demanding clients need in a matter of a few minutes."

**™** Comexi F3

SR Embalagens, Brazil Among the reasons for the purchase of the 8-color press, the converter lists reduction in delivery time, competitive time-to-market, robustness and reliability, and printing quality, as well as low production costs. The new Comexi F3 also features electronic systems for high quality printing on different substrates, from plastic films to paper or laminated structures. 'There has been a resumption of the Brazilian economy, making it very important for us to be prepared and offer our customers the best solutions. For this reason, we rely on Comexi,' said Sergio Cameiro, CEO of SR Embalagens.

Durst Tau RSCi

LabelPrint OÜ, Estonia The Tallin-based label converter has installed the new Tau RSCi, becoming the first beta-testing site for new single-pass UV inkjet press, announced by Durst at Labelexpo Europe 2019. The new Tau RSCi features print widths of 330, 420 or 508mm (13, 16.5 or 20in) and a higher printing speed of up to 100 linear m/ min. New features include a high opacity white print mode for an increased screen-like opacity and a high-speed white mode that allows high speed printing at 80 linear m/min of all colors, including white. 'This new press will mainly be used to transfer longer run flexo jobs onto a digital platform,' said Sten Sarap, owner of LabelPrint OÜ. 'It is too early to make big statements. However, we are very confident that this new press, with its revolutionary print quality and high printing speed, will help us to reduce production cost and improve lead times.'



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# Installations









### 1 Jetsci Colornovo inkjet press Maa Gayatri Offset Printer, India

Monotech Systems has installed a Jetsci Colornovo UV inkjet press at Maa Gayatri Offset Printer, a sister concern of The Hindustan Offset in Haridwar. The press is equipped with CMYK+W UV inkjet and features inter-color LED pinning, chill drum UV curing, corona, web cleaner, spot registered flexo, cold foil and lamination, 27in semi/full rotary die-cut, slitting and dual rewind, advanced color management and RIP solution for fast ripping, as well quick accurate color matching and reproduction. It can print and deliver the finished label roll at a speed of 50m/min at 600 x 600 DPI resolution. Gulshan Bhatia and Pradeep Bhatia of The Hindustan Offset Printers, Haridwar, Uttrakhand, said: 'Due to the economic slowdown, it is the best time to invest in digital label printing. We have done extensive sampling and evaluation before we zeroed in on Colornovo.'

### Rotocon Ecoline RDF 330 Impress Print Services, South Africa

The Durban, South Africa-based converter chose Rotocon's Ecoline after conducting a thorough investigation into off-line finishing machines for printed labels to complement its digital capabilities. 'We contacted Rotocon because of its wellestablished installation base in the local market, the company's reputation for balancing valuefor-money machine reliability and quality with a Durban-based service team of two technicians,' commented Suhail Agjee, co-director at Impress Print Services. 'We started negotiations and soon realized that the team could meet our requirements, including matching the specifications and pricing of a semi-rotary print station (and including it in the RDF 330 design for the first time) to help us save on printing plate costs.

### **1** Daco DF350SR Lemon Labels, UK

UK-based converter Lemon Labels has installed a Daco DF350SR digital line to increase overall production capacity and expand its finishing capabilities. 'The Daco DF350SR is the perfect next step for us. Alongside our existing Daco DTD250 machines, this will allow us to increase capacity to deal with our growing demand,' said Trevor Voisey, founder of Lemon Labels. 'The DF350SR gives us the flexibility to offer in-house label tinting by using a RotoMetrics tinting kit, varnishing and single-color print with the UV flexo station. Previously we had to outsource this requirement with varying degrees of success. The semi-rotary running mode also allows us to die-cut to registration and finish short to medium run digitally printed label work produced on our dry toner digital label printer.'

 Martin Automatic butt splicer and rewinder

ProPrint Group, UK ProPrint Group, based in Wellingborough, UK, has invested in a Martin Automatic MBS non-stop butt splicer and a non-stop LRD rewinder for its latest Edale FL3 flexo press dedicated to the production of linerless labels. Bob Green, operations manager at ProPrint Group, said: 'We were seriously impressed with the Martin Automatic installations at Desmedt Labels near Brussels, which has effectively automated all of the company's narrow web presses. The owner, Henri Köhler, was very open and helpful with production figures and we could see with our own eyes how smoothly the whole production process flowed.'



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



# *Appointments*



Lykke Trusbak Director label segment Grafisk Maskinfabrik (GM) Trusbak has 25 years of experience in the graphic arts and label industries and joins GM from Konica Minolta.



**Jim Carstairs** Regional sales manager Flexo Wash Carstairs will work primarily with customers from the Midwest to the West Coast while leveraging his extensive contacts throughout the USA.



Laurie Geldenhuys Managing director Troika Systems With the appointment, the company seeks to further expand its global growth, focusing on efficiency, waste reduction and sustainability.

Lori Bitar Chair

AIM North America

development manager,

appointed by AIM North

America as chair of its

Bitar will seek deeper

Pharma Working Group.

insight into technological

advances impacting the

healthcare industry and

facilitate the growth of

AIDC technologies and

standards in pharma.

work with the Pharma

Working Group to

Flexcon's market

Lori Bitar, has been



Holger Selenka Sales manager Asia Pacific Vetaphone The goal for the appointment is to further develop business in this high-growth market. Selenka has more than 30 years of surface treatment experience.



Richard Rindo Vice president, US sales Fujifilm North America Fujifilm North America has promoted Rich Rindo to vice president, US sales, commercial print strategy and business development with oversight of its graphic systems division.



Kara Weiner COOFlexcon North America Weiner will focus on cross-functional collaboration and improve on operational improvements.

Bernd Weber Chief financial officer Feldmuehle The company's shareholders appointed Weber to the management with sole power of representation responsible for accounting, IT, human resources and treasury.

Garrett Forde CEO**SPGPrints** Garrett will succeed Dick Joustra who is retiring this year. Joustra will ensure a seamless transfer of his responsibilities to Forde and will remain a member of the supervisory board.



Paul Little Managing director CPS Group Little will be responsible for the strategic development and leadership of the group with a view to taking its growth within the UK and wider European markets to the next level.

Annette Stube

Stube has been

Stora Enso

Head of sustainability

appointed as executive

of sustainability and a

member of the Group

Leadership Team.

vice president, head



Christoph Michalski Chief executive officer BillerudKorsnäs president and CEO since Michalski will assume his new position November







**Chris Smith** 



**Scott Derouin** Regional sales manager Paper Converting Machine Company Derouin will oversee printing, coating and laminating (PCL). He will be responsible for the sale of PCMC's PCL products in the eastern parts of the United States and Canada.





Chuck Pemble Business development manager, Americas XaarPemble will be responsible for building and growing OEM and integration channels.



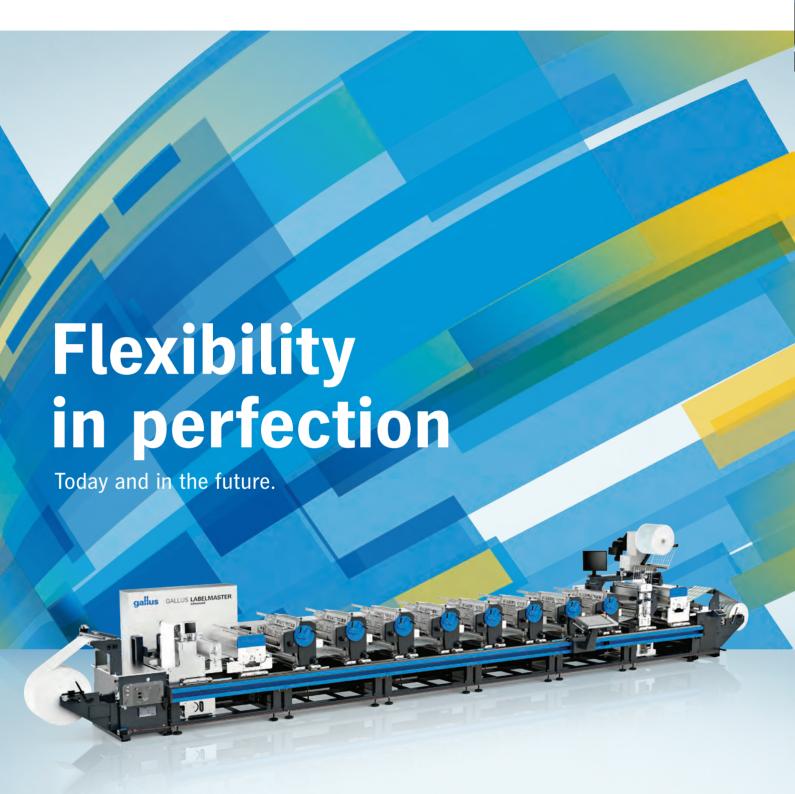
Shane Govert Product manager, North America, Domino Govert will manage the company's digital printing division in North America to support the label and corrugated markets.



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







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# The Andy Thomas-Emans column Converter consolidation continues

Accelerating consolidation of label converting businesses is changing the shape of the industry

he label converting industry has historically been driven by smaller (so-called 'mom+pop') sized companies, founded by entrepreneurial individuals and often by senior press operators leaving to start their own converting businesses.

According to L&L and Labelexpo's global database, around 80 percent of the 35,000 label converting businesses still fit this model, with turnovers below 3-5m USD. Although it is less common to see start-ups in the developed economies, it still remains the main driver for growth in developing economies – which are themselves the drivers for global industry growth.

In fact in the developed label markets of Europe and North America, consolidation of label converting businesses is accelerating, changing the shape of the industry in a profound way. There are many factors at work. The retirement of the first-generation of label business founders; the requirement from brand owners for redundant capacity and local servicing for their regional hubs; the need to reinvest more frequently to stay competitive; and the need to diversify into package printing technologies.

Of course converter consolidation is not new. When I started writing about the label industry in the 1990s, there were giant, mainly US-based packaging groups buying up family or privately-owned European label companies — Clondalkin, Chesapeake for example — as well as European examples like the Wace group.

Not all corporate acquisitions in this period were successful. The most typical mistake was to destroy the entrepreneurial driving force that made the smaller companies successful in the first place. The label industry, unlike, say, wide-web flexible packaging, is not a scalable business, in the sense that simply adding capacity does not necessarily equate to more efficiency and market power.

### Personal relationships

Most smaller converters are successful precisely because of the personal business relationships their owners and managers have built up, often on a hyper local level. Simply adding them to a bigger group may make them more efficient – by allowing pooling of procurement for example – but if the founders are let go, those personal relationships can no longer be taken for granted by a new team of corporate customer relationship managers.

Corporate acquisition may also stifle the agility required in an industry where technologies and end user markets change with bewildering rapidity. Entrepreneurs who were taking decisions based on experience, close customer contact and gut feel were now having to go through multiple layers of management before investment decisions were approved.

Those lessons seem to have been learned, as two current case studies demonstrate. Firstly, the growth of the All4Labels Group,

which recently expanded to include Italian shrink sleeve label converter Rotomet and the roll-fed activities of the GPS Group. All4Labels, which brought together X-Label, Rako and Baumgarten in 2016, now has 29 production facilities worldwide, with over 3,000 employees and an annual revenue in excess of 520m EUR. All this has been achieved without an actual acquisition. The group was, and continues to be, based around inviting family-owned label converters to join up. This allows All4Labels to leverage the advantages of global scale with those of local engagement, where customers continue to engage with known and trusted sales teams.

### "The label industry is not a scalable business: simply adding capacity does not necessarily equate to more efficiency and market power"

The second case study is the rapid growth of the Optimum Group, backed by IK Investment Partners, which recently added German converter SC Etiketten to its roster of 12 converters based in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Denmark. This makes Optimum group one of the biggest label converting groups in Europe, a feat achieved in only two years.

Again the interesting point is that each of the members has kept its own identity, and the private owners and their management teams have been left to run their companies while being integrated into management and procurement structures of the Optimum Group. Private owners have also reinvested in Optimum stocks.

In the US, converter consolidation continues apace. The recent acquisition of Paco Label Systems by Frankston Packaging Company demonstrates two interesting acquisition trends in the US: adding complementary package print technologies to a 'one-stop' group hub, and reaching more deeply into regional markets.

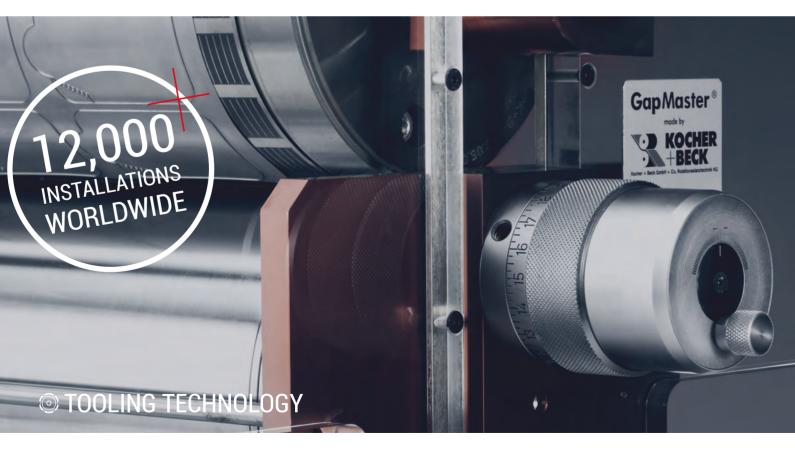
Thus Frankston's portfolio already includes cartons, boxes, flexible packaging and corrugated. Paco will bring added depth to its pressure-sensitive label and flexible packaging capabilities, as well as deepen its regional reach into the southwestern region of the US.

Consolidation, long a powerful centrifugal force in the supplier and brand ends of the chain, now seems to be an unstoppable force also on the converter side.



For more columns from Andy Thomas-Emans, go to www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/andy-thomas





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# When brands stand up

Branding and design columnist Vicki Strull explores brands taking a stand on social issues and how that shows up in their packaging

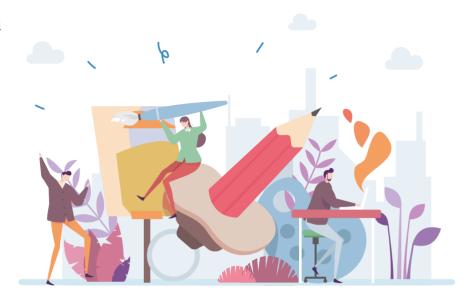
n the midst of recent protests, pride marches, plastic-free campaigns, political division and the Covid pandemic, more brands are taking a stand on the issues facing our world today. And it's not just brands recognizing their responsibility to show up and speak out; consumers want to hear how brands feel about the issues they care about.

There are hundreds of instances where brands have used their influence to affect change and more than half of consumers believe that brands have the power to solve social issues. In the past few months, we have seen a more concentrated focus on issues-related messaging, advertising, labels and packaging because we are in a state of crisis on so many different fronts. What's new this time around? This time, it's not going to stop. Consumers will continue to expect brands to take responsibility for improving the world.

When a brand stands up for an issue, how does that show up in its packaging? You may have seen the ways in which these brands have taken a stand: as part of #metoo, Brawny launched a 'Strength has no Gender' campaign. In March, in honor of Women's History Month, KIND created the limited-edition Equality Bar to support the ERA. And in June, during Pride Month, Skittles gave up its signature rainbow to create limited-edition black, gray and white packages (and donated a portion of its proceeds to a leading advocacy group).

While many brands turn to packaging design to voice their stance, packaging itself is an environmental issue. Thousands of brands have dedicated innovative solutions and support to protect the planet and reduce waste. Allbirds, for example, was the first brand I saw that produced a carbon footprint label for its products. Like a food label that details calories, sugar and other health information, Allbirds tells customers how much CO2 was emitted during the construction of its shoes. (Unilever is following suit by including carbon footprint on its labels.) Allbirds is a shoe company that was founded on its commitment to renewable resources. The company makes its shoes out of wool, because wool is a renewable resource.

Creating a sustainable future is woven into the fabric of Allbirds' corporate culture; so is its commitment to hold each team member accountable to achieving that goal. That's a critical differentiator: brands can't just pay lip service to a cause. They must be authentic and consistent when taking



a stand. It must align with their purpose, or what Simon Sinek, one of my favorite modern-day philosophers and authors, calls their 'why'.

Another example occurred at the start of the Covid pandemic. With the world's hotels and restaurants closed, craft breweries had fewer customers to sell to. More than 600 breweries and distilleries quickly pivoted to manufacturing hand sanitizer. They saw the need and they felt strongly about a healthy world - and yes, that includes the health of their business and their employees. Many printers that were creating labels for wine, beer and liquor soon shifted to make labels for hand sanitizer.

### "I have this notion that design can change the world"

It wasn't just about revenue and keeping people employed – although those are valid goals in themselves. Many of those same breweries are donating a percentage of proceeds to local and national restaurant relief funds. They are putting their purpose into action and showing up as true community partners, giving to the very establishments that don't have enough business to buy their products or employ staff.

### Design to change the world

I have this notion that design can change the world. Perhaps it's by using renewable resources for packaging materials or creating designed-to-fit boxes that eliminate waste. But in the coming days of (hopefully) economic recovery, I'm thinking bigger and broader. For example, say I add an embellishment or foil stamp to a packaging design. And say that embellishment helps increase sales for the brand, and that increase means more people can keep their jobs. That in turn means employees can survive this crisis better - mentally, physically and financially. Suddenly, that one embellished design could be changing the lives of entire families.

And that's not all. When sales increase, production increases; the company stays afloat and it can purchase more from its suppliers.

In turn, those suppliers might now be able to avoid lay-offs. And so it goes: the potential for purpose combined with action to create far-reaching change.

With today's consumers increasingly more purpose- and issues-driven, there's never been a more pivotal time for brands to be vocal and visual about taking a stand. Because if a brand isn't taking responsibility for affecting change on the issues that are meaningful to them, their consumers, and their communities, consumers will switch to a brand that does.

......



Design strategist Vicki Strull presented at Labelexpo's Virtual Label Summit and will speak at TLMI's Virtual Annual Meeting on Nov 11-12



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# How to evaluate an acquisition: Part IV

Bob Cronin of The Open Approach on the importance of laws and regulations, culture, and management team

any entrepreneurs hold back from buying, selling or merging because of the complexities of the process. Looking at everything that needs to get done can seem overwhelming. However, if the objectives behind a transaction are wise (and the perceived gains are realistic), then the challenges

As you read story after story of M&A in labels and packaging – accompanied by the giddy executive quotes – it can be easy to think that every deal inspires a meteoric financial rise. But the truth is that good transactions yield a lot more than increased revenues. They deliver new channels, geographic exposure, manufacturing capabilities, brand visibility, technologies, people capital, logistics and more. What you're truly doing in an M&A deal is building a better company. Smart objectives encompass this thinking.

In this fourth and final installment in our due diligence series, we look at some of the less-obvious elements at play in every deal – laws and regulations, organizational culture, and management team – and discuss how these things can affect your success. While it may seem like these are 'givens', their dynamics can tank a deal even well after it's closed. Because of this, it's important to understand them, and ensure you can effectively navigate their implications now and anytime down the road.

**Laws and regulations** – Every company is bound by the laws and regulations of their respective city, county, state, country, province, etc. These all have different requirements for an M&A transaction, including such things as tax structure, obligations for liabilities, contracts, intellectual property rights and technology licenses. But they also affect human resources, including employee termination and confidentiality agreements, which almost always arise during an ownership change. These can be especially noteworthy when work is done in highly regulated industries (e.g. banking, healthcare and insurance). Some of their restrictions can greatly impact the transaction's benefits.

Don't assume that the governing obligations of your company will be the same as those of the other entity, or that they will just vanish under a transaction. You need good counseling on what you can and cannot do. You also need to understand

labor issues and ensure that your HR



Many small and medium-sized label companies get by with minimal HR functionality, or have various family members as the leads. Consult with your advisor and set up a solid HR structure (internal or external), so you'll be ready to take on the personnel, payroll, and other issues that will ensure the success of your

### "What you're truly doing in an M&A deal is building a better company"

Culture – Organizational culture is of significant importance in M&A. Culture dictates how decisions are made and changes are implemented. When a company is acquired by or merged with another, the two cultures must mesh. The more similar the cultures, the easier the transaction process – and the greater the likelihood for success of both the deal and the resulting enterprise. Conflicting cultures can make it difficult to accomplish much of anything.

As an owner, you may not see your culture objectively or note its differences from that of the entity on the other side. Ask your team for their perceptions of the two styles. If your advisor specializes in the labels and packaging space, get their take too. Many cultures can be merged effectively, but some issues are tougher to manage. For example, if you have a traditional, top-down structure but your target is more entrepreneurial, things can get tricky. Leverage the expertise of your tenured advisor to devise a strategy by which your new entity and people can truly thrive.

Management teams – One of the greatest potential yields of a merger or acquisition is the resultant leadership 'dream team'. But deals are often exit opportunities for key players. Thus, your due diligence needs to examine who's coming, who's leaving, and who's leading the new enterprise.

Sometimes, owners want to remain in an advisory capacity, or an acquired entity wishes to protect the roles of its top brass. But you'll want to make sure you have all the proper skill sets in the right roles. In most businesses, there are few people who move the needle toward success every day and understand how to navigate the issues, people, and customers to make it happen. A critical part of due diligence is making sure that remaining leadership can deliver on the objectives behind the transaction – the idea we discussed at the start.

A thorough due diligence process will indeed bring up the issues and potential hurdles of the deal. Examine these realistically to determine their significance and how you can best navigate. Knowledge is power. Good guidance is indispensable. Whether this is a one-time move or ongoing strategy, embark on these actions wisely. Your investment in due diligence is an investment in your company. Done well, it will indeed deliver the return you desire.



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# Rewarding innovation

Federico d'Annunzio has been on a long journey of technological exploration and innovation since his company Gidue first burst onto the scene at Labelexpo Europe 1999. Now he has been awarded the label industry's top honor, as Andy Thomas-Emans reports

fter 21 years leading innovation in the label and package print industry, Federico d'Annunzio has been awarded the R. Stanton Avery Global Achievement Award for 2020.

Sponsored by Avery Dennison, the R. Stanton Avery Global Achievement Award recognizes 'an innovation or idea that has helped transform and progress the label industry across the world'.

In his constant questioning of the limits of flexography, Federico d'Annunzio follows in the footsteps of Stan Avery's pioneering spirit and values, and the award is a recognition of that by his industry peers.

This author has followed d'Annunzio's career since Labelexpo Europe 1999 when the Flower flexo printhead was first launched - through to the development of Gidue into one of the world's leading flexo press manufacturers, and to the sale of Nuova Gidue to Bobst, where d'Annunzio was able to develop his ideas on flexo automation on a broader canvas.

The Global Achievement Award criteria also specify that the winner must have taken part in industry organizations and events, and d'Annunzio has long been an advocate of wider industry involvement in innovation. In 2007 he was appointed to the board of Finat, the European label association, where he is widely acknowledged to have led a highly successful membership drive and focused on the need for innovation in the industry.

"A central feature of d'Annunzio's world view is that cooperation among industry peers including competitors is central to moving the industry forward"

Indeed, a central feature of d'Annunzio's world view is that cooperation among industry peers - including competitors - is central to moving the industry forward.

'My role is not itself innovation, but involving all the stakeholders, including trade show organizers and the media, in the innovation process. Like with Revo

for extended color gamut printing and UVFoodSafe to bring UV flexo to the packaging industry [see boxout], it is about involving a lot of players around the problem. Innovation is an industry move, you cannot do it on your own. Innovation is a process which involves a lot of people and technology itself is not enough. And if someone is better than you, let's involve them. It has to be open, or you do it only for yourself and a few customers.'

### A Flower blooms

Federico d'Annunzio began his technology career in a rather unlikely fashion designing a machine to manufacture LP record sleeves – before settling on the print industry ('I told my parents it was either the printing industry or the edible oil industry'). After spending ten years as the Italian sales arm for US-built flexo presses, d'Annunzio became convinced that UV would be the future for flexography, which up to then was dominated by water-based and solvent.

'I realized that I had to design a flexo printing head built only for UV,' recalls d'Annunzio. 'Printheads designed for water-based and solvent presses had to be big and strong enough to contain the power required to dry these inks. With UV flexo we could go much smaller.'

d'Annunzio founded the company Gidue along with Cristina Toffolo and first showed the new technology at Labelexpo Europe

The print unit d'Annunzio designed was called the Flower because it opens up 'like a flower' on press stop, with the anilox, rubber roller and doctor blade assembly automatically disengaged and ready for removal. The print cylinder is held in place by the patented Pitagora 3 x pressure point configuration and is locked from below rather than by guides into the press frame. This means that no print cylinder or anilox pressure adjustments are necessary when the plate cylinder is changed, regardless of

The pyramidal design of the Flower imparted a high degree of stability to the press and this became the core technology for the next two decades of Gidue - then Bobst – in-line press designs.

'In the early days it was the smaller family-sized businesses which trusted and supported me rather than the big groups, and these often grew into much bigger companies. One example is Nuceria,



Global Achievement Award for 2020

which of course today has grown into a huge package printing group as part of All4Labels.'

### Flexo champion

Federico d'Annunzio remained a fervent champion of flexo technology against digital, even when the advent of inkjet appeared to threaten the future of flexo - much as the latter had supplanted letterpress in the 1990s. So while the other major flexo press manufacturers reached out to inkjet engine OEMs to develop hybrid machines, d'Annunzio insisted that if flexo could be brought under digital control, it could in many cases out-compete digital in the short-to-medium run job sector.

d'Annunzio's believed that 'digital' should mean digital control of the press - 'it would be the digital eyes and fingers of the press operators', increasingly replacing manual intervention on the press.

This train of thought led to the development of automated pressure adjustment. The camera system which monitored print pressure was not developed by d'Annunzio or his team, but is a great case study of his innovation strategy at work: bringing in stakeholders and ideas from different disciplines.

'I had the idea from the motorway cameras which use number plate recognition. I approached the police and asked them who supplied their cameras, then I asked them to build a camera which would fit onto a flexo press. Quite simply it measures a greater number of pixels when the pressure is too great, and a smaller

number when the pressure is not enough. It was then quite a simple matter to send that information to the motors which control the movement of the print cylinders. In fact the same camera also reads color for us.'

d'Annunzio installed his first M5 Digital Flexo press with fully automated print pressure and register control at Adare Haverhill in 2013. Leading that project at Adare was commercial director Daragh Whelan, who was to become a close partner in proving Digital Flexo in the field. Whelan also took Adare as a partner into d'Annunzio's Revo team looking to implement extended gamut printing.

d'Annunzio takes a 'systems' approach to innovation, meaning that each individual advance serves the final goal. So Revo was not a goal in itself, but a key part of the wider Digital Flexo ecosystem. ECG places responsibility for color management not with the ink kitchen or the press operator, but with pre-press, where it forms part of an automated color management system. Color is monitored by spectrophotometric cameras on the press without operator intervention.

The same can be said about innovations such as Ink on Demand, introduced at the last Labelexpo Europe show. Ink on Demand eliminates ink trays and chambered doctor blades, keeping just 30 grams of ink in the print unit.

This in itself is interesting enough, but the full benefit of Ink on Demand is seen when matched with the HAL color mixing and dispensing unit. This automatically creates Pantone colors from 14 basics inks - a lighter and darker shade of each ECG color - using only the 30g dose of ink in each print unit.

# **Beyond labels**

Another area where d'Annunzio was thinking ahead was his firm belief that narrow web converters should also be converting flexible packaging – and even cartons – on in-line presses. Indeed, he was pushing Labelexpo's management to turn the exhibition into a package printing show



"In five years a brand owner will be able to 'see' all the converters in the world. To see what machines they have available; how each converter is performing; whether they are an ethical company; what they produce; what are their sustainability initiatives"

targeted at label converters – which is what it has now become.

The idea of producing flexible packaging on a wider (mid-web) in-line press had of course been around for some time, epitomized by Mark Hermann's Comco ProGlide MSP (multi-substrate) press. But Hermann's main target for the press was flexible packaging converters, not label converters – which was why he decided not to show the press at Labelexpo.

As early as 2004 d'Annunzio developed the 730mm-wide Unipro press for the flexible packaging market, with a plan to launch it at both drupa and Labelexpo, and with label converters firmly in his sights. This was one project which did not succeed commercially, but the general idea proved to be a sound one.

In an interview with this author at that time, d'Annunzio also talked about the suitability of mid-web flexo for carton converting. That development never really took off, mainly because of the limitations of in-line die-cut/creasing compared to flatbed.

d'Annunzio remains upbeat: 'The key breakthrough for cartons will be linked with digital – or digitized – die-cutting. Currently you have to stop the press for half an hour, but that roadblock will go away and there will be more interaction between the printing and converting line.'

d'Annunzio believes the in-line move will come not from the carton industry, but

# Involving stakeholders – Revo and UVFoodSafe

Three years ago, Federico d'Annunzio approached this writer with the idea of bringing together a team of suppliers from across the label industry to examine best practice in the use of UV inks in indirect food contact packaging applications. d'Annunzio felt that because this was an industry-wide issue – many brand owners would not specify UV because of fears of photo-initiator migration – an industry-wide response was needed. Eventually just such a group of the key press, ink and UV lamp manufacturers came together under the UVFoodSafe banner to carry out trials at the Bobst Firenze site. Those tests are now complete and initial recommendations were published at the last Finat online congress.

Revo, meanwhile, is a team of leading industry players brought together by d'Annunzio to promote and optimize extended color gamut (ECG) printing in the flexo package printing industry. ECG allows spot colors to be simulated using a fixed 7-color ink system. Up to this point ECG had been something seen mainly in the offset industry (hexachrome for example), and although individual suppliers had demonstrated ECG print at Labelexpo, there was a great need to standardize the combination of plate, anilox, mounting tape, press conditions, color measurement and pre-press color separation.

from the label converter – as happened with flexible packaging. 'There are many advantages to go from the roll compared to a sheet. Another advantage we have is the high cost of carton materials. In the label industry, where the laminated substrate was very expensive, we had to be obsessed with waste saving and not having too many people involved in production. This is our culture - and it's more interesting for the carton industry than the flexible packaging industry where the cost of waste is far less.'

#### Digital future?

When Bobst finally embraced digital label printing technology, d'Annunzio took the opportunity to fully integrate Digital Flexo technology into the Mouvent digital print engine to create a new, higher level of automation.

'With the DM5 integration, the digital automation of the analogue processes – flexo, die-cutting – supports the fully automated digital flow of a hybrid press, eliminating production bottlenecks during job change-overs, so one click, one job.'

Despite his evident enthusiasm for the DM5 hybrid concept at Labelexpo Europe 2019, d'Annunzio still does not see digital as necessarily the future of label printing.

'Digital will not be main driver if it is only digital print and that goes into a big bottleneck. These super-fantastic digital presses can do jobs in a short time but then lose three times more in the process of coming to that order. Brand owners want cost reduction and flexibility, and digital printing is just one part of the whole cost. The only real advantage of digital printing is the convenience, not the cost.'

d'Annunzio believes that without full digital integration of the supply chain, analogue will continue to win on cost most of the



time. 'If you have an ECG machine where you don't change the inks, and where you reuse plates four or five times the cost of the plates alone will be much less than the cost of inks in digital. The battle between analogue and digital will only have only losers if you do not fully digitize the flow. And when I talk about digitizing the flow I mean the connection between companies.'

For d'Annunzio digital integration means the 'agile interaction between brand owners, converters and suppliers based on fully transparent, objective data exchange.' This means far more than the digitization of a press or the use of an MIS within the converter's plant – although both are key components. It is nothing less than



complete data transparency based on an agreed, industry-wide data set. d'Annunzio's next project is a software consultancy which aims to establish just such a trusted data framework between all players in the packaging industry supply chain.

"If you have an ECG machine where you don't change the inks, and where you reuse plates four or five times the cost of the plates alone will be much less than the cost of inks in digital"

'In five years a brand owner will be able to "see" all the converters in the world. To see what machines they have available; to see how each converter is performing against an agreed set of metrics; to see whether they are an ethical company towards their employees or their suppliers and customers – have they been to court for example?; what products do they produce – for example which companies produce piggy-back labels with four layers; to see what are their sustainability initiatives. All these things can no longer be hidden as the private information of one company. This will be a performance-driven, and not a legacy-driven, world."

Although this may seem a daunting or frightening prospect, d'Annunzio sees it driving positive change for converters. 'For example up to now converters have invested a lot in sustainability but have not been rewarded for it. Now they will be rewarded for their efforts because everybody in the supply chain will immediately know about their sustainability investments.'

Although he will be focusing hard on this new project, d'Annunzio will remain engaged in driving innovation at Bobst. It will be fascinating to revisit this interview in five years to see how d'Annunzio has influenced both press automation and, potentially, a revolutionary new way for companies in the label industry to do profitable business with each other.

### Award citation

Announcing Federico d'Annunzio's award, Mike Fairley, founder of the Label Academy and chair of the Label Industry Global Awards judging panel, said: 'Once again, the judging panel was impressed by the high quality of entries to this year's Label Industry Global Awards, so drawing up the shortlist was no easy task. Nevertheless, we unanimously agreed that Federico d'Annunzio was the stand-out choice for the prestigious R. Stanton Avery Global Achievement Award, with endorsements from all corners of the world. What really stood out for us was the wide range of Federico's creative and innovative solutions that between them have had such an impact on the fast-changing world of label press design, productivity and performance.'



For more about the Label Industry Global Awards – and to watch Federico d'Annunzio's acceptance speech – go to www.labelawards.com



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# Label Industry Global Awards 2020

Winners of the Label Industry Global Awards 2020 were announced during a virtual event in September. James Quirk reports

sually celebrated during Labelexpo, this year's Label Industry Global Awards was conducted remotely, but the quality of the entries – and the final winners – was undiminished.

The winner of the R. Stanton Avery Global Achievement Award 2020, sponsored by Avery Dennison, had already been announced as Federico d'Annunzio (see interview on previous pages). The virtual awards ceremony gave him the opportunity to react to the prize, while the winners of four other categories were also announced.

The judging panel for this 17th edition of the awards, chaired by Labels & Labeling and Label Academy founder Mike Fairley, also included Chris Ellison, president of Finat; Craig Moreland, past chairman of TLMI; Greg Hrinya, editor of Label & Narrow Web; Jean Poncet, editor-in-chief at MP Medias; and James Quirk, group managing editor of Labels & Labeling. The panel poured over the entries over a series of conference calls prior to the virtual ceremony to draw up the shortlists and decide the winners.

# Award for Innovation (for companies with more than 300 employees)

Joint winners:

Lenze SE – The use of data already available in a press servo drive to provide Smart Condition Monitoring instead of adding extra sensors was regarded by the judges as 'a look into the future, providing enhanced information to improve the building, efficiency, maintenance and running of machines'.

#### **Paper Machine Converting Company**

- Developed completely in-house, the PCMC Meridian Elite's laser ablation technology for anilox cleaning completely eliminates the possibility of hotspots, provides higher performance and reliability, and allows customers to have complete documentation of the cleaning process for the life cycle of their anilox.

#### Shortlisted:

**Avery Dennison** – The development of a ground-breaking thermal transfer label that is the thinnest on the market, enables 33 percent more labels per roll, fewer changeovers, reduced freight costs, offers substantial environmental benefits - and all at a lower overall cost – was seen as particularly positive for the industry.





The GMG Color team celebrate winning of the Award for Innovation (for companies with less than 300 employees)

**HP Indigo** – The flawless integration of pre-press, VDP composition, color management, and RIP into a powerful DFE (Code name 'Edison') that meets the particularly demanding requirements of label and packaging applications impressed the judges. It was developed as a joint effort between HP Indigo, and industry leaders Global Graphics and Esko.

# Award for Innovation (for companies with less than 300 employees)

Winner:

GMG Color – The GMG ColorCard digital proofing system enables converters to achieve significant time and cost savings. Proofs are color-accurate first time, with very tight delta tolerances. Substrate changes can be quickly recalculated and

printed, with ColorCards easily including the addition of tints, tolerances or barcodes.

Shortlisted:

**GEW** – The GEW next-generation LeoLED UV curing system was seen by the judges as fundamentally changing the economics of LED, offering converters an LED option at almost half the cost of earlier models. It uses the same power supply as mercury arc systems, delivers a 35 percent higher dose, and 40 percent higher intensity.

**Tecnocut** – The automatic calibration of die-cutting accuracies to below 0.4 micron is achieved using the Tecnocut electronic system, providing converters with greater control in the die-cutting of material. As materials and coat weights become increasingly thinner, the judges felt that enhanced die-cutting performance was worthy of recognition.



Andreas Flötner, global segment manager, converting and printing at Lenze, joint winner of the Award for Innovation (for companies with more than 300 employees)

# **Environmental and Sustainability Award**

Winner:

Avery Dennison Brazil - The implementation of a Circular Program to connect converters, brand owners, recyclers and others, to direct waste that would have previously been discarded in landfills into the production of cellulose paper and, subsequently into paper towels, was recognized by the judges as a blueprint for the future development of the industry.

Shortlisted:

Avery Dennison – The judges liked the new fully repulpable, and more sustainable to produce, all-temperature adhesive. It offers faster, cleaner converting by converters and less adhesive transfer, leading to high uptime for end users.



**Phoseon Technology** – Energy savings of between 75 and 85 percent and the elimination of an air exhaust system have been achieved by customers through the implementation of Phoseon's UV LED curing systems when compared to prior drying systems.

# **Rising Star Award**

Winner

Elizabeth Yerecic, Yerecic Label – The rising start award, sponsored by the Label Academy and Avery Dennison, went to Elizabeth Yerecic of Yerecic Label. Elizabeth joined Yerecic Label full-time in 2017. Immersing herself in the industry, she was quick to join the workforce development committee at TLMI and helped to co-chair two successful sessions, 'Training for your future' and 'Strategies for hiring', at the 2019 printThink meeting. Elizabeth is the team lead





at Yerecic for the product development cross functional team, and successfully launched Yerecic Label's SustainLabel! line. Elizabeth is also passionate about the environment and lobbied for Yerecic Label to join the Association of Plastics Recyclers. Upon joining, Elizabeth immediately joined the label working group. She has become a key figure in the growth of Yerecic Label.

Shortlisted:

Andrew M Boyd, Blue Label Packaging Company

Jesse Freitas, StickerGiant

Lindsey Muchka, Tailored Label Products

Vineeth Bhandari, Divya Impex

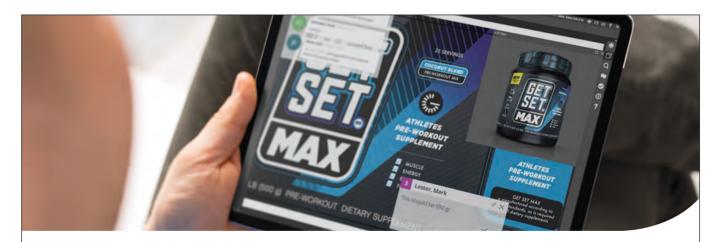


Mike Fairley, chair of the judges, said: 'I, on behalf of the judging panel, would like to commend and congratulate all this year's Label Industry Global Awards finalists and winners. The stand-out brilliance in their innovation, leadership and sustainability, and dedication to improving their businesses, is a fantastic inspiration to the label and package printing industry.

'This year, more than ever, it is vital that their achievements and contribution to moving our global industry ever forwards are recognized, particularly in the absence of a live awards ceremony, as we weather these unprecedented Covid times.'



Go to www.labelawards.com for more information and to watch the award ceremony video



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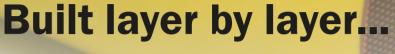
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It all comes together to make one of the best composite sleeve solutions on the market.

# Construction

The inner and outer layers are produced with a unique Epoxy and Glass Fibre resin that are resistant to high temperatures and possesses high hardness (>80ShD). The high-temperature resistance and hardness allow us to utilise this construction method in multiple applications such as ANILOX cylinders, narrow web products and wide web products. The strength of this material allows for the CRO Sleeve to have incredibly precise dimensional stability.

The volume building layer is a bespoke lightweight foam honeycomb, again designed to be resistant to the influence of temperature and pressure. It's designed with a close texture containing specially designed channels for the resin to flow within during the production process. This allows us to use less resin but at the same time improve the strength and durability of the overall construction.

The combination of resistance to pressure and temperature means that our CRO Sleeves will be long-lasting and consistent over time.

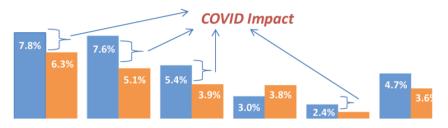




# Finat report puts industry on Radar

Finat's annual Radar converter survey has laid bare the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the European label industry. Andy Thomas-Emans reports

# FINAT CONVERTER GROWTH: 2019 AND QI 2020



■inat's annual Radar report looks at key trends affecting the European label industry based on surveys of European converters who are members of the self-adhesive label association.

The latest Radar report assumes an even greater relevance than usual, since it is the first opportunity to track the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the European label industry, and particularly on label converters.

The survey shows starkly that Q1 2020 converter sales growth plummeted from an average 4.7 percent at the end of 2019 (itself down from 2018 figures) to 3.6 percent as Europe went into lockdown.

It is certainly true that some end-use segments surged due to consumer stockpiling at the beginning of the crisis household chemicals and non-perishable foods particularly – but the big question is whether this is a temporary blip, or will it hold up by the time next year's Radar survey is conducted.

The Radar survey also attempted to answer longer term Covid-related questions: will the virus continue to create supply and demand disruptions for some consumables categories? Should companies be exploring alternative sourcing strategies?

More than half of the survey group reported that delivery times have been a major issue, with companies unable to get the products they needed when they required them. Only 16 percent reported that delivery times remained the same between January and May of this year. Converters in the UK/Ireland reported the fewest problems with delivery disruptions, possibly driven by shored-up inventories

due to Brexit. The highest numbers of converters reporting delivery time delays were in central Europe.

Turning to the employment effects of the pandemic, the report finds that only a small number of participating Finat converters had to make employees redundant. More ominously, 38 percent of companies were concerned they would have to do so 'in the near future'. Nearly half of participating converters had not seen any redundancies during the first two quarters of this year and do not foresee having to do so in the near future.

Putting this is a wider context, as of mid-June, unemployment remained at historic levels in many labor markets around the world and despite early signs of recovery in some regions, retail sales and manufacturing output remain well below pre-Covid levels. An additional factor to consider in this analysis is the support national governments are extending to companies to prevent layoffs, and when that support might end.

#### Converter growth

Looking at pre-Covid growth trends, we see from the Radar report that 2019 delivered slightly lower sales growth for converters compared to 2018 as uncertainty gripped financial markets and the potential effects of Brexit were factored in. The sales average for all survey participants was 4.7 percent in 2019 compared to 4.9 percent for 2018. Once again eastern Europe delivered the highest converter growth rates – an average of 7.8 percent – while central Europe showed the sharpest decline with 2019 sales growth averaging 2.4 percent compared to 2018.

While overall year-on-year profitability rates were up for the participant group as a whole, this was primarily driven by strong profit growth in central and southern Europe. UK/Ireland converters reported robust sales growth at 7.6 percent, but profitability levels were down compared to 2018. Converters in Scandinavia reported the sharpest contraction in year-on-year profitability with an average of -3.8 percent for participating converters in the region.

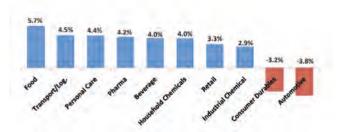
With the Radar surveys now entering their seventh year, the authors were able to make some interesting longer-term observations. Thus between 2013-2019, converters in eastern Europe and UK/Ireland have witnessed the highest growth rates, with the average hovering around 9 percent. Scandinavian converters have historically reported the lowest year-on-year growth, averaging 3.7 percent since 2013.

# Growth per end use category

As in previous Radar surveys, participating companies were asked to indicate revenue growth, or contraction rates, for the top five

"If we add together shrink sleeves, flexible packaging and wraparound labels, we see that over 40 percent of the converter sample are producing unsupported filmic products which ten years ago would have been pretty much the exclusive province of wide web flexible packaging converters"

#### CONVERTERS' 2019 AVG. GROWTH PER SEGMENT



end-use sectors each company serves.

For the first time the food segment delivered the highest year-over-year sales growth, followed by transport/logistics, personal care and pharmaceuticals. (See boxout.)

#### Capital equipment

Capital equipment purchasing intentions contrast sharply from what converters were projecting in last year's Radar survey. While 25 percent of Finat converter respondents projected they would purchase a conventional or digital press in the 2019 Radar report, that figure falls to 20 percent in this year's report. However, it is worth bearing in mind that the Radar response forms were sent out in March-April when the ravages of Covid were at their height, and the authors predict those capital investment figures might well be higher if the question was asked now.

#### End use sectors

Consumer durables: the consumer durables segment delivered the sharpest sales declines for converters in 2019 compared to 2018 with sales averages in the sector down more than 9 percent. Early in the second quarter, many of the largest electronics companies temporarily closed their factories or minimized production output. Sales into the segment in 2020 are projected to remain lower as cautious consumers delay purchases for larger items such as appliances, furniture and higher-end consumer electronics goods.

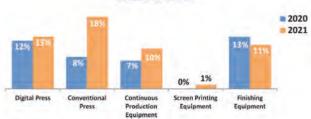
**Food**: the highest growth segment for label converters in 2019, with average sales growth at + 2.5 percent over 2018, is the food segment. Consumer surges in the sector due to Covid-19 mean growth of food labels will also be high for 2020. The market continues to be driven by trends such as convenience, rising health/nutrition awareness, European consumers becoming more comfortable with e-grocery platforms and heightened shelf-ready packaging demands.

**Household chemicals**: converters report label sales into the household chemicals space increased in 2019 compared to 2018 and 2020 performance will likely promise a continued surge. Companies including P&G, Church & Dwight Reckitt Benckiser and Unilever are reporting huge demands for surface cleaning products due to Covid-19 and sales are expected to remain high for the rest of the year.

A detailed breakdown of converter equipment purchasing responses gives an interesting picture. Looking at what press types



## CONVERTERS' CAPITAL EQUIPMENT PROJECTIONS 2020 & 202I



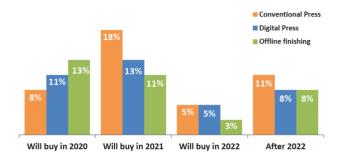
converters plan to buy between 2020-2022, 32 percent indicated they will purchase a conventional press, 32 percent a digital press and 5 percent a hybrid press. The 'digital' category breaks down into 24 percent for a toner-based press and 8 percent for inkjet. These purchasing indications were pretty much uniform across all European regions.

In addition to specific press formats, converters were asked to indicate the price point of their next digital press purchase. The authors speculate that once again, we see the influence of more expensive hybrid press and toner-based systems in the price point data. In the 2019 survey, 39 percent of converters indicated they would be spending 750,000 EUR or more on a digital press in the following years; 43 percent of converters indicated the same in 2020. Twenty-five percent of surveyed converters indicated they would be spending 500,000 EUR.

#### **Beyond labels**

The Radar survey also asks converters if they are diversifying from PS labels into new packaging formats such as cartons, in-mold

## FINAT MEMBERS PREDICT ASSET ACQUISITIONS 2020-2023



labels, shrink sleeves and pouches.

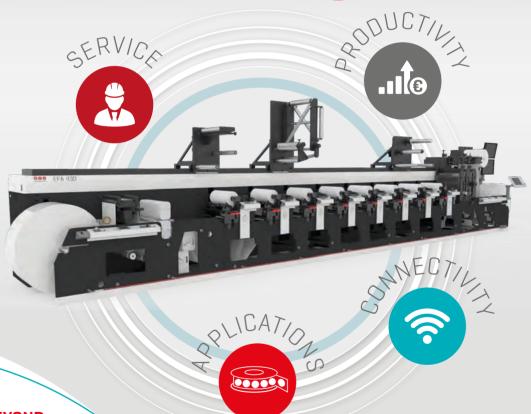
A striking result is that converters in this year's survey showed the least interest in entering shrink sleeve and pouches production - very different from last year's survey, which showed pouches as the sector with the highest converter interest.

The authors speculate that, with the bigger converters and groups already producing flexible packaging, smaller converters might be put off by the investment and learning curve required in entering the pouch sector. At the same time the advent of the global pandemic has seen converters refocus on their core PS labels business. It is certainly the case that technologies such as shrink sleeves and pouches require higher (or different) levels of expertise and the necessity of forming relationships with new consumables suppliers, as well as significant capital investment.

For the second Radar survey running, linerless labels remains one of the top markets label converters are interested in entering,







# MPS GOES BEYOND THE MACHINE.

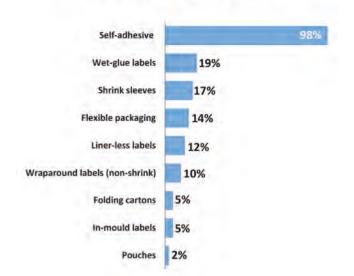
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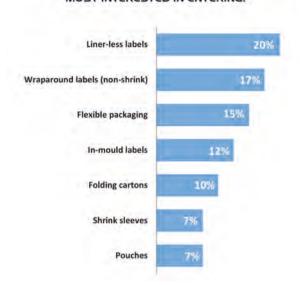
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# IN WHAT MARKETS ARE FINAT CONVERTERS CURRENTLY THE MOST ACTIVE?



#### IN WHAT MARKETS ARE FINAT CONVERTERS THE MOST INTERESTED IN ENTERING?



coming in as number one in this year's survey. As many as 20 percent of survey respondents expressed an interest in entering linerless production, led by converters in the UK/Ireland and central Europe.

It would be of great interest to know if this growing interest is in the logistics/VIP sector, where linerless is well-established, or in the prime label market where end users have yet to make a major commitment to the technology.

The survey results show an interesting picture of how different types of label production are distributed among converters. Not surprisingly self-adhesive labels are produced by the overwhelming majority of the converter sample. Wet-glue labels are produced by almost 20 percent of the sample, suggesting that most wet-glue label converters are now fully integrated with self-adhesive label production, whether through acquiring roll-fed converting companies or expanding their own production facilities.

The next biggest category is shrink sleeves, at 17 percent, followed by flexible packaging at 14 percent and wraparound labels at 10 percent. If we add together shrink sleeves, flexible packaging and wraparound labels, we see that over 40 percent of the converter sample are producing unsupported filmic products which ten years ago would have been pretty much the exclusive province of wide web flexible packaging converters. This shows how far and fast the narrow web industry has moved in the direction of diversification.

At the foot of the table we see that folding cartons and in-mold are both at 5 percent. IML has not shifted much in terms of overall production volumes in Europe in the last ten years, and cartons are produced mainly by the bigger packaging groups which also include label divisions.

#### Liner recycling

Given Finat's strong support of liner recycling initiatives, it is interesting to see the Radar reports tracking how this is impacting label converters. The encouraging news is that converters are increasingly working with their labelstock suppliers to make self-adhesive labelstock constructions more sustainable. Converters indicate landfilling and composting are their least-probable strategies for channeling their spent/used liner in the coming years.

Converters were also asked to indicate how they would be willing to support liner recycling in the future. Over 80 percent of converters indicated they would be willing to ensure that their spent liner is made available for targeted collection within 200km of their label production facilities. Just over one-third of converters indicated

"It is true that some end-use segments surged due to consumer stockpiling at the beginning of the crisis - household chemicals and non-perishable foods particularly but the big question is whether this is a temporary blip, or will it hold up"

that they would be willing to make a modest financial contribution in order to establish and operate a full liner recycling program.

Converters also indicated they were more willing to pay slightly more for a liner material that contains recycled content than to accept inferior performance of that liner on their label presses. More than 60 percent of converters indicated they would be willing to accept a uniform color for liners that contain recycled content.

#### Labelstock growth

This issue of Radar compares Q2 2020 with Q2 2019 labelstock consumption volumes in Europe using data taken from the quarterly Finat Labelstock Statistics Report.

Labelstock growth in Q2 2020 is at the highest point for both papers and films since Radar started tracking trends seven years ago. These numbers reflect the surges resulting from the coronavirus pandemic – both consumer stockpiling and label converters stockpiling materials in an attempt to avoid supply chain disruptions in surging and critical markets

Material volume growth trends have particularly impacted the food, medical, personal care and hygiene sectors, as well as VIP labelstock used in the e-commerce sector. Self-adhesive signage has also surged as regions sought ways to ensure social distancing best practices.



The Finat Radar reports are researched and written by LPC. Finat members can access the full reports at www.finat.com/pages/finat-radar



Coating your success

# **Compostable Labels**









# All4Labels expands through **GPS-Rotomet**

The global converting group has added a shrink sleeve label expert to its roster. Andy Thomas-Emans reports

he All4Labels Group has expanded its international portfolio of family-owned label converting businesses with the addition of leading Italian shrink sleeve label converter Rotomet and the roll-fed activities of the GPS Group.

The renamed GPS-Rotomet becomes a fully owned subsidiary of All4Labels, while Daniele Grotto and Andrea Cerisara, who founded and developed the business over decades, become shareholders in All4Labels and part of the management team.

To ensure business continuity, Daniele Grotto also retains the chairmanship of GPS-Rotomet and Andrea Cerisara continues to run the roll-fed and shrink sleeve businesses.

The shopping bags division of the GPS group is not part of the agreement and remains under the full control of the Grotto family.

GPS Label and Rotomet together account for a total combined turnover of approximately 50m EUR in 2019, with their two facilities in Schio, Italy, serving both local and multinational customers with shrink sleeve and roll-fed labels for the food and beverage and home and personal care markets. The company runs both mid-web offset and CI flexo press technologies and has around 130 employees.

Adrian Tippenhauer, CEO of All4Labels Group, said: 'We are extremely pleased and proud to welcome Mr Grotto and Mr Cerisara and the entire GPS Label and Rotomet employees as new partners and members of the All4Labels Group. With the new team on board and their world-class manufacturing facilities in Italy, we are strengthening our position in the shrink sleeve and roll-fed market and benefit from many years of experience in this segment. I would as well like to thank our chairman Romeo Kreinberg and the Triton team, especially Herbert Doleisch and Fabrizio Gualdi, for the great support in this transaction. Without their dedication, it would have not been possible to bring this

The Triton Private Equity group became an investor in All4Labels in November 2019, representing a major step forward in the financial support available to the company - the 43 companies currently in Triton's portfolio have combined sales of around



17.4 billion EUR and 96,700 employees. Since its founding, Triton has completed more than 70 investments and supported more than 260 acquisitions.

Daniele Grotto, founder and owner of the GPS Group, said:

'We are extremely pleased to have the opportunity to contribute our labels business to such a globally excellent player in the packaging industry as All4Labels. We have reached an extremely important goal that allows GPS-Rotomet to further push its development and growth while leveraging the commercial and industrial synergies offered by being part of a global group. I would like to thank Adrian Tippenhauer, Romeo Kreinberg, the management team and all stakeholders of All4Labels for the synergistic approach and thinking and for embracing Andrea Cerisara and myself in their team. We appreciate them giving us the chance to ensure continuity to our venture and directly contributing to such an interesting success story.'

#### Global network

GPS-Rotomet joins an All4Labels Group which already has a global network of 29 productions sites with more than 3,000 employees. Its annual turnover is over 520m EUR, and the company claims to service over 5,000 customers worldwide, printing over 60 billion labels a year.

All this has been achieved in just four years since the original partners Rako Etiketten, X-Label and Baumgarten came together, combining production sites across Europe, Russia, China and Latin America.

The last remaining piece of the jigsaw is of course the US, and Adrian Tippenhauer tells L&L a North American partner is now under active consideration.

Technology-wise, All4Labels continues to specialize in the label and flexible packaging markets, offering the full range of products from wet-glue and PS labels to in-mold, shrink sleeves and wraparound labels to laminate tubes, labeled tubes, flexible packaging, folding cartons and thermoformed trays.

The benefit of the Rotomet expansion will be felt particularly in the shrink sleeve and wraparound label capabilities of the group.

All4Labels already has significant shrink sleeve and flexible packaging capacity at its Nuceria and Folienprint operations, with the latter producing digital shrink sleeve products using HP 20000 production equipment. Indeed, because of the historic expertise of Rako in digital printing, the All4Labels group has a deep investment in digital, with over 50 digital press installations globally. Hybrid and digital embellishment technologies are high on the priority list for future investment.

Digital integration is also seen in All4Labels' Label Intelligence division which specializes in combining digitally printed serialized labels with cloud integration for track and trace and product authentication applications.



L&L has covered the whole All4Labels story in various editions of the magazine. Search 'All4Labels' at www.labelsandlabeling.com



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PRINTING THE BEST QUALITY EVER

# Ravenwood prepares for global growth

Linerless label specialist Ravenwood Packaging has installed its 30th Com500 linerless coater and established an office in Australia to further its plans for global growth. Mike Fairley reports

lthough a near global lockdown due to Covid-19 did initially provide something of a challenge for Ravenwood Packaging in terms of providing after sales service and support while travel was restricted, it has nevertheless proved to be a busy and successful year so far for the growth of the company's linerless label technology, as well as for ongoing innovation and further global expansion.

In a conversation with Paul Beamish, Ravenwood's founder and managing director, he was proud to announce the latest installation - bringing the company up to 30 to date - of the Com500 linerless coater into Skipnes Etikett in Trondheim, Norway's largest label producer, as well as the establishment of a Ravenwood Packaging company in Australia to support the growth of linerless technology in the country, as well as in New Zealand and Asia.

'With our own set-up in the United States, continued growth in Europe, and now extending into Australasia," says Beamish, 'we are now significantly advancing a linerless label technology, that was primarily created for a changing developed world, into new markets and opportunities in fast-changing and developing countries where food distribution and retailing is moving more and more to pre-packed and chilled goods.

# "We can now lay claim to billions of labels being produced and supplied worldwide through our technology each year"

'This ongoing global expansion in linerless technology has all been complemented with our expanding global network of machinery distributors and printer partners that has been growing year-on-year currently covering some 44 printers and distributors, between them supplying and servicing some 20 countries - while in



terms of actual linerless label products, we can now lay claim to billions of labels being produced and supplied worldwide through our technology each year.'

#### **Emerging demand**

The latest Com500 Coater installed at Skipnes Etikett in May this year was to meet emerging demand for linerless in Norway and Scandinavia, mainly due to the cost saving and sustainability benefits. With four linerless customers producing meat, fish and poultry products already, Skipnes is aiming to increase this to ten customers by the end of the year.

Another fast-emerging market for linerless, and one that is rapidly gaining in popularity, is the USA, where Ravenwood now has its own operation. Here,

US-based print specialist Catapult Print has also recently invested in a Ravenwood Com500 Coater, adding linerless technology to its packaging and labeling facility in Orlando, Florida, including associated distribution centers, to capitalize on a market in which linerless was fast becoming the label of choice for many fresh and frozen food manufacturers and brand owners.

Catapult Print, which also specializes in self-adhesive and narrow web film, was formed in April 2018, with Mark Cook,

founder and CEO, deciding to add linerless to the company's product portfolio from the very outset to meet increased adoption of food safe packaging formats that reduce food spoilage, and to derive a point of difference by delivering stand-out products

Typical linerless label applications today include meat, fish, chilled products, ready meals, fresh vegetables, pizza, salami, tubs, bakery and bottles,' adds Paul Beamish.

'The backs of these labels can often feature additional information, such as recipes, money-off coupons and promotions, including skin packs and super protruding food products. Linerless allows brand guardians more opportunity to communicate with shoppers, as there is more space to tell a story.

'Converters with our Com500 machines have a dedicated coating system that runs and delivers high quality Ravenwood linerless labels to the correct specifications required for applying labels to food stuffs using Nobac applicator machines. Com500 machines are of a modular construction with the ability to simultaneously apply silicone and hotmelt adhesive to pre-printed labels, resulting in a linerless label.'

One of the key aspects of linerless labels that adds to the label's overall performance



# "Linerless allows brands more opportunity to communicate with shoppers, as there is more space to tell a story"

is that the adhesive and the silicone release coating are applied to the face of the label after printing, and then only added where the design requires. The release coating on the label face acts as a protective coating for UV, moisture and chemical resistance, adding to a label's longevity. By utilizing the face and the back of the label it means that end-users get more space to feature information – great for driving engagement and providing a competitive edge when products need to stand out on the shelf.

Unlike traditional self-adhesive labels where printing on the adhesive can act as a deadener and affect performance, linerless labels are virtually adhesive-free on the reverse so offer two selling faces. It is also possible to apply sleeves around packs using only two or three glue lines, each usually only 12mm wide. Eliminating the release liner carries many benefits: less waste, reduced landfill disposal costs and a much-reduced carbon footprint. Linerless is overall a more environmentally friendly and sustainable process of labeling.

# **Application**

Within the packing factory, linerless labels provide more labels per roll, fewer changeovers, less downtime, and promote a clean room environment when compared to traditional self-adhesive labels. This is especially apparent at the point of application. For conventional self-adhesive labels, the liner needs to be collected then disposed of at a cost to the packer and it also takes up a lot of space with waste bins cluttering up the working area. Ravenwood linerless labels have no liner to be disposed of.

'As for Nobac linerless applicators currently in use in a vast number of food packaging plants around the world, we now have well over 2,200 installations globally, daily applying everything from top and

side labels, c-wrap labels and full-wrap sleeve labels,' says Beamish. 'We are also constantly developing more varieties of linerless product, more different food labeled products, and currently working on new solutions for fruit labeling, which we are very excited about for the future.

'Put this together with our ongoing work in further developing shaped and die-cut linerless labels, where we are now able to shape the leading edge of the label for a totally bespoke and creative look across all linerless label formats, including slideable ready meal cardboard sleeves, and we have much for us and our customers to be pleased about.

'Machinery wise, our Nobac 500R linerless applicator has been developed and tailored in line with applying ready meal pack sleeves, and a printer of choice, such as the Videojet Viper, can be added. We have also modified the machine to work with flat salmon packs and this can be adjusted to meet individual pack specifications and produce c-wrap, d-wrap, full wrap. top and side and, if required, base labels."

Apart from Nobac linerless applicators and Com500 coaters, Ravenwood Packaging also sells and supplies through its global network of machinery distributors a game-changing VXR vision pack inspection system – an end-of-line fully streamlined process that automatically detects faulty labels, printing errors and poor print quality, as well identifying foreign bodies such as glass metal and ceramics.

It also works with other manufacturers for the supply of thermal transfer, thermal inkjet and laser coding equipment that can be added to the new Nobac 5000 range launched in March 2020 - for all fixed and catchweight products. This latest launch has assisted in meeting extra demand during the Covide-19 lockdown from food

# Ravenwood appoints Asia-Pacific MD

Ravenwood Packaging has appointed Sam Aloschi as the company's Asia-Pacific managing director.

Aloschi brings more than 24 years' experience with a proven track record in the food packaging sector.

Based in Sydney, Australia, Aloschi will lead the delivery of Ravenwood's growth plans in the Asia-Pacific region, supporting its linerless and pack inspection distributor network. 'It's a huge honour to have been appointed Asia-Pacific managing director at Ravenwood, especially at such an exciting time for the company,' he said. 'We are beginning to see a marked increase in linerless, especially in Australia. With strong foundations for this growth, I am confident that we can continue to build on this success and drive our strategic vision forward.'

Business operations in Australia reflect that of the UK headquarters, with machinery sales, spare parts and service. Sales is headed up by Aloschi and sales manager Bob Elvin, with spare parts and service covered by customer support manager lan Towsey and service engineer Bob Towsey.

Ravenwood has two linerless label distributors based in Australia: Hally Labels, located in Queensland, and LMA (Label Manufacturers Australia), based in Melbourne.

manufacturing companies, both in the UK and worldwide.

'During lockdown, we have continued working on further refining our Nobac applicators to provide new and improved features that now offer more flexibility for customers to apply different types of labels, adding built-in remote diagnostics, and able to offer more flexibility in the supply chain,' continues Beamish.

'It has been an interesting and exciting time since we were established in 2004. What we have been able to achieve, and how our linerless technology has been accepted and welcomed by converters, packers, pre-packers and brand owners has made it all more than worthwhile. We have still managed to grow during a global lockdown, introduce new products and solutions in 2020, and feel confident that we are now well prepared for ongoing and continued global growth in the years ahead.'



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

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# LINTEC



# Steinhauser celebrates 115 years

Fourth-generation and woman-owned converter launches social media campaign to celebrate anniversary and sees record growth amid the ongoing pandemic. Jordan Hart reports

teinhauser, a label converter in Newport, Kentucky, is celebrating its 115-year anniversary with a new 'timeline' social media campaign, which focuses on the company's journey since it was founded in 1905.

This new campaign, according to the company, 'uses Steinhauser's Instagram page as a way to highlight its history and impact, and also emphasizes the importance of humble beginnings, the fight to stand up through tough times and the keys to success and survival.'

Steinhauser is no stranger to tough times. In 2009 the company made the difficult decision to transition away from commercial print and sold its offset equipment to focus on labels and packaging. That year Steinhauser purchased an HP Indigo 6000 digital press to complement its 10-color Comco Proglide flexo press. A few years later the company upgraded to an HP Indigo 6600, and in 2017 it replaced that with an HP Indigo 6800.

# "Flexo changed our business for the better"

'We can do anything on that press and the quality is just amazing,' said Tara Halpin, Steinhauser CEO and fourth-generation owner. 'No one can tell the difference between flexo and digital and that was very important to our customers.'

## Steinhauser culture

Tara Halpin has been working hard to keep company morale up during the pandemic. Once a week the Steinhauser team gathers for an outdoor lunch; they also have meals catered from local restaurants to maintain the community spirit. Steinhauser recently invited Cups N Cones, a local ice cream truck, for a small celebration of the anniversary. Cups N Cones donates a portion of proceeds to local organizations that assist cancer patients. Halpin says: 'We want to take care of our team, our family, and our local community.'



Tara Halpin (front, center) and the Steinhauser team celebrating 115 years in business

Flexo turned out to be a worthwhile investment for Steinhauser. While 80 percent of its customers' jobs are digital, 80 percent of revenue comes from flexo. 'Flexo changed our business for the better,' said Halpin. In 2019 Steinhauser installed a new flexographic press, a 12-color MPS EF 530. This significant investment has produced exponential growth. July 2020 was the biggest sales month in company history, despite the ongoing pandemic.

# Community

Addressing the company's Covid-19 efforts, Halpin said: 'Everyone is pitching in to help those who need it. 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.' In addition to traditional orders, Steinhauser partnered with a local brewery that converted to making hand sanitizer to meet local shortages and printed 10,000 labels.

For both internal operations and business in the midst of Covid-19, 'communication is of utmost importance,' says Halpin. 'Staying in contact with customers, suppliers and industry peers is essential to ensuring packaging and label producers continue to operate. The label and packaging industry is a close-knit community, and now is the time to maintain a supportive culture.'

This team culture and community focus has become a cornerstone of Steinhauser. After a tumultuous period in the company's history, Halpin had a renewed focus on cultivating a better workplace culture and caring for the community. As a result of these efforts, Steinhauser, a woman-owned company, is now a three-time recipient of the Printing Industries of America Best Workplace in the Americas award. Steinhauser was also the first company named a 'Label Leader' by TLMI.

Halpin credits a large part of this cultural change to Steiny Snax, monthly meetings where all 40 employees come together to share updates. Communicating openly to the team on a regular basis helps everyone to feel included and shares the vision, mission, and values of the company. Steiny Snax have continued during the pandemic, with outdoor, socially-distanced meetings.

While the pandemic is delaying an in-person celebration of the 115-year anniversary, Steinhauser is not letting the accomplishment fall by the wayside and is celebrating through the 'timeline' campaign. When asked about the future of Steinhauser, Halpin says: 'I want all Steinhauser employees to be as happy as they can be: to be fulfilled, have a great living, develop personally and professionally, and help our customers and our community.

'For Steinhauser, culture is always king and family is always first.'



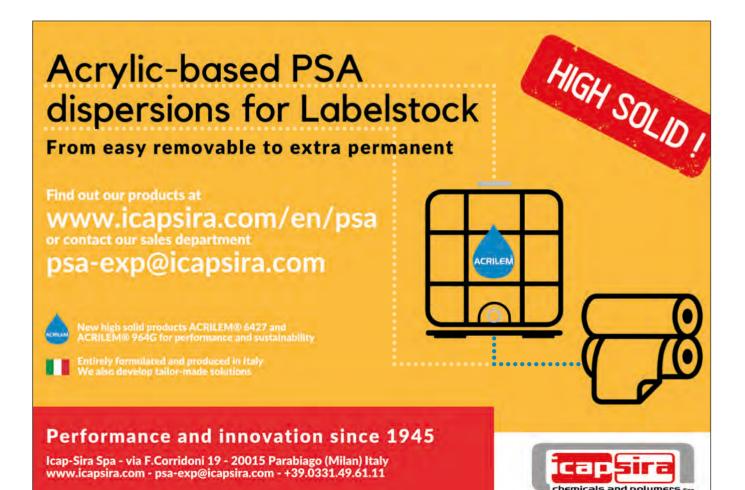
To follow the 'timeline' campaign, visit Steinhauser's Instagram: www.instagram.com/steinhauserinc





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# Garino Hermanos celebrates 100th anniversary

The Uruguayan printer is still family-owned and run by the founder's grandsons. James Quirk reports

arino Hermanos, based in the Uruguayan capital of Montevideo, celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. The company was founded as a printer of basic sheet-fed products in 1920 by Guillermo Garino Brusco, the son of an immigrant Italian family established in the country in the late 19th century. His brother Americo soon joined him. Their business started as an association with Guillermo's brother-in-law, Juan Schmidt, and required all of Guillermo's savings for his wedding. The wedding had to wait, but thus began a company that is now 100 years old and is still owned and run by their grandchildren.

Based in a local market of under 3.5 million people, diversification has been a key facet of Garino Hermanos' history since its foundation. Originally named Schmidt & Garino, the company installed Uruguay's first business forms press in 1949 thanks to a partnership with UK-based Lamson Paragon (later acquired by Moore Business Forms in 1975).

In 1952, Garino bought out Schmidt and renamed the company Garino Hermanos (the latter is the Spanish word for brothers). It continued to focus on business forms and sheet-fed products before – under the leadership of Julio and Raúl Garino, sons of Don Guillermo – branching out into security printing with checks and tickets in the 1980s. The brothers set up the company's Information Services division, which began as a partnership with IBM.

# "Our goal has always been to provide our clients with high quality and good service"

Seeing the business forms market in decline, the company – now led by Guillermo Garino, grandson of the founder Guillermo Garino, and Jorge Garrido, grandson of Americo – moved into label printing in 1998 with the installation of a Nilpeter FA 2400 flexo press.

# **Family connection**

Today, the company is split between two divisions which each represent an equal share of the overall business: Information Services handles transpromo work, software development, document digitalization, cross media and electronic billing. The second division, Graphic Arts Services, produces security documents and business forms on three Muller Martini web offset presses; and

# Labelexpo shows: 29 and counting

Jorge Garrido is a familiar face at Labelexpo events. His appearance on a panel discussion at Label Summit Latin America 2020, held in early March in Chile, marked his 29th attendance at a Labelexpo event. 'My first Labelexpo was in Chicago in 1996,' recalls Garrido. 'We were investigating flexo presses and decided to buy our first Nilpeter FA machine.

'Attending the shows is always a positive experience. I have been able to see the industry's evolution at the events through the years. They have also given me the opportunity to meet and establish great relationships with industry experts.'



L-R: Director Jorge Garrido, director Guillermo Garino, and executive director Carina Conte, in front of one of Garino Hermanos' three Nilpeter presses

tickets, labels and promotional products including scratch-off cards on its one HP Indigo and three Nilpeter presses. Label converting takes place on equipment from GM and Prati.

The family connection remains strong to this day. As well as the founders' grandsons Guillermo Garino and Jorge Garrido, a third -Ignacio Garino – leads the Information Services division. A number of their children, nephews and nieces are involved: Carina Conte is executive director; Gabriella Garino works in sales; Esteban Garrido and Edgardo Garrido are both engineers.

Garino Hermanos has maintained a leadership position in its local market thanks to consistent investment in new technology and high levels of product quality and innovation. 'I believe there are three essential pillars for our continued success,' says Guillermo Garino. 'The first is our focus on customer satisfaction and our undivided attention to market requirements. The second is continued investment in technology, always in search for greater efficiency and flexibility. Finally, the stability and quality of our team and our ability to acquire and share product knowledge within the organization.'

According to Jorge Garrido, the company's traditional focus on security printing has proved an asset when shifting to serve the pharmaceutical industry and to comply with PS9000 quality standard, the company's most recent certification. It is also certified to ISO 9001-2015.

'The pandemic has complicated everything,' says Garrido of the state of the Uruguayan market today. 'Technological transformation is arduous and costly; navigating a business in today's world is a great challenge. Living in a small country such as Uruguay, with a small local market, adds further challenges. Export business to other Latin American countries has fallen recently. But our goal has always been to provide our clients with high quality and good service, as well as developing innovative products. That is how it has been since my grandfather's time, and it is still the case today.'



Read a 2014 report from Garino Hermanos at www.labelsandlabeling.com/features/garino-hermanos-combats-small-local-market



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# Leftech's foil adventure

Argentina-based Leftech Group has moved into slitting and distribution of foils – a venture which has seen it also establish a facility in Brazil. James Quirk reports

he entrepreneurial spirit of the label industry is often – and rightly – celebrated. Though increased consolidation among both suppliers and converters is creating behemoths with global operations, there is still room – particularly in developing markets such as South America – for an individual or small company to employ ingenuity and agility to create a successful niche in the market.

This is one such story. Argentina-based Leftech Group is the Latin American distributor for Japanese water-wash flexo plate manufacturer Toyobo. In recent years it has added Aura CtP equipment from China to its portfolio, rebranding it as Ecoflex for the Argentine market.

Now it has moved into slitting and distribution of foils, in a move that has also seen it set up a dedicated facility in Brazil.

'I began to investigate the foil market two years ago,' explains Martin Fraire, founder and CEO of Leftech. 'Label converters in Argentina tend to buy from just two major international suppliers, via local distributors. According to my research, between them they supplied roughly 85 percent of the market. I felt there was room for a third player.'

With extensive contacts in China, Fraire toured five or six manufacturers of slitting equipment in the country, before settling on Hangzhou Hansoar Machinery. 'Hansoar has a slitter dedicated specifically to foil. Because it is designed for slitting foil, the machine is more delicate and can handle material as thin as 12 micron. Rather than being a machine that can also handle foil among other products, it is designed specifically for foils. It's a company that knows what it is doing.'

Fraire ordered a machine and shipped it to Argentina. It arrived at Leftech's premises in the Buenos Aires suburbs in July last year, and was in production a few weeks later.

The Hangzhou Hansoar Machinery slitter has a width of 1.28m, which allows clients the flexibility to order the widths they want, according to Fraire. It runs at 500m/min when slitting cold foil.

# Quality

So what of the foils themselves? An industry friend in Argentina had showed Fraire a catalog from Scodix, which listed a digital cold foil from Dragon Foils. The friend, knowing Fraire was a regular visitor to China, asked him to buy him some. 'If the foil was being sold by Scodix, I figured it must be a top-quality product,' says Fraire. He

#### Brazil

A conversation with a Brazilian label converter at Label Summit Latin America 2019 in Medellin, Colombia, was the catalyst for Martin Fraire to see potential for his foil project in Argentina's neighboring country. As in Argentina, the foil market in Brazil is dominated by a small number of international suppliers, who generally serve the country's label converters from distribution centers in São Paulo. Fraire decided to open a facility in the south of the country — close to Argentina, and a region home to several leading label converters. Another slitter was swiftly ordered and shipped to Brazil, where Leftech do Brasil has now been established in partnership with Alex Spitzner, an Argentine friend of Fraire's based in Brazil who has 25 years' experience in the packaging industry and is general manager of packaging company HZ Group.



Leftech CEO Martin Fraire with the foil slitter from Hangzhou Hansoar Machinery

met with Dragon Foils, and Leftech is now its exclusive distributor in Argentina.

Because of Fraire's established relationships with Argentina's leading label converters — he supplies most of them with plate processing equipment and Toyobo Cosmolight flexo plates — the new project was quickly off the ground. 'We've had great success since we started,' says Fraire. 'We have learned a great deal. The product works. The machine works. Gold cold foil has sold particularly well, while copper — which is popular here for wine labels, a key market in Argentina — has sold better than I thought. It is still early days, but in the first year we have done five orders for a container-load of foils each time. The foils have been very well received by our clients.'

Among these clients is Argentina's biggest label converter — and one of the leading label operations on the continent — Artes Gráficas Modernas, led by the indomitable Fernando Leiro. General manager Matias Caletrio is enthused by Leftech's latest venture. 'We are very satisfied with the new Leftech foil cutting center. It has allowed us to reduce the raw material web width by having special cutting with rotating blades, which reduces dust getting into the cut. This allowed us to reduce the cold foil supply widths by 1.5cm on each side. Furthermore, the response times are admirable — there is no amount that we have requested that has not been supplied the very next day. The service has been excellent.'

Label and carton converter JM Ramos Mejía, based in Buenos Aires, has also begun buying foils from Leftech. 'We produce fine packaging in luxury rigid cartons and high-quality folding cartons, as well as flatbed offset and narrow web roll-to-roll labels,' reports Fabian Brey, the converter's president. 'We employ countless processes, including hot stamping with manual, automatic, flatbed and rotary in-line equipment. For each we use different widths, lengths and winding tensions. So supplying hot foil has always been a challenge for our suppliers, but now we have integrated everything into a single provider — Leftech Group. The quality of the cut is incredible, and the delivery speed is surprising: within 24 hours we have everything we asked for, with regard to both quantity and quality, with the cuts and lengths that are required.'



Read more about Leftech Group at www.labelsandlabeling.com/search/node/Leftech





# Madiwor makes it work

Argentine converter Symbar has seen major benefits since implementing Madiwor's workflow software, despite only scratching the surface of its capabilities. James Quirk reports

Buenos Aires-based label converter Symbar has seen major benefits since installing cloud-based workflow software from Madiwor, which has helped it to successfully weather the country's recent unstable economic climate as well as increase efficiency and solve problems with price estimating.

Symbar is part of – and based next door to the headquarters of – Grupo Hasar, an international supplier of a wide range of hardware and software products, with operations in Mexico, Chile, Brazil, Peru, Uruguay and the US. It began printing self-adhesive labels in 2004 with a Mark Andy 830 press, since upgraded to a 4-color Mark Andy 2200, and serves the retail, logistics, food and beverage sectors with two shifts and 60 employees.

Twenty-five percent of its business comes from label printing. The rest comes from selling printers, handheld readers, labels and consumables from Zebra, for which the company is a distributor. 'We focus on everything that has to do with traceability,' says Karina Pugliese, product manager for supplies at Symbar. Clients include Avon, Coca-Cola and Pfizer.

'Growth of the label printing business is a key part of our strategy, and investment in processes and equipment has to come with it,' says Pugliese. 'Increasing efficiency and profitability by installing the workflow system from Madiwor has been a part of that.'

While using its own workflow software, developed in-house and mixed with an external system, the company had struggled particularly with price estimating. 'The price-quoting problems the system had meant we were sometimes losing money on jobs without knowing,' says Pugliese.

"Many Argentine label converters have been struggling due to the country's economic problems, but they haven't impacted us: we've had a good year. This is partly down to the Madiwor system"



# Madiwor adds local market experience

In a shrewd move, Madiwor has been boosted since last year by the support of German Calvo, partner at Digital y Flexo, who has more than 25 years' experience as a distributor for the label market in Argentina, and is well-known as the local face of Mark Andy, Xeikon and Prati. 'I have known Ignacio and Sebastián for many years,' he explains. 'We began talking at Labelexpo Americas 2018, where Madiwor was exhibiting, and I could see the advantages of the system. Since early 2019 I have been helping to open doors and introduce the software to my Mark Andy clients.'

Since installing Madiwor's software in mid-2019, following three months of testing, all that has changed. 'We are really happy with the system. It has been a huge help and reduces stress,' enthuses Pugliese. 'It has improved our competitivity. A client can make an order online, and the software automates the process of choosing what is needed for each job. We've been able to reduce stock levels because the system controls what is needed.

'Many label converters in Argentina have been struggling due to the country's economic problems, but they haven't impacted us: we've had a good year. This is partly down to the Madiwor system.'

Pugliese says Symbar is only using around 30 percent of the software's capabilities, though this will increase in the near future to some 60-70 percent. 'We are ramping it up more and more. We will begin using the production module soon, and this will hugely increase our efficiency.'

#### Customizable

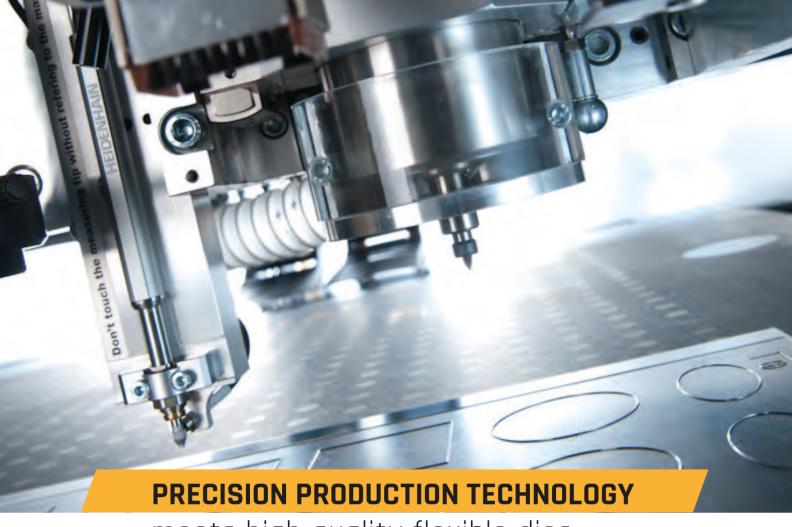
The modular nature of Madiwor's software means that users can install the complete system or select the modules they require. The cross-platform software can be integrated into an existing workflow, or operate as a stand-alone system. The software is easy to implement and run, and is highly customizable. Modules include production planning, estimating, raw material inventory, finished product stock, B2B e-commerce (an extranet facility), and material cut and assignment. 'The software continues to evolve. New modules are coming all the time and we add updates on a weekly basis,' says Gastón Famá, product specialist at Madiwor. 'It removes the stress of working out how to print a particular job. All necessary information, every metric from every machine, is stored and used by the software to help the business run more efficiently.'

The software, after extensive trialing and use at a label converter over an 18 month period, became commercially available in 2018 when brothers Ignacio and Sebastián Morrison founded Madiwor. Today, the company has more than 50 clients spread across North and South America, Europe and Africa.

'Madiwor is a system created by industry professionals who know first-hand the challenges faced by label converters,' says Ignacio Morrison, who has also designed workflow software for companies outside the label sector. 'It has been designed specifically for label converters. It is very easy to implement and can be adapted to suit the user's needs.'



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# Pakistan Paper Products expands

One of the oldest printing and packaging companies in the Indian sub-continent, Pakistan Paper Products continues to expand amid the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Aakriti Agarwal reports

akistan Paper Products, founded in 1951, began printing pressure-sensitive labels in 1997 under the brand name Pro Labels. Today it is the largest printer of pressure-sensitive labels in Pakistan, consuming over 5.5 million sqm of paper and filmic labelstock annually, and serving only the local market.

While the company's first investment was a 10in 5-color Mark Andy 830 press, today it runs four 8-color presses – two Nilpeter FB3300, a Mark Andy Performance Series P3, and a Mark Andy Evolution – as well as a 10-color Gallus ECS 340 and one 6-color KDO press.

The latest addition was the 8-color Mark Andy Evolution press, which was remotely installed during the Covid-19 pandemic with the help of local engineers. Support was provided via video conference by a Mark Andy technician in the UK. Abid Sayeed, chief executive at Pakistan Paper Products, says: 'We always add a machine when we have run out of capacity or need to modernize for new and innovative labels. For instance, we invested in a Gallus ECS 340 10-color press with two screen units in 2017 to fulfil a major requirement of Unilever haircare products. The Mark Andy Evolution was added to enhance our general capacity as we were constantly running at maximum capacity and beyond. This machine is now full and we are again running at maximum capacity.'

Pakistan Paper Products is focused on high added-value labels in homecare, haircare and skin care segments and fulfils all requirements of FMCG customers in Pakistan. Auto lubricants is yet another high-volume business for the company as it supplies to all the leading oil marketing companies in Pakistan.

# "Demand for home care and personal care products is dramatically on the rise and we see this continuing for the foreseeable future"

While the company focuses on high-value labels, Sayeed reveals that the overall label printing industry in Pakistan is still at a nascent stage. 'We are right now playing catch up in terms of volumes and availability of print technologies compared to the rest of the world. We expect the local label industry in Pakistan to grow

# Company history

Pakistan Paper Products (PPP) was founded in 1951 and started with the production of exercise books on a press procured from Germany. In 1964, the company was listed on the Pakistan Stock Exchange and remains one of the oldest listed companies in the country. It ventured into many different areas of paper converting and in 1965 set up a state-of-the-art packaging plant in Chittagong, east Pakistan. This plant was the only unit of its kind producing flexible, offset and corrugated packaging items in the region. Due to the break-up of the country in 1971, this unit was lost to what became Bangladesh Paper Products. PPP continued its operations in Karachi and in 1997 set up the first pressure-sensitive printing unit in the country under the brand name Pro Labels.



at a rapid pace in the future as we see high growth in self-adhesive labels in the country. In-mold labels and shrink sleeves are growing too, but we are focused only on self-adhesive labels and are struggling to fulfil the growing volume despite adding machines to enhance capacity,' he says.

'In terms of sustainability, however, we have not yet reached the stage where those are vital and important goals at this time. Even so, there are clear environment laws in the country according to which we have to treat the waste in a proper manner before disposing it,' Sayeed adds.

#### Pandemic impact

Turning to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, Sayeed says: 'At this point we do not see any major negative long-term implications in the label industry and continue to see positive growth in our business. Demand for home care and personal care products is dramatically on the rise and we see this continuing for the foreseeable future.

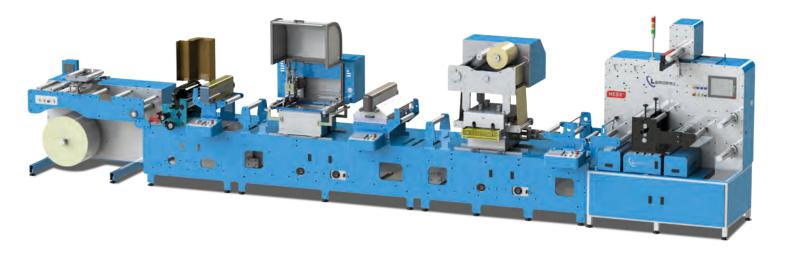
'During the pandemic, we had finance, human resources and sales staff come to the head office on rotation basis to keep the head count low. In our factory, workers were trained to use masks and gloves where possible. Better hygiene was impressed upon by everyone and sanitizers were made available so that workers could continuously sanitize their hands.'

Like most of the world, Pakistan's economy contracted for the first time in 68 years due to the pandemic. However, Sayeed says: 'The overall print and packaging industry has done quite well during this period as demand for home care, personal care, skin care products and pharmaceuticals have gone up dramatically and this has more than offset the reduction in demand for sectors such as auto lubricants which is a big part of our business.'

Although, like in most countries, managing the supply chain has been a big challenge in Pakistan too, Sayeed concludes: 'While we have faced some shortages, overall it was nothing major as we shifted our buying to Asia when the pandemic was at its peak in Europe.'



For more news from the Indian sub-continent, go to www. labelsandlabeling.com/regions/south-asia



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# UV Graphic sees rise in demand

The Indian manufacturer has seen a surge in demand for its presses, reports Aakriti Agarwal



Abhay Datta (right) at Labelexpo Europe 2019, where UV Graphic sold seven presses

ndian press manufacturer UV Graphic Technologies has seen increased demand for its Ultraflex UFO flexo press in the current financial year.

Since May, the company has installed four presses, one each at Optimum Labels in Delhi, Vikram Printers in Pune, PP Labels in Pinjore, and a 10 color film press at Jupiter Laminators in Sonipat. There are seven further orders in the pipeline.

Abhay Datta, director of UV Graphic Technologies, says: 'We have been getting a lot of enquiries since April, mainly from tier-2 and -3 cities. A lot of people are getting rid of their old equipment. They are investing in the latest flexo technology with wider web

# "Buying from local manufacturers ensures good service and timely installation"

widths of 450 and 530mm to print both pressure-sensitive labels and flexible packaging. Label printers have had time to think and restrategize their business models during lockdown. Stable companies are investing for a better future."

The company has received three repeat orders for its Ultraflex UFO press. All three customers had purchased their respective machines in 2019 and have confirmed repeat orders in September 2020.

# Customers' view

Umesh and Pramod Dongre of Shree Multi Labels, based in Pune, installed their first 9-color Ultraflex UFO 370 press in February 2019. The company has ordered a second 6-color Ultraflex UFO press to be delivered by the end of December. Shree Multi specializes in pressure-sensitive filmic labels and stand-up pouches for food.

Pramod Dongre says: 'It is a value-for-money press that offers all features and high-quality printing. Moreover, due to the Covid lockdown, buying from local manufacturers ensures good service and timely installation, which is critical for just-in-time delivery requirements of brands.'

Another Pune-based company, Hempra, owned by Parveen and Tanish Mutha, installed its first 9-color Ultraflex UFO 450 flexo press in July 2019. Hempra specializes in flexible packaging and shrink sleeves. The second press, an 8-color Ultraflex UFO 450, is expected to be delivered in February 2021. Praveen Mutha says: 'We have seen an increase in our print quality and our customers

are coming back with repeat orders and long-term commitments. Thanks to this this substantial increase in productivity and quality, we have ordered our second machine within a year.'

Sanjay Vakharia of SM Packaging, located in Vasai, Mumbai, installed a 10-color Ultraflex UFO 370 press in September 2019 and is engaged in pressure-sensitive, shrink sleeves and in-mold labels for pharma and F&F industry. The second 8-color Ultraflex UFO 370 press is due to be delivered in November. 'We did an extensive study of imported and local machines before deciding to opt for Ultraflex. We have opted for a high configuration press from UV Graphic within 12 months of installing the first one. Ultraflex UFO, in my opinion, is comparable to any European press in terms of high printing quality, efficiency, speed, and is also very user-friendly. We have been able to cater to the huge demand during lockdown due to this installation,' says Vakharia.

Seeing demand soar, UV Graphic has increased capacity to two machines a month, and has opened a new sales office in Mumbai.

'Our press is very compact and is built in such a way that it takes only a day to install,' says Abhay Datta. 'We claim perfect register and make ready with less than three meters of waste on our presses and the fourth meter is sellable, which results in huge savings for any printer. All our presses are designed to handle film and labelstock so the machines are finding a huge demand in the flexible packaging industry as well. In the end, the market is driven by the buyer, not the seller and we see a good demand for our flexo presses.'

The company ensured smooth delivery and installation to customers during the pandemic. 'Service is key in this industry. Our engineers, while taking all precautions, flew or drove to nearby cities and installed the machine in a day. While remote diagnostics are working well during these times, remote installation requires trained engineers at the customer's end,' Datta observes.

# Opportunity beckons

Datta sees potential for growth in the Indian label industry. 'Businesses are diversifying. A lot of ancillary equipment does not get manufactured in India at the required scale, resulting in huge imports. During lockdown, many companies strategized and are gearing up to manufacture quality ancillary equipment such as slitter rewinders, off-line finishing equipment and other machines related to the label industry in India. Challenges with imports and after sales service due to lockdown have resulted in a huge demand for high-quality equipment manufactured locally. Indian manufacturers must prove their mettle in the next few months to benefit from this opportunity.'

UV Graphic has started manufacturing high-speed slitters with turret rewinders and an option of 100 percent defect detection in association with international inspection brands. 'We have already supplied three of these machines and have three more orders. Owing to the demand, we will launch a slew of other products in the coming months which include digital finishing, hot foil stamping, screen printing and semi rotary die-cutting systems. We want to be a one stop shop for our clients' all label requirements,' Datta says.



For more from Aakriti Agarwal on the Indian market, go to www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/aakriti-agarwal

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# Holography in India: fishing for new opportunities

Investment in materials and technologies, alongside new applications, is driving growth for holography in India, says Dr Paul Dunn, chair of the International Hologram Manufacturers Association

emand continues to strengthen the market in India for holography as we see continued integration of holography alongside other authentication and track and trace technologies driving growth. In turn, this will herald sustained growth and progress, revealing a technology set to forge ahead in the coming years; underpinning moves to support overt and covert protection strategies by authorities, local government and law and enforcement agencies seeking quick and effective security solutions.

Indeed, it is throughout Asia, where counterfeiting remains pervasive, where we can see unmitigated commercial potential for holography. India will continue to offer widescale growth as law enforcement and national government intensify their war on counterfeiting and the supporting criminal infrastructures - it is expected that increased integration of holograms in these territories as part of brand protection strategies will be adopted by those looking to tackle the problem. With several regulatory bodies in India and abroad laying out stringent rules and standards and manufacturers realizing the importance of authentication, the business is set to grow, providing growth opportunities for existing and even new entrepreneurs.

This comes as law enforcement agencies such as Europol and EUIPO have issued fresh warnings over counterfeit goods, particularly the international trade in falsified pharmaceuticals, which is worth in excess of \$4bn USD. The World Health Organisation has also warned about the increase in illicit medicines linked to coronavirus on sale throughout countries like India, where counterfeiters are exploiting gaps in the market.

Holograms can be effective in the frontline fight against counterfeiters and fraudsters, protecting brands and profits and reassure those in the supply chain with their presence on products, recognizing the security and financial benefits provided. Growth in India's market for authentication devices appears also to be strong and lucrative following forecasts that the global market for anti-counterfeiting packaging will reach upwards of \$250bn USD by 2026. This is primarily due to the rise in healthcare concerns, higher adoption



Holostik offers a wide range of UV embossed labels and folding cartons

# "Throughout Asia, where counterfeiting remains pervasive, where we can see unmitigated commercial potential for holography"

rates of anti-counterfeit technologies and growing awareness of tracking and tracing technologies.

#### **New applications**

Commercial holography's capacity to carve open new applications is felt strongly in India, where, for example, it's used by the Indian Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) to tackle the issue of vehicle fuel pollution – across several states, people are urged to ensure that they comply with a legal directive to use color-coded hologram stickers to identify the type of fuel used in their vehicles.

The move sees diesel vehicles bearing a hologram sticker with an orange-colored background, while cars running on petrol and compressed natural gas (CNG) display another sticker with a light blue background. For all other vehicles, the background will be grey. The hologram sticker, which includes the registration

number, the registering authority, a laser branded PIN, and engine and chassis numbers, is essentially acts as a third registration plate attached to the inside of the bottom-left side of the windshield.

The capacity for holography to incorporate various data forms and recognition information continues to grow in importance but for now, its versatility demonstrates a canny knack to add value in protecting India's indigenous fishing industry. The state government of Kerala has introduced Holographic Registration Plates (HRPs) in a move to tackle the increasing number of unregistered fishing vessels infiltrating coastal regions which have been identified as being involved in criminal activities, including human trafficking.

The plates feature embossed, difficult-toreplicate security holograms fixed on top of the wheelhouse with an identification number laser etched to ensure each of the vessels has a unique identifier. The

application is allowing the authorities to better track fake fishing vessels, improve coastal security, locate unregistered vessels out at sea and conduct rescue operations more effectively.

In another development, the University Grants' Commission (UGC) has directed all the universities and higher education institutions in India to introduce identification devices such as a hologram of the institute and QR code in students' certificates and degrees to ensure proper verification and curb duplication. According to a UGC official, the move also helps to bring uniformity across the country's higher education system. (According to resources, the number of colleges and universities in India reached 39,931 and 993, respectively, in FY19. India had 37.4 million students enrolled in higher education in FY19.)

Another development has seen the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) starting to add holograms to 500ml bottles at train stations in some parts of the country. It's expected that the initiative will be implemented nationwide in the next few years. Estimates indicate that the yearly demand for packaged water by railway commuters is approximately 584 million bottles.

End user demand and the search for ever more interesting packaging concepts and design certainly reflect holography's versatility and flexibility in the India consumer market; lending itself



Embossed label with lens & 3D pri effect for an international edible oil brand

# About the IHMA

The IHMA is made up of more than 90 of the world's leading hologram companies. Members include the leading producers and converters of holograms for banknote security, anti-counterfeiting, brand protection, packaging, graphics and other commercial applications around the world, and actively cooperate to maintain the highest professional, security and quality standards.



Visually appealing carton with dome lens for a unique pharma product

to integration with various substrates and print and conversion technologies, driving product innovation.

#### Growth

Indeed, growth in packaging authentication devices across India remains strong and lucrative on the back of forecasts that the global market for anti-counterfeiting packaging will reach upwards of \$250bn USD by 2026. This is primarily due to the rise in healthcare concerns, higher adoption rates of anti-counterfeit technologies and growing awareness of tracking and tracing technologies.

India continues to be at the forefront of holography innovation, developing a new generation of optical structures featuring distinct visual effects that are easy to identify, yet even more difficult to simulate. New techniques in film coating and production technology are pushing the boundaries for the use of holographic materials: a wide variety of specialist origination techniques offer an almost infinite variety of colorful 3D visual effects, ranging from the bright and stunning, to subtle graphic features and tones.

The work of optically variable devices (OVDs) companies such as Holostik illustrates the brightness, vivacity and luster of holograms as an eye-catching packaging accoutrement.

Indeed, various surveys have established that the technology grabs the attention of global consumers browsing crowded retail shelves in store or supermarket. This is the one single property that all brand owners look for in their packaging - maximum brand appeal.

Holostik's 3D UV embossed holographic labels are used to enhance the retail appeal of a raft of healthcare products including deodorants and corn oil supplements on shelves across India, while contributing

a strong degree of authenticity and consumer confidence in the provenance of the products on sale. The labels not only enhance the brand aesthetics but also provide security from counterfeiting indeed, for folding carton produced for a leading brand of nasal spray in India, the manufacturers have created packaging that catches the eye and stands out among competitor products.

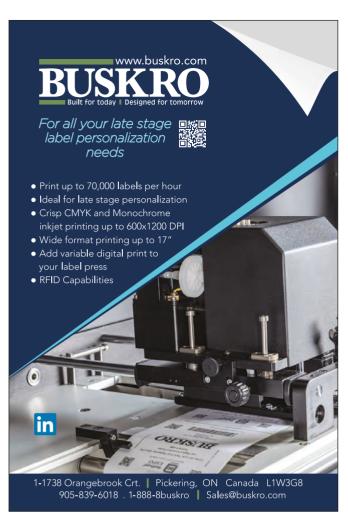
# "Holography remains an effective frontline weapon in the battle to thwart counterfeiters and criminal gangs"

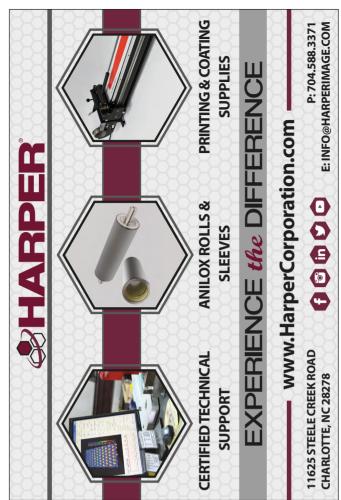
There's little question that holography, as advocated by the ISO12931 standard, enables those with responsibility for law enforcement and security across India's regional and national borders to verify the authenticity of a legitimate product, differentiating it from fake products coming from counterfeiting hot spots around the world. Even those that carry a 'fake' authentication feature can be distinguished from the genuine item if that item carries a carefully thought-out authentication solution.

It also remains an effective frontline weapon in the battle to thwart counterfeiters and criminal gangs. So, it's appropriate that as holography continues to find new markets and opportunities, the technology remains undimmed.

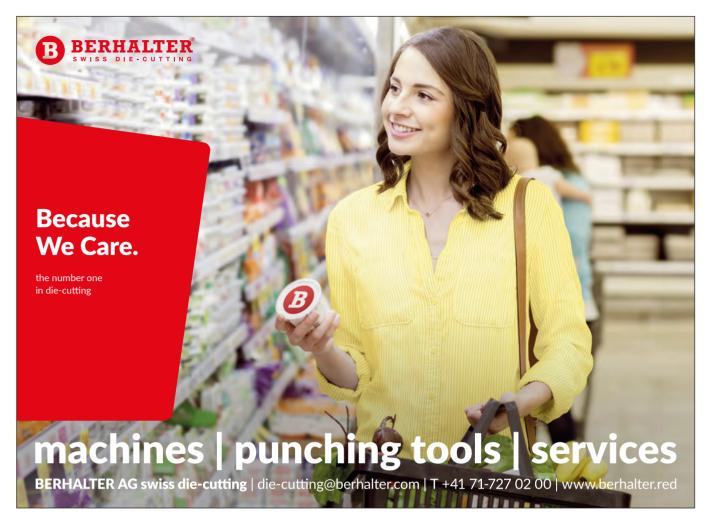


For more information about the International Hologram Manufacturers Association, go to www.ihma.org











## Hebei Weiyuan plots digital path

In 2018 Hebei Weiyuan took its first step into digital printing, purchasing the first Konica Minolta AccurioLabel 190 label press to be sold in China. Now, founder Zhai Dafa shares his experience with Yolanda Wang

stablished in 2015, Hebei Weiyuan is a print company with integrated design, printing, bookbinding and package processing. Its products are targeted mainly at the pharmaceutical packaging sector. But the company's key focus is on information technology, as its founder Zhai Dafa explains: 'Informatization and digitization are the future trends of industrial development. Take label printing, for example, where the key driver for industrial change is still end user market demands. These include more and more end consumers searching for personalized and variable label products; brand owners speeding up development cycles when launching new products; and marketing channels becoming more diversified.

'As a service provider, we need to understand and meet these demands and create new opportunities for our customers, combining information technology and printing technology to create new and higher value. That's why we defined ourselves at the time of registration as a service company relying on information technology and digital production.'

## Investing in digital

Zhai and his team spent almost two years studying the domestic digital printing market and researching different brands of digital press in the light of the overall direction and goals they had set.

'Pharmaceutical packaging is our key product, including various medical adhesive labels and cartons,' continues Zhai. 'Pharma packaging is quite different from other packaging products. Drug brands require a rather simple printing process but emphasize functionality and price. So we firstly consider the cost/performance ratio when selecting and purchasing a digital press.

'In addition, as a new entrant to digital printing and a small-sized printing company, we were aware we might encounter some problems, which meant we needed to be very cautious when investing. Some of the questions we asked included: will customers accept the quality and price of digital printed products? How do we get more purchase orders? How to staff and support the facility? Are there any more other additional items to buy except the press? Who will be responsible for after-sales facility maintenance? How about the repair and maintenance cost, and so on. Essentially, we were weighing again and again whether the investment in a digital press would meet our expectations or not.'

Though the purchasing decision was complex, the outcome has been positive. In March 2018, Hebei Weiyuan finally decided to buy a Konica Minolta AccurioLabel 190 label press, making it the first user of this machine in China.

Konica Minolta is an established leader in the commercial digital printing market. After entering the label market in 2016, it sold more than 500 AccurioLabel series label presses all over the world up to March of this year, making it one of the world's leading digital label press manufacturers.

## Digital powers manufacturing

As the first user of the AccurioLabel press in China, Hebei Weiyuan's opinion is important: 'It took us very little time to complete the installation and commissioning of this machine up to printing our first purchase order. It's very simple in operation. Now almost all our colleagues in the digital printing division of our company can run this machine,' said Zhai. 'Simple and convenient' are the two words used most often by Zhai when talking about the press.

During outbreak of Covid-19 at the beginning of 2020, this press



"Especially for small brand owners, an integrated packaging solution supplier for their whole product line is usually the best choice: simple, easy and economic"

fulfilled Hebei Weiyuan's orders, including rush jobs for epidemic control materials. At that time, all nationwide road traffic was strictly controlled and many employees failed to return, but Hebei Weiyuan still managed to get vital orders of epidemic control packaging out of the door.

During this period, Hebei Weiyuan also felt deep empathy from Konica Minolta. 'Konica Minolta voluntarily reduced 50 percent of our printing costs in February and March, which relieved to a large extent our financial pressures in the short term and let us know clearly the sincerity of Konica Minolta in fighting together with us in the hard times, giving us more confidence for the future.'

Konica Minolta's nationwide service and after-sales service network also addressed Hebei Weiyuan's concerns about the operational parameters of the press – for example direct printing on heat-resistant films. Hebei Weiyuan had many discussions with engineers from Konica Minolta about the stability and performance of these materials during their trial runs. 'We hope Konica Minolta will make some more studies into the printability of the different label materials which we need to print as part of our wider product application range."

At present, Hebei Weiyuan's business is split between conventional and digital printing. After installation of the Konica Minolta AccurioLabel 190 label press, Hebei Weiyuan's digital label business rose sharply, accounting for 10 percent in 2018 then 30 percent in 2019. Zhai estimates that digital printing output may account for 40 percent of the company's business this year.

## Added-value

'Brand owners are no longer satisfied with "ordinary" service. They expect to get products fulfilling their design requirements, yet also expect to see more optimal label solutions within a reasonable budget,' says Zhai. 'The digital press has allowed us to get more



involved at the design and specification stage of our customers' projects.' In addition to increasing the volume of labels printed, the service role - moving Hebei Weiyuan from 'just another' manufacturer to their customers' partner – might be one of the greatest achievements of the digital investment.

"In addition to increasing the volume of labels printed, the service role - moving Hebei Weiyuan from 'just another' manufacturer to their customers' partner - might be one of the greatest achievements of the digital investment"

Now Hebei Weiyuan has a new perspective on its previous concerns about the digital installation. 'Compared with cost of conventional printing, the unit price of digitally printed products might be still a little high. However, when we consider the other costs including workshop, operators, production time and materials, the quote for our digital printing orders remains highly competitive.

Although Hebei Weiyuan has far more production capacity on conventional presses compared to digital, its output is, in fact, roughly equal, with the digital press at full production capacity and with an average 80 percent uptime.

'Moreover, brand owners are also gradually accepting the relatively high cost of digital printing,' says Zhai. 'They found no increase in the total cost after comprehensively considering the faster lead time and inventory management factors, and found a decreased cost for personalized and short-run printing compared to conventional.'

In addition, digital printing technology has brought plenty of new business for Hebei Weiyuan and extended its production into package printing. 'With the personalized, flexible, prompt and convenient advantages of digital technology, we have developed a clientele of new label users and established a reliable and sound cooperative relationship with them. On this basis, they have gradually given us more packaging orders,' confirms Zhai. 'Most customers want to find a stable supplier who has the whole range of label and packaging solutions, which is conducive to more efficient management of suppliers, simplifying purchasing procedures and saving on communication costs. Especially for small brand owners, an integrated packaging solution supplier for their whole product line is usually the best choice: simple, easy and economic.'

After this first, highly positive digital experience, Zhai has decided to reduce investment on conventional presses and increase the size of its digital printing facility in the future. The Konica Minolta AccurioLabel 230 digital label press will be its next target.



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

## Distributor news in brief

## Lombardi signs Matik as distributor

Italian manufacturer Lombardi Converting Machinery has appointed Matik as the distributor and service provider for its printing and converting equipment in North America.

## Maxteq appointed as Nilpeter agent

Nilpeter Asia Pacific has appointed Maxteq as its new agent to drive sales in Australia and New Zealand. It previously managed sales in Australia and New Zealand from its regional headquarters in Bangkok, Thailand, but has now decided to engage a local partner. Maxteq is one of the leading Australian agents, representing BST eltromat, Cartes, Lundberg Tech, Miyakoshi, Spilker, tesa, and Rotocontrol, among others.

## Omet names Benelux distributor

Omet has signed a partnership agreement with Wifac, which will act as its exclusive agent for Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg.

## MPS appoints Scandinavia agent

Dutch press manufacturer MPS has appointed Nortech Solutions as its local agent in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark.

## Edale appoints agent in Italy

British press manufacturer Edale has appointed Nebigraf in Italy. Nebigraf was established in 1999 and also represents brands such as Miyakoshi and Smag.

## JM Heaford appoints Colombia agent

JM Heaford has appointed Chemisolutions its new agent in Colombia to sell and support its mounters and proofers. Chemisolutions was established in 2010 in Bogota,



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## Huangjin eyes digital future

The Chinese converter plans to increase its focus on digital printing with the installation of a third Epson water-based inkjet press. Yolanda Wang reports

stablished in 2013, Shanghai Huangjin is a dedicated PS label converter with ■ in-house R&D and design services along with production and sales. It employs 22 people in a 2,200sqm facility, with an annual turnover of 17-18m RMB (2.5m USD). Huangjin's label products are mainly focused on cosmetics and food, accounting for 60 percent and 40 percent respectively of production volume.

Riding on the increasing popularity of digital printing and an increase in short run orders, Huangjin purchased an Epson SurePress L-4033AW in 2015 and an Epson SurePress L-4533AW in 2019, accelerating the company's digital focus. Today digitally printed labels at Huangjin account for 30-40 percent of its business.

Qi Shipeng, GM of Huangjin, says the decision to purchase the first aqueous inkjet Epson press was made after 'an investigation of almost all the digital printing technologies on the market at that time'. The L-4033W press uses Epson's own patented Micro Piezo inkjet head technology and a 7-color aqueous ink set.

'We chose this aqueous inkjet technology for four reasons,' Qi explains. 'First, environmental friendliness. The Chinese government's environment protection regulations at that time were not as stringent as now, but as a responsible manufacturer we had already made great exertions to reduce environmental pollution and waste from our daily production. Whether talking about the machine itself or the ink, the Epson digital press conforms to EU RoHS rules; it can reduce the use of chemicals and volatile organic solvents.

'Second, it can produce highly saturated colors with an extremely wide color gamut, which will facilitate color matching with conventional letterpress, guarantee color conformity and provide more printing choice for customers.

'Third, digital printing reduces human intervention during operation, which is good for color control in different production batches over different times making color more stable.

'Fourth, the press can handle an extensive range of materials without any pre-printing treatment. The surface exhibits excellent adhesion and scratch resistance, so the labels produced are delicate, beautiful and durable.

'Without a doubt the longstanding brand awareness and reputation of Epson in the printing market and its patented inkjet head and ink technology impressed us most,



and was at the center of our cooperation,' concludes Oi Shipeng.

As its digital printing business continued to grow, in 2019 Huangjin bought its second aqueous inkjet press, an Epson SurePress L-4533AW. 'By this point one press was insufficient to handle our digital print requirements,' recalls Qi Shipeng. 'What's more, the Epson SurePress L-4533AW demonstrated huge improvements in output and operational performance compared to the previous 4033AW series.'

The culmination of these investments, to Huangjin's immense pride, was winning first prize in the Wine and Beer digital label category and second prize in the Liquor digital label category of the Packaging Impressions Excellence Awards 2019.

### Digital vs conventional

At present, Huangjin continues to develop both conventional and digital printing simultaneously. 'For each label order, we comprehensively consider its quantity, materials costs, production process and lead time, among other factors, and then select the most appropriate printing method.

'Digital printing is in fact a good supplement to conventional printing. Overall, both digital printing and conventional printing meet the requirements of certain market segments and will exist side by side for a long time. Of course, individual label converters will have a different mix of sales, quotations and end user marketing and customer groups, so the two printing technologies will have difference emphases, or will develop differently. There is no doubt that

## "Qi believes there will be long-term changes to the label industry as a result of the pandemic"

the Covid-19 epidemic has sped up the pace of digital technology adoption in the label printing industry.'

Today overseas export orders at Huangjin account for some 20 percent of business. After the Covid outbreak, domestic orders were basically at the same volume as last year, but overseas orders unsurprisingly suffered. Luckily, this lost business was made up by newly added orders for epidemic prevention materials.

For Qi, the pandemic impacted all industries and he believes there will be long-term changes to the label industry as a result. 'Surviving companies will take the opportunity to make disaster recovery preparations beforehand and will have a long-term development plan.'

At Huangjin, for example, this means an intention to increase investment in digital printing and the purchase of another Epson machine this year. This will be a SurePress L-6534VW UV inkjet press and the investment will include a digital die-cutting system. In the future, digital printing will become the core of Huangjin.



Read more from Yolanda Wang on the Chinese market at www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/yolanda-wang







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## Labelexpo South China to debut in Shenzhen

The first Labelexpo in southern China takes place in December in Shenzhen. Yolanda Wang previews the event

he first Labelexpo show to be held in south China will take place in Shenzhen on December 8-10 this year. Labelexpo South China 2020 will occupy 10,000sqm of floor space at the Shenzhen World Exhibition & Convention Center, the world's largest purpose-built event space. The show will build on the success of Labelexpo Asia 2019, which recorded its largest edition to date with an 18 percent increase in visitors.

The addition of the show to the Labelexpo portfolio means that there will be a Labelexpo in China every year, alternating between Shenzhen (Labelexpo South China) and Shanghai (Labelexpo Asia).

The inaugural show offers a platform for 150 participating exhibitors, who will be showcasing the latest label and package printing machinery, smart technology, materials and components. In addition, the show will focus on fast-growing areas of the market in a number of exclusive feature areas on the show floor.

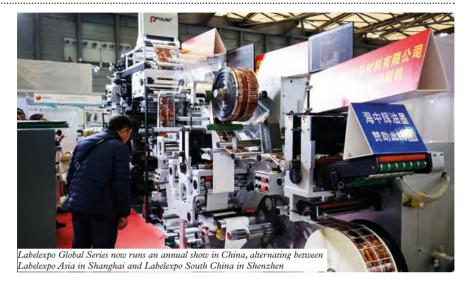
This includes Brand Print South China 2020, which is aimed at printers of all types of signage, promotional materials and collateral for brands, as a one-stop

## Why Shenzhen?

Shenzhen is among the most economically advanced cities in China and its most important trade show hub. Located along the booming Pearl River Delta Economic Zone, in 2018 its total GDP hit a record-breaking level of 2.4tn RMB (354bn USD), ranking fifth in Asia and third in China after Beijing and Shanghai. There are 1,900 printing companies in Shenzhen.

Shenzhen World Exhibition & Convention Center opened in late 2019 and is set to become the world's largest purpose-built event space when fully completed, offering 500,000 sqm of indoor floor space.

China is the second largest manufacturer of packaging in the world, and flexible packaging is the country's fastest growing package printing sector. It is estimated that China's flexible packaging market will reach a value of 111.39bn RMB (15.7bn USD) by 2022.



## "The timing of Labelexpo South China 2020 in December is extremely significant; the show will be a vital catalyst for the industry in the region as we move into the post-Covid recovery phase"

shop for all their large format and digital printing needs. Visitors will be able to source specialized machinery, software and materials from leading manufacturers to grow their business. The addition of Brand Print means that Labelexpo South China 2020 presents a unique opportunity for printers to explore the synergies between different parts of the whole print industry from a single location.

A second feature area is Print Automation 4.0, which will cover the entire workflow, from estimating and order taking, through to proof, printing, finishing and dispatch. Seen for the first time at a trade show in the region, its introduction reflects the increasing interest in and adoption of digital platforms to enhance business processes and capabilities. Live demos will take place over the three days of the show.

## Major hub

Kevin Liu, event director for Labelexpo South China 2020, said: 'We are tremendously excited to be bringing a Labelexpo show to Shenzhen for the first time. The city is a major printing and technology hub, while Shenzhen World is one of the most inspiring venues in the

world to host a trade event.'

Chinese exhibitors include Fangda Packaging, HanGlobal, Pulisi, Runtianzhi, Caisheng Printing Machinery, Reborn, Soonmax, and Hongsheng. Overseas exhibitors include 3M China, Ritrama, BST eltromat, Kurz and Epson.

Liu added: 'The timing of Labelexpo South China 2020 in December is extremely significant; the show will be a vital catalyst for the industry in the region as we move into the post-Covid recovery phase. For this reason, I strongly encourage printers to come and connect with manufacturers and suppliers at this inaugural show, as their investment will be essential in helping our dynamic industry recover.'

Show visitors will also be able to attend an educational program, covering the industry's hottest topics.



Go to www.labelexpo-southchina. com for more information and to register. Registered WeChat users can also access show details on a dedicated app. Entry is free. Visitors should register online to receive their exhibition pass and guaranteed fasttrack entry



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## Labelexpo premiers Virtual Label Summit

The week-long virtual conference, organized by Labelexpo Global Series, focused on a wide range of topics and featured leading industry experts from around the world. Jordan Hart reports

dapting to the drastic changes of recent months, and determined to keep the label industry connected in the face of the global pandemic, Labelexpo Global Series recently organized its first Virtual Label Summit, in association with Labels & Labeling magazine. The week-long conference featured a different theme each day and attracted 333 delegates to the live event from North America, Latin America, Europe and Asia. Registration is still possible, and presentations and additional learning materials can be accessed for three months following the event.

The conferences kicked off with day one focusing on an international view of the label industry amid the Covid-19 pandemic. The first session, 'A look inside the post-Covid pressroom', featured virtual factory tours of Indian converter Kumar Labels – with company founder Anuj Bhargava accompanied by L&L India and Southeast Asia editor Aakriti Agarwal - and US converter MacArthur Corporation – with Christie Wong Barrett and Thomas Barrett joined by L&L North America editor Chelsea MacDougall – to see how they have adapted their businesses during the pandemic. In the following session, the Labels & Labeling's global editorial team shared their expertise on industry trends from around the world.

Day two, themed around converters' thoughts on business and market opportunities, opened with Chris Ellison, managing director of UK converter OPM (Labels & Packaging), discussing his company's move into flexible packaging production. 'The global flexible packaging market continues to evolve as shifts in consumer preference lean more towards convenience in single serve or grab-and-go options, extended shelf life, and sustainability,' said Ellison.

The second session, a global converter panel discussion moderated by TLMI president Linnea Keen, featured Charlie MacLean, CEO, ASL Print FX (Canada); Mark Glendenning, CEO, Inland Packaging (USA); Isidore Leiser, CEO, Stratus Packaging (France); Sachen Gudka, CEO, Skanem Interlabels (Africa); and David Richards, managing director, Amberley Labels (UK). The group discussed the range of reactions to the pandemic and how they have kept their businesses up and running. While Kenya was able to keep workplaces open with nearly all employees, Amberley Labels in the UK 'went from 60 people to 16 overnight' in terms of on-site staff, according to Richards.

### **Future-proofing**

To kick off day three, which focused on future-proofing your business, Andy Thomas-Emans, strategic director for Tarsus Labels Group, gave a technology update. The session offered valuable insights into technology trends and sectors of opportunity. This was followed by Claudia St John, president of Affinity HR, on leading a team through a season of crisis. TLMI's vice president of

## Presentation access

All presentations and additional learning materials can be accessed by registered attendees for three months following the event. Go to www.labelsummit.com/virtual for more information.



The global converter panel, moderated by TLMI president Linnea Keen, featured Charlie MacLean, ASL Print FX (Canada); Mark Glendenning, Inland Packaging (USA); Isidore Leiser, Stratus Packaging (France); Sachen Gudka, Skanem Interlabels (Africa); an

sustainability, Rosalyn Bandy, moderated the day's final session: 'A converter's journey to zero landfill'. It featured John Crosby, vice president of operations at Grand Rapids Label; Brian Hurst, vice president of operations at Yerecic Label; Jesse Hood, director of quality and continuous improvement at Hub Labels; Mark Howard, vice president, graphic services, at Syracuse Label & Surround Printing; and John Dultz, process improvement manager at CCL.

Vicki Strull, L&L columnist and principle at Vicki Strull Design, began day four with a presentation focused on sales and marketing: 'You have eight seconds, do your labels make an impact?' With economic uncertainty due to the pandemic and consumers limiting their purchases, impactful packaging is crucial, she emphasized.

For the final session of the day, Ken Theriot, executive director of TheRiot Agency, sat down with Jesse Freitas of StickerGiant and Adam Peek of Fortis Solutions Group to discuss developing a winning sales and marketing strategy for today's new buying environment.

The final day began with 'Breakthrough innovation in packaging: from design to print', featuring moderator David Lukshus, president of Cog LLC, and panelists Ken McGuire, research fellow at Procter & Gamble; Cedric D'Souza chief technology officer at Aeroflexx; and Ben Greengrass, creative director at ThoughtMatter. The group discussed how a global CPG company took an innovative new package design from R&D to product launch.

The final session of the week featured Hernán Braberman, partner and executive director at design agency Tridimage – a favorite speaker at the Label Summit Latin America conferences – who used music to illustrate what each generation is looking for in packaging design in his presentation 'Design playlist for Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials and Gen Z'.

The Virtual Label Summit also featured networking breaks where delegates could speak to supplier sponsors and learn about their technology offering. These included Avery Dennison, Baldwin Vision Systems/AMS Spectral UV, Bobst, Brotech Digital Graphics, Domino, Flint Group, GEW, HP Indigo, Hybrid Software, Label Academy, MacTac, MPS, Pantec Print Decoration, Omet, UPM Raflatac, and Xeikon.



See the Label society page at the back of this issue for more photos from the Virtual Label Summit

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## Labeling for successful logistics

The label is key to resolving the challenges of modern logistics and the recipe for successful delivery, full transparency and ethical provenance. Piotr Wnuk reports

he Covid-19 pandemic has created unprecedented challenges for supply chain and logistics management in the last few months. Products such as canned food, toilet paper and cleaning supplies have seen a significant rise in demand; other end use sectors have slowed dramatically.

Simultaneously, e-commerce is booming. Some companies are struggling to meet demand fueled by the increasing number of customers adopting online buying habits. The shift to virtual shopping and a focus on consumer desire for safety has had a massive impact on the logistics market and the entire supply chain, including label manufacturers.

## Pandemic magnifies challenges

According to Forbes, e-commerce has seen a 129 percent year-on-year growth in the US and Canada as of April 21, with an impressive 146 percent growth in all online retail orders. 'The biggest challenge right now is keeping up with this unusually high demand,' comments Stephanie D'Cruz, product manager, variable information at Avery Dennison.

"The explosion of e-commerce and online shopping has resulted in the huge complexity in managing traceability, health and safety processes, delivering just-in-time and stock control for added cost efficiency"

Bruce Hanson, president of forms and labels at RRD Business Services, adds that one of the greatest challenges the logistics labeling segment is facing right now is forecasting demand. 'As we're going to press, forecasts are being completely surpassed,' he says. 'Managing those forecasts and ensuring we're keeping our clients with a consistent supply chain for their labeling needs is extremely important to their business and ours.'

The main challenges the logistics labeling market is currently facing are not new, but due to the pandemic, they have been significantly heightened. Addressing them as a matter of urgency would help to ease the strains created by escalating demand.

'Over the last decade, those in supply

chain management have witnessed dramatic changes in the way customers order products,' says Colin Le Gresley, managing director of Aztec Label, a UK-based label converter heavily active in the logistics sector. 'The explosion of e-commerce and online shopping has resulted in huge complexity in managing traceability, health and safety processes, delivering just-in-time and stock control for added cost efficiency. A lack of reading accuracy can potentially result in the items being misplaced or, at worst, lost in the supply chain system altogether. With ever-increasing volumes, demand for improved accuracy coupled with shorter lead times continues to grow.'

Armor is a manufacturer of thermal transfer ribbons widely used for printing

logistics labels. Mark Day, global sales director states that logistics labeling buyers continue to look primarily for a competitive price. 'This is putting an enormous amount of pressure on labels and printing materials manufacturers to deliver good quality products at the lowest possible price point. Logistic labels are the essential link between the entire supply chain, so the information they bear is crucial. The more data they deliver all along the journey, the more value they bring to each stakeholder.'

Labels are used to track consignments and pallets through the supply chain and are crucial for any logistics or distribution business – for both warehousing purposes as well as shipping products around the world.

'The challenge, therefore, is not only producing the label itself, but also sharing the information it contains with each stakeholder, including the recipient,' says Day. 'The label should provide data about the product, the origin, the recyclability info, the entire logistics journey, accurate date and time of arrival. This is where the power of the logistics label lies, and this is where it can add value to the entire supply chain.'

According to Nick Recht, enterprise product manager at Teklynx, a company specializing in barcode software, the information itself often presents a big challenge for the entire supply chain. 'Most logistics companies do not get the luxury of making up the rules of what, where, and how the product is identified, which means they need to respond to many different customer demands,' he states. 'This can be a major challenge for companies that need to manage multiple complex requirements and can cause bottlenecks due to time consuming, and error-prone manual labeling processes that are not standardized across

"Companies need to manage multiple complex requirements and can cause bottlenecks due to time consuming, and error-prone manual labeling processes that are not standardized across the supply chain"

the supply chain.'

Colin Le Gresley believes that this complexity has only been compounded by the impact of the coronavirus outbreak. 'Now, as we move into the new normal, the demand is intensifying, with ever-shifting consumer behavior and the need for accurate traceability and data-driven analytics,' he comments. According to a recent study by global research firm EPiServer, 38 percent of UK consumers and 26 percent of US consumers are now buying online at least once a week. 'With the demand growing as consumers increasingly rely on e-commerce under the cloud of the pandemic, our customers are turning to us to ease supply chain complexity and help reduce lead times through tracking efficiency.'

## Simplifying complexities

The e-commerce boom is pushing supply chain stake holders to adopt more standardization and control in the labeling process.

'I think the biggest opportunity today is around standardization of processes, hardware and software,' agrees Nick Recht. 'Too often we see companies that have expanded their business to additional workstations, new locations, complete mergers or acquisitions and keep their existing labeling processes in place. This

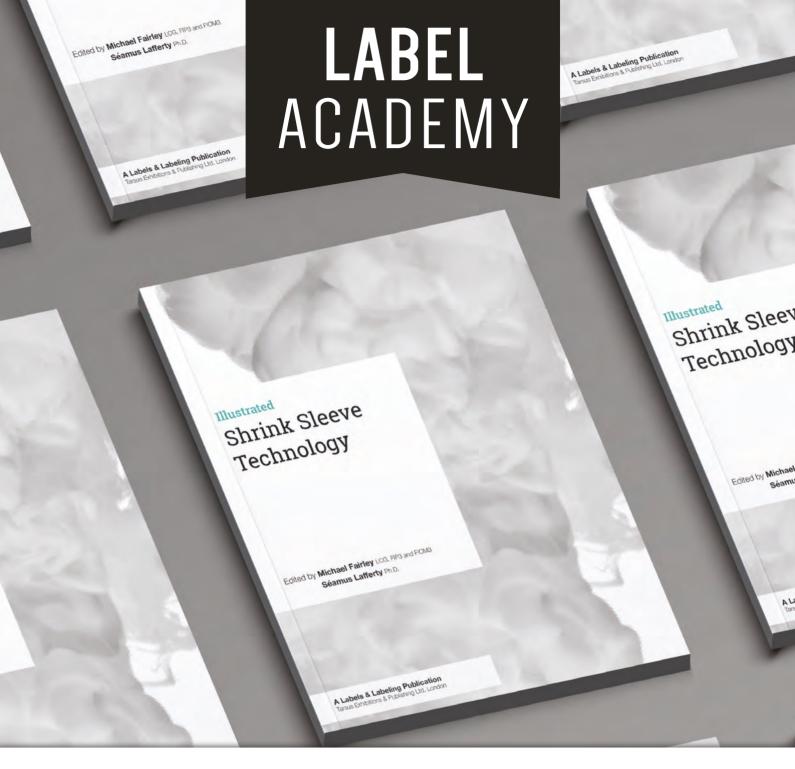
leads to a piecemeal labeling environment with many different procedures and disparate systems that are often held together by tribal knowledge. Having said that, major risks also a mean major opportunity for improvement.'

The demand for logistics labels is expected to increase in the coming months. As the lockdown restrictions ease, more outlets begin to reopen or return their operations to pre-pandemic levels. This will lead to an increase in demand for stock deliveries nationwide and internationally, on top of the acceleration seen during the pandemic.

Says Colin Le Gresley, 'Advanced technology will be key to being able to meet this demand. With everything from automating initial order processing and design approval through to prepress, print and finishing – enabling manufacturers like ourselves to deliver quality, accurate labels on schedule.'

Nick Recht points out that standardization is taking place both at the label converter - in the form of business system integration and label press automation, reducing manual intervention in the printing process – and by secure label approval processes including standardized templates. 'Both will help to reduce waste across the logistics labeling environment





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**Shrink Sleeve Technology** is an essential read for manufacturers seeking an understanding of how to produce the perfect shrink sleeve label and the complexities involved.

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and support organizations create additional operational efficiencies.'

There is a clear focus today on utilizing cloud-based technologies which can connect the entire supply chain to increase speed and accuracy, says Ken Moir, VP of NiceLabel. 'A cloud-based label management system is the fastest way to deploy labelling across the extended supply chain with suppliers, contract manufacturers and third-party logistics providers. It removes the requirement for investment in IT infrastructure and its ease of use increases agility, enabling rapid speed to market.'

## Is RFID the answer?

The use of RFID technology appears to be the perfect solution to provide speed and accuracy in the logistics supply chain; however, it also brings a challenge, as suppliers are required to design and encode RFID labels – a more complex process than designing a barcode label.

'Centralized cloud-based RFID technologies solve this challenge by providing pre-designed, approved RFID labels and allowing suppliers to print the labels on-demand as and when they need them,' answers Ken Moir. 'The cloud is simplifying and making real-time RFID printing and encoding possible for suppliers across the supply chain.'

Cloud-based labeling can also help in streamlining supply chain processes, reducing inventory and moving products through the warehouse faster.

Companies that are dependent on several suppliers typically need to deal with multiple labeling standards. Ken Moir believes that transitioning to cloud-based technology is the key to consistent, standardized labeling between supply chain partners, allowing storage of data centrally and sharing it with suppliers over secure internet links. 'Hosting all information in the cloud reduces any concerns in terms of securing the business infrastructure and mitigates the risk of relabeling at the point of receipt of goods.'

'There is a swell of opportunity for RFID in improving operational efficiency,' echoes Bruce Hanson. 'RFID technology continues to advance, and as costs come down, it's making it a more viable option for companies to consider. While it's expensive to transition from barcode labels to RFID or NFC, it does lead to greater efficiencies by improving scan rates, which streamlines package logistics with less labor costs. Overall, the use of RFID leads to better management of workforce as well as increased track and traceability of packages.'

## Intelligent sustainability

The introduction of intelligent labels into the logistics labeling supply chain will

transform it into an 'Internet of Things' ecosystem. An IOT-based infrastructure will make the whole supply chain more transparent to all accredited users, with real-time information available at multiple access points.

"Intelligent label technologies enable global supply chains to be sustainable. They make it possible for the 'who, what and where' of every physical product to also become data-points of irrefutable fact and absolute visibility"

'Intelligent label technologies enable global supply chains to be sustainable,' argues Avery Dennison's Stephanie D'Cruz. 'Intelligent labels make it possible for the "who, what and where" of every physical product to become data-points of irrefutable fact and absolute visibility, with proof of provenance assured.' This will enable suppliers to demonstrate a trail for ethically sourced materials, for example.

The requirement for increased sustainability has led to innovation at other points of the labeling chain. To help paper companies recycle paper and boxes that have adhesive labels on them, and to meet the US Postal Service's standards of recyclability, some new thinking has been employed.

'To help improve the recyclability of paper packaging, Avery Dennison developed a new adhesive that is compatible with the existing recycling stream,' says Stephanie D'Cruz. 'Our new TrueCut adhesive technology is purpose-built for paper facestocks and specially designed for shipping, weigh scale, warehouse and logistics applications. It is fully repulpable; this means the adhesive is fully recyclable and products labeled with this platform can go back into the paper recycled waste stream."

There have also been interesting developments in the sustainability of thermal transfer ribbons, says Mark Day. 'Armor is producing the AWR8 ribbon for logistics labels without a single drop of solvent. This is a patented process that enables us to save 360g of CO<sup>2</sup>

compared to an equivalent ribbon made with a standard production process. An easy solution to lower the environmental footprint of a global logistics label printing operation.'

Linerless labels will play a key part in the future of logistics labeling, and one interesting innovation has been the InNo-Liner technology developed by Herma. Dr Thomas Baumgärtner, managing director and head of the self-adhesive materials division at Herma, explains: 'From our perspective, for ecological reasons alone, linerless labeling systems will play an essential role in the future. Of course, they will have to satisfy the labeling speeds required by logistics and distribution centers. We demonstrated how such a system operates at Labelexpo Europe last fall, and we have been inundated with enquiries since then. We supply an end-to-end system capable of operating consistently at higher speeds and with the process reliability demanded by logistics centers.'

'While linerless labels aren't applicable in every scenario, they are a great option that contributes to waste reduction when the opportunity is available,' states RRD Business Services' Bruce Hanson. 'When using traditional laminates, however, one should consider processes that allow for recycling of liners to minimize the amount of waste sent to landfill. Finding paths that capture waste through a sustainable recycling process is an environmentally friendly alternative.'

### What's next?

The impact of the pandemic will shape the future of every aspect of the supply chain and the logistics market for years to come. A key trend accelerated by the pandemic is automation. Says Nick Recht, 'Fewer people will take on manual tasks in logistics labeling environments, and as a result we'll see an increase in label printing automation and cloud-hosted label printing to counteract logistics labeling challenges."

'We believe that sustainability will be an even greater priority than before the Covid-19 pandemic,' says Stephanie D-Cruz. 'Intelligent label technologies make it possible for global supply chains to be sustainable and trusted by design.'

Bruce Hanson also believes the adoption of intelligent supply chain technologies will be boosted: 'Looking ahead, we're expecting a further adoption of RFID and potentially the use of drones or other shipping methods.'



Turn to the next page to read about the implementation of UHF RFID labels in the food service and logistics industry









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## RFID tags aid Reynolds

One of the UK's biggest food retailers has turned to RFID to manage deliveries and increase sustainability, traceability and inventory accuracy. Piotr Wnuk reports

eynolds was founded in 1945 by William Reynolds as a fruit and vegetable business, later offering a range of meats, dairy products and salads. Today, the company sells to some of the best-known names in the catering and food service industries, delivering 3,000 orders each day. Traditionally, many products were delivered in disposable cardboard cartons. Revnolds was consuming 60,000 of them each week to deliver products to some 4,000 different sites. This operational model was not an environmentally friendly option, and made worse by a significant increase in the cost of cartons and disposal of the waste.

As well as Reynolds itself, many of its customers were also facing increased waste disposal costs and were looking for a more sustainable approach, suggesting a change from cardboard to so-called totes: returnable and reusable plastic crates. Although more sustainable, they cost around ten times more than the paper version. The challenge for Reynolds therefore was to find an efficient way of tracking and proving ownership of the trays, which were often diverted into other organizations or simply not returned.

'We were packing the goods into sturdy plastic totes because that's what our customers wanted,' says Reynolds IT director Richard Calder. 'Our customers were finding them useful, but they weren't returning them. It wasn't just a small number. We were losing a significant sum of money each year, having to replenish crates that just seemed to disappear out of the system.'

Reynolds turned to Avery Dennison to find the best option. It needed a product that would be sufficiently weatherproof to withstand the tray wash process and durable enough to withstand the physical handling involved in customer operations. The company decided to evaluate how UHF RFID could solve the issues.

'The performance of the AD237 RFID technology was very good and it met Reynolds' criteria,' says Peter Jackson, market development manager, food intelligent labels at Avery Dennison. 'The size was a great fit for the plastic totes with plenty of space for data info. Reynolds uses two identical duplicate tags on each tote to enhance reading performance, minimize potential damage and maximize the lifespan of the tote usage. Each tag can operate independently or as a pair, so it's a very robust technology. The RFID label does not need to be encased in a protective shield, so operational costs are dramatically reduced."

In order to increase inventory accuracy, each tray is labeled with an

RFID a new opportunity to leverage a sustainable approach, reduce waste and environmental impact

UHF RFID tag as an identifier, which is then read by Reynolds when it leaves for a delivery and is read again when it is returned empty.

'Impini RFID readers are built onto the conveyor belts in the distribution center and fixed readers are placed above each dock door to read outgoing and incoming totes. Reynolds uses its own in-house software to manage the entire inventory,' adds Peter Jackson.

As the crate travels through various stages in the distribution center, it passes several RFID readers before it is loaded onto the delivery van. This helps ensure the crate is correctly loaded with the food items ordered by the customer. Multiple crates are then put together and loaded onto the lorry for delivery.

'Once you have a unique RFID label on each tray, it opens up a

## "Once you have a unique RFID label on each tray, it opens up a wide world of future opportunities to improve the service we give to our customers"

world of future opportunities to improve the service we give to our customers,' comments Calder. 'The RFID option came at the right time, just as the tags were dropping in price and had become more reliable.'

## Integrated system

The system put together by Calder's team is integrated with the company's ERP system. This enables tracking the goods inside the crates and the deliveries, ensuring the right crates went into the right lorries for delivery. If the trays are not returned within the agreed time period, follow up action is taken to ensure the customer is billed for the cost of a new tray. Currently, the return rate is close to 98 percent – a dramatic cut in overall tray losses.

We are talking of savings of between £100,000 and £150,000 GBP a year on the crates that were being lost,' adds Calder.

All crates are tracked through the whole process: checked out of the factory and checked back in again when they are returned from customer premises. The tags embedded in the crates are then wiped, checked off in the ERP system, washed and re-used.

Combining tags and readers, RFID provided Reynolds with exceptional benefits across its supply chain by offering a new opportunity to leverage a sustainable technology, reduce waste and enhance its capability to deliver quality food efficiently. 'The use of plastic returnable crates is fully aligned with our sustainability goals. The UHF RFID tracking system that Reynolds has deployed allows us to ensure the crates are being correctly used in as many restaurants as possible,' states Guy Croot, head of distribution at Pizza Express, one of Reynolds' customers.

'By adding a unique identifier and online connectivity to every item in any inventory, RFID-enabled intelligent labels let grocers, restaurants and convenience stores, dramatically improve inventory management, efficiency, traceability, sustainability and customer satisfaction and have an improved omnichannel infrastructure,' concludes Peter Jackson.



For more information about the RFID technology used by Reynolds go to rfid. averydennison.com



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## Adding value with connected packaging

Consumer packaging must be beautiful and smart, writes Jay Sperry, platform evangelist at Digimarc Corporation

onsumer product packaging has long been scrutinized for structural and aesthetic performance. Now, though, a more important characteristic is at the fore – intelligence.

Packaging can be smarter and 'digitally connected' when combined with distributed computer systems and the web. This change will revolutionize productivity and quality while delivering new capability in a variety of product packaging applications. This capability has led to the fourth Industrial Revolution for manufacturing, or Industry 4.0, where data is dominant, and the Internet of Things (IoT) provides greater connectivity than ever before.

Packaging took a technological leap forward in the mid-1970s when it began carrying a printed UPC barcode that provided automatic price scanning at retail checkout - a foundational moment when new symbols on packaging, combined with sensor technology and computing power, provided a digital link to point-of-sale systems. In the 1980s, manufacturers discovered the power of 2D barcodes and machine vision to automatically identify objects to match with the right product or to assemble multiple packaging components.

Packaging has since seen more symbols and codes clutter its 'real estate', including introducing the famous 'Mobius Loop' symbol, to indicate the container should be recyclable. The introduction of the QR code enabled marketing professionals to leverage the proliferation of mobile devices among consumers. This was a turning point, where consumers began to engage with packaging directly, leading to further programs such as SmartLabel in 2015, which responded to consumer demand for product data. Several consumer brands also introduced custom marks for consumer engagement including Pepsi's PepCoin and Coca-Cola's Sip-and-Save.

## "Now is the time for market leaders to support the value-add of connected packaging"

For packaging and label suppliers, there are strategic use cases where converters can add value, increase competitive advantage, and assume a market leadership position with connected packaging products. Topping the list of these use cases are food safety and traceability, manufacturing productivity and quality control. Printers and packaging designers are tasked with implementing next-gen machine-readable codes leveraged for a wide range of advanced applications; now is the time for market leaders to support the value-add of connected packaging.

## Food safety and traceability

Consumer safety, particularly for fresh packaged items, is a major focus of manufacturers and consumer brands. Consumer brand leaders, trade associations and governing bodies have responded, from the formation of the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the 20th century to today, with the introduction of batch-lot coding to assist with consumer food safety and risk management in supply chains. The European Union made the incorporation of traceability a requirement for consumer product food businesses

in 2002 under the General Food Law. Canada passed a series of consumer safety laws in 2019 that changed labeling practices on consumer prepackaged fresh fruits and vegetables. Both require information such as common name, lot code or other unique identifiers, and name and place where the food was manufactured, prepared, produced, stored, packaged or labeled to be available.

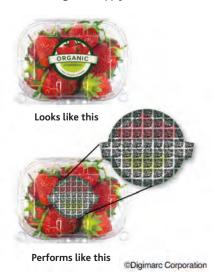
In 2018 GS1, a leader in standards that enable an ecosystem of shared data between trading partners, published its inaugural Digital Link standard with a vision to represent GS1 Identifiers within IoT platforms. Using URL lookups, this enables multiple applications without adding various new codes and mark requirements to often limited packaging space.

Most recently, the FDA published a 'New Era of Smarter Food Safety Blueprint', which outlines its food safety plans for the next decade. Most current systems rely on human-readable codes and paper-based records that lead to a state of 'anonymity and lack of transparency in the food system', the FDA wrote. Among the four foundational pillars of the Blueprint is Tech-Enabled Traceability with a vision 'to create a more nimble, resilient, and interoperable food system'.

## Manufacturing productivity and quality

According to a survey conducted by Packaging World of over 200 product manufacturers in 2019, 52 percent shut down a line once a month due to mislabeled products. In the United States alone, the average food recall will cost a company \$10m USD in direct costs and perhaps another \$19m in indirect costs, according to the GMA. Machine-readable codes on each package and product component can be leveraged to perform quality control within manufacturing software. Only 17 percent of respondents in the survey used machine-readable codes, while 35 percent pointed to planned investments in automated control systems.

Parts-matching and quality control are examples of how machine-readable codes add value to manufacturers of packaging and products. Growth in global supply chains and e-commerce



Digimarc on fresh foods packaging can add serialized identities

has led to increased opportunity for counterfeit and gray-market goods to infiltrate distribution systems and make it into consumers' hands. Illicit goods detected by US customs alone cost product manufacturers \$1.4 billion in lost sales in 2018 compared with \$94 million in 2003, according to the US Department of Homeland Security.

In 2021, high-speed cameras in European Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) will begin to detect digital watermarks on packaging to improve the proper sortation of food-grade and re-usable plastics. This innovative first step was spearheaded by Procter & Gamble, and now in its second iteration, HolyGrail 2.0, which has more than 85 participating members such as PepsiCo, Colgate-Palmolive and Unilever. These leading brands have announced digital watermarking plans as next-gen sortation capability is realized in the European Union (EU) and beyond.

Product manufacturers, with leadership from their packaging suppliers, can parlay internal productivity initiatives and increased customer value by implementing digitally connected packaging. Implementation of Industry 4.0 extends across the value chain, where packaging suppliers and their supply chain can leverage digital identities to optimize existing processes and create new products.

Implementing connected packaging requires machine-readable codes, detection cameras, data distribution and end-user applications. Packaging suppliers support their customers in multiple ways, most critically with the digital identities embedded within their products, within the numerous production stages of design, prepress, printing and quality control.

For print suppliers, implementation of digital identities has primarily been in a 'static data' workflow, where an entire print run, or many repeat print runs, use the same input data for machinereadable codes. The implementation of variable data, such as DataMatrix batch/lot codes, often has been 'off-line' of package printing – implemented by industrial inkjet printers or laser marking devices at various stages of product packaging and distribution.

## "There is an urgency today for both packaging suppliers and brands to lead the implementation of connected and responsible packaging"

Connected packaging is driving the need to include individual serialized identities to printed products. Converters have options to deliver this, from a simple batch/lot plate change in conventional printing to a fully digital printing platform where each package has a serialized identity included with full color printing.

Converters have invested in hybrid printing platforms – where the economic advantages of large volume flexographic or gravure printing is combined with variable data inkjet printing in-line with print production. This application is likely to be counted on as consumer brands with large packaging volumes adopt the need for item-level identification by printed machine-readable codes.

Digimarc offers an imperceptible digital identity across packaging to advance several use cases where the benefit of a generally imperceptible machine-readable code means broader coverage scannable areas, including front-of-package labeling that previously was off-limits to large, unattractive symbology such as a QR code. Digimarc incorporates into existing artwork using the same colors and print configuration to add intelligence with embedded identifiers.

Digimarc has demonstrated the ability to leverage hybrid printing platforms to apply unique digital identities to each label within mass-produced flexographic or gravure print runs. This combination







Performs Like This

Exaggerated for illustration purposes

Digimarc digital watermarking on plastic

to deliver connected packaging identification supports traceability, product quality management and consumer engagement within a cost-optimized value proposition for packaging materials.

### **Getting started**

There is an urgency today for both packaging suppliers and brands to lead the implementation of connected and responsible packaging, because recall management, government regulations, and trade requirements are converging rapidly. Converters should ask themselves: how do my customers think about next generation supply chains, IoT, and advanced data and analytics? How can we add digital links and next-gen barcodes to our products? How are we marketing the capabilities of connected packaging? Brand owners should identify optimized codes for their targeted applications – and then evaluate how to communicate requirements to the product and packaging supply chain.

Education, training and cross-functional alignment on how connected packaging will benefit various stakeholders is a crucial first step for an organization committed to advancing capabilities. Information and services are available from trade associations, industry consortiums, technology providers and professional educators.

Digimarc has developed and invested in an automatic identification and data capture (AIDC) platform that enables printers and premedia suppliers to create and orchestrate responsible and connected packaging.

Digimarc has partnered with printers such as Westrock, Berry Global, MCC, CCL and Wipak as well as pre-press agencies SGK, SGS and HL Repro and consumable supplier MacDermid, among many others, to provide education and deliver these solutions to market. This ecosystem represents many of the most intelligent leaders in consumer brand product packaging, and they're smart enough to know that the future demands packaging that delivers intelligence at every stage in the supply chain.



Jay Sperry is the platform evangelist for Digimarc, an automatic identification technology provider delivering traceability solutions to major retailers and brands. He is a color and print quality management leader and practitioner with 20 years' experience in packaging and specialty printing, including flexo print operations, academic research patents and global product and business development



## ILLUSTRATED FLEXIBLE PACKAGING

Flexible packaging continues to experience one of the highest growth rates across all printing sectors. Narrow- and mid-web printing using conventional and digital technology has opened up the market for both label converters and new customers entering this industry, who have never previously had a solution for short-run flexible packaging orders.

Now in its second edition and including a whole new chapter, **Illustrated Flexible Packaging**, is an essential resource for label converters, package printers, suppliers and brands.

The chapters in this book look at:

- + Inks, coatings, curing and laminating NEW
- Paper and board, metallic foil, films and multi-layer constructions
- + Types of flexible packaging and special constructions
- + Pre-press, printing and converting
- + Forming, filling, sealing and lidding operations
- Markets, applications and opportunities

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## Dies and tooling

Die accuracy is crucial in production of a quality self-adhesive label. Tony White reports

rinting a high quality self-adhesive label is one thing, but it is the die-cutting and finishing procedures which add the final flourish of quality. Although not always immediately apparent to many in the supply chain, correct die-cutting is an important part of the finishing process for self-adhesive label production.

## "Consider how accurate the tool must be to be able to cut through the facestock yet not penetrate the liner"

When we consider the purpose of the die-cutting tool, it becomes obvious how accurate the manufacture of the tool has to be. The bottom line regarding the purpose of die-cutting is to ensure that the self-adhesive label not only leaves the liner carrier cleanly and efficiently on the label application equipment, but also allows the finished labels to be stored in roll form until required for application to the final product. In the self-adhesive industry the die-cutting procedure, in most instances, is carried out in line with only a 'kiss impression' pressure on the facestock. Consider how accurate the tool must be to be able to cut through the facestock yet not penetrate the liner, so the margin for error is strongly related to the thickness of the film or paper facestock being cut (a few micron). Equally it is

accurately and that attention is paid to the condition of the tool during the production run. Some fantastic results can be achieved by combining clever die-cutting and relief embossing/debossing, as can be seen the image of a label produced by Spanish converter IPE.

The two main types of dies used in the label industry are flexible cylindrical rotary dies or solid cylindrical dies. Solid dies are the most robust but are more expensive but can be sharpened whereas flexible dies are cheaper but do not last as long and cannot be sharpened.

### Industry 4.0

Italian company Albertin Alcide e figli has been manufacturing dies and tools for almost 50 years (it celebrates its 50th anniversary next year). Over the past few years the company has added a five-in-one stamping tool which allows five different effects to be achieved in one pass without changing the tool, including hot foiling, embossing, debossing texture and anticounterfeiting holograms. This innovation is compatible with several well-known machine manufacturers.

Ferruccio Albertin, CEO of Albertin, comments: 'Since our foundation, we've been searching for new opportunities and new technologies allowing our customers' to make their production processes more accurate, easier and faster. Our latest developments have moved in this direction and we aim at creating an Industry 4.0 compliant production plant.

'Industry 4.0 offers a high level of control for all aspects of the production process and thanks to state incentives, the Italian



## Tooling news in brief

## Merger benefits

Maxcess International, created by the merger of Maxcess with RotoMetrics earlier this year, has been increasing R&D investments to deliver significant benefits for its customers.

'An early R&D initiative to combine RotoMetrics' anvil technology with Fife's digital sensors is showing tremendous promise to help tag and label customers increase productivity,' said Sean Craig, global vice president of R&D. 'In addition, the integration of performance coatings from Componex, Webex, Valley Roller, Menges and RotoMetrics offer increased performance on a variety of roller products across a variety of industries, including packaging and medical applications.'

With significant investments in R&D, Maxcess is expanding its Industry 4.0 digital technologies, with end-to-end monitoring and data collection, allowing customers to run smarter production lines with minimized downtime and optimized speeds.

### Arden Group certified to ISO 14001

UK-based Arden Group, a die-making and engraving company, has received ISO 14001 accreditation. Arden's environmental management system clearly sets out how the company aims to minimize its environmental impact, including measures such as increasing recycling capacity, monitoring energy usage and not using chemical processes in production.

Martin Poynter, managing director of Arden Group, said: 'Our corporate colors might be blue, but we're very much a green company at heart. We no longer use any chemical processes in our production, the majority of the products we produce across our dies and engraving divisions are between 80-100 percent recyclable and we've cut our own plastic use internally by banning the use of bubble wrap and unnecessary packaging. It's never been more important to promote sustainability within the packaging sector, so to be recognized for our efforts in this area is testament to the hard work of the whole workforce.'

Albertin has been manufacturing dies and tools for almost 50 years



Wink's latest development is the AutoControl version of the established SmartGap adjustable anvil system

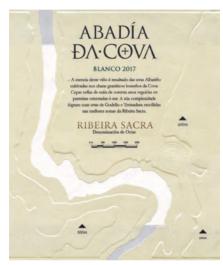
market is empowering and revamping machinery to be competitive. It's a big effort in terms of investment and training. However, we strongly believe in this revolution and we are aware of the benefits that can be gained from it. Any factory that wants to achieve the fastest and the most accurate production process has to reply with technology. We do not foresee a hardware revolution, however, we do expect increased importance in sustainability initiatives and a drive to achieve zero environmental impact.'

Wink's latest development is the AutoControl version of the established SmartGap adjustable anvil system, which represents a further step towards Industry 4.0. A specially developed sensor bar continuously monitors the cutting result and sends immediate signals for automatic gap adjustment for perfectly cut labels. This results in a significant reduction of waste, effort and costs for the label converter.

'The "mega-trends" of digitization, automation and sustainability have long since found their way into all sectors of the economy, also in the label industry,' says Andre Gysbers, marketing director at Wink. 'Digital printing and the corresponding reduction in run lengths, personalization and SKU proliferation are primarily issues that affect the printing process to a stronger degree than the die-cutting process. However, when it comes to increasing efficiency, stable processes and avoiding waste, die-cutting plays a decisive role.'

### Flawless labels

Perfect tools with the highest precision are the basis to producing flawless labels quickly and reliably. Wink's SuperCut magnetic flexible dies guarantee minimum tolerances and maximum durability. SuperCut dies are available with several finishes and coatings to maximize die-cutting efficiency. Alongside the SuperCut dies, Wink provides OptiMag magnetic cylinders, which are manufactured with high-tech equipment in all standard



Fantastic results can be achieved by combining clever die-cutting and relief embossing/debossing, as in this label produced by Spanish converter IPE

dimensions, as well as special formats.

However, in addition to the basic tooling, currently it is recommended to use adjustable anvil systems such as Wink's SmartGap to meet demand for highest quality labels and maximum efficiency. The small gap between the magnetic and anvil cylinder, also known as 'clearance' or 'undercut', plays an important role in label converting. Even the smallest deviations can affect the success and failure in die-cutting, as changes in the gap size have a negative impact on the die-cut quality.

In particular, ultra-thin (downgauged) liners are very demanding in terms of die-cutting, because they are not compressible like glassine liners, and thus much more sensitive to die strikes. Wink uses special engraving and hardening techniques for its SuperCut dies to guarantee minimum tolerances, and offers the SmartGap adjustable anvil system to gain full control of the cutting depth.



For more from Tony White, go to www.labelsandlabeling.com/ contributors/tony-white

## RotoMetrics webinar

RotoMetrics, now part of the RotoMaxcess group, and Labels & Labeling recently hosted a webinar on di selection, handling and usage. Subjects covered included receiving the die, verifying ordered specs, mounting and dismounting, storage, magnetic cylinder inspection, cleaning, storage, cleaning dies and the role of nonstick coatings. The webinar can be viewed in the video section of labelsandlabeling.com.

## Kocher + Beck USA expands in **South America**

Kocher + Beck USA, a supplier of rotary die-cutting technology, has named Flexipack CIA as its new partner for the markets of Peru and Ecuador. The agreement was signed by president and CEO, David Morris with Fernando and Mateo Carpio. 'We are extremely pleased to make this appointment with Flexipack, and believe we are ideally positioned to provide the highest quality tooling, customer service, and support for both our new and existing customers within Peru and Ecuador,' said David Morris, President and CEO of Kocher + Beck USA.

## UEI Group opens new headquarters

The UEI Group of companies inaugurated its new global headquarters, located at 9000 Nieman Road, Overland Park, Kansas, USA, early this year. To commemorate, the UEI Group held an opening ceremony for employees and local officials which concluded with a ribbon-cutting by Glenn and Sue Hutchison, the chairman of the board and his wife. UEI Group was founded with one company by Glenn E. Hutchison in 1971.

Albertin adds copper stamping tools Albertin has begun production of copper stamping tools at its facility. 'We have added copper tools to our portfolio to respond to customers' changing needs,' said Ferruccio Albertin, CEO of Albertin.

Albertin already produces magnesium, brass and rubber stamping tools, which along with the new copper stamping tools, are manufactured at its factory near Milan, Italy. It also offers counterforces; brass cylinders; graphic design services; micro and nano embossing stamping tools; Braille blind embossing tools; silicone rubber stamping tools for flat and curved surfaces and in-line flat stamping tools.



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## Let the work flow

Faster production, shorter changeovers, less waste and measurable savings – multi-system, multi-device connectivity and data exchange is the way forward. Piotr Wnuk reports

echnology and connectivity continue to develop rapidly, with their implementation rates rising across all modern business. Likewise, in the printing industry integration and automation of both in-line and off-line processes are becoming a reality. Automated unwinds and rewinds, inspection processes, finishing operations from turret rewinding to slitting, varnishing and cold foiling. This trend extends to management information systems (MIS) developers, software companies and equipment manufacturers who collaborate to implement significant production improvements.

"Printing machines on average are not running 30 percent of the time. This downtime can be easily transformed into an additional production capacity and turned into extra profit"

Workflow automation increasingly integrates all processes and production stages, be it of management information, pre-press, or the press and other process stages. It is undoubtedly the direction the industry is going in terms of running tomorrow's printing presses and converting plants.

## Let the machine talk

'Combining these technologies will uncover the hidden potential of machines and can bring up to 30 percent improvement in performance,' says Atze Bosma, CEO of MPS Systems. 'There is a world of opportunity in the printing industry when it comes to connectivity and data-driven service. We are keen to show our customers how to improve the performance of their presses.'

MPS' connectivity platform 'Talk to me' enables its presses to communicate with software and hardware on the printshop floor, allowing multi-directional data exchange. As a result, press operators and management can gain full control of the printing process and make instant



data-driven decisions about each stage.

'We strongly believe there is real potential to increase the efficiency of a printing machine, but it is not achievable without correct data collection and analysis,' adds Bert van den Brink, technical director of MPS. 'Connecting our printing press, Cerm's MIS system and Esko's pre-press gives us a clear set of data, helping to identify exactly where the inefficiencies occur and how to tackle them to increase the overall productivity."

'All three individual systems offer an interesting set of functionalities that can easily improve converters' productivity,' comments Geert Van Damme, managing director at Cerm. 'But the interaction between these systems provides an extra dimension that can be compared to any team sport: it's the way they play together that makes them win.'

According to Tim Klappe, managing director of MPS Asia Pacific, the biggest gain from in-depth analysis is allowing printers to monitor performance details and use this knowledge to identify bottlenecks and weak points in their production lines in order to react accordingly.

'The cost of label presses spans between 300,000 and 3 million EUR. These are sophisticated pieces of equipment. However, the information that we can normally extract from these machines is very limited. We can monitor speed, mechanical or electrical errors and

sometimes pressure information along with the registration data,' says Klappe. 'There is no option to find out how exactly the machine is running. We don't know how long it takes to set it up, what the exact material wastage is, uptime, downtime, or even an average machine's speed per day or week.

'Of course, we can rely on machine operators to input some of this data manually, but it will not be real-time information and will certainly not be as valuable or accurate as the hundreds of measurements per minute that modern sensor technology can deliver.'

### Digital twin

By using several hundreds of sensors attached to a machine, MPS has created a digital twin model to enable reading of

'With a detailed and continuous data stream we can understand exactly what is happening with the press at any given point in time in detail. Not just the 10 to 20 scans that the operators are able to make manually during the run of the job; having a digital twin with streamed dynamic data sets enables better decision-making,' adds Klappe.

The constant stream of real-time data opens new analytic opportunities in the form of an easily accessible online dashboard. Label converters no longer have to wait for productivity reports as all the important information about their production lines is collated on the virtual dashboard.

According to Klappe these streaming analytics make business owners more agile and responsive to the realities of what is happing in the label print operation. 'The majority of label converters look back at past performance,' he notes. 'Today, real-time production data can be compared with historical information to give the management an immediate perspective on how the business is developing. Streaming analytics allow management to be proactive with real-time processing and decision making instead of just being reactive to older data. Converters have the opportunity to be faster than competitors and gain extra capacity due to the continuous implementation of the best practices, reductions of errors and downtimes.

'We might be talking about several seconds gains, a minute here and a minute there in faster set-up time. This might not sound especially exciting at first. However, these time gains can easily translate into hours a week and weeks in a year. According to our research, printing machines on average are not running 30 percent of the time. This downtime can be easily transformed into an additional production capacity and turned into extra profit for converters.'

'You can compare the real-time data exchange between the systems (hardware and software) and MIS with the input of a switch panel at a railway station,' adds Geert Van Damme. 'When a train has passed a switch (status change in pre-press, e.g. plates ready), the next train can start moving (printing is possible). The MIS is the switch panel, checking all conditions for the complete workflow. Hardware, software and the operator report status changes

(switch signals) that fulfil consecutive or parallel conditions for following steps. If this real-time data exchange did not exist, operators would have to switch on/off manually or would have to tell the next operator that he is ready to go (as they did years ago by putting the job ticket on the in-box-pile of the next operator in line). Now they all see instructions on their screen for the next job in line when conditions are set automatically.'

### Machine talk

Cerm and Esko have estimated that simply through integration of MIS and pre-press software, converters are already able to significantly raise their production performance. The efficiency boosted by a single entry of data reduces wastage and errors up to 80 percent and by automating the processes the throughput time can be reduced up to 50 percent.

These gains present converters with the opportunity to process over 40 percent more jobs using the same amount of printing presses and operators.

Esko's Value Stream Mapping (VSM) focuses on a company's value creation workflow, exposing waste and delays based on real numbers and insights gathered from employees, and revealing opportunities to improve productivity and throughput. VSM considers the workflow a system of steps and activities which are all connected in one way or another, helping executives to establish a long-term zero waste strategy rather than undertaking singular actions. It is the starting point of a business improvement project.

Ken Polspoel, global solutions manager at Esko, comments: 'VSM forces you to think holistically. There's no point in creating islands of success in a sea of waste.'

'The system is updating conditions in the work schedules, which lead to decisions like postponing jobs where conditions are not met and rescheduling jobs that are ready for production to an earlier and more optimal position (e.g. using the same paper/ die/colors) which leads - in turn - to a cheaper production cost (less changeover times and less material wasted),' adds Geert Van Damme. 'If you can consistently be more efficient than estimated, this can lead to lower sales prices with the same margin to beat competition.'

"With a detailed and continuous data stream we can understand exactly what is happening with the press in detail at any given point in time"

Besides the machine efficiency, enabling systems to communicate introduces label converters to consistency and quality of data used in different departments and significantly reduces the need for communication between pre-press department, customers and customer services delivering considerable time and cost savings.

'We are talking to our partners, such as UV suppliers, anilox rollers suppliers, inking systems manufacturers to invite them to connect with us as well,' states Klappe. 'We can connect all elements of the label production, and we are currently making decisions about which devices we should link into our data collection network. I am certain about one fact; this development will not stop. On the contrary, it will accelerate even faster'

'It will never end.' echoes Geert van Damme. 'There are many machines that cannot be connected yet and those who reach a first level can always do better. Even with Esko, starting about 17 years ago, we continue working on new workflows together, based on the experience and the requests from our customers. This leads, for example, to faster implementation of our systems, of the integration between our systems or to automate workflows for new products in our industry.'

## Theory in practice

'For me, MPS is the number one press builder in terms of technology,' says Bernd Koch, chief information officer at fs-Etiketten, a family-run label converter







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based in Friesenheim, southern Germany. 'MPS is always at the forefront of innovations and it is the leader in the field of connectivity. Connectivity is something I was already interested in and MPS gave me the opportunity to experience it first-hand by running a trial in our production plant.'

The 'Talk to Me' connectivity platform in combination with the new machine was essential for Koch. 'The advantages of this platform are that it is faster, the changeover time is shorter, there is less waste, and the connectivity asks less from us, because everything is centrally controlled by the MIS we were already working with,' he says.

## "Thanks to multidirectional connectivity, we can arrange and control the entire production process ourselves. It saves us a significant amount of time."

Koch has a clear vision of the 'Talk to me' system's functionality and the benefits it presents to his business. 'The connectivity platform works fully automatically. If there is a printing job on the machine, we use the job memory function to take the pre-settings from the press,' he explains. 'When the operator goes to set up the next print job at the terminal, the press is already automatically set up in the right position, therefore, the changeover is very fast. As changeover time is where you do not make money, you want to keep it as short as possible. Thanks to the connectivity platform, there is more time for production of completely converted labels. The higher the automation, the higher the productivity.'

fs-Etiketten is working with the MIS data exchange of the connectivity platform. 'All my expectations are met,' continues Koch. 'Now the instrumental improvements need to take place; we want to integrate the systems even more. At the moment we are working with four terminals on the machine, each with a different task. One screen is for the AVT inspection camera, one for the CC1 register control, one for the Cerm MIS and one for the BST optical camera. We would like to see all systems connected so we can experience an even greater increase in productivity.'

For fs-Etiketten, 'Talk to Me' has proven its advantages in daily production as the company manages to minimize waste,





achieve faster changeover times and increase productivity.

'As we were the first MPS customer with the "Talk to Me" platform in the development stage, we could collaborate with MPS. We believe this way of working is the way forward. We experienced the benefits almost immediately after the implementation of the platform. Thanks to multi-directional connectivity, we can arrange and control the entire production process ourselves. It saves us a significant amount of time. For now, the trial means no capital investment, but we would definitely invest as I can see the immense advantages it offers,' Koch concludes.

## The future is here

All new MPS presses, shipped from the beginning of this year, are already equipped with an edge server allowing multidirectional data collection. It can also be

retrofitted to the majority of EF presses produced back to 2018.

'This does not mean that continuous improvements happen just by installing this type of technology,' warns Klappe. 'No, the technology gives us information. Knowledge about production lines and operation. We can report on it and present several suggestions on what we think should happen to improve the operation. However, it is the label converter who needs to be open to receiving knowledge and especially open to taking action to improve the production efficiencies. Successful companies will integrate these streaming analytics to move from a reactive to a more proactive approach to operations excellence.'



For more information about 'Talk to Me' system go to www.mps4u.com/ innovations/talk-to-me-connectivity/



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## Efficient job planning and production scheduling

In an exclusive extract from the Label Academy book 'Management Information Systems and Workflow Automation', Mike Fairley looks at the process of planning jobs and managing their production

he process of planning jobs and managing their production through a label or package printing plant can be quite complex. The process needs to constantly monitor the changing workload of individual machines and printing processes, complete print production orders to schedule, and maintain accurate staffing levels. Ideally it should also highlight spare capacity, display slippage, spot bottlenecks or problem areas, offer 'what if' scenarios and prioritize orders thereby maximizing the company's technology investment and minimizing machine downtime.

The growing proliferation of shorter runs, the need for multiple versions or variations, a requirement for sequential coding or numbering, jobs with hot or cold foiling, embossing, matt or gloss varnishing, are just a few of the things that can challenge scheduling. Multi- shift and multi-process pressrooms present further challenges. Even pressrooms with just one or two presses and a handful of jobs at any given time, can make effective scheduling tricky.

It is not simply a case of lining up jobs by due date, in the order they were received. Label and package printing has a great many variables to be considered in order to strike a good balance between efficiency on the pressroom floor and shipping the printed jobs when promised. Indeed, the most efficient job sequence is not always readily apparent.

Multiple deadlines, urgent rush jobs, special finishing requirements, delays in ink or paper delivery may all make it necessary to arrange jobs in scheduling sequences that are far from ideal with respect to production efficiency. Batching jobs by material, size, or ink can mean that jobs with due dates that are even days or weeks later may be scheduled to print before those with closer due dates.

Indeed, there are often so many variables, especially those that may occur unexpectedly - employee sickness, press breakdown, damaged plate or cutter, temporary shortages of materials, conflicts with jobs requiring the same plate cylinders, the need to delay one job so that another may be printed on a particular press – that any number of criteria may have to be constantly evaluated in order to determine the order that labels or packaging should be printed in. Ideally, the scheduling system should also be able to block-out recurring or planned maintenance periods where a press or process

All these requirements and pressures lead to a need for an efficient and easy way of conveniently presenting and viewing jobs that need to be printed in some form of job planning or scheduling system. A system that provides an easy-to-view means of sorting, grouping, controlling, planning and viewing the sequences and steps "Label and package printing has a great many variables to be considered in order to strike a good balance between efficiency on the pressroom floor and shipping the printed jobs when promised"

of production on possibly an hourly, daily, weekly, shift, machine or personnel basis as required. It can also be valuable for the scheduling system to undertake capacity analysis over a defined period to determine potential future bottlenecks.

Modules used for job planning and production scheduling in the label or package printing plant are today an essential element of a MIS workflow system and can provide full visibility of machine capacity, both short and long term, and offer detailed scheduling of each production step of the job, from customer approval right through to shipping. Depending on the software it may also be possible for press operators to consult their work schedule on their press or feedback what they are actually doing. A change in schedule can be automatically seen on the shop floor.

Increasingly, MIS systems offer real-time feedback of shop floor activity to the scheduling board or screen via job tracking terminals or JDF capable systems. Others may look to define the current running efficiency of a resource for new operators, or identify machine faults to automatically adjust running time of operations. Some can provide an out of sequence alert, indicating jobs started early or not as planned, and so alerting the scheduler.

So let's look at some of these production scheduling systems in more detail.

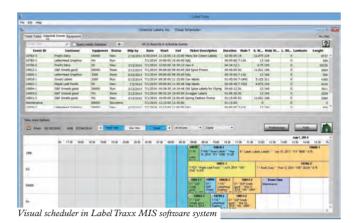
## **Production scheduling systems**

Production scheduling systems or tools come in a wide variety of formats and systems starting from spreadsheets generated on a PC screen or printed out onto paper, and ranging through White Boards, Magnetic Boards, Card Planning Boards, Adhesive Strip Boards, right up to sophisticated production scheduling software incorporated into the latest MIS systems.

All of the above systems, sometimes used in combination, can be found in the industry. Why? Because, while computerized production scheduling systems have definitely become an essential



Production scheduling and job planning are an essential element of a streamlined MIS workflow



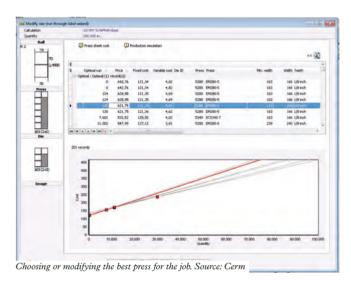
planning tool, they frequently only provide a limited view of the production schedule, failing to provide a planned 'big picture' or total production schedule overview that everyone can see. Constant scrolling or passing round instantly outdated printouts can be of limited help to busy production departments who must have a complete overview of the rapidly changing production schedule to make any informed amendments.

A guide to some of the main types of production scheduling boards and computerized systems that are available to the label and package printer are therefore briefly outlined below:

- Magnetic planning boards: Magnetic production planning board kits provide a wider format picture enabling a complete production schedule to be viewed at a glance. They can be rapidly updated, give an overview of production and presses, and may be operated as stand-alone scheduling boards or alongside software systems.
- Card planning boards: Card Planning Boards are an ideal system for when a large amount of job information is required to be stored and shown. A range of different card capacity sizes and heights are available. Card boards are ideal for production, project and personnel planning and are available in one or two week systems.
- T-Card production planning boards: Job information is written or printed onto a T-shaped job card (T-card) body with the 'at a glance' information onto the visible card shoulder. Information can be handwritten or transferred directly from a computer printer or photocopier using perforated job card sheets.
- Printed white board production planning boards: Magnetic
  whiteboards printed with production and project planning
  grid designs provide an economic planning/scheduling
  alterative. A dry wipe surface enables data to be easily
  written and erased.
- Adhesive channel strip boards: An inexpensive solution that uses adhesive backed channel strips that firmly adhere to a backing board so as to hold job card strips, so creating an individual planning/scheduling board.
- PC with spreadsheet software: Spreadsheet software can
  provide an effective means of scheduling using functions
  such as cutting, copying, inserting, pasting, formatting,
  coloring text, sorting, and filtering of records so as to provide
  spreadsheets on which all print jobs can be easily seen on
  the computer screen (or printed out), rearranged, sorted
  and displayed by press or process, order or job number, run
  length, delivery date, customer or any other requirement.
- MIS production scheduling modules: MIS modules used for production scheduling in the label and package printing plant are available to provide full visibility of machine capacity, both short and long term, and offer detailed scheduling of each production step of the job, from



Material usage variance by press for shipped tickets. Source: Label Traxx

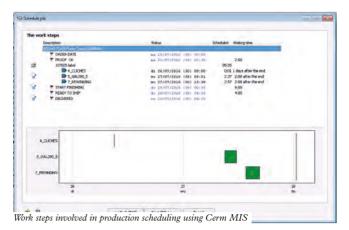


"Production scheduling is at least as important as any other part of the production loop, and can be the cause of a company's worst nightmare if not handled efficiently and correctly"

customer approval right through to shipping. Depending on the software it may also be possible for press operators to consult their work schedule on their press or feedback what they are actually doing. A change in schedule can be automatically seen on the shop floor.

It is also possible to reserve production slots for jobs that are expected, view milestones for scheduled jobs as well as schedule in planned maintenance, down time or holidays. When necessary, a scheduler can move a job up or down the queue, or even split-run the job, part now and part later, or perhaps run in parallel on different presses. A good system can also indicate how much and when overtime will be required. It is also possible to optimize make-ready times by grouping or ganging similar labels or labels with different shapes together, especially if they have the same substrates, colors or cutter tooling.

With some of the more sophisticated MIS systems data can be



"Poor production control and scheduling can undoubtedly be a recipe for disaster. If scheduling is inefficient and not managed properly, then the production floor does not know what to print and when, and machine efficiency can quite quickly fall through the floor"

sent direct to Esko's Automation Engine for pre-press, proofing and automated step and repeat. More and more digital presses today also come with built-in software to create step and repeat.

Some of the latest computerized production scheduling and control systems used in the printing industry actually look and feel like traditional production board and are very easy to use. Indeed, time indicators moving across T-cards as a job progresses can be realistically used to drive a large wall-mounted plasma screen.

It may additionally be possible for a production scheduling and control system to also handle multiple user sites, a wide variety of plant, shift and overtime patterns, schedule multiple component and sections and handle large amounts of digital jobs as easily as

conventional analogue printing. Move an item on one screen and it moves on the others. These systems can work standalone or live to the rest of the system by using shop floor data capture and networked machine monitoring.

### Scheduling as a control system

Production scheduling, whatever the type of system used, can perhaps be defined as a control system that becomes part of the larger, more-complex label and package printer's manufacturing planning and control system. The overall production scheduling system needs to be considered as more than a schedule-generation process, whether it is manual or automated. It is not just a piece of software, but should ideally be a system that interacts with all departments and provides information that all managers and supervisors need for other planning and supervisory functions. Sub status reports can also be shown to provide information on items

- All artwork approved for a job
- Whether there will be enough material in stock on the scheduled production date
- Whether tooling is available
- Whether the order has been confirmed to the customer (to define priorities).

When looking at materials availability, it is important to be aware of possible materials shortages. It should be born in mind that poor production control and scheduling can undoubtedly be a recipe for disaster. If scheduling is inefficient and not managed properly, then the production floor does not know what to print and when, and machine efficiency can quite quickly fall through the floor. Customers don't get orders filled on time, operators don't get materials when needed, bottlenecks occur - all of which may spell trouble.

Production scheduling is at least as important as any other part of the production loop, and can be the cause of a company's worst nightmare if not handled efficiently and correctly.

A well-ordered and managed planning and scheduling module will undoubtedly provide for and increase the transparency and visibility of a company's production plans, help to manage and control progress and capacity right across the business, enabling each department to prioritize and manage their own workloads.

It is also invaluable in determining whether delivery dates can be met and can identify predictable downtime for maintenance schedules. A proper production schedule also gives production and other personnel a detailed statement of what is expected and in

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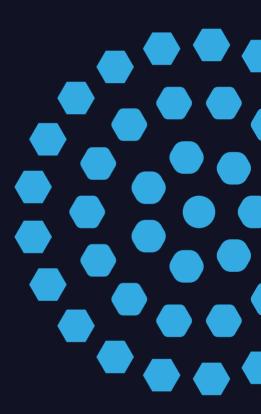
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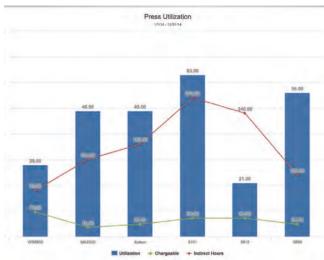
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Press utilization. Source: Label Traxx

order that supervisors and managers can measure productivity and performance.

Other advantages include minimizing WIP (work in process) inventories, set-up times and overall lead times as well as maximizing machine and production personnel. A good production schedule should also be able to identify resource conflicts, control the release of jobs to the production floor, and ensure that all required raw materials – such as blank product and correct ink colors – are purchased and received on time. Additionally, better coordination will increase overall productivity and minimize

Label and package printing production environments may often change dramatically from one day to another, one shift to another, or even hour by hour. This means that the system needs to respond to the unexpected and quickly be able to identify backlogs and to modify existing production or press schedules. Flexibility in a system is therefore paramount. Keeping it simple makes scheduling manageable. Fast and responsive production scheduling is one of the major keys to successful supply-chain management, in some cases even linking customer's and supplier's schedules together.

Effective and efficient production scheduling today is an essential element in controlling and managing a label or package printing plant, and in providing profitable results.

## Production scheduling - the work steps

To understand how the production scheduling process works within an MIS system, Cerm has kindly supplied a screen shot to explain the necessary work steps involved. As can be seen, there are four columns on the screen – Description, Status, Scheduled and Waiting time.

- •he Description column shows the job order details, followed by the order date, proof date, plates, press, rewinding, finishing, shipping and delivery.
- In the Scheduled column, every work step is allocated a calculated time.
- In the Waiting time column, every work step is allocated a waiting time (queuing time needed to go to start the next
- Based upon delivery date and transport time, the MIS system calculates backwards (Status column) to determine the start of every step necessary: rewinding, printing, plate-making (depending on the complexity of the job) the allocation of resources and the sequencing of timing and tasks necessary to produce the printed products and as indicated in the illustration, MIS production scheduling is an automated system for dealing with related services.

## Automatic scheduling

Geert van Damme, managing director of Cerm, provides an update on a newer area of production planning – automatic scheduling

As each year goes by, MIS scheduling tools are becoming more intelligent. Firstly, new tools can find the most efficient way to sequence jobs on the individual machines, saving spoilage and changeover time. When all jobs requiring the same substrate, and being printed on a particular digital press, are lined up, there will be just one substrate change on that machine.

The challenge is to combine the efficiency-goal with the other constraints of individual jobs. When all 'ready-to-print' jobs on the first substrate type are printed, some jobs on the next substrate might be too late for delivery. If switching the order of the materials, some jobs using the first substrate might be delayed. So there are constraints than can render it impossible to choose the most efficient sequence and require decision parameters or even human intervention. For example, when there is simply not enough capacity to produce all the jobs on time, which ones will you deliver late?

Secondly, these tools allow the distribution of jobs over several identical presses – by scheduling, following the same example, the first substrate jobs on press one and the second substrate jobs on press two. The difficulty here is that many converters have few identical presses, and sometimes none. You can put a 4-color job on a 5-color press, and a 280mm job on a 330mm press, but not the other way around. Especially with complex in-line finishing, this can be tricky.

The intelligence levels of these software tools will increase in the future, so we can expect interesting developments in this area.

"A sophisticated MIS system with efficient job planning and production scheduling capabilities is more than a nice-to-have tool; it is becoming a necessity"

## Easier decision making

In summary, production scheduling using one of the latest MIS systems will make the key work steps in label and package printing decision making easier and simpler, in particular:

- In releasing jobs for production
- By prioritizing jobs that require resources (spot colors, special tooling, stamping foils, and so on)
- By assigning resources (people, presses, inspection machines)
- In reassigning resources from one job to another (similar
- By determining when jobs should be started (to meet deadlines/delivery dates)
- By halting a job that can be stopped to make way for another more urgent job (a rush order).

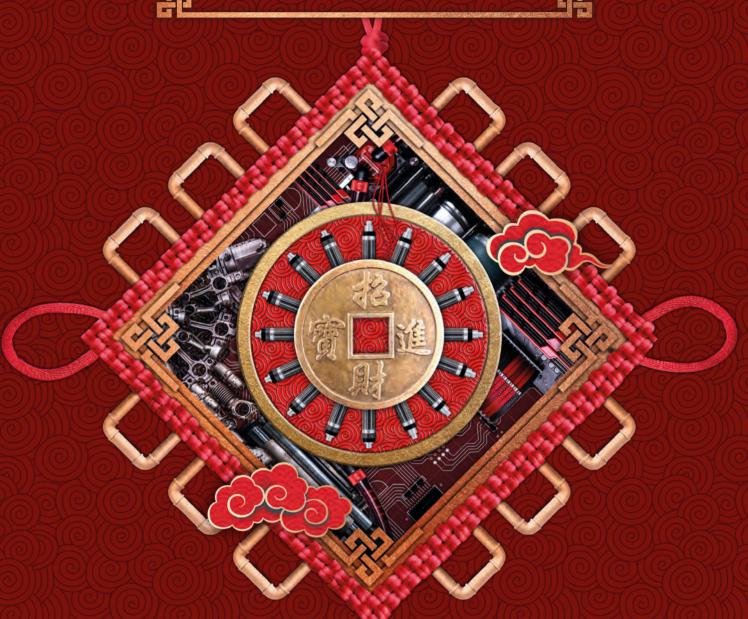
Today, a sophisticated MIS system is more than a nice-to-have tool; it is becoming a necessity.



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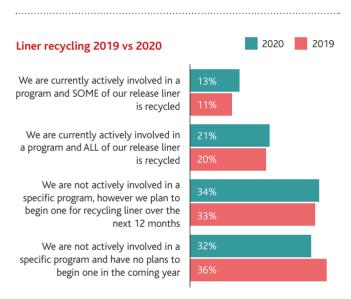
### Liner recycling in the European market

Finat asked European converters about their current recycling practices to gauge the growing importance of liner and matrix recycling programs

#### Market awareness

Are converters aware that liner is now fully recyclable for a full-value paper product?

NO



#### **Predictions**

Finat asked survey participants to indicate which strategies they consider most probable for the future channeling of their spent liner (listed in order of probability):

- #1 Recycle reprocessing liner to obtain the same or lower quality product
- **#2 Reduce** reducing the amount of material needed through making the liner lighter or thinner
- **#3 Recover** incinerating for energy recovery
- **Refuse/rethink** replacing liner utilization with alternative technologies
- **Reuse** using the liner repeatedly
- #6 Landfill
- #7 Composting

#### Willingness to use recycled materials

What percentage of converters are willing to use liner made of recycled materials?

said YES if all liners would have a uniform color

said YES if it would contain recycled content and mean higher material costs of up to 5%

said YES if it would mean that the performance of such a liner would be technically inferior to the currently used product made of virgin materials7i

#### What are converters doing with their used liner?



#### Recycling support

Converters were asked to indicate ways in which they are willing to support liner recycling in the future:

spreading the word and encouraging their customers to make spent liner available for targeted collection

making their spent liner available for targeted collection in hubs maximum 200km away from converters' locations

financial contribution (approx. 5,000 EUR per year) to establishing and operating a full liner recycling program

Source: Finat Radar report, Vol 13 – Summer Edition compiled by LPC.

Total figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding up or down, they may also exceed 100% due to multiple choice questions.

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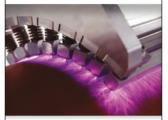
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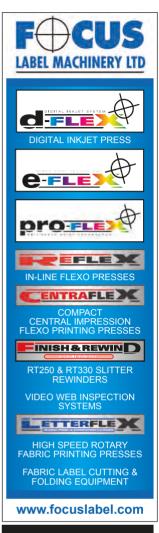






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Anderson Europe GmbH		Luster LightTech	86
Appvion Operations, Inc.		Martin Automatic	73
Armor		Meech	45
Asahi		MoistTech Corp	97
Avery Dennison		Monotech Systems Limited	94
Berhalter AG		MPS	46
Bunting Magnetics Co		NDC	76
Buskro Ltd		Nilpeter	88
Cartes		OMET	50
Cerm		Orthotec	78
Codimag		Pantec	74
Cosmo Films Limited		Prati Srl	23
Dantex		RK PrintCoat Instruments Ltd	97
Digimarc		Rotometal	42
Durico C&T. Inc		RotoMetrics	4
Durst		Ruco	12
Erdhart + Liemer		Shanghai Jinda Plastic Co.,Ltd	84
Esko		Shenzhen HanGlobal Digital Solutions Co., Ltd	80
Focus Label Machinery		Sihl	
Gallus		Sistrade - Software Consulting SA	73
GEW		SMI Coated Products Pvt. Ltd.	97
Grafisk.		SPGPrints	8
Harper Corporation Of America		Spinnaker Coating, LLC	56
Herma		Theurer.com GmbH	60
Holfeld Tool & Die (Head Office)		TOYOBO	69
Icap-Sira Chemicals And Polymers Spa		UEI	BC
Inkjet Solutions Ltd		Uninet Imaging	
Kocher + Beck		Univacco	38
Label Academy		Vetaphone A/S.	32
Label Academy		Virtual Label Summit	103
Labelexpo South China		Wasau	82
Labelman		Yupo	74
<u></u>			

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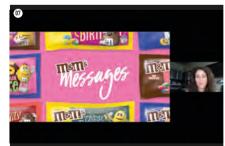






- 1 Thomas Barrett of MacArthur Corporation hosted a virtual tour to show how his business is managing production
- Anuj Bhargava of Kumar Labels showed how his factory is being run during Covid
- (3) Converters joined TLMI's Rosalyn Bandy to speak about alternatives to landfill for label waste
- **<sup>®</sup>** Chris Ellison of OPM (Labels & Packaging) spoke about the flexible packaging market
- © Claudia St John of Afinity HR presented tips team collaboration
- Andy Thomas-Emans looked at innovations that are shaping the future of label production
- f w Design specialist Vicki Strull explored the value that innovative packaging generates for brand customer
- Ken Theriot of TheRiot Agency, Jessie Frietas of StickerGiant and Adam Peek of Fortis Solutions Group discussed winning sales and marketing strategies
- Men McGuire of P&G, Ben Greengrass of ThoughtMatter, and Cedric D'Souza of AeroFlexx talked about their collaboration on a disruptive new packaging form
- 1 Hernán Braberman of Tridimage investigated what drives different generations to pick one product over









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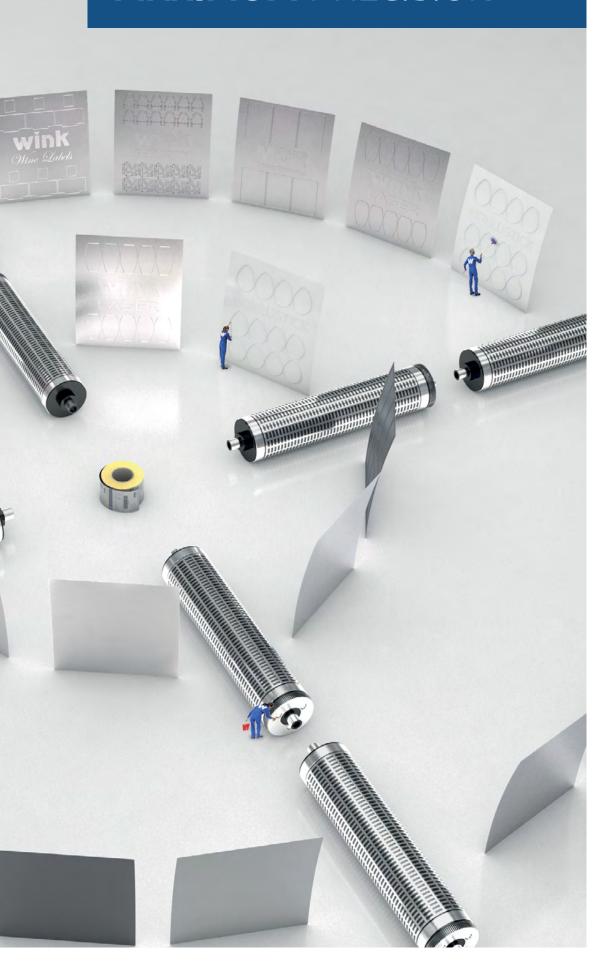
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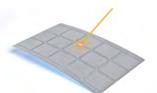
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## **Market Scope**

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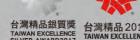














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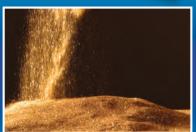


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