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VOLUME 44 | ISSUE # 3 | JUL - SEP 2022

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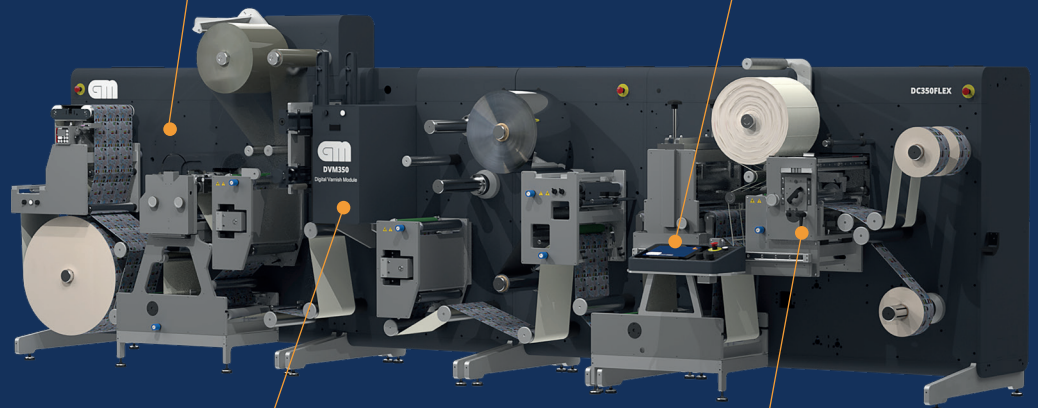
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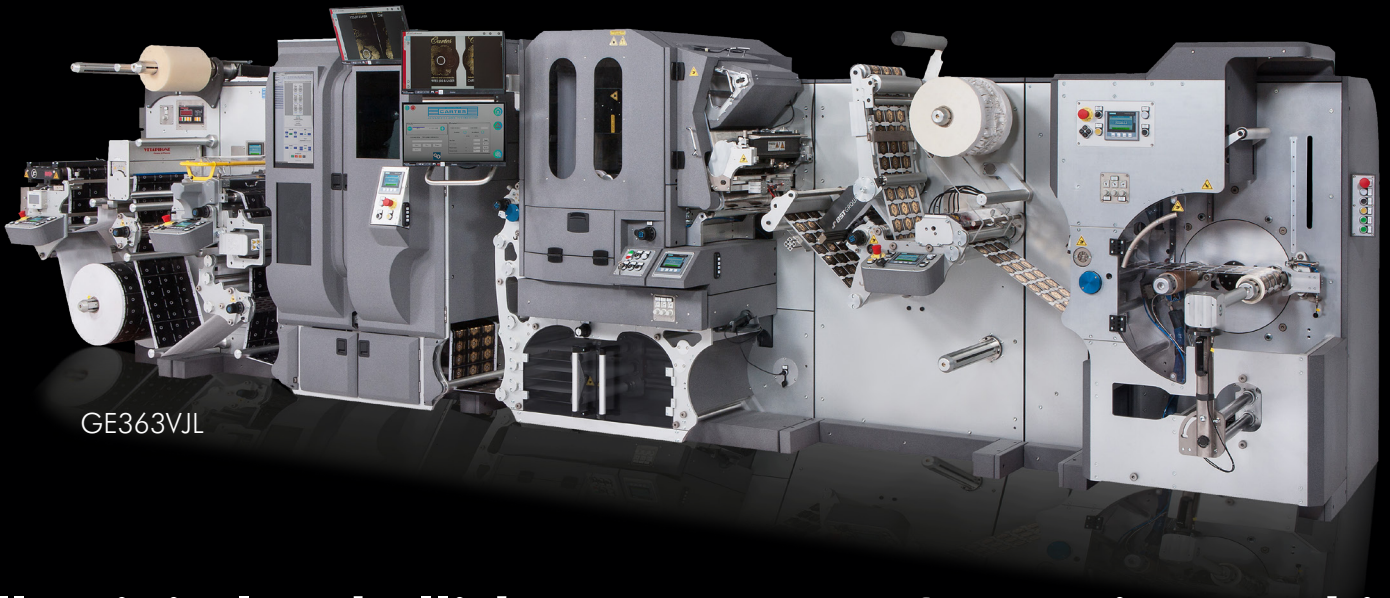


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L&L

– Meet the team

Labels & Labeling is the leading global information source for the label and package print converting industries with an editorial team and network of correspondents spread throughout the world



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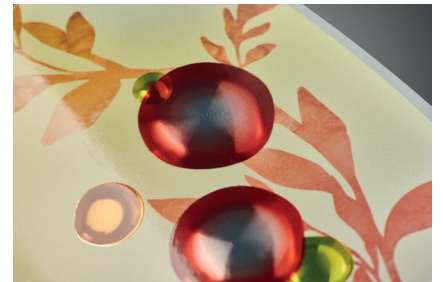
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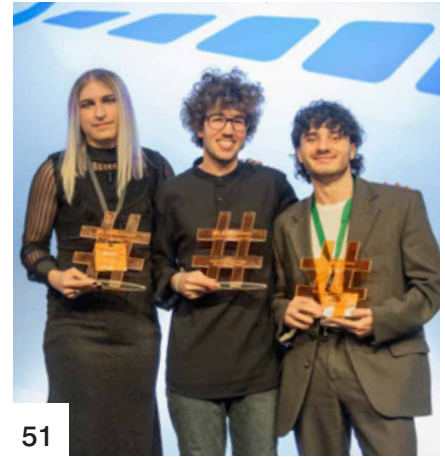
Contents



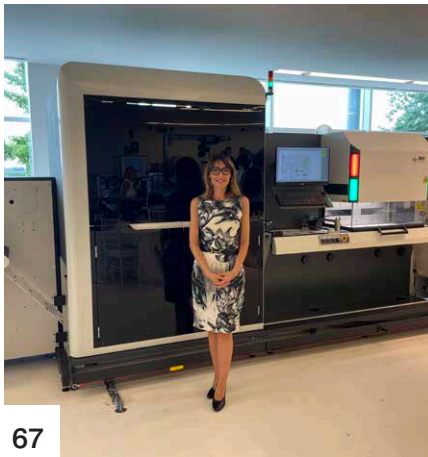
40



47



51



67



85



89

Regulars

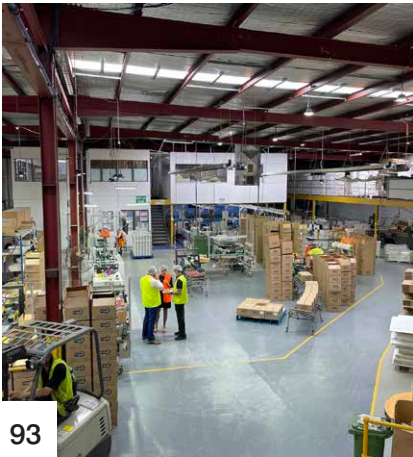
- 9 Editor's welcome
- 10 News
- 15 New products
- 19 Installations
- 22 Label & packaging showcase
- 25 Mike Fairley column
- 29 Andy Thomas-Emans column
- 31 Continuous improvement
- 35 Branding and design
- 39 M&A
- 40 Q&A: John Wynne, Fortis Solutions Group
- 144 Label trends

Trends

- 51 *Finat unites European industry at ELF 2022*
European Label Forum covered the challenges faced by label converters
- 69 *Stepping into automation*
There are opportunities for those who understand the intricacies of a digital workflow
- 71 *Watermarking clouds*
Digimarc presses forward with ambitious plans to help brands combat counterfeiting
- 81 *Holography against counterfeiting*
Counterfeiting is an economic pandemic affecting large numbers of businesses
- 110 *Reuniting at Labelexpo Americas 2022*
Labelexpo unleashes all the technology suppliers have been developing

Features

- 47 *Steinhauser expands flexo fleet*
US converter installs its second MPS machine
- 75 *Beontag becomes a global RFID player*
Brazilian company becomes the world's second-largest RFID tag manufacturer
- 79 *Eye on complex pharma print inspection*
Argentine manufacturer invests in an EyeC inspection system to ensure 100 percent quality control
- 83 *A-Z of packaging development*
Manish Mehta of Reifenhauer, describes his new venture as a closed-loop packaging company
- 85 *Unlocking creative freedom*
QBC unlocks new creative opportunities after the switch to digital print technology



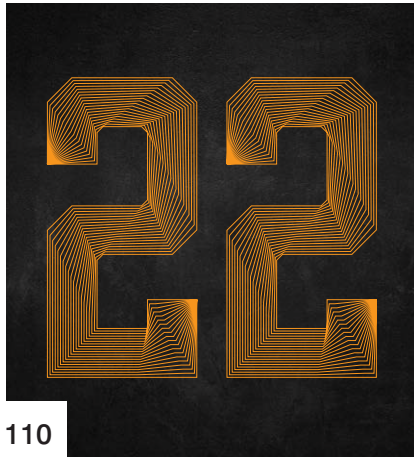
93



97



105



110

89 Yuto expands labels business with digital investment

One-stop packaging shop makes its first UV inkjet investment

93 Australia's smart packaging powerhouse

Peacock Bros' acquisition of AMR Hewitts unites 280 years of printing history

97 Shedding digital light on SMEs

Luminar expands its digital printing capacity to offer high-quality packaging to small businesses

105 Taking labels to the limit

Industrial labels deliver vital information while withstanding harsh environments

114 Labelexpo A-Z preview

A comprehensive technology outlook for what to expect in Chicago in September

55 Gallus launches roll-to-roll digital press

Gallus One is part of a wider program to reinvent the industry's view of digital printing

59 Mark Andy unveils DPro mid-market strategy

Mark Andy targets the latest Digital Pro press at its traditional mid-market customer base

61 Omet launches KFlex flexo press

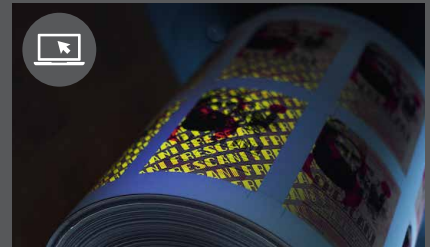
The new KFlex from Omet is designed to be a versatile workhorse

63 EcoLeaf challenges traditional foiling techniques

Actega's open house provided an opportunity to understand the performance and sustainability of its EcoLeaf technology

Technology

Online contents
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HP Indigo Secure digital printing technology (video)

Discover how HP Indigo can help your business gain a security edge



Read L&L issue 2 online (magazine)

Previous issue of L&L is now available to read online



Flexible packaging: markets, applications and opportunities (Label Academy)

The flexible packaging market offers opportunities for narrow web printers



In conversation with Bob Cronin (online exclusive)

How to stay competitive in a changing industry landscape

g1

Gallus One



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www.gallus.one

L&L looks back (L&L issue 1, 2009)



P29 James Quirk reported from the inauguration of Avery Dennison's new slitting and distribution center in Santiago, Chile. The facility was developed to supply its local market with the company's range of self-adhesive products and allowed for greater stock capacity than Avery's previous distribution center in the country, which was opened in 1995.



P38 On the 30th anniversary of L&L, the magazine's founder, Mike Fairley, looked back to the publication launch and early news stories, reviewed some of the key industry innovations covered over the years, and highlighted the emergence of the magazine into a global publishing and exhibitions group at the forefront of label industry growth.



P48 L&L visited UK-based Borble, a digital label converter that installed Xeikon's new 3300 press. Borble's biggest sectors were chemical, food, cosmetics, industrial and promotional labels. While the majority of its sales were in the UK, many products were ultimately exported, providing opportunities for variable data to which digital was suited.



P57 Andy Thomas visited the Skanem Group's Liverpool, UK, operation to find out what the requirements are for a converter that wants to service global multinational brands. The group then completed a move from rotary letterpress to combination rotary offset litho and positioned itself as a primary strategic supplier to multinational brands.

A familiar face returns to L&L

Editor's note

As you may have noticed, a new name has taken over this editor's section of the magazine.

I'm not entirely new, however. From 2016 to 2021, I wrote about the North American label and packaging market on these very pages. I've met many of you at Labelexpo global shows, at TLMI and FTA meetings, and at supplier open houses. We've strategized at business meetings and laughed over dinner. We've rubbed elbows and shared stories. Many of you have opened your organizations to let me peek around and write about your business goals.

In 2021, I took a short sabbatical to lead the content marketing efforts of a growing industry supplier. That experience has given me a unique insight into just how vital this magazine is for the industry. I am honored to bring that experience back to the

“Their continued dedication and genuine passion for this industry have made — and kept — Labels & Labeling the leading publication for over four decades”

readers of Labels & Labeling. As the magazine's fourth editor, the significance of this title is not lost on me. While I might edit these pages, the magazine has always belonged to you, dear reader.

Labels & Labeling has been the industry-leading magazine for the past 40 years. Its reputation and position are built upon a foundation laid by editors before me: James Quirk, Andy Thomas-Emans, and of course, the Label Guru and L&L founder Mike Fairley; in addition to editors and contributors spread across the globe.

Their continued dedication and genuine passion for this industry have made — and kept — Labels & Labeling the leading publication for news, commentary and analysis for over four decades.

And yet, these pages reflect a changing industry. We're all tasked with doing more with less. Culturally, we want our teams to thrive and feel supported; we're all looking for smarter, more efficient, more sustainable ways of doing business; we're all chasing a changed consumer and shifting to digital workflows.

In this issue, you'll read about companies that are joining forces, companies that are growing their technology base, and brands that are looking for differentiation. The bulk of this issue is dedicated to a preview of Labelexpo Americas 2022 and the innovators who are pushing the industry forward.

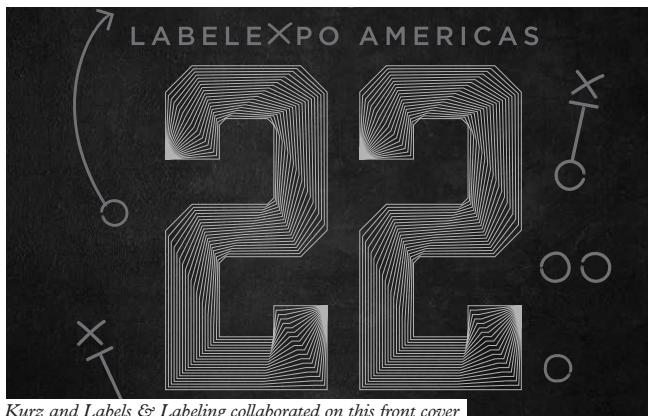
What better time to return to Labels & Labeling than on the cusp of our global label reunion? Be sure to read our comprehensive guide to see what technology and trends will take center stage at Labelexpo.

Be sure to find me in Chicago, or reach out and say hello at cmcdougall@labelsandlabeling.com.

I'm happy to be back.

Chelsea McDougall
Group managing editor

News



Kurz and Labels & Labeling collaborated on this front cover

Kurz and L&L collaborate on front cover design

A special-edition L&L cover features silver foil techniques as explained by Kurz. Andy Thomas-Emans reports

The front cover of this edition of Labels & Labeling was produced in conjunction with hot stamping specialist Kurz.

The label and packaging world is changing, markets are evolving faster, but one constant remains: hot stamping is the leading solution for high-class surface decoration in the graphic industry. No other transfer finishing method meets requirements for handling rough surfaces and for tactile designs with outstanding brilliance and durability.

The benefits of hot stamping include: designs with high-gloss, diffractive and tactile effects; high-speed processing; appropriate for a large variety of substrates; strong adhesion and durability; suitable for overprinting; and no priming or curing needed.

The Kurz foils used on this L&L cover were Light Line Laser Seamless / AL (for the '22') and Alufin 152 Matt Silver (for all other silver parts).

'We are really happy that two very special silver qualities have been chosen for the cover design, which in combination provide an exciting contrast and become a real eye-catcher,' says Elke Andersch, marketing manager packaging and print at Kurz. 'With the Alufin 152 Matt Silver, a cool, distinct accent is set - and quite the opposite, the exciting Light Line Laser Seamless / AL brings a shimmering diffractive and shiny effect into play that could hardly make the contrast more exciting!'

Continues Andersch, 'It also shows that "silver" is not just "silver" - and even if you focus on the Kurz silver product line Alufin, you will quickly realize that with the most diverse degrees of gloss, you can also achieve quite different grace and effects. Be it with matt-gloss combinations, or with matt - and at the same time glossy diffractive effects - the creative scope is almost limitless.

'If you play with the substrate, you can also create further exciting creative solutions with the material and the versatile and almost countless effects. That's "just" silver, but Kurz's playground extends almost to infinity: from a multitude of gold and colored possibilities to surprising single images and glittering endless diffractive effects to pigmented and even semi-transparent transfer products.'

The hot stamping dies were provided by Hinderer + Mühlich (H&M), whose latest development is nano-embossing that enables the design of new patterns, flows, satin finish, photographic effects and more.



ePac Flexible Packaging adds Vancouver and Montreal locations

ePac Flexible Packaging expands in Canada

Flex pack converter details plans to add Vancouver and Montreal locations

ePac Flexible Packaging, a short and medium run-length flexible packaging specialist, has confirmed plans for a third sales and manufacturing location in Canada.

Adding to operations in Vancouver and Toronto, ePac Montreal will serve customers throughout Quebec province.

ePac is one of the first and largest flexible packaging companies globally based on digital printing technology, offering a full complement of printing, laminating, and pouch-making services. It helps small, and medium-size brands grow and compete with large manufacturers.

'Since opening ePac Vancouver in 2019 and Toronto in 2021, demand for our services has grown rapidly,' commented George Boustani, managing director of ePac's Canadian operations.'

'To keep pace, we've decided to add a new sales and production facility - ePac Montreal. In fact, we are now accepting orders in Quebec and fulfilling them from our other Canadian operations until the Montreal site officially opens.'

UPM Raflatac to turn label waste into building insulation

UPM Raflatac, Inosence Polyol Oy and Finnfoam have built a collaboration model that will turn PET plastic label liner waste collected through UPM Raflatac RafCycle recycling service forms a waste stream, which is difficult to recycle.

Now this label liner waste can be processed into a raw material in a process developed by Inosence Polyol, which Finnfoam then uses as a raw material for polyisocyanurate or FF-PIR insulation.

About 80 percent of the backing materials for self-adhesive labels are paper and there are established processes for recycling them. The remaining 20 percent are PET-based films with an extremely thin layer of silicone applied to the plastic.

These fractions are difficult to separate, and therefore this PET plastic backing films have in the past ended up being mainly incinerated.

UPM Raflatac collects PET-based film waste from its customers and end users. Inosence Polyol Oy utilizes the waste collected for the production of polyol.

UPM Raflatac's material flow guarantees a steady supply of raw materials for the production of polyol.

News



Syracuse Label and Macaran Printed Products merge, partner with OPM Group

Independent US label converters merge

Syracuse Label & Surround Printing, Macaran Printed Products and W.N. Van Alstine unite, and partner with UK-based OPM Group.

The respective boards of directors from Syracuse Label & Surround Printing, Macaran Printed Products and W.N. Van Alstine have recently approved a merger agreement.

The new organization will provide enhanced development and manufacturing capabilities, incorporating state-of-the-art label technologies along with improved economies of scale.

The new business will be led by industry veterans Nick Van Alstine (Macaran/Van Alstine) and Kathy Alaimo (Syracuse) operating as co-CEOs, with Tom Sargent as president.

The merger brings together three strong, industry-leading label and packaging companies who share common cultures, common causes, and common goals. Both companies are 100 percent employee-owned. Driven by industry consolidation, both organizations found themselves in similar circumstances as the competitive landscape has shifted around them. The merger will create an organization with greater scale, capacity and capability, bringing additional value to the customers and markets it serves.

The merger will create a new organization with three facilities, 165,000 sqft of manufacturing space, 175 full-time employee owners and 65M USD in sales. It also brings together a C-suite leadership team with decades of proven experience in the industry.

A critical aspect of the merger is the continued development and support of the Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP). The ESOP ownership structure was adopted by Syracuse Label & Surround Printing in 2007 and Macaran/Van Alstine in 2017.

In addition, effective December 31, 2022, both Alaimo and Van Alstine will retire and assume roles as co-chairs of the board of directors. Sargent will assume the CEO position effective January 1, 2023. This announcement is the culmination of a well-planned and orderly succession process to ensure the continued success of the organization.

Meanwhile, the newly formed companies have partnered with UK-based OPM group to bring the latter company's patented Thicker Label Closure (TLC) technology for wet wipe products to the US market.

TLC gives brand owners an opportunity to replace rigid plastic flip-top closure systems with semi-rigid pressure sensitive label technology. The solution optimizes product sustainability, maximizes pack functionality, allows for better brand continuity and lowers cost. In addition, it enhances ease of use and delivers a better overall user experience to the consumer.

TLC is ideal for a wide range of markets including healthcare, cosmetics, mother and baby, household, pets, veterinary, automotive and industrial.

To support the venture, a new 10-color Nilpeter FA22UV flexo press will be installed at the Syracuse site, in New York. With capabilities such as line and process color printing, outer surface and sub surface printing and specialty foil embellishments, the press will be operational later this year. Additionally, a 12-color 22-inch FA line Nilpeter machine will be installed at OPM's Leeds facility.

News in brief

All4Labels marks 25 years of using HP

All4Labels Global Packaging Group has completed 25 years of using HP digital printing technology. To celebrate, the two companies have signed off the extension of the Master Global Agreement for five additional years.

The celebration of this strategic milestone took place at the All4Labels Site at Trittau with an entire day dedicated to the latest digital printing technologies starting from the development of the first digital printing machines installed 25 years ago at All4Labels.

Mondi's pouches show effective sorting

Mondi has conducted a series of tests to prove its mono-material polypropylene (PP) pouches and rollstock materials can be sorted into appropriate recycling streams. Implemented in collaboration with the National Test Centre Circular Plastics (NTCP) in the Netherlands, the tests, replicated real-life scenarios and proved that Mondi's top web and thermoformed semi-rigid trays are successfully sorted into the correct recycling stream.

Mondi's pre-made pouches were also detected accurately, setting the standard for sorting streams that still need to be developed throughout Europe, supporting high-quality input for plastic recycling processes.

Gallus to be carbon neutral by end of 2022

Gallus has pledged to make its products carbon neutral by the end of 2022. The company has partnered with climate specialist, Forliance to offset the remaining emissions from its production process and help achieve its target within an ambitious timeline.

The company's first project objective is to explore how its presses are manufactured and calculate the related carbon emissions. Gallus then plans to compensate for the resulting emissions, adhering to the gold standard offsetting program. At the same time, a team is driving the company's de-carbonization through increased energy efficiency and the use of renewable energies to reduce scope 1 and 2 emissions.

News



Fujifilm Imaging Colorants expands in the US

Fujifilm Imaging Colorants opens facility in Delaware

Fujifilm Imaging Colorants has opened its first of two new facilities in New Castle, Delaware dedicated to the production of aqueous ink inkjet dispersions

The New Castle site is Fujifilm's first dispersion manufacturing facility in the US. The new facility, a \$19M USD investment, will create more than 21 new professional, managerial, engineering and skilled labor jobs. The newly-added space, at approximately 8,100 sqft, includes state-of-the-art manufacturing and process control equipment, adding to the current 40,000 sqft of occupied manufacturing space at the site, which employs 90 people.

Fujifilm's high purity reactive dispersant (RxD) pigment dispersion products are important to the development of aqueous inkjet inks for a variety of fast-growing inkjet markets, including packaging, textile, and commercial printing. They use a proprietary cross-linking technology to lock each pigment particle in a secure polymer cage, resulting in a highly stable dispersion that enables the design of ink formulations that can meet demanding performance requirements.

Fujifilm supplies aqueous inks to digital printer OEMs and RxD pigment dispersions to ink formulators.

In addition to this new facility, the construction of a second facility, which will add 11,000 sqft of new operational space to the overall site, began this spring and is expected to be operational by summer 2023. Upon completion, the two plants will double Fujifilm's production capacity of pigment dispersions in the U.S. to meet the fast-growing demand for inkjet printing globally.

Fujifilm leadership, employees and community partners were joined at the celebratory opening event with remarks given by the Lieutenant Governor of Delaware and the Mayor of New Castle, Delaware, and President of the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce.

Avery Dennison joins forces with Wiliot

Avery Dennison and Wiliot, one of the Internet of Things pioneers, have partnered to create a new era of IoT that benefits people and the planet.

Avery Dennison will leverage its R&D capabilities and scale to design and manufacture second-generation Wiliot tags, stamp-sized computers powered by Bluetooth that attach to any product or packaging to embed it with intelligence and connectivity to create more agile, profitable, and sustainable supply chains.

In addition, Avery Dennison will integrate Wiliot sensing services (SaaS) with its atma.io connected product cloud, enabling tag sensing information to be added to the end-to-end item-level data of a connected product. Both companies share a vision for the future of the IoT, where almost everything is connected to the internet, with an ambition to help eliminate waste and provide unparalleled transparency and consumer connection. The partnership will help scale the manufacturing capacity of Wiliot tags and leverage Avery Dennison's market development, innovation, and ROI expertise to drive value and enable the company to deliver on large projects to some of the world's largest retail, food, beverage, and pharmaceutical brands.

Inovar secures investment from Kelso & Company

Inovar Packaging Group, a full-service provider of pressure-sensitive labels, shrink sleeves and flexibles packaging, has announced that funds managed by Kelso & Company have acquired a majority interest in the company.

Inovar was previously a portfolio company of AEA Investors. The existing management team, led by executive chairman and CEO Jeff Brezek, will continue to lead the company and remain significant owners alongside Kelso.

Arden Software expands operations in Asia

The packaging software firm has relocated its Asian arm of the business from the former office in Delhi, India, to larger complex in Hyderabad, India, marking the next stage of the company's global expansion plans.

Arden Software, headquartered in Manchester, UK, specializes in CAD and CAM software for the print and packaging sector.

The company now employs more than 60 people around the world and has offices in the UK, Denmark, Germany, India and the US.

Digimarc partners with Sealed Air

The two companies partnered to bring product digitization to markets like food proteins, e-commerce fulfillment, industrials, and consumer goods at scale through smart packaging.

According to Digimarc, product digitization allows brands to maximize the value of every package to deliver on consumer demands for authenticity, sustainability, and personalized experiences. Read more on Page 71.

Labelco becomes part of Optimum Group

The addition of Labelco fits well within the European growth ambitions of Optimum Group and will expand its presence in Denmark. With the acquisition of 100 percent of the shares, the group becomes a player with large international customers which focus on food safety. Together the group now consists of 18 member companies in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Denmark, with each company having its product and market combination.

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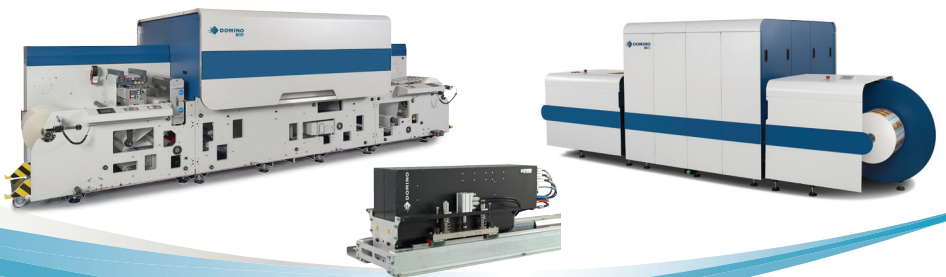
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New Products

01



03

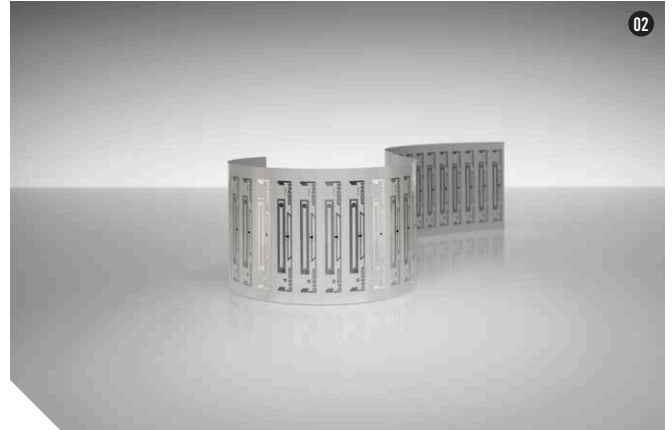


01 AccurioLabel 400 press
Konica Minolta

The new press is aimed at mid- to high-volume label converters. It features new developments such as the ability to expand applications with white toner, improved productivity with print speeds of up to 40m/min, and further running cost reductions thanks to more durable parts, as well as enhanced print quality. It is available in 4- and 5-color options. With a main scan capability at 1,200 DPI (equivalent of 3,600 DPI), the AccurioLabel 400 single-pass toner press prints on paper widths up to 330mm or 250mm. Multiple touch panel monitors in three different areas of the label press enable intuitive operation and ease of use for operators, eliminating the need for extensive user training. Tasks that were time-consuming on analogue machines can be performed quickly and accurately in delivering stable printing quality, says the company.

02 Dual-frequency RFID inlay
Avery Dennison

The new AD Slim DF EM4425 tag is designed for logistics, medical and industrial use while also offering customer engagement features. Based on Avery Dennison's dual frequency product line, the inlay operates in both HF and UHF RFID frequency ranges. Dual-frequency provides shared memory functionality, which allows both UHF and HF protocols to update product information in real time. This enables all-in-one tool for inventory management and product authentication, enabling a consistent customer experience regardless of channel. Customers can use the inlay's RFID technology to establish an inventory and supply chain management system. The extended read ranges of UHF enable opportunities in warehouse management, tracking valuable goods and returnable transport item use cases.



02

04



03 Activ Hybrid UV LED retrofit system
Fujifilm

The new UV LED curing system can be installed on new presses or retrofitted to existing equipment by label and packaging converters. The system combines the latest UV LED curing technologies with Fujifilm's ink expertise to improve label production on narrow web presses. It enables traditional UV or water-based flexo presses to be converted to UV LED curing. The system's hybrid design has the added benefit of conventional UV Arc capability, arming printers with the option to also print with specifically developed and unique conventional UV inks.

04 SurePress L-4733AW and L-6534VW
Epson

The two new additions to Epson's label portfolio offer higher print quality, consistency and flexibility, says Epson. The SurePress L-4733AW builds on the success of its predecessor, the L-4533AW.

Virtually automatic, requiring no manual cleaning of the printhead surface, the new press is primed for unattended printing. With the optional SureSpectro AS-4000 in-line spectrometer for real-time automated measurements to speed profiling and ensure consistent output for multi-plant networks, the L-4733AW can deliver accurate spot colors and gradients required for brand-quality color prime labels and packaging. The SurePress L-6534VW with orange ink uses CMYK with standard high-opacity white ink plus orange to widen the color gamut using the minimum colors required. It can offer up to 92 percent Pantone coverage certification within Delta E of 1.5,1.

eXact 2 X-Rite

The eXact 2 is said to be the first color measurement device that connects to a full ecosystem of software tools, including InkFormulation

New Products



software, ColorCerts suite for print quality control, PantoneLive digital color libraries, NetProfiler for device optimization, and the new X-Rite Link fleet management platform for real-time insight into device performance.

05 INXFlex Contour
INX International Ink
 INX's latest development is a UV and LED dual cure flexo ink designed to help produce distinctive shrink sleeve labels for brand owners. It follows the introduction of Genesis GS washable label ink, a recycle-friendly product that recently added a new flexo version and UV curable primer that makes INXFlex Contour washable too. 'In addition to high performance capabilities, these colorful and vibrant inks were carefully designed to address pertinent brand owner issues including efficiency and sustainability,' says Renee Schouten, INX's VP of marketing.

06 Sitexco Label L10
Eaglewood Technologies
 The new laser anilox cleaning system is designed using Sitexco technology and is specifically for narrow web printers. Cleaning times are between five and 15 minutes with no water or chemicals needed and no waste produced, thereby benefitting sustainability initiatives. It is a lightweight, desktop machine that will deep clean any ink chemistry: water-based, energy curable (UV/LED), solvent-based, adhesives, varnishes and coatings.

07 Temperature-logging label
Toppan
 The thin, card-sized temperature logger label enables temperature to be measured and recorded at regular intervals and data to be sent to a database via wireless networks. Toppan plans to supply it at less than one-tenth of the cost of existing temperature logger devices. When attached to freight, Toppan's temperature logger label automatically records

the surface temperature at an interval set by the shipper using UHF or NFC. Log data (record of date, time, temperature) from shipment to the final destination or a given point on the route, which is read using a dedicated app, and traceability data from the reading location are sent to a cloud-based management system to facilitate chronological tracking and management of temperature changes during transportation.

08 Quantum Jet 333
Gulmen Digital
 The Australian manufacturer has launched an industrial label printer developed to answer the growing demand for high-quality printing and faster turnarounds. The 13in (330mm) printing system leverages Colordyne's ChromaPlex LT aqueous pigment inkjet engine to offer a high-speed, high-resolution print for short-run labels and tags. The company views the new system as

suitable for printers in the consumer products space and businesses looking to reduce costs by offloading work from their flexo presses without sacrificing the quality of the printed product.

Clear shrink film
Innovia Films
 Innovia Films has launched RayoWrap CMS clear BOPP film for shrink and wraparound label applications. The CMS30 provides high shrinkage, but only in the machine direction, making it suitable for labeling contoured drinkable dairy and beverage containers. This film is perfect for use on small PP or PE bottles, as it can be easily removed to aid recycling of the bottle, or the whole labeled container can be recycled in a polyolefin stream.



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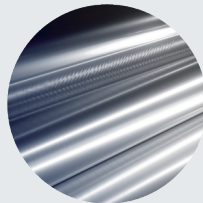
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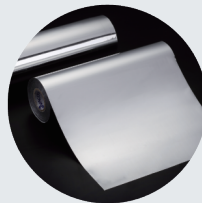
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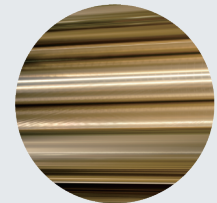
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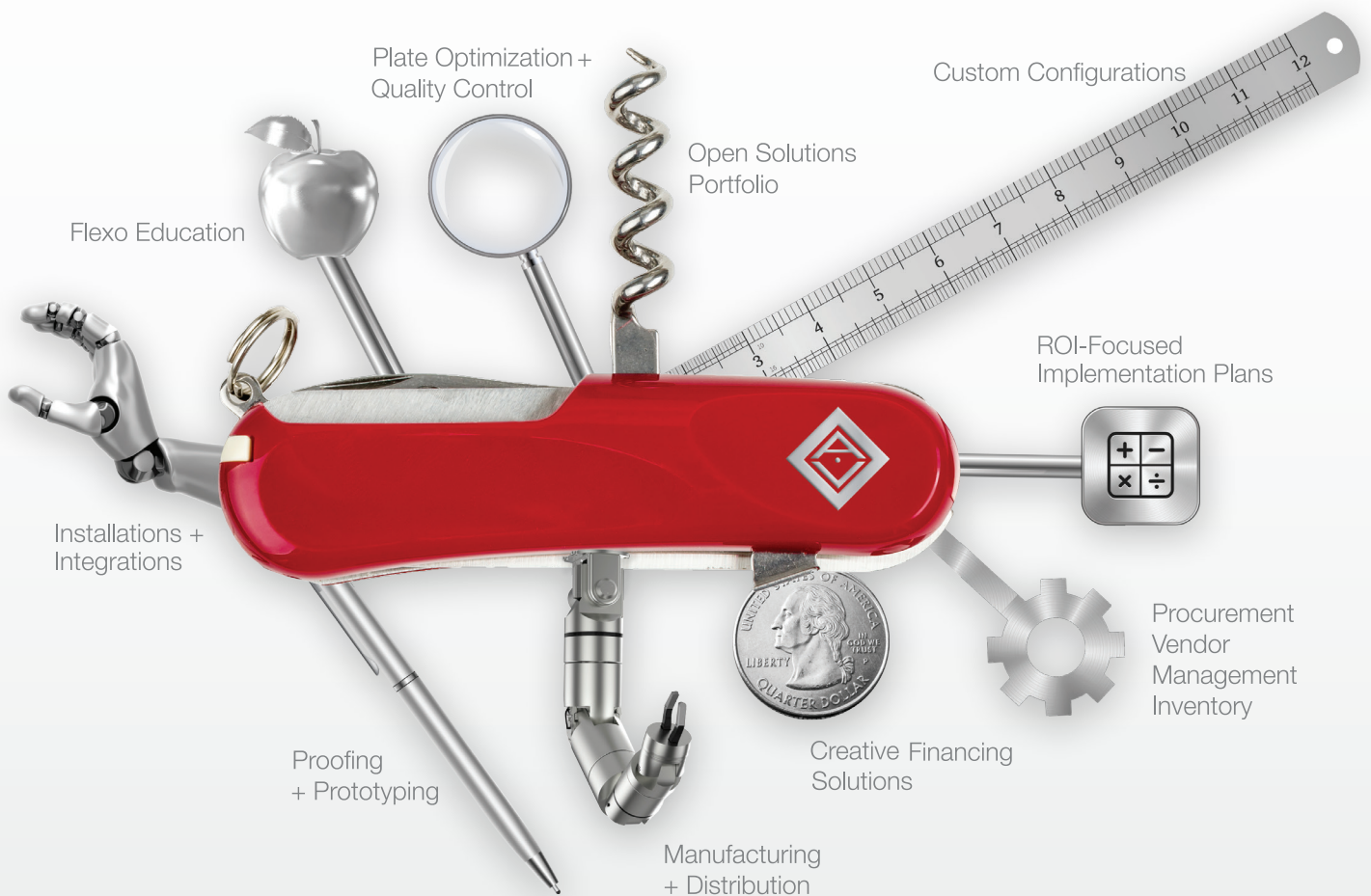


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Installations



01 HP Indigo 6K
MCC Label, USA
 MCC, headquartered in Chicago, has added the HP Indigo 6K digital press into the company's existing fleet. Dieter Maes, vice president global marketing and sales at MCC, said: 'MCC are privileged to have worked with HP indigo for more than 20 years. Over the last few years, with beta-testing and innovation, we have found HP to be a great partner that has supported us to achieve massive company growth. Any expansion with our applications and our offers to customers relies on this partnership and HP has proven to go above and beyond in its approach.'

Lemorau ICR 330
Nutech Labels, India
 Nutech Labels, a division of Nutech Security Printers with 38 years of experience in the label and packaging market, has installed a Lemorau ICR 330 inspection slitter rewinder.

02 Heidelberg Speedmaster XL106+6+LYYY
Viappiani Printing, Italy
 Viappiani says the investment in the Heidelberg Speedmaster press is part of a plan for growth which in recent years has significantly increased turnover and profit, despite the pandemic and the raw material crisis. The increased production capacity will aid Viappiani's production for a gradual normalization of lead-times.

03 Nilpeter FB line
Silver Fox, UK
 The UK-based converter has acquired its first Nilpeter press complete with a LED UV system. The company manufactures high-grade cable, wire and equipment labeling products used in a range of industrial sectors around the world. Nicholas Michaelson, managing director, said: 'This new machine, coupled with our increasingly knowledgeable and skillful local workforce, will allow us to

further support and enhance our growing network of distributors across the globe. Additionally, these new production capabilities will enable us to be even more responsive to customer needs, as well as open up the opportunity to develop new and innovative label types, for use with our Fox-in-a-Box labeling kit.'

04 Mark Andy Digital Pro 3
Emmedue, Italy
 Emmedue has installed the first Mark Andy Digital Pro 3 hybrid press in Italy to extend its production capabilities and grow its export markets. It is the company's first digital press dedicated to roll-fed printing. It is expected to help with market expansion and production diversification to the beverage and wine labeling sectors. 'Digital printing is an integral and essential part of every label converter's plan to grow and develop its business,' said Maurizio Maffioli, owner of Emmedue. 'It improves customer

service, especially on shorter run jobs that need variable text and graphics. We see the Digital Pro 3 as the perfect solution for our current and future needs.'

Dantex PicoJet 330S
ModTek, USA
 US-based converter ModTek has installed a PicoJet 330s, a hybrid label press manufactured by Dantex, to increase its production capacity. With the success of its first Dantex PicoColour digital label press installed in November 2020, ModTek partnered up with Dantex again and installed the second digital press in April 2022. 'The PicoColour is an excellent entry-level machine, and it does everything that we need,' said Shawn Borman, owner of ModTek. 'The inks are highly durable and the press is very user-friendly. We did, however, quickly realize that we needed more throughput. The PicoJet 330s is significantly more comprehensive, three times the speed of the PicoColour, and has superb print quality. In certain

Installations

05



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areas, we can complete 40 hours of work from the PicoColour in about 10 hours on the PicoJet.'

Polar finishing equipment
Grün Gedruckt, Germany

The Germany-based media house has installed a second-hand Polar N115 XT cutter and Transomat uploader, in line with its sustainability approach, lowering carbon footprint and climate-neutral operations.

05 Screen Truepress Jet L350UV SAI S Hickman Label Company, USA

Screen has sold its 200th Truepress Jet L350 printer. The machine, a Truepress Jet L350UV SAI S, was sold to Hickman Label Company of Lebanon, Tennessee. This technology for printing labels was first unveiled in 2014, with the launch of the Truepress Jet L350UV, followed by later models the Truepress Jet L350UV+, Truepress Jet L350UV+LM, and the current

Truepress Jet L350UV SAI S. The Truepress Jet L350UV SAI series offers printing speeds up to 60 m/min. It allows for seven colors with the option of an additional functional ink.

06 Edale FL1 Prime Kingfisher Labels, UK

The recent investment, a 6-color, 350mm Edale FL1 Prime press, features preregistration and Edale's unique Uniprint technology, ensuring optimal print geometry to produce the highest quality print possible. Jobs can be set in just one web length of material using the job storage feature. Further innovations such as the open architecture of the inking system enable rapid changeovers and precise control over color management.

Vinsak digital embellishment system
Classique Labels & Packaging, UAE

The UAE-based converter has installed a Vinsak digital

embellishment system on a Lombardi Digistar finishing line. The embellishment machine is a hybrid of the inkjet systems from Vinsak and the Digistar from Lombardi of Italy. The inkjet systems include a 330mm monochrome VIS1200K UV system capable of printing QR codes, versioning and high-quality images up to 600 DPI.

07 Xelikon CX300 White Graphics, USA

The new press will be placed in White Graphics' new facility in Naperville, Illinois, which will be fully operational by early fall 2022. 'The new facility will enable all White Graphics to be under one roof – which will increase our workflow and productivity as we can place complementary equipment in one area, rather than separated into three areas as we are now,' commented Andrew White, president of White Graphics. 'Printing and finishing will be in one line. And our new Xelikon CX300 will really

enhance the overall productivity of our operation.'

08 Landa S10 Nanographic press Essentra Packaging, UK

The multinational packaging specialist in the healthcare, personal care and beauty industries has invested in a new Landa press for its Bradford site, marking the first installation of the machine in the packaging industry in the UK. Andrew Hopkins, general manager UK and Ireland, said: 'At Essentra, we've never been afraid to break new ground and find innovative ways to add value for our customers. Our investment in the Landa S10 press at our Bradford production site is the latest example of how we're building one of the most solid all-round offerings in the pharmaceutical, personal care and beauty packaging industries.'



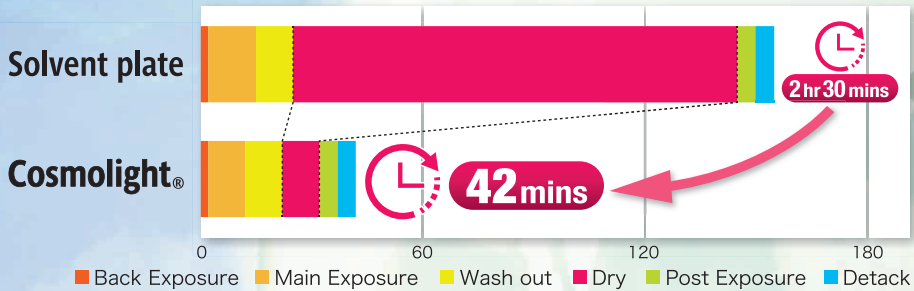
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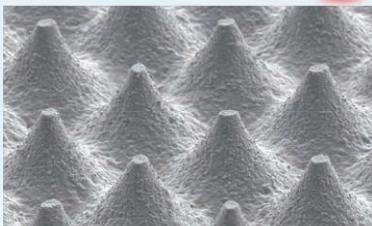
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01 Cabas, Greece
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02 Group A: marketing /
end-uses

02 First winner
Marzek
Etiketten+Packaging, Austria
Côtes du Rhône

03 Second winner

Çiftsan Label & Packaging
Company, Turkey
Alqaissi grill spices

Group B: Printing Processes

04 Kuresa, Peru
Body Spa Conditioner



**Group C:
Non-adhesive applications**

06 First winner

IPE Industria Gráfica, Spain
Nightology Sachet

06 Second winner

Stratus Packaging, France
Champagne Christian Senez
Evenementielle

**Group D: Innovation
and electronic printing**

**07 Schreiner Group,
Germany**

Robust RFID-Label

**Group E:
Digital printing**

08 Cabas, Greece

Gerolemo – Maratheftiko Sweet

Judges Award

**09 Multi-Color
Corporation, Australia**

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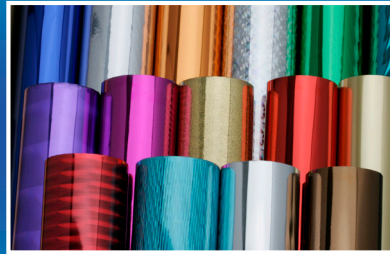
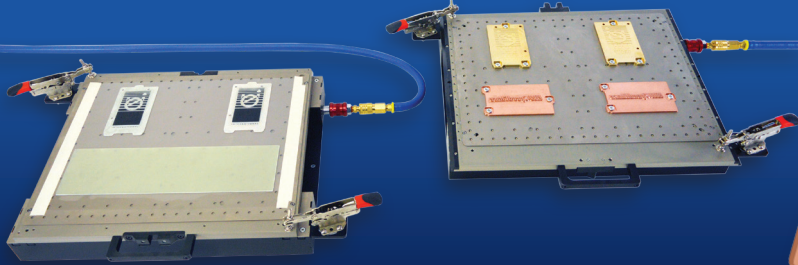


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The Mike Fairley column

Investing for the future

Labelexpo Americas provides a perfect opportunity to future-proof your business

With Labelexpo Americas almost upon us, those converters planning to attend will no doubt have already been thinking about what materials, technology and software they will need to look at with a view to enhancing their ability to cost-effectively produce the optimum label quality, reliability and performance.

With everything that has happened over the past couple of years, planning and investment decisions may well be different today to any of the converters' pre-planned short- or medium-term pre-pandemic or rising inflation requirements. Labelexpo Americas therefore provides a golden opportunity to re-set the future and transform your converting business with quality performance, reliability and cost-effective technology and materials investment.

But where to start? There is little doubt that managing automation of pre-press and color workflows – in many cases across digital and conventional press technology – is becoming a critical factor in increasing quality, quality checks and offloading tasks to automated software and, thereby, increasing throughput without the need to increase employee numbers. That certainly sounds like a good place to start.

Continuing with the automation theme, and the need to increase overall quality, speed and service, then end-to-end software solutions for the whole value chain – from sales, estimating, job management, ordering, stockholding, planning, costing, invoicing and shipping – have become more of a necessity than a luxury today. And it's not just the initial investment; software modules change and improve and updated software is developed, so keeping up-to-date with the latest in MIS should be important for show visitors. There are also an increasing number of specialized and niche software packages that are worth keeping an eye on.

Automated future

Uncertain about what the future holds? Then why not attend the conference session and panel discussion on day one on what the automated future looks like. There are also a number of interesting master classes on a range of different topics.

As usual with a Labelexpo show, new and updated presses – conventional, digital inkjet and toner, as well as hybrid – are to the fore. Quality, performance and output speeds of digital presses continues to evolve and there are now digital presses available for almost any kind of end-use application and performance requirement. Use Labelexpo to review the latest models, and see them running. Compare performance between different presses, and with the latest flexo technology, and plan the next investment wisely.

It is not just the presses themselves that need to be looked at during a visit to Labelexpo. Automation of unwinds and rewinds can aid profitability performance, while the latest print inspection systems today provide a guarantee of perfect results, prevent costly customer rejections and deliver impressive returns on investment. Considerations that few converters can afford to ignore. Make sure

“Labelexpo Americas provides a golden opportunity to re-set the future and transform your converting business”

these opportunities are on the expo visit wish list.

Laser cutting technology has come a long way in recent years, with the latest systems offering zero make-ready, no tooling, no particular operator experience needed, and all working in conjunction with any MIS that allows fully automatic workflow. If you haven't considered digital laser cutting before, then maybe it's worth a look.

What about added-value finishing options? Foiling, embossing and varnishing have been used for many years, but some of the latest finishing technologies are definitely worth investigating. Rotary screen for example, now has possibilities for tactile images, textured varnishes, hot foil imitations, scratch and sniff labels and printed self-adhesive patterns.

Inkjet production also has the potential today to create specialized effects, including combinations of textures and colors, virtually unlimited designs, together with metallic color simulation using CMYK and white ink. Exciting added-value solutions can work to create additional profitability. So too, are some of the new brand protection and security printing solutions.

Want to diversify into related narrow and mid-web opportunities? Then what about the production of small folding cartons for the pharmaceutical or health and beauty markets, perhaps the growing applications for shrink sleeves or maybe flexible packaging. Particularly if it's work for the same brands or customers that already source their labels from you. All the necessary technologies, inks, materials and knowledge can be found at Labelexpo.

So, with just a short time to go before the show opens, now is the time to finalize that list of things to see and investigate, who to talk to, what conference session or master class to attend, agree what budget is being proposed for investment, how many members of the team will go to Labelexpo, and what information, ideas or proposals each of them needs to bring back for final discussion.

Make sure to get the most out of the time spent at the show, meet old colleagues, friends, customers, suppliers or association members and, above all, enjoy the Labelexpo experience and once again marvel at what an incredible industry the label and narrow web sector has become.



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

Leverage HP Indigo Technology in the Shrink Sleeve Revolution

A Booming Application

Shrink sleeves represents a third of the global labels market share after pressure sensitive and glue applied, bringing to market a full 360-degrees design flexibility on a variety of container geometries. Shrink sleeves application is an attractive proposition to brands and customers due to its aesthetic appeal, high flexibility of graphic and data presentation, high durability print, achieved by reverse print technology, and application compatibility to any container, material and shape.

A full coverage shrink sleeve may also be a more cost-effective and simplified option, compared to traditional product labels, by eliminating multiple label components from each pack and replacing them with a single solution. These advantages are turning shrink sleeves into the fastest growing label segment with a projected revenue of \$15.5Bn by 2026 (AWA 2021, Mordor Intelligence).

HP Indigo Digital Printing

Shrink sleeves leading printing technologies are set in gravure and flexo. Digital print focuses mostly on short runs, craft beers, product promotions and mock ups. The main advantages of digitally printing shrink sleeves with HP Indigo are the fast time to market, low set up cost, low waste, and the ability to print variable data. Hundreds of label converters are using their Indigo presses as their first step into shrink sleeves.

There are a host of key advantages for converters utilizing HP Indigo technology, notably:

- It is the only digital technology where the ink is dried on the blanket and not directly on the media, keeping heat sensitive media from uncontrolled shrinking.

- The technology enables ink order change on the fly – providing the ability to print the white separation first or last depending on the application.
- A thin and flexible ink layer following the media shrink process without graphic distortion.
- An inline priming system to enable printing on a wide range of substrates.
- Finally, the ability to digitally

print with white ink. Premium White for Sleeves (PWFS) was specifically developed to provide a low friction surface for smooth converting, and 69% white opacity for a premium look. PWFS provides a dynamic coefficient of friction (COF) with a range of 0.15-0.3. This range suits manual and semi-automatic sleeving lines.

Leveraging HP Indigo Technology

Shrink sleeves application requires a deep knowledge and experience in selecting the right materials and





processes according to customers' needs and capabilities. Two types of converters can be identified as a good fit to begin digital shrink sleeves:

1. Pressure sensitive label converters who own a narrow web HP Indigo 6x00 press can jump start their 100% digital shrink sleeves journey by using the PWFS to cater for the needs of small brands, short runs, campaigns and more. This process is a good fit for producing shrink sleeves without investing in coating process

equipment to achieve a low friction surface. Cambridge Label, an experienced PSL producer for more than 20 years, has diversified their portfolio by adding shrink sleeves to their digital product offerings. Sheldon Hubbs, Cambridge Label's Business Development Manager, stated that the company has successfully taken advantage of HP Indigo's features in creating a wide range of short to medium run products for various markets such as food and beverage, manufacturing, health and beauty, nutraceutical, household products,

healthcare and many more. Cambridge Label takes pride in offering industry leading quality at a quick turnaround time.

Once gaining enough experience, these converters can advance to mid volume sleeves production using fast automatic lines with high performance requirements, such as specific COF values and high ink protection during the converting process. The mid web HP Indigo 25K, accompanied by an offline or inline coater is an efficient solution to allow a variety of functional needs for volume production.



2. Experienced sleeves players who can use the Indigo 6x00 with the PWFS to develop a profitable short run business and cater for the growing SMB segment, and then scale up with mid web HP Indigo 25K. Arca Sleeves, an Italian-based specialist in shrink sleeves application and a member of Arca Group, use the HP Indigo 6800 digital press for their fully digital sleeves production with the new PWFS. This has allowed them to create a new portfolio of short runs and multiple SKUs for their new and existing brands and increase the efficiency of their flexo machines to produce long runs.



HP Indigo work in close collaboration with partners such as Karlville, AB Graphics and Prati to provide optimized end-to-end proven solutions, which utilize the performance of HP's technologies. Our technologies provide shrink sleeves production opportunities for pressure sensitive label converters who wants to diversify their business and for sleeves experts to develop their digital business.

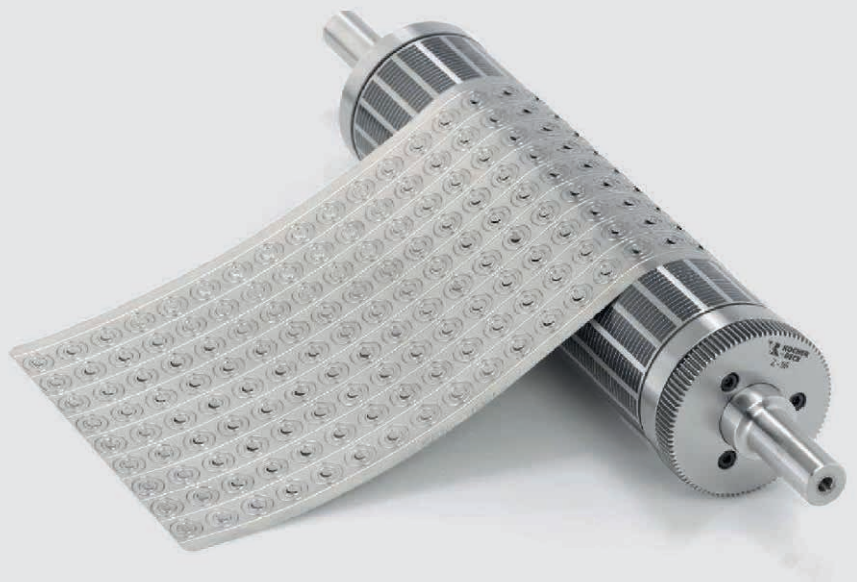
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The Andy Thomas-Emans column

Industry founders develop digital for the smaller converter

In many ways, this edition of Labels & Labeling represents a turning point in the digital debate. Gallus, one of the founders and titans of the conventional narrow web industry, has publicly announced a new mission: to lead the 'digital transformation' of the labels industry with the launch of a standalone digital press with no inline converting units.

Gallus already has a hybrid digital press, of course, the LabelFire, but this is positioned as the company's 'Rolls Royce' at the top end of the market, along with all the inline options one would expect from a top-of-the-line flexo press.

The revelation about Gallus' new digital press, the Gallus One, is that it targets the mid-market sector. It is a standalone press without any inline options, with finishing envisaged as near line on a separate converting machine.

Up to now, the conventional press manufacturers have targeted primarily the higher-end market with their hybrid inkjet-flexo presses. But the new Gallus press is aimed specifically at the smaller converter looking to replace legacy flexo or letterpress machines. It also has enough advanced features inherited from the LabelFire, such as automatic missing nozzle compensation, to attract elite converters looking to populate multiple sites with digital presses.

In another major cultural shakeup, Gallus stresses that the hardware specifications are less important than placing the digital press inside an ecosystem that links it to wider factory management systems. It is no longer about training skilled operators but automating and de-skilling the actual print process. The skills move to the front end of the process, but even here, much can be automated. Here, Gallus plugs into partner Heidelberg's existing Prinect workflow.

A similar story can be told about Mark Andy's announcement that it will integrate Konica Minolta's latest Accurio digital print engine in a new generation of Digital Pro presses.

While Mark Andy has the high end covered with its Digital Series HD hybrid press, the company was probably the first of the conventional press manufacturers to recognize that a new machine concept was required to tackle the smaller-to-mid sector of the converter market. This led to the development and launch of the Digital One press, which was built around a 4-color toner-based print engine and basic onboard converting.

This can be seen as a continuation of Mark Andy's historical targeting of this market segment with flexo presses like the 830, 2200 and Scout. The company sees simple to operate 4-color toner presses as the direct successors to these machines.

The prize for targeting this part of the converter market is the legacy press base. Depending on which analysis you use, legacy flexo and letterpress machines make up between 40 to 50 percent of the installed narrow web press base across Europe and North

“Digital is the obvious way to replace legacy flexo presses, but high-end hybrid machines are often out of the question for companies with limited capital resources. This is the key target for the digital presses announced by Mark Andy and Gallus”

America. These machines are generally kept going because they have long been paid for and keep turning over a modest profit with little effort. However, they generally require skilled operators to set up and change over since there is little or no automation. And as we know, such operators are getting more and more scarce. The pandemic also demonstrated the need to de-skill the print process to avoid having key personnel out of action and bringing press lines to a halt.

Digital is the obvious way to replace these presses, but high-end hybrid machines are often out of the question for companies with limited capital resources. This is the key target for the digital presses announced by Mark Andy and Gallus.

Before leaving the subject, it is worth noting that Omet has proved the exception to this trend with the launch of its mid-market KFlex flexo press platform. Interviewed by this writer, Omet CEO Antonio Bartesaghi said Omet believes label converters prefer flexo to digital - provided flexographic technology continues to progress towards 'set and forget,' where machines can be operated by semi-skilled labor assisted by basic automation and machine intelligence. Omet has developed a new way of manufacturing the KFlex platform more efficiently, making it extremely cost competitive in its target market.

It should also be noted that neither Gallus nor Mark Andy has abandoned flexo press development. It is a question of which features and at which price-point flexo works against digital in the small-to-mid sector of the converter market.



To learn more about these developments, visit [Labelexpo Americas](http://LabelexpoAmericas.com) in September. www.labelexpo-americas.com

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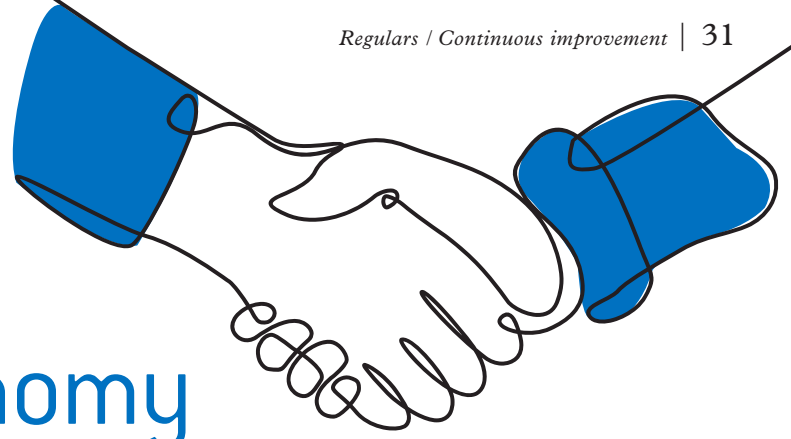
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Leading through a changing economy



In the changing market landscape, the importance of culture is a topic gaining attention, writes Paul Brauss

My best experience in the label and packaging industry included being part of a leadership team that expressed a genuine interest in learning how to manage the company with a process-centric approach to continuous improvement and cultural development.

The system expands on traditional manufacturing process improvement by including every business process step upstream and downstream in an organization. The results reduce cycle time, improve process yield, and enhance productivity. Using a holistic process approach as a central operation theme, we constructed a strategic path forward with CI (continuous improvement) at its core, allowing us to manage through three recessions, emerging with a stronger market position every time. The approach resonated with early career training and experiences and drove champions for change using the techniques. This experience was not my first, building a process-centric company. Before the label industry, I worked in the material handling equipment market in one of the most successful private equity market roll-ups. We successfully rolled up 11 companies in nine years, and I consider it an excellent private equity investment story. I've also had four other experiences with private equity that, while technically successful, were not so great.

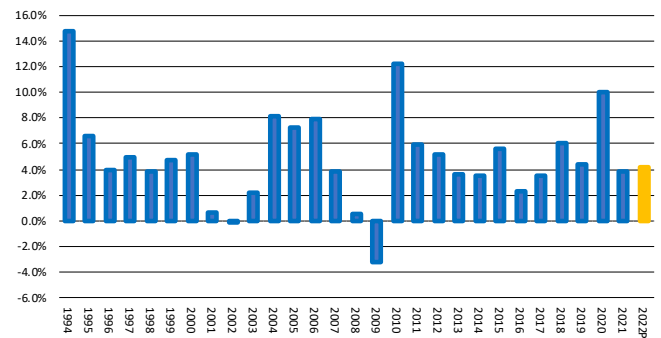
“Recent HR surveys identify that 43 percent of working Americans have considered looking for a new job”

The difference in approach was striking, and I see the same potential opportunity or pitfall in the label and packaging printing market segment as discussions increase about changing dynamics with private equity ownership in the sector. The customers will determine the actual outcome, and the converter business leaders will emerge with a story comparing ownership strategies. Rather than wait for the story to unfold, I'm hopeful the leader's teams and owners will focus on the cultural elements that make the ownership opportunities suitable for the market, the company and the employees, having experienced all sides of the ownership spectrum. If leaders are polarized but understand the need for cultural development, typically, it is because they are unsure of the first steps.

Attractive

The label and packaging printing market segment is attractive on many fronts to the investor or the entrepreneur. The market requires solution creativity because of the dynamics of packaging design and insight because of technology trends that can support the design trends. I started working in the industry 24 years ago and continue to be impressed with the people who have devoted their careers to improving it.

From a historical perspective, the attraction is easily seen:



Annual Label Market Growth

- The market is now 75 years old and resilient
- It has 12 years of consecutive growth
- It has grown in 26 of the last 28 years
- It remains entrepreneurial, with an estimated 2,000-2,200 label converters in North America

Mergers and acquisitions have been consistent for about 15 years, with an average of 27 converter acquisitions per year. Several investments in the past year included companies on their second, third and fourth turn with private equity. At the same time, we are seeing supplier consolidation that will also impact the market for the next several years. The label and package printing market is not the only segment that has evolved in this fashion. I believe Peter Drucker, the father of modern business management, identified the consolidation period in a market segment by describing the buyout firms as providing a needed function in the industry. He was clear to add then, and we can confirm today, that the proven path forward for private equity ownership requires financial-based restructuring and capacity consolidation that can be traumatic to the employees.

With private equity ownership now in its second, third and fourth turn, we have to acknowledge the ownership perspective and leadership view today must become longer term than in previous market consolidations – leading to a discussion on another key learning. Peter Drucker added to his statements that the most critical path to any company's true success, regardless of ownership, includes a culture managed for the long run. A company's governance needs to focus on long-term performance rather than short-term value fluctuations. I could not agree more.

The importance of culture is a topic gaining attention and a source for many conversations in the label and package printing market today. The availability of the workforce, the dynamics of the pandemic, and the 'great resignation' have amplified the discussion. Recent HR surveys identify that 43 percent of working Americans have considered looking for a new job. Wages are at the top of the list for reasons an individual leaves a company. They included health care benefits as part of the pay equation. Employees next express the company's need to provide a positive or uplifting work environment. It was clear that employers earn loyalty by helping

workers succeed. Another survey of business leaders identified over 70 percent report a positive culture is essential to a company's success. More than half of these business leaders surveyed (private equity and private-owned) indicate they do not evaluate or don't know how to evaluate culture, plus they do not have a plan to influence culture. Whether you have cultural improvement plans or not, the leaders' actions will impact the culture regardless. All companies operate with a system of values and procedures that drive culture. Values are guided by the experiences of the leaders, good and bad. Every company leader is thinking:

- Is the ownership in it for the long haul or the short flip?
- Are you thinking regional growth or national growth?
- Are your sales processes transactional or relationship?
- Is your company focused on cost-cutting or minimizing cost increases?
- Are you investing in employees for the long term, or are you under performance-intolerant?

Company culture is based on the paradigms of the people who lead, and the culture must evolve. Leaders must cause a change in the paradigm and fuel action that catalyzes change. Sustaining the cultural shift requires commitment, discipline and a measured visual approach.

My roots are in manufacturing, and as an industrial engineer, I was fortunate to have worked with great leaders who helped make sure the development of business solutions was holistic, by providing me opportunities to drive improvement through every department in a company. Often described as a change agent, my approach can seem intimidating to the uncommitted leader. My experiences began when American manufacturing performance was eclipsed by overseas competition, and many companies were more

“Many company leaders today have not led an organization through a recession or a time with rising interest rates”

interested in investing in LCC (low-cost country) sourcing. Investing in North American companies was seen as time-consuming and laborious work. Answering the challenge to increase productivity and enhance quality became a central mission, and learning a process approach that eliminated company silos became a focus. Yes, this commitment to continuous improvement does take time and is hard work. An organization that takes a holistic approach can turn the pledge into a fun, rewarding experience. During good economic times, the catalyst of change requires a firm, patient approach. During tough economic times, the catalyst for change is survival when there is no time for patience. The continuous improvement process has helped organizations I worked with in good economic times, but became indispensable when times were tough.

Looking to the future, many market indicators highlight growth for the converters but at a slightly lower annual rate. We know consumer confidence drives this growth. However, consumers can shift focus quickly, and while still needing many consumables, during economic turbulence there is sure to be reduced demand for durables. Revenue growth for converters does not translate equally to market segment growth for everyone, and recent pricing increases will mask real productive change. As the economy

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tightens and interest rates rise, equipment providers and production support products providers will see a retraction in opportunities before many others.

Converters experiencing significant competitive challenges will look for ways to reduce spending, driving further supplier retraction. With an industry demonstrating positive growth for so long, converters have not seen their currently defined market segment share challenged until recently, and not from another converter but from supply chain issues. The impact of raw material suppliers not delivering drove increased competitive quote activity. Sales experts will tell you there is nothing worse than having a customer head back to shopping the market, risking potential loss of orders. Buyers under extreme pressure, looking to satisfy end consumer demands, continue to get their product sourced no matter what and are willing to challenge long-standing vendor/supplier relationships to get it done. These buyers seek better support, quicker answers, and confidence in their supplier choice. This activity negatively impacts sales organizations' productivity and shop floor productivity as schedules move, causing issues with set-up, run times, and workforce planning. In the end, the converter must become more aggressive in their approach to a solution. Competitive threats will surface from many directions and only get more intense as the economic winds shift. Over time, raw material suppliers will remedy the supply problems. The new buyer converter relationships introduced during the shopping period could blossom with old relationships challenged, leaving owners to wonder if their current relationships can stand up to the new challengers.

Prepared

Many company leaders today have not led an organization through

a recession or a time with rising interest rates. They may not be prepared for the actions required in a slowing economy. These leaders are hesitant to commit to a focused cultural improvement initiative when this type of commitment is mandated.

The fighting advantage comes to the converter that understands the value proposition they provide. Determining how a company brings value to its customers is the first step in orchestrating a continuous improvement plan. If there is a gap in this understanding, then a leader may not have the best information for pointing the organization in the correct direction. I recommend that each converter refresh their perspective on what their customers truly value about the supplier-vendor relationship using in-person interviews with participants from shop floor management. This information, when translated, will become the compass directing a sustaining proposition for the organization's continuous improvement initiatives sustaining the relationship. The solutions required are sure to include a need for reduced lead times, improved quality process performance that insulates customers from problems, and productivity levels that yield a reasonable price. The champions will be the converter with an engaged leadership group that shifts the organization's paradigms to focus on continuous improvement as a process-centric and people concentrated in a culture designed to engage and fulfill employees.



Paul Brauss, former CEO of Mark Andy and a past board member of TLMI, is a consultant and executive coach. See Braussconsulting.com, and buy his book at amzn.to/2NFzXkB

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Hit or miss?

Branding & Design columnist Vicki Strull rounds up some recent packaging design hits and misses

There is nothing we label and packaging designers love more than discussing what makes a great design. We can go on for hours about typography, embellishments, color, brand story, product goals, sales drivers, convenience, sustainability – you name it. Such a discussion typically ends in declaring the packaging either a hit or a miss. I've rounded up some recent packaging hits and misses for those of you who have never been privy to such an exhilarating conversation. Feel free to share your thoughts (and your favorite hits or misses) on my LinkedIn profile.

1. Miller gives a whole new meaning to the word 'Lite'

As a vegetarian, I am by no means a barbecue expert. But I loved this new product and its packaging from Miller Brewing Company because it makes perfect sense. Introducing beer-infused charcoal that claims to turn 'Miller Time' into 'Griller Time.' While I am not their target market, it's clear that Miller totally gets their customer. Launched just before Memorial Day, Miller knows that summertime is beer time and grill time. From a design standpoint, this brand extension works. Miller Lite's packaging still uses its classic logo and typography, and yet it feels refreshing and lite-hearted (sorry, I couldn't resist!). It certainly stood out among all the classic black and red packaging on the charcoal aisle. Signs of a hit? The bags sold out as quickly as they could be re-shelved.



Miller Brewing Company introduced beer-infused charcoal that claims to turn 'Miller Time' into 'Griller Time'

2. Two-in-one packaging

Pepperidge Farm's Goldfish crackers and McCormick & Company's Old Bay seasoning teamed up for a limited-edition product that quickly sold out online and flew off the shelves when it rolled out to retail. The two brands came together because they discovered that people have been sprinkling Old Bay seasoning on Goldfish crackers for years as an appetizer delicacy. So, they reasoned, why not give people what they want?

The two-brands-in-one packaging certainly works. The bag is redesigned in Old Bay's signature colors of yellow, blue and orange and prominently features a large Goldfish logo.

That's smart; the design combines the two strongest elements of the separate brands into one very attractive bag while losing none of the brands' clout. I think this is a win-win.



Pepperidge Farm's Goldfish crackers and McCormick & Company's Old Bay seasoning teamed up for a limited edition product



Wesson oil has been around since 1899

3. Getting to the bottom of your product

Beauty products are notorious for pumps that makes it seem as if there is no more product in the bottle, but there definitely is. This one is my pet peeves! Last week, I cut open a bulk-size hair conditioner bottle, and scooped out four ounces of unused product. That's half of the contents of a regular-size bottle! Have you ever done this?

We should never have to cut open a bottle, a tube or any packaging to get all of the product that we paid for. That's just bad design. Not only that, it can be dangerous. Cutting open bottles and other packaging exposes products to the outside air and can speed up the oxidation of ingredients and promote the spread of bacteria.

4. Is Wesson's new look borderline boring or simply brilliant? Maybe both.

Wesson oil has been around since 1899, and according to independent retail data, it is America's best-selling plant-based cooking oil. After buying the brand from Conagra, Richardson International launched a rebranding that is inspired by Wesson's 123-year history yet feels fresh and current.

The packaging uses tri-colored labels and a soothing color palette; the rebrand colors correlate to each type of oil – canola, corn, vegetable, and best blend. The goal is to make it easy for shoppers to differentiate between the oils and pick the one they want. While the typography is not the same as Wesson's previous and somewhat famous logotype (created by the legendary Saul Bass in the 1960s), it certainly is keeping with the nostalgic font feel.

Certainly, the design is minimalistic. Do you think it works, or is it borderline boring? (Or both?) It's clean, easy to find and differentiate on the shelf; it maintains its heritage, gives a nod to the nostalgic, and is part of a media campaign to attract Millennial and Gen-Z cooks and chefs. With the rising cost of food, the timing could not be better.

Of course, the true test comes when sales numbers are measured. How do you think it will perform? Most importantly, does the rebrand make you want to give Wesson another look? Because, after all, that is the point – to look, touch, pick up and purchase, all in just a few seconds.

5. Bad packaging isn't just poor design – it can be dangerous!

I'm a big believer in responsible packaging. Design matters! Don't think so? Recently



Who Gives a Crap is a socially-conscious company based in Australia that sells 'ethically-made' toilet paper



Frito-Lay's Cracker Jack celebrates women in sports by creating Cracker Jill limited edition packaging

I saw what I thought was candy and a bottle of water. Wait a minute – that was not candy! Those were naphthalene balls (commonly known as moth balls), and their brand name is Swallow. How did that ever get approved? The transparent packaging made the bright-colored balls look like edible – NOT! And the 'water' bottle? That was actually clear glue! But it had a 'water splat.' Upon a closer look, that image is intended to inform customers that the glue is washable. Yikes! Complete confusion and it could be dangerous if ingested. Needless to say, these are examples of packaging design misses.

6. Designing a classic

Coca-Cola announced a huge brand shift earlier this year, re-designing the labels and packaging of its most popular soda flavors. Now every Coca-Cola flavor will have a new 'modernized' design meant to 'quickly communicate flavors,' according to the announcement in January. For example, single colors represent a single flavor (like Cherry Coke), while two-color designs represent flavor combinations (like Cherry Vanilla Coke). White logos mean a beverage is a regular, full-calorie flavor, while black logos mean the product is zero sugar, zero-calorie. So does the rebrand work for you, or do you prefer the 'classic' branding? (Pun intended!)

7. Who Gives a Crap?

Who gives a crap? Well, it turns out, this toilet paper company does. According to its mission statement, Who Gives a Crap is a socially-conscious company based in Australia that sells 'ethically-made toilet paper aiming to change consumption patterns and raise funds for sanitation projects in developing countries globally.'

To give its brand broader global awareness, Who Gives a Crap has rebranded to attract new customers outside of the Australian market. While the name is

hilarious, the company is serious in its goal to provide access to toilets for people all over the world, donating 50 percent of its profits to building toilets for those in need.

The company continually updates its designs. Designed with kids in mind, a recent colorful, abstract packaging transforms typical plain white toilet paper wrappers with graphic shapes and colors depicting stylized people, animals and imaginary creatures. From the side, the wrapped toilet paper looks like large building blocks – something that children could totally play with before use, which is what the design studio imagined.

I love this playful approach to design; it's fun, bright and eye-catching. Plus, it's very unexpected in this category. (I would say they could wipe up the competition with this design, but that's going a little too far in the pun category, don't you think?) If I saw this in the store aisle, it would stop me in my tracks – exactly the goal of packaging design.

8. Avoiding wrap rage

I realize that a brand's packaging must protect its product and meet regulations. But when does packaging become too difficult to open? (When you grab the garden shears, but serious accidents do happen! Some people end up at the ER needing stitches or at the dentist with a cracked tooth when trying to open a package. Never use a sharp knife or your teeth to open a package.)

This is so common that there's even a modern-day term for this: wrap rage. People get so frustrated when trying to open impossible packaging that they become super angry. The real question for us as brand strategists and packaging designers is: how much rage does that person feel toward the brand because of their negative unboxing experience?

There needs to be design balance. Your product needs to be protected, even

child-proof, but it doesn't have to be Fort Knox. If you're designing or producing packaging that requires garden shears and a blowtorch to get to the product, ask yourself, when this gets shared online, what kind of unboxing experience will it be.

9. It's a whole new ballgame for Cracker Jack and Jill

Frito-Lay's Cracker Jack is celebrating women in sports by creating Cracker Jill limited-edition packaging. I love this! While similar to the original, the new bag design looks more youthful and contemporary. Its bold red stripes are flatter, and there's a base of blue at the bottom. Each of the five new bags features a female dressed in the iconic sailor uniform; all five female images were designed to represent America's diverse demographic. The bag has a fun, animated, super-hero(ine) vibe. The new bags were available at Major League ballparks this season.

Tina Mahal, VP of marketing at Frito-Lay NA, explained that the limited edition packaging is designed to honor women's transformative role in sports and beyond – in every role they play – and everywhere where women have a seat at the table. Do you think the packaging supports the brand's goal?



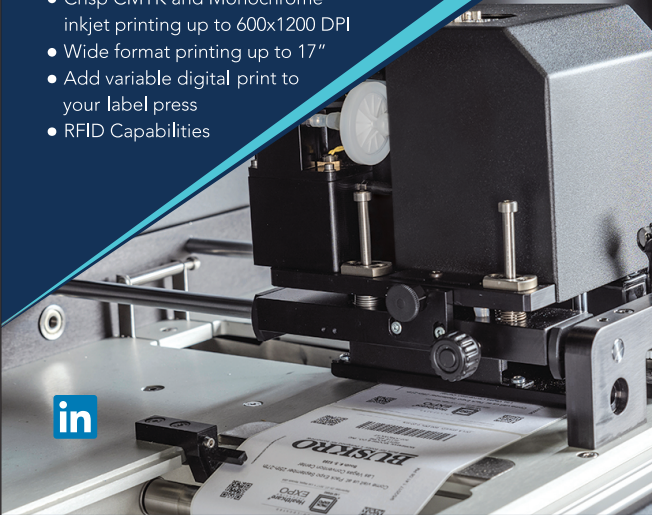
Vicki Strull is a packaging designer and strategist who advises top-tier and emerging brands on how to leverage the power of print and packaging within their omnichannel marketing strategies. Through MarketWise Academy Vicki teaches master classes on next-gen print + digital marketing strategies and techniques for designers, marketers and brand leaders. Join fellow trendsetters at vickistrull.com or follow Vicki on LinkedIn @vickistrull

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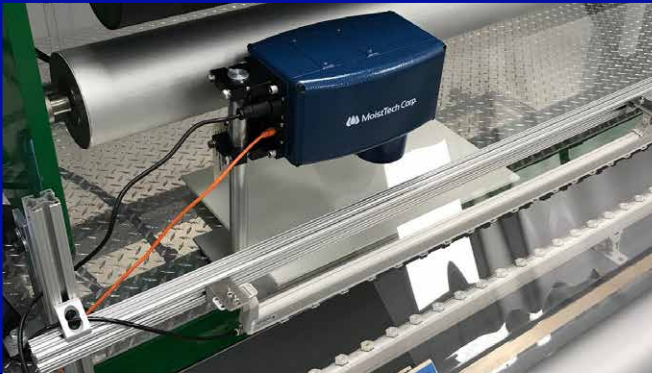


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The key forces driving M&A

You need to jump in now, says Bob Cronin of *The Open Approach*

If there's one thing you can count on in our label and packaging industry it's that there will always be change.

Looking at the last several months, this is an understatement. Material shortages, logistics entanglements, hiring challenges and the continuing effects of Covid-19 have changed the way we can actually run our companies – and the ways we can be profitable. With more changes looming (e.g., recessionary adjustments, inflation, the effects of the war in Ukraine), it's time to reassess our trajectory and decide what we need to do now to stay successful.

Labelexpo Americas comes at the perfect time. This gathering of industry pundits, frontrunners, experts and colleagues is your opportunity to gain wisdom and insights on where our business is headed and how you can get in front of it.

I'm pleased to be part of this great conference again this year and facilitating two sessions specifically to that point. The first will examine M&A in general, and the second will look at how it is changing in light of new dynamics in our marketplace and financial world.

Private equity remains a significant force behind M&A today and is especially active in the label space. While major entities are also players, private equity is new, incoming investment into our industry and can often shape what's to come.

To thrive in today's environment, we need to understand where we stand. With many of the new issues we now face, what are the forces still driving investor interest and what will these mean to you? Here's a highlight of just a few items we'll discuss:

Industry fragmentation. The label and packaging industry remains highly fragmented. There are numerous small and medium-sized players spread out geographically, with no single player in command. Fragmentation intrigues investors because of the rollup potential. Bringing together several good, small

“Labelexpo Americas comes at the perfect time”

players can yield one great operation. If your neighbor gets acquired, how will this affect your business? If you become part of a notable model, how will it affect yours?

Attractive growth rates. The global printed label market reached a value of USD 42.3 billion in 2021 and is projected to achieve a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.5 percent from 2022-2027. It also boasts very high profitability. This is notable as many industries are declining and/or struggling. Still, label companies will need to be adept to manage rising customer pricing pressures and purchasing pullbacks. Those that have economies of scale (i.e. as part of a larger, more nimble investment platform) will capture a larger share of customer spend.

Success stories of prior PE Investments. The last two decades have been extremely favorable for labels and packaging investors. Numerous lucrative and successful plays have been made, and many more continue to prove out.

The great, well-publicized stories help more deals perpetuate. Plus, with the ability to look at past transactions and evaluate their successes and shortcomings, new investors are able to replicate workable strategies and get their models off the ground quicker, with better direction and results.

Multiple potential models. Label and packaging products are vital and visible in just about every type of business there is. This enables our industry to perform well during economic changes as it does not rely heavily on any one sector. Additionally, our products are often a solution to market challenges (i.e. tamper-evident/trackable/RFID labels and other packaging safety features during Covid-19), further enhancing our value. This allows an acquirer to build an enterprise by many models and

also by market, materials, or geography. And revenue possibilities abound as such entity gets bigger.

Low capital expenditures. Our business is unique in that a small array of equipment can respond to a significant number of demands. Moreover, growth is being driven more by versatile, digital technologies over mammoth printing presses and operational requirements. This makes it easier for private equity firms to acquire label companies and still provide for the growth capital needed.

Synergies with other investments. Private equity investors can gain synergies they can put to work in the supply chains of their other portfolio companies that use labels and packaging. This is a factor that can have a significant effect on the opportunities created for all conjoined entities.

Growing your company in the best and most profitable ways is the objective of every entrepreneur. M&A needs to be part of your strategy. Every company will ultimately be a buyer or a seller. Stop by my sessions for a deeper discussion and gain a better understanding of what's at stake. What you learn now may be integral for how you grow and thrive in the future. I look forward to meeting you and helping you maximize your opportunities.



Bob Cronin is managing partner of *The Open Approach*, an M&A consultancy focused exclusively on the world of print. To learn more, visit www.theopenapproach.net, email bobcronin@aol.com, or call or text (+1) 630 542 1758. To register for the Labelexpo Americas conference, visit www.labelexpo-americas.com

Q&A

John Wynne is founder and CEO of Fortis Solutions Group, a converter group based in the United States. Founded in 2010 in Virginia Beach, Virginia, the company continues to expand its footprint with manufacturing facilities across North America. Interview by Luis Rodriguez

L&L: Tell us about your career to date.

John Wynne: Post college, I spent seven-and-a-half years working within the media and communication investment banking units at Deutsche Bank and Morgan Stanley in New York. There I spent time capital-raising both on the debt and equity side, as well as working on M&A engagements.

I got an MBA along the way and eventually got the entrepreneurial bug at about the same time I had gotten engaged, so I started thinking about what's next.

I ultimately decided to leave New York and pursue my own opportunity. And decided to move back to where I grew up, Virginia Beach, Virginia, thinking I could network better here than I could in New York.

Back in Virginia, I treated my search like a job. I was setting up meetings every day – breakfast, lunch, dinner meetings and everything in between. Initially, I started out by meeting with the professionals, accountants, bankers and lawyers across town that would have access to some of the companies, which ultimately led to some introductions into various companies and industries.

I didn't start out by saying that I have to find my way into the printing industry per se. There were certain business characteristics that I was seeking but that could have been applicable to a lot of different industries.

I eventually came across a company here in Virginia, a label converter that was in the process of being sold to York, now Multicolor, and I became intrigued with custom manufacturing. I liked the brands they were working with and thought that was an industry I could really wrap my arms around and was very fortunate that just 30 minutes away was a company by the name of Labels Unlimited.

I made an inbound to the owner and spent time going lunch with him, and as he got to know me and my approach to the business end and how I would treat the employees, he said that I should come down and take a look under the hood.

He invited me in to take a look and see if there's something here, telling everyone I was a consultant, which ultimately led to me acquiring the initial business in October 2010.

L&L: How has Fortis Solutions Group changed since your start at the company in 2010?

JW: We've grown significantly since 2010. From one site here in Virginia Beach with one product line, which was pressure-sensitive labels, to now selling five core product lines – pressure-sensitive, flexible packaging, shrink, folding carton, and label applicators – in 17 other locations, including one of our latest in Montreal.



Fortis Solutions Group has evolved from a pressure-sensitive label company in 2010 to add shrink, folding carton, flexible packaging and label applicators to its portfolio

“There’s really no playbook with the way we’ve been scaling, figuring things out on the fly and adjusting in the air. But we’ve got a great team and we’re working collaboratively”

We also diversified from what was primarily a single end-market focus, food, into a more diversified portfolio focused on food, which is about 50 percent of our base and is very stable. But we've augmented that base with markets like health and beauty, nutraceutical, household chemical, ad chem, and others.

And then, like I said, we added people. We've added a ton of talent along the way, which, frankly, has allowed us to offer more comprehensive solutions to our customers. More value adds than we could previously, and that's been one of the core tenants of our acquisition strategy: making sure we can find some additive intellectual capital along the way that can not only work within their legacy facility but add value across all our locations.

L&L: Has your background in investment banking had any benefits for your M&A strategy?

JW: My experience in New York provided a foundation for the technical analysis that's associated with M&A, and it was incredibly helpful to work on both the buy and sell side to understand the perspectives on both ends: like what's the ultimate intent, for example.

Both parties want to do a deal, but they may want to get there a little bit differently, and so it kind of becomes more of a social, interpersonal interaction, where it's best just to be a good listener. To be empathetic and understand their perspectives. You don't

want to have any preconceived notions; you just want to be a good partner and understand how you would want to be treated if you were on the other side.

For example, if someone is bringing something up, they're not bringing it up to be difficult. They're bringing it up because it's a pain point for them, and they want to work through it.

Ultimately, it's about being patient and understanding that and giving validity to whatever the topic may be. Having good bedside mannerisms and how you treat and interact with people are just as important as the technical aspects of delegation.

L&L: Do you envision the stream of acquisitions continuing at its current pace?

JW: I do. We see M&A as one of our key growth drivers. Through M&A, we've been able to enhance our product lines, core competencies and geographic presence to offer more value for our customers, and so, ultimately, we're going to continue to pursue additional opportunities.

You have to be in your customer's backyard to service them really well, and so we continue to pursue other companies. There are certainly still some gaps because at the end of the day if you get a one-day ship time right to customers, they certainly value that a lot more than one week. We all live in an Amazon world, and that extends to our business as well.

L&L: As Fortis gets larger and the business evolves, has your approach to leading the company changed as well?

JW: We've been incredibly fortunate to have been able to scale effectively. And that's thanks to our incredibly talented team.

I'm very much engaged in the day-to-day of the business, but I also recognize that we can't accomplish all our objectives without dividing and conquering. So, as we evolved, those leadership responsibilities have continued to be spread among our team, allowing me to work more on the business rather than in the business.

And that felt like the right transition. It's been a natural evolution in that regard. There's really no playbook with the way we've been scaling, figuring things out on the fly, and adjusting in the air. But we've got a great team, we're working collaboratively, and we've been able to really keep a lot of the noise that slows down companies as they grow out of the equation.

You can't be micromanaging functional areas. To get the right people, they have to know they're going to have your support but can ultimately paint their own canvases. And that's really been the messaging I've delivered as we've been recruiting additional people at Fortis.



Fortis Solutions Group currently has more 1,200 employees across its 18 manufacturing facilities

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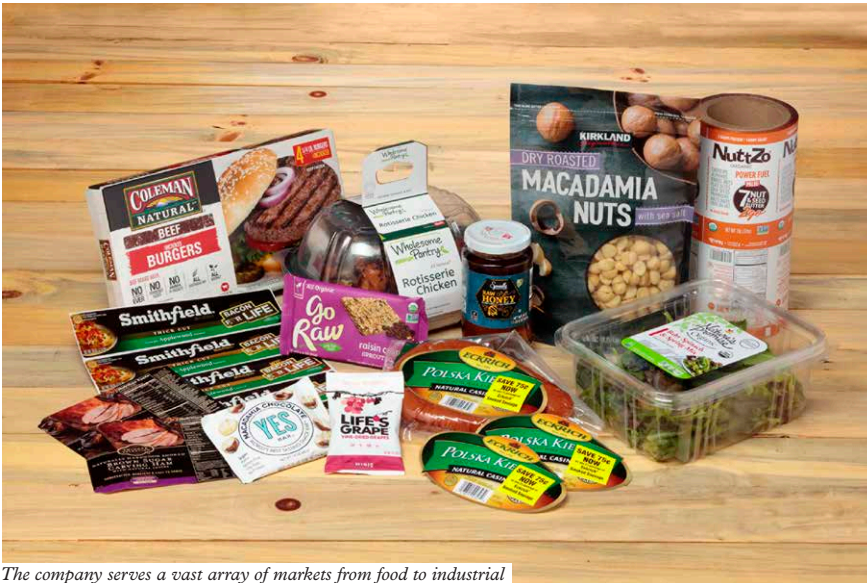
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The company serves a vast array of markets from food to industrial

“Through M&A, we’ve been able to enhance our product lines, core competencies and geographic presence to offer more value for our customers and so we’re going to continue to pursue additional opportunities”

L&L: What are the main benefits for a converter when becoming part of Fortis Solutions Group?

JW: We always embrace that local representation in the functional area. Going back to that team dynamic, because we recognize that those local touch points are what made those businesses so successful. And so we really focus on being excellent stewards of the acquired businesses and supporting their continued growth by leveraging our best practices, including cross-selling our products, work-sharing across facilities, opening up our capital resources, and the vendor relationship.

When you look at the supply chain challenges of today, that certainly highlights the benefits of working with a larger group.

And, given our size, we’ve been able to further support our new employees with additional investment benefits, attractive wages, 401k match, profit sharing, educational reimbursement, and we provide them with upward mobility across the group as well.

We’ve had some folks who, in their current role, wanted to move for family reasons or otherwise, and in many cases, we’ve been able to find them a role in a location nearer to them.

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Digital and flexo printing are within Fortis Solutions Group's arsenal

“We’ve grown significantly since 2010. From one site here in Virginia Beach with one product line, which was pressure-sensitive labels, to now selling five core product lines – pressure-sensitive, flexible packaging, shrink, folding carton, and label applicators – in 17 locations”



Fortis Solutions Group has expanded its customer offering through acquisition



The companies acquired by Fortis Solutions Group often have specific skill set

L&L: Where do you see the most changes happening in the label industry right now?

JW: We’ve seen a move to more automated workflows. One example: think about the continued labor challenges that are out there right now, and more people are starting to look at material handling automation. Robotics has certainly become more topical.

Certainly, we’ll see more enhanced sustainability offerings.

And, not just because of the pandemic but the Texas freeze and the strikes overseas. I think people are starting to pursue broader supply chain networks.

There are a few other trends out there, too. You’re seeing more and more consumer engagement with brands. The continued proliferation of variable data personalization.

More informative, descriptive packaging. Just more descriptions about the product you’re buying, different ways to engage the consumer through your packaging.

L&L: How has Fortis Solutions Group coped with the material shortages and supply chain challenges of the past year?

JW: It hasn’t been easy. I feel like our team is frequently playing whack-a-mole with the challenges of the day.

When we say supply chain disruption, it includes cost increases as well as material availability.

We’ve dedicated additional personnel to our supply chain team to bring in more resources to our sourcing effort.

We’ve also enhanced the communication level between the plants, so we now hold daily calls among our group to discuss priority items and ensure continual supply for our customers.

Lead times used to be four-to-five days on materials and now they’re around 40-to-50 days, so it’s certainly impacted working capital levels as you don’t know for certain if you’re going to get the material. It has really impacted the way in which we buy and hold material as well.

But we’ve been really fortunate to really have that collaborative culture internally because we can quickly leverage another plant and we have visibility on who has what.

So, if we need to ship material from one site to another, we certainly will.

It’s not a fun topic, but we’ve been able to deliver for our customers, which, ultimately, is why we’re here.

L&L: What has Fortis Solutions Group done to improve the sustainability of its production across the larger group?

JW: We’ve installed improved technology across the footprint such as LED lighting, better air compressors, and cardboard bailers to reduce our footprint.

We launched a dedicated continuous improvement team with the primary goal of attacking waste throughout our footprints. And operationally, we’ve been focusing on combination runs to reduce and process scrap.

We’ve removed solvent inks from our press room. And the new presses we’re bringing in are fitted with UV LED. So, we’re trying to attack it from a number of different angles.

L&L: What are your interests or hobbies outside of work?

JW: I’ve got three youngsters running around that keep me busy, which is always fun. I dabble in some racket sports – tennis, pickle ball. And I like being out on the water. We do a lot of water-related activities as a family, and we enjoy traveling together. Those are the things that tend to keep me busy when I’m not in front of the computer or on the phone.



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Tara Halpin, owner and CEO of Steinhauser, during the MPS installation ceremony

Steinhauser expands flexo fleet

US-based converter Steinhauser has recently installed its second MPS machine. Luis Rodriguez reports

Operating out of a 36,000 sqft facility in Newport, Kentucky, Steinhauser installed its second MPS press, an EFA 530 flexo machine, during the first weeks of 2022. It replaces a Comco Proglide MSP installed in 2005 – the company's first foray into flexo.

'The first time through with MPS, the team did their due diligence. Talking to industry leaders, press manufacturers, and did their research,' says Rod Baehner, vice president of operations at Steinhauser. 'The second press came along based on the performance of that first press. And naturally, there are synergies that go along with that, having the tooling in place and smaller cost of entry, but a lot of it was based on the performance of the press and the MPS's after-sale services.'

The press began operation just a few weeks after the installation. It features 12 flexo stations, two rotary screens, two die-cutting stations, cold foil and lamination stations, delam/relam stations, a turn bar for double-sided printing, a Martin Automatic rewinder, AVT Helios S inspection system with Workflow Link, and UV LED curing capabilities.

According to Steinhauser, the purchase and installation of its second MPS press come from its satisfaction with its first MPS installation in 2018. It also stems from the fact that all the tooling was already in place, along with the personnel training necessary to operate a flexo press.

With both machines now operating in tandem, the company's intention with the new press was to have a sister press that can share work wherever possible across the company's pressure-sensitive and shrink sleeve platforms. Both machines are primarily focused on work in the health and beauty, beverage and household end-user markets.

According to Steinhauser, the press has already helped the company remain a major player in end-user markets where many larger converters have a strong foothold. This is partly due to the fluidity of moving work from one press to the other.

"Halpin always has her door open, and she walks the floor all the time. She's a very present owner"

'The MPS presses have allowed us to be more competitive in our turn times with the compatibility of both the presses,' says Erin Dickman, director of sales and marketing at Steinhauser. 'There was a time when we had two different presses, and once we installed the second MPS, the work became very fluid between the two.'

Along with the two MPS presses, the company utilizes an HP WS6800 digital press, an AB Graphic Digicon Series 2, and other equipment to continue offering short- and long-run services across the United States.

11 decades in business

Steinhauser was founded in 1905 by Albert Steinhauser from his garage in Cincinnati, Ohio, with a focus on printing government bonds. The company has operated as a family-owned business for 117 years, with Tara Halpin currently taking the lead as its fourth-generation owner and CEO.

In 2005, the company began shifting from an offset, lithographic commercial printing company to a label converter with the purchase of its first Comco Proglide in 2005. That purchase was made partly because of a major customer changing formats and Steinhauser wanting, as always, to ensure it fulfills its goal of keeping its customers satisfied. Because pivoting a business can be a major risk, the move required a level of trust from its employees.

'We had been litho printers for 100 years, and our largest customer had decided that they wanted to change label platforms from sheet-fed, in-mold to flexo PSL,' says Baehner. 'Tara's dad made the very courageous decision to make the investment off of a handshake and a conversation he had with the customer, and the

team just jumped on the opportunity to do so.'

The investment paid off and led to the company purchasing a second Comco Proglide in 2008, shifting from its roots as a commercial printing business and rebranding as a label converter.

According to the company, being able to manage its success was not only built on Steinhauser's ability to gain new customers but the ability of its team to deliver exceptionally printed products, and a positive experience during both sales and service. All this ensures a continuing relationship and a returning customer.

'I think we offer a very unique blend of service and quality, and we've always been very consistent about that,' says Baehner. 'We service everything from short-run digital customers to those with national distribution. We always try to fit the needs of every customer, and we have shown that our quality and service are second to none. It's what we do and what we've always done.'

In the first quarter of 2017, the company tripled its profits. That same year, Steinhauser was honored as 'Best Workplace in the Americas' by Printing Industries of America. And in 2020, the company reported its highest revenue to date.

However, not all years can be that successful.

Supply chain issues and materials shortages led the company to stockpile materials – three-to-four times more than usual to ensure there would be enough to sustain its customer base. With price increases across the label and packaging industry, 2022 and beyond continues to be difficult.

'It certainly hasn't been easy in any aspect of the business,' says Baehner. 'We're facing the same challenges all converters or manufacturers are facing these days, but it's been our team's consistent effort to deliver on every little detail and their obsession with delivering for our customers that has kept us on track. To say it's been difficult the last couple of years is probably an understatement, but the effort put forth by everybody in this building has made it a little less rough sledding than it could've been.'

Finding success in culture

Halpin's father, Robert Steinhauser, was always walking the floor and checking up on everybody – from the front of the house to the warehouse – to make sure that each employee had what they needed and that business was running smoothly.

When Halpin took over the business, these were a few aspects of her father's leadership that she made sure to emulate.

Halpin makes sure that Steinhauser's



A new MPS press was installed during the first weeks of January 2022, marking the company's second MPS installation

“Everyone now knows what our vision is, what our mission is, where our values lie, what we're trying to accomplish and why you come to work every day”

employees know her door is open at any time, and each has a full understanding of the business and how it operates.

'I always tell people that [Halpin] always has her door open, and she walks the floor all the time. She's a very present owner,' says Dickman. 'Sometimes people say things that belittle being a women-owned company, but I always tell them, "No, she's actually here." She's involved in basically all parts of the business, walking the shop floor. It's a very unique thing for people to see.'

This emphasis on culture has trickled down and created an environment where people want to work, where many of the employees have relatives who also work at Steinhauser and a place where people are passionate about the work they are producing. It's not uncommon for employees to point out items on the store shelves and be proud of the work they created.

But it wasn't always this way.

The company, for a time, struggled. Employee engagement was low, giving way to a higher turnover rate than the company had wanted. Planning and business operation was not up to par.

Halpin knew a change needed to be made, and being more transparent and open with Steinhauser employees about the company was a solid start.

'It hasn't always been like this. There have been hard years where the engagement wasn't as great,' says Halpin. 'But now we have a strategic plan across the company,

department strategies, and everybody has an individual action plan. So, everyone now knows what our vision is, what our mission is, where our values lie, what we're trying to accomplish, and why you come to work every day.'

And it doesn't stop at transparency. Steinhauser also provides its employees with many incentives, including Steiny Snax – a meeting where monthly results/successes are shared while providing snacks for all the employees. Steinhauser provides lunches, ice cream and chair massages monthly. The company has launched a community outreach program called Steiny Smiles where donations and volunteer work is done with local organizations.

The team at Steinhauser, 48 employees, has maintained strong performance in a highly competitive market which, according to the company, is largely in part of its team's ability to stay focused and produce quality products across its customer base.

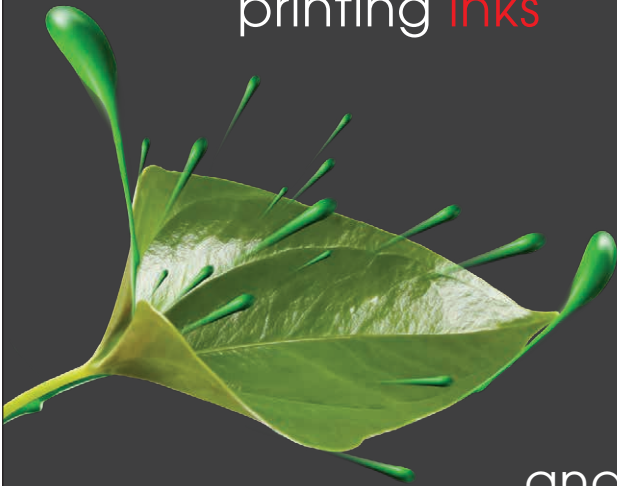
'Things are ever-changing,' says Halpin. 'We're a pressure-sensitive and shrink sleeve business; that is what we're great at, and that is what we're focused on. That has been a key to our success: having that focus and knowing what we're good at. And we're certainly open to other avenues for business, but first, we need to know if it's going to fit well with what we're doing right now and how we're doing it.'



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Delegates gather for the Finat European Label Forum in Baveno, Italy

Finat unites European industry at ELF 2022

This year's European Label Forum, the first in-person ELF event since the pandemic struck, covered the critical challenges faced by label converters in a post-lockdown world. Andy Thomas-Emans reports

In June, 350 Finat members gathered in the beautiful lakeside setting of Baveno, Italy, for the first time since the Covid pandemic struck in 2020.

Finat managing director Jules Lejeune kicked off proceedings with a comprehensive survey of the last two years. The multiple impacts of Covid, strikes in the paper industry, chip shortages and the Ukraine War have all severely impacted the label industry supply chain. 'The direct suppliers to the industry cannot get the raw materials they need from further up the supply chain, so this is not a problem that can be quickly fixed.'

Finat's annual materials survey showed the European labels industry growing at a healthy 7 percent through 2021 — more than double the growth rate of 2020 — with non-paper rolls growing at more than 9 percent. Southern Europe saw the highest growth rates (9.5 percent, up 2.8 percent on 2020) and eastern Europe (9.6 percent, up an impressive 6.9 percent on 2020).

Finat's annual Radar survey shows that European label converters posted average sales growth of 9.2 percent in 2021, just under double that of 2020, although there were significant regional differences. Eastern European converters saw sales growth drop by almost one-third in 2021 compared to 2020, while Scandinavian converters saw sales growth plummet from 9.2 percent to 5.3 percent. The most significant gains were posted by converters in central and southern Europe, followed by UK and Ireland.

The Radar report shows food and beverage sectors growing the fastest at more than 8 percent in 2021, closely followed by retail at 7.5 percent, transport and logistics at 6.5 percent, personal care at 5.9 percent, with pharma and household chemicals at just over 4 percent. Industrial chemicals and consumer durables posted respectable growth rates of 3.1 percent and 2.8 percent. The only sector to decline growth was, predictably, automotive, which shrank by 1.4 percent.

The Radar survey looked at capital equipment buying intentions and predicts that 33 percent of the Finat converter sample intend to buy digital presses in 2023, against 19 percent for this year. For conventional presses, a buying spike of 29 percent last year was reduced to 14 percent of the sample in 2023.

Consumer trends

The Baveno ELF was packed with actionable data on consumer trends. Benjamin Punchard, global packaging director at Mintel, made the observation that the Covid pandemic has instilled a deep fear of contamination in consumers. For example, almost half of Italian consumers reported that they regularly disinfect shopping

“The most significant gains were posted by converters in Central and Southern Europe, followed by UK and Ireland”

when they get home.

'As on-the-go consumption returns, consumers will look for both convenience and hygiene, and we are already seeing snacking products released using anti-microbial coatings or incorporating anti-bacterial wipes,' said Punchard.

Mintel's research found consumers more focused on long-life products and limiting time spent in stores, prioritizing larger pack sizes and turning to ambient products.

Packaging sustainability is a key concern for consumers, with a marked preference for non-plastic containers. This has sparked innovations in the paper/board category with the launch of new technical papers for pouches, tubes, sachets and even paper bottles.

The plastics industry has responded with more sustainable ocean-collected plastics or bottles and labels that incorporate more recycled material.

The flexible packaging industry also has a negative sustainability image among consumers, said Punchard, and has responded with the development of 'technically recyclable' materials, such as the mono-material HDPE pouches used by Reckitt Benckiser for its dishwasher tablets, or with recyclable PP replacing a non-recyclable multilayer structure.

Matthias Vollherbst, CEO of German converter VollherbstDruck, called on delegates to adopt sustainability 'heart and soul.'

He described the sustainability initiatives implemented by Vollherbst over the last two years, including a complete switch to renewable energy, a 22 percent reduction in water usage, eliminating paper from the ordering process and reducing materials waste by 15 percent. The company is a beta tester for the Ecoleaf metallization process, which eliminates foil waste and promotes wash-off adhesives to remove adhesive residue from reusable glass containers. Vollherbst has adopted a zero-to-landfill policy for all its consumables wastes, focusing strongly on liner collection and recycling.

All bases covered

The Baveno ELF covered a wide range of topics of immediate

“Panel sessions covered the future of family-owned converter businesses and the smaller independent converter in the face of rapid industry consolidation”

interest to label converters. Panel sessions discussed the future of family-owned converter businesses and the smaller independent converter in the face of rapid industry consolidation. There were Q+A sessions with converting groups and materials suppliers looking at how the industry can become more resilient in the face of chaotic supply chain conditions (these will be covered in more detail in the next edition of L&L).

One often overlooked factor in building a resilient industry is company culture.

Digital label industry veteran Alon Bar-Shany detailed how, at Indigo, he had built a management culture that maintained the ‘insurgent’ vision of the founder as the company expanded after the HP acquisition.

Bar-Shany explained that as companies grow, they encounter a set of forces that tend to push them off course. The founder’s impulse starts to wane, and the company moves from an insurgent to a ‘struggling bureaucracy.’ A robust company culture — defined by Bar-Shany as ‘the stories employees tell about the management/CEO over the water cooler’ — helps defy these trends and maintain the founder’s insurgency impulse.

Founder impulses typically cluster around three elements: an obsession with the front line, an insurgent mindset, and a bias for action, along with a strong cash focus and aversion to bureaucracy.

Bar-Shany applied this model to the Indigo label team’s development of the HP Indigo 20000 press at a time when HP wanted to focus more on the commercial print market.

This required an ‘insurgent’ belief in a potential new market adjacent to labels, accepting some risk of cannibalizing existing sales but mitigating this by strongly supporting existing customers. The end result was opening up a new market sector in digital flexible packaging.

Big data, recruitment, supply chains

The concept of Big Data was examined in a session that included Dutch converter Geostick - which under Tom Schouten’s youthful leadership has pushed the boundaries in automation and data handling - and Guido Iannone, who is driving automation initiatives at global converting powerhouse All4Labels.

MPS’ Marius van Lith explained how automation, digitization and Big Data address the key productivity challenges facing label converters today: increasingly scarce operator skills, increasing pressures on price, smaller order sizes, under-utilization of capital assets, and a push toward sustainability.

The essential building blocks include Cloud-based connectivity between machines, factory-wide MIS, and the human/machine interface. Each machine needs to be fitted with real-time performance monitoring, and machine learning algorithms advise managers how to tune and improve overall performance.

To help the audience visualize Big Data in practice, Tom Schouten showed a live demo of a control panel representing real-time data

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Left to right: Gwen Calvo Suárez, Jorge Casterad, Alessandro Tomaghelli

Recognizing young talent

At the opening of the European Label Forum, Finat presented the winners of the 2022 #LABELicious competition.

The brief challenged young people between the ages of 18 to 25 to design a label for the fictitious Genergise brand, which aims 'to develop health and wellness products to make consumers aged over 60 feel like being under 30.' The jury, which included this writer, selected three winners from more than 100 excellent entries. The Design category was won by Gwen Calvo Suárez (Spain), the Smart Labels category by Jorge Casterad (Spain) and Sustainability by Alessandro Tomaghelli (Italy).

Jorge Casterad, was announced as the overall winner. The jury commented: 'A clever minimalistic design and innovative idea of building in thermal ink to check skin condition.'

analysis of press production data.

Another key issue for label converters is recruitment. Professor Dr Dirk Burth from the University of Applied Sciences, Munich, presented the results of a packaging industry recruitment survey asking respondents about their ideal employer.

Opportunities for professional development topped respondents' ideal job requirements, coming well above pay and conditions. Half of all respondents favored working for a medium-sized or start-up company and most favored an urban location accessible by bike or public transport and with dining facilities in the area.

Other important requirements included fair pay with a 'clearly regulated and transparent salary system,' flexible working hours, home working, job security, work-life balance, realistic objectives and professional appreciation.

Bram Desmet, adjunct professor at the Vlerick Business School, covered how converters and suppliers respond to supply chain disruptions. Desmet said supply chain management is based around balancing the three corners of a triangle – service, working capital and operational costs. So, for example, decreasing safety stocks reduces the amount of tied-up cash but hits service levels and increases operational costs.

With label businesses faced with a shortage of raw material inventory, problems delivering to customers and firefighting costs to close the service gap, Desmet provided potential strategies to restore the balance based on optimizing ROCE (return on capital employed) and pro-active planning.



The next Finat European Label Forum will be held in Vienna from May 31 until June 2, 2023. Visit www.finat.com for details.

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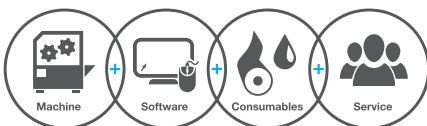


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Gallus launches roll-to-roll digital press

The new Gallus One press forms part of a wider program to reinvent the label industry's view of digital printing. Andy Thomas-Emans reports

Gallus is looking to drive a digital transformation in the label industry with the launch of a standalone digital press targeted at the mid-market sector.

Based on the Labelmaster platform, the Gallus One is a 340mm wide roll-to-roll UV inkjet press printing at 70m/min at 1,200 DPI in four colors + White. The press retains many of the advanced features of the Gallus Labelfire 340 including full automated cleaning of inkjet heads and a camera-based missing nozzle and density unevenness compensation system.

While the Gallus Labelfire 340 remains Gallus' premium digital platform, the company believes the Gallus One, with its compact footprint, high level of automation and 'extremely competitive price', addresses a major gap in price performance sector of the label market.

'The whole technology of the new press is based on the experience of the flagship Gallus Labelfire 340 and with focus on the highest level of reliability and availability,' says Dario Urbinati, Chief Sales & Service at Gallus. 'We see significant interest from the small family-owned business market and as a replacement for legacy letterpress and flexo technology, but also from multinational groups looking for standardization.'

Urbinati believes the label industry is at the beginning of a new era in which the success of digital printing will depend on solid TCO (Total Cost of Ownership) foundations.

'There is an expectation gap between what digital presses have promised and what they have delivered. We want to bridge that gap. The digital conversation needs to move to a visionary level and away from talking about machine specifications. We are moving away from making a sheet of metal to selling an entire ecosystem – the press is the tool to turn data into something tangible.'

Urbinati believes that Gallus, as one of the founding companies of the narrow web industry, has a responsibility to help transform the market.

'Gallus has a history of reinventing itself – from letterpress to

“The Gallus One is a true joint development with Heidelberg which brings together decades of Heidelberg expertise and Gallus' history of developing world class narrow web press technology”

flexo and offset and now digital. And now we will reinvent ourselves for the new technology out there. But the next curve for us is an ecosystem, not just a technology.'

Joint development

Urbinati says that the extensive digital expertise of Heidelberg has been central to the development of Gallus' digital platforms.

'We are drawing on in-depth digital expertise in printhead waveform design from Heidelberg, digital ink development, workflow software and testing facilities. The Gallus One is a true joint development with Heidelberg which brings together decades of Heidelberg expertise and Gallus' history of developing world-class narrow web press technology. In this project we have learned a lot about how Heidelberg and Gallus can work together with all our joint competence in house.'

The close bond between Heidelberg and Gallus is represented by Dr. Frank Schaum, who became CEO of the Gallus Group in 2020 after a career spanning 30 years at Heidelberg in a range of roles from engineering to transformation management.

Schaum is keen to stress the full commitment of the Heidelberg group to Gallus.

'After a comprehensive realignment Heidelberg is back on track



The Gallus One digital press built on the Labelmaster platform

and stable and Gallus is firmly located in the packaging business of Heidelberg,' states Schaum.

Gallus is using the extensive resources of the ink testing laboratory at Wiesloch-Walldorf to develop digital inks tuned to the Fuji Dimatix inkjet heads used in both the Gallus Labelfire 340 and Gallus One presses. A second lab optimizes waveform design to drive the inkjet heads. All ink R&D is carried out in house, and manufacturing is then outsourced.

Successful in-house ink developments have included a non-cracking UV inkjet ink for folding carton and tube applications and a low migration digital ink for the Gallus Labelfire 340 press.

'Ink and software are key to the success of these presses,' says Urbinati. 'Because the printer has to buy the ink from the same supplier it is an important part of the entire ecosystem.'

The importance of the Heidelberg relationship goes beyond the software and ink technology.

'The importance of workflow has been greatly underestimated in our industry,' says Urbinati. 'What we are looking to create is an eco-system around the press which is a central part of delivering the TCO benefits.'

The Gallus One press fully integrates with the Prinect + Cloud-based workflow from Heidelberg, and this has two aspects. Firstly, it delivers in-depth, real-time insight into all aspects of production status; and in the second step it provides actionable data to production managers across a secure network, accessible on any smart mobile device. The world of Prinect can also link presses across multiple sites into a seamless workflow.

In addition, Gallus engineers have remote access to key machine metrics such as ink temperature and production velocity – though not job data, which is stored on the customer's in-house networks. This allows Gallus to offer a predictive maintenance service and remote support.

Importantly, the Prinect ecosystem is in preparation to be ready to integrate third party applications through an open API interface – for example MIS/ERP/workflow systems.

Experience Center

To promote the vision of a new digital age, Gallus is building the 'Gallus Experience Center' in St Gallen, which will act as the group's digital competence center. All manufacturing of conventional press platforms is now concentrated in Langgöns, Germany, while digital research and development and final assembly of Gallus Labelfire 340 and Gallus One digital presses is carried out at the Heidelberg production



Dario Urbinati, Chief Sales & Service Gallus



Dr Frank Schaum, CEO of Gallus Group

“We will continue to be a major player in the conventional press market even as we drive the industry towards adoption of digital print”

facility in Wiesloch-Walldorf.

Urbinati says the St Gallen Experience Center will be 'an industry-wide push and will include our partners across the label industry – including start-ups which have an interesting new idea, the brand owners and even our own competitors, because sometimes today's competitors are the partners of tomorrow, especially in a digital ecosystem.

'As technology leaders in both the digital and conventional worlds, we want to build a touchpoint to transform labels towards a TCO- and customer-focused industry. By bringing the whole industry together we are actively driving ecosystem building. It is a necessity that somebody in our industry is doing that.'

The Experience Center will focus on all aspects of the digital transformation, including workflow and sustainability. Sustainability is a central plank of Urbinati's vision for Gallus' future, with a pledge that all presses will be certified carbon neutral from next year.

Once the Experience Center is up and running by the end of the year Gallus will be looking to hold industry events, both in-person and on streaming platforms.

How important is flexo?

So does this new emphasis on digital transformation mean Gallus is shifting its weight away from conventional press technology?

'Not at all,' says Urbinati. 'We will continue to be a major player in the conventional press market even as we drive the industry towards adoption of digital print. We are still investing in the conventional side of the business – for example the development of the new 570mm-wide Labelmaster flexo

and 570mm RCS presses. Our sales of both platforms remain healthy. At the same time, we also see a way forward to the tighter integration of digital and conventional platforms.'

Schaum says it is the customer's business model, technical requirements and company setting which defines the choice of printing technology.

Urbinati points out that the digital market is not confined to short runs. For example, Gallus has Labelfire presses in continuous operation over multiple shifts in the folding carton sector.

'Run length partly depends on ink coverage and we have clear indications that we can compete above 10,000 linear meters run length.'

This is reinforced by Dr Frank Schaum. 'Some of the traditional printers are quite conservative and just understand flexo. Our hybrid Gallus Labelfire 340 incorporates a lot of the elements of our conventional technology, so we can help customers get over that canyon. In order to be able to offer our customers the entire range of solutions, we are now adding pure digital printing machines to our product range in addition to the conventional and hybrid machines.

Together, Urbinati and Schaum have set out on a mission to transform the internal culture of Gallus as a condition of transforming the wider industry. As Urbinati explains: 'It is our responsibility as a 100 year-old company to reinvent the industry as we reinvent ourselves.'



For more on the background to the Gallus-Heidelberg relationship see www.labelsandlabeling.com/features/future-gallus

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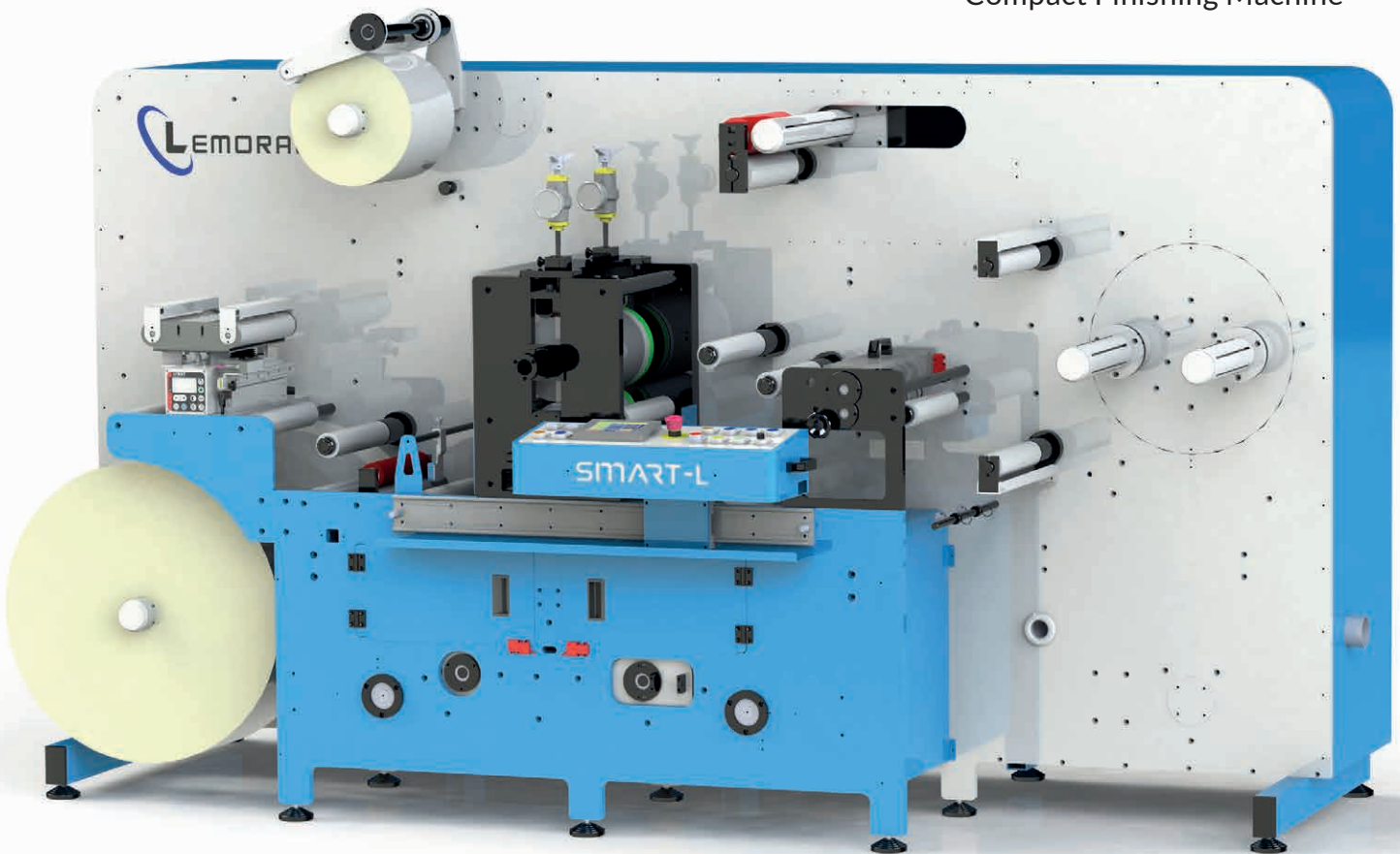
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Mark Andy unveils Digital Pro Max mid-market strategy

Mark Andy is targeting the latest Digital Pro press, now including digital white, at its traditional label and converter customer base. Andy Thomas-Emans reports

At Labelexpo Americas 2022, Mark Andy launches the latest version of its Digital Pro toner-based press, the Digital Pro Max, now adding digital white to the standard CMYK and increasing speeds to 130ft/min (40m/min).

This is the third generation of the Digital Pro (DPro) line that uses Konica Minolta's toner-based imaging technology. The DPro Max provides end-to-end flexo and digital print capabilities. With the new digital white print technology, clear and metallic substrates are supported without the need for a traditional flexo printing plate. As with the existing Digital Pro systems, a full suite of converting and decorating modules are available.

The partnership between Mark Andy and Konica Minolta has been in place for over five years, successfully leveraging the strengths of each company - Konica Minolta in digital marking technology and Mark Andy in web handling, converting and robust narrow web press design. To date, there are more than 300 Digital One/DPro press installations.

The development of the DPro press line represents, in many ways, a return to founder Mark Andrews' original vision of the company serving the mid- and entry-level sectors of the narrow web market with presses like the 2200.

'Mark Andrews built the company on the middle of the market,' states Greg Palm, executive VP of marketing and business development at Mark Andy. 'It's the same market segment for our DPro digital strategy. They have the same wants and needs, except we are serving them with digital printing technology. That is because digital is more cost-effective for short runs, and the middle tier downwards have the same short run needs as the big guys, maybe more.'

Palm recalls that Mark Andy's digital strategy started at the top end of the market. 'We began by developing the HD Series inkjet press, which is in the same class as the Performance Series - a solid high-end production press which can be a multi-million-dollar investment. Then seven years ago, we heard from our middle market customers that they needed a digital label press, but at a price they could afford. It was clear that we needed to start again with our traditional customer segments. Digital means different things to both smaller and larger guys.'

Continues Palm, 'We spent a lot of time figuring out what would be a good match between technology and market needs. We researched multiple technology partners, including inkjet and toner systems. Finally, we went with toner technology that Konica Minolta had originally developed for a different market. In partnership with Konica Minolta, we set about designing the Digital Pro press with those customers' words and needs - we were opening a new market segment. It's the customers that give you the right direction.'

'Our relationship with Konica Minolta has involved trips to Japan to discuss image quality and the range of materials required by label converters because a partnership only works when we are working to the same outcome. Together we have demonstrated that there are benefits of not having to go to million-dollar investments.'

The big prize for Mark Andy's Digital Pro strategy lies in the



Mark Andy launches Digital Pro Max press at Labelexpo Americas

“The cost structure of the Digital Pro Max works well for our customers in the middle part of the flexo market. CMYK at this price point and speed has not been seen before. The white will challenge anything out there”

legacy press sector. Greg Palm estimates this represents 50 percent of the installed narrow web press base, so there is a lot to play for. Although obsolete legacy presses are paid for multiple times over, they still require skilled operators and generate waste on changeovers.

'Converters told us that they are finding it difficult to retain the expertise they had when they started their company,' says Palm. 'The DPro Max delivers both intuitive operation and waste reduction. On the DPro Max, the process colors are in register immediately. Decorating and converting technologies can be added to the base press, or a customer can start with a roll-to-roll press and upgrade later.'

In addition to the new digital CMYK+W printing technology, Mark Andy has further engineered the press to change over quickly, with minimal waste. Mark Andy has automated die setup to make the converting end of the DPro even more efficient and less dependent on operator skills.

'The cost structure of the Digital Pro Max works well for our customers in the middle part of the flexo market,' says Palm. 'CMYK at this price point and speed has not been seen before. The white will challenge anything out there. Add to that Mark Andy's demonstrated ability to service and support their customers, and this will be a good thing for global converters. They will have an option they've not had before.'



Mark Andy will demonstrate its DPro Max at Labelexpo Americas (www.labelexpo-americas.com).

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Omet KFlex press

Omet launches KFlex flexo press

The new KFlex from Omet is designed to be a versatile workhorse. Andy Thomas-Emans reports

Omet has launched a new flexo press platform, the KFlex, designed as a versatile machine capable of converting a wide range of label and filmic materials.

The KFlex is a modular platform press handling substrates from 12 microns up to aluminum lidding and light cartonboard. Targeted at end-use applications in the wine and spirits, food and beverage, household, industrial, healthcare and cosmetics markets, the press is designed to handle everything from self-adhesive labels to wet glue, multi-layer, wraparound and shrink sleeve labels to lids.

The KFlex press is available in two web widths, 430mm (16in) and 530mm (20in), with a maximum print speed of 200m/min (656ft/min).

Omet's new 'Switch' platform technology enables the rapid exchange of trolley-mounted slide in/slide out printing and converting units, allowing the KFlex to be quickly reconfigured and optimized for different production tasks.

The modules currently include a peel-and-seal module for producing multi-layer labels, booklets and coupons with up to three layers and seven printed faces, cold foil and lamination, embossing, coating, hot foil (available both on a rail and as a flatbed in-line station), and a delam-relam unit with web turning bars for back and front printing. Rotary silk screen units are also available.

The slide-in-slide-out Easy-Change Die-Cutting (ECDC) system allows for off-line die preparation and fast exchange of cylinders and flexible dies without the need for a lifting device.

The press has dual UV/LED-UV and hot air-drying paths on each print unit with an additional UV curing unit on the chill drum to provide an extended path for UV coating – all within an extremely compact footprint. The demo press was fitted with GEW's latest LeoLED water-cooled LED-UV lamps.

This arrangement gives converters enormous flexibility to set up different web path combinations to implement UV or water-based coating and reverse printing on films.

Each KFlex print unit incorporates dual servo drives enabling on-the-fly automatic print-to-print and print-to-die pre-register adjustment. Optionally, Omet can also fit a vision color-to-color automatic register adjustment system based on high-definition camera. This controls both machine and cross direction for each print unit in real-time, bringing the press quickly up to sellable color without operator intervention.

Omet CEO Antonio Bartesaghi tells L&L that the development of the KFlex demonstrates Omet's long-term commitment to the flexographic market.

'We have worked hard on ease of use and fast changeovers with our quick-change trolleys. We have the flexibility to change any unit



Antonio Bartesaghi, Omet CEO with the KFlex press

"We have worked hard on ease of use and fast changeovers with our quick-change trolleys. We have the flexibility to change any unit at any position on the press platform"

at any position on the press platform, so we are more flexible and efficient than many other flexo platforms on the market.'

He continues, 'We are also manufacturing these presses in a more efficient way by building the frames separately from the different functional units that go on top. Each goes on a different manufacturing path and is matched up at the end. This shortens our delivery times and has allowed us to keep production in Italy.'

Bartesaghi says the KFlex press was designed to be easy and intuitive to use, helping address the current skilled labor shortage.

'Auto pre-setting and camera control of registration means the press can be run without the need for a skilled operator,' says Bartesaghi.

Sustainability is another core concept for the KFlex press, particularly with the adoption of LED-UV curing. 'LED-UV is the future,' states Bartesaghi.



More information on the KFlex press will be available on the Omet stand at Labelexpo Americas (www.labelexpo-americas.com)



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Digital foil challenges tradition

Actega Metal Print's recent open house at its Lehrte, Germany, headquarters provided an opportunity to understand the performance and sustainability of its EcoLeaf technology firsthand. Adrian Tippetts reports

A sustainable technology ecosystem is not only defined by reducing the environmental and social burden, but it must be economical, and above all, there can be no compromise in quality.

This is especially so in the case of metallic effects. Silver or gold embellishments are a proven method of creating visual and sensual appeal that stands out on a crowded retail shelf, particularly in luxury wine, spirits, cosmetics goods, and many other premium sectors. While foiling may be renowned for its brightness, reflective color and fine detail, both hot and cold processes incur waste when a significant proportion of foil and adhesive is not used in the final product.

However, specialty coatings and inks manufacturer Actega seeks to challenge foil's dominance with EcoLeaf, a metallizing technology that promises equivalent quality – but without waste and with reduced operating costs.

Actega Metal Print hosted an open house event at its Lehrte, Germany headquarters to show that after five years of R&D development, EcoLeaf is now ready for the label converting market.

Only print what you need

EcoLeaf uses 'liquid foil' instead of plastic-backed reels used in conventional hot and cold foiling. By only placing metal flakes precisely where they are needed, EcoLeaf avoids the need for PET carrier film – and reels altogether. Actega claims the technology reduces the CO2 footprint by more than 50 percent compared with hot and cold foil.

The application process is similar to inks but uses pure metal flakes. These are processed and reproduced in a super flat monolayer, enabling mirroring and quality that rivals traditional foiling.

Trigger image process

The print result is created by printing a trigger image in a varnish-like material, applied by flexo, screen or inkjet printing. The trigger image is then UV-cured before passing to the metallization unit, which processes the metallic flakes from a liquid format to a fully dried, flattened surface and transfers it to the trigger image with a donor roller. No drying is needed, and the metallized web may then be overprinted with a variety of colors and coatings.



Actega's EcoLeaf unit integrated with an inkjet press was demonstrated at the open house event

“Ecoleaf is about achieving excellence with fewer materials, more process simplicity, and flexibility, more efficiency, with less waste”

Eliminating waste

Only the precise amount of foil needed on the package is used in the process, which means consumption is kept to a minimum, and the potential for waste reduction is significant.

“There is no other need for the unused foil and its adhesive. [Traditional foil] only gets used by 10, maybe 20 percent of the whole coverage area of the label. The rest is a waste that often gets either incinerated or sent to landfill,” says Paulo Grasso, sales director for EcoLeaf at Actega Metal Print.

Initial calculations from the company's life cycle assessment suggest that 1kg of EcoLeaf flakes replace 3,000kg of foil waste, eliminating 20 tonnes of CO2 emissions plus 250 liters of dirty, recyclable water.

Mirror effect

The flake production method assists EcoLeaf's high quality. Being a PVD (physical vapor deposition) coating, EcoLeaf flakes are smaller, while the edges and orientation are more regular and flatter than metallic inks. While metallic inks are more prone to scattering light and sparkling, EcoLeaf achieves a shiny, mirror effect.

In gloss level tests, EcoLeaf achieves 600 measurable gloss points, measured at a

60-degree angle, which for the human eye Actega claims is acceptable and comparable to the 700 gloss points of foil.

Rolled for image sharpness

The processing of the metal layer in the unit into a fully dried, flattened surface plays an important role in assuring a clean, sharp image – as does speed.

The metallization unit has a central impression configuration. The donor roller is a soft, silicone-coated sleeve mounted on an air mandrel in the middle of the machine. Surrounding this are seven process positions. The first process is an application station. Metal flakes, suspended in deionized water, are pumped into a cassette, then applied to the donor roller via counter-rotating rollers.

Next is a polishing station with chrome-coated rollers to smoothen and flatten the flakes. This application-polish sequence is repeated, then a squeegee removes excess water and flakes and is fed to a tank below for reuse. A hot air or infrared unit fully dries the metallic layer on the donor roller. At the nip point, the flakes are applied to the trigger image. Bonding is instant, as the varnish that forms the trigger image is specially formulated to attract the flakes, 'like a magnet,' in a way

“Packaging must be sustainable and beautiful - and embellishment needs to be there. But you shouldn't be throwing away unused materials in doing so. That is the vision of EcoLeaf”

that would not be possible with a standard varnish, Grasso says. No drying or curing is needed, and the metallized web passes to the next stage in the printing or converting sequence.

Seamless inline and near line integration

The EcoLeaf metallizing system can be integrated to run inline on narrow web presses and offline into finishing equipment. At the end of 2021, an agreement was reached for AB Graphic International to become exclusive distributors of EcoLeaf with the company's converting machines.

Actega showcased the EcoLeaf system on a Gallus press and demonstrated the productivity and flexibility for flexo applications. The metallizer is mounted on an optional overhead rail system which is easily slid into any position in the printing sequence. Only a standard anilox roll is suitable for applying the trigger image. For flexo, Actega claims speeds of up to 70 m/min are possible at optimum quality and stability.

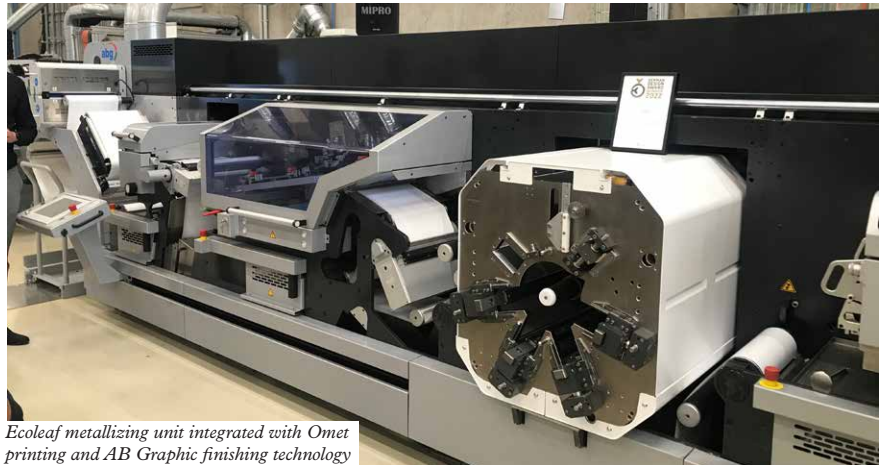
Screen if you want to print thicker

Using screen printing, Grasso claims single-pass laydown of up to 80-micron thickness is possible. The combined flexo and screen effects can be metallized using a single pass: it is simply a matter of applying the trigger image with those processes before metalization.

'Flexo is extremely beautiful on films or coated papers or for very fine details, like linework or micro text. With flatbed or rotary screen printing with the EcoLeaf, we get the beauty of haptic effects, simulating the embossing effect even on film,' Grasso says.

For inkjet, a digital UV print bar is used to jet the trigger image with 600x1200 resolution Ricoh Generation 5 printheads, chosen according to Grasso 'because of their capability of achieving the necessary jetting volume for haptic effects.'

'For inkjet applications, EcoLeaf will run apply a 10-micron deposit at up to



Ecoleaf metallizing unit integrated with Omet printing and AB Graphic finishing technology

50m/min or go to 20-micron with max 25m/min,' he states.

'With inkjet embellishments, we have a continuous flow of printing, with computer files activating the digital print bar. A series of short runs, perhaps of 500m can be run with immediate changeover and no material waste,' Grasso says.

Operational efficiency

Besides quality and sustainability, EcoLeaf contributes to lower operating costs in a variety of ways.

First is reduced stock holding, as eliminating the need for foil also cuts logistics and inventory costs. A tank of ink substitutes piles of different colors, diameters, and widths of foils – and their management.

Machine operation is straightforward, like any inking process: the metallizing unit features single button activation. With no reels, splicing or tooling, setup times are limited to plate and screen exchange for analog processes, while inkjet avoids these altogether.

Donor roller exchange takes seconds, enabled by a foot pedal-activated air compression.

Also, Actega leases rather than sells the unit to converters, charging on a pay-per-use basis.

The elimination of waste also helps the converter reduce the burden of 800 USD per ton levied by the EU on non-recyclable plastic packaging.

Furthermore, the metallized coating is safe for microwave ovens because, as seen under a microscope, the flakes do not quite touch each other. There is no conduction beyond a few centimeters of the surface. However, this makes EcoLeaf unsuitable for printed electronics.

Beta tests

In 2019, beta testing began at several label converting facilities across Europe to raise performance on flexo, screen, digital and hybrid digital presses. Among

these are Germark in Spain and Vollherbst, Kolbe-Coloco and All4Labels in Germany.

All4Labels's Witzhave, Germany, facility was the first to install the EcoLeaf unit on a digital hybrid press. Guided by Actega's R&D team, All4Labels has been testing several papers and films and began sample production at the beginning of 2022.

Chen Yan, head of global operation technology, All4Labels, says: 'The biggest component is the CO2 placed on the supply chain. We all need to make incremental changes in every business area to reduce CO2 footprint drastically. We must also show how we are supporting that reduction and enabling the younger consumer generation to succeed and achieve their own sustainability goals. As a technology that is helping us to improve our CO2 footprint by 50 percent, EcoLeaf is an example of that commitment.'

Certainly, for analog print applications, EcoLeaf metallizing speeds are comparable with traditional foiling speeds. Even so, the R&D team at AMP continues to investigate ways of driving up printing speeds. The key challenge to running at 120m/min and beyond is maintaining water and metal separation when the system spins faster, which is essential for image sharpness. R&D continues to raise the gloss count further and optimize suitability on a broader range of substrates.


There are plans to market EcoLeaf outside Europe from 2023 and, in due course, apply the technology to wider web packaging markets.

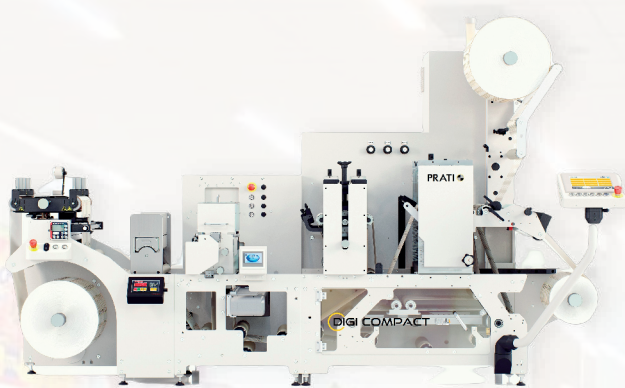
Grasso says: 'Packaging must be sustainable and beautiful - and embellishment needs to be there. But you shouldn't be throwing away unused materials in doing so. That is the vision of EcoLeaf: achieving excellence with fewer materials, more process simplicity and flexibility, more efficiency, with less waste.'



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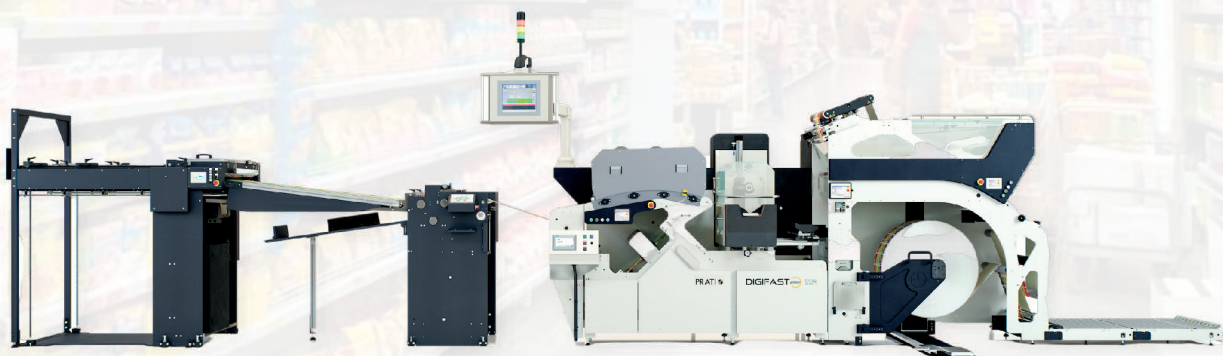


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Prati launches fully automated finishing line

At its Open House event in Faenza, Italy, Prati demonstrated a finishing line incorporating inkjet varnishing, laser die cutting and turret rewind. Andy Thomas-Emans reports

Prati has unveiled a fully automated digital embellishment and converting line, running from inkjet varnish and digital cold foil application to laser die cutting, waste stripping and turret rewind for non-stop operation.

The company says such a configuration is ideal for label converters looking to start a fully digital web-to-labeling/packaging/sticker business, as well as converters faced with the challenges of ultra-short run, personalized or highly customized finishing work - including intricate die cuts and micro-perforation.

The line is seen as ideal for short runs of promotional labels in the food and beverage, wine and spirits, cosmetics, personal care and home care sectors.

The DIGIFASTone is a fully modular finishing machine based on Prati's Futura Industry 4.0 open technology platform that allows Prati systems to be upgraded quickly and easily on-site rather than shipping back for a factory retrofit.

The DIGIFASTone demonstrated at the Open House event was fitted with a digital printing module capable of printing spot varnish and tactile effects and textures up to 130 microns high at speeds up to 50m/min.

The laser die cutting module is built by SEI Laser and operates at up to 100 linear meters/min, which would typically equal around 45m/min on a typical label job. Instantaneous job change is achieved by reading barcodes or QR-codes pre-printed on the digital press. There is no limit on label length, and substrates and liners of any thickness can be handled. The open house print sample was produced on cotton paper, which is difficult to die cut conventionally.

In S-D or D-S configurations, the DIGIFASTone can handle a wide variety of materials, including self-adhesive, clear-on-clear labels, wrap-around labels, shrink sleeves, plastic films, unsupported paper and plastic materials in a range of thicknesses from 12 to 350 microns.

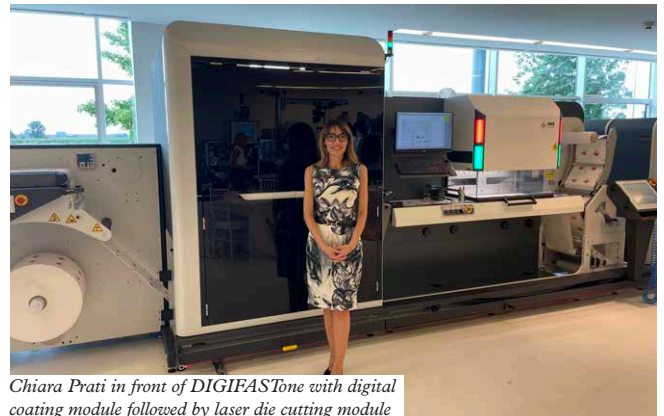
The full range of DIGIFASTone modules now includes a buffer for direct connection to a digital press, rotary and semi-rotary flexo units, digital coating unit, cold foiling, registered rotary and semi-rotary die-cutting, laser die-cutting, hot foiling and embossing, 100 percent print inspection, longitudinal cutting with manual and automatic blade positioning and single, double and turret rewinding.

A 'digital screen' module capable of printing braille dots and Marburg Medium fonts for pharma products can be built with a single Xaar 2002 GS12 HL printhead for coating thicknesses of 250 microns at speeds up to 25m/min or with a double print bar for thicknesses up to 280 microns at a speed of 50m/min.

Company CEO and CSO Chiara Prati explained to L&L that the DIGIFASTone was designed for a new era in which designers, 'limited only by their imagination,' will drive the application of digital finishing technology.

'In the past, designers must accept the limitations of analog technology. But digital printing, together with digital finishing, creates new possibilities not limited by the use of plates or tooling.

Designers are best placed to take advantage of all the nuances of finishing in the various phases of doming, varnishing, cutting, curing, foiling and slitting. This technology favors freedom and



Chiara Prati in front of DIGIFASTone with digital coating module followed by laser die cutting module

"In the past, designers must accept the limitations of analog technology. But digital printing, together with digital finishing, creates new possibilities not limited by the use of plates or tooling"

imagination for the producers of labels and packaging. It is also ideal for a PDF to packaging workflow.'

Chiara Prati also points to the high level of automation on the DIGIFASTone, which helps label converters faced with a shortage of skilled labor. A single semi-skilled operator can work the whole line.

Also on display at the open house was a Digifast20000 carton converting line. This is an exciting development that allows users of HP Indigo's 20000/25k press to switch between flexible packaging and folding carton production on the same finishing machine. It can be placed near line or inline using a specially developed buffer.

The Digifast20000 can handle materials from 12 to 600 microns in either roll-to-roll or roll-to-sheet configuration. It is fitted with a dual UV/hot air drying flexo coating station to handle UV or water-based coatings for the food industry.

The sheeter section with vacuum belt and stacker can be disconnected from the Digifast20000 when starting film production. The whole line has a high degree of automation, with no manual setting involved.

Other machines shown at the open house included the compact Digicomcompact digital label finisher, available in roll-to-roll, roll-to-sheet and roll-to-stack configurations, and a Saturn Bidi inspection-rewinder dedicated to cosmetics and pharma label finishing.



For more information on the machinery mentioned in this article, visit the Prati stand at Labelexpo Americas in September (www.labelexpo-americas.com).

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Stepping into automation

Automating the label production process is a real challenge, but there are great opportunities for those who understand the intricacies of a digital workflow, says GM's CEO Uffe Nielsen

Digital transformation is accelerating throughout society. Businesses are looking to save costs by finding greener and more agile ways to stay competitive and future-proof their companies. Reducing human intervention by moving toward higher levels of automation is seen as one of the crucial answers.

In the label world, we are following the same trends with more automation and better connectivity built into increasingly digitized machines capable of talking to us and each other. Customers want faster delivery of more sustainable products, multiple sorts and shorter print runs. Digital printing technology allows printing small orders and many different SKUs at short notice. Meanwhile, process automation promises to cut down overall production time and reduce waste to a minimum.

With more automation and faster finishing, are manufacturing and same-day delivery a reality for today's label converters? In short, yes. But really, it depends on several factors. To understand the whole picture, let's examine the pain points.

Step 1: Move to tool-free cutting

The biggest bottleneck in label converting is conventional die-cutting which requires a new cutting tool for each job, which adds a significant amount of time and cost to the process. You could choose to standardize production and only offer a limited number of label shapes or convince customers to use an existing die. However, the converting line must still be stopped to change the tooling and perform set-up between jobs.

A much bigger issue arises when we talk about short and ultra-short runs. When printing digitally, all these small jobs are ganged together on one roll to optimize the use of material and take advantage of machine uptime. This is not a problem for the digital press, but where traditional die-cutting falls short. The solution to both problems is laser cutting, a technology that only a small number of label converters have successfully implemented in their production.

With GM's new advanced and highly automated LC350 Laser Cutter, we are looking at a much faster, more efficient and cost-effective finishing process. Furthermore, it is naturally more sustainable because you will not be using large amounts of energy for manufacturing, transporting and storing a die inventory.

Step 2: Build a seamless workflow

However, faster and more efficient cutting on its own is not enough. The production process must be analyzed and changed into a digital and connected workflow. No more silos where the print department is completely separate from the finishing department; no more storage facilities full to the brim with rolls and rolls of different substrates – lean integration and a waste-free workflow is the name of the game.

Let's look at an example. GM is the main supplier to a large customer, which is today leading the way in web2print for labels. The company was producing labels with a lead time of 14 days but wanted to become a market disruptor with same-day delivery of high-quality products, so we stepped in with our laser expertise and helped it overhaul the set-up.

More than just installing a laser cutter, we looked at all the aspects involved, such as how to get the order from the online system and into the machine and how many substrates they should offer. And we implemented zero-transition technology based on QR codes for super fast job changeovers to ensure every label shipped



Uffe Nielsen, CEO of GM, shows the factory in Denmark where all machines are produced

“Process automation promises to cut down overall production time and reduce waste to a minimum”

is cut with precision and there is no waste.

With GM laser cutting as the core enabler, this is now a successful 24/7 operation with a seamless workflow where all the steps have been fully optimized and connected, from ordering to dispatch. Ultra-short runs? Not a problem. Even an order for 10 labels is viable.

Step 3: Make connectivity work for you

Connectivity plays a huge role in successful label production. The integration of laser cutting with a management information system (MIS) can fully automate the workflow, and this is where we will find real productivity gains. GM partners with Cerm, which means the LC350 Laser Cutter can speak directly via JDF/JMF to the MIS and be an active part of the end-to-end solution.

We have built the GM Dashboards so that the entire production flow is visualized in a simple way. This full factory overview makes it easy to see if the daily production targets are met, or a machine is down, so productivity can be optimized. The system is designed on an open software platform that is compatible with most of the MIS systems used in our industry, including Cerm or solutions such as Microsoft Power BI (Business Intelligence).

Step 4: Manage expectations

We are, however, some years away from full-on 'lights out' automated production of labels, so you should be realistic about the concepts of 'digital transformation' and 'automation.' Collaborate with your trusted supplier to find the best way to maximize the potential for your business and your customers. What works for one business may not be the right solution for another, so apply some common sense.

For GM, this means speaking to our customers to understand what their needs are, so we can recommend a solution that is stable, robust, and most of all repeatable. This is a holistic approach that considers the entire operation to ensure our customers fully exploit the benefits of our technology and make it work for them to lay a solid foundation for future growth.



Uffe Nielsen will present at the Digital Embellishment Master Class at Labelexpo Americas 2022. Go to www.labelexpo-americas.com for more information.



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Watermarking clouds

Digimarc presses forward with ambitious plans to help brands combat counterfeiting and give consumers complete visibility of their purchases. Piotr Wnuk reports

US-based Digimarc Corporation is a leading provider of enterprise software and services, which includes digital identifiers such as serialized QR codes designed to address counterfeiting, product authenticity and supply chain traceability. Digimarc products are created for multiple industries such as apparel, consumer packaged goods, health and beauty and automotive.

L&L readers might be familiar with the watermarking technology developed by Digimarc to track and increase recycling accuracy. It was ultimately chosen as the most effective way of improving post-consumer recycling through more effective material sorting by the collaborative HolyGrail project, established under the auspices of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

Unlocking visibility

Digimarc's ambition reaches further than solving problems of recyclable waste. The company cemented its drive to develop the next generation of digital identification and detection-based technology in November 2021 with the acquisition of London-based cloud company Evrythng.

'This acquisition allowed us to provide a complete solution set to our customers,' says Riley McCormack, CEO of Digimarc. 'The best determinant of a technology product's value is how much of the customer's problem it can solve. By combining Digimarc's unique and advanced means of identification with the advanced supplier business intelligence using any means of identification, we are now uniquely positioned to unlock additional solutions for our customers and enhance their Digimarc journey.'

'Not only are our products and technology competencies directly complementary and naturally connected, but our company values and cultures are deeply aligned, with a focus on executing as a team, committing to audacious goals, and genuine innovation with exceptional talent,' adds Niall Murphy, CEO and co-founder of Evrythng.

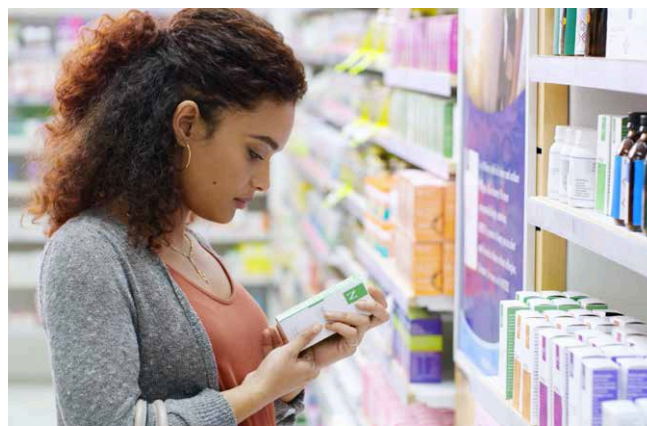
Evrythng pioneered Product Cloud category technology, linking every product to its Active Digital Identity on the web and joining data across the value chain for visibility, validation, real-time intelligence and connection with people.

Combining Digimarc's unique means of identification with the Evrythng Product Cloud makes it possible to gather and apply traceability data from across the product lifecycle, unlocking end-to-end visibility and authenticity through item-level, real-time intelligence, and analytics. This technological combination unlocked the full potential of data, from enabling more sustainable, transparent and secure supply chains to empowering consumers to verify the authenticity of products and recyclability of their packaging.

How worried are consumers?

Consumers' desire for authentic products isn't limited to luxury goods. They expect the products they buy for themselves and their families to be the real deal. A new report by Digimarc carried out across 4,000 consumers by an independent research firm Censuswide explores what brand integrity and values mean to consumers and shows that they are more critical than ever before.

'Being able to verify that a product is authentic is now important to 73 percent of consumers and over half (59 percent) said transparency into how and where a product was made was key to



According to a report which Digimarc carried out with independent research firm Censuswide, consumers' desire for authentic products isn't limited to luxury goods

“Being able to verify that a product is authentic is now important to 73 percent of consumers and over half said transparency into how and where a product was made was key to their purchasing decisions”

their purchasing decisions,' says Ken Sickles, chief product officer at Digimarc. 'Furthermore, with 45 percent of consumers concerned about which country a product has come from and 38 percent advising that they consider the number of miles it has traveled, brands cannot escape the high demand to better demonstrate and communicate their integrity and values to consumers.'

The findings highlight how brands must do more to protect their integrity and limit their exposure to the damaging impact counterfeit products can have on consumers, as well as their own reputation. Still, a third (36 percent) cite difficulties in getting critical information on claims from the brands they shop with about their products' authenticity, origin, ingredients or sustainability.

Being able to track the product along the supply chain, see the package journey and scanning a QR code to prove it also appealed, with 64 percent saying they'd happily scan a QR code if it gave them the information quickly and easily, and 52 percent of millennials saying they've used QR codes more over the last two years.

'The challenge brands face from counterfeiters is multifaceted with sales online, the altering of packaging and product labels, as well as infringement of intellectual property,' comments Sickles. 'The need to address counterfeiting is no longer just about protecting brand reputation. It is also about protecting consumers' health and safety and must be addressed.'

'As this research highlights, consumers also have a vested interest in ensuring the products they purchase are authentic, with nearly half of respondents saying it would help them feel reassured they are purchasing an authentic product if they had a way to check the manufacturer's claims. It's hugely positive, therefore, to see



Being able to track the product along the supply chain to see the package journey by scanning a QR code appealed to 64 percent of respondents



The Brand Integrity Solution aims to protect brand reputations by giving every product a digital presence connected to a cloud-based record of its journey and interactions

“The need to address counterfeiting is no longer just about protecting brand reputation. It is also about protecting consumers’ health and safety”

that nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of respondents would happily scan a QR code if it gave them the information quickly and easily. Adopting this technology will enable brands to unite with their consumers, keeping their products real and protecting their reputation.’

Authentication simplified

To answer those worries, Digimarc went a step further and, in May 2022, added its watermarking technology to the newly developed Brand Integrity Solution, which gives brands and their customers more sophisticated and flexible ways to verify the authenticity of products.

The company’s data-driven approach involves assigning each product a serialized digital identity that can be tracked in the cloud and accessed through various on-package digital triggers, including the secure and covert digital watermark.

‘As counterfeiters have become more sophisticated and supply chains more diffuse, companies are recognizing that traditional brand protection approaches largely reactive and reliant on trained inspectors and specialized equipment are both ineffective and inefficient,’ notes Sickles. ‘We created a unique digital solution that leverages the ubiquity of smartphones and other digital devices to make product authentication much more streamlined and less prone to human error.’

Moreover, Digimarc’s support of dual-factor authentication, such as scanning QR codes and digital watermarks on a single package, provides a strong defense against bad actors accustomed to easily circumventing lesser brand protection measures.

‘Digitizing products with QR codes is a great starting point,’ adds Sickles. ‘But, when coupled with a robust product cloud and covert digital watermarks, brands can gain even greater visibility into their products and offer their consumers the chance to do the same.’

Companies lack actionable intelligence about several product attributes without a singular source for product data. The Digimarc Brand Integrity Solution aims to protect their reputations by giving every product a digital presence connected to a cloud-based record of its journey and interactions. This can prove a product’s authenticity, uncover counterfeiters and their origin, and provide insight into a product’s supply chain so that brands can anticipate issues and act fast.

Theory in production

In June 2022, Digimarc partnered with Sealed Air, a company established to solve critical packaging challenges. Its automated packaging systems help promote a safer, more resilient, and less

wasteful global food supply chain, enable e-commerce, and protect goods transported worldwide.

The partnership is projected to bring product digitization to markets like food proteins, eCommerce fulfillment, industrials and consumer goods at scale through smart packaging. Product digitization will allow brands to maximize the value of every package to deliver on consumer demands for authenticity, sustainability and personalized consumer experiences. Product digitization will also drive operational improvements by illuminating a product’s supply chain journey.

‘Brand owners understand that physical products are powerful, direct-to-consumer communication channels. Digimarc’s new joint offering with Sealed Air makes the brand-consumer connection easier than ever,’ claims Curt Schacker, global head of digital printing and packaging at Digimarc. ‘Smart packaging also allows for smart supply chains, enabling operational efficiencies not available with the status quo. We chose to partner with Sealed Air because of the company’s leadership in printing variable, serialized flexible packaging at mass scale, a cornerstone of any smart packaging initiative.’

‘The work we are doing with Sealed Air enables consumers to confirm product authenticity, access product origin and provenance information, and verify critical sustainability information that today’s consumers crave in the quest for brand integrity and circularity,’ adds Schacker.

‘By combining Digimarc’s leading product digitization platform and watermarking technology with our new digital printing and packaging solution, prismiq, and our proven packaging expertise, we are expediting our digital packaging efforts to deliver a complete, end-to-end solution for brands and consumers,’ confirms Carrie Giaimo, vice president of digital business development at Sealed Air.

Smart packaging allows every product to be ‘born digital’ at the time of manufacture. By giving every product item a unique digital identity in the product cloud, brands can fully benefit from product digitization. It ensures a product’s authenticity, improves circularity, powers a smarter supply chain, and opens an owned-media channel for direct-to-consumer engagement and the delivery of contextualized experiences. At the same time, brands receive invaluable, real-time data intelligence to drive future sales, marketing, and other critical business strategies.



For more information about Digimarc’s Brand Integrity Solution, visit www.digimarc.com/solutions/retail-brand/brand-protection

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Beontag becomes a global RFID player

Thanks to rapid growth and multiple acquisitions, Beontag has become the world's second-largest RFID tag manufacturer. James Quirk reports

Rapid growth and a spate of recent acquisitions have propelled Beontag to the position of second largest RFID tag manufacturer in the world – despite only moving into the sector in 2013 and beginning exports in 2018.

Beontag began its days as CCRR, a merger between Brazilian labelstock manufacturer Colacril and Brazilian converter RR Etiquetas, but rebranded last year as part of its drive for international expansion. It started manufacturing RFID tags in 2013 and now claims a 90 percent share of the Brazilian market. In the last year, its international growth has been exponential, with six acquisitions in Europe so far – completed within 12 months – and plans are in place for additional deals.

“Everything has been done in a thoughtful fashion. We have been watching the market and preparing for many years”

In April 2021, Beontag acquired France-based Digital Tags. Six months later, it tied up deals for Italian company LabID and the RFID arm of Finland-based Stora Enso. In January this year, Beontag acquired the Scandstick Group, a manufacturer of self-adhesive materials with factories in Sweden, Belgium, Slovenia and Poland. This was swiftly followed by the purchase of Temera, an Italian company known for its Internet of Things software and technology for RFID and BlockChain.

In April, Beontag finalized a deal with Confidex, a provider of RFID, NFC and BLE (Bluetooth Low Energy) products for mobility, logistics and industrial clients, with operations in Finland, China, France, Netherlands and the United States. These acquisitions are expected to multiply Beontag's revenue by two and a half times this year.

The company has set up a new head office in Milan, Italy. Senior executives – including CEO Ricardo Lobo – have relocated there and elsewhere in Europe. Now present in 14 countries and exporting worldwide, Beontag's next target is the United States, with an acquisition in advanced stages and expected to be announced soon. Its sights are set on Asia for the next stage of its global expansion.

Rapid expansion

The seeds for this rapid expansion were sown around a decade ago when CCRR received private equity backing from BTG Pactual, the largest investment bank in Latin America. This prompted the move into RFID production. Later, the first phase of acquisitions focused on the Brazilian market, including synthetic paper distributor Syntpaper and the office label converter Pimaco, formerly owned by BIC.

Beontag, which is 40 years old, has 35 percent of the coating market in Brazil and operates slitting centers locally as well as in Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay. The company is in the process of installing a new state-of-the-art coater which should



Beontag CEO Ricardo Lobo



Beontag's facility in Campo Mourão, Brazil

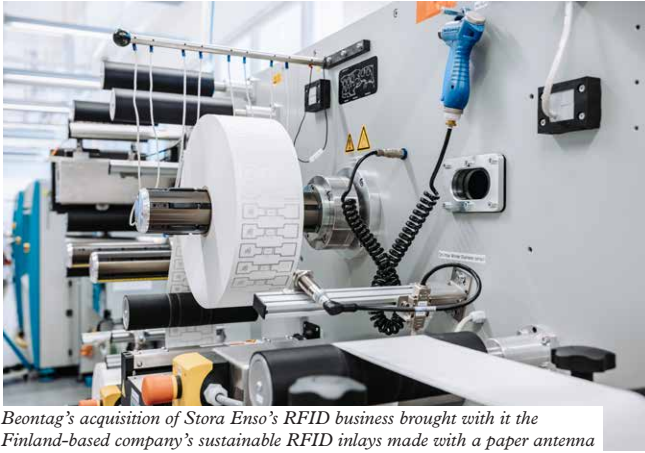
Unique technology for sustainable inlays

Beontag's acquisition last year of Stora Enso's RFID business brought with it the Finland-based company's development of sustainable RFID inlays made with a paper antenna.

The ECO RFID Tag emits less than half the CO2 compared to a PET tag and is fully recyclable and compostable since it has fewer layers than a standard tag.

The product range includes a paper tag for microwave use. It is designed for item-level tagging and tracking of ready-meals. The tag does not need to be removed from the food package before microwave heating and can be recycled.

'Sustainable products are the main pillar of our ESG strategy, and that is why we have been investing in new technologies that can unleash our clients' goals in sustainability. No one has an RFID tag that is as eco-friendly as ours,' says Beontag CEO Ricardo Lobo.



Beontag's acquisition of Stora Enso's RFID business brought with it the Finland-based company's sustainable RFID inlays made with a paper antenna

“We used to try to follow what international companies were doing. Now we can be in the avant-garde”

Beontag installs Mark Andy P7 press

Beontag recently installed a 20in Mark Andy Performance Series P7 flexo press, fitted with a Tamarack RFID unit, at its Campo Mourão, Paraná, Brazil plant.

‘We did a lot of research and compared solutions from several manufacturers. I visited them all, and after seeing all the advantages of each machine, we chose to go with Mark Andy,’ says Marcio Muniz, vice president of digital transformation of Beontag. ‘The final decision was made based on scalability and the capacity of offering RFID tags with images, perfect flexography, and cutting-edge technology.’

The Performance Series P7 is equipped with a Tamarack P500 RFID unit that operates at speeds up to 500ft/min. In addition, it has four flexo print stations, reversed stations that allow printing on both sides of the substrate, and the capability of combining different layers of material. It also offers two die-cutting stations and can process up to six streams of finished rolls simultaneously.

Muniz also highlights the sustainability advantages of the machine. ‘By running it correctly, the press can significantly reduce waste, energy and optimize the production process, leading to savings. The machine is so fast and so powerful that it can run up to 250,000 labels, depending on specifications, in about 40 minutes – something that would take us a whole shift to accomplish when using our off-line equipment.’

All these benefits align with Beontag’s circular economy goals to reduce waste. ‘The company takes environmental, social and corporate governance seriously. We carefully look at everything and everyone affected by our activities and develop best practices based on what will have the most positive impact,’ says Barbara Dunin, director of ESG, marketing and communications at Beontag. ‘The company has recently signed the UN Global Compact and launched an ESG strategy with KPIs and quantified targets to evaluate the program.’

The press was installed by Mark Andy’s Brazilian distributor PTC Graphic Systems, run by Miguel Troccoli. ‘They had a lot of courage to embrace a project like the P7 with RFID in-line, as it put them on another level of production. But Beontag has a unique administration and is managed by young, well-prepared, professional leaders. They are a market reference.’

expand capacity in Brazil by up to 50 percent. The Germany-built machinery has a dual adhesive system, capable of providing products both in hotmelt and acrylic, as well as a state-of-the-art drying system. With a length of 82m, an operating speed of 400m per minute, and a working width of 1,500mm, the machine also has a surface defects detection system.

Ricardo Lobo joined Beontag from BTG Pactual in 2015, becoming CFO and then CEO the following year. A chemical engineer by training, he studied in Brazil and France, completed his MBA in the United States, and worked for Procter & Gamble in eastern Europe before joining BTG’s private equity division.

‘It is a global market, so we have to be present in all continents to serve global brands. We are building a multi-national company as best we can,’ he explains.

‘We are getting the right advice. We have built an M&A team and raised investment. Everything has been done in a thoughtful fashion. We have been watching the market and preparing for many years. We are doing well – the companies we have acquired are being integrated quickly and effectively. We have fantastic technologies and people thanks to these acquisitions.’

The local and international acquisitions – a mixture of labelstock manufacturers and smart technology providers – have brought Beontag exposure to a wide variety of technologies and markets. Still, they adhere to a business model put in place long before the private equity investment supercharged the company’s growth: divisions that are complementary, technology that can be applied across many market sectors, and opportunities for cross-selling.

‘We don’t have channel conflict,’ explains Lobo. ‘We work in many vertical markets where there is not much integration, so you need to supply software and support as well as the products. We are in more verticals in different industries than anyone else. Apparel, of course, but also many other areas: toll roads, banking, luxury goods, leisure, tickets, industrials, pharma and more.’

The acquisition of Scandstick is a good example. It offers Beontag presence in multiple EU markets, with coating or slitting facilities in Sweden, Belgium, Slovenia and Poland.

It also has a linerless label business, Linerless AB, capable of producing uncoated self-adhesive materials with reduced environmental impact, which Beontag plans to expand into other parts of the world.

‘We have many synergies with Scandstick, so we are going to be able to cross-sell a lot,’ says Lobo. ‘They have impressive technologies which we did not possess, and similarly, there are things that we can do that they can’t. There is a really interesting synergy and potential for integration. But most important are the people that come with the acquisition.’

Following the acquisitions, Beontag now has a higher revenue in the United States and Europe than in Brazil. Thirty-five percent of revenue comes from RFID; 65 percent from self-adhesive materials and labels. Products from both business areas are exported worldwide, though the RFID products perhaps have a greater reach – they are exported throughout North and South America, Europe, Asia, China and India.

‘Most of what we do comes in a full bundle – RFID inlays (both dry and wet), software applications and label printing,’ says Lobo. ‘We don’t produce prime labels, just RFID labels and labelstock.’

‘We want to serve well the key clients in the key markets, wherever they are, with the best technology in the most verticals. That will ultimately give us a leadership position, but it would also be going about it in the right way. We used to try to follow what international companies were doing. Now we can be in the avant-garde.’



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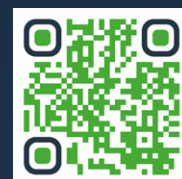
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Emege Impresores has five decades of experience in folding carton production for the pharma industry

Eye on complex pharma print inspection

Argentine folding carton manufacturer invests in a bespoke print inspection system designed by EyeC to ensure 100 percent quality control at every step of the production process. Piotr Wnuk reports

Emege Impresores, a folding carton manufacturer based in Buenos Aires, Argentina, has five decades of experience in cardboard box production with a strong focus on the pharmaceutical industry. Working in one of the most challenging market segments, the company strives to provide the best quality and efficiency required from any packaging printer, on top of the stringent regulations and quality control required by its customers.

“It was crucial to have someone who understood the application flow end-to-end, who could provide real-time feedback about what customization is feasible and what is not”

To prevent product defects, the company devoted a significant number of its personnel to focus entirely on strict manual controls and information checks. This move proved time-consuming yet did not provide 100 percent error-free production, leading to additional costs, frustrated employees and unsatisfied customers. Perhaps most importantly, it didn't align with the company's overall business strategy.

To optimize business performance and inspection processes and to rule out potential defects when dealing with non-standardized customer data, such as incorrect Braille embossing, the Emege Impresores management team began a search for an automated technology.

Rafael Gómez, chief executive officer at Emege Impresores, learned about the EyeC inspection systems at drupa 2016.

'We considered our options carefully, and EyeC had the strongest product portfolio,' says Gómez. 'Roy Jiménez, EyeC's sales and service manager played an essential role in finding the right solution for us by asking the right questions and helping us to envision our business requirements.'

Bespoke system

Germany-based EyeC developed and implemented a bespoke system based on its Proofifier 1200DT series to ensure 100 percent

quality control, from pre-press through press makeready to the finished product.

'The system makes handling even large or thin samples straightforward and safe. It verifies the complete sample content as print-to-file or print-to-print against a signed-off PDF file or printed proof, in any language,' adds Gómez.

Several operators are now using the EyeC Proofifier 1200 DT as part of their pre-press and quality control daily work schedules. Every time a sheet is compared to an original PDF, the system is used to scan the printed sheet, barcodes and Braille. Once a job is put on the press, the first sheet is checked, then every 3,000 sheets after that.

Gómez adds: 'Thanks to the user-friendly interface, our operators use the system consistently because they feel supported to avoid mistakes. This enables us to ensure we can meet the complex requirements of our customers.'

The Proofifier also fully inspects Braille and 1D codes thanks to intelligent technology. Every time a job is completed, the system creates an inspection report, which certifies quality. At the same time, employees can keep track of inspection results. All these functionalities were integrated into the final system design so that operators at Emege Impresores can quickly check deviations and ensure that the quality meets specifications.

EyeC provided technical support remotely and on-site in Spanish regarding the implementation and training throughout the project.

Emege Impresores' main objective was to control the assembly of the sheet with the adaptation of the artwork and then the printed sheet.

To date, the company can record significant manufacturing cost savings, significantly fewer rejects, and higher quality. This translates into less complicated handoffs and reduced time required to bring new folding cartons to customers and the market.

'Since we installed the EyeC inspection system in our plant, we are more certain and confident that our work will have a good outcome, which helps us strengthen our customer and partner relationships simultaneously,' says Gómez.

'The value the EyeC Proofifier provides us as a company of quality, and superior security is undeniable. I would very much recommend it,' concludes Gómez.




For more information about Emege Impresores go to emegeimpresores.com or eyec.com to learn more about EyeC

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Holography against counterfeiting

Counterfeiting is an economic pandemic affecting large numbers of businesses and brands around the world. Akanksha Meena reports

According to a report issued in 2021 by Authentication Solution Providers' Association, counterfeiting costs the Indian economy a whopping 1,000 billion INR (12.9 billion USD) every year. In fact, one in three Indian adults has been the victim of fake products from e-commerce websites, making online counterfeiting the fastest growing business crime. Alarmingly, counterfeiting incidents increased by an average of 20 percent from 2018 to 2020.

“As counterfeiting remains pervasive, the potential of holography is likely to grow”

A report by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry underlines that 31.6 percent of the FMCG personal goods space is spurious. In the automotive aftermarket sector, which is worth INR 40,000 crore (USD 5bn), counterfeited fake automotive components are responsible for up to 20 percent of road accidents in India, says a study by Nielsen and Automotive Component Manufacturing Association of India. In the healthcare and pharma sector, counterfeited medicines occupy more than 30 percent of the pharma market and create a healthcare nightmare for the developing world.

Yogesh Kapur, executive vice president of UFlex's holography business, says that while counterfeiting is a global issue, malpractices higher in India due to a lack of specific legislation to address counterfeiting. Only a few Indian states have dedicated crime enforcement units to take action against reported counterfeit cases.

“What adds more to these incidents is the dearth of anti-counterfeiting technologies in India, as it becomes difficult for the compliance enforcement and investigative officers to identify the difference between genuine and fake,” he adds.

Kapur also cites a lack of adoption of available technologies, leading to difficulty identifying the original product. “The biggest reason that is a fertilizer to counterfeiting is the mindset of Indian consumers to accept look-alike counterfeited products as they are much cheaper than the original. It gives them a fake status symbol but at the cost of several factors including product performance, impact on health and value for money,” he notes.

Some leading pharma and medical companies have directed their efforts at authenticating packaging to protect their products. Holograms have become one of the most widely used overt authentication features on pharma products around the world.

Holography provides overt first-line authentication, while covert features such as scrambled images, micro-text and UV-sensitive or other specialty inks provide second-line authentication for trained examiners equipped with appropriate decoding equipment.

Another important trend Kapur highlights is the serialization of holograms as part of systems that combine authentication with traceability, with track-and-trace systems linking on-pack security devices with database management and field-tracking services. In this way, knowing where a particular consignment has been, where it is now, and where it is heading has become a fundamental part of production and logistic operations. This technology, coupled with single seal holographic labels that prevent duplicity is playing its part in preventing counterfeiting incidents.

Latentogram

UFlex has recently developed Latentogram hologram technology. It is a polarized covert image applied on a reflecting layer. Latentogram can contain textual, graphic or hidden images that can be made into self-adhesive labels in several shapes and sizes. It can be customized in any design or logo and creates infinite possibilities with invisible text, graphics and photos of people or with alternative numbering. It is a tamper-resistance technology that prevents security features from being re-used, thus adding a protective layer.

Latentogram works through an authenticity identifier – a device that has a special film as the main element, which allows the user to see covert images on the Latentogram. It verifies the authenticity of the security element applied on a document or on packaging by simply placing the identities on the Latentogram and decoding the covert elements. There are other options as well, for example, tangent reader, nano text and 3D motion.

“Brand owners should consider that the more successful and recognized their brand becomes, their chances of falling prey to counterfeiting products and practice is likely to grow manifold. The question is, should brand owners wait to implement a



Yogesh Kapur, executive vice president of UFlex's holography business

program only after they become a victim to counterfeit products, or take preventive steps beforehand?’ Kapur says.

As counterfeiting remains pervasive, the potential of holography is likely to grow. ‘Today, with investment in holograms, holographic technologies and development of new and improved holographic applications, the segment is witnessing an upsurge in India. It is interesting to see sectors other than FMCG, pharmaceuticals, automotive take cognizance of the impact that counterfeiting could bring and are taking preventive actions beforehand.’

India is taking leaps in holographic innovation, including 3D UV-embossed holographic labels and self-kiosk labels, as well as opening doors to brand promotion and customer loyalty through engaging QR codes on packaging.

With the growing number of counterfeiting incidents, the focus is shifting towards traceability, consumer food safety, inventory accuracy and management, including first-in first-out. ‘We learned that winning at the shelf is not enough anymore; brands must win in the online shopping cart too.’

The growth of e-commerce in India has customers more prone to fall prey to counterfeited goods.

In an effort to curb counterfeiters, the Indian government is mandating QR codes on the labels of all APIs manufactured or imported in India, at each level of packaging, to enable tracking and tracing of the pharma ingredients. This rule is expected to come into force on Jan 1.



For more from Akanksha Meena on the Indian label market, go to www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/akanksha-meena

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A-Z of packaging development

Manish Mehta, MD of Reifenhauer, describes his new venture Packult as a closed-loop packaging company. Akanksha Meena reports

Packult, established in 2021, provides complete packaging service to brands right from ideation, product research, development, design, supply chain management and execution in line with industry regulations and protocols.

Manish Mehta, MD of Reifenhauer and Packult's founder, Mehta says that as a technology provider, the company was functioning behind the curtains in the packaging industry and was not in direct contact with brand owners and end-users. The start-up allows him the opportunity to be at the forefront of packaging development.

The new company benefits from Reifenhauer's rich expertise in extrusion, lamination, printing, coating digital, flexo, gravure, slitting and pouching, pre-press and inspection technologies but functions as an entirely separate entity with a separate team. Reifenhauer is the backbone of Packult.

Expertise

Packult developed its knowledge base with raw material suppliers such as Exxon Mobil, Dow, Reliance and Gail. Then it moved on to inks, adhesives and coating materials and worked on understanding the converting process.

Mehta says that with Reifenhauer's technology expertise, he has been able to find ways to use technology to solve current issues in the industry. 'For example, we sold high-end coating machines 4-5 years ago and they are still not commonly seen in the market. But we can achieve a lot by coating. You can make a polyester or BOPP film with a special coating that has very high barrier properties instead of creating multi-layer films that pose tremendous challenges in recycling.'

'We can challenge with alternative materials. Hence, we decided why not come out as a solution provider either to converters or brand owners. There are many small to mid-sized companies that might need our help and cannot afford independent packaging departments. During the Covid years, I realized why not come forward and supply the know-how that is missing.'

Start-up brands usually have to reach out to multiple suppliers for different types of packaging requirements. Packult offers the complete service in-house from design, pre-press, color and logo design to final product.

The company has an in-house graphic designer and creative visualizer. Brands need only to send a PDF file to receive the final job.

'Then comes process know-how. We can offer them complete packaging no matter the product's property, including packaging machines. This provides a complete closed loop.'

Packult also provides consultancy services for brand owners interested in investing in new and advanced technology. They receive technical guidance along with training.

'We are merging Reifenhauer and Packult's activities in terms of knowledge sharing, experience, expertise selling,' Mehta says.

Mehta describes it a passion-driven initiative. The stakeholders in the company apart from Mehta include Reifenhauer Germany, Nippon Paper Industries Japan and Comexi Spain.

Packult aims to offer technology support to enhance productivity and operations for converters for which it has a dedicated process control department.

If not maintained correctly, technology can become redundant and lose its initial productivity or capabilities. When this happens, machines might spend more energy, manpower and time. And converters might hesitate to reach out to machine manufacturers



Manish Mehta, founder of Packult and MD of Reifenhauer

“We are merging Reifenhauer and Packult’s activities in terms of knowledge sharing, experience, expertise selling”

because the cost of repair and technicians becomes very high, Mehta explains.

This is another challenge that Packult will address by offering technical support to these converters and helping them regain original levels of productivity.

'That's how we combine the product mix – process control, packaging design and innovation. I feel that we were behind the curtain earlier but with this, we will come to the front. We don't want to do standard jobs, we are more interested in design innovation,' Mehta adds.

Packult will focus on establishing market presence in India and opening additional branches in the first few years. Later on, it will extend international branches in countries including the Middle East and Africa to begin with. It will also collaborate with international companies in designing and circular economy initiative R Cycle for support in sustainability.

Additionally, it will also cooperate with ad agencies.

Currently, a team of 15 leads Packult in the same premises as Reifenhauer but is entirely independent. Mehta is heading the new entity at the moment but plans to hire someone else for the role by the end of 2022.

The company already has a few projects on hand and has the capacity to take on more work.

'We are evolving and don't have rigid policies. We know the goals that we want to achieve. Cooperation and collaboration are a way of life. As long as our interests are taken care of, we are allowed to run the company, tech data and security are not touched and the decisions are taken together, we will work towards the same goal,' Mehta concludes.



For more from Akanksha Meena on the Indian label market, go to www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/akanksha-meena



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Unlocking creative freedom

Chandigarh, India-based non-alcoholic beverage start-up Quirky Beverages Company (QBC), unlocked new creative opportunities in labels and packaging when it switched to digital print technology. Akanksha Meena reports

Fresh graduate Vivek Sonar was out with his friends in 2016 when he noticed that the Indian market lacked quality non-alcoholic beverages apart from established brands like Coca-Cola and Pepsi.

Sonar says that the so-called 'beverage revolution' in India began in 2018 when new beverage brands started appearing in the market.

A passionate entrepreneur, Sonar jumped at the opportunity to start his brand of non-alcoholic beverages, called Quirky Beverages Company (QBC). He found success in the very first year.

“I place labels higher than what’s inside because that is what sells. We can make the finest products, but if the packaging does not do justice, it will not sell”

The positive market response motivated him to push the brand further despite the challenges of a start-up.

'We run our company for people,' Sonar says. 'People love our product. They love to flaunt them and tag us on social media. When we see people enjoying our product, it makes us happy. That is where we feel we are different from other brands. That was our core starting point, and that is still where we are still.'

He then took a break from the market to focus on product and packaging research and development.

'Technology advances every day, and we have to keep up with them,' Sonar says. 'Printing and packaging exhibitions have helped us immensely in terms of learning, getting to know the right people and new technologies.'

Sonar met with HP in 2020 and says that the digital press manufacturer helped resolve the brand's labels and packaging concerns. HP recommended a converter that prints QBC's labels and shrink sleeves.

He says: 'Usually, when we go with conventional print technology set up, we are stuck with one label design, and you need to get out almost 2.3 million labels at once. That was holding us back on several of our products.'

Quirky Beverages Company was forced to stick with one label wrap-around design for its entire range of products. It could not experiment and prototype with the inability to order short runs. The brand was finding it difficult to launch new product variants that required new label designs and formats.

Exploring label formats

Switching to HP Indigo digital print technology enabled the brand to produce short-run labels in new designs for its complete range of beverages. This breakthrough allowed QBC to focus on its branding and design.

'There is a massive change in our labels, and it took us five years to reach this point. There is a lot of learning that goes on every day. For us, labels are the most important part of our products. I place them higher than what's inside because that is what sells. We can make the finest products, but if the packaging does not do justice, it will not sell,' Sonar explains.



Vivek Sonar (left) founder of Quirky Beverages Company

The company has now introduced PET bottles and cans to its packaging lineup. Sonar explains that getting low-volume can printing is difficult in India, so he opted for shrink sleeves for his canned beverages. The shrink sleeves are printed on HP Indigo.

'It becomes very helpful when we get low-volume batches of shrink sleeves. We get more than 220 designs printed for market research. Rapid prototyping has been possible due to HP digital technology. It was not possible for us earlier. Around 10 different jobs used to cost us 6,000 to 10,000 USD on any conventional press. With digital, we can get labels for 60 USD with a quick turnaround time.'

This empowered the brand to launch 20 to 30 new products in a short period.

'Our creativity has increased. A label may look good on screen but might not match the final print result. We did not have the capability to check that earlier. We had to stick to our old designs due to the inability to print short runs. But now, we do not have to worry about timelines, getting cylinders and color matching. If anything goes wrong, labels can be printed again,' Sonar adds.

QBC uses self-adhesive labels for its glass bottles and shrink sleeves on its PET bottles and cans. A digital-focused strategy has helped QBC launch new packaging forms, not just variants.

'This intervention and upgrade in technology have enabled us to do that otherwise wouldn't have been possible. This is a huge problem for us because we are always creating new things. When we go to label converter, they quote around 2 million labels. They don't print anything below that. We cannot invest that kind of money in labels until we have tested our products in the market. Vendors do not understand this, and those who do understand this are using digital technology. If I have 20-30 SKUs all in different flavors and sizes, a conventional guy would not be able to pull it off.'

Conventionally printed labels would also lead to wastage, adding to the costs. 'It also added to the environmental waste. A lot of paper was wasted in what could have been printed on smaller size materials.'

Even the label design process has changed since the early days of QBC.

'I used to just go to a print shop with an idea and guide their designer. He would charge me hourly, and I would then get the labels printed and stick them on the bottles. We used to have the same template for all the labels and would just change the name of



QBC added shrink sleeve labels for its new products printed on HP Indigo



Digital printing enabled QBC to add new label designs

“Start-ups should always standardize the processes and not always focus on low cost. Do your research before putting out a product. Once your reputation is formed in the market, it is too difficult to remake it”

the product on them.

‘We sat there for around 12 hours and came up with one design. I was very happy with them at that time. Now, if I look at those designs, I would not have approved them. But it used to sell, which was crazy.’

Today Sonar and his team understand the aspects of designing. The company now hires professional designers and design agencies. Sonar learned several elements of design and color, including the design process, Pantone colors, standardization of materials, bottle sizing and costing.

Knowledge sharing

Sonar added that resources and knowledge on packaging, technology, and vendors are not readily available on the internet. For a start-up or layman, typing in a search engine for what they need is the endpoint.

‘Good vendors don’t show up on the internet. They are like Illuminati – behind the shadows.’

When Sonar came across digital technology, he was surprised to see its capabilities.

‘How come I did not know about this back then? Things would have been massively different,’ he says. ‘But I guess everything takes time, and it is important as a learning curve to network and connect to the correct guys. That’s how you grow. You have to visit exhibitions on packaging printing and understand every aspect of it and meet the right partners. You have to go out there; nobody is coming to tell you.’

What can technology providers and converters do to help start-ups? For starters, says Sonar, they need to improve their search engine optimization and clearly mention the services they offer. They should be available on Google to be visible in the search results. A handful of vendors appear in search results despite the market being full of them.

He says that the company has adopted a few new policies this year. It will have five vendors for each service because relying on a single vendor might cause delays.

He also adds that label converters need to educate start-up businesses who need guidance through the process.

‘As a start-up, we have one thing in mind – it should be cheap; everything else is secondary. Before that, let’s talk about substrates; not everyone knows relevant vendors and details about the substrates in terms of gsm, strength, coated or uncoated and material sourcing. You cannot change your label later on because customers get used to them. For me, the biggest learning as a start-up was if the material is available locally or can be sourced from multiple suppliers.’

For start-ups, he says: ‘You should always, first of all, standardize the processes. You should know what you want exactly and do not always focus on low cost; it might turn expensive later on. Once the cat is out of the bag, it cannot be put back in. So do your research before putting out a product and research packaging. Make a checklist of all the things that could go wrong and keep a check on it because once your reputation is formed in the market, it is too difficult to remake it.’

The company has a plant in Chandigarh and is setting up new plants in Goa, Gujarat, Guwahati, Delhi and South India. The sites have been finalized and will be operational by 2023.

The response to QBC products has been ‘overwhelming,’ and Sonar gives most of the credit to branding, design and packaging.

‘Nothing has changed other than packaging. The product and recipe are the same as four years ago. What has changed is the perception of how people see a brand.’



For more information on Quirky Beverage Company, visit www.quirkybev.com

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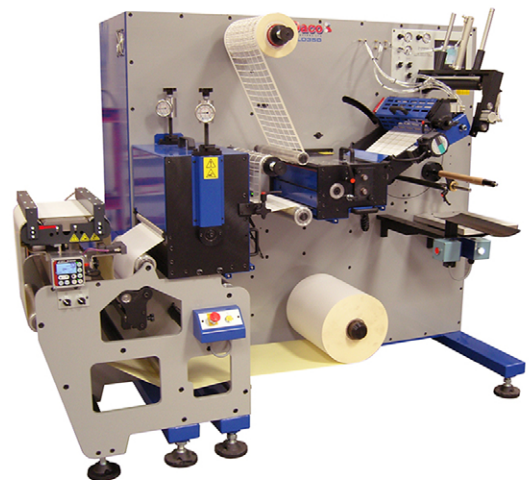
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Yuto expands labels business with digital investment

The Yuto Group offers its Fortune 500 customers a one-stop packaging shop, and the label division has now made its first UV inkjet investment. Yolanda Wang reports

Established in 2002, Yuto Group is a leading provider of high-end brand packaging in China. It is headquartered in Shenzhen and was listed on the Shenzhen Stock Exchange in 2016.

Yuto serves mainly Fortune 500 customers and high-end brands, specializing in consumer electronics, cosmetics, food, health and tobacco and other industries where it provides a full range of packaging products and services. These include printed boxes, gift boxes, brochures, stickers, cartons and intelligent packaging.

The company has won first place in the awards for the top 100 Chinese printing and packaging enterprises for five consecutive years. In 2022, the revenue of Yuto reached 14.85 billion RMB (USD 2.21bn), up 26 percent over 2021.



Yuto's label production site in Dongguan

New business

From its leading position in the wider packaging industry, Yuto has adopted a strategic plan to make labels a more important part of its overall packaging portfolio.

'The demand for label products has actually been growing among our existing customers all the time, and labels are a very important part of product packaging. The requirements of customers for different types of label products have continuously developed,' says Zhong Yurong, deputy general manager of Yuto's label division. 'Yuto adds functionality to the labels themselves, and we are paying increasing attention to added value.'

Yuto found that some of its existing customers wanted their packaging suppliers to provide integrated solutions, including printed boxes and labels, to solve the matching problems of label products with the quality, color and delivery time of the whole package.

After a period of trial operation, Yuto's label division was officially established in 2013. The group gave clear guidelines for developing this division to expand its customer base and reach out with its services to new customers. To this end, the label division set up a special business section focusing on existing label customers to explore how the business could be developed. Zhong Yurong became the head of the label division in 2014.

"The market demands for short-run label products and variable data are increasing all the time"

Through the efforts of this team, Yuto became a label supplier to Huawei in 2014. Since then, the label division has secured more large customers including, Xiaomi, Lenovo, Motorcycle, Scud, Meitu and Tiancai, laying a firm foundation for the rapid development of the whole division.

At present, the label business of Yuto is mainly distributed in three regions: south China, north China and east China, allowing for the fastest local delivery to the customer's closest production factory. To date, the monthly revenue of the label business has reached 8-9 million RMB (1.19m USD). Its main label products include electronic labels, household chemical labels, logistics labels, cigarette labels, wine labels and anti-counterfeiting labels, among which electronic labels account for 75-80 percent.

Digital

In January 2021, Yuto ordered its first Flora single-pass UV J-330 digital press from Shenzhen Runtianzhi.

'I began to pay attention to the digital printing technology of the label industry as early as the beginning of our label business,' says Zhong. 'Digital printing technology must be the future development trend and

direction, but for label converters like us, the key question is: What's the appropriate time to invest? Which equipment is suitable for the company's products? How do we make good use of the digital press? What is the return on investment?'

Zhong believes that after years of development, digital technology in label printing has now matured. In addition to the well-known international brand suppliers, Chinese manufacturers have been launching more new digital printing equipment into the label market. 'Especially due to the impact of Covid-19, the market demands for short-run label products and variable data are increasing all the time. Therefore, Yuto officially put on the agenda to invest in new digital printing technology in 2020.'

After having examined all the most popular digital technologies, based on electronic ink, toner, water-based inkjet and UV inkjet, Yuto's label division finally locked into UV inkjet label printing technology.

Why did it choose UV inkjet printing? Zhong explains, 'On the one hand, it is highly applicable to a wide range of label materials. On the other hand, our conventional equipment now mostly uses UV ink, which facilitates color matching

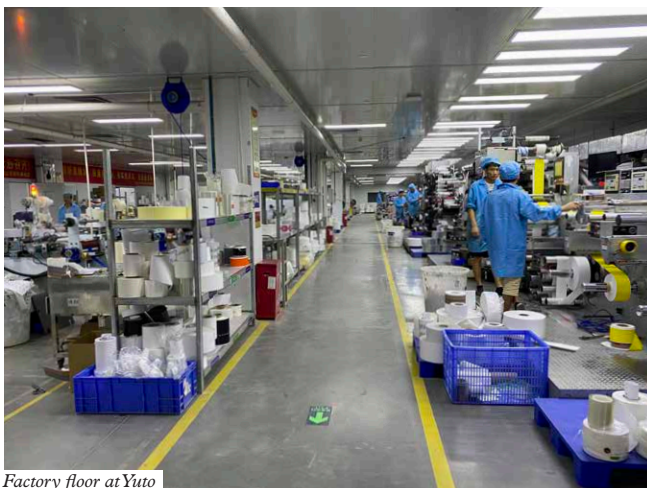


Flora UV J-330 inkjet press at Yuto

“UV inkjet is highly applicable to a wide range of label materials. And our conventional equipment now mostly uses UV ink, which facilitates color matching between the two printing technologies”



Yu Quan, deputy general manager of Runtianzhi; Zhong Yurong, deputy general manager of Yuto's label division; Yolanda Wang, L&L China editor, and Dio Zhao of Labelexpo



Factory floor at Yuto

between the two printing technologies. This is especially important for Yuto, whose customers have very strict requirements on the color of label products.'

As the head of the label division, Zhong Yurong believes that investment in new equipment needs to be considered from different aspects. 'First, the supplier's own qualification and strength. The maintenance and spare parts requirements require strong after-sales and technical support.

'Second, the company's reputation in the industry. Good products need to pass the scrutiny of the market and our customers. The end user's experience and evaluation are of high value. Finally, the most important thing is reliable press operation and technical support, particularly the ability to communicate and solve any potential problem in advance.'

Subsequently, Yuto selected a short list of digital label printing equipment from five well-known suppliers and spent nearly half a year on full comparison and testing.

'In terms of the time in the market, Runtianzhi had not been long in inkjet digital label printing technology, but the digital press they produced had a good reputation in other fields. In addition, in the whole process of proofing and testing, Runtianzhi's technical strength, effectiveness and timeliness of services and the quality control status of its products completely convinced us, which enabled our company to finally determine to invest in the Flora J-330 digital press,' says Zhong Yurong.

After installation, Yuto worked hard on the color management of this digital press, testing the max/min limits and color stability of the machine in a practical production environment. Printing a wide range of test samples allowed the company to fully understand the performance of the equipment.

Future

According to the strategic plan of the Yuto group, the label production unit located in Yuto Technology Park, Dalingshan Town, Dongguan City, will be the most important mass production base for the group's label business in the future.

The new Yuto label division plant has a planned production area of more than 5,000 sqm and about 100 employees. In addition to the newly purchased UV inkjet press, it is also equipped with printing equipment including full rotary letterpress, Zonten intermittent offset press, toner digital press, screen printing machine, as well as a wide range of finishing equipment including rotary die-cutters, flatbed high-speed die-cutters, hot stamping machine and inspection rewinders.

The label division has also set up world-class testing labs, covering all the standard tests, including initial adhesion, peeling force, retention force, eraser, constant temperature and humidity, as well as environmental protection and test equipment.

Zhong Yurong concludes, 'By constantly standardizing and improving the series of processes from incoming materials, printing, finishing, inspection and delivery, we will exert all efforts to provide customers with first-class label products and services.'

At the end of 2021, the label division invested in its first in-line flexo press. 'Yuto aims to supply its customers with different types of label products by continuously improving the company's production strength, to strengthen the adhesion with existing customers, and further assist in developing new customers,' Zhong Yurong says.

From packages to labels, Yuto's label division helps the wider Yuto Group continuously expand the company's service capacity, helping the group build a one-stop packaging service platform.



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Australia's smart packaging powerhouse

Peacock Bros.' acquisition of fellow Australian converter AMR Hewitts has united 280 years of printing history and created a powerhouse ready to start the smart packaging revolution. Piotr Wnuk reports

In 1888, Ernest Peacock opened a small general printing business in Collins Street in Melbourne, Australia, with just one platen press. Seeing opportunities within the explosion of business in the new Federation, Peacock developed printing systems and binders – often in gold leaf – which quickly positioned him as a printer of quality.

Not content with limiting his offering to print system stationery, he gradually expanded the portfolio. Soon, he was trading filing cabinets, manila folders, book-keeping equipment, and even Millionaire, the first commercially successful mechanical calculator that could perform a direct multiplication.

Since then, innovation has been permanently engraved into the company's operations and is the signature of Peacock Bros. The company developed loose-leaf binders and filing systems for doctors, lawyers, real estate agents and payroll systems, as well as providing printing services for a variety of clients, ranging from local schools to major companies such as Coles and Myers supermarkets.

In the 1970s, Peacock Bros. was the agent for the iconic Casio hand-held calculator, but it was, in fact, hand-marking machines that pointed the company in another direction. Cartons were still being labeled by hand, causing endless problems – it was the perfect time to address this need.

With the purchase of a Mark Andy press and producing a significant number of labels for chemicals and addresses, Peacock Bros. decided to sell off the general printing business in 1978 and concentrate solely on manufacturing labels and desktop printing systems.

The innovation continued. In 2011 Poland-based Emis, manufacturer of the Flexor line of inspection slitter rewinders installed a die-cutting and converting machine at the Australian converter's Melbourne headquarters – the first such machine in the country. That same year Peacock invested in a Mark Andy P7

“Our businesses are culturally aligned: two great Australian-owned companies with a rich history in Australian manufacturing”

Performance Series, an 8-color machine with GEW UV curing and Harper ceramic anilox rolls of 430mm web width.

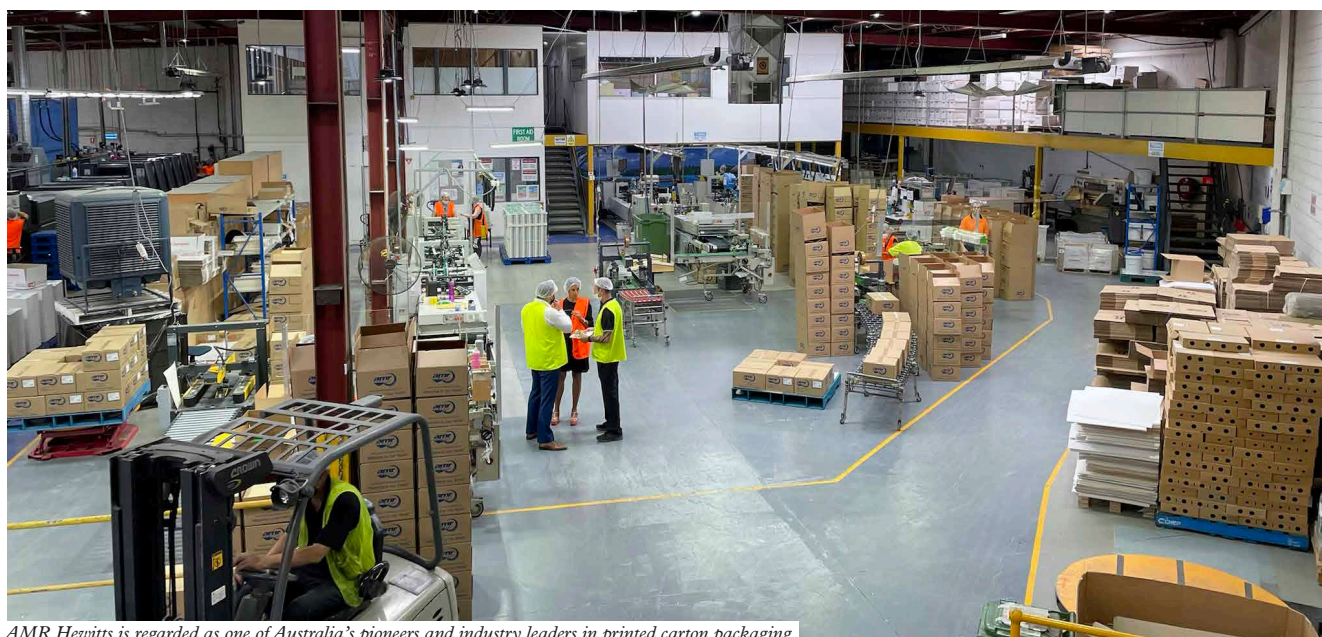
Peacock Bros. also became the first company in the region to invest in an HP Indigo 8000 just a few years later, in 2017, to utilize its capacity and high speeds as key to opening new markets. The recent investment in AB Graphic finishing equipment further strengthen its capabilities.

Today, Peacock Bros. is one of the most prominent label manufacturers in the ANZ region, with branches and channel partners across Australia and New Zealand. The company also made its name as a regional provider of barcode printers, data capture and software integration, and software products for warehouse, logistics, and stock distribution.

The books are filled with over 12,000 customers representing a wealth of industries – from manufacturing, distribution, warehousing, transport and logistics to healthcare.

Coming together

The company has recently acquired AMR Hewitts PrintPackaging, a 146-year-old family-owned business specializing in printed carton packaging. It operates with over 35 staff members based in Victoria, Australia, primarily servicing packaging customers in pharma and food and beverage, including well-known brands like Aspen Pharmacare Australia, Ferndale Foods, and BIC Australia.



AMR Hewitts is regarded as one of Australia's pioneers and industry leaders in printed carton packaging

'We are delighted to announce the coming together of two of the great family-run printing businesses in Australia, with over 280 years of combined printing history, to create the most experienced local printing group in the country,' says Ryan McGrath, group managing director at Peacock Bros. 'The acquisition of AMR Hewitts will further strengthen Peacocks Bros. offerings in the printed packaging marketplace, complementing our current range of color labels and flexible packaging products.'

The acquisition includes AMR Hewitts' offices and production facilities in Tullamarine, expanding the Peacock Bros. coverage to include Melbourne's west.

Hewitts was established in Melbourne in 1876 by Thomas Hewitt, starting as a printing shop on La Trobe Street. In 1985, Dandenong-based printers AMR took over Hewitts' operations, leading to the creation of AMR Hewitts PrintPackaging at Tullamarine.

'AMR Hewitts is a proud family-run business with long-standing customers who have come to know and trust the quality of our work. We are so pleased to be joining the Peacocks Group given its shared values and operating culture and knowing that our



Peacock Bros. can integrate various smart technologies into its packaging

staff and customers will be looked after and that the long history of the business and our brand will continue to grow into the future,' comments Matt Mimmo, founder of AMR Hewitts.

AMR Hewitts is regarded as one of Australia's pioneers and industry leaders

in printed carton packaging – having led the adoption and specialization of cold foil printing, pearlescent inks, holograms and tamper-evident packaging in the country; along with successfully securing several patents for its carton printing innovations.

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“The acquisition of AMR Hewitts will further strengthen Peacock Bros. offerings in the printed packaging marketplace, complementing our current range of labels and flexible packaging products”

lithographic cartons with the highest DPI dot to enhance the look of the printed product. Its presses can produce up to seven colors with two different coatings in one pass. AMR Hewitts has also recently invested in in-line cold foil printing to offer further enhancements for the look of folding cartons.

AMR Hewitts previously won the Heidelberg Australia Award for Excellence in Craft and has been inducted into the Victorian Manufacturing Hall of Fame for Sustained Manufacturing Excellence, acknowledging its pioneering achievements as an innovator in packaging research and development.

‘Our businesses are culturally aligned: two great Australian-owned companies with a rich history in Australian manufacturing. Both businesses pride themselves on quality

products, solutions, and services,’ adds McGrath. ‘It is an opportunity to leverage and grow the business in time – adding more value to the overall business and to our customers. The carton market is also set for growth, especially with companies looking for more sustainable options and substitution of plastic materials.’

Smart packaging revolution

The smart packaging revolution is gaining momentum worldwide. Peacock Bros. is at the forefront with its in-house manufacturing capabilities integrated with this new technology to offer its customers a single supplier that can digitize their products and take them to market.

‘Digitized product solutions such as anti-counterfeit, supply chain visibility, consumer brand engagement, and recycling

initiatives are just some of the solutions we specialize in, and the ability to now offer these solutions to the printed carton marketplace is very exciting for our customers,’ says McGrath.

The recent acquisition further strengthens Peacock’s offerings in the printed packaging marketplace, complementing its current range of color labels and flexible packaging products.

‘Now that we have AMR in the mix, we have strengthened our position as a single supplier of all our customers’ printing needs,’ says McGrath. ‘Pharmaceutical or beauty companies often have many different packaging needs depending on the type of product, so they can now work with a one trusted single supplier.’

Peacock Bros. might have just become one of the APAC region’s biggest and most modern printing powerhouses. However, the business values and innovative ambitions have not changed since 1888 and are guarded by the founder’s first platen press, proudly displayed in the reception at the company’s Melbourne head office.



For more information about Peacock Bros., visit www.peacocks.com.au

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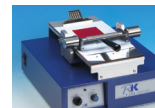
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Shedding digital light on SMEs

Australian converter Luminar has expanded its digital printing capacity to give small businesses high-quality packaging ready for competing with big brands. Piotr Wnuk reports

Luminar's story started from humble beginnings nearly two decades ago. It has been growing steadily, building on years of experience and reputation. Luminar now operates with a team of 20 and relocated from a small facility in Castle Hill to a 1,000 sqm warehouse in Riverstone, north-west Sydney, after changing its name in 2018.

'Luminar has been around for over five years; however, I started my career in print in my dad's company, which was then called Avonlea Labels. So, altogether, I've been in the industry for about 11 years,' recalls Matt Ellis, managing director of Luminar Group. 'My dad started his business out of our garage in 2005. He was working on a two-color flexo press while my mum took care of the accounting side of the business and answered all phone inquiries.'

Ellis comes from a marketing background with a focus on online advertising. Before joining his parents, while he was selling Google Ads, he persuaded them in 2007 to develop a website and invest in digital marketing.

'That was the catalyst to getting my parents out of the garage,' adds Ellis.

He joined the business 11 years ago as its fifth employee. He immediately noticed enormous demand for high speeds, variation and low-order quantities.

'I had a chat with my dad about taking the digital label trend seriously. And soon after, he flew me to Melbourne to negotiate our first HP Indigo press. The rest is history,' notes Ellis.

Five years ago, he bought the business from his father to create a hybrid digital label and flexible packaging facility. He has grown the company from 12 employees to around 22. Positioned as a hybrid digital labeling and flexible packaging company, Luminar's broad customer base includes industrial, automotive, and food and beverage clients.

'With such a diversity of customers, we needed a technology that would increase our printing efficiency without sacrificing quality or attention to detail. Since October 2021, our flexible packaging sales have grown by over 1,000 percent, and to continue servicing our customers at the highest level, we felt the Screen Truepress Jet L350UV was the best solution for us and our customers to cater to this business growth. The decision to select this machine came about after a long association with Jet Technologies, which systematically proved the L350UV's unrivaled reliability and high productivity,' says Ellis.

'Having the local support from Screen and Jet Technologies made the decision a no-brainer, and we are excited about the additional strength this system will provide for our already-strong printing capabilities. Since working with the new system, we have found that it is incredibly efficient and agile, offering a wide range of materials used to service our existing customers while also supporting our growth trajectory.'

Implementing the L350UV has extended Luminar's digital printing capacity and streamlined its existing digital operations.

'We have worked with Luminar for many years and are very excited at the digital printing opportunities that the L350UV will bring for its business,' adds David Reece, director of sales at Jet Technologies.

Luminar focuses on established small and medium businesses as well as innovative and hyper-growth businesses such as My Muscle Chef and Mingle Seasoning, and craft beer and health and beauty clients. Small businesses are the backbone of the Australian



Matt Ellis in front of the Screen L350UV press installed in 2021 as part of the company's commitment to enhancing digital operations

"When I took over the business from my father, I chose a new name – Luminar. 'Lume' translates to light, and at Luminar we help shed light on our customers' products and businesses"

economy, and despite the effects of Covid-19, entrepreneurs continue to start up new operations to achieve their dreams. In fact, by the end of June 2021, there were more than 2.4 million actively trading businesses country-wide – a 3.8 percent rise on the previous year.

Small focus, big ambitions

'When I took over the business from my father, I chose a new name – Luminar. "Lume" translates to light, and at Luminar, we help shed light on our customers' products and businesses,' says Ellis. 'We want to highlight their story, brighten up their brand, and ensure each product radiates through the packaging and labeling. It's a meaningful name and encompasses everything we do.'

'For small businesses, how you present your product is often the difference between a purchase and a lost sale – it's simply the nature of fast-moving consumer goods. That means you need the right packaging to get eyes on your products, and digital can deliver far more than traditional. We have a passion for educating our customers on the buying journey and the positive impact on-demand short-medium run lengths can have on any business, and I feel our responsibility to help customers understand all their direct and in-direct costs associated with buying in bulk.'

'However, small businesses often can't afford to source their printed packaging from traditional providers. Not only are there eye-watering setup and labor costs, but the long waiting times can be hugely detrimental to cash flow management. Unlike digital print packaging, conventional techniques usually require a high minimum order that could be anywhere from 10,000 to

100,000 units per SKU. That's not feasible for most small FMCG businesses with multiple products and razor-thin margins. Furthermore, we want to enable SMEs to drive growth to their business, rather than have their cash flow locked up in bulk-run packaging.'

Luminar aims to break down the barriers to high-quality print packaging by turning all the drawbacks of traditional solutions on their head. Its hybrid and digital printing equipment, including the recently installed Screen press, aims to deliver premium packaging at a low cost and in a much shorter turnaround time.

Shaking up supermarket shelves

As for almost every other business in Australia, the pandemic brought tremendous challenges amid massive growth for food company Mingle Seasoning, a relatively new brand offering a variety of sauces and seasoning created for busy individuals and families who want to connect around food. When Covid-19 arrived, the Mingle brand grew rapidly and needed a partner with insight, technical knowledge and support.

'Our business is trying to break the mold in the flavor space through more than just product quality,' says Adam Morris, managing director at Mingle Seasoning. 'Our packaging design is a key strategic element of our marketing strategy and is a pillar of the business. We do not have the marketing budgets of the larger players, so our products need to stand out on the shelf.'

Mingle Seasoning decided to work with Luminar because of its attention to detail and a keen interest in working alongside customers – rather than treating them as a 'revolving door of income.'

'Its industry knowledge, problem-solving ability, and genuine interest in the success of our business has been refreshing but also integral to our journey so far,' adds Morris.

Luminar helped Mingle source new packaging formats, offered more economical options, and worked collaboratively with the client to help them optimize their production and impact on cash flow.

'Luminar helped us launch our first range of sachets into the market, among other product formats,' continues Morris. 'These sachets have become some of our most popular products and are in a unique packaging format. The sachets are for sale in Australia's major retailers, and are also being exported to New Zealand. As these products have matured, Luminar has been a part of our optimization projects through cost reductions and material adjustments, which have helped us drive more promotional growth with the savings.'



Luminar helped new brand Mingle to launch its first range of sachets into the market, among other product formats

“We have a passion for educating our customers on the buying journey, and the positive impact on-demand short-medium run lengths can have on any business”



FWD Form Nutrition entered the supplements market looking to create products that are natural and beneficial to those looking for continuous improvement

Muscling into the supplements market

FWD Form Nutrition entered the supplements market looking to create products that are natural and beneficial to those looking for continuous improvement. A naturopath, who helps formulate the supplements, suggested the co-founders Elle and Scott meet with Luminar, which eagerly stepped in to help the brand package its products and break through in a crowded market.

'We wanted to create packaging that looked clean,' Elle says. 'It needed to look sleek, clean and premium. People consuming our supplements need to trust that they are high-quality products. The FWD Form Nutrition brand is about leaning into the uncomfortable and improving yourself, and we want our community to be inspired by that.'

Scott adds: 'We had an initial conversation about getting a stand-up pouch for the supplements and then trying to figure out how powder would fit into them. Luminar helped to highlight a lot of issues because we didn't realize how hard it

would be.'

FWD Form Nutrition has recently launched an online shop, which is just the beginning of its journey. Now that the founders have the right packaging, they can start bringing its core mission to market: inspiring people to go after what they want, whether in fitness or their career.

'Mingle and FWD, for me, are examples of exactly what I'm in this business to do, to facilitate growth,' says Ellis. 'Our purpose is to help businesses sustainably, innovate, and grow confidently.'

One of Ellis's biggest goals is to make labels and packaging as easy to purchase as a pair of shoes. 'I want to promote a digital-first mindset, and not just in the sense of digital print, but also in the way that we run and operate our business, our processes and procedures, and how we communicate both internally and to our customers and suppliers,' concludes Ellis.



For more information about Luminar, visit luminar.com.au



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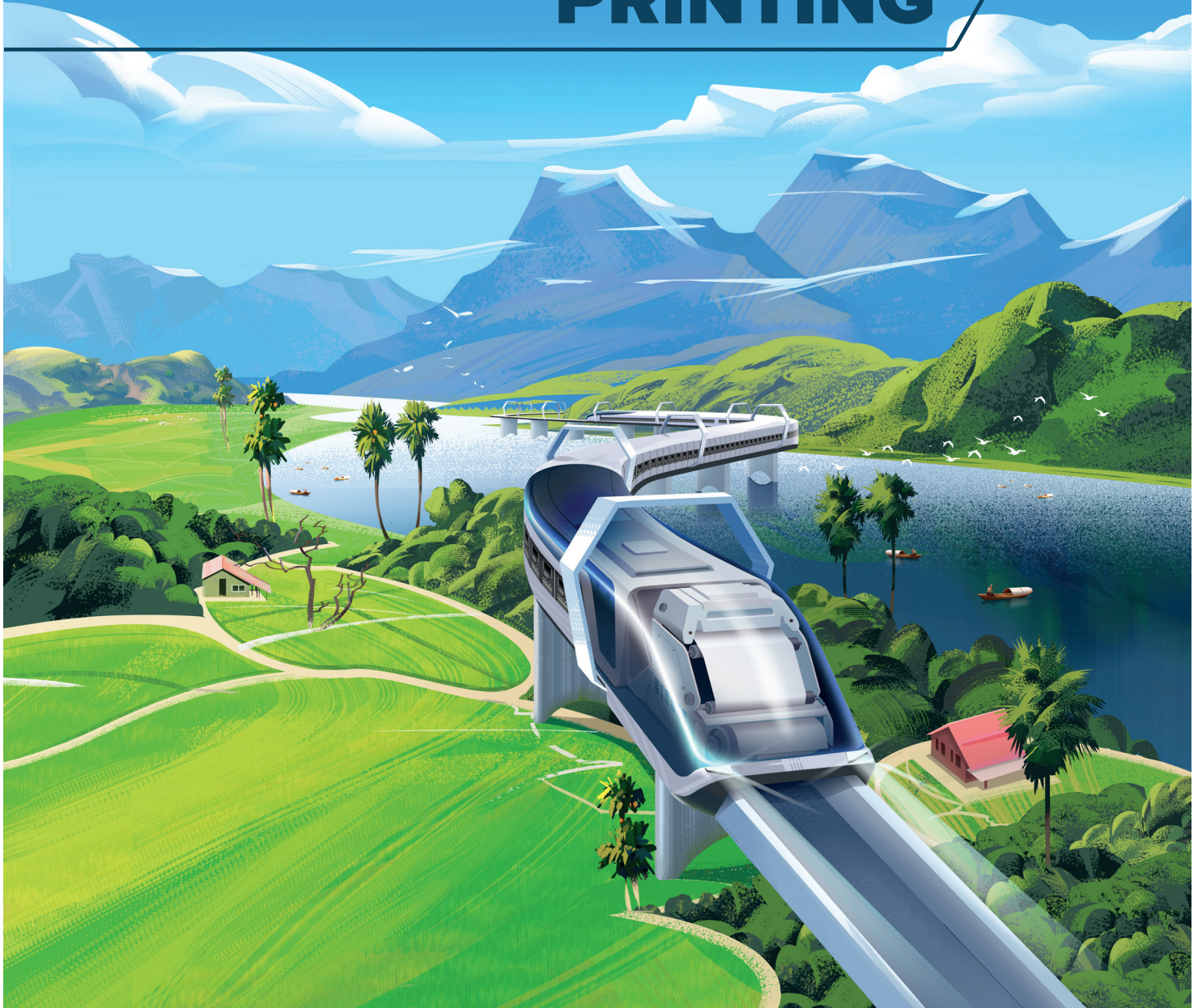
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Recycling in Africa

Africa's inappropriate waste management is causing economic, social and environmental problems. However, there are some positive signs, writes L&L's Africa correspondent, Gill Loubser

Africa currently recycles only 4 percent of its waste – a far cry from the African Union's vision of its cities recycling at least 50 percent of generated waste by 2023. Consider this against the fact that some 70-80 percent of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) is thought to be recyclable.

The reality is that some 90 percent of Africa's waste is disposed of at uncontrolled dumpsites and landfills, often with associated open burning.

This discouraging scenario first came to light when the UN's Environment Program and South Africa's Council for Scientific & Industrial Research published an initial Africa Waste Management Outlook that reported on the state of waste management in Africa. The researchers declared that Africa's first priority was to address public health imperatives by ensuring that all citizens have access to proper waste management services. Comprehensive, reliable and regular city cleansing and controlled waste disposal is the foundation of any integrated waste management system.

The second priority was harnessing waste as a resource – unlocking socio-economic opportunities by moving waste up the management hierarchy, away from disposal and towards prevention, reuse, recovery and recycling.

Against the minuscule recycling rate across the continent, South Africa stands out as a leading light. In 2021, South Africa consumed approximately 3.4 million tons of packaging (glass, paper, metal and plastic), of which approximately 54 percent was collected for recycling, compared to the 4 percent continental average. Apart from South Africa's success story, the situation remains gloomy: collection services in most African countries are woefully inadequate. The average MSW collection rate is paltry (mostly organic waste), and the bulk of which is dumped but could provide significant socio-economic opportunities.

Across Africa, recycling is emerging as a viable enterprise, driven more by poverty, unemployment and socio-economic need than by public or private sector design.

An army of informal waste-pickers makes a living by recovering valuable resources at little to no cost to municipalities or private companies.

So, it's not all negative news: here are some bright spots.

Recycling challenge to Africa's plastics problem

Recently, 15 innovative projects were chosen as finalists in the first round of the Afri-Plastics Challenge, funded by the Canadian government.

Entries included many ideas for the reuse and recycling of plastic waste from across sub-Saharan Africa, including Côte d'Ivoire, DR Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa and Togo. The challenge had three elements: Creating Solutions, Promoting Change and Accelerating Growth.

In the first, 25 semi-finalists devised innovative ways to reduce the volume of packaging and plastic products before consumption, while the second element sought out projects and creative campaigns to influence behavioral change and promote sustainable plastic consumption.

In the third sector, Accelerating Growth, 15 finalists transformed plastic waste into rewarding solutions after use and disposal. From used plastics, these finalists produced designer textiles, accessories, building materials and even school benches.

Among these innovations was mega-gas alternative energy produced in Kenya, using a thermal cracking process to convert



Africa currently recycles only 4 percent of its waste – a far cry from the African Union's vision of African cities recycling at least 50 percent of generated waste by 2023

“Against the minuscule recycling rate across the continent, South Africa stands out as a leading light”

plastics into clean cooking gas for those living in poverty.

Such inspiring projects earned each finalist a 24,000 USD grant to grow ideas, demonstrate their scalability and advance solutions to plastics waste management.

The Canadian government's Minister of International Development, Harjit Sajjan, looks forward to watching the growth of these projects: 'As custodians of the longest coastline in the world, our responsibility to the health of the oceans does not stop at the edge of Canada's waters,' he points out. 'The global marine ecosystem is complex and deeply interconnected – plastics pollution in sub-Saharan Africa has global consequences once it enters lakes, rivers and ocean.'

According to Matthew Haden, founder of The Recycler, a Tanzanian enterprise that offers professional waste management and recycling solutions, his business specializes in separating all kinds of recyclable waste in order to process and trade on domestic and international markets.

'Besides being a recycling company, however, we're looking into innovative ways to manage waste and hope to offer zero waste to landfill in the near future,' he comments.

Tanzania's biggest city, Dar es Salaam, has a serious waste problem. It has been ranked as one of the dirtiest cities in the world (Forbes, NYC Partnership Consulting). The city produces an estimated 3,000 tons of waste daily, of which only 40 percent ends up in the designated landfill. The rest is either burned or illegally dumped. The rivers are jam-packed with waste, and when the rains come, the debris exacerbates the city's poor drainage and causes flooding.

Even if waste does make it to the legal landfill at Pugu, 35km away, the story is a little better. The municipality cannot manage the quantity of waste and material continually combusts owing to the release of methane. There are significant quantities of recyclables and valuable organic waste, but interventions for recycling generally need to happen before the waste ends up in a dump truck, in a river or in the ocean.

The Recycler has now set up collection points throughout the city and is researching large-scale bio-gas, waste-to-energy, insect-derived protein and informal collection networks.

Successful 'Recycling in the Bag' campaign

Over the past 15 years, more than 19 million tons of paper and paper packaging have been recovered and kept out of South African landfills. The country also boasts an average paper recovery rate of 70 percent, making paper the second-most recovered material in South Africa, where paper products are recycled in many cases up to 25 times.

The circular waste economy is a thriving network of collectors, buyers and processors using recyclables such as waste paper to make new products.

Ahead of this year's Global Recycling Day, Fibre Circle, the producer responsibility organization for South Africa's paper sector, teamed up with food service and packaging producer Detpak and Remade Recycling (part of South Africa's Mpack Group) to show 200 recycling collectors that paper grocery bags and takeaway food bags can be collected from households and sold with their waste-paper collections.

A positive outcome of the Covid-19 pandemic for the paper packaging sector has been growth in online shopping and resultant moves to paper grocery bags. Made from recycled paper fiber, paper grocery bags and folding cartons can now be collected and baled together for recycling. For waste collectors who sell recyclables to a buy-back center, the type of paper – and the cash value obtained – is significant.

'With paper bags now synonymous with suburban and city-based grocery deliveries, when Covid kept many of us away from supermarkets, we felt it important to close the loop with the production and recycling of paper bags,' explains Carla Breytenbach, marketing manager for Detpak.

For the 'Recycling in the Bag' campaign, small groups of collectors were invited to a discussion and demonstration by Anele Sololo, Fibre Circle's manager for education and SMME development.

'Safety and visibility are key aspects in the lives of collectors, who navigate busy streets, making an honest living,' notes Donna-Mari Noble, communications manager for Mpack Group's Remade Recycling.

Global plastics treaty accelerates progress

Earlier this year in Nairobi, Kenya, the UN Environmental Assembly met for its fifth session. Hailed as the most important environmental pact since the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change, environmental leaders drafted a blueprint for a global plastics treaty to address the issue of marine litter and plastics pollution.

Given the environmental challenges faced as a consequence of plastic pollution, South Africa particularly supported the establishment of an Inter-Governmental Negotiating Committee to devise an internationally legally-binding instrument on plastics pollution.

Comments Plastics SA executive director Anton Hanekom: 'We acknowledge and support the urgency to address the issue of plastic waste and marine plastic debris. However, we don't believe this will be achieved by regulating plastic production. Plastics can play a valuable part in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals, provided they're responsibly and sustainably produced, used and recovered in a circular economy.'

Although the agreement is based on principles of equity and shared responsibility, Plastics SA contends that the special needs and circumstances of Africa be recognized and that the capabilities of each country be analyzed. It's proposed that countries should be allowed domestic flexibility to develop regionally-appropriate plans for eliminating plastic waste leakage.

'We need additional and predictable financing, technology transfer and the development of increased capacity to implement our plans. We believe a global agreement should be used as an opportunity to accelerate progress already made. By building a



Fibre Circle teamed up with food service and packaging producer Detpak and Remade Recycling (part of South Africa's Mpack Group) to show 200 recycling collectors that paper grocery bags and take-away food bags can be collected from households and sold with their waste-paper collections

stronger foundation for effective waste, we can ensure that used plastics are kept in the economy (recovered and recycled) and out of the environment,' Anton Hanekom concludes.

Dow invests in African recycling

In a first-of-its-kind investment, Dow Africa is to work alongside the recycling company Mr Green Africa to address critical gaps in waste management systems, enabling more plastic waste to be sorted, collected and reused in new applications. The move supports Dow's global commitment to help advance a circular economy for plastics and reduce plastic waste pollution.

It's expected to enable approximately 90,000 tons of plastic waste to be recovered over four years and recycled into new packaging applications.

With support from Dow and other investors, Mr Green Africa, headquartered in Kenya, plans to expand its operations into other African countries, extending the capabilities of its recycling efforts across the continent.

In addition, Dow and Mr Green Africa aim to co-develop more traceable, fair, high-quality post-consumer recyclate (PCR) that can be used to produce new flexible plastic packaging – helping brand owners and converters achieve their goals towards sustainable packaging in Africa.

At full scale, the investment is expected to create around 200 new jobs, impact the lives of 5,000 waste pickers and engage more than 250,000 consumers in separation-at-source programs.

Aqua Africa acquires Trashy Bags

UK-based Aqua Africa has acquired Trashy Bags Africa, a social enterprise in Accra, Ghana, that turns waste plastics into reusable shopping bags, fashion accessories, school supplies and other products, marketed locally, internationally and online.

In Ghana, drinking water, yogurt and juices are sold in small plastic sachets, a form of packaging introduced in 2004 to provide safe drinking water. The sachets are easily opened for consumption but usually end up as litter.

The company has reprocessed approximately 30 million sachets since its founding. Every month about 200,000 plastic sachets are collected and brought to Trashy Bags Africa by a network of collectors, all gaining an income from their efforts while giving value to waste and creating jobs.

For the last few years, Aqua Africa has supported Trashy Bags' mission to eliminate plastic pollution on Ghana's streets. With 63 percent of Ghanaians obtaining safe drinking water from plastic sachets, it's not surprising that much of this waste consists of carelessly-discarded sachets.

All products are upcycled, ensuring minimal energy use. Currently employing some 30 local staff to design, clean and stitch plastic trash into fashionable, eco-friendly products, Trashy Bags supports the Ghanaian government's aim to deliver a 'Ghana Beyond Aid' by promoting a 'Trade Not Aid' ethos.



For more from Gill Loubser on the African market, visit www.labelsandlabeling.com/contributors/gill-loubser



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TAKING LABELS TO THE LIMIT

Industrial labels deliver vital information while withstanding some of the harshest environments. Luis Rodriguez reports

A label, ultimately, is meant to deliver information efficiently. And when it's attached to a product that's being jostled around on the shelves by curious consumers or thrown into a shipping container and delivered across the globe, the label needs to be durable to remain legible.

But what about a label going through an enclave burning at hundreds of degrees? Or a label attached to the outside of a snowcat plowing through a snowstorm in the harshest Alaskan winter? Or even a label attached to the outside of a spacecraft re-entering the atmosphere after floating through the cold depths of space?

How do material suppliers ensure their product is going to work in its intended way, and, following that notion, how can a label converter ensure that the label it provides its customers is going to stay adhered to the product and continue to be legible throughout its lifecycle?

'At the end of the day, it's a labeled product, and most companies think, "We just need to make sure it sticks," says Paul Purdef, director of marketing – durable

"Take a freezer, for example, where the label is going to be sitting in cold temperatures for a long time. You need special materials, specific adhesions, that will hold through frost"

label solutions at Avery Dennison. 'Whether the label is going on a car or appliance or there's some specific regulation, they just expect it to work. They don't want problems or to have to spend time figuring it out.'

The answer, for both the supplier and the converter, is extensive research, rigorous testing, and a trust in its partners that the standards and regulations in countries across the globe have been identified and considered when delivering the product.

Research and development

'We've been doing this for a long time,' says Purdef. 'We have a dedicated team supporting the durables and industrial label business, and they've been doing this for many years. Somewhere around five decades. Once we understand the

requirements, the specifications from a product standpoint, that starts to give us the clarity we need to work out what we're trying to do from a development standpoint with the R&D team.'

A durable label and adhesive might experience a wide array of conditions. For example, a label attached to an HVAC unit will experience the wear and tear of the sun, rain, heat, cold and other intense weather conditions for years on end. A drum label may encounter a highly corrosive material or be submerged in salt water for a prolonged period.

At Avery Dennison's Innovation Center in Mentor, Ohio, research is conducted in a wide range of conditions, including accelerated aging in freezers reaching minus 40 degrees Fahrenheit and ovens reaching

“Whether the label is going on a car or appliance or there’s some specific regulation, the customers just expect it to work. They don’t want problems or to have to spend time figuring it out”

392 degrees Fahrenheit; and accelerated weathering and durability testing, including salt spray and exposure to intense UV heat.

‘From an R&D standpoint, we have a UL accredited client services lab, we have an analytical lab, and it’s all ISO 17025 standard approved for automotive testing,’ explains Purdef. ‘We can provide a lot from the analytical standpoint, where we can bring a certain amount of data to help assist in some other things we’re developing but also to provide data to support the products we’re developing to show that it’ll work as anticipated.’

Similar to Avery Dennison, 3M handles much of its research and development in-house, conducting everything from high and low-temperature testing to environmental cycling, where the company applies moisture or other potential outdoor hazards the label or adhesive may encounter during its lifecycle.

‘R&D at 3M is our bread and butter,’ says Sara Merritt, the company’s global business manager. ‘Everything that we do and what really drives us at 3M is our customers’ needs. It’s what we’ve done at the beginning of the company and what we continue to do today. We look at what our customers really need in terms of materials and technology to apply what we already know to real-life problems.’

According to 3M, 5.9 percent of its sales – 1.9 billion USD in 2019 – flows back into its R&D program, helping the company produce over 3,500 patents each year across its 51 technology platforms with over 8,000 scientists in 50 countries across the globe.

‘We have a very strong research and development lab in IATD [industrial adhesives and tape division], and it’s really a technology platform,’ says Merritt. ‘We have a very deep technology expertise in adhesives, materials and process technology that not only enables us to have great durable label products, but also other tapes, adhesives, and other products that go even beyond our division into other parts of 3M as well, giving us a further depth of science and materials expertise.’

At 3M, bringing a product to market is much more extensive than developing, testing, and launching. There are many steps the company takes before a product can finally leave the warehouse and be delivered to a converter.

‘We start by looking at our customer’s needs and building a road map to go from there,’ says Merritt. ‘Once we get a good sense of that, we look at our current portfolio to see if we have the right adhesives, the right facestocks, topcoats, liners, and every other material necessary to build an industrial label. And once we’ve identified our gaps, we’re finally ready to start the R&D process.’

Once in the R&D process, the company then begins developing a concept, prototyping the product, and getting feedback from customers to see if this is a product they would consider, thereby ensuring the development and manufacturing teams are on the right track.

Though crucial to the overall quality and build of a product, R&D and testing – for all that it can showcase the performance of the label or adhesive – can only go so far. At some point, a converter will have to get the product and prove the concept that the material supplier has been working to develop.

Plan into action

‘We have a dedicated team that drives innovation [at Avery Dennison]. They work with our customers on the specific requirements they need to hit or, in some cases, on a product for which there’s an unmet need in a market,’ says Purdef. ‘But at the end of the day, the product goes to our customers, and they’re the ones who have to put that particular application into action.’

The processes of creating the durable or industrial label doesn’t differ much from any other label.

Durables can be printed using conventional or digital methods. The difference is the products themselves: durable or industrial labels require certain specialty products that will only really be used for specific applications because, for one, these products wouldn’t be cost prohibitive to either the converter or the end user, and secondly, many of these are very heavy duty and just don’t fit other applications.

‘For the most part, creating labels for industrial markets is the same as any other. We don’t have any specific equipment that’s focused on just durable labels,’ says James Cirigliano, vice president of marketing at US converter Diversified Labeling Solutions. ‘Where it differs are those unique situations where you have to make sure that all the materials match that application. Take a freezer, for example, where the label is going to be sitting in cold temperatures for a long time. You need special materials, specific adhesions, that will hold through frost.’

For a time, durables were screen printed, which more easily allowed for raised lettering and was more resistant to sun and regular wear and tear from outdoor elements. Thermal transfer continues to be a popular method as it can create a surface that tends to be much more resistant to scratches.

But methods have evolved to better enhance printing across the board, especially with digital technology.

‘Typically, you would see more analog type methods like screen printing or flexographic printing, or even thermal transfer where you’re physically taking ink and pushing it down into the surface. Historically, that gave a much more durable print,’ says Merritt. ‘Now, as digital print technology has evolved, it’s now enabled converters to have a much more durable print with the right tap code and label material.’

For example, 3M’s versatile label material was developed to ensure that, no matter which print method a customer may be using, it can be versatile across water-based and UV flexographic, UV inkjet, thermal transfer, screen and digital toner-based printing.

The material features a topcoated facestock which ensures that the label will be resistant to volatile chemicals and will hold even when encountering high temperatures.

And though suppliers give converters a large choice of products to use, how does a converter know which is the right one? First, it has to ask the right questions.

‘You have to rely on your materials suppliers when you’re looking to understand the products,’ says Cirigliano. ‘They typically have some really detailed specs on the materials, and we’ll talk with the suppliers and learn about these materials ourselves. And if it’s an application we’ve never done before, we’ll go to our suppliers, and they’ll tell you everything they have that can work.’

Many durable labels, depending on the application, are heavily regulated by different governing bodies to ensure these label products adhere to a certain standard.

This is somewhat of a blessing, as it sets up a goal post for the suppliers and converters to hit when creating the materials or labels themselves. It’s also a curse, as these regulations, depending on the end-user sector, can be constantly shifting.

‘There are a lot of challenges when developing the durable goods themselves,’ says Merritt. ‘There are a lot of changes, whether it’s in the shifting printing trends or the regulations. We’re constantly connecting with our colleagues around the world to have a pulse on



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how trends are changing and how it’s going to affect our portfolio.’

This, on the converter end, can make things much easier. The testing has been done by the supplier, so the converter can trust the product will work. And it also allows the converter to stick to strict guidelines established by the governing body that will ensure the product will be good to go on the other end.

‘There’s a very strict testing process that goes on for GHS [Globally Harmonized

System], for example,’ says Cirigliano. ‘So, for us, it’s just a matter of sticking to those exact materials, so we know the product is going to perform well.’

Push it to the limit

What does it take to push a label to the limit? What would it ultimately take for a label to survive the exit of Earth’s atmosphere, the cold vacuum of space, and the re-entry?

‘I imagine it’s a lot of shared knowledge because your customers are the ones using the final product, so if it doesn’t work the ways it’s intended to, they bounce that knowledge right back to you,’ says Cirigliano. ‘There are times when there’s a material we’re not sure about, we’ll get some sample materials, and we’ll run a few short runs and let the customer test them to see if they meet performance.’

Across the supply chain, from supplier to converter to end user, collaboration and shared knowledge are the basis for figuring out how to develop and utilize a product that will survive the extremes that a durable may encounter.

It’s also a matter of looking at what’s been done in the past and seeing if there’s any overlap when it comes to the conditions the label may be enduring or the time it is meant to stay attached to a powdered drum, for example.

‘I think the big thing is that it’s a collaborative process, both internally at 3M where we work with teams and externally where we work with our business partners, end users and converters,’ says Raymond J. Maskow, regional converter specialist at 3M Converter Markets.

‘For most of us at 3M, we’ve not been to space yet. We don’t know exactly what it’s going to take to get up there, but there are a lot of engineers who have a generalized idea of what that’s going to take, what parameters they’ll need, they’ll give out those specifications for it, and we’ll work to select the materials that point most closely to what we’re looking for.’



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STRATEGIC ANALYSIS OF WHAT TO EXPECT
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REUNITING AT LABELEXPO

This year's Labelexpo unleashes all the technology suppliers have been developing over the last three years. Andy Thomas-Emans looks at key technology trends to look out for at the show

As the first Labelexpo show in three years, Labelexpo Americas presents an opportunity for label converters to see the major technology developments that have taken place since then.

The rise of digital embellishment has been one such trend. After digital printing, digital embellishment will be the next big game changer for label converters and package printers.

Digital embellishment means replacing analog coating, decoration and converting processes with digital. This can range from simply replacing a flexo varnish plate with an inkjet-applied varnish to digital foiling, digitally-applied tactile effects, simulated embossing, debossing and laser die-cutting — all fully variable with on-the-fly job change and no tooling.

The Digital Embellishment Trail at Labelexpo Americas 2022 will enable attendees to explore the full range of digital decoration options, both stand-alone and inline, with live demonstrations, sample packs and experts on site. Suppliers like Prati and Cartes will demonstrate complete 'lights out' lines for fully digitized and automated finishing, including inkjet modules, laser die-cutting and turret rewinds.

Digital printing sees some exciting new technology at the show. This includes the worldwide launch of the HP Indigo V12 press and the Domino N710i, with Durst showing a 20in-wide UV inkjet press printing four colors at 328ft/min. This all looks set to challenge flexography in terms of raw speed and productivity on 4-color work. Low migration ink sets and an increasing range of additional colors are other key inkjet trends at the show.

We will also see the titans and founders of the conventional narrow web press industry accelerating their own shifts towards digital and hybrid technologies. Mark Andy is a prime example as the company reveals its new Digital Pro Max digital press, building on its long standing partnership with Konica Minolta.

LED-UV has an increasingly prominent place in both flexo and inkjet curing, and there are significant new launches at the show, including the first global reveal of GEW's AeroLED air-cooled LED-UV system. We will also see the launch of dual-capable lamps able to cure both LED and conventional UV inks, which will help converters introduce LED into their existing workflows.

Automation, Industry 4.0 and AI are other key trends to watch for at the show. AI is making rapid strides, particularly in machine learning for inspection systems, and automation is impacting just about every aspect of the label converting business from tool selection to job planning and factory management.

On the materials and consumables side, sustainability is the key trend at this year's show. Materials suppliers are not only about using more recycled material in labelstock or using forest-certified paper grades; the industry is also talking about adhesive and ink technology enabling the recycling of containers by releasing cleanly and without residues. TLMI will focus on many of these trends and on liner recycling in its dedicated sustainability zone.

Labelexpo Americas 2022 also includes an extended conference and education program amplifying the technology trends seen on the show floor. The two-day conference program explores some of the label and package printing industry's key technologies and trends, including Industry 4.0, automation, supply chain challenges, mergers and acquisitions, the changing industry landscape, and product diversification.

Two in-depth master classes will cover digital embellishment and self-adhesive label materials.

Finally, this show will be the first machinery exhibition to bring together the label and packaging industry since the start of the Covid pandemic. The Labels & Labeling team look forward to being there.

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LABELEXPO AMERICAS UNVEILS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Two days of conference sessions are complemented by Label Academy master classes on digital embellishment and self-adhesive materials, writes Labelexpo conference manager Helen Stoddart

LABELEXPO CONFERENCE

The organizer of Labelexpo Americas 2022 has confirmed details of the conference and educational program for this year's event. The high-profile speaker line-up includes representatives from Actega, Avery Dennison, Blue Label Packaging Company, Cartes, Cerm, Channeled Resources, Finat, Fortis Solutions Group, GM, Henkel, HP Indigo, Kurz, Label Traxx, Mactac, S-One LP, TLMI, UPM Raflatac, Xeikon and 3M.

The educational program comprises six one-hour conference sessions on 13 and 14 September, the first two days of the three-day show, plus two Label Academy master classes over days two and three.

Day one of the conference is designed to explore some of the label and package printing industry's key technologies and trends, including industry 4.0/automation, and supply chain challenges. Among the session highlights is 'What does an automated future look like?', chaired by Steve Metcalf, chief marketing and IoT officer, Baldwin Technology, which will comprise a case study presentation followed by a discussion exploring how far automation will change the industry. Panelists include Geert van Damme, managing director, Cerm; Christian Menegon, global business development manager, Labels & Packaging, HP Indigo; Rob Mayerson, president, Label Traxx; and Andrew M Boyd, president, Blue Label Packaging Company. Other day one speakers include TLMI president Linnea Keen, Jules Lejeune, managing director of Finat, and John Wynne, CEO of Fortis Solutions Group, who will open the conference with a joint overview of the global label market. Mike Ferrari, founder of Ferrari Innovation Solutions, will chair a panel discussion on supply chain complexities.

Day two is designed around future-proofing your business. Topics include M&A activity, the changing industry landscape and diversification. Highlights include a panel discussion chaired by Bob Cronin, managing partner at The Open

Approach. This will examine how M&A shapes the label and package printing industry and how converters adapt. Other day two speakers include Bruce Hanson, CEO of AWT, who, together with Cronin, will precede this panel discussion with an opening session covering M&A and staying competitive. The conference closes with a case study presentation and panel discussion chaired by S-OneLP's Tom Hauenstein, on the topic 'Opportunities beyond PS labels', which delves into some innovative ways the industry is diversifying. Panelists included Martin Leitner, product manager at Durst Group.

MASTER CLASSES

The two in-depth master classes will cover digital embellishment on September 14 and self-adhesive label materials on September 15. The former features sessions including inkjet coating and varnishing given by Filip Weymans, vice president marketing, digital solutions, Xeikon; special effect inks and coatings, given by Mohammad S Farahat PhD, director of R&D, Novel Device Technology, Sun Chemical; digital foiling techniques, given by Michael Aumann, director – digital embellishment solutions, Kurz; digital embellishment and laser die-cutting, given by Virgilio Micale, director of sales, Cartes; an EcoLeaf case study from Actega; digital embellishment and workflow given by Uffe Nielsen, CEO of GM; integrating digital embellishment into existing systems; and the design and branding perspective, given by Doris Brown-McNally, brands innovation lead at HP Graphic Arts. Attendees will also see this in action on the show floor, with highlighted state-of-the-art examples of the technologies from participating companies on the Digital Embellishment Trail.

Topics covered in the self-adhesive label materials master class include an introduction to the various materials in the marketplace, given by Andy Thomas-Emans, strategic director, Labelexpo Global Series; release liner substrates, given by Bruce

Ruppert, manager of product development, UPM Raflatac; adhesives given by Valerie Alexis, senior applications specialist, Henkel; paper and synthetic paper face materials given by Angel Harvey, senior product manager – prime paper and VI, Avery Dennison; non-paper face materials from 3M; identification and characteristics of self-adhesive materials from Mactac; new uses for label waste, given by Calvin Frost, CEO Channeled Resources; and testing methods and procedures.

Tasha Ventimiglia, Labelexpo Americas event director, said: 'Since our last show in 2018, the industry has shifted significantly, due primarily to the pandemic and ongoing supply chain challenges, so this is our opportunity to offer a face-to-face educational platform in the region, where attendees can bring their industry knowledge up to date. Places are limited for conference and master class sessions, so I'd strongly encourage visitors to book as soon as possible.'

John Wynne, CEO of Fortis Solutions Group, said: 'I'm very much looking forward to attending Labelexpo Americas. The two-day conference program touches on the areas most relevant to our industry and appropriately helps frame the opportunities and challenges ahead of us. Further, the event is an opportune time to network with industry experts and the industry's leading suppliers.'

Henkel's Valerie Alexis said: 'I'm really excited about sharing the different types of adhesives used in label applications. Understanding the adhesive limitations and the end-use performance requirements helps with choosing the right adhesive for applications used in label printing, so this session will be especially useful for converters, and indeed any attendees at Labelexpo Americas 2022 keen to increase their knowledge.'



For full details, to book a place at the conference or to reserve a master class spot, visit: www.labelexpo-americas.com/features-and-schedules

LABELEXPO AMERICAS:

3M demonstrates key durable label products for automotive, medical and general industrial markets. The company displays a wide range of technologies such as its new versatile print topcoat and a variety of solvent and solventless adhesives. Additionally, 3M features multiple technologies for flexographic mounting.

AB GRAPHIC INTERNATIONAL shows a new non-stop converting line for the first time. It includes the NSU 670mm converter and Vectra turret rewinder for non-stop blank label production. The company also highlights other products from its portfolio, such as Digicon Series 3 in a beverage specification that features the Big Foot hot foil/embossing module and flatbed screen. Other machines on the stand include the Omega SRI3 label finishing system, the entry level DigiLite, a DigiLase laser cutter with a new decal option for roll-to-roll, individual pieces, and A4 sheets, a Vectra ECTR turret rewinder and RTS sheeter.

ACTEGA introduces new ActExact SafeShield UV and LED flexo ink products for labels with stringent low migration requirements, including indirect food contact packaging, cosmetics and nutraceutical applications.

Actega showcases its specialty and haptic coating effects for labels and shrink sleeves along with live presentation of its EcoLeaf metallization technology on the ABG stand. EcoLeaf eliminates the need for foil and reducing the carbon footprint of metal pigment finishing by 50 percent.

The company presents a wide range of printed samples with technical experts on hand to talk about requirements for flexo and rotary screen ink, and coating products for pressure-sensitive labels, shrink sleeves and narrow web pouches.

AGERGAARD GRAPHIC SUPPLIES presents its end seal and doctor blade technology tailored to label printing and narrow-web printing processes. The Coatseal Flexi 3D

end seal series is designed to withstand abrasive and viscous UV inks and achieve reliable sealing results thanks to the improved rotational contact area between the anilox roller and end seal. This unique contact zone reduces the friction and mechanical wear on the seal for improved efficiency and extended lifecycle.

For graphics and colors, the company promotes Steelblade doctor blades made of high-quality steel for a precise and clean ink wipe. They are an integral part of a powerful printing deck with an anti-spit profile supporting UV label printers in tackling their ink-spitting issues.

For printers preferring plastic doctor blades, Agergaard suggests Polyblade series, which offer precision doctoring combined with wear resistance and work safety.

AKEBOOSE GMBH showcases its Nova Compact and Nova RS chamber doctor blade systems. The Nova RS chamber system is specifically designed for viscous UV inks that are difficult to pump.

APPLIED LASER ENGINEERING introduces its new Twin Track Technology. This technique provides control of the focused laser beam by controlling the laser power and the position of the focus beam within each anilox cell.

This Twin Track approach offers several significant advantages. All parts of a cell can be reached by the focused laser beam, and the power of each of these points can be controlled. According to the company, the Energy Density Ceiling is no longer an issue because Twin Track operates close to sharp focus. Twin Track enables allows users to achieve higher cell volumes with a lower depth of engraving, thanks to the focused laser beam moved around the anilox cells with the laser power changed dynamically to keep the cell bottom flatter.

ARROW SYSTEMS showcases the latest water-based pigment inkjet using the

Duraflex technology from Memjet, the Arrowjet Aqua 330, designed to print labels, flexible packaging, blister foils and shrink sleeve materials using water-based pigment inks. It can operate at 1600x1600 DPI and speeds of up to 150ft/min. In addition to the high-speed inkjet products, Arrow Systems promotes a wide range of digital finishers and in-line products for printing and cutting in a single pass. The company showcases blade and laser finishers with the latest for in-line print and cut technology, the Arrowjet Nova 330R.

ARTWORK FLOW presents its flexible workflow management system for multi-stage approval and artwork collaboration. Additionally, the company features an AI-enabled Smart Proofing for FDA compliance, helping brands go to market faster. Visitors are able to learn how the platform helps pharmaceutical and life sciences brands with efficient 21 CFR Part 11 compliance.

ASAHI PHOTOPRODUCTS features its AWP-CleanPrint line of water-washable flexographic plates designed as more sustainable alternative for traditional solvent-washable plates and to deliver improved quality on press with reduced cycle time.

Asahi also promotes a brand-new water recycling unit that can be used with its plate processing systems. It features a filtering system that recycles approximately 85 percent of the water used in plate processing, with only the remaining waste as a slurry or sludge to be disposed of. A portion of the additive used in the water wash remains in the filtered water, reducing the amount of additive required for processing subsequent plates.

ASAHI PHOTOPRODUCTS continues the path toward an accountable sustainability program for its flexo plates and strives to soon achieve a carbon neutral status for



Actega



Anytron

TECHNOLOGY PREVIEW

the AWP-DEW in partnership with the Carbon Trust.

ANYTRON shows an integration of digital printing and laser die-cutting with its 13in in-line label press Any-Jet III. Labelexpo Americas is the first trade show where Anytron's new press is on display after its launch in 2022. Any-Jet III is designed as a turnkey, in-line, and dual-function product with print station for label and flexible packaging, lamination, and a laser die-cutter for label producers. It is suitable for label printers, print providers, brand owners, packaging companies, and commercial printers. Users are also offered an optional thermal lamination unit and an in-line sheeter.

AVERY DENNISON is looking at four key sub themes and grouping of products and services within its booth. The company showcases upgraded services designed to support businesses to reduce waste, help customers manage orders, and quickly create custom products. Avery Dennison showcases new adhesives, topcoats, overlaminates and label technologies. The company also presents technologies and materials designed to enable plastic recycling as well as materials that contain recycled content. Finally, Avery Dennison is also showing its 'connected' technology and how it fits into the future of labeling.

BERHALTER presents a new Swiss Die-Cutter B6, delivering 500 strokes per minute. The machine digitally die-cuts with maximum precision, featuring individually controlled die-cutting motion, flexibly adjustable opening level of the punching tool, digitally monitored penetration depth and a new active foil guide built into the punching tool.

Also at the company's stand is the new CUTcontrol technology, which can link all production processes and provide the KPIs for strategic production planning, including

live data streams from machine, accessories, and punching tools.

BREIT TECHNOLOGIES showcases its eco-friendly cast and cure films, in which a decorative, clear holographic pattern or matte finish is applied to a printed substrate, such as labels. Unlike laminated holography or cold and hot foils, the cast-and-cure film can be re-used up to a dozen times. Additionally, the cast-and-cure process does not use any adhesives or metals, so that it doesn't affect labels' recyclability.

BAR GRAPHIC MACHINERY, in association with its distributor, J&J Converting Machinery, showcases the latest range of BGM Elite machines, including BGM Elite iSR, a compact, robust, and free-standing label inspection slitter rewinder. The company also showcases the BGM Elite eDSR Easy Load die-cut slitter rewinder, the company's fastest, compact, free-standing label die-cutting technology. It offers rotary die-cutting capability up to 250m/min and is also available for use as a conventional slitter rewinder.

BROTECH shows the SDD330 laser die-cutter, SDF Plus 330 converting system, and SMS500 seaming system. The SDD330 laser die-cutter supports lamination and roll-to-sheet operation. The SDF Plus 330 converting system is designed for multiple processes in one pass, including hot foil stamping, flexo printing/cold foil, screen printing, varnishing, die-cutting and slitting. It features a 90-degree rotatable hot stamping head, which can apply a maximum of three foils simultaneously, including hologram foils.

The SMS500 shrink sleeve seaming system is specially designed for flexible packaging and can reach a maximum seaming speed of up to 400m/min.

CARTES showcases the Cartes Jet D-Screen

digital embellishment system combined with the company's laser die-cutting system. The Jet D-Screen module is designed to create labels with multilayer effects, spot coating, complex tactile effects, braille printing, and detailed foiling and metallic doming.

The Jet D-Screen includes a high degree of process automation, including automatic job changeover with barcode reading, automatic slitting knife positioning, and turret rewinding systems.

The company also promotes its GT360 Series for the conventional embellishment of high-end labels.

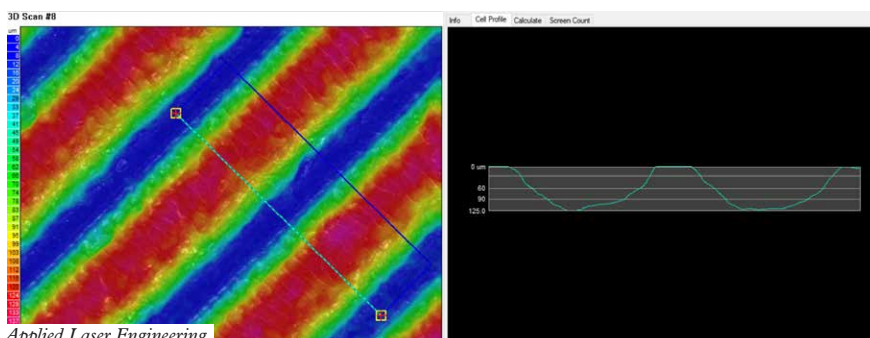
CERM presents smart management information software (MIS) products for industrial print shops. Cerm MIS potentially increases the productivity of label and packaging converters with its focus on the technical production process and specific interfaces to its partners within the printing industry.

COMET FLEXOGRAPHIC MACHINES exhibits its top-selling machine, the Comet SL16-UV, a compact, stack-format flexo press with UV varnish and cold-foil.

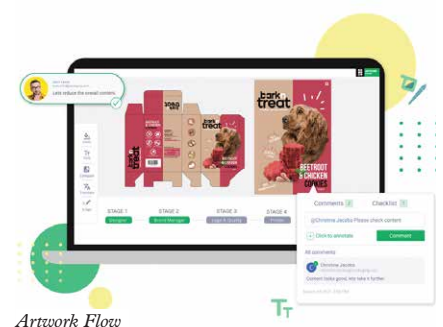
COLOP, a manufacturer of modern stamp and marking devices, presents e-mark, a mobile printer based on inkjet technology that works in combination with a free, in-house developed software for iOS, Android and Windows operating systems. A wide range of materials can be marked including carton, fabrics, certain plastics and labels.

The application enables users to design color prints, including logos, automated date and time stamps and QR codes or barcodes.

COLORDYNE TECHNOLOGIES introduces the 3800 Series WB (water base), a sustainable water-based inkjet engine utilizing a Kyocera mechanical piezo printhead



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Arrow Systems

technology ideal for food packaging and pharmaceutical packaging. Expanding its strategic partnership with Kao Collins, the new development leverages the proven high quality performance of Colordyne's 3800 Series UV engine design and that of Kao's LunaJet inks to create an eco-friendly, water-based inkjet product for digital printing on labels, plastic flexible film packaging and other non-porous substrates.

DANTEX GROUP launches its next generation of digital inkjet presses. The Pico range consists of the new PicoColour HD, PicoJet 254, PicoJet 330i, and the flagship PicoJet 330s.

PicoColourHD is available with in-line finishing. All PicoJet models feature modular stations including flexo, die-cutting, cold foiling, lamination, edge trimming, back scoring, and rotary or shear slitting. Customers can also benefit from Pico's SuperWhite, offering inkjet white at an opacity of 92 percent in a single pass, along with a new orange

Dantex also promotes a wide range of its plate processing and cleaning equipment, letterpress and flexo plate materials, along with tapes and sleeves.

DACO SOLUTIONS together with its partner Flexo Export, exhibits a Daco PLR350 slitter rewinder with a three-spindle semi-automatic turret rewinder. The patented PLR is available with web widths of 250mm (10in), 350mm (13.75in) and 430mm (17in). The machine is available with inspection table, vision system and rotary die station for plain label production and a large capacity unwind to keep roll changes to a minimum.

The Daco TD 350/430 fully automatic turret rewinder to produce plain labels is manufactured with 1m (40in) unwinds, one or two rotary die stations and a four-spindle turret rewinder. With the addition of one or two flexo stations, the machine can produce finished rolls in one pass. Drying options include UV, IR and LED, along with options of UV inkjet systems for barcodes and variable data work.

DAVIS STANDARD provides information on its equipment for film manufacturing, liquid coating, extrusion coating, slitting, unwinding, and winding. Davis Standard offers custom-built, high-output production lines for the label industry, whether it be adhesive-coated labels, silicone-coated liners, or converting.

DCM presents its most recent developments, including Super Tigre, a new fully automatic double turret slitter rewinder operating up to 3,280 ft/min with automatic slit positioning, cores taping and core positioning.

DCM also shows Sleeve Intense, a non-stop seamer with an automatic sleeve monitoring system, automatic solvent needle web guide, seaming line control, quality control in-line and defect identification.

Also on display is the Babycat, DCM's inspection and doctoring machine, now also available with a Decosystem camera to monitor the seaming line and its thickness.

DELTA MODTECH shows the newly updated Crusader Converter running a precision RFID antennae placement demo. A second Crusader Converter will feature Edge Laser Technology with barcode reader integration, allowing for on-the-fly cut pattern changeover. In Domino's booth, visitors will also find a Delta Spectrum finishing machine with an integrated Domino K600i. This demonstration features seamless integration of Domino's inkjet technology, coupled with tight tolerance and high-speed die-cutting.

DEMAK GROUP demonstrates its Kromex technology for manufacturing 3D emblems and decals for applications ranging



Asahi Photoproducts



Berhater



Cartes



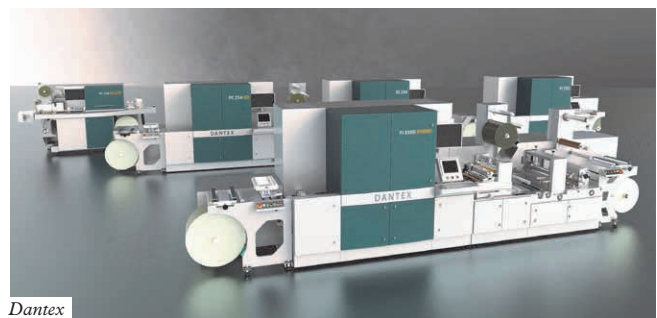
Colordyne



DeltaModtech



Daco



Dantex

from automotive to marine, Five different finishes are available including Chrome, matte, colored, transparent and ABS. Demak also shows doming machines to give labels a 3D effect and outdoor resistance guaranteed over eight years.

The Demak PM line is equipped with continuous vacuum technology to avoid air bubbles and an XYZ robot for dosing resin on complex shapes with very high accuracy.

DIPCO demonstrates its quick change flexo pan liner technology developed for digital and in-line press equipment. The company also promotes its line of bio-friendly, non-conductive ink pan liner and catch tray inserts spanning all segments of the print industry. Products support all inks and coatings, from water-based to UV, and are solvent safe.

DIMATRA presents a new model of its labels inspection and slitter rewinder machine for 100 percent inspection and high-speed slitting. The machine has 450mm (17.71in) width, running at 500m/min (1,640 ft/min) and is programmed to stop automatically on a splicing table before slitting, where an operator can cut the web, remove the defects manually or rewind a specific distance on a special rewinder for defective material. The machine is designed for inspection and slitting labels with a liner, wraparound labels, shrink films for shrink sleeves and others.

Dimatra also exhibits the Sleeve Seamer Eco, a compact and efficient machine designed for short runs of sleeves with quick setup. It can produce sleeves up to 200 mm (7.87in) running at 120m/min (393 ft/min).

Also on show is a fully servo-driven Sleeve Cutter machine, able to make 350 cuts per minute with horizontal and vertical perforation systems. The cutting can be controlled by a pre-set distance or by programming its printing sensor.

DILLI shows Neo Picasso, its new digital inkjet label press, which includes upgraded web control technology for more precise printing. With CMYK plus two spot colors (orange and violet) and

double white as options, maximum print width of 330mm, it covers a wide range of labels and flexible packaging. The latest version of Neo Picasso is equipped with a corona treater, chiller, pin-curing system and full-color variable data printing capability.

DOMINO debuts its N730i digital UV inkjet label press and showcases its N610i and K600i in booth 6523.

Domino shows its N730i digital UV inkjet label press for the first time. The press prints at 1200 dpi with BITSTAR print head technology. It is configurable in up to seven colors (CMYKOVW) and can achieve up to 92 percent of the Pantone color range. Its ergonomic design is automated with roll lifts at the unwind and rewind and supporting media rolls of up to 1 meter in diameter. It has an optional flexo priming station (pre-digital), which can be retrofitted to optimize print quality on more difficult media types. An optional flexo station (post-digital) can be retrofitted to support varnishing, a brand spot color, or flood white for shrink sleeve applications.

Domino also exhibits its N610i digital UV inkjet label press, a 600x600 native dpi digital UV inkjet label press available in up to seven colors (CMYKOVW) in roll-to-roll, roll-to-inline / nearline, and hybrid configurations. The K600i dual bar digital UV inkjet printer is also on display. The K600i allows variable data printing at up to 492 ft/min and the ability to print serial, batch, random, or PINs; alphanumeric characters; variable images; linear barcodes; 2D matrix, or QR codes.

DPR LABELING debuts two new roll-to-roll digital converting machines for mid to high-volume label production.

The Taurus laser finishing system operates at speeds up to 30m/min. Eliminating the need for conventional die plates, this high-speed laser system has the power to produce any shape on rolls up to 350mm (13.8in) wide. Capable of laminating, cutting, slitting, removing matrix, and rewinding, this all-in-one system allows users to customize jobs and deliver on demand.

The Aries semi-rotary label finishing system is built for rolls

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ranging from 250mm (9.8in) up to 330mm (13in). Production speeds are up to 20m/min.

DURICO shows a range of direct thermal film and inkjet-compatible label facestocks. New films will include phenol-free products with increased heat stability and highly-resistant ones suitable for harsh environments such as solvent, alcohol, hot water and meat blood. Durico also presents its translucent direct thermal films with enhanced transparency, providing a frosted look to the see-through food label. Also presented are highly durable inkjet PP films, B55609 and GHS-compliant, and inkjet DuPont Tyvek suitable for use with color inkjet printing systems.

DURST GROUP showcases its Tau RSC printer series. New features increase the productivity of the flagship printer, the Tau RSCi, with a print width of up to 20in and a print speed of 328 ft/min, and this will be shown for the first time at a trade show. Customers can also experience the power of the Durst Workflow Label and how intelligent software helps reduce ink consumption.

EAGLEWOOD TECHNOLOGIES introduces the Sitexco Label L10 anilox cleaning system, based on the award-winning Sitexco laser anilox system. The L10 is a slimmed-down version especially designed for narrow web printers. This technology does not require chemicals or water and doesn't generate waste.

EF COOLING presents Evo-series chillers, which include two circuits for the simultaneous cooling of two processes with only one chiller, reducing the necessary footprint and providing more floor space for manufacturing. Additionally, these chillers feature exclusive ef connect, a fast, transparent and secure support line providing remote online analysis and troubleshooting by ef cooling service experts.

ECLIPSE LABEL EQUIPMENT is exhibiting three new digital label cutters and laminators. The Eclipse LF350HS model handles media widths up to 350mm (13.5in). It offers up to 25 percent increase in

productivity with the optional second cutting head and automatic pattern changeover from the barcode reading system. The 350HS offers a smaller footprint and is designed as a desktop model.

The Eclipse LF220HS offers the same productivity as the 350HS while handling media widths up to 220mm (8.5in) with an increased production speed and the ability to be operated as an in-line system.

Eclipse also demonstrates full in-line printing and digital label finishing system with the Epson C6500 full-color printer, Eclipse ACU-1+ accumulator, the Eclipse Mini+ laminator and digital finishing systems for short-run label production from plain media to a final label.

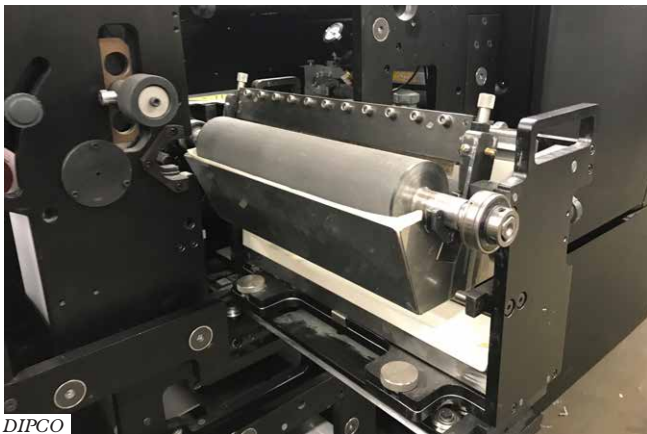
EPSON showcases the SurePress L-6534VW UV press available with digital varnish or orange ink. The digital varnish offers spot varnish, simulated foiling, and embossing, all in-line with label production. Orange ink has a 92 percent Pantone coverage certification within Delta E of 1.5. The L-6534VW models automates maintenance and checking of the printheads during the production day without operator intervention.

The SurePress L-4733AW water-based resin press builds on the success of its predecessor, to deliver labels suitable for food product packaging, including PS labels, IML, shrink, and candy wrappers.

Epson also showcases the P-, R- and S-Series printers for proofing, prototyping, and large-size label production up to 63in width, as well as its ColorWorks color inkjet desktop label printers that handle on-demand jobs in tough production line environments.

ERHARDT+LEIMER's core competence is based on camera and sensor technology, providing systems and process control equipment to web-based industries, including textile, converting, battery, printing, corrugating, non-woven, paper manufacturing, tire, rubber, plastics and packaging. The product range includes web guiding, web tension control, web monitoring, web inspection systems, web thickness and basis weight measurement systems.

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synthetic doctor blades, exhibits advanced laminated synthetic doctor blades with precision engineered edge profiling for specialist coating applications.

EYEC features a wide range of systems during live demonstrations at booth 1337 and in cooperation with partners. Visitors to the stand can learn more about the EyeC ProofRunner 100 percent print inspection technology available for printing presses and rewinders with up to 68in (1.70m) web width. On display are also two EyeC Profiler print sample inspection systems for sample sizes up to 50x36in (1,270x915mm), along with innovations that reflect the company's future-oriented, creative, and pioneering approach.

FEDRIGONI SELF-ADHESIVES is exhibiting for the first time at Labelexpo Americas and brings together all of the Fedrigoni brands under one banner. Visitors can experience new products and services, which are a direct result of the acquisitions over the past two years and the synergies of Acucote, Arconvert, Manter, Ritrama, IP Venus and Tageos.

Unique products at the booth include the Fedrigoni Art of Luxury portfolio for wine and open and close wet wipes for home and personal care. For food and beverage converters, Fedrigoni showcases WOff, a Wash Off Adhesive that is expected to be certified by the APR (Association of

Plastic Recyclers) and provides debonding of non-recyclable label materials from PET and glass containers. Lastly, in the Smart Labeling section of the booth, visitors can discover the Tageos portfolio of high-performance, premium-quality RFID inlays and tags.

FIX-A-FORM INTERNATIONAL presents a Fold & Fix booklet label machine with a 16.5in web width and the capability to handle 0.75 to 15in leaflet lengths at up to 100 ft/min in multiple modes of operation.

Folding unit mode enables in-line folding of leaflets during the affixing process in a single pass pile feeder mode for feeding pre-folded leaflets, booklets, or other items onto the web to produce leaflet labels.

The machine features lamination or glue-only options and an adjustable pre-curve roller, while the web tracking via servo-controlled side adjustment enables pre-printed laminates to be laid down in register. The hot melt glue and steering unit is fully programmable for discrete solid or dashed transverse glue lines or 100 percent surface coating.

FLEXO WASH introduces the FW 850 laser anilox cleaner. The FW 850 series models clean up to two narrow web rolls in one cycle and can be installed without water supply, drain, or safety equipment. It can handle aniloxes up to 7in in diameter, 27.6in length and 110lbs weight.



Eaglewood

FLXON showcases its latest doctor blades, ink pumps, and filters. The latest blade from Swedcut has been specially developed for durability and precise ink metering at high speeds.

FLINT GROUP NARROW WEB presents a new series of products focused on making products recyclable, called Evolution. At booth 5703, the company shows its Evolution Primer and Evolution varnish along with DualCure technology, a new technology that lowers operating costs and energy consumption when using LED curing technology. Evolution Primer is a de-inking primer for shrink sleeve label printing that makes it possible to recycle the sleeve label material at the same time as the bottle. Evolution Varnish ensures that the inks remain on the label throughout the recycling process.

FORMIC presents Robotics-as-a-Service, helping factories start automating without the high cost, complexity, or risk typically required to onboard the technology. Formic delivers customized robot systems from leading vendors at a low hourly rate with no upfront investments, including everything from planning and deployment to maintenance and upgrades.

FUJIFILM showcases multiple 'Go Green' printing products for the label and packaging segment. The company shows its



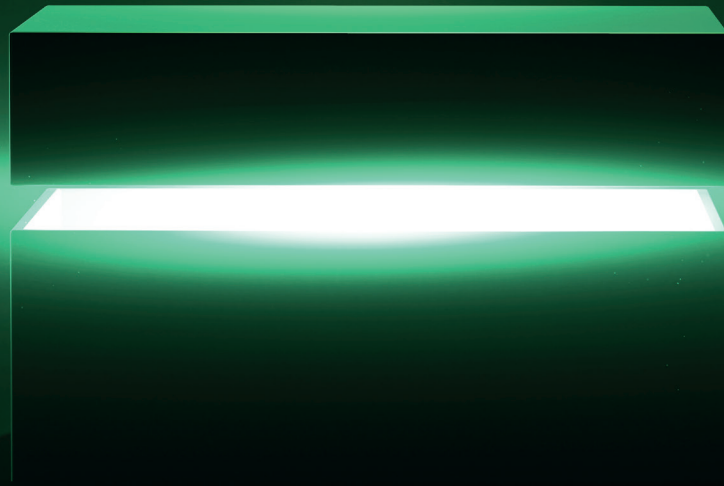
Fedrigoni



Fix-A-Form

Dantex is unveiling

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Illumina LED Curing System and 300 Series Inks, a two-part system consisting of an LED curing unit and specially formulated LED inks that easily convert existing water-based or UV flexo presses to boost productivity and reduce energy costs by 86 to 95 percent.

The company also shows its Flenex Water-Wash plates and processors. The plates are 100 percent solvent-free and provide high quality at fast production times while lowering cost-in-use compared to thermal, solvent, or other water-wash technology.

Also on display is ColorPath Sync cloud-based color management software, providing one location to manage color for multiple workflows, devices, and media.

FUJI SHOKO promotes Katana, a ceramic-coated doctor blade model rebranded for the US market. Non-coated steel or stainless-steel models are also available for ordinary conditions. Katara series are fully processed in Japan.

GEW brings its latest UV LED products to Labelexpo Americas. LeoLED, released in 2019, is GEW's water-cooled UV LED offering and is fully compatible with GEW's ArcLED hybrid system. It has a 50mm-wide window to give a long dwell time and is waterproof-sealed for easy cleaning and resilience to dust and ink. The LED array delivers electrical power of 88W/cm and an intensity of 30W/cm², with minimal light loss due to the direct UV path.

GEW says LeoLED is suitable for users who want access to UV Arc and UV LED technology, those with more demanding applications, or those who want to print on substrates wider than 600mm.

GEW also highlights AeroLED, a fully air-cooled UV LED system released in 2022. It is a high-power UV LED system for full cure, printing, coating and converting applications up to 600mm wide. AeroLED delivers power and reliability with a unique concept that eliminates many of the operational problems in existing air-cooled LED systems on the market. Moreover, the company says the design makes AeroLED cost-effective and step changes the accessibility of LED printing.

GRAFISK MASKINFABRIK exhibits six machines, including the new DC350Flex high speed label finisher fitted with a multi-web module producing multilayer labels using the entire web width. Also, the DC330Mini compact label finisher can be seen converting pre-printed labels. It has several options such as real-time monitoring, full remote control, and job data in the cloud.

Visitors can also see the SR350 slitter inspection rewinder, which has been completely redesigned as a modular machine with a range of options such as BST 100 percent inspection camera for pharma and security labels, scanner barcode reader, inkjet system, automatic slitting unit, waste vacuum ejector and turret rewinder. Visitors can also see the LR250 label inspection rewinder. Also on show is the CC160S semi-automatic core cutter and the CS350 high-speed sheeter, a 350 mm roll-to-sheet guillotine cutter suitable for cutting labels and heavy materials.

GRAFOTRONIC presents three world premieres for the label industry.

The workflow automation suite enables the Grafotronic DCL2 to do job change autonomously, handling all job settings automatically. IQ works with a set of cameras monitoring the web and automatically adjusting parameters, taking over all the manual adjustments with a tolerance below +/- 0.1 mm.

Grafotronic also promotes The One single anvil semi-rotary die, capable of reaching 150 m/min. It can be set up within just 30 cm of material with a tolerance of +/-0.1 mm.

Also on show is the HI3 inspection rewinder with the Choose Green program. This features a regenerative system which captures braking energy and converts it into power, making the system approximately 30 percent more energy efficient.

Grafotronic is also showcasing Boon-Tech auxiliary machines,



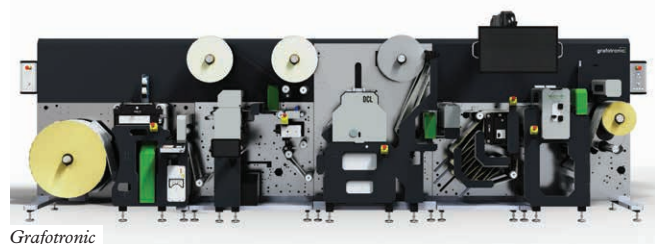
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including boon|Rebel, a small (1.2 m footprint) digital finisher; boon|Raptor, a high-speed label cutter and boon|Velox automatic core cutter.

HARPER exhibits its patent-pending Xtreme Channelled Application Technology (X-CAT), a product that combats ink spitting, moiré, trail edge voids (TEV), ghosting, and ink re-solubility at high speeds. It also makes the anilox easier to clean and allows particles to pass through rather than being trapped behind the blade, reducing or eliminating scoring. X-CAT works with UV, water-based and/or solvent inks and performs well in applications including process printing, the 60-degree hex, UV narrow web, solvent wide-web, UV mid-web, and water-based narrow web.

HEIDELBERG GALLUS discusses its new digital UV inkjet web press, Gallus One, along with its entire line of flexo web presses, Screeny and flexo consumables.

Based on the Labelfire digital web press and the Labelmaster overall platform, the Gallus One is a 340mm wide roll-to-roll UV inkjet press printing at 70m/min at 1,200 DPI in four colors plus white.

Gallus also showcases its line of rotary silkscreen for screen units. Gallus Screeny is said to offer its customers a wide range of products for screen-printing applications. According to the company, Screeny, and its line of pre-press products, are suitable for

both Gallus and non-Gallus screen units.

HERAEUS NOBLELIGHT AMERICA showcases infrared and UV LED curing systems suitable for a wide range of label applications, including drying water-based inks, curing UV inks and pressure-sensitive adhesives.

Infradyr Compact IR modules for drying water-based inks and coatings combine IR heat with air management to remove moisture from the process area. The compact, modular unit retrofits easily into existing offset, flexo and digital presses or onto paper, foil and other coating lines.

The Semray UV4103 UV LED curing system is a modular air-cooled, easy-to-configure system for different printing, coating, or adhesive curing widths. In addition, advanced micro-optics enable larger working distances without significantly reducing the print area's intensity. The plug-and-play modular segments are easy to swap in and out of the backplane, whether for maintenance purposes or to change wavelengths.

HP INDIGO is showcasing the HP Indigo V12 digital press to the public for the first time. The press, rooted in the HP Indigo industry-winning formula, utilizes the new LEPx technology to create the new math of label printing with earning power exceeding multiple Flexos.

The company says that label converters

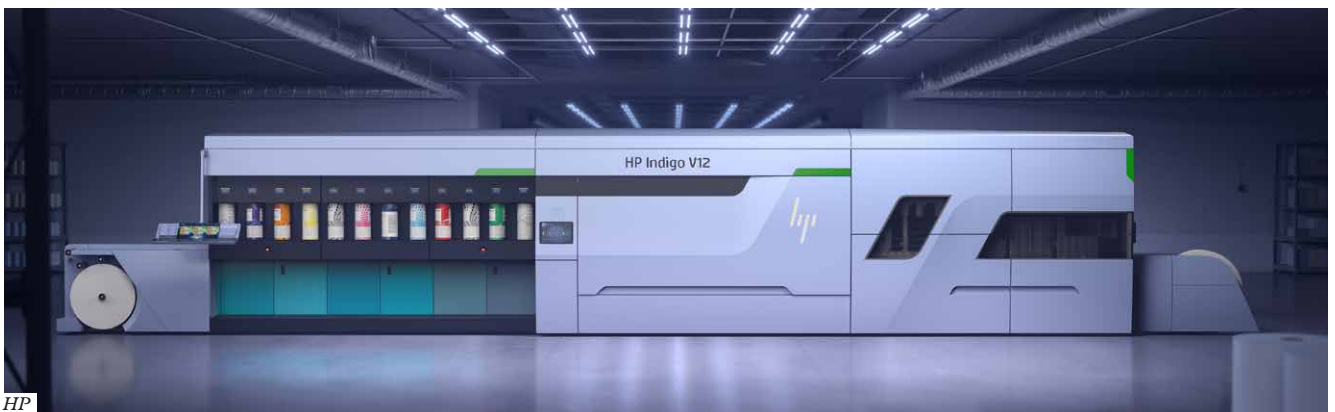
operating this press will outgrow the label market by a factor of three. This allows brands to benefit from an agile and sustainable supply chain without compromising print quality or packaging innovation.

HP is running live demonstrations of the HP Indigo V12 and the HP Indigo 6K digital presses, the backbone of the digital label space, at the designated booth site, as well as different automation technologies, new business opportunities and innovation from the lab.

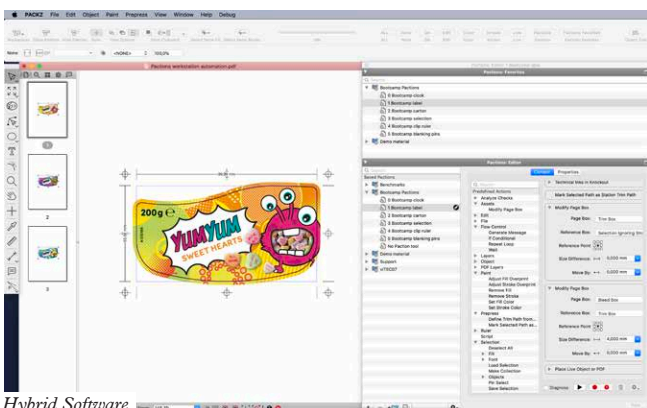
HUBERGROUP PRINT SOLUTIONS introduces the I-Ray UV flexographic ink system available for conventional mercury bulb UV curing and I-Ray Max dual-cure for both UV LED and mercury bulb UV curing. I-Ray and I-Ray Dual Cure UV ink systems utilize the latest advancements in energy curable technology, including high strength, low viscosity and compatibility with most substrates, including labels, flexible packaging and shrink films.

Hubergroup also shows UV and LED curable coatings. The Hydro-X line of water-based inks is optimized for label, folding carton, bag and flexible packaging printing applications. The inks are imprintable, scuff, rub, scratch-resistant, and fade-resistant.

Hubergroup also showcases a comprehensive line of water-based coatings.



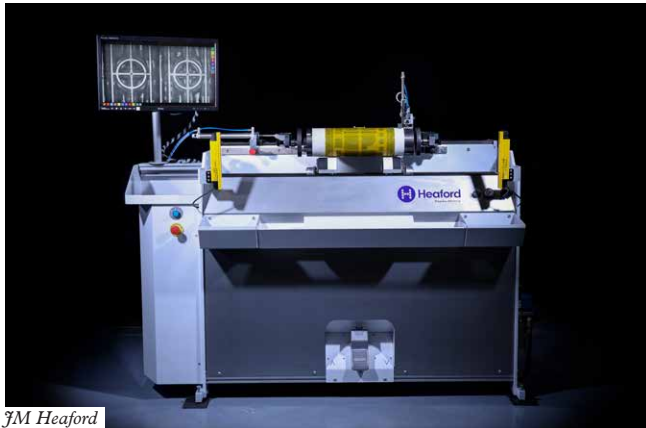
HP



Hybrid Software



International Media products



JM Heaford



Karlville



Konica Minolta

HYBRID SOFTWARE showcases its recent acquisition of iC3D by showing 3D visualization throughout the entire prepress process. At booth 3015, Hybrid Software and iC3D will join its Hybrid Software Group sister companies, including Global Graphics Software ColorLogic, Xitron and Meteor Inkjet.

Hybrid Software will showcase version 8 of Packz, its native PDF editor. Enhancements include complex layered artwork that can now be viewed in color and wired modes simultaneously, and object-based screenings can be inspected per separation. The Smart Flattener guarantees artwork quality and consistency, professionally managing spot color and transparency interactions as well as press gamut conversions. Pactions is a programmed toolset with action lists, responding to customer needs for advanced automation. It reduces the amount of operator time needed to edit, approve, and print a new package design.

Also on display will be Stepz 8, an interactive software package based on the award-winning technology of Packz, which allows for the preparation and execution of step-and-repeat and variable data tasks for high-speed digital printing of labels. Hybrid Software also presents Cloudflow, SmartDFE and variable data printing technology.

IMDA brings a team of experts in in-mold processes as the association's members will be present in the booth, ready to answer questions about labels, substrates, molding processes and more. New this year is the IMDA Ask the Experts resource book, with IMDA members listed by category for easy access to their knowledge and resources in in-mold labeling (IML), in-mold decorating (IMD) and in-mold electronics (IME). The association also has information on the recyclability of the in-mold processes; in-mold labeling was recently designed as a 'preferred' process for consumer packaging by the Association of Plastics Recyclers (APR).

INFIGO SPECIALISTS are on hand to show label converters how to build and scale a thriving online brand through its web-to-print technology. From creating a functional storefront, with unique, eye-catching designs, to the modules and integrations that provide a seamless customer experience and printing workflow, to the strategies that improve conversions and enable scale – Infigo provides the insight label converters need to know to generate online revenue.

INTERNATIONAL MEDIA PRODUCTS showcases its most recent thermal transfer ribbon addition, the Z200+ wax/resin, offering

image durability, abrasion resistance, and high-speed printing capability. As a US-based manufacturer, IMP offers a full line of 'plug and play' thermal ribbon technologies for the barcode label and tag printing market. Additionally highlights its flexible package printing ribbons, used for thermal transfer overprinting, including the new 4.0-micron extended length product line. All IMP formulations are halogen-free and ROHS compliant.

JM HEAFORD demonstrates its range of plate mounters. Visitors can see Heaford's AutoMouter, the system which eliminates operator judgment from the mounting process and reduces press downtime. The Label AutoMouter is configurable for multiple presses and offers options including pre-register compatibility, plate and tape cutters and a sleeve exchange unit. The company also shows a semi-automatic FTS model plate mouter.

The Heaford ELS model completes the trio of plate mounters on the booth. The plate mounting system uses high magnification cameras used on all Heaford models.

KARLVILLE displays the Plus series machine combo, K3 Plus Seamer and iPlus Inspector.

The K3 Plus is its third-generation seaming machine with folding system



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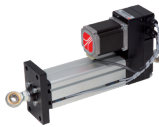


A SOLUTION FOR ANY PROBLEM

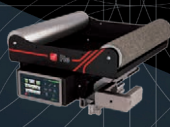
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 PROPOSALS
 ARE NEEDED
 JUST **THE RIGHT ONE**



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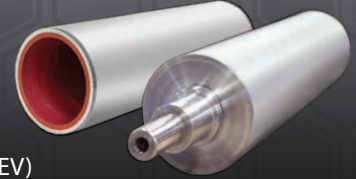
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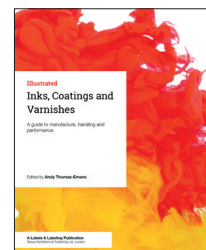
Flexible packaging continues to experience one of the highest growth rates across all printing sectors. Narrow- and mid-web printing using conventional and digital technology has opened up the market for both label converters and new customers entering this industry, who have never previously had a solution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

that addresses shrink sleeve seaming issues. It comes with a fully automated setup and feedback loop. The machine runs a +/-0.15mm lay flat tolerance with a friction-free forming system. Operators can position seam up to 5mm from fold. Laser perforation (cross and continuous perforations) integration with turret unwind and rewinds are optional.

The iPlus is its latest inspection machine. It runs 500m/min and is equipped with an E+L oscillation system on both shafts, which allows to control the type (sine or square) and quantity of oscillation from the MMI.

KLEAR PLASTIC VENTURES (KLEAR) presents sustainable PET heat shrinkable film products. Crystallizable TopGreen film is recognized by The Association of Plastic Recyclers (APR) for meeting or exceeding their Critical Guidance Protocol for Clear PET Articles with Labels and Closures requirements (PET-CG-02). These films are claimed to pass through the PET bottle recycling process without clumping or negatively impacting the material flow. Sleeve labels made with crystallizable PET film allow recyclability of post-consumer PET bottles. Klear also supplies films made with 30 percent post-consumer recycled (PCR) content. CO2 emissions are claimed to be reduced by 19 percent during the manufacturing process compared to virgin polyester films produced from petroleum.

KOCHER+BECK shows the latest motorized GapMaster unit. The new GapMaster EM and the EM Retrofit offer the ability to change the increments of adjustment down to as small as 0.25 microns if required. The system also incorporates a job-saving function and the ability to set a limit on the range of adjustment allowed. The GapMaster EM has a user-friendly calibration function and a home/start function that can be set by the customer. The EM Retrofit has the same functions as the EM GapMaster but can be retrofitted to all existing Kocher+Beck GapMaster units.

The range of flexible dies, TecScreen printing meshes, and magnetic cylinders will also be on show and showcased with



Kroenert



Kurz

a preview of a new magnetic tool incorporating HMT (Hidden Magnetic Technology).

KONICA MINOLTA unveils the AccurioLabel 400 five-color label press for the first time in the US, targeting mid- to high-volume label converters, commercial printers, and large brand owners.

Important new developments include the ability to expand applications with white toner, extended job opportunities with press runs up to 3000m and improved productivity with print speeds of up to 130 ft/min. Other features include resolution equivalent to 3600x2400 DPI, prints on substrate widths up to 13in, multiple-touch panel monitors, and Intelligent Quality Optimizer. The IQ-520 enables real-time control of white toner opacity, color stability control, as well as automatic calibration, density adjustments and profile creation.

The company also showcases its AccurioLabel 230 label press, GM DC330 Mini all-in-one compact label finishing machine, PKG-1300 and AccurioPro front-end software.

KROENERT promotes coating and laminating lines for web materials such as paper, foil, film, cardboard and non-woven. The product range includes customized production and laboratory lines. Kroenert offers systems with web widths of up to 3,300mm, coating thicknesses of more than 1mm to a minimum of 100 nanometres and processing speeds from 0.5m/min up to 2,000m/min. Besides topics like digitalization in coating technology, the company will also focus on innovative user interfaces and sustainability.

KTI promotes the MTR Series of turret rewriter in web widths up to 22in (558mm), roll diameters up to 16in (406mm), and speeds up to 750 ft/min (228m/min). The MTR Series turret rewriter has four spindles, an integrated dancer for superior web control and PLC touch screen controls. In addition, a new roll closure system is available with in-line print and apply technology, allowing customers to add various product and production information to the roll closure labels, including product codes, lot numbers, job

Est. No.	Date	Est. No.	Customer	Application	W/L Status	Press
5234	11/13/19	1040	Durham Wines	Cheese Label	Lost	2200
5233	11/13/19	1034	Assesme Labels	Vintage Wine Labels-F	Open	D8000
5232	11/13/19	1040	Durham Wines	Assorted Wines	Wpn	8000
5230	11/12/19	1040	Durham Wines	Assorted Wines	Open	8000
5229	11/12/19	1040	Durham Wines	Assorted Wines	Open	D8000
5228	11/06/19	1032	Clear Springs Inc.	Hemp pouch, Rocky Mountain High	Open	20000
5227	10/01/19	1034	Assesme Labels	Vintage Wine Labels-F	Open	D8000
5226	08/19/19	1040	Durham Wines	Assorted Wines	Open	8000
5225	08/19/19	1034	Durham Wines	Assorted Wines	Wpn	D8000
5225	08/05/19	1016	LetterHead Graphics	Merry Ice Cream Labels	Wpn	8000
5224	07/25/19	1033	The Orland Company	Moose Loose	Open	D8000
5223	05/13/19	1034	Assesme Labels	Vintage Wine Labels-F	Open	D8000
5222	03/21/19	1040	Durham Wines	Assorted Wines	Open	2200
5221	03/21/19	1040	Durham Wines	Assorted Wines	Open	8000
5220	11/02/18	1034	Assesme Labels	Vintage Wine Labels-F	Open	D8000
5218	11/02/18	1034	Assesme Labels	Vintage Wine Labels-D	Open	D8000
5218	09/12/18	1034	Assesme Labels	Vintage Wine Labels-F	Open	2200
5217	09/12/18	1034	Assesme Labels	Vintage Wine Labels-D	Open	D8000
5212	09/12/18	1040	Durham Wines	6 x 4 Pouch per. lbs.	Wpn	20000

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INK
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Evolution**

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Self-adhesive Labels offers a comprehensive introduction to self-adhesive / pressure-sensitive label technology, the individual components, materials and specific applications. Also covered are performance requirements and sustainability.

This brand new Label Academy guide is a must-have resource for label converters, brand owners, designers and the wider label supply chain.

The chapters in this book will specifically look at:

- + Introduction to the self-adhesive label market
- + Silicone release liner technology
- + Pressure-sensitive adhesive technologies
- + Identification and characteristics of PS label materials
- + Test methods for pressure-sensitive labels

Also in the series:



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numbers and date of production. Additional options can be added, including automatic core loading and a slitting module.

KURZ showcases its DM-Uniliner and the MJETeco. The MJETeco from MPrint, a Kurz company, is a standalone UV inkjet product for late-stage customization. The MJETeco handles a wide variety of applications, whether users are printing barcodes or serial numbers for security labels, or complete back labels for wine and spirits. The company also demonstrates its Digital Metal technology.

LABEL TRAXX unveils its Version 9.0 workflow software. In response to ongoing industry consolidation, the Enterprise Edition will be previewed, offering a set of capabilities designed to serve the requirements of multi-site organizations. The company previews new CRM features with the Customer Service suite, including Rapid Quoting. The recently-added Inventory Forecast Tool provides the operations team insights and alternatives to respond to supply chain challenges in real-time from its Automated Planning & Scheduling Suite. The expanded team will also answer

questions about new subscription plans and cloud hosting alternatives.

LEMORAU presents a compact digital finishing machine, Smart-L, featuring software which allows for the import and export of job and production data. Lemorau Smart-L includes a linerless lamination station, semi-rotary/rotary die-cutting with pressure gauges, an Easy Strip Waste Rewinder to avoid breakage and strip intricate designs, a slitting unit equipped with six circular knives, air trim removal, and a semi-automatic turret rewriter. Also on display will be a Lemorau CT1500 core cutter and ER400 roll lifter.

LEMUGROUP exhibits its new off-line digital finishing and embellishment system MA-350, incorporating robotic roll packaging. Modular functions include spot varnishing, heavy-duty hot stamping and screen printing. The MA-350 system will be complemented with a GTU glueless turret rewriter and Lemu automatic robotic boxing system. As with all LemuGroup automation, it can be equipped to run on any digital or traditional flexo press.

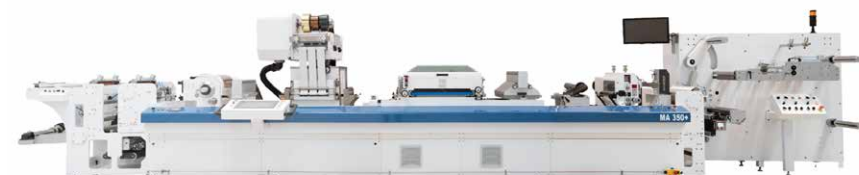
LUMINESCENCE SUN CHEMICAL SECURITY, a member of the SunChemical-DIC group, promotes its HelioMark inks for brand authentication, including a comprehensive range of security inks and product authentication tools.

LUNDBERG demonstrates Lundberg Tech MatrixCompactor 140 label matrix waste removal system. It provides in-line waste handling of matrix and trim waste with adhesives from label presses. The MatrixCompactor 140 captures the matrix and trims directly from the press, and the cutter chops the waste into small-sized pieces for easy transport in the non-stick pipe system. The matrix waste is subsequently compacted in the integrated WasteCompactor. Lundberg waste handling experts are available to discuss central waste handling technology for label and flexible packaging providers.

MAAN ENGINEERING presents its hot-melt coating equipment. The company introduces visitors to its network of coating and converting specialists.

MACTAC discusses its expanded technology, capacity, and adhesive formulation capabilities in booth 143. As part of Lintec, Mactac has also acquired Spinnaker, which specializes in the customized production and distribution of pressure-sensitive roll label and sheet base materials in North America. With Spinnaker, Lintec and Duramark Products (formally Ritrama USA and acquired by Mactac earlier in 2021) serving the industry together, Mactac delivers customers technology, capability, service and value.

MARK ANDY is showcasing a broad range of digital label presses from entry-level roll-to-roll printing to a sophisticated 'True Digital Hybrid.' Its newest digital press is configured as roll-to-roll with 5-colors CMYK and white and prints at speeds up to 130 ft/min. The press has a flexo-only option with the unique ability of running left to right or right to left. Also at the show is the Digital Series iQ inkjet press built on Mark Andy's Evolution Series flexographic platform with award-winning web handling and digital integration. Completing the digital lineup is the Digital Series HD UV inkjet press with four flexo units, in-line varnish and die-cutting. Mark Andy's new Production Monitoring and Analytics software, sMART link, is also showcased. Rotoflex equipment includes VSI and VLI inspection rewinders and the new AT4 quick-change turret rewriter. The AT4 can be configured for in-line or off-line label finishing with auto core gluing and auto label closer as options. Mark Andy Print



Lemu Group



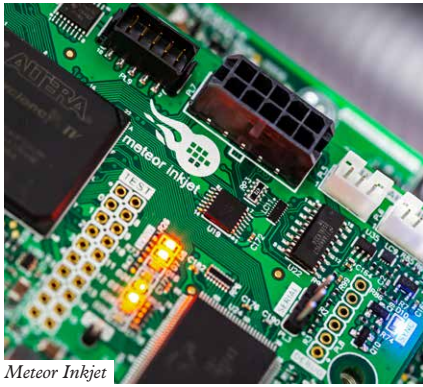
Lundberg



Martin Automatic



Maan Engineering



Meteor Inkjet

Products (MAPP) supports all demos with materials such as Dupont plates, tesa tape, performance doctor blades, various cleaners, racks, and roll lifting equipment. Booth visitors will have a chance to win an anilox roll rack, roll lifter and discount coupons for press room needs.

MARTIN AUTOMATIC, a supplier of automatic butt splicers, exhibits the latest versions of its machine, including MBS unwind butt splicer and LRD transfer rewinder.

The MBS supports non-stop unwinding of labels, flexible packaging, shrink sleeves, laminates and light paperboard. The machine accommodates the automation of any web by featuring Martin Automatic's patented linear sheer butt splice unit and integrated roll loading mechanism.

The LRD is a two-spindle non-stop transfer rewinder that features the same versatility and adaptability as the MBS but for the delivery end of the press. In addition to the automatic transfer, it features automatic unloading of finished rolls and is fitted with a slitting module that can accommodate automated differential winding.

The MBS and LRD are available in web widths out to 710mm and diameters up to 1270mm.

MERLIN TECHNOLOGY presents humidification technology reducing electrostatic charges, dust and improving overall print quality and material handling in the press room. Merlin has its latest high-pressure system on display, which can be configured to the customers' needs and is a perfect retrofit option for accurate humidity control. The system features low operating and maintenance costs with high reliability.

METEOR INKJET showcases its portfolio of industrial products for labels and packaging, including a range of drive electronics for all major industrial inkjet printheads; ready-to-use digital front ends and workflow solutions; software development kits allowing custom printers to be built from the ground up; and a complete suite of tools and services to support machine



NeuraLabel Printing Solutions

builders in the design and optimization of print systems.

MICHELMAN showcases a selection of water-based in-line and off-line primer and overprint varnishes for HP Indigo and inkjet-based printing platforms. All solutions are developed with sustainability and circular economy initiatives in mind. The company's range of solutions for digital presses includes DigiPrime primers for HP Indigo, JetPrime primers for inkjet, and DigiGuard OPVs. Michelman will also feature DigiGuard Plus strengtheners that enhance HP-validated UV OPVs' performance when combined with DigiPrime priming solutions for HP Indigo high-performance labels. In addition to its line of primers, OPVs and strengtheners for printing applications, Michelman also offers a line of barrier and functional coatings for flexible and rigid packaging applications. The company's primers, barrier coatings, topcoats, and heat seal coatings are claimed to provide increased functionality while maintaining a sustainable package, with opportunities to reduce waste, provide product protection, and use fewer raw materials.

NASTAR promotes TwoFer Twin Signage, the latest fully-recyclable product in the sustainable, patented TwoFer Linerless Label Solutions product line.

Comprised of two recyclable face sheets temporarily secured adhesive sides together until ready to be applied and no liner, TwoFer Twin Store Signage is used as labels or in-store signage for an end cap, wall, or aisle graphics. Both sides can be duplex printed in one pass flexographically or digitally in rolls and sheets.

Providing secure adhesion to most surfaces and easy removal when the promotion is over, other applications include TwoFer Shelf Talkers, recyclable, and back-to-back shelf tags. Patent Pending TwoFer FastFoldZ speed tag application at store level with no liner to discard. TwoFer ship/return labels for eCommerce distribution and TwoFer charity labels for fund solicitation utilize permanent

adhesive versions.

Also on display are NASTAR's temporarily permanent and permanently removable T1055 temporary adhesive, linerless pressure sensitive including direct thermal stocked in DT printer ready rolls, laser paper and film products, and pattern coated products.

NATURAL INK, a flexo ink manufacturer, shows a portfolio of UV LED, UV, water and solvent inks. The company also promotes 'ultra opaque' whites to 'ultra transparent' colors for wine labels and special effects for premium labels. Also on display are its latest developments, such as food contact inks, high-performance OPVs and eco-friendly options.

NEURALABEL PRINTING SOLUTIONS unveils Callisto, an industrial desktop label printer ideal for short- to mid-run on-demand printing. Callisto is based on the HP A3 PageWide printhead technology and uses high-capacity, durable pigment ink.

PAPER RESOURCES reveals its new brand identity, which better communicates the range of offerings and expertise Pri+ represents. Along with its complete line of eight different specialty adhesives, Pri+ showcases its rugged label constructions with TimberTack hot-melt rubber-based adhesive. TimberTack soft adhesive can be applied to wood, burlap, corrugated packaging, carpet backing, HDPE, and even livestock.

PHOSEON TECHNOLOGY introduces Nexus One sustainable UV LED curing products for flexographic printing applications. All Nexus One UV LED curing products from offer a 5-year warranty and enable quality applications at fast press speeds.

POLYART GROUP launches r-Polyart, which is claimed to be the first synthetic paper made of 30 percent post-consumer recycled material. r-Polyart looks and prints like 100 percent virgin material and has virtually the same mechanical properties, but has a lower carbon footprint, the company said.

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Phoseon Technology

The Labelexpo floor map will be printed on this sustainable material to ensure a low carbon footprint for the show.

The company also launches Fiberskin, a weather-resistant paper, recyclable and biodegradable, printable by dry toner, for short-term outdoor exposure for industrial, VIP and prime labels, outdoor tags and signage.

PRATI promotes its DigiFastone digital finishing line based on the company's Futura field-upgradable open platform technology.

The line is fully digital from inkjet module to laser die cutting and turret rewind, and offers the capability to produce short-run promotional labels in the food and beverage, wine and spirits, cosmetics, personal care and home care sectors.

DigiFastone can produce tactile effects and textures, decorations and textures up to 130µm, and Braille and Marburg Medium printing for pharmaceutical products. The system generates low wastage, reduces setup times, and offers a register accuracy of 0.15mm.

PRIME UV-IR shows its latest products in booth 1402, including IR-AK1 Compant, an IR Dryer that combines the best of two drying technologies. The company also shows its MiniMax that minimizes UV cassette size while delivering maximum UV energy. Ink Mist Extractors that remove airborne contaminants and a LEDMax IP3 will also be on display.

PRINT IQ shows its end-to-end estimating, ordering, and production system, eliminating the need for workarounds and offering time saving and cost benefits.

RE promotes its web guiding systems. Re web guides can be installed and calibrated through a user-friendly controller interface. The updated MWG.10.1 and SmartMotion web guide controllers are on display.

The SmartMotion is Re's new web guide

controller for small and medium size web guide systems. It brings the stepper motor and the driver technologies into a single device, allows a compact size, minimizes wiring needs, and control of the actuator stroke without using mechanical or electronic devices.

Re also promotes tension control systems, pneumatic and electromagnetic powder brakes, safety chucks, shafts and web inspection systems.

RICOH ELECTRONICS launches two new products: the new 150PRx PF Direct Thermal Label, providing resistance to medical applications such as soap, hand sanitizer, lotion and cleaning solutions; and the B125CS, its first general-purpose resin thermal transfer ribbon.

Along with high chemical resistance, 150PRx is Ricoh Electronics' first completely phenol-free DT formulation. This formulation is 100 percent free of all BPA and BPS to ensure safe handling for converters and end users. 150PRx PF application areas include but are not limited to prescription labels, laboratory labels, and product ID labels.

With high adaptability to a range of materials, B125CS enables end users to use one ribbon for various labeling needs. B125CS is also said to maintain high resolution and sensitivity to achieve printer energy savings without sacrificing crisp letters on the finished image. Application areas include but are not limited to retail, warehousing, manufacturing, and medical.

APPLIED RIGAKU TECHNOLOGIES presents NEX LS, an in-line silicone coating analyzer for real-time process control. NEX LS software provides a clear visual representation of the process. Its analytical head sweeps back and forth across a moving web and real-time data displays as a graphical cross-direction and machine direction profile. The company also offers at-line benchtop unit for measuring very low silicone coating weights and metal catalysts



Polyart

in silicone coatings. Both benchtop and process solutions feature EDXRF (energy dispersive X-ray fluorescence) technology, a standard, non-destructive technique used in the paper and film industry for determining silicone coating thickness and composition.

ROSAS MASCHINENBAU introduces four new products for the label converting market: the Infinity 4K line scan camera, its second-generation Gazelle high-speed bidirectional rewinder, the FP III flexo printing unit series, and the Deer I smart and compact web doctor machine.

The Infinity 4K line scan camera is designed for tabletop rewinders with web widths of up to 520mm. It features new AI-based print inspection technology that provides label checking capability like a human operator. Gazelle high-speed bidirectional rewinder for imprinting a variety of label types is also featured. The company collaborated on the development with Graph-Tech USA, which incorporated its EZ 202 DOD color inkjet head based on Epson S3200 technology.

The Gazelle II DOD Color is also designed with a pre-installed interface for the fully automatic 100 percent inspection module, quick release of tension axles (for simple reel change installations and removals), and web tension on the curve (hard on the inside and soft on the outside).

The Infinity 4K camera will be demonstrated on rosas' Cheetah 500 tabletop rewinder with backside serialization and a TIJ printer for numbering and coding. The second-generation Gazelle rewinder will be shown with the Graph-Tech USA EZ 202 DOD color inkjet head. Graph-Tech is rosas' local agent in the USA for the Gazelle rewinders.

ROTMETAL showcases MCA Magnetic Cylinders with an aluminum body. The company has created a magnetic cylinder that maintains high strength and hardness while significantly reducing weight by utilizing aerospace-grade aluminum. This

is said to make them lighter, easier to handle and helps reduce transport costs and energy consumption while maintaining the quality and consistency of traditional magnetic print cylinders.

Rotometal MCA Magnetic Cylinders have already been used by renowned printing companies.

SCHOBERTTECHNOLOGIES, a rotary tooling specialist, showcases RSM410MX-Digi-VariCut for producing metallic in-mold labels for markets such as paint, cosmetics, food and storage boxes. The hybrid drive technology combines continuous and intermittent rotary die-cutting technology in re-registration mode; thus, a wide range of print formats can be covered with a single tool or magnetic cylinder. This compact RSM version is designed for a maximum web width of 430mm and print format lengths up to 812mm (32in). The RSM-Digi-VariCut portfolio also includes machines, modular and upgradable, designed for a maximum web width of 770mm and format lengths of up to 1120mm.

The standard configuration includes a high-speed, programmable robot-automated stacking and counting system (Spider), which combines acceleration, velocity and precision at a continuous web speed of up to 50 m/min. The equipment is designed to stack different types of products combined within the same printing image.

Visitors at the booth are also able to find out more about the company's rotary cutting and creasing tools, high-performance punching modules, rotary die cutting-perforating modules, tools and modules for Braille embossing, heavy-duty rotary die-cutting modules, magnetic cylinders for web width up to 1500mm and format repeat 1220mm (48in).

SCREEN showcases the Truepress Jet L350UV SAI, the latest model from the L350UV series with a resolution of 600x600 DPI and speeds up to 60m/min. The Truepress Jet L350UV SAI series prints in CMYK plus white, blue and orange options. Automated head cleaning is activated by the press of a button.

The Truepress Jet L350UV SAI is suitable for prime labels and industrial labels in just about any industry – even those that are highly regulated such as the food and beverage industry.

SEI LASER presents the Labelmaster laser cutting system designed for converting roll materials in the packaging and labeling industry. Labelmaster is compatible with a wide range of substrates such as paper, PET, BOPP and textiles. Web widths from 350 and 600mm are available. The Labelmaster features a QR/barcode reading system that allows changing jobs on the fly, and there are options for up to four laser units with power ranging from 150 to 500W. The proprietary control software, ICARO, makes Labelmaster an efficient option for a range of applications including die-cutting, slitting, sheeting and laser micro perforating. Available modular options include varnishing and laminating.

SENSORY ANALYTICS showcases its SpecMetrix in-line coating thickness measurement systems for the converting, flexibles, and label industry. SpecMetrix can identify coating defects or process issues and make coating adjustments for advanced coating process control.

SHARK WHEEL is showing its Shark Advantage 'square' wheel technology claimed to increase the efficiency of all web-based print and converting machines, including, flexography, offset, digital and screen printing. The company says benefits include reduced tension and better register maintenance, eliminating wrinkling and the ability to operate at any speed anti-stick, anti-dust and maintenance free.

STRATA-TAC ADVANCED COATING TECHNOLOGIES is launching its coupon films for IRC Labels with improved designs for enhanced performance on press. The coupon films are available in a variety of stock widths, with custom widths available upon request. Strata-Tac is also showcasing new and existing inkjet and laser printable durable films, lay flat products, and security products.

TECHKON USA is demonstrating the latest innovations of the SpectroVision in-line color measurement system and its newest handheld, all-in-one spectrodensitometer, SpectroDens 4. Visitors can see a demonstrable version of a SpectroVision system designed specifically for retrofitting Mark Andy, Nilpeter, Bobst, Omet,



Prati



Screen



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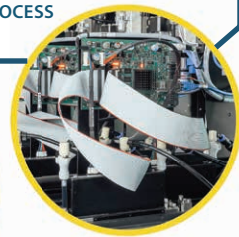


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Tharstern

Domino, MPS and Gallus flexographic and digital presses for automated color measurement and control.

SpectroVision is a cost-efficient in-line system that improves the color measurement and barcode reading process to keep presses moving at high speeds and to help flexo printers reduce waste. Each system includes a color spectrophotometer, a 2D camera (for web viewing), a dedicated press-side PC/command console, and two seats of Techkon's ChromaQA color management software suite.

TECTUPRINT, a Spanish engineering company with more than 30 years of experience in the narrow web graphic sector, showcases its Semi-Tec 350 hybrid modular semi and full rotary machine for conventional or digital finishing with flexo module and the option of inkjet printing.

TESA TAPE showcases three products: tesa Softprint 52016 and 52017 Steel Master, as well as tesa Twinlock.

tesa Softprint 52016 and 52017 are double-coated foam tapes used to mount photopolymer plates in flexographic printing. Both are specifically designed for use with plates between 1.14 and 1.7mm in thickness. The structured PP-liner helps prevent air pockets when plate mounting, while the high bonding to the plate helps avoid edge lifting and plate movement. tesa

Twinlock is a reusable, self-adhesive and compressible plate-mounting sleeve. After printing and plate removal, the tackiness can be reactivated so the sleeve can be used for the next print job.

THARSTERN promotes Tharstern Cloud for labels, a new MIS technology built entirely from the ground up to help label converters digitize their business processes and automate their production workflow.

It uses an 'API First' approach, featuring a fully accessible public API allowing any data within the MIS to be written and read by any external application at any level.

Tharstern Cloud is built on cloud-native technologies. This means that, as well as the obvious benefits such as remote working, mobility, and always being up to date, it also offers world-class security, availability, and almost unlimited scalability.

A virtual noticeboard allows the company to share news and promotes employee engagement initiatives, along with a virtual training academy.

THWING-ALBERT INSTRUMENT COMPANY, a manufacturer of testing machines showcases its testing equipment suitable for industries including adhesives, flexible packaging, labels, paper, plastics and non-wovens. Companies globally rely upon Thwing-Albert testing equipment to evaluate adhesion, COF, tensile strength,

and many other critical properties that can impact quality in production. Its instruments are built to meet ISO, ASTM, TAPPI, and PSTC standards.

TRESU introduces a new variant of the third-generation coating circulator, Tresu H5i G3 for high-performance circulation with high flow, high viscosity, high speed, high temperatures and high pressure. It is designed to automate special coating applications, and with H5i G3 controlling the WB, UV, or eBeam coating application, operators can now save resources and exploit the full potential of the coating media for creative designs and strong branding - also with high viscosity and high flow.

Used in combination with a Tresu chamber doctor blade system, the Tresu H5i G3 provides full control of the enclosed circulation from the bucket to the chamber. The Control Pressure Technology system prevents contamination of air inside the chamber and eliminates micro foaming and undesired blistering of the print.

TRINITY GRAPHIC promotes its Shrink Sleeve Distortion Services. As a shrink-sleeve label shrinks around a bottle or packaging, all the graphics and embellishments on the label become distorted in proportion to the bottle or packaging dimensions. To compensate, all the graphics must be pre-distorted during the pre-press stage to ensure that the final label appears as the designer intended. The latest technology developed by Trinity Graphic uses the latest software, scanners, distortion measurement techniques and the skillset to overcome these challenges.

TOOTECH is launching Laser Label Printer, which images directly onto the middle layer of the label after passing through the label's surface. The surface layer protects the barcode and character image so they cannot be erased by friction or chemicals. Tootech already supplies this printer to



Tootech



Tower Products



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Advertisers index

AB Graphic International	70	Fuji	99	PCMC	68
Achem Industry America	13	Gallus	8, 112	Polyonics	34
All 4 Labels	107	GEW	1	PPG Teslin Substrate Products	73
Anderson & Vreeland	18	Grafisk Maskinfabrik	IFC	Prati	65
Anytron	60	Guangzhou Yutian Machinery Manufacture	91	Printum Technology	49
Appvion Operations	95	Harper Corporation Of America	129	Re	129
Arconvert	119	HP Indigo	26, 27	RK PrintCoat Instruments	96
Arjobex	88	Icap-Sira Chemicals And Polymers	82	Roll Cover Italiana	74
Armor-limak	125	INX International Ink Co	135	Rotometal	38
Avery Dennison	116	Kao Collins	136	Ruco	49
Berhalter	126	Kocher + Beck	28	Ruian Dingyu Machinery	84
Buskro	37	KROENERT	80	Runtianzhi	103
Cartes	2	KTI - A Quantum Design Company	88	Schober	52
Cellopack for Packaging Industries s a e	91	Kurz	5	SEI Laser	62
Cerm	77	Kurz - Label weeks	54	Shenzhen HanGlobal Digital Solutions	84
Colordyne Technologies	140	Label Academy	130, 132	Sistrade - Software Consulting	74
Cosmo Films	80	Labelexpo Americas	92	Stamfag	142
CRC	78	Labelexpo Awards	109	Technicote	140
Dantex	123	Labelexpo India	100	Theurer	57
DIENES CORPORATION	34	Labelexpo SEA	104	TOYOBO	21
Dimatra	32	LEMORAU	58	Ultralight	96
Domino	14	Lintec	44	Univacco	17
Durico	82	Martin Automatic	126	Universal Engraving	24
Durst	IBC	Meech	33	UPM Rafflatac	30
Elkem Silicones	4	Miyakoshi Europe	37	Vetaphone	104
Epson	121	MLJ INDUSTRIES	103	Wacker	66
Erhardt & Leimer	BC	MoistTech Corp	37	Xeikon	130
FLEXcon	43	Nazdar Ink Technologies	139	Yflex	142
Flexo Innovations	136	Nilpeter	50	Yupo	53
Flexoexport	87	Novation	94	Yupo USA	129
Flint Group Narrow Web	132	OMET	46	Zeller & Gmelin	91
Focus Label Machinery	42, 108	Pantec	96		

companies such as Samsung Electronics and LG Electronics.

TOWER PRODUCTS releases its new SmartFlex UV Wash FX, a low odor product for cleaning UV flexographic inks from plates and machinery. When used as directed, the product will not swell photopolymer printing plates and can be applied by hand or used in an automatic plate cleaning unit. The product can be mixed with water or used full strength for all UV ink cleaning applications and is also an outstanding cleaner for UV Screen Printing inks.

UPM RAFLATAC features its latest innovation, the Ocean Action Label, made from ocean-bound plastic waste. UPM Raflatac also showcases its sustainable films, including UPM Raflatac Forest Film, PP PCR and PET PCR materials, and RAFNXT+, a product verified by the Carbon Trust and certified as CarbonNeutral, and Renewal Hemp material made with alternative fibers.

Additionally, the company will showcase UPM Raflatac OptiCut linerless materials, also certified as CarbonNeutral; its print-on-demand and digital labeling

solutions for digital printing systems; and the MyRaflatac customer portal and demonstrations of the newest features of this service.

UVER launches its new Multi-Wave LED lamp technology, designed to cure all types of UV Inks.

VOYANTIC introduces Tagsurance 3, a quality testing system for RAIN RFID and NFC manufacturing. Tagsurance 3 is a complete system for measuring the performance of UHF and HF RFID inlays, tags, and labels in different stages of the production process, from chip attachment to label converting and incoming inspection. The system is designed to be easily installed into various machine types. The system is modular and scales to various production volume needs from one to eight lanes with one to five stations per lane, and handling lane speeds up to 200 m/min.

WAUSAU COATED PRODUCTS showcases unique wine, beer, spirit and shelf marking products and promotes sustainable labeling options, including FSC-certified materials and products manufactured with up to 100

percent post-consumer waste and up to 90 percent recycled polyester (rPET) liner. 420 Vellum, Wood Veneers (oak, cherry and birch), Estate Label #14, recycled natural kraft from tree-free products, such as sugar cane paper and cotton – all products created through low-impact manufacturing and efforts to divert waste from landfills to alternative, cleaner energy uses.

Wausau Coated Products also highlights a new manufacturing line, Coater #14, that produces material for billions of labels per month. Wausau claims there is no other machine like its new, unique product.

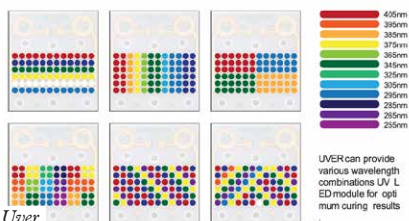
WILSON MANUFACTURING COMPANY expands its waste technologies portfolio with the presentation of the Pin Eject Die, providing quality slug removal without using an air source.

Also featured is Wilson's E Diffsystem, the high-tech adjustable anvil with a user-friendly touch interface allowing for precise adjustments with a single tap of the screen. The system is suitable for converters utilizing existing cutting tools for additional materials or making instantaneous adjustments on press when changes in materials occur. This year's new feature is the enhanced Customer Portal. Visitors can see how quickly and easily it is to get immediate quotes and place new orders directly into production. The robust performance of the portal is demonstrated live with up-to-the-minute production status, fast and easy searches for prior orders or quotes, and instant tracking of shipped orders.

XEIKON at booth 5703 features Xeikon CX300 dry toner press, that allows converters to produce FDA-certified labels and packaging. Xeikon also shows its PX3300 UV-IJ hybrid press for durable labels that can be die cut, trimmed, and rewound inline to maximize productivity. The Uniform X-800 workflow is also shown. Xeikon is also participating in the Digital Embellishment show feature and the conference program.

ZELLER+GMELIN unveils its newest development in UV/LED prime label opaque white inks. The new ink formula was developed to provide advanced opacity, brighter hues, and smoother lay downs for dual-cure opaque white flood coat applications. With the new ink chemistry, converters can achieve the ultimate in opaque white laydowns in a single pass, saving money, time and the environment.

The Wavelength Combination by UV LED Chip



Trinity Graphic



UPM Raflatac



Zeller



For more information about the show, visit www.labelexpo-americas.com

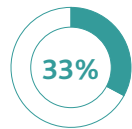
Label trends

New research sponsored by Digimarc and carried out by independent research company Censuswide surveyed 4,064 consumers in the US and UK to find out if their desire for authentic products isn't limited to luxury goods

Quality concerns – online shopping may be easier, but shoppers are more worried about the quality of products in the market:



of consumers feel online shopping added to the sale of counterfeit goods



think social media has normalized cheaper products that may or may not be counterfeit

Consumers everywhere worry about fakes:

67%

of consumers are concerned about product authenticity when buying goods for their home and family

59%

of US consumers are worried new products they buy are counterfeit

56%

of consumers are worried that new products they buy are counterfeit

53%

of UK consumers are worried new products they buy are counterfeit

Percentage of consumers who worry about the authenticity of products for the following industries:



83%

Pharmaceuticals



79%

OTC medication



78%

Apparel and fashion



78%

Chocolate and confectionary



57%

Alcohol and tobacco



55%

Baby food and formula

Worries across generations:

Boomers:



87%

care about the authenticity of pharmaceuticals

75%

are concerned whether the goods they buy for their family are genuine

Millennials:



83%

care about the authenticity of luxury goods

68%

care about the authenticity of baby food

Gen Z:



69%

care about the authenticity of luxury goods

51%

worry about whether the goods they buy for their family are authentic



Turn to page 71 to read more about Digimarc's survey. To see full details of the Censuswide survey go to digimarc.com/resources/brand-integrity-consumer-insights-survey

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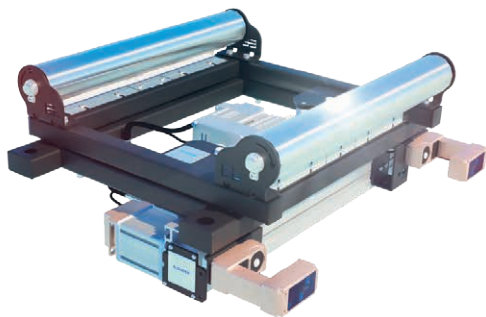


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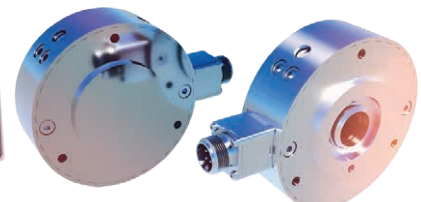
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- Wear-free, brushless motor

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- Web tension trend for process analysis

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