

— EST 1978 —

# LABELS & LABELING

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Beer &  
spirits

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A WINNING  
STRATEGY

## WET GLUE LABEL MARKET

Sustainability trends boost  
wet glue label appeal

## LABELEXPO SOUTHEAST ASIA REVIEW

Label and packaging expo returns  
to region primed for growth

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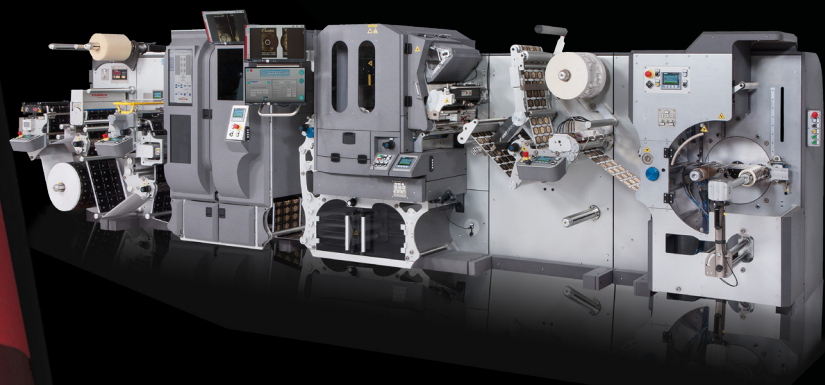


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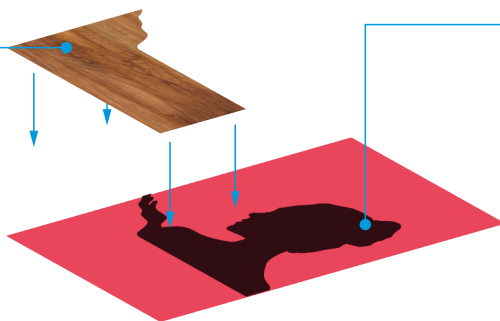
ADVANCED LABEL TECHNOLOGY



# One machine, endless solutions!

Label application in register with LOL system (Labels On Labels)

②



①

Flat bed screen printing (Dark Brown)

Flat bed screen printing (Dark Black)

③



④

High raised digital embellishing by Jet D-Screen printing and metallic doming foil transferring  
Height: 60 microns  
Height: 90 microns  
Height: 110 microns

A

B

C

LASER converting by ILC (Invisible Laser Cutting) our patented system to avoid white edges


⑥

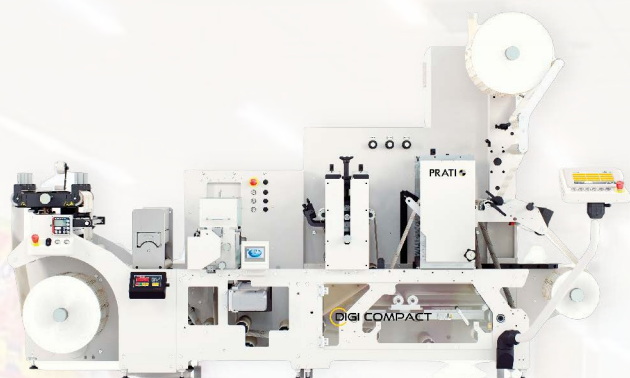


⑤

Automatic piece removal by cut-off window system (Depastillage)



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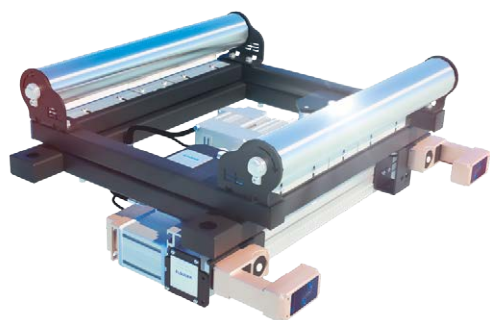


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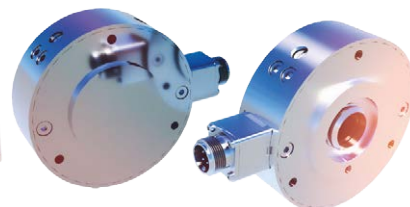
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WEB TENSION SYSTEM ELTENS

**NETWORKABLE SYSTEMS**

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- Web tension trend for process analysis

10Sec



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SYSTEM ELSCAN

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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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**Andy Thomas-Emans**  
*Strategic director*



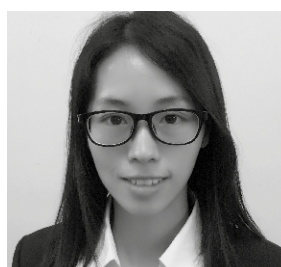
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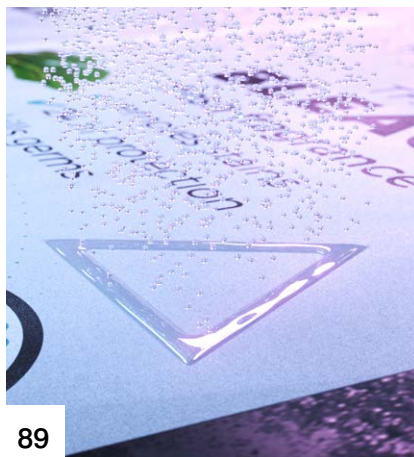
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labelsandlabeling.com



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Reflecting on the key trends seen at the first-ever Labelexpo Mexico 2023



### Read L&L issue 1 online (magazine)

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



### First V12 heads to All4Labels (feature)

The global All4Labels packaging group continues leading labels industry in digital trend



### Product decoration technologies: glue applied labels (Label Academy)

For decades, the popular method of decoration for glass and cans has been wet glue paper labels



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## L&L looks back (*L&L issue 3, 2004*)



### Message on a bottle

The beverage industry is seeing a shift from wet-glue to more value-added labeling solutions as beer, wine and spirit brands gear up their offensive for the market share war.

Katy Wright reports

**T**he beverage industry is seeing a shift from wet-glue to more value-added labeling solutions as beer, wine and spirit brands gear up their offensive for the market share war. The shift is driven by a combination of factors, including the need for more durable labels, the desire for more sophisticated designs, and the need for more efficient labeling processes.



### Born in the USA

Nilpeter is consolidating its commitment to the American market with a brand new facility. Katy Wright reports

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### India takes off

With the second India Label show approaching in New Delhi between 9-10 December 2004, Andy Thomas reviews the last show in Mumbai and looks at the potential of India as an outsourcing hub

Labels & Labeling magazine in India

**T**he beverage industry is seeing a shift from wet-glue to more value-added labeling solutions as beer, wine and spirit brands gear up their offensive for the market share war. The shift is driven by a combination of factors, including the need for more durable labels, the desire for more sophisticated designs, and the need for more efficient labeling processes.



### Making the move to flexo

Pressures on margins in the wet glue sector have driven Italian sheetfed printer Viappiani to move to UV flexo to enter the faster growing markets of sleeves and pressure-sensitive rolls.

Andy Thomas reports from Segrate, Milan

**A** major shift in the wet glue sector has driven Italian sheetfed printer Viappiani to move to UV flexo to enter the faster growing markets of sleeves and pressure-sensitive rolls. The move is driven by a combination of factors, including the need for more durable labels, the desire for more sophisticated designs, and the need for more efficient labeling processes.

**P8** Labels & Labeling reported on a shift in the beverage industry from wet-glue to value-added labeling solutions, driven by global brewery giants like SABMiller and Anheuser-Busch. This transformation affected market share, cost control and consumer experience, highlighting the ever-evolving landscape of the brewing industry and the impact of consolidation.

**P30** Labels & Labeling covered Nilpeter's commitment to the American market in 2004, as the company opened a new, larger production facility in Cincinnati, Ohio. The expansion showcased the importance of integrating European and American product lines, provided a more productive environment for employees, and signaled dedication to both the market and workforce.

**P55** Documenting the rapid growth of India's label industry, Andy Thomas captured the success of the India Label show in New Delhi and the potential of India as an outsourcing hub for printed goods. He also reported on the increased circulation of Labels & Labeling magazine in India, highlighting the support and partnership of international stakeholders in the country's booming industry.

**P70** Andy Thomas reported on Italian printer Viappiani's strategic transition to UV flexo printing in response to pressures on margins in the wet glue sector. This move exemplified how businesses adapted to industry challenges by targeting high-growth areas, investing in new technologies and entering markets such as sleeves and pressure-sensitive rolls to remain competitive.

## New faces at Labels & Labeling

### Editor's note

**W**hen you open this magazine, don't flip past the team page too fast. We've added some new editors, columnists and features to the mag that will bring fresh perspectives to the label industry.

Charlie Edward has joined L&L as our North America editor. Charlie has a background in TV news and a diverse skillset that helps him tell stories across multiple platforms. He loves to tell the stories of the people behind the trends moving the industry forward.

There were changes in L&L's India office, too. Akanksha Meena was promoted to global brands editor where she will lead our expanded branding and design content. You can read more from Akanksha in this issue where she reports on popular UK restaurant brand Dishoom, and craft beer and spirits brands on their design

**"A leading magazine requires a commitment to producing high-quality content that resonates with the audience and stays ahead of the curve"**

strategy.

Akanksha also leads our new monthly branding and design newsletter and manages the partnership with the Dieline, with whom we've partnered for specially-curated design articles.

Replacing Akanksha as India editor is Pallavi Choudhary. Pallavi held a similar role in India covering the wider print industry in the region. Her technical background will help her understand the technicalities of the machines and equipment being talked about in our industry.

Rosalyn Bandy, TLMI's

VP of sustainability, is now an L&L columnist. Roz is a sought-after expert in the field of sustainable labels and packaging and is responsible for developing TLMI's strategic plan for sustainability. Her debut column is on page 30 of this issue.

Elsewhere in the magazine, you'll see the former editor James Quirk who is now a consultant our Latin American correspondent writing dispatches from that region.

As this issue went to press, James and I visited Mexico for the Labelexpo Mexico launch. We'll have more about that

in Issue 3, but in this issue, you can read more about that market from All4Labels and Etiflex, along with material supplier Arclad.

You'll also hear from Mark Andy and its success in the region, as well as a new venture from with backing from a longtime industry player.

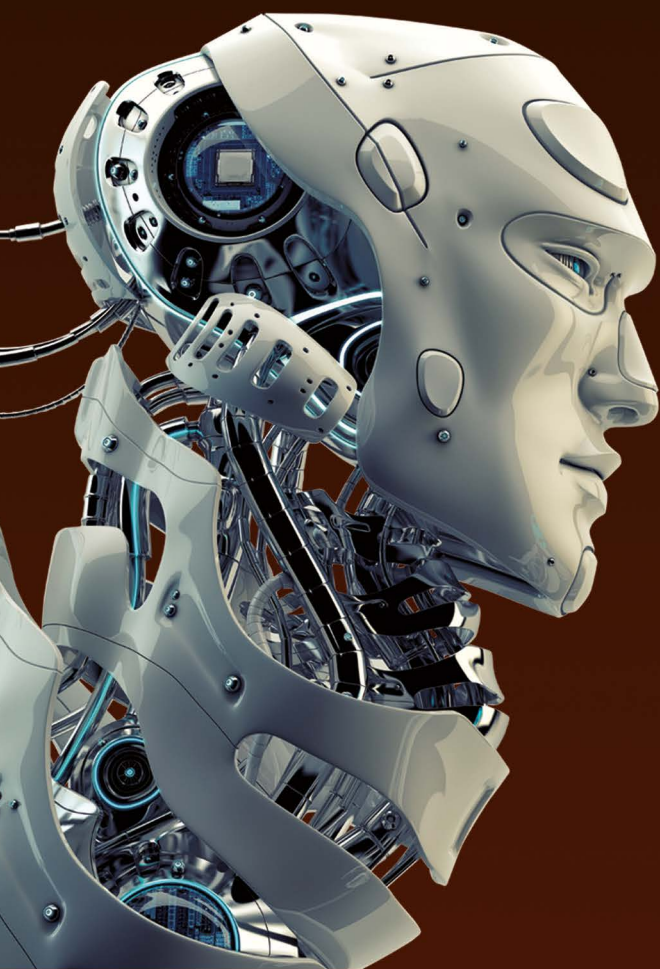
We're excited about these moves here at L&L. Being a leading magazine requires a commitment to producing high-quality content that resonates with the audience and stays ahead of the curve and helps you navigate this dynamic industry. I believe these new minds will do just that.

*Chelsea McDougall*

Chelsea McDougall  
Group managing editor



# *The Future of Flexo*



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**Versatility** Speed  
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Flexibility



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# Installations



## 01 GM HF330 Eticom, Mexico

Mexican label and packaging printer, Eticom, has invested in a second GM HF330 standalone hot foil unit to increase efficiencies and reduce delivery times of embellished labels. The new technology enables precision hot foil stamping and embossing in a single pass, featuring a 50-ton flatbed hot stamper with multiple foil streams for applying different colors and effects. The machine works either in-line with a digital press or offline as a standalone machine. Carlos Ramirez, production director for digital at Eticom, said the GM HF330 units add maximum value to their customers by delivering high-quality hot foiling and embossing, faster. The machine aims to benefit Eticom's customers by adding high value at a cost-effective price point.

## 02 Mark Andy water-based digital press Cupsz, Netherlands

Cupsz, a Netherlands-based company that designs and produces coffee cups, recently installed a water-based digital press by Mark Andy. The investment will allow Cupsz to switch from narrow web flexo technology to water-based technology to stay ahead of evolving food packaging laws. The digital press can run a 350 to 460-micron board at around 120m/min, making it more productive than its previous digital presses. The installation and commissioning were completed in January 2023.

03 Screen Truepress Jet L350UV SAI E  
Maestri Etichette, Italy  
Maestri Etichette, an Italian label specialist based in Brescia, has acquired its first digital inkjet press, the Screen Truepress Jet L350UV SAI E, as part of a

strategic decision to expand in digital printing. The press allows Maestri to meet the demand for increasingly varied and smaller print runs for its customers in the food, personal care, chemicals and pharma sectors. The company aims to be recognized for reliability, quality and professionalism, and the screen press provides the print quality and flexibility needed to achieve this. The Screen Truepress Jet L350UV SAI E offers improved color reproduction and scalability, and Maestri expects to invest in additional digital inkjet printing technology in the coming years.

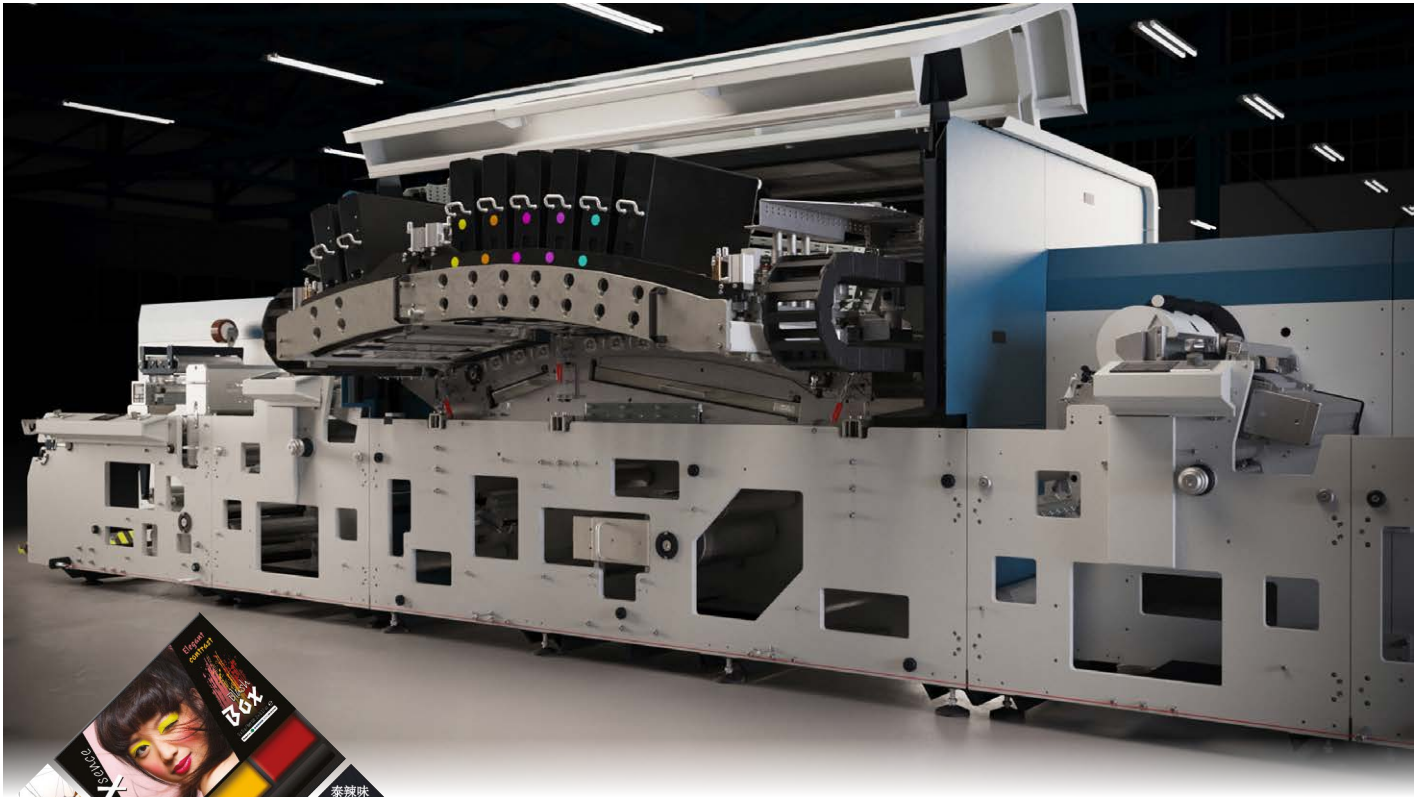
04 Digicon 3000  
Baker Labels, United Kingdom  
Baker Labels has expanded its digital pouch production facility, BakPac, with the installation of a Digicon 3000 machine from ABG and Edale, which is the first of its kind for the UK flex pack market. The machine provides

finishing capabilities, including a dual-function unwind station, flexo and hybrid gravure print station, water-based lamination, cold foil, slitting and rewinding. The Digicon 3000 works with an HP Indigo 20000 digital press to create a complete single-pass printing and converting line for short-run flexible packaging. The investment cost around 600,000 USD and will allow BakPac to add more value to jobs and push into new markets.

Gallus Labelmaster 440  
Macaran, United States  
New York-based label converter Macaran has installed a 14-color Gallus Labelmaster 440 from Heidelberg to meet customer demands for more complex label designs. The new press is helping the company to deliver high-quality, consistent products with a wider print area. Capable of printing up to 14 colors with precise color-to-color registration, the



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# Installations



Labelmaster has a short web path, increasing the company's productivity and capacity to take on new work. The switch to Gallus was based on its reputation for efficient flexo-screen combination printing. According to Macaran president Tom Sargent, the new press 'allows us to offer extended branding opportunities to our customers to deliver better brand messaging for the consumer.'

**05 Jetsci Colornovo SAPFC Aakruti Multipack, India**  
Indian packaging provider Aakruti Multipack has installed the Jetsci Colornovo SAPFC digital UV inkjet label production press at its Gujarat facility, as it expands into the digital labels and packaging sector. The system provides printing, finishing and converting inline and can be used to address various applications, serving the short to medium-run market. The decision to opt for the Colornovo SAPFC press was based on sustainability

and productivity concerns, and it is capable of printing on surfaces up to 330mm wide at speeds of up to 50 m/min. The move comes as the market increasingly focuses on multiple stock-keeping units and shorter runs, which is difficult to achieve with conventional presses.

**06 Bobst hybrid press Caribbean Label Crafts, Barbados**  
Caribbean Label Crafts has invested in a Bobst hybrid press for producing highly embellished labels for the high-end spirits market. The press combines conventional flexo and UV inkjet printing technology, helping the Barbados-based firm to expand its high-end, high-value labels offering to a wider customer base. With 93 percent of its production exported to 32 countries, Caribbean Label Crafts plans to have one unified business with multiple plants serving the entire region in the next three to five

years. It has opened a new plant in Kingston, Jamaica, and plans to open another in the Dominican Republic later this year.

**07 Lemorau MEBR+ and Lemorau ICR 4 Label Print, Romania**  
Romanian printing and labeling converter, Label Print, has installed a Lemorau MEBR+ finishing system and a Lemorau ICR 4 slitting-inspection machine. The Lemorau MEBR+ is a digital finishing machine that offers a max speed of 80m/min when die cutting in semi-rotary mode. Meanwhile, the Lemorau ICR4 slitter-rewinder and inspection machine operates at 400m/min and up to 295m/min with optional video inspection. Label Print also specified a rewinder unit for defects, clear on clear sensor, anti-static bar and razor knives unit for the Lemorau ICR4 installation. CEO and founder of Label Print, Razvan Lungu, commented that both machines

exceeded all expectations and congratulated Lemorau for their special work toward their customers.

**08 Nilpeter FA-22 Reflex Plus, United Kingdom**  
Reflex Plus has installed a Nilpeter FA-22 flexo press at its Keighley site in England, equipped with a UV-laminating unit, cold-foil equipment, RSI Nilscreen printing unit, flatbed embossing and hot foil unit, a die-cutting unit, waste handling and a video inspection system. The 10-color press is configured to print on multiple substrates and comes with an advanced automation package and an intuitive user interface including fully mobile print controls. According to Shaun Hanson, Keighley site manager of Reflex Group, the new press is a true beverage combination press that provides the flexibility and dynamics needed in their

# Installations



production setup. The press runs with less energy and generates less waste. The installation of the new press complements the existing production setup and is expected to help the company achieve sustainability goals.

**09 Durst Tau RSC E**  
**SheetLabels.com, United States**  
SheetLabels.com has bought a Durst Tau RSC E for its newly acquired site in Pflugerville, Texas. The press can achieve speeds of up to 170ft/min and offers a native resolution of 1200 dpi, with up to eight color options available. All Durst printers come with workflow and analytics software, as well as 24/7 service and support. Alan Etheridge, senior VP of SheetLabels.com, said he chose the press for its quality, flexibility and speed, as well as its UV inkjet asset and support structure. Durst's service team exceeded expectations, he

added. Etheridge said he plans to purchase several additional units over the next five years and called the press one of the foundational assets in current and future locations.

**10 HP Indigo V12**  
**Brook + Whittle, United States**  
Brook + Whittle has installed an HP Indigo V12 digital press, one of the first in the US. The press allows quick setup, on-the-fly graphics changes, and variable data printing, with a print speed of 400ft/min. The V12 can replace two or three flexo presses, according to Brook + Whittle, and provides HP Indigo quality for mid- to longer-run lengths, faster delivery, fast response to design changes, no limit in the number of SKUs and more sustainable production. Jeremy Letterman, COO at Brook + Whittle, said the investment continued the company's legacy as an early technology adopter and print

process innovator.

**11 DuPont Cyrel Fast**  
**EPL, Global**  
Specialty packaging company EPL has upgraded its flexo platemaking process with DuPont Cyrel Fast thermal system, which eliminates the use of solvents or water in processing flexographic printing plates. The thermal workflow will be implemented across EPL's manufacturing sites in North America, South America, Europe and Asia as part of the company's sustainability commitment. EPL COO Ram Ramasamy said the decision was made after an evaluation of the available systems, and the technology made it easier to meet quality and sustainability commitments to customers and investors.

**12 ThermoFlexx TFxX 48**  
**KB Folie Polska, Poland**  
Polish packaging company KB Folie Polska has invested

in the XSYS ThermoFlexx system, including ThermoFlexx Woodpecker screening technology for microstructures on the surface of flat top dot plates to maintain print quality. The company has been producing flexo plates in-house for years and the new digital imager ThermoFlexx TFxX 48 will enable plates up to 900 x 1200mm. Featuring the built-in flextray, it can automatically load and unload plates, reducing the risk of damage during manual handling. With Woodpecker screening added, KB Folie can improve ink density and dot definition while ensuring a smoother ink laydown for high-quality jobs. KB Folie specializes in flexible packaging for food, chemicals and cosmetics.



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**01 Genys Sour Sour**  
Designer: Bold Brands  
(Kaunas, Lithuania)

Printing technology:  
Digital

**02 NTRL Organic Smoothie**  
Designer: Bold Brands  
(Kaunas, Lithuania)

Printing technology:  
Digital

**03 Naturfrisk Ginger Ale**  
Designer: Everland  
(Copenhagen, Denmark)

**04 Rebael**  
Designer: Everland  
(Copenhagen, Denmark)

**05 Uphill**  
Designer:  
Design Republic  
(Brussels, Belgium)

Printing technology:  
Digital



06



06 Moqqi

Designer:  
Design Republic  
(Brussels, Belgium)

Printing technology:  
Offset

07



08



09



10



09 Bandera Honey

Designer: Brain Tank  
(Kyiv, Ukraine)

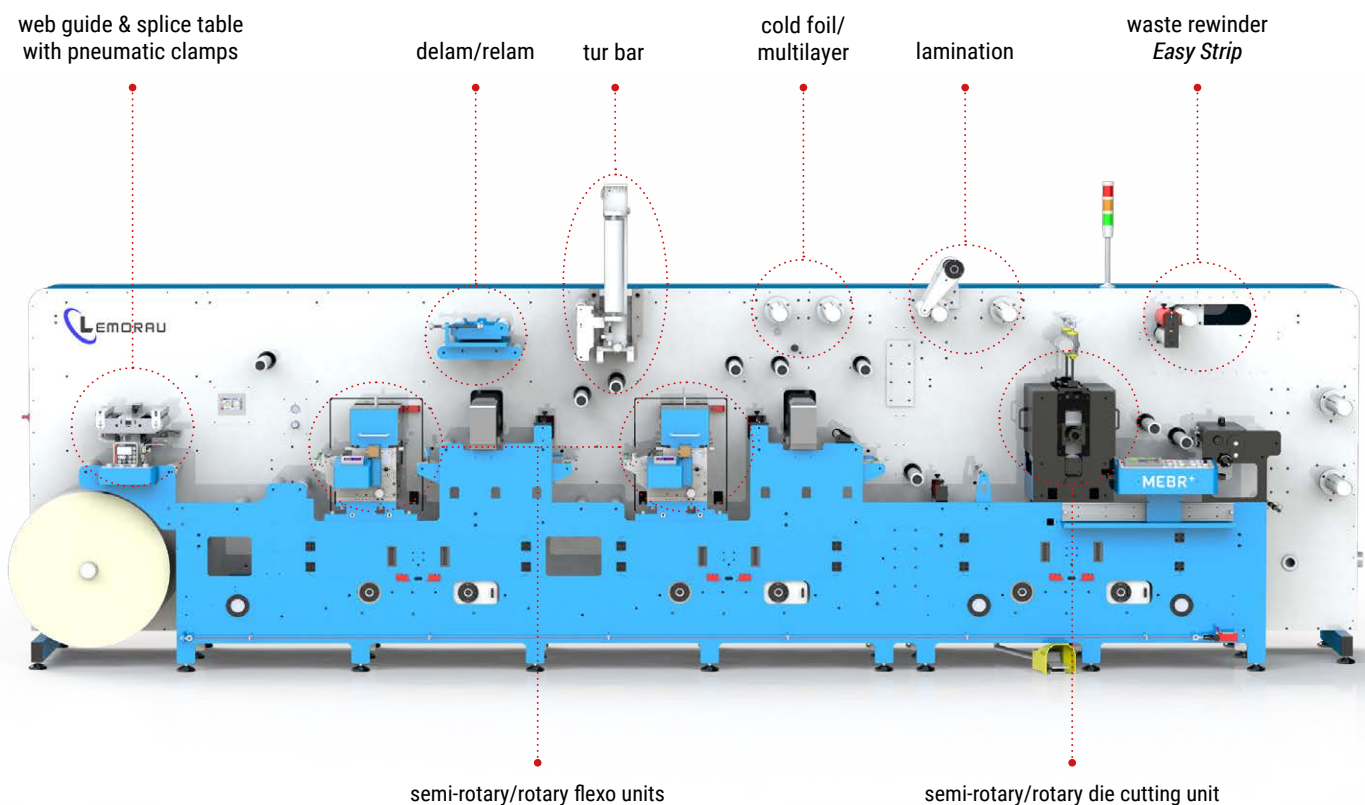
Printing technology:  
Flexography

10 Slovyanochka

Designer: Brain Tank  
(Kyiv, Ukraine)

Printing technology:  
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## The Andy Thomas-Emans column

### AI in the labels world – threat or opportunity?

AI tools like ChatGPT could create interesting possibilities in the label industry, Andy Thomas-Emans writes

Anyone who has engaged with ChatGPT or any of the other Large Language Models (LLM) out there cannot have failed to be impressed with their capabilities to turn natural language inquiries into an intelligent and actionable responses.

Of course, the accuracy and usefulness of the ChatGPT response are directly related to the information it has been trained on. And this is why the idea of incorporating your own custom knowledge base into ChatGPT is an interesting one. To be able to train an LLM with your company's own data would allow an almost limitless set of natural language queries to be asked without the need for programming knowledge or knowledge of specific software. Let's call it LabelChatGPT. The possibilities are endless.

For example, an in-house design team at a converter could generate multiple design variations for a customer's new packaging campaign within the capabilities of the equipment available, and as the equipment list expands new treatments can be added.

If the LLM 'understands' the goals of the customer's marketing strategy, understands the competitive landscape and is given a set of design parameters to work with, it could come up with a series of variants, learning what it needs to change as it gets closer to the ideal label design.

What about modeling different job scheduling scenarios? 'LabelChatGPT, here are my five most important clients who need to have their jobs finished by Thursday. Give me five different scenarios which make the most efficient use of pre-press, press and finishing resources while allowing me to fit in three short notice short run jobs involving variable text and foil finishing.'

Or equipment maintenance schedules. 'LabelChatGPT write me a document containing the sequence of job maintenance for every piece of equipment in the plant taking account of peak workload, holiday periods of key staff and availability of external and internal engineering resources.'

Warehousing and stock levels? 'LabelChatGPT calculate when I need to reorder my top 10 label stocks given the jobs scheduled for the next month and average makeready and wastage rates per press?'

Of course, many of these queries can be answered at the

**"Going forward it could well be the MIS suppliers who best know the label industry who will lead the way in integrating LabelChatGPT into their MIS programs"**

moment by interrogating a management information system (MIS). The difference is that the MIS will require training in a specific software package and the ability to request and integrate information from different silos – warehouse management data, material consumption data, equipment configuration data, press running data and so on.

The ability to use natural language requests and for the LabelChatGPT to accurately parse that to actionable scenarios which can be endlessly refined, queried and subject to numerous 'what if' questioning - in real time - could be a game changer in the way we interact with information and with the physical plant around us. This is particularly the case as we start to gather more and more data automatically from sensors around the plant and at key nodes of our operations: from machines, from environmental sensors, from materials and consumable workflows through the plant. How will we make sense of this data and not be overwhelmed by it? How will we make it useful and useable?

Dedicated AI tools like 'LabelChatGPT' would be one possible answer. This is all hypothetical of course but well within the bounds of current technology.

The most important initial task would be to organize the information which the LabelChatGPT will use and to keep it current. This would give converters with well-organized data sets a key advantage, and anyone with a comprehensive MIS probably has the data backbone required.

Indeed, going forward it could well be the MIS suppliers who best know the label industry who will lead the way in integrating LabelChatGPT into their MIS programs. It would be a natural language front end to an intelligent assistant which uses the information dynamically updated in the MIS as a basis for its decisions and recommendations.

Custom data sets are already being integrated in LLMs by a wide range of companies from financial institutions to car manufacturers.

Thoughtful commentators on LLMs are stressing that rather than being a threat to human creativity, they can act as force multipliers. Humans will take the higher-level decisions using intelligent assistants to analyze and integrate complex data sets and deliver clear and actionable recommendations.

#### What is ChatGPT?

ChatGPT is a large language model created by OpenAI based on the GPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) architecture. It is designed to answer a wide variety of questions, engage in conversations, and generate human-like text. ChatGPT was 'trained' on a massive amount of data from the internet, including books, articles and websites, which allows it to understand and respond to many different topics.

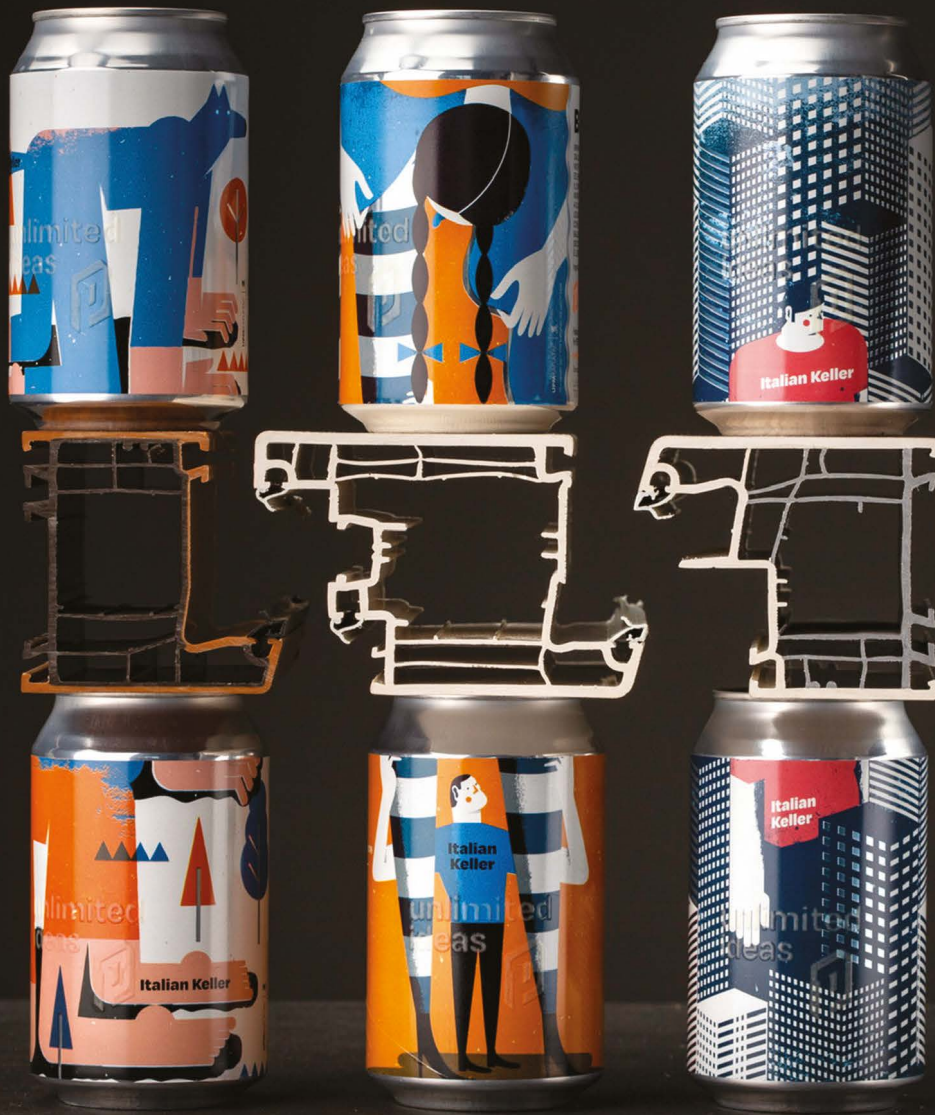
With ChatGPT, users can ask it questions and the AI will software will provide information based on a wide range of topics. It uses artificial intelligence and natural language processing techniques to analyze users' input, generate a response and provide relevant information based on the query.



To read more of Andy Thomas-Emans' columns, visit [www.labelsandlabeling.com](http://www.labelsandlabeling.com)

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# Get down off the fence

*Continuous improvement projects don't have to add more to one's workload. In fact when done well, it can have the opposite effect, writes columnist Paul Brauss*

Stability and growth are the primary reasons any market attracts private equity buyers and a key reason many family-owned businesses flourish from one generation to the next.

The label and packaging printing segment has enjoyed stable market demand compared to other manufacturing market segments. The influx of investors plus the handoff from one generation of ownership to the next, have highlighted a lack of managerial experience through turbulent times. The changing landscape of procurement practices plus workforce availability has added new competitive forces for this current leadership group.

Demands on converters now include more inventory control capabilities and enhanced marketing capability to communicate value propositions to the customers. In recent years, converters have seen increasing pressures from workforce gaps, supplier inconsistencies, and continued increases in customer expectations. Unlike the long economic growth cycle that drove demand in all markets, we are now faced with pre-recessionary forces.

Converters in specific industrial markets are already experiencing a decline in demand that they've not experienced in 10 years. Inflation and increased interest rates are making borrowing for equipment purchases undesirable at a time when new equipment needs are critically high. These external factors have highlighted internal problems within companies starting with their lack of leadership experience through up and down cycles business cycles.

Many Generation-3 companies and roll-ups led by experienced financial-based leaders need more emotional intelligence to engage their best assets. This criticism is not meant to be harsh because these young leaders have not had a chance to experience turbulent times which often force leaders into action. Economic reports indicate a real crisis is most likely afoot.

## Workload

As I speak to company leaders about their hesitancy in fully committing to continuous improvement initiatives, I hear a common theme: an unwillingness to commit to a course of action is primarily because the organizations are busy with the day-to-day running of the business.

Pressing improvement projects are seen as an added workload for employees believed to already be overloaded. As we discuss a path to improvement, the leaders often see this as added work. However, I know from experience that the continuous improvement management process does not add new workloads to the organization but can provide a better work environment.

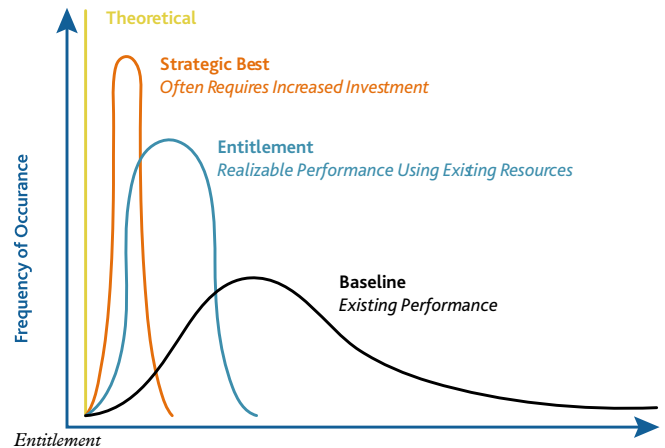
All leaders recognize that if special improvement projects are needed, they always engage the same people: the subject matter experts. In most organizations I have talked to, this is about five percent of their total population. This limits project completion and leads to islands of improvement, yielding far less improvement than possible. Because the engaged group is limited to about five percent of the company, the work piles on, leading to long lead times for completing the project.

Management systems centered on continuous improvement should engage 85 percent of the organization, thereby considerably reducing the stress and workload of the 5 percent.

But how do you get that level of engagement?

## Results vs drivers

Let's start with the metrics the organization typically reports.



**“Inflation and increased interest rates are making borrowing for equipment purchases undesirable at a time when new equipment needs are critically high”**

Topics such as revenues (how much has shipped), EBITDA (earnings before interest taxes, depreciation and amortization), and gross margins (sales minus direct costs expressed as a percent). These types of measures are called 'results.'

Results are essential when gauging a high-level financial performance of a company but carry little weight when explaining how each employee can impact them favorably.

A company wanting to effect change must discuss metrics relevant to the workforce that the crew can influence directly. These metrics must first be time-based and quality based. Then add metrics for productivity. When the new metric focus definitions are appropriately understood, they drive behavior modifications. That is why we call these metrics 'drivers.'

Time is easy to understand, and we measure overall cycle time by taking the time required to do one process step and adding it to the time to do the next process step, and so on. This metric is additive. When you start measuring the time required for each process step, you quickly determine where there is waiting time, rework time, or idle time impacting the process.

I recommend an organization picks the next 20 orders received and note the date and time. Follow these orders through the company from order entry through the graphics department through scheduling, production and shipping. You will quickly learn where your processes need to be improved to reduce the time required. Everyone in an organization understands the time, and everyone can impact the discussions around time. Discussions around time will cause behavior changes.

The next metric is more complicated to calculate but easy enough to understand. We are all familiar with the quality sampling of products. The driving metric for quality requires we

appreciate the handoff from one process to the next is high quality. This metric is multiplicative, meaning the quality level of one process step is multiplied by the quality level of the next process step, and so on. When results are multiplied, even a high score for each process can yield lower-than-expected performance.

The example I share is the handoff from sales to the organization to accept an order from a customer.

For the organization to process the order, the organization must know the essential requirements for production. The production floor can only proceed with the order information. Still, only some organizations understand having insufficient information or incorrect information impacts the yield of the process even if most of the data is known, for example, 90 percent. When handed to the following process performing at 90 percent, you see a process first pass yield of 81 percent. Everyone quickly recognizes that a metric focused on multiplying quality levels highlights problems rapidly. To see how your organization is doing, take the 20 orders I discussed when tracking time and follow how many go through the company processes seamlessly.

#### Focus on winning

The key to a successful transition of the metric discussions is to have the definitions of the metrics evident to everyone. Human behavior will drive action because most people focus on winning. When they understand how to win, a behavior change follows. Taking advantage of this phenomenon requires we link activity to the driving metrics.

When leaders begin their focus, I recommend returning to the basics of flow diagrams and value stream maps. In an organization focused on ISO Standards, this is second nature. I'm surprised to see still flow charts from top to bottom. Flow diagrams must move

Cycle time – Process CT is = to the sum of process step CT's

First Pass Yield is = to the product of the process step yields

	CT (days)	FPY (%)
Process A - Step 1	5	90
Step 2	4	90
Step 3	6	80
Process Cycle Time	= 15	
Process First Pass Yield	=	64.8

#### New metrics

from left to right, like a 'timeline.' The timeline helps us change a reference of thinking and amplifies the need to shrink the time between process steps.

I encourage leadership teams to include the company's subject matter experts in the dialogue and highlight process issues that impact the handoff's time and quality. These issues are barriers to success. This activity heightens awareness to the next level of the organization and often uncovers that the executive leadership needs to be made aware of the impact on the macro business processes. Create a simple summary sheet of the barriers for later use in prioritizing future projects with estimated time savings.

#### Shift meetings

The frequency of the metrics review is essential. Knowing more significant problems are often an accumulation of minor issues, using a daily shift kick-off meeting provides a perfect opportunity to communicate the metrics.

Many company leaders report they are already conducting daily

The advertisement features a dark red background with a subtle diamond pattern. On the left, the word "WINE" is written in large, white, serif capital letters. In the center, the text "Elevate your **quality wine** with our **quality labels**" is displayed in white. Below this, the Roll Cover logo is shown, consisting of a stylized 'Rc' inside a shield shape, followed by the text "Roll Cover" in a bold, serif font. At the bottom, the website "www.rollcover.it" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. On the right side, a silhouette of a wine bottle and a glass filled with red wine are shown. The word "LABELLING" is written vertically in large, green, serif capital letters along the right edge of the image.



## “I recommend operators highlight interruptions to their equipment operation as another tracking point impacting time and quality”

shift start-up meetings asking about safety concerns and other administrative topics. The leadership and organizational behavior change is influenced by conversation topics that focus on cycle time and process quality making for a consistent communication process. More importantly, this becomes a universal conversation approach used in all areas of the company including the office areas.

The benefit of the meeting is that the conversation takes place around topics the employees can immediately impact. Shop floor supervisors responsible for individuals operating capital equipment such as printing presses or finishing equipment can rotate through the facility stopping at each work cell or press cell to discuss time and quality issues a couple of times per shift.

I recommend operators highlight interruptions to their equipment operation as another tracking point impacting time and quality. Support communication by creating simple metric boards at the press stations and a summary board on a central aisle to accommodate the conversation topics; by adding a simple 'who, what, when' to the subject, a supervisor or manager can assign simple tasks before issues lead to big problems.

We can visualize time as a critical metric to our business processes. Now imagine that timeline with zero interruptions or delays.

Take the same 20 orders we used as a process check; the overall actual timeline result becomes the 'baseline' time metric. If we remove all process delays and all process errors, the processing time becomes the theoretical best.

Many barriers to the process can be removed without investment. Eliminating barriers requires a commitment to standardizing consistent process methods for repeatability. This action leads to the process entitlement timeline.

Imagine a company's value proposition with a 35 percent to 50 percent reduction in cycle time. With a simple focus by executive leadership, including highlighting 'driving' metrics and simple communication tools, the journey of continuous improvement is begun.

We can take many existing organizational activities, modify them to encourage human behavior, and increase a company's emotional intelligence to motivate people to engage and drive results.

Through this activity, we create a better value proposition for the customers and a better-performing organization that values employees.

These examples highlight not adding more work, but instead replacing the focus so that it provides a better work environment and encourages people to stay. It's time to climb down from the fence on the side of a driving improvement with a focus on reducing process cycle time and improving process first pass yield.



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

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## Part 2: Chasing Arrows: Can Packaging Be Sustainable?

In this Q&A, branding and design columnist, Vicki Strull, sits down with the host of the podcast Sustainable Packaging with Cory Connors. Below is an excerpt of their conversation

**Vicki Strull:** Cory, you've interviewed so many people on your podcast, **what are some of the innovations you've heard about that are so staggering you believe they are going to make a huge impact in sustainable packaging?**

**Cory Connors:** There are some creative things going on in making spirits packaging more sustainable like Colourform, who are doing molded pulp instead of several layers of boxes for very high-end liquors and champagne brands. It's exciting. They're taking molded pulp and making it beautiful – like a second skin for the bottle. Whereas it used to be there was foam and then an inner box and then a shipper box. The molded pulp packaging eliminates three layers. Imagine that impact over hundreds of thousands of bottles. And the consumers love it. They keep the molded pulp, they think it looks beautiful on the bottle. So they're adapting to it. Things like that are changing the game and we're really looking at packaging differently and saying, 'Hey, do we really need two boxes here? Could we just do one?'

**VS:** Let's talk about brands testing different packaging and understanding how consumers will respond. I believe that when we prototype, we can really start

**"We're really looking at packaging differently and saying, 'Hey, do we really need two boxes here? Could we just do one?'"**

to know how people will respond to a design. Prototyping is part of the 'design thinking' movement, where there is a methodology: concept, create, prototype, iterate, prototype again until the packaging or product is ready to be manufactured. When brands prototype and test, they can begin to understand and analyze the discrepancy between what people say they will do, which is pay more for something that is sustainable, and what they *actually* do, which does not typically match what they say. If we can prototype more, we can understand that gap better.

**CC:** Very accurate. I liken it to political polling. When somebody calls you and says, 'Who are you going to vote for?' We've learned that not everyone is honest about what they say and what they do in the voting booth. I think that's true with some consumers saying, 'Of course, I'd spend more for sustainability.' But will they really? Are they actually on board for this? I've also seen that it can increase sales. It can add value to consumers' minds, like you and me. And if we buy it and like it and talk about it because it's exciting, it can increase brand awareness and loyalty.

**VS:** To that point, when we produce sustainable packaging, sometimes it's more expensive. **Cory, who should absorb that extra expense?** The manufacturers? The innovators? The suppliers? Is it the brand's responsibility to absorb some of the extra costs? Or does it always come back to the shopper?

**CC:** That's a touchy question because a lot of us are on strict incomes and a lot of people are struggling with the changes. The answer is, it depends. I know that's frustrating, everybody hates that answer. But oftentimes, the government is going to have to step in with some additional discounts for the manufacturers – maybe

– grants for businesses that are being more sustainable. But it often does fall on the consumer.

I know a lot of brands are really struggling and a lot of suppliers are very tight right now. We've absorbed lots of cost increases over the last several years. The market has been absolutely erratic with the most cost changes I've ever seen in my two and a half decades in the business. I mean, to have a 30 percent cost delta from the last time something was ordered – that's hard to absorb. I can assure you that the supplier can't absorb it, we'd be cost oversell, assuming the margins are reasonable. So yes, it often falls on the consumer, which is a challenge. This is why it's on us as designers and suppliers to provide alternatives that aren't always more expensive. **What are your thoughts on who's responsible for the cost increases, Vicki?**

**VS:** I agree that it's complicated. I think it's incumbent upon the suppliers to come





up with the material innovations because they know those materials so well. And it's incumbent on the converters to understand how to use those innovations and make them work within their cost structure. It's also incumbent upon the innovator to help converters work those innovations into their workflow and business model. Because if you have an innovation but the converter can't make it work within their cost structure, then they can't offer it to the brand, and the brand can't offer it to the consumer. Or if they can offer it, but it changes their margins, then their business becomes less sustainable and the converter can't absorb that updated cost. Now, if you let the cost increase trickle to the shopper, then the product may become too expensive and the shopper may not purchase it, so sales won't meet the forecasts and the product may not be sustainable. Again, I think it goes back to the ecosystem of everyone working together to make real change.

**CC:** Totally agree, 100 percent. All of it has to sell through. It has to last as long on the shelf, for instance. We can't let the performance of the packaging suffer for sustainability. Very important. Vicki, there was one word you used earlier in this discussion that I am very interested in learning more about. You mentioned haptics. I am blown away that you're even thinking about haptics in packaging. **Can you explain what that means and how you use haptics in design?**

**VS:** Absolutely. I love talking about haptics, I've written articles on haptics, and I've done presentations on haptics! I learned the word haptics from one of the suppliers I work with – Sappi. Sappi makes paperboard and commercial papers. They came out with a piece 10 years ago

## “We can't let the performance of the packaging suffer for sustainability”

called *'The Neuroscience of Touch'*, which talks about the importance of haptics in corporate communications and commercial print. As a packaging designer, I'm looking at haptics in terms of how we interact with packaging because of haptics. Activating our sense of touch on packaging enhances both the retail environment and the unboxing experience. When you think about shelf appeal, haptics on packaging can entice someone to reach out and touch a product. As we look at haptics related to consumer behavior, we know that touching something triggers psychological ownership – a phenomenon where we subconsciously start to believe we own something just by touching it. That can trigger the 'endowment effect,' which means we value the item more. Haptics are key in making packaging appealing to shoppers. And that's just on the shelf; when you start talking about it in an unboxing experience, those haptics and whatever those textures – whether it's embossed, a metallic, spot UV, a die cut, or a tip-on — they all affect our perception of the product inside, which then goes back to the business goals of the brand. Maybe they can charge more for it; maybe people think it's higher quality.

I've done it in both directions; one, where a brand wants to charge more for something and we add haptics to make that price justified for a premium or luxury product and help them raise the price. I've also done the reverse where brands have come to me and said, 'Here's our design so far. Can you help us with this? Our price point is \$79.' And I have said, 'If your price point is \$79 for that product, you don't have packaging that fits a \$79 price point.' Haptics are really amazing in terms of consumer engagement.

**CC:** I have a customer – Shun Cutlery – Kai USA; they craft knives in Japan. Their boxes have this amazing soft touch feel that we make for them at Landsberg Orora, and it is a big selling factor. People pick them up and say, 'Ooh, this is really neat. I really like this. This feels cool.' First, they see that it's beautiful, and then second, they love that tactile feel. So I can definitely concur with what you're saying.

**VS:** Yes! Anytime I do a haptic embellishment, that's exactly the response we're looking for: hold it longer. And when you start to think about this idea of psychological ownership and the endowment effect, once you're holding it longer, you start to think that it belongs to you, and then it's more likely that you

purchase it and it goes home with you. The other thing from what you just described, in those few seconds when they say, 'Ooh, it must be nice,' the packaging has suddenly changed the perception of the quality of the product inside. Pretty amazing.

**CC:** Absolutely, yes. Some of the items that brands are selling in these boxes cost hundreds of dollars and it's important to provide the right package to the consumer; one that's valuable and that's worth their money. Not just the item inside, but the packaging itself needs to inherently have value. Many of these items are gifts and they want to be able to give them with pride to friends and family and associates. They want the packaging to say, 'You're worth it.'

**VS:** And to bring that back to sustainability, when you add that soft-touch, it's incumbent upon us to find a soft-touch coating that is environmentally friendly. That's been hard because these are laminates and now you're getting into layered materials; you're adding something. Or if it is litho laminated or has adhesives, it can be harder to recycle or it can make the packaging not recyclable at all. This is where we need a lot of innovation.

**CC:** Well said. I interviewed some paper manufacturers recently, and they were talking about the exact same thing. What if we could make it feel like this without coating, with the right chemistry, and without an additional layer. Some of these high-end boxes have a plastic layer that people don't know about. They're not always totally recyclable. And we need to be honest with each other about that.

**VS:** I do have one question that I'm curious about. Can you talk about the single-stream recycling system that we have in the US and compare or contrast it with what's happening in Japan, where they don't have single stream? They have a bento-box-like system, where people put their glass in one section and their aluminum in another, and their paperboard and their plastic into different sections.

**Do you think that single-stream recycling has hurt the sustainability of the materials in the United States, or do you think it's helped because it has made it easier for people to recycle?**

**CC:** Oh, wow. Great question. The answer I think is both. It has hurt some areas and it has helped some areas. I've read



## "I think you're going to see a lot of changes over the next several years with extended producer responsibility and different recycling laws"

so many stories about this. I think it was in New Jersey where they tried to demand that people recycle. 'You must recycle.' And people said, 'No, we never have before. You can't make us do anything.' Now, in particular [the state] said, 'You must take your corrugated and tie it up with string and make it easy for [recycling].' NO. It has to be easier for the consumer. Where I live in Oregon, it's very easy to recycle. You put it in your blue bin and it gets recycled. And they're expanding that often. We're going to be able to recycle soft plastics like low-density polyethylenes. And polystyrenes. We'll be able to recycle those in the next couple of years, which is very exciting. And they're doing that successfully in Canada as well. So the answer is, it can

be very, very good for the numbers. It can also not impact them at all because if we're not changing the behavior of people and encouraging them – sometimes financially – to recycle. Companies like D6 in Texas, have a new program where they'll pay you for every thermoform tray that you bring into Sam's Club. Wow. People want to do that, right? So I think you're going to see a lot of changes over the next several years with extended producer responsibility and different recycling laws that are taking place.

**VS:** This has been just an absolute pleasure and I wanted to thank you very much. I learn a lot every time I listen to your podcast, and I learned more in today's

conversation as well.

**CC:** Thank you, Vicki. I appreciate your wisdom, your friendship and partnership in this!

*This is Part 2 in a Q&A series with Vicki and Cory. To read part one, read Issue 1 of Labels & Labeling.*

*The mission of Cory's podcast is to help make the planet more sustainable by educating, informing and engaging packaging professionals and consumers. To listen to the full episode, visit [www.corygated.com/sustainable-packaging-podcast](http://www.corygated.com/sustainable-packaging-podcast) or search for "Sustainable Packaging with Cory Connors" on Apple or wherever you stream your favorite podcasts.*



*Vicki Strull is a packaging designer, strategist, and speaker who advises top-tier and emerging brands on how to leverage the power of print and packaging within their omnichannel marketing strategies. She consults with print service providers and OEMs to create new revenue streams and shares her strategies in a master class for MarketWise Academy and at design, packaging and print events around the world. Join fellow trendsetters at [vickistrull.com](http://vickistrull.com) or follow Vicki on LinkedIn @vickistrull*

### *From The Dieline: Cacao Ceremony responds to the urge for connection*

WIN Creating Images crafted a mythological design for the conceptual brand Cacao Ceremony. While the rectangular glass bottle already makes an immediate impact, the beautifully illustrated and embossed label continues the stunning design. The 60s-inspired typography style plays into the product's psychedelics, while the dainty illustrations make the packaging more luxurious.

The design of the Cacao Ceremony blends mythological design elements with a tarot card aesthetic. In combination with the ancient pharmacy bottle shape and the 60s style-inspired font, Cacao Ceremony promises to take you to faraway places.

At the center of the design sits 'The Third Eye', also called Ajna Chakra in Sanskrit, which is known as 'the seat of intuition.' This Chakra – normally just above the eyebrows in the middle of the forehead – has been placed in the middle of the bottle and acts as an individual's center of inner wisdom, self-awareness, higher consciousness, and self-reflection. By opening these associations, Cacao Ceremony responds to the urge for connection that resides within the mindfulness-embracing Gen Z.

The creative concept draws its inspiration from an international trend: consumers are increasingly drawn to buying from brands that offer realness, connection and authenticity.

Cacao Ceremony invites the consumer to an ancient ritual. The ceremonial context opens up a supernatural world where the taste of the cacao is just the start of a powerful experience.

In trends like traditional ceremonies or tarot, it's the appeal that comes from the power of thought which gives designs a special energy. A similar attraction is found in the universe, which emanates a surreal magic that evokes a spectrum of emotions ranging from uncertainty to longing.

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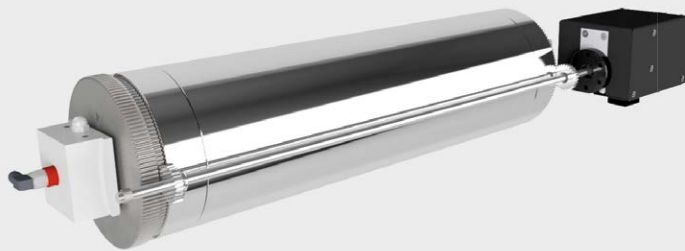






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# How top leaders orchestrate change

*Every business needs to adapt and change, and the best ones do so continuously. Bob Cronin of The Open Approach offer for lessons for implementing change in your organization*

Change is hard in any industry, in any organization. But the reality is that change is the single largest factor in an organization's success. Any change in trajectory, business model, personnel, culture — or ownership — can be especially daunting.

As leaders, we are expected to determine the best course for our businesses, which means we are also responsible for enacting and navigating the change required to get there. If a CEO cannot champion this, it can spell disaster for their companies — despite excellence in other areas. Think of the once-great companies such as Eastman Kodak or Sears Corporation. These leaders did not think they had to adapt, even though they had the proper talent, power and resources at their disposal. And when they tried to, they were too late.

Let's focus on ensuring you're never one of them, with these four essentials that top leaders use when implanting change:

## 1. Help people embrace the concept

The first imperative of orchestrating change is understanding the idea overall. Few people like change. Or more on point, very few people like to change.

When an employee hears about change, their first reaction is to start wondering what it means to them personally. Your staff will look at the change as to what's best for them, not what's best for the company as a whole. And they will fear it because of the unknowns. This is a normal reaction. Good leaders help their people assimilate and see the change as a positive — from the perspectives of many roles. Think through the various impacts a prospective change has at different levels and be prepared to communicate to and mobilize people accordingly. Change can be a time to reinvigorate staff and reward your hardest workers with new opportunities.

## 2. Establish and leverage a change management team

The process of considering changes and evaluating them can be challenging. As a leader, you need to decide who needs to be involved in these discussions. If your management team is essential in a particular change, it's good to have them involved in deciding on it and coming up with a plan to implement it. This is especially true in the case of an acquisition, merger, company sale or owner exit. Many entrepreneurs make these deals on their own, with their top staff finding out during an introduction to new owners. Such a major change can then get derailed, and you'll end up alienating your greatest

## "Leaders create other leaders; this is especially true in times of change"

allies and causing fear that permeates the entire team. Have the right people involved at the right time and leverage their insights and perspectives. Leaders create other leaders; this is especially true in times of change.

## 3. Be Transparent

It's important to get everyone on board. This includes employees, partners, vendors and clients — all of whom can influence a change's success. Plan and time your messaging to each audience. Communicate the reason for the change, what will be achieved by it, and how it will benefit the organization. Follow up with the positives for each audience. Make sure to provide such communications in a way where each individual in the specific audience receives it at the same time. If some employees hear it before others, you'll create fear and suspicion. Likewise with customers, as any who hear it from outside your company will feel that their business and relationship are not valued and start looking for a new supplier.

Additionally, you'll need to be transparent about potential negatives. The change may impact compensation, objectives and roles. It may require additional work for some or even temporary business disruption. When you touch on any of these points, you'll develop resistance. Explain where you're heading and how these changes will help get you there. Remind everyone that growth requires adjustments. Discuss the drivers behind the decisions, the risks you'll avert, and your considerations. People will find it easier to embrace change if they understand its goals and see it as the best possible option.

## 4. Run an organization that continually changes

Look to any industry, and you'll see that the frontrunners are those that are constantly adapting. Some have done it by acquisition, some by convergence, and others by total industry disruption. Remember there was once a little online bookstore called Amazon?

The lesson is this: we all need to change so we can continue to

grow and thrive. As leaders, we have two types of decisions: easy and hard ones. Done correctly, both can forever impact your business and its success. Leading a company takes impactful thought, solid reasoning, recognition of all the issues, and sound strategic goals with the universal benefit communicated in a manner people understand and support. Every business needs to adapt and change, and the best ones do so continuously. It isn't easy to constantly reinvent your business, but the alternative can be a lot more difficult.



*Bob Cronin is Managing Partner of The Open Approach, an M&A consultancy focused exclusively on the world of print. To learn more, visit [www.theopenapproach.net](http://www.theopenapproach.net), email [bobcronin@aol.com](mailto:bobcronin@aol.com), or call +1 630-542-1758.*



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# Making sense of life cycle analysis

*When it comes to sustainable labels and flexible packaging, understanding how to communicate environmental impacts is crucial for driving change, writes Rosalyn Bandy, TLMI's VP of sustainability, and L&L's new sustainability columnist*

**W**ith the advent of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and the idea that 'through design we can eliminate waste and pollution, circulate products and materials, and regenerate nature, creating an economy that benefits people, business and the natural world,' you now hear more about circularity goals, the circular economy, or the new plastics economy.

But making sense of it can prove challenging and communicating the environmental impacts of labels and packaging to your customers even more burdensome.

There is abundant information on this topic, thanks to the Association of Plastic Recyclers and the APR Design Guide, and it's spelled out clearly for each type of plastic container.

TLMI has provided opportunity for members to understand APR's guidance, with educational sessions featuring both Seventh Generation and Nestlé, who detailed how the APR Design Guide is used by their respective companies in the design of their labels and packaging with their circularity goals at the forefront.

The question I often get is about how light weighting or downgauging labels will affect recyclability and remain an opportunity for end-users to meet their sustainability goals. Downgauged labels, while maintaining functionality, are offered by most substrate suppliers.

The greenhouse gas reduction is impressive when using less material. Substrate suppliers have that data, just ask for it.

## Flexible packaging

When it comes to flexible packaging, however, the question of sustainability is an intriguing and complex one. It's a question that many label converters who also manufacture flexible packing must understand.

Laminated flexible packaging is not recyclable, so how does that impact the circularity goals of so many of converters and their customers?

**"If flexible packaging ends up in a landfill at the end of its useful life, are the greenhouse gas reductions enough? If it must be discarded after a single use, would that be enough to be considered a win?"**

Flexible packaging is much lighter than rigid containers, which dramatically reduces the scope of greenhouse gas outcomes.

The Flexible Packaging Association provides an excellent life cycle analysis comparison study of the water and fossil fuel consumption as well as greenhouse gas emissions of stand-up pouches compared to HDPE and PET rigid containers.

And yet, if flexible packaging ends up in a landfill at the end of its useful life, are the greenhouse gas reductions enough?

Hypothetically, do we care if a light weighted single-use package significantly reduces greenhouse gas emissions, waste disposal volume and negative environmental and human health impacts, but then must be discarded after a single use? Would that be enough to be considered a win?

A lifecycle analysis will give you greenhouse gas results at a particular point in time. It won't give you information about litter, waste, mechanical recycling infrastructure and technology.

It's a cradle-to-gate calculation that does not extend out beyond the gate to look at end of life or back to the cradle. Greenhouse gas impacts and pollution mitigation compared to litter and microplastics are very separate goals and the analysis of each cannot be combined to form conclusions about what makes one packaging format a more sustainable product.

As Scott Trenor, technical director of APR, explains: 'A good example of reducing material weight but staying in the circular economy is the single-use packaging directive in Europe. The directive allows for an increase in the weight of the

flexible packaging if companies change to a recyclable mono-material, rather than a multi-layered, non-recyclable material.'

## Rethinking 'reuse'

EPA's waste hierarchy of reduce, reuse, recycle has been around since 1975; long before flexible packaging and other light-weighted containers. In this age of circularity, perhaps we need to consider redefining what 'reduce' means given that less material-intensive products also tend to have less reuse and recycling potential.

With the many options facing brands who want a 'sustainable label,' the best any of us can do is understand what the options mean, align with organizations that can help us understand the impacts of each product we offer, and be transparent about the pros and cons.

The technology is changing, the recycling infrastructure is slowly ramping up, so more opportunities for circularity are coming our way.

Emily Tipaldo, executive director of the US Plastics Pact, said it well: 'We must act boldly in collaboration and quickly adapt or change course as we work together to meet our ultimate goal to reduce plastic waste by creating a circular economy for plastic in which it never becomes waste or pollution.'



*Rosalyn Bandy is VP of sustainability for TLMI. For more information about TLMI sustainability, contact Rosalyn.bandy@tlmi.com.*

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HP Indigo 200K

# HP Indigo launches new mid-web digital press

*HP Indigo unveiled a new, more efficient and productive 200K mid-web digital press for labels, shrink sleeve and flexible packaging. Chelsea McDougall reports*

**H**P Indigo has developed a new digital press aimed at the flexible packaging, label and shrink sleeve markets. The 200K digital press provides increased efficiencies and productivity built on the success of its 25K digital press.

HP launched the 200K digital press before a global audience at a VIP event at its headquarters in Israel in March. HP will bring the press to Dscoop in the US this spring and Labelexpo Europe this fall.

## Tech specs

The new press is based on HP's install base of over 300 HP Indigo 25K digital presses worldwide. HP says the new press – which runs at 56m/min (184ft/min) in enhanced productivity mode, or three-color printing in cyan, magenta and yellow – is 30 percent faster than its predecessor and can help converters realize 45 percent gains in productivity, compared to the HP Indigo 25K.

'The HP Indigo 200K is a mid-web digital press specially designed for converters addressing the needs of brands in flexible packaging, but it also serves the growing requirements of the label and shrink sleeve industries for higher productivity and wider format,' says Noam Zilbershtain, VP and general manager of HP Indigo and Scitex. 'Flexible packaging is a growing market, and HP Indigo customers are growing much faster than the market. I have no doubt that the HP Indigo 200K digital press will open the door for more flexo converters who want to join the success, and reign in industry 4.0.'

HP's successful mid-web digital press – the 20000 – was launched in 2014, and an upgraded version was released in 2020 with the 25K. ePac was the beta site at that time.

Nearly every element of its predecessor was modified for the new 200K press to run more efficiently. The laser writing head, the in-line primer, paper handling and more were optimized to increase speed and throughput. In addition, HP added more capabilities in the digital front end to reduce time to color, scaling and added AI-driven services to increase uptime.

An in-line priming unit on a 30in wide press enables the treatment of virtually any substrate ranging from 10 to 400 microns. The ILP unit is followed by an energy-efficient drying system before HP's Liquid ElectroPhotography (LEP) print unit. The 200K offers a wide range of ElectroInks and is designed to print high-coverage packages with white on the majority of the

## VIP Partners

The label and packaging supply chain was also represented at the VIP event. Partners showcasing materials, equipment and technology also included: AB Graphic, Actega, Cerm, eProductivity Software, Esko, Fedrigoni, Hybrid Software, Infigo, JetFx, Karlville, Kurz, Label Traxx, Michelman, Nobelus, Prati, Sun Chemical, UPM Raflatac and other companies geared toward other print segments.

**“We’re bringing agility of digital print to the flexible packaging market – not only for short runs, for every run”**

substrate, both surface and reverse.

An inline spectrophotometer ensures color consistency with the Spot Master, a technology that HP claims is the 'industry's fastest time to color.' After printing, an on-press inspection unit allows operators to inspect the quality of print jobs – both reverse and surface print.

The HP Indigo 200K digital press also features HP Indigo's PrintOS software automation capabilities for batching, ganging and variable data.

The flexible packaging market seems primed for the digital disruption that changed the landscape of the label market years ago.

HP's global product manager Aviram Iluz says: 'We are still scratching the surface of digital flexible packaging production, with less than 1 percent of the total market value printed digitally. This equals opportunity. We're bringing agility of digital print to the flexible packaging market – not only for short runs, for every run.'

## Beta site

UK-based Sirane Group was announced as one of the press' first beta customers – one of three being delivered worldwide. The new 200K digital press, installed in April, is Sirane's first step into digital

packaging production.

Sirane Group managing director Simon Balderson says: 'For us, moving from analog to digital, is a change of mindset, really. It's not just a change of mindset in terms of us as a packaging supplier, but it's a change of mindset for our customers and the imagination they have to see what we can do with this technology.'

The company is changing to a digital-first mentality.

'The way I look at it, digital will be our default,' Balderson says. 'Of course, we will have analog there behind us, but digital is first. The mindset we're trying to put in place.'

Sirane Group commercial and business development director Peter Ralten says: 'At Sirane, we have been looking into digital print for a while now, realizing it is where the future lies. The HP Indigo 200K digital press, with its incredible increase in productivity, opens new business opportunities for us.'

The HP Indigo 200K digital press offers the benefits of digital production: on-demand delivery, no minimum orders, unique designs, reduced energy consumption and minimal waste.

'Digital printing isn't just about short runs,' Ralten says, 'If a company wanted 100,000 stand-up pouches or more with 100,000 different, unique designs then digital printing makes that possible, which opens up exciting possibilities.'

'But at the same time, short-runs are a key feature of the digital press, and again will offer our customers a service which we are not currently able to offer.'

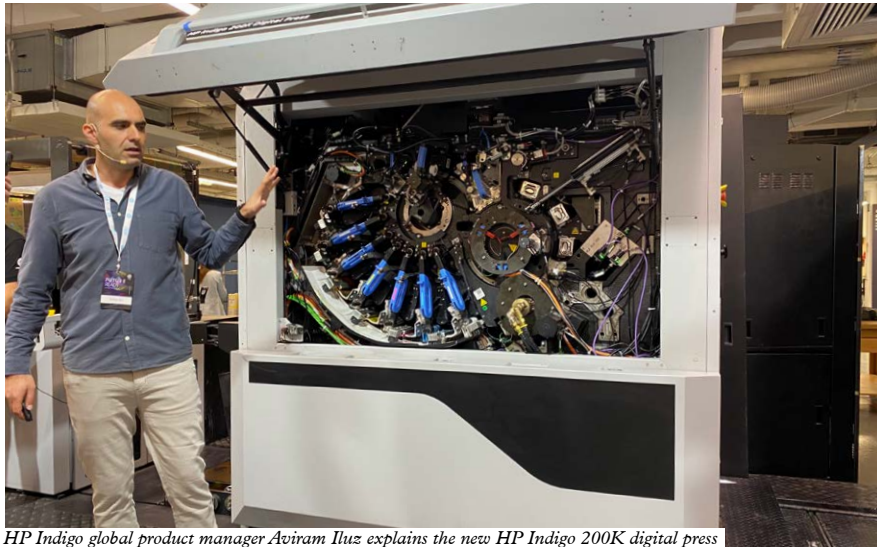
Sirane is a packaging development-to-manufacture company, with expertise in absorbency and material science. The company specializes in board; bags, pouches and film including traditional flexibles; absorbent products; assembly and fulfillment; plastic replacement and more.

Ralten adds: 'Sirane offers a huge range of flexible packaging solutions, ranging from paper-based heat-sealable barrier films and recyclable plastics through to traditional flexibles. The HP Indigo 200K will offer something different and exciting to all our flexible packaging customers, no matter what substrate they use.'

Sirane has four main divisions: food packaging; horticultural; medical and healthcare; and lab supplies and services. The company is based in Telford, UK with three sites, and has additional manufacturing in Mexico, Czech Republic; the US.

#### VIP event

While the 200K launch may have been the highlight of the event, it wasn't the only reason HP brought guests to its global



HP Indigo global product manager Aviram Iluz explains the new HP Indigo 200K digital press

## "No doubt that the HP Indigo 200K digital press will open the door for more flexo converters"

headquarters. It was the first event of its kind since 2019 and welcomed more than 100 visitors from across the globe. HP says 60 percent of VIP attendees were new or prospective HP Indigo users.

One longstanding HP customer who spoke during the event was Deanne Sinclair, owner and president of Toronto-based Cambridge Labels. Sinclair has several HP Indigo presses for labels but also invested in a 25K, which the company uses as a way to move short-run label and shrink sleeve jobs off her other HP assets. Cambridge Label doesn't currently print flexible packaging jobs on the 25K, though Sinclair is investigating expanding the company's application range.

'We were getting pressure-sensitive label orders for, say 1,000 ft, that have a lot, a lot of versions,' she explains. 'And it would tie up our 6K for a bit too long. So in order to take care of other small to medium-size orders, I've been printing pressure sensitive and shrink jobs on our 25K. Just not flexible packaging ... yet.'

Sinclair's talk was titled 'Excuse me, where can I find a flexo operator,' and lamented the trouble she – much like many label converters – has in finding skilled workers to run her machines.

Bavarian converter Labelisten offered an interesting take on sustainability in the packaging industry. Frank Plechschmidt started his lively discussion with, 'Good morning, fellow waste producers!'

For Plechschmidt, digital printing is attractive because of its waste reduction. With digital, Labelisten can print just what the customers need. 'Just think of how much packaging is thrown away before it's even used,' he says.

Plechschmidt also sees flexible packaging

as 'baby steps to sustainability.' Flexible packaging replaces rigid packaging, which is more taxing to produce and transport. And, though there are some options on the market, flexible packaging materials are not inherently recyclable or compostable.

The VIP event also included tours to HP's Ness Ziona and Kiryat Gat campuses, where guests saw HP's ink production facility, as well as a behind-the-curtain look at the production of its V12 digital label press. The V12 made waves at Labelexpo Americas last year and will be on display with the 200K at Labelexpo Europe 2023.

Visitors on the flexible packaging VIP track also visited Digipack, a company that launched Israel's first all-digital flexible packaging business with an HP Indigo 20000 installed in 2019. Digipack's customers include food, pharma and cosmetics, and its CEO has witnessed rapid growth from the reduction of run lengths and an increase in specialized runs.

Digipack CEO Yiftach Stern says: 'With the HP Indigo 20000, we can commit to short delivery times from the moment of the concept until the product reaches the shelf, with an added benefit of reduced inventory.'

Other sessions included a keynote address by Kfir Damari, co-founder of Spacell, Jose Gorbea, HP's global head of brands, who discussed creative strategies for digital packaging and a customer panel that included Sirane, Labelisten and Cambridge Label, as well as PressUp, Beeri and Sealed Air.



HP Indigo 200K press will be on display at Labelexpo Europe in September. For more information, visit [www.labelexpo-europe.com](http://www.labelexpo-europe.com)



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# Labelexpo Southeast Asia 2023 returns to Bangkok

*Labelexpo Southeast Asia returned to BITEC in Bangkok in February, for the second edition of the show in a region primed for growth. Andy Thomas-Emans and Chelsea McDougall report*

**T**he three-day Labelexpo Southeast Asia 2023 marked the post-Covid return of the show to the region following the launch event in 2018.

Labelexpo Southeast Asia brought together almost 7,500 converters and brand owners from across the ASEAN and wider Asia-Pacific region, mostly from Thailand, Malaysia, China, Indonesia, India, Singapore, the Philippines, Vietnam and Australia. The show was supported by the Thai Innovative Printing Trade Association (TINPA) and over 170 suppliers were showcasing their latest technologies.

## Regional trends

The wider APAC region represents the fastest-growing label market in the world. According to consultancy Knowledge Sourcing Intelligence in September 2022, the Asia Pacific labels market was valued at 15.778 billion USD in 2020 and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 7.34 percent to reach a market size of 25.092 billion USD by 2027.

Thailand itself is emerging as a hub for the ASEAN region. The

**“This region is in many ways reminiscent of China a decade ago. Multinational brands are moving to the region and an advanced retail infrastructure is emerging, leading to growing requirements for higher quality packaging”**

government has undertaken a massive investment program in transit and hotel infrastructure, and a new high-speed train service links Bangkok to Laos, and from there to China. There has also been significant foreign investment in the country, including by international label converting groups and label buyers.

In terms of label technology, this region is in many ways reminiscent of China a decade ago. Multinational brands are moving to the region and an advanced retail infrastructure is emerging, leading to growing requirements for higher quality packaging – including from local brands who need to compete with the global giants.

Letterpress, offset and screen printing remain a powerful force, but regional label converters are starting to look at flexo and digital. The key question is, how are they going to invest?

## Press technology

The transition between letterpress and flexo was well represented on the **Sen Labels** Machinery stand. Sen Labels is a Malaysian manufacturer of flexo and letterpress machines. On the stand was an SEN intermittent flexo press equipped with LED-UV along with an LED-UV intermittent letterpress. Marketing manager Max Goh says intermittent flexo is well suited for short runs without the high tooling costs associated with full rotary flexo.

‘We learned a lot from our intermittent letterpress technology, particularly how to avoid gear marks,’ says Goh.

The press speed is 60m/min. Sen Labels is now looking to take its semi-rotary flexo technology to the Middle East and Europe.

**Haotian** was another company showing intermittent letterpress – there was no full rotary letterpress at the show.

Intermittent offset made a strong showing at Labelexpo Southeast Asia 2023, with machines shown by, among others, **Zonten**, and **Nickel** with its striking FS350 semi-rotary offset press.

Rotary flexo is now part of the show mix with **Label Source** demonstrating an F4 inline flexo press, which was sold on the show floor to barcode and VIP specialist S.I.N. Information.

## Ancillary products in brief

A range of UV and LED-UV curing systems were shown by manufacturers including GEW (see above) and **Alphacure**. **IST Metz** launched its MBSc (Modular System compact) UV system designed for label printing applications.

**GSE** showcased its Colorstat ink dispensing and management software for standardizing color quality and cutting waste in label and packaging printing at the booth of its distributor, Techno Global Graphics.

**Asahi Photoproducts** was showcasing its water-washable CleanPrint flexo plate and plate processing technology. There are no VOCs emitted and the system allows for faster plate production, improving pressroom productivity.

**Maxcess** showcased its Fife-500 Max web guiding unit and GuideLine digital sensor, which can detect lines, line edges and graphic patterns such as bar codes point. It can be used in low-contrast conditions or with different patterns located close to each other. GuideLine can also edge guide transparent films.

**Rotometal** showcased its new lightweight aluminum magnetic die cylinders and Sandon Global demonstrated its laser-engraved anilox rolls and sleeves.

**Voyantic** showed its Tagsurance 3 system for RAIN RFID and NFC tag and label production, including testing and quality assurance. The Tagsurance 3 System allows accurate three-point testing at high speeds.

## “Thailand is emerging as a hub for the ASEAN region. The government has undertaken a massive investment program in transit and hotel infrastructure, and a new high-speed train service links Bangkok to Laos, and from there to China”

Digital had a major presence, with several global players showing their cutting-edge technologies and a growing presence from Chinese suppliers.

Seen for the first time at an Asia-Pacific exhibition was **Konica Minolta**'s new AccurioLabel 400. This is the latest update to the established and highly successful AccurioLabel 230 4-color toner press, which is one of the fastest-selling digital presses in the world.

The main upgrade over the AccurioLabel 230 press is the addition of a white toner station, while the maximum speed of the AccurioLabel 400 has been increased to 39.9m/min in CMYK mode - 20m/min CMYK+W. Speed is also affected by the type of media being handled.

The press was demonstrated at the show

in overprint mode – the press comes as standard with an overprint sensor kit for registration with pre-printed media.

The unwinder and converting modules are built for Konica Minolta in Asia-Pacific by **Brotech**, with the capacity for rolls of 1,000mm diameter.

Brotech CEO Ramon Lee tells L&L the company has developed a new design that fully encloses the printing and converting stations, allowing the press to be air-conditioned. Taking down the internal temperature allows a wider latitude to print on films.

**Epson** brought its full range of digital label printing equipment to the show, including the SurePress L-4533AW aqueous inkjet press, the SurePress L-6534VW LED-UV press and its full range of



Epson L-6534 LED-UV inkjet press

ColorWorks benchtop printers.

**Durst** showcased its entry-level Tau RSC E 330 5c digital press, with the same 1200 DPI native print resolution as the rest of the Tau RSC range. Durst marketing director Thomas Mascina says the press is configured to offer 'an economically attractive entry into Tau RSC technology.' The press comes equipped with Durst Workflow and Durst Analytics software and optional Durst Smart Shop software, enabling a web-to-print workflow.

**Flora** (Shenzhen Runtianzhi) showcased its J330-S UV inkjet press printing CMYK+W and using the latest Epson S3200 600 DPI printhead. It runs at speeds up to 60m/min and can accommodate media roll sizes up to 1,000mm.

**Hanglory** showed its LabStar 330S UV



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Haotian intermittent letterpress



Label Source F4 flexo press



Lintec Corporation

inkjet press, which uses Kyocera printhead technology to print at 1200 dpi in five colors. The press was shown for the first time with an upgrade package which includes a flexo module for both spot colors and cold foil application. The 'S' version also features fully inline converting with lamination, full/semi-rotary die cutting and matrix rewind.

**Dilli** showed its Neo Picasso press on the stand of local agent Hua Far. The press has a resolution of 600 x 1200 DPI and a speed of 50m/min. It prints CMYK+W.

One of the key emerging markets for benchtop-size digital devices is full-color VIP and industrial labeling, and several suppliers were demonstrating systems.

**AstroNova** showed its compact T2-C high-capacity tabletop label press, while

Oki demonstrated its Pro Label series printers and Pro9000 series graphic arts printers, covering the full range of on-demand label printing applications.

**KPowerScience** launched its Winjet PE4600 Series of pigment-based aqueous inkjet printers. The PE4600 prints at 1600 dpi resolution on a 324 mm print width.

#### Converting equipment

The increasing demand for high-quality packaging noted earlier was fully reflected in the range of advanced finishing and converting equipment at the show.

**Grafotronic**, for example, used the show to support a strong move into the ASEAN region. The company now has an office in Thailand for parts and service and distributors in Vietnam and Malaysia with

The Philippines to follow.

Grafotronic Thailand forms part of a new global servicing and troubleshooting network, along with centers in Europe and the US, offering 24/7 online and phone support.

Mattias Malmqvist, VP of sales and marketing at Grafotronic, says, 'Now is the right time to exhibit at Labelexpo Southeast Asia because local converters servicing major global brands are now in a position to afford top-line inspection equipment. We are also focused on making smarter machines so that anybody can use them, with all printing, knife and die setting fully automated.'

Grafotronic was demonstrating two converting systems. The Hi3 slitter/rewinder is capable of reaching 400 m/min



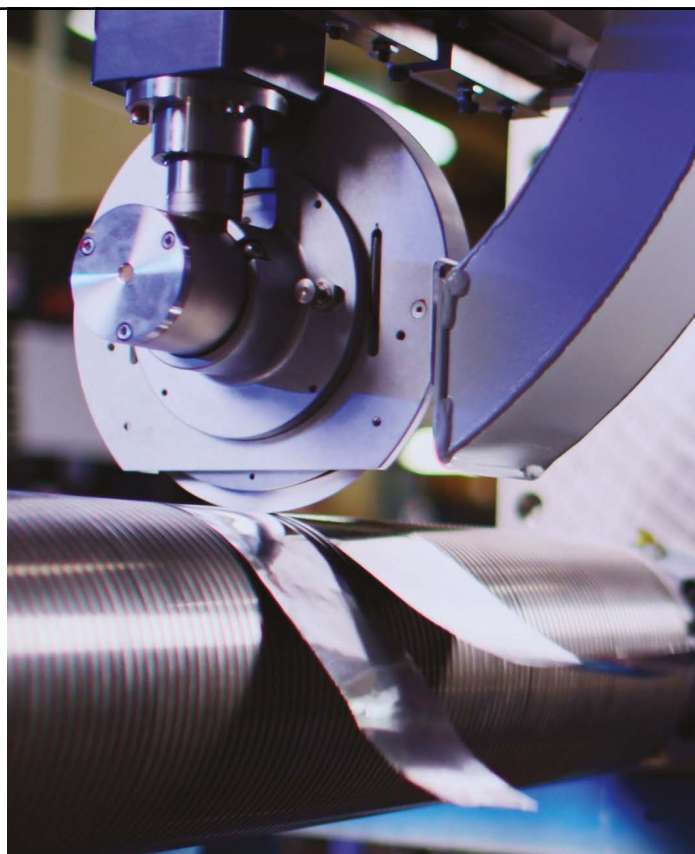
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and is the first Grafotronic machine under the company's new Choose Green program. With a new regenerating brake system, the Hi3 captures the machine's braking energy and converts it into power, making it approximately 30 percent more energy efficient. The compact Grafotronic CF2 is a servo-driven finishing unit for digitally printed labels.

**Brotech** focused on shrink sleeve label production, looking to provide an entry-level system for converters moving into this fast-growing sector. The SMS500 shrink sleeve label seaming system is 520mm-wide and operates at speeds up to 400m/min. The machine incorporates a closed loop width sensing system, allowing the seaming width to remain unchanged at any speed. The SMC330 completes the system with a sheeter unit incorporating cross and machine direction perforation. Also on the stand was a CDF330 multi-functional digital label finishing unit.

**Press Systems Group**, a leading Southeast Asia distributor of printing products covering the flexo, offset and gravure markets, demonstrated the curing performance of **Zeller+Gmelin** LED-UV inks on a **Rhyguan** converting machine. The demonstrations also showcased GEW's latest air-cooled Aeroled LED-UV curing system in combination with UV and LED-UV inks from Zeller & Gmelin.

**Yicheen** showcased its RDM series of multi-function, modular label finishing systems including both full rotary and semi-rotary die-cutting modules. The RDM series can be customized for functions including slitting, varnishing, laminating, stamping and sheeting.

**Vinsak** launched its USAR 430 modular finishing machine in combination with Tecnocut's E-Diffsystem.

Inspection systems, both for on-press and on slitter-rewinders also took a prominent place at the show.

**BST** demonstrated its entry-level TubeScan 100 percent inspection system. TubeScan can be configured with the QLink workflow to remove defective labels at the rewinder. Also demonstrated was a PowerScope 5000 digital monitoring system and a compact web guide.

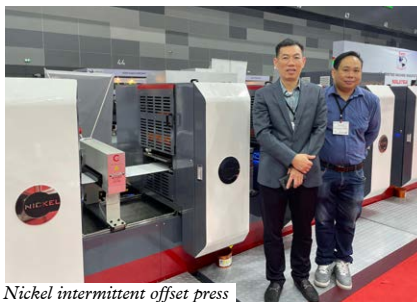
**Erhardt+Leimer** demonstrated its second-generation Smartscan inspection system, which no longer requires an external control cabinet.

China's **Luster LighTech International** displayed intelligent vision equipment including the LabelHero Series 100 percent label quality inspection system. Carrie Duan, Luster LighTech international sales manager, says Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam are successful and growing markets for the company. 'The quality requirements of local brands are now at the

### Digital embellishment trail

Digital embellishment means the replacement of analog tooling and plates with any combination of inkjet varnishing, digitally applied tactile effects, digital foiling and laser die cutting. Participating companies in the show's Digital Embellishment Trail included Kurz, Grafotronic, Domino and Epson, and all had samples and experts at the show to demonstrate the possibilities of variable embellishment.

## "The increasing demand for high-quality packaging noted earlier was fully reflected in the range of advanced finishing and converting equipment at the show"



Nickel intermittent offset press



Zonten intermittent offset press

point where the better Chinese machines can be sold at a cost that meets the value point of local converters,' Duan tells L&L.

### Materials

Given the importance of VIP and industrial labeling through ASEAN for end-use applications including food labels, receipts, bank statements, utility bills and transportation tickets, it was not surprising to see a lot of both global and Chinese suppliers of thermal and direct transfer materials.

**Armor-limak** showcased its inkanto thermal transfer ribbons, which work with the full range of uncoated and coated paper, synthetic, textile and flexible packaging. **Ricoh** showcased a variety of direct thermal papers and thermal transfer ribbons suitable for printing on papers, films or textiles, **Zhejiang King Label** showed its thermal transfer ribbons and **Schenzen SY Label** its direct thermal products.

**Zhuoli Imaging Technology** showed its PET thermal transfer ribbons, including wax, wax/resin, resin, near-edge ribbon and color ribbons. These products are manufactured in compliance with RoHS and REACH regulations and have ISEGA and UL certifications.

Label materials suppliers from across the globe were well represented including important local player **Thai KK**, which put a heavy emphasis on sustainability at its booth. The company highlighted its biodegradable laminated paper material which successfully underwent testing in

a nearby university laboratory. Thailand's warm, humid temperatures make it ideal for this application.

**Lintec Corporation** demonstrated a wide range of PS labelstocks for end-use applications ranging from industrial and freezer grades to glass and plastic beverage containers.

India's **Cosmo Films** showcased a wide range of materials including flexible packaging, label, lamination, packaging, synthetic paper and industrial films, along with its newly launched PET-G shrink label films along with new lamination adhesives.

**Mega Source Technology** showed a coating technology for BOPP, PP and PET films. The company also showed a range of synthetic papers.

**Jinya** showed a range of self-adhesive papers and films, including materials optimized for inkjet VIP applications along with permanent, removable, frozen-grade and tire adhesives.

**Seal King** showed a range of premium security labels and tamper-evident tapes, which can be applied to nearly all surfaces including metal, plastic, paper, carton and glass.

**Yupo** offered its range of synthetic in-mold label materials. Yupo's synthetic paper is recyclable and both oil and chemical resistant.



The next Labelexpo show is Labelexpo Europe 2023 which takes place in Brussels in September. For more information, visit [www.labelexpo-europe.com](http://www.labelexpo-europe.com)

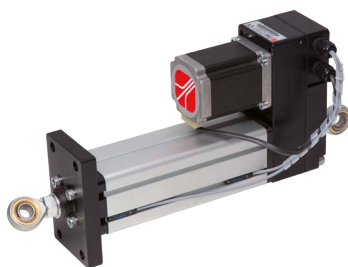


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- Cold Foil



# Upgrading the barcode to the web: GS1 Digital Link turns five

*Major brands are realizing the enormous business value of product digitization with GS1 Digital Link, writes Dominique Guinard, VP, Cloud and IoT, at Digimarc*

**F**ive years ago, the GS1 Digital Link standard was announced, promising to disrupt the consumer goods industry for the better by allowing products to be digitized at scale, and transforming how brands and consumers interact.

The standard upgraded the ubiquitous barcode used by over two million manufacturers so that every product can connect to the web, be smartphone interactive, and transact with point-of-sale systems – all with one code or tag on the product (QR code, NFC tag, digital watermark, etc.).

In short, GS1 is the global standards organization responsible for the barcodes seen on the products we use every day. GS1 barcodes are scanned about 5 billion times a day.

While the barcode – also referred to as a UPC or EAN – has provided excellent service to supply chains across industries for 50 years, the barcode has two major shortcomings. Unlike QR codes or NFC tags, barcodes are not scannable nor readable by consumers via a smartphone without the use of a special app. Before the GS1 Digital Link standard, a consumer's mobile device would have no idea what to do with the series of numbers contained in a barcode (known as a GTIN).

The GS1 Digital Link standard resolved this issue by turning all the information contained in the 1D barcode (and more) into a web address (a URL or Web URI). With GS1 Digital Link, this information is natively encoded in a 2D code like a QR code or an NFC tag. This is game-changing because mobile phones, and literally every software client in the world, support URLs and know how to read them to access the content.

With GS1 Digital Link, all this information can be encoded in an on-pack QR code. Once scanned by the phone camera, the code redirects to a web experience chosen by the brand. Consumer goods brands are using the standard, combined with digital twins and the product cloud, to deliver personalized, dynamic experiences to consumers. Brands can choose to create static redirections, or they can make them fully dynamic and linked to the context using platforms like Digimarc's patented technology. This allows brands to deliver relevant content directly to consumers via



GS1 Digital Link turns five



A package of MOWI salmon with a GS1 Digital Link

**“This is game-changing because mobile phones, and literally every software client in the world, support URLs and know how to read them to access content”**

a single standards-based code that serves multiple applications rather than individual proprietary codes for each application.

## An evolving standard

Several enhancements have been added to the standard since its initial release in 2018. The standard can now compress data to make URLs smaller for use cases with limited space.

Why does this matter? An uncompressed GS1 Digital Link looks like this: <https://dlnkd.tn.gg/01/9780345418913>. With GS1 Digital Link compression, the link is transformed and shortened to: <https://dlnkd.tn.gg/ARHKVAdpQg>.

The difference in size is six characters, which might not sound like a lot, but it is enough to allow the compressed Digital Link carrier to be printed at significantly smaller sizes while still being decoded offline.

The power of GS1 Digital Link doesn't stop here. The standard also has the power to completely replace the 1D barcode as more POS system manufacturers and supply chain partners begin to support the standard.

Regulatory initiatives like the EU Digital Product Passport are accelerating the adoption of the standard. The EU digital passport requires many consumer products to feature a unique and accessible digital

identity to help consumers make greener choices. The standard uniquely meets most of the early criteria mandated by the EU.

Pilot projects and full-scale rollouts have also been initiated. Digimarc has partnered with MOWI, the world's largest provider of Atlantic salmon, on the first mass-scale rollout of GS1 Digital Link on products. Digimarc technology combined with GS1 Digital Link provides MOWI's customers with unprecedented transparency and product traceability. A package of MOWI salmon with a GS1 Digital Link allows consumers to scan the product in-store to learn information including, where the fish was farmed, when it was harvested, and its journey to the grocery store.

Combining simplicity with direct actionability and consumer reach, we believe that the GS1 Digital Link is a game-changing standard. And we are at an exciting inflection point in the industry. As we celebrate the fifth anniversary of GS1 Digital Link, major brands are realizing the enormous business value of product digitization with GS1 Digital Link facilitating the digitization of products at mass scale. Now is the time to act.

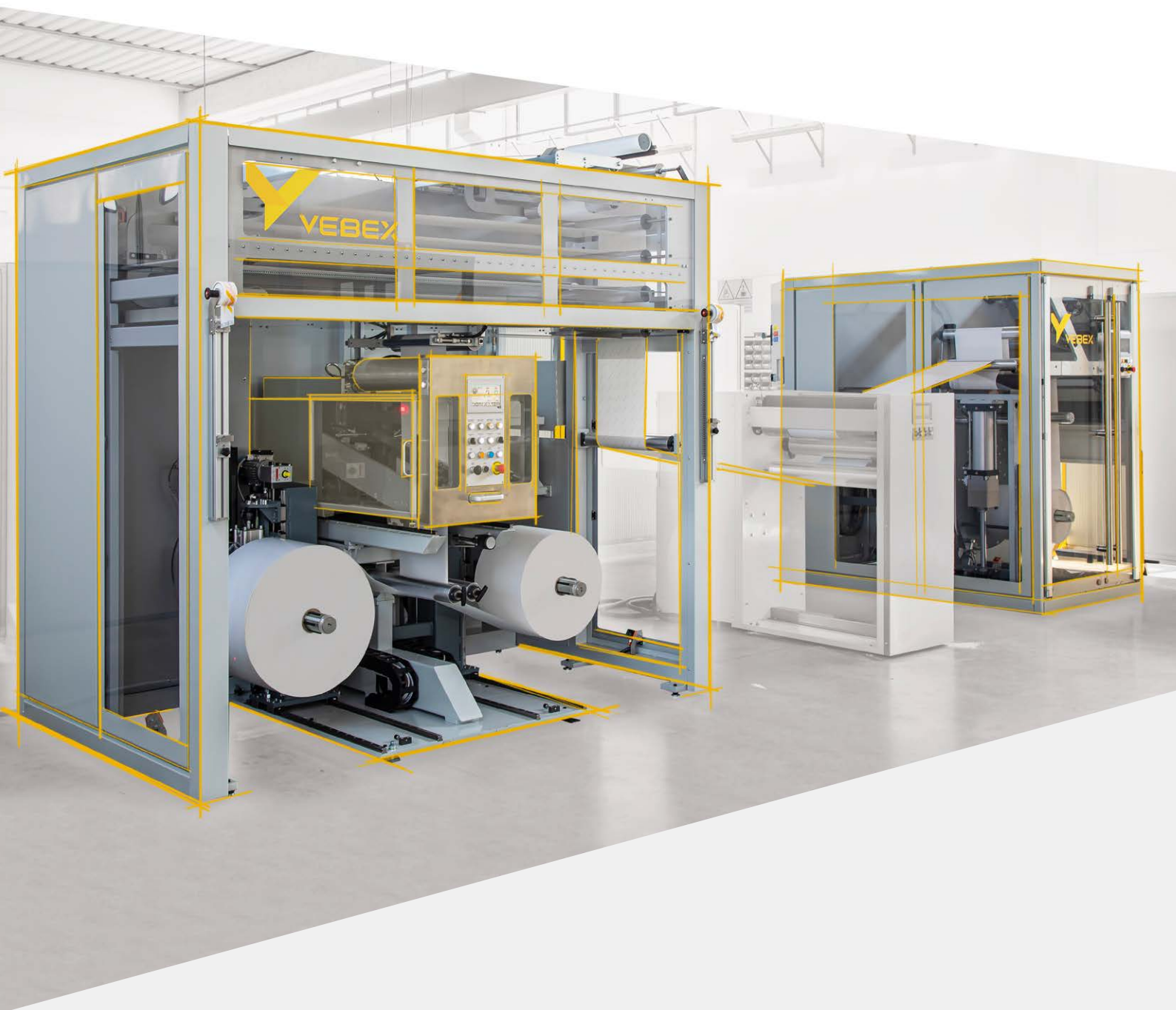


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PERFORMANCE IN EVOLUTION

# Plastic tax – be prepared for change

*Single-use plastics bans and new taxation impact around 20,000 businesses in the UK alone. Brand owners are reaching for new tools to navigate the legislation. Piotr Wnuk reports*

**B**elgian chemist Leo Baekeland pioneered the first fully synthetic plastic in 1907. He beat his Scottish rival, James Swinburne, to the patent office by one day. His invention, which he would christen Bakelite, combined two chemicals, formaldehyde and phenol, under heat and pressure.

Bakelite sparked a consumer boom in affordable yet highly desirable products. It had a dark brown, wood-like appearance but could be easily mass-produced, making it ideal for bringing new design trends such as Art Deco to the masses.

In the early decades of the 20th century, the petroleum and chemical industries began to form alliances with companies like Dow Chemicals, ExxonMobil, DuPont and BASF, which are still the primary producers of raw material resins for the plastics industry.

## Single-use plastic laws around the globe

The 'Drowning in Plastics' report released by the United Nations in 2021 estimates

**“Businesses should partner with a packaging data specialist that can consistently deliver a highly efficient and transparent service without the need to scale up to meet the requirements”**

that 9.2 billion tons of plastic have been made between 1950 and 2017, with more than half of them produced since 2004. If these trends continue, by 2050, annual global plastic production might reach over 1,100 million tons.

Globally, packaging is the largest source of plastic waste – and by some margin. In 2015, 141 million tons of plastic packaging waste was generated, compared to 42 million tons of plastic textile waste – the next largest sector.

Governments around the globe have been implementing long lists of legislation to slow the demand and lower single-use plastic production and consumption.

Throughout the EU, the big themes

surrounding much of the packaging legislation, include eco-modulation, heavy regulations on single-use plastics, requirements of post-consumer recycled content (PCR), labeling, recyclability package design and plastic taxes.

Some countries can recycle most of their plastic waste. Up to 56 percent is recycled in Germany, closely followed by Austria, South Korea and Wales. But the global picture is quite different – 15 percent of plastics go to recycling, but 40 percent of this waste is rejected for contamination or other issues, meaning only 9 percent of plastic waste is recycled. By contrast, metals can have an up to 100 percent recycling rate.

Australia is phasing out single-use plastic in different states and territories over the coming years. In November 2022, its most populous state, New South Wales, banned a range of single-use plastic, including straws, cutlery and bowls. Polystyrene foam food containers are also banned under the new rules, along with some face, body and hair products that contain plastic microbeads. Businesses that breach the regulations could face fines of tens of thousands of dollars.

The United States still lacks country-wide bans or taxes on plastic bags, although some states have implemented such laws. California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Vermont and Washington have imposed bans on disposable plastic bags.

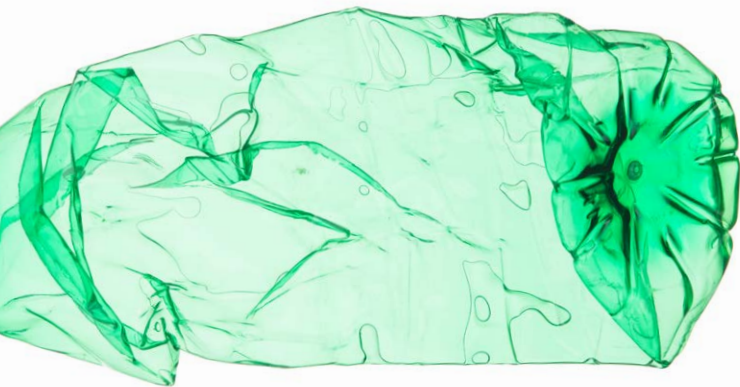
China is another developing country that has outlawed certain types of plastic packaging. India has also passed new tax laws facilitating a plastic ban, but its implementation was paused due to the pandemic.

## Plastic Packaging Tax in the UK

The UK introduced Plastic Packaging Tax (PPT) in April 2022. Businesses manufacturing or importing 10 tons or







**“There is a wealth of help out there for companies that wish to understand what PPT is, whom it applies to, and so on. However, very little is out there to help capture the required data”**

more a year of plastic packaging that contains less than 30 percent recycled plastic will be taxed at 200 GBP a ton. Plastic packaging containing at least 30 percent recycled material is exempt from the tax.

An estimated 20,000 businesses in the UK are affected across a broad range of sectors. Companies that fall within the regime must submit quarterly returns to HMRC detailing the weight of plastic packaging components imported or manufactured in the country.

One of the leading packaging data services providers, Ecoveritas, has noted the increase in registrations for the Treasury's flagship Plastic Packaging Tax (PPT). As of September 26, over 2,600 businesses across the UK successfully submitted their Q1 returns on time. The first quarter of the tax raised around 58 million GBP and went some way towards alleviating fears that PPT might not raise the 235 million GBP projected for year one.

'It's pleasing to see the number of registrations jump, but for a measure that would supposedly affect up to 20,000 businesses, there is still work to be done,' says Kathy Illingworth, head of sustainability consulting at Ecoveritas. 'HMRC will surely be keen to ratchet up the pressure after some of the abysmal headlines and come down hard with penalties for late or non-filed returns. Businesses should partner with a packaging data specialist that can consistently deliver a highly efficient and transparent service without the need to scale up to meet the requirements.'

According to Illingworth, there are specific steps that businesses need to take to prepare for the tax, such as checking existing records, ensuring they can accurately verify the source and composting of the plastic packaging, removing unnecessary packaging and increasing recycled content.

'You may be charged significant penalties if you do not submit your return or pay the tax in time, and you'll also be charged interest on late payments. Late payment interest is applied from the date the tax was due until it's paid,' adds Illingworth.

Ecoveritas recently launched a data collection vehicle (DCV) to support UK businesses through the first reporting year. The tool captures data and enables manufacturers, retailers, and brands to collate it efficiently to calculate tax liability accurately.

'Our DCV is free to use and enables companies to map the data they currently have onto the tool,' notes Illingworth. 'It provides a great framework for collating the data metrics required while highlighting missing data, allowing businesses to adjust their data ahead of submission.'

Sandy Dhesi, commercial manager at Ecoveritas, adds: 'There is a wealth of help out there for companies which wish to understand what PPT is, whom it applies to, and so on. However, very little is out there to help capture the required data. We understand that quality granular data is going to prove pivotal under the new legislation, but as many companies are already feeling the pressure of PPT liability, we wanted to make robust data capture as accessible as possible. This is why our DCV tool is completely free.'

The data collection vehicle allows manufacturers, retailers and brands to collate this data efficiently to calculate their tax liability accurately. It is the latest in a suite of tools from Ecoveritas designed to help businesses manage the introduction of PPT and

broader Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) laws, alongside their PPT calculator and their global EPR matrix.

'The new legislation is already bringing significant cost impacts, so it is paramount that businesses avoid incurring unnecessary additional costs due to non-existent or insufficient data. As a packaging data specialist who supports businesses in packaging data collection, analysis, and calculation for extended producer responsibility regulations, we understand that data quality will prove pivotal for manufacturers and importers,' says Dhesi. 'That's why, as a next step forward from our plastic tax calculator, we have designed this data collection template to help businesses get started with their data collection journey.'

From data that is required from internal sources or the supply chain, the DCV tool is separated into primary, secondary, and tertiary packaging to make data collection easier.

#### **Eco view on your packaging**

Another tool available from Ecoveritas, Ecoview, is a versatile digital platform, making transparency and compliance much simpler. The system is designed to simplify technical and sustainable packaging management and more value-adding for brands, retailers and their supply chains. It brings online analysis, audit and reporting technologies together in one place – with an intuitive user dashboard that ensures every business has access to packaging data at every level, from the top line to granular.

'At any point in time, users can view a high-level snapshot of their packaging products, enabling them to interrogate their data, see gaps and opportunities for improvement in their packaging operations, and benchmark progress to meet KPIs,' says Josh Remi, commercial manager at Ecoveritas. 'Users can really drill down into everything from the packaging by polymer type, the volume of recycled content by supplier and recyclability of materials, to plastic packaging tonnage by department and information about OPR certification. It also provides information relating to branded and own-brand products.'

Moreover, users can see their projected Plastic Tax costs from April 2022 and efficiently identify, at the click of a button, where action can be taken to reduce their bill by both supplier and product.

'The platform has been developed with users front of mind,' says Remi. 'In creating it, we have really focused on making life easier for brands and retailers as they try to navigate the increasingly important area of packaging compliance.'

Collecting, collating, and submitting data to ensure your business complies with a myriad of packaging waste regulations can be a daunting and complex task. From assessing your business activities and packaging flows and identifying what packaging is obligated to collecting and sorting relevant packaging data, completing your data form, and providing a methodology statement for use at audits, the work is unrelenting.



For more guidance and information about Plastic Tax compliance, visit [ecoveritas.com](https://ecoveritas.com)



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# TLMI hosts converter meeting

*TLMI's annual converter meeting covered a range of topics and honored management excellence. Chelsea McDougall reports*

**T**LM I welcomed a record number of attendees to its annual spring converter meeting in St Petersburg, Florida in March.

There were nearly 200 members and 15 new TLMI members at the converter-only event that played host to a number of networking events and educational sessions.

Highlights of the three-day event featured speakers including economist Alan Beaulieu, Corey Reardon of market research firm AWA, branding and design expert (and L&L columnist) Vicki Strull, as well as sessions on sustainability and mergers and acquisitions.

## Time to invest

Beaulieu is a TLMI favorite, having spoken to the group of label business leaders at many TLMI events. Beaulieu predicts that an economic recession is looming, but as he has in the past, he told the business owners that it is still a good time to invest in technology – particularly any technology that eases the labor burden.

'Late 2024 is the time to get aggressive in your buying,' Beaulieu says. 'Buy new equipment, new buildings, anything to automate your processes.'

'If you want to know where you're inefficient, ask a millennial. They'll tell you where you're going wrong,' he quipped, but added, seriously, 'Motivate your teams to constantly think of ways to improve. Empower young people to find efficiencies.'

In his session on the label and packaging market, AWA's Corey Reardon noted to the audience of American, Canadian and Mexican converters that North America makes up 18 percent of global label consumption.

Of course, a recession is a cause for concern, he says, adding: 'Historically, in each major recession, labeling tracks relatively well. The label market is relatively buoyant, it's not recession-proof, but it's recession resilient.'

Packaged goods still need a label, after all.

## Converter panel

A converter panel featured a range of perspectives from different types of business, featuring Tara Halpin of Steinhauser, Charlie A MacLean of ASL PrintFX and John Wynne of Fortis Solutions Group. Each reported that their businesses achieved record years in 2022.

Halpin, who is a champion for workplace culture, credits Steinhauser's success to her team.

'Workplace culture is how your employee's hearts and stomachs feel on Sunday,' Halpin says. 'We have 47 people who I am responsible for keeping safe and secure. So to me, succession planning is very important. If anything happens to me – something



*A converter panel, from left: TLMI president Linnea Keen, John Wynne of Fortis Solutions Group, Tara Halpin of Steinhauser and Charlie A MacLean of ASL PrintFX*

## "Late 2024 is the time to get aggressive in your buying"

happened to my dad so I know, anything can happen – I want to make sure everybody knows what to do. We work on cross-training everybody so if anything comes up – illness or vacation – that the company can still function.'

An interesting question about where these three leaders are looking to invest resulted in three different responses. And yet, it was clear that converters are doubling down on automation investment and capabilities.

## Eugene Singer

TLMI's converter event also recognizes the winners of the Eugene Singer Award for Management Excellence.

To be considered for a Eugene Singer Award, TLMI converter members submit a series of growth and business efficiency metrics to TLMI's partner firm, Industry Insights.

This year, Eugene Singer awards were given to the following companies: Ridgefield, New Jersey-based Trend Printing won in the small company category for the first time; Fountain Valley, California-based Coast Label Co won the mid-range company category for the first time, and seventh time overall; Lancaster, Ohio-based Blue Label Packaging won for the second time in the medium company category; Brunswick, Ohio-based I.D. Images, LLC won for the first time in the large company category.



*TLMI's annual meeting is on October 15-17 in Colorado Springs, Colorado. For more information, visit [www.tlmi.com](http://www.tlmi.com)*

## TLMI's Bandy to joins L&L as columnist

TLMI's vice president of sustainability, Rosalyn Bandy is now an L&L columnist. Bandy is a sought-after expert in the field of sustainable labels and packaging. Within her role at TLMI, she is primarily responsible for developing and leading projects around TLMI's strategic plan for sustainability. A key component of Roz's role is also educating members on ways they can reduce environmental impacts.

'We're honored to carry Roz's byline in Labels & Labeling,' group managing editor Chelsea McDougall says. 'Roz is a well-respected expert in her field, and her work is even more important as conversations around sustainability are heating

up. As label converters and brand owners stare down their own environmental goals, Roz's unique perspective will help raise awareness, inspire action and encourage the industry to move the needle on sustainability.'

Before joining TLMI in August 2017, Bandy worked at Cornell University as the energy smart community liaison and before that was senior sustainability manager at Avery Dennison. She holds dual Master's degrees in environmental science and public administration.

Her first column appears in this issue. To read more, turn to page 31.



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# Mexican market in focus

*A pre-Labelexpo Mexico webinar hosted a panel featuring Sandy Almirall, president of the North America region at converting group All4Labels; Carlos Uribe, general director of material supplier Arclad Mexico; and Ari Vonderwalde, CO/CEO of Mexican converter Etiflex. James Quirk, the webinar's moderator, provides highlights from the discussion*



Sandy Almirall, president of the North America region at converting group All4Labels



Carlos Uribe, general director of material supplier Arclad Mexico



Ari Vonderwalde, CO/CEO of Mexican converter Etiflex

**L&L:** Are you excited about attending the first-ever Labelexpo in Mexico, and why do you think the country is a suitable venue for the event?

**Carlos Uribe:** We're delighted that Mexico has been chosen as the location for this event. The country is a reference point for the wider region in terms of having an impressive number of label converters with very good technology.

**Sandy Almirall:** We're very happy about the event being here. Mexico has great opportunities. The label industry is very strong. It will be great to see people and new technologies and to see what is happening and where the industry is going. We're really excited about it.

**Ari Vonderwalde:** I'm very excited, after so many years of craziness, that we can be back at one of these events in our country. The label industry here has been growing strongly and has professionalized a great deal. It can compete at a world-class level. As a 100 percent Mexican company, it is a pleasure and an honor for us that Mexico is the host of the event.

**L&L:** What are you looking forward to seeing at Labelexpo Mexico 2023 in terms of technology?

**Uribe:** We have a stand at the show and are launching some new materials that adhere to industry trends such as environmental sustainability. During these exhibitions, we also like to see what new machinery is being shown and what is coming, because we need to continue to adapt our materials and our service to what the converters need.

**Vonderwalde:** We see an evolution and a revolution happening in our industry with

**"The label industry in Mexico has been growing strongly and has professionalized a great deal. It can compete at a world-class level"**

regard to automation, so I am particularly interested in seeing the advances in the automation of processes.

We are also interested in seeing digital technology and how it continues to evolve. Also, digital embellishment, which is fashionable at the moment and which can replace some complex and expensive processes. And software and artificial intelligence, RFID, this sort of thing. And of course, environmentally sustainable products.

**Almirall:** We are also very focused on digital, so are interested in seeing what will be shown in this area. We are also working with hybrid technology and are introducing digital into some of our flexo and offset processes.

I am also interested in seeing any rotogravure technology and materials for shrink sleeves, anything which can help make us more efficient, sustainable and automated in rotogravure printing.

**L&L:** According to Mordor Intelligence, the Mexican label market is expected to register a CAGR of 5.5 percent from 2021 to 2026. Does this match your experience over recent years, and do you expect the growth to continue? Where do you see opportunity in the market?

**Vonderwalde:** Yes, we are experiencing good growth. It is due to various factors and depends on the market verticals in which we are operating.

Nearshoring and the geopolitical situation of the country are generating growth and I think this will continue. And, above all, it's a result of the professionalization and the technological development of the market. As Abraham Lincoln said: 'The best way to predict the future is to create it.' And this is what we are doing, creating it.

**Almirall:** At All4Labels we have great confidence in the Mexican market. Our predictions are for optimism and growth. Nearshoring is creating a huge opportunity and a boom in manufacturing. We have to be agile to make the most of it. A window of opportunity has opened and those who thrive will be those who are quickest, most flexible, most productive, and most organized. We see Mexico as a platform to serve the United States and Canada, and a platform to produce world-class work. It has the talent; it has the technology. One market, in particular, I want to mention is wine and spirits, which is exploding. Mexico is a big producer of tequila and the wine sector is growing, and these require high-value labels.

**Uribe:** I agree with Ari and Sandy that nearshoring and the arrival of foreign companies are creating a good moment for Mexico. In terms of specific markets, I would mention the automotive and food and beverage sectors in particular, and retail and eCommerce too. Mexico is one of the fastest-growing markets for Arclad and we



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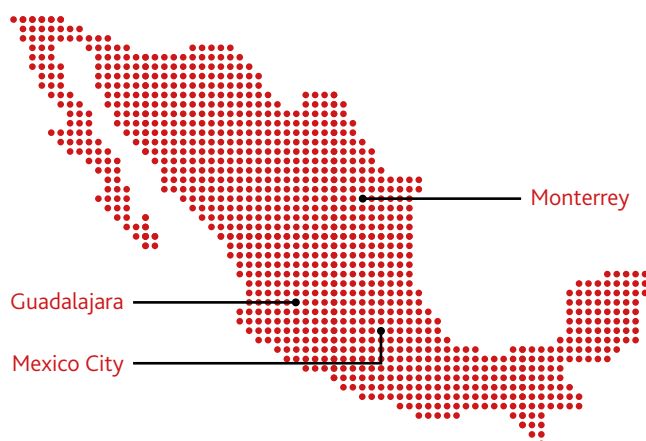
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**“It has been a good period in the Mexican market and we see our clients investing in new equipment, particularly in digital and hybrid technology. They have added capacity and are printing at wider web widths”**

### *Labelexpo Mexico 2023*

The inaugural Labelexpo Mexico took place on April 26-28, just before this edition of the magazine went to press. You can read a full review of the event in the next issue of Labels & Labeling. Visit [labelexpo-mexico.com](http://labelexpo-mexico.com) for more information about the show.



*Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey are the epicenters of the Mexican label industry*

continue to invest in the country.

### **L&L: What are the challenges of doing business in the local market?**

**Uribe:** For material suppliers, Mexico is a very competitive market. Consistency of service and product quality is key. We always have to keep innovating in order to stay competitive.

**Vonderwalde:** From a macro point of view, inflation and high-interest rates are challenges for converters. At a more local level, governmental bureaucracy can be quite heavy and can be a challenge which makes our work more complicated. And within companies, it is a challenge to work more efficiently and train our workforce to overcome these barriers.

**Almirall:** Inflation is a macroeconomic pressure that affects us all and requires us to be very productive and creative to maintain growth. You can't simply pass on the higher costs to your customers. We are in a highly fragmented industry; there is a great deal of competition. Finding talent is another challenge. A company is made by people. The extent to which we have the right personnel – motivated, aligned, with a good understanding of where we are heading – affects how we can achieve our objectives.

### **L&L: To what extent are the supply chain issues caused by the pandemic now resolved? Are there still knock-on effects? Is there a long-term legacy?**

**Vonderwalde:** The biggest impact that can still be seen is in time-to-market, both from our suppliers to us, and from us to our customers. During the pandemic, and for around a year afterward, the supply chains were broken. This created huge delays in deliveries in general. The concept of time-to-market has been lost a little. This is a negative legacy, which is evolving and slowly returning to what it was before. The shortage of materials is no longer a problem.

The industry is very dynamic at the moment and even just three months ago we might be saying different things.

**Almirall:** We have emerged from a critical phase when it was a huge challenge to keep factories open. It is a different time now, but inflation and rising costs are among the knock-on effects and the industry has to work together to try to bring things back to where they were before. During the pandemic, we were faced with challenges that were very difficult to overcome. We had to be very flexible and creative. There is a positive effect from this – today, when faced with a challenge, we know what we are capable of and we have incorporated those lessons into our operations.

**Uribe:** The supply chain problems are largely resolved but inflation and high costs are definitely a result of the pandemic. But things have been getting better and we hope that this year and next year will be more normal as investment returns and initiatives such as nearshoring have an impact.

### **L&L: How has the local market evolved in recent years in terms of the technology being installed by Arclad's customers, and the materials they are buying from you?**

**Uribe:** It has been a good period in the Mexican market and we see our clients investing in new equipment, particularly in digital and hybrid technology. They have added capacity and are printing at wider web widths. In terms of what we sell, the biggest growth has been in materials for applications with variable information. We estimate that around 45 percent of the materials sold into the Mexican market are for these applications. This is because of retail, e-commerce and logistics. And for environmental reasons, there is increasing interest in materials with reduced weight.

### **L&L: Sandy and Ari, what technology have you been installing at your plants in recent years?**

**Almirall:** For us, digital has been the main focus. It has allowed us to be faster, and to handle short runs more quickly. Our clients want personalization and this creates shorter runs with more versions. We see digital in two ways: traditional digital printing, and hybrid, where we can incorporate digital in-line with our flexo and offset systems. This allows us to add certain types of finishing to our products in a fast and efficient manner. We've also been looking at rotogravure technology with wide web widths and high speeds for shrink sleeve production.

**Vonderwalde:** We have invested in digital printing and digital finishing, which allow us to fulfill various needs in the market. We have also invested in the production of RFID and intelligent labels, as well as in software that automates processes in order to increase operational efficiency.

### **L&L: Do you also serve the Central American market from Mexico, and where do you see opportunities there?**

**Uribe:** We have offices in Central America, which have also been experiencing good growth. The textile sector is strong there, as is the agro-industrial market. The region produces a lot of fruit so that is another big market.

**Almirall:** We do serve the Central American market, both from Mexico and also our operation in Brazil. Usually, our customers are converters who also have a presence in Mexico or in South America in addition to Central America.

**Vonderwalde:** We sell to certain segments in Central America. It is a smaller market, of course, than North America, and there can be logistical challenges in terms of delivering labels.

## “Nearshoring is creating a huge opportunity and a boom in manufacturing. We have to be agile to make the most of it”

### L&L: What trends do you see in the Mexican flexible packaging market?

**Uribe:** There needs to be an evolution towards the ecological, towards lighter-weight materials that do not compromise on performance and that is more easily recyclable. This is how flexible packaging needs to evolve and we can see that many companies in the sector are focused on these areas. Consumers want environmentally sustainable packaging, whether that be flexible packaging or labels.

**Vonderwalde:** Without being very much involved in this market, but knowing it pretty well, we can see that it is growing and will continue to grow because of the qualities it can bring.

Here we can get into the debate about whether plastic is the devil – which it isn't. But when you begin to dig a little deeper, you can understand the circular economy and what is recyclable and compostable and you can see that it can fit within a sustainable society. So I see it continuing to grow. It allows you to have a 360-degree graphic around the product which helps it stand out on the shelves in a very competitive market.

**Almirall:** Flexible packaging is something that really draws my attention. I spent many years working in the rigid packaging sector,

### What is nearshoring?

Nearshoring is the practice of partnering with suppliers, manufacturers and other necessary entities within a supply chain that is located in countries near the company in question. For instance, a US company might practice nearshoring by working with a supplier in Mexico instead of one in China.

and there is great rivalry between the different formats. Depending on the needs of the consumer, there are flexible packaging solutions that are very innovative, such as refillable and resealable packaging which can be more sustainable than rigid packaging. So there is a lot of competition between flexible plastic packaging and rigid plastic packaging. It depends on the needs of the consumer and the market.

### L&L: Is the Mexican market ready for RFID or does the technology still need to be fine-tuned?

**Vonderwalde:** There is no question that if you are prepared, there are hugely diverse and unimaginable applications for RFID. It helps bring products closer to the consumer, and it can bring huge efficiencies. There has always been the question of its cost: an RFID label is much more expensive. But the market is more than prepared for it – it is the present, rather than the future – although of course, it will continue to evolve.

**Almirall:** We see RFID as an important trend and are looking at how it can be incorporated in an accessible and efficient way. We believe in it. I think there will continue to be an evolution in the technology and how it is produced. It has been a great success in



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## “The country is a reference point for the wider region in terms of having an impressive number of label converters with very good technology”

Europe in terms of its functionality but also in terms of cost and the benefits it brings to clients.

**L&L:** Mexican association Canagraf estimates that there are 450-550 label converters in the country, up from 300 a decade ago. Have you seen a lot of new companies become customers in recent years?

**Uribe:** I don't know the exact numbers, but we've been operating in Mexico for around 12 or 13 years and we have seen the number of companies rising. Mexico City, Guadalajara and Monterrey continue to be the main centers of the industry, but you can find converters all around the country. There is a great variety in size, from big companies to smaller ones with just one or two machines. I think there has been a particular rise in Monterrey and the north of the country in terms of converter numbers and converter growth.



To watch the full webinar recording (in Spanish), visit [www.labelsandlabeling.com](http://www.labelsandlabeling.com)

### About the panelists

**Sandy Almirall** joined international converting group All4Labels in 2023 as president for the North America region and managing director of All4Labels Mexico. He brings more than 20 years of leadership experience, having run various companies both in the United States and Mexico. He is based in Mexico City.

**Ari Vonderwalde** is CO/CEO of Etiflex, a label converter with multiple locations throughout Mexico, where he has been working for three decades. A chemical engineer, he has helped Etiflex improve, evolve and become a reference in the industry. During his time with Etiflex, he has worked in all business sectors across multiple functions, providing strategic direction to help achieve the growth and success of the company.

**Carlos Uribe** is general director of Arclad Mexico. He has more than 25 years of experience in the graphics industry in Colombia and Mexico, holding roles in logistics and management for printing companies in offset, flexo, silk screen and digital. He has been working in the self-adhesive industry for the past eight years. He is a graduate of EAFIT University in Medellín and holds an MBA from Southern New Hampshire University in the United States.

**James Quirk**, the webinar moderator, is a freelance writer and consultant and former Labels & Labeling editor who covers the Latin American market for the magazine.





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# Dishoom: A journey

*Popular restaurant brand Dishoom pays homage to the old Irani cafes of Bombay, and brings the charm and nostalgia associated with them to the heart of the UK, Akanksha Meena reports*

Founded in 2010 by cousins Shamil Thakrar and Kavi Thakrar, Dishoom is today a popular restaurant group in the UK with nine restaurants and 1,700 employees.

During the pandemic, Dishoom started offering at-home meal kits as a part of its delivery service. The meal kits have become so popular that the brand launched a range of products for customers to purchase through its restaurants and eCommerce platform. Its product range includes chutneys, spreads, cocktails, spice kits and chai curated by Dishoom chefs and its bar team. Now Dishoom customers and fans have a way to take some of the brand's romance home.

Authenticity is important to the cousins and is reflected in its packaging and label designs.

The Dishoom design team takes great care in researching everything from fonts to colors and imagery to accurately represent Indian culture. History is also a big part of what the design team does, and their love of historical places across Bombay has influenced their label designs. The Art Deco heritage in Mumbai has a unique influence on the label and packaging design and the design team takes patterns and influences from it to tell stories authentically.

Dishoom's internal design team of five – headed by Samuel Sutton, senior graphic designer – designs all the brand's labels, packaging and collateral.

'We realized the value of having an in-house team,' Sutton explains. 'I could go and speak to our founders. I could just walk in and show them concepts. There's flexibility in being able to do that and collaborating. Being able to go and speak to the chefs who've developed the recipes and taste them enabled us to bring a bit of extra depth to our designs and also work a bit faster.'

Dishoom's founders were brought up in Britain but visited their grandparents in Bombay regularly. The brand is a love letter to the city. Dishoom's tagline – from Bombay with love – is a thread that runs through everything that Dishoom does.

## COCKTAILS

The Premier Padmini Negroni cocktail is a blend of Indian cocoa and sweet pears mixed in with the traditional Italian cocktail. The cocktail label is a riff on the black and yellow Premier Padmini taxi cabs that were seen in Bombay in the 1970s and 80s. The typography on the label is inspired by the original logo on the Premier Padmini with some foiling. The chrome band around the side of the taxi is replicated on the label.

Sutton explains: 'Taxis in Bombay are just Premier Padmini, which is a Fiat car. So, there are these Italian cars driving all around Bombay and they're super iconic. These taxis are black and yellow with loud roofs covered in mad wallpaper. And so, it's a bit of a homage to that. Negroni is a

classic Italian cocktail. And the twist is that it's Italy in Bombay.'

The Permit Room Old Fashioned is an old-fashioned classic whiskey drink. The label is inspired by the permit rooms in Bombay where guests are required a license to drink liquor.

The label takes references from 'old-fashioned' Bollywood magazines featuring grainy images of celebrities at bars with drinks in their hands to bring out nostalgia and glamor associated with the time and drink. The thin gold strip across the label contrasts with the texture of the label material. The vintage typography ties the complete look together.

Sutton points out that the team originally designed cocktails labels that looked quite similar to each other in an Art Deco style, but later the design team opted for more variety with its cocktail label designs.

'The similar label design for the cocktails didn't bring enough personality to each of them, and so there wasn't as much excitement around the cocktails when the labels were all so similar,' Sutton says. 'So that's why we sort of went heavy with the storytelling on those. We did a refresh and I think since then there's been a much better response. And they sort of stand-alone as drinks.'

The brand will be expanding its cocktail range in the future.



*The Premier Padmini Negroni cocktail label is inspired by black and yellow Premier Padmini taxi cabs*

# back to Old Bombay

“Being able to go and speak to the chefs who’ve developed the recipes and taste them enabled us to bring a bit of extra depth to our designs and also work a bit faster”

## CHUTNEYS AND SPREADS

Dishoom chutneys and spreads are a range of recipes developed by the brand's in-house chef. The products feature matching labels in different colors in minimalist vintage design – staying true to the brand's design philosophy.

‘We like to imagine odd little stories (to design labels),’ Sutton says. ‘For this, we imagined a charming little produce shop somewhere on the corner of Bombay. So if you’ve seen the movie *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, there’s the cake shop Mendels. In the movie, Mendels has these beautiful cake boxes, and it conjures a sense of this romantic store. This is our version of that to take you to that romantic place.’

Just like the cocktails, the labels carry a hint of gold through foiling on the Dishoom logo and outline around the imagery.

## DISHOOM ‘MASALA DABBA’

The Dishoom spice tin contains specialist blends from their chefs, such as kebab masala, and hard-to-find spices. The spice tin is designed to be a keepsake, and customers can order refills from



*Dishoom range of chutneys feature monochrome labels with foiling*

their store. The design of the spice tin riffs off old Indian tea tins, which adds to the nostalgia factor. The ‘masala dabba’ features smaller tin boxes inside printed on top and the side in a minimalist design accompanied by a cookbook.

‘You put your old buttons in the box or you put your sewing kit after you are done using it. The idea of designing something to not just house the product but to carry on for people to reuse and to stay in their homes and that way you sort of become a part of somebody’s

home. And it’s lovely if your logo is around somebody’s home for the next 10 years, of course!’ Sutton says.

The brand outsources its printing services and works with large suppliers in London. The choice of labelstock is carefully made to create a premium and luxurious feel.

‘The label didn’t have to have the scalloped edge like that. It could just be straight and be cheaper to make. But it adds a little touch and sort of differentiates you. And we don’t typically use gloss paper. It’s almost always uncoated. Because it’s got that nice bit of texture. And I love a bit of foiling,’ Sutton adds.

Dishoom labels are often long runs, but the brand also does short-run labels for limited edition products. The brand has an internal product development and legal team to ensure the labels and packaging are compliant with regulations and supply chain requirements before choosing materials and finishes.



*Dishoom Masala Dabba tin*



For more information on Dishoom, visit [www.dishoom.com](http://www.dishoom.com)



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# The psychology of design

*Branding specialist Fernando Arendar uses insights from neuroscience, psychology and behavioral economics to create packaging that connects with consumers. James Quirk reports*

**T**he use of neuroscience, psychology and behavioral economics by branding experts and marketers to gain insight into consumer behavior has risen steadily over the past decade or so. But Fernando Arendar, a Buenos Aires-based branding specialist focused on packaging, believes that the important lessons gained from these fields are too often ignored, mistrusted or misunderstood by brands and packaging designers.

Arendar, who has more than 18 years of experience as a brand strategist and packaging designer, has worked with global brands such as PepsiCo, AB InBev, Nestlé, Kimberly Clark, Unilever and Arcor. He founded Nitid Studio in 2021 with the idea of applying behavioral science to the branding work it performed for its clients.

As the son of a psychoanalyst and a native of Argentina – which has more psychoanalysts per capita than any other country – it was an appropriate pivot for Arendar, whose passion for packaging began in childhood. The turning point came during the pandemic when he dedicated significant time in lockdowns to analyzing why certain packaging design projects had proved successful and which did not.

'The more I investigated, the more questions arose,' he recalls. 'Why does a particular brand strategy work? What makes it work? It comes down to people and their behavior, so I began to study that. The first book that led me to delve deeply into the subject was "Decoded: The science behind why we buy" by Phil Barden. It led me to study the work of [the psychologist



*Fernando Arendar, founder of Nitid Studio, has more than 18 years of experience as a brand strategist and packaging designer*

and economist] Daniel Kahneman and [the neuroscientist] Lisa Feldman Barrett and others. I wanted to understand the brain and why we behave the way we do. It became a passion and an obsession. I read everything I could find – books, studies, research papers – on the topics of neuroscience, behavioral science, behavioral economics, social psychology and cognitive psychology.

'There is a great deal of investigation in these fields that relates to packaging and consumer behavior, but I realized that the world of scientific research and the world of branding are too disconnected. I wanted to bridge the gap between behavioral economics and psychology, and the world of packaging.'

## Simulate

Phil Barden's 'Decoded', published in 2013, showed how insights from the fields of behavioral economics and psychology

**"It became a passion and an obsession. I read everything I could find on neuroscience, behavioral science, behavioral economics, social psychology and cognitive psychology"**

– particularly Daniel Kahneman's Nobel Prize-winning work – could help to explain consumer behavior. Kahneman integrated economic science with the psychology of human behavior, judgment and decision-making. The central thesis of his book 'Thinking, fast and slow' was that the human brain works under two systems. System one, essentially 'auto-pilot', is used when we carry out activities intuitively and automatically – such as driving a car. System two is deployed when taking conscious decisions, or those that require greater reasoning. Our brain spends most of the time using system one, as it is the most effective way of optimizing the energy consumed. This includes making decisions at the time of purchase.

Work by neuroscientists, meanwhile, has shown that we experience the world through our brains. The brain is not an objective reader of events and objects – rather it interprets them and gives them



*Nitid Studio's packaging design for 1790 Coffee*

## Case study: 1790 Coffee

1790 Coffee sources specialty coffee from Mexico cultivated by indigenous communities for more than 200 years. Each variety comes from a single region and is grown on small farms with a high level of quality control. It is roasted in Washington, DC, and has notes of chocolate flavor because its plantations share the soil with cocoa plantations.

'The brand had already been launched with a design, so we had to decide which elements to keep and which to leave out,' says Arendar. 'Another challenge was to communicate that this was a quality Mexican product without falling into the typical elements of

that country. So, it was important to map the semantic network of the US consumer in terms of "Mexican-ness" and strategically select the right elements based on this.

'We defined the brand personality and aesthetics by first developing the strategy and then the packaging design and brand guidelines. We created a distinctive symbol blending the eagle and coffee that could be used throughout all the brand's communications. We incorporated Aztec elements into the design, which, along with the gold, subtly activate both the Mexican and quality concepts.'

## "In the US market, brands are very open to new ideas"

meaning. The taste perception of a product, for example, can change dramatically depending on how it is presented or what color it is. A quote by neuroscientist Lisa Feldman Barrett adorns Nitid Studio's website: 'What we see, hear, touch, taste and smell are largely simulations of the world, not reactions to it.'

'A key moment was understanding how we construct memory,' says Arendar. 'When we see something, our brain

immediately and automatically connects it with other concepts – this is known as "spreading activation". This helped me to understand which packaging designs might work or not, because of the memories or ideas they can trigger in the brain.'

### Stimulate

Some brands, says Arendar, make the mistake of believing that consumers think rationally, while some designers and marketers mistrust these theories when it comes to their application in packaging design. 'It can sometimes seem that they are threatened by the possibility that neuroscientific theories undermine the "magic" of the profession.'

Or sometimes they misunderstand them. 'One example is the idea that the brand needs to tell a story,' he says. 'Many brands end up putting too much information on the packaging. Don't tell the story by using lots of words – you have to make the brain create the story thanks to the design and what it stimulates. Rather than trying to be clever, you should try to be clear.'

'Another example is the famous five-second rule, about how long the consumer takes to choose a product. It is not really a question of time but a question of energy, because our brain is in energy-saving mode most of the day. If you watch shoppers in action, sometimes they will spend longer evaluating a product. It

### Case study: Ruani

Ruani is a healthy brownie made with nutrient-rich ingredients which seek to replace desserts rich in fats, sugars and carbohydrates. They are free from gluten, dairy, refined sugars and harmful chemicals. 'Nitid created a modern, clean, vibrant and distinctive design, showing the product in an unconventional and more dynamic way, to give more

movement to the design,' says Fernando Arendar. 'A system of icons was developed to communicate the product's benefits in a clear way, making it easier to read. Unlike the design of other healthy products, we avoided overloading the front with information, as this type of resource can cause friction and mental exhaustion in the consumer.'



Nitid Studio designed packaging for brownie brand Ruani



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*PowerUp wanted a brand redesign that avoided any resemblance to energy drinks*

### Case study: PowerUp

PowerUp, a herbal infusion beverage, approached Nitid Studio for a complete brand redesign. The challenge was to identify and capture the functional benefits that consumers seek in a healthy beverage. The brand had to be perceived as honest, healthy, light, modern and energetic while avoiding any resemblance to energy drinks.

The Nitid team successfully redesigned the PowerUp brand and created a distinct identity that meets consumers' implicit goals. 'We used a translucent label that showcased the product, triggering consumers' sensory perceptions of honesty and transparency, leading to a perception of quality and purity,' says Arendar. The

illustrations of fruits and vegetables on the label visually communicated the healthy and refreshing nature of the beverage, while the minimalist label design reflected its lightness.

'One of the most significant challenges in the redesign process was conveying the beverage's energizing nature without resembling an energy drink. We overcame this by using playful and dynamic typography, incorporating the flavor name characters, which appealed to the consumer's psychological associations of vitality, youthfulness and fun. We also used bright colors that reflected the brand's energy and helped differentiate the brand's flavors.'

depends on the product, and it depends on the profile of the consumer.'

The application of these lessons to his work had a hugely positive impact and helped Arendar to understand why previous projects were successful.

His clients, mainly consumer goods companies in the United States, have been receptive to his methods.

'In the US market, brands are very open to new ideas,' he says. 'They have more respect for our profession and our time and knowledge. They have fun with the projects.'

'It's not a silver bullet – it reduces risk more than it eliminates failure. And it depends on the context of the consumer market: you can't necessarily just replicate the same strategy in different geographic areas. But understanding how our mind works and how we make decisions can significantly reduce the chances of making mistakes, avoid losses for our clients and provide us with powerful tools to be more effective when it comes to implementing our proposals and strategies.'



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# SUSTAINABILITY TRENDS BOOST WET GLUE LABEL APPEAL

*Glue-applied labels remain the dominant form of prime product labeling, providing key volume, sustainability and print quality benefits for end users. Andy Thomas-Emans reports*

**D**espite the consistently higher growth rates of pressure-sensitive and shrink sleeve labels, glue-applied labels remain, by far, the dominant method for prime product labeling.

How do we define a glue-applied label?

Wet glue labels are printed in sheets – or on rolls that are sheeted – then cut or die punched into single labels and stacked into a magazine, which is inserted into the label applicator. Glue is then applied to the reverse side of the label, either to the whole label or to the leading and trailing edges, and the label is applied to the container.

A second type of glue-applied label is the roll-fed wraparound label. These are delivered to the label applicator on a roll, then cut on the machine into single labels and adhesive (usually hot melt) is applied to the leading and trailing edges.

According to figures compiled by the AWA consultancy, glue-applied labels account for just one-third of the 71 billion sqm of labels consumed annually, against 41 percent for pressure-sensitive labels. But when we consider only the primary (prime) label market, glue-applied represents 44 percent of total label volume compared to only 23 percent for pressure-sensitive. The remaining PS volume goes to industrial and VIP labeling.

The market share of glue-applied labels is markedly different in different regions of the globe, reflecting different levels of development. Generally, the more developed economic regions show a higher percentage of PS and shrink sleeve compared to glue-applied.

Thus, according to AWA's figures, glue-applied has the highest market share in Asia, representing 46 percent of all label consumption. In the Americas, glue-applied represents just 14 percent of the market and in Europe 20 percent. The figures for Europe hide important regional differences however: the consumption of glue-applied labels is higher in eastern and southern Europe compared to the north and west, where pressure-sensitive and shrink sleeve labels have made a bigger dent in glue-applied volumes.

The key end-use markets for glue-applied labels are in the labeling of drinks bottles and canned human and pet foods.

Of the 25 billion sqm of glue-applied labels consumed annually, 70 percent goes to the beverage market and 23 percent to the food

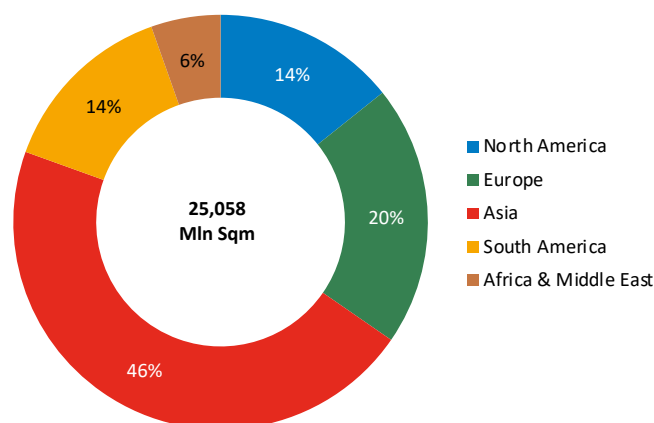
market. The remaining 7 percent is mainly used in the household chemicals and automotive segments. In Europe, beverage applications account for 84 percent of wet glue volume, with food representing 12 percent.

Glue-applied labels have applications across a wide range of container types including cans, jars, bottles, composite tubes and boxes. As well as appearing as body and neck labels, glue-applied labels are also used as top straps over the closure as a tamper-evident or security feature.

The key glue-applied end-user markets are characterized by high volume, low margin and highly industrialized production systems. Label converters in this sector are highly automated and consolidated operations compared to the self-adhesive label converting sector.

## CONVERTING PROCESS

Glue-applied labels are supplied by the converter in either traditional cut & stack wrapped bundles or on a reel. Cut & stack labels are either cut to shape or ram-punched into specific profile shapes compatible with the container profile. These are also referred to as patch labels. Cut labels are rectangular or square in shape, and this profile is suitable for 360-degree wrap-around decoration or patch labels.



*Global distribution of glue-applied labels (source: AWA)*



Glue-applied labels can also be supplied in reels for 360-degree wraparound decoration. These are not pre-cut to shape but cut singly from a reel at the point of application.

Cut & stack labels are manufactured in a multi-stage operation starting with the printing of label sheets on an offset-litho press. If subsequent processing is required – for example over-varnishing, foil blocking, embossing or bronzing – the printed sheets are moved to different workstations on the production floor.

The finished sheets of labels are then guillotined and square cut or profile punched, batched, packaged and palletized.

Manufacturing using this multi-pass process can have a production cycle of several days, or in some instances several weeks dependent on the quantities required, with perhaps 10 people involved as sheets pass through the printing, embellishing and converting processes.

High-volume wet-glue labels can also be printed on a web-fed gravure press. The printed reels are transferred onto a sheeting unit which can be an in-line or off-line for further processing.

The production of roll-fed wraparound labels is a simpler process involving high-speed printing on CI flexo, gravure, or mid-web inline presses, with or without lamination. The rolls are slit to width and delivered to the packer.

## MATERIALS

A wide range of both paper and filmic label materials are available for glue-applied label applications.

Wet glue label papers are available in a range of formats: standard, wet strength, humidity and alkali resistant, embossed, cast coated/high gloss and metalized, covering all the technical and marketing requirements of the end-user market. They are also suited to a wide variety of other applications such as box covering, lamination, food wrapping and interleaving.

Wet glue papers are available in either coated or uncoated grades. Uncoated paper has a low gloss level, greater absorbency and is less suitable for quality image reproduction. Coated papers, available in matte coat, semi-gloss, gloss and cast-coated grades, have a coated gloss/reflective surface, lower absorbency and are more suitable for quality image reproduction.

A range of specialist craft/antique papers are available specifically for wine labels and craft beverages.

When selecting papers for use in wet glue label applications, a range of performance factors must be considered: direction of the grain and the resulting effect on label curl in uncontrolled humidity; substrate moisture content during storage and transportation; humidity levels in the printing environment; and humidity levels in the filling and label application areas.

Films are available for both cut & stack and roll-fed wraparound applications. Films are usually selected for performance reasons,

## "GLUE-APPLIED LABELS HAVE APPLICATIONS ACROSS A WIDE RANGE OF CONTAINER TYPES INCLUDING CANS, JARS, BOTTLES, COMPOSITE TUBES AND BOXES"

typically for applications requiring durable moisture resistance, chemical resistance, wet strength and burst resistance on large PET bottles.

These films are available in transparent, opaque (white) and metallic grades and are supplied both for surface printing and for lamination.

To run smoothly and efficiently on the applicator line, reel-fed wraparound films need to combine controlled stiffness with anti-static properties, web flatness and strong ink and adhesive compatibility. A key trend is to downgauge the filmic material to get closer to the economics of paper labels.

Examples of the new generation of filmic wraparound labels include Innovia's RayoWrap ETF transparent label film, targeted at no-label-look monoweb applications without requiring lamination, while the company's RayoWrap LRH is a high-yield, white label film. Jindal's Label-Lyte OPP film is targeted at beverage applications using reel-fed, wraparound glue-applied labels, and is available in clear, white and metalized grades for both lamination and surface print applications.

Jindal also provides films for wet glue cut & stack magazine-fed labeling. These films are coated on both sides to provide litho printability and compatibility with a broad range of wet glue and hot melt adhesives on the reverse side.

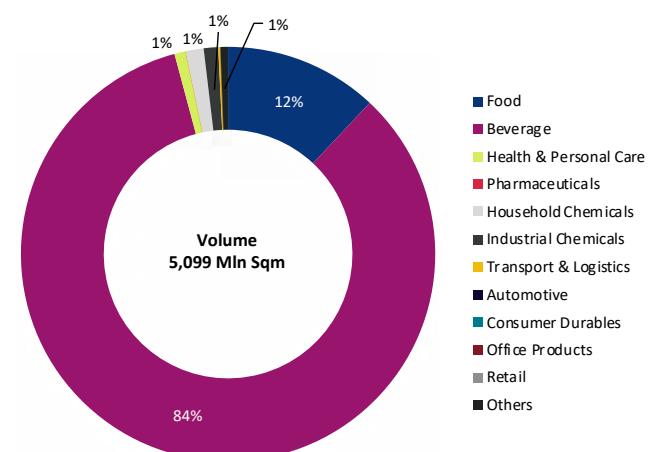
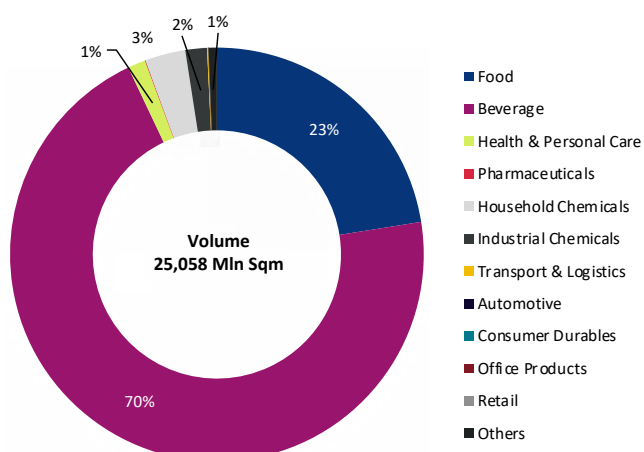
## DECORATIVE EFFECTS

Although cut & stack labels are targeted at low-cost, high-volume applications, there is a wide range of decoration options available to add value to each product category.

Gloss lacquers, for example, are used on the face of glue-applied labels both for scuff resistance and increased shelf impact. For lithographic printing, the norm is UV lacquers, while photogravure printed labels use a range of solvent and water-based lacquers.

Embossing is used where a specific part of the design needs to be raised to enhance the label's appearance. With gravure printing, in-line all-over or partial embossing is possible, producing a tactile feel to the label – particularly effective when used on metalized paper labels.

For metallic effects, foil-blocking is available as a separate





## "EXTENSIVE TECHNICAL INNOVATIONS ARE KEY TO PRODUCING THE KIND OF WET-STRENGTH, WET-GLUE LABEL PAPER USED IN THE BEVERAGE INDUSTRY"

process step on wet glue labels in a wide range of colors. Foil laminate and metalized papers are also available, offering a reflective metallic finish that can be over-printed. The superior transparency of offset inks allows high brilliance levels to be achieved in these applications. Holographic effect wet-glue label papers are also available.

Wet glue labels can be die punched in complex shapes, which, combined with embossing or other textural elements, delivers an effective promotional tool for high-end premium products.

### LABEL APPLICATORS

Cut & stack labeling machines operate by applying glue to the back of each label before applying it to the container. There are two main types of adhesive used. 'Wet' glue is water-soluble and liquid at room temperature, and is the most common type of cut & stack adhesive. The second adhesive type is hot melt, a solid glue that is heated to become a liquid.

The adhesive can be applied to either the full area of the reverse side of the label or by gluing the trailing and leading edges. The type of adhesive application can be selected from options such as skip, pattern or stripe, depending on adhesion, application speed or drying speed required.

When labeling cans, the adhesive is first applied as a stripe to the container and a second stripe of adhesive is applied to the trailing edge of the label as it rotates over the label magazine.

Wraparound roll-fed glue-applied labels typically use hot melt technology. Several kinds of hot melt adhesives are available to suit different purposes, such as particular packaging materials or the conditions within the factory environment.

A wraparound hot melt labeling system consists of two gluing units. The first applies a vertical strip of glue which adheres the label to the container, while a second unit applies glue to the trailing label edge as the label is wrapped around the container.

It should also be noted that there is a third type of wet glue labeling machine using pre-gummed labels. In the pre-gummed system, labels are pre-coated with glue, then water is applied either through dipping or spraying to activate the adhesive properties of the glue. As techniques and materials have developed, however, the pre-gummed labeling method has waned in popularity in favor of wet glue and hot melt systems.

### WET GLUE VS SELF-ADHESIVE

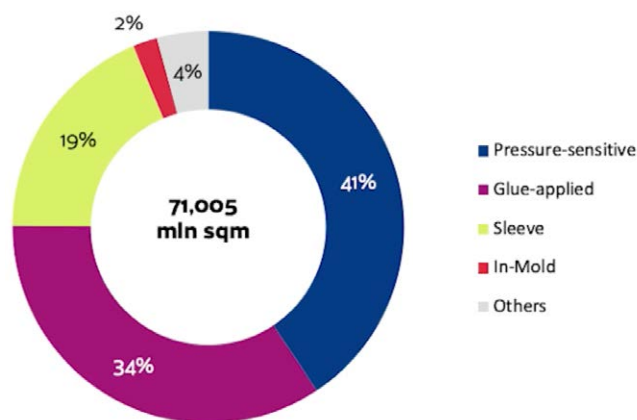
The choice between wet glue, glue-applied roll-fed wraparound and self-adhesive can be a complex one when the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) is considered. TCO includes a wide range of factors including material costs, printing and conversion costs, manufacturing window/lead time, application equipment investment, operational cost of application lines, application flexibility, application speed, application downtime, and logistics.

Wet glue labeling offers the lowest per-label cost of all methods of label decoration. This starts with the offset-litho provides itself, which provides excellent reproduction of photographic designs, tone-work and metallic colors with relatively low plate costs.

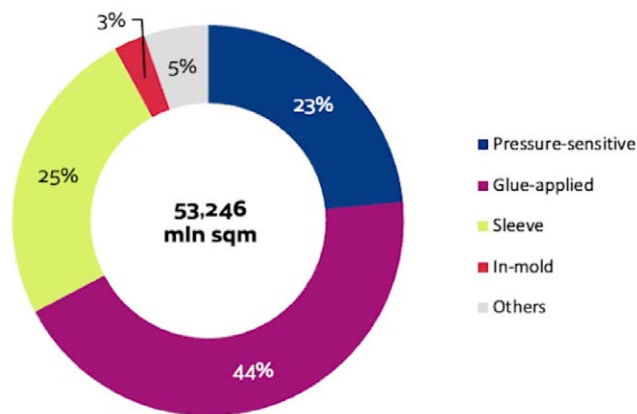
Another press technology factor moving the TCO dial in favor of wet glue labels is the increasing use of in-line technologies on sheetfed offset presses, which can dramatically shorten lead times.

Offset-litho presses for wet glue labels are already equipped, pretty much as standard, with single or dual UV coaters or extended delivery hot air dryers for water-based coatings. And more processes are going in line.

Germany-based Cito group, for example, has been adding in-line



Global Label Market by Label Technology, Volume (source: AWA)



Global Primary Label Market by Label Technology, Volume (source: AWA)

capabilities to offset presses for scoring, cutting and perforating. UK-based wet glue specialist Gavin-Watson says it can now save several hours in the production of orders using the Cito equipment. 'This technology has become the standard which is now completely indispensable. From a bespoke shaped perforation to a scored, perforated and part forme cut project.'

Offset litho technology also benefits from higher levels of industrialization and automation than a typical PS label converting operation, along with a fully standardized color management process from design and proofing to print. Heidelberg's Prinect Image Control, for example, controls every stage of the workflow from prepress to press using a single measuring system.

Some converters have their own in-house offset color management systems – Inland Printing is a good example with its InColor technology, which ensures color standards are met before live production takes place.

Automation has also been happening on the cut & stack finishing line, both for square cut and die punched labels. The ability of sheetfed offset presses to gang multiple jobs up on the same sheet, added to automated finishing, has allowed the economic production of shorter runs and smaller batches, as well as reduced cycle times.

Polar, for example, demonstrated at Labelexpo Europe 2019 an automated finishing system for small to medium-sized runs of both square-cut and die-cut labels. The LabelSystem SC-25 allows two strips of square-cut labels to be processed simultaneously to produce up to 1,560 bundles an hour. The LabelSystem DC-11plus was demonstrated carrying out automated in-line production of



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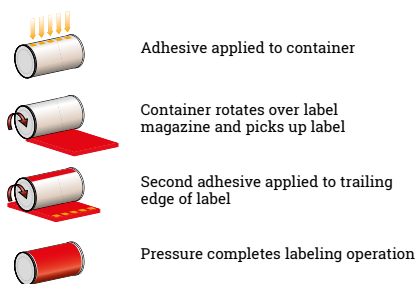
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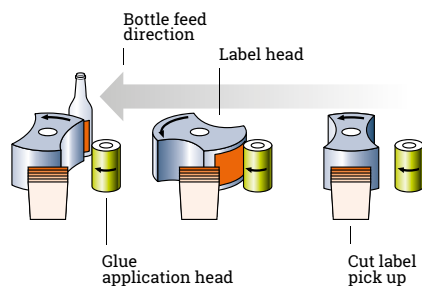
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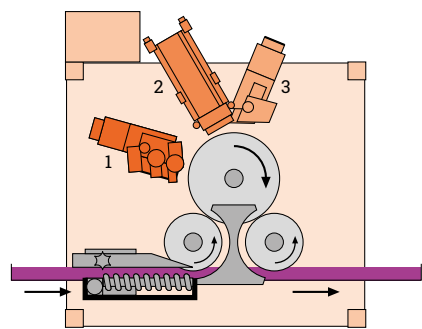




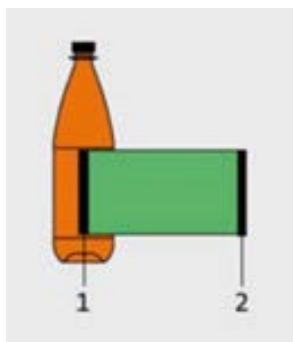
Stages involved in labeling a can



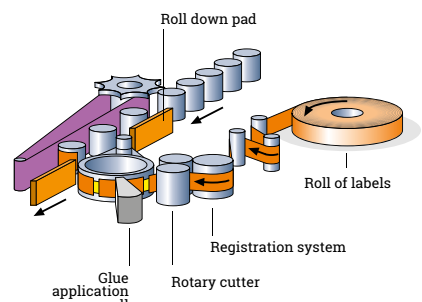
A typical patch label application sequence



Single label leading and trailing-edge gluing using a hot melt double head. Key: 1 Hot melt gluing head, 2 Pre-cut single labels in magazine, 3 Hot melt gluing head



Wrap round label featuring hot melt glue strips on leading and trailing edges



Typical reel fed wrap round applicator

## "THE CHOICE BETWEEN WET GLUE, GLUE-APPLIED ROLL-FED WRAPAROUND AND SELF-ADHESIVE CAN BE A COMPLEX ONE WHEN THE TOTAL COST OF OWNERSHIP (TCO) IS CONSIDERED"

die-cut labels. A counter pressure system allows the processing of non-paper materials such as compressible plastics or metalized foil.

### SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION

From a sustainability viewpoint, glue-applied labels have several key advantages. Most obviously there is no waste matrix or liner to dispose of. Wet glue labels applied with water-based adhesives can be easily removed from returnable bottles in a caustic wash bath, while a new generation of alkali-based washable hot-melt adhesives now allows these labels to be washed off cleanly as well. Modern conventional offset inks are non-bleeding, avoiding contamination of the alkaline water wash.

Generally, UV offset inks are specified for one-way (non-returnable) containers.

In addition, companies like Inland Packaging are now offering soy-based offset inks as a more eco-friendly option, as well as water-based gravure.

Downsides of wet glue labels include the multi-stage sheetfed manufacturing process. Lead time becomes more of a factor when the specification requires multiple embellishment processes such as hot foil-stamping, embossing and lamination, all of which require separate steps in a sheet-fed workflow.

The ability of inline self-adhesive converting equipment to print and embellish in one pass considerably reduces the manufacturing time frame.

In addition, wet glue labels cannot be applied to highly shaped areas of containers, and paper labels have limited moisture resistance compared to plastic labels unless specially developed for ice bucket resistance.

Wet glue applicators tend to require higher investment, including change parts and adhesive, while self-adhesive label application equipment requires fewer resources to set up and does not require labels to be stacked in a magazine before application.

Against that, as we have noted, self-adhesive labels are more expensive, as they include the cost of the liner and the ready-applied adhesive.

Label applicator speeds are not as wide apart as they once were, so this is not usually a factor differentiating wet glue

from self-adhesive. Wet glue labelers typically operate at speeds around 600 units per minute, against around 500 per minute for PS applicators.

### PAPER INVESTMENT

Paper manufacturers are gearing up for increased production of added-value wet glue papers as the industry recovers from the intense paper shortages caused by a combination of forestry strikes and supply chain disruption.

Sappi, for example, is investing heavily in wet glue label production at its Gratkorn mill in Austria. The double-digit million-euro project includes a new embossing calendar, enabling the paper mill to produce high-quality wet-strength wet-glue label papers from Q4 this year.

Robert Gabriel-Jürgens, head of label paper sales at Sappi Europe, explains: 'Extensive technical innovations in the paper machine's water and material cycles are planned, as well as investment in the new embossing calendar. This is key to producing the kind of wet-strength, wet-glue label paper used in the beverage industry, for instance on returnable beer bottles, and to enabling the production of exceptional, high-quality labels.'

Gabriel-Jürgens says Sappi is seeing increased demand for wet glue label papers. 'Paper-based products give sustainability benefits, including the use of water-soluble adhesives. We also see a (wider) trend towards fiber-based products, with paper of growing interest to brand owners.'

Sappi has also been developing a new range of non-wet-strength, wet-glue label papers. The Parade Label Pro is designed for applications including standard labels for bottles, tins and jars, as well as wrappers.

So, despite the continued inroads made by self-adhesive and shrink sleeve labels, particularly in the more developed markets, the usage of glue-applied labels continues to grow at a healthy rate.

Driven by moves towards sustainability and continued automation, Consultancy Research and Markets forecasts the glue-applied label market to grow by 5.94 billion sqm between 2022 and 2027, accelerating at a CAGR of 4.99 percent.



For more information on glue-applied labels, visit [www.label-academy.com](http://www.label-academy.com)



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## Beer & spirits

**CRAFTING  
A WINNING  
STRATEGY**

*Entering the highly competitive craft beer and spirit market can be difficult for a new brand looking to make its mark. How can these brands craft a winning strategy to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the big-league players? Akanksha Meena reports*

In the world of beer and spirits, competition is fierce as startups emerge to challenge the longstanding legacy brands. These new players enter the market intending to disrupt the status quo. But how can they stand shoulder-to-shoulder against the big-league players?

## “THE LIQUID INSIDE THE PACKAGE IS WHAT MATTERS MOST, BUT THE PACKAGING ITSELF IS ANOTHER CONNECTION POINT TO DRIVE SALES”

‘The craft beer industry has become so large that it is getting harder and harder to stand out against your competitors. The liquid inside the package is what matters most, but the packaging itself is another connection point to drive sales. If you can create a premium, intriguing design that connects with your audience, you may have a long-term customer base,’ says Vanita Marzette, senior product manager, wine and spirits, at Avery Dennison.

Understanding the brand and having clarity on how it should come to life is crucial. Deciding whether they want a smooth label or a tactile feel can get the ball rolling. Then comes decisions on colors and print methods, all of which will come into play when selecting material.

### CHOOSING THE RIGHT BASE

Using the correct material is key, as longevity, adhesive, shelf life, moisture protection and water resistance are all factors that can adversely impact the product.

Frank Alexander, senior vice president of global sales at All4Labels, says: ‘In such a competitive market as the traditional world of beer labeling, a fundamental driver to stand out on the shelf and differentiate from competitors is to have a disruptive look and feel. Traditional wet glue labels are being replaced by pressure-sensitive labels or sleeves due to the various capabilities of embellishment options and the superior appearance.’

The traditional world of beer labeling often prefers wet glue labels, which are highly cost-effective, particularly on high-volume, long-run jobs. On the other hand, a label with more decoration is more likely to stand out on crowded shelves.

‘A concrete and effective alternative [to wet glue labels] can be pressure-sensitive labels, which offer better adhesive properties and more decoration options on reverse-printed mirror solutions, with

metallic effects available in graduations. The opportunities of customization and embellishment are uncountable and can also include tactile effects for an outstanding look and feel,’ Alexandar says.

Using a UV coating can improve the finish on the label and provide long-lasting

protection to the print. For example, a product labeled then stored in a cold room or freezer environment, versus a product stored in an ambient temperature will require a different material and finish. Additionally, adding a laminate or coating to the label not only adds an attractive matte or gloss finish but also offers protection for the label against moisture, condensation or scuffing.

### SIMPLIFYING DESIGN

The experts at UK beer label specialist AA Labels suggest clearly conveying the key strengths of the product on the label if looking to go toe-to-toe with the best in the business.

‘A lack of clarity in product labeling information could result in a customer moving to another brand. Fonts are important, making sure your choice of typeface fits best within your design,’ says Shoaib Akram, operations manager at AA Labels.

Colors, imagery and typography play a crucial role in label design and can create a unique brand identity. Colors elicit specific emotions and can drive decision-making. Therefore, using the same colors across logos, websites, storefronts, in-store design, staff uniforms, packaging and advertisements can strengthen brand recognition and awareness. Font choices often set the tone for the whole design and can influence viewers’ feelings toward and interactions with the design. Images are highly effective communication tools and can help create a connection with the text and clarify the information presented.

Embellishments such as foiling or embossing can help highlight particular parts of the label.

Kieron Weedon, managing director at UK agency Kingdom & Sparrow adds that consumer behavior is an important factor to consider in design. When consumers buy something new, it’s mostly an instinctive



*The Cheshire English whisky label designed by Kingdom & Sparrow*



*Sipello label designed by Kingdom & Sparrow*



*One packaging trend is more vivid color designs. This along with retro looks, die cuts, and eccentric lettering are all playing a big part in some designs*





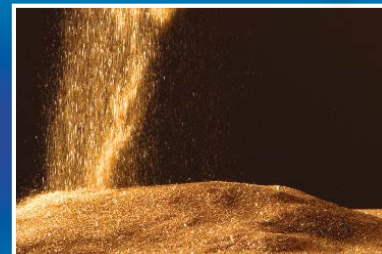
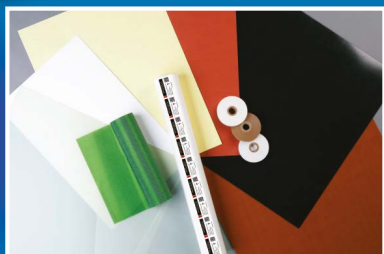
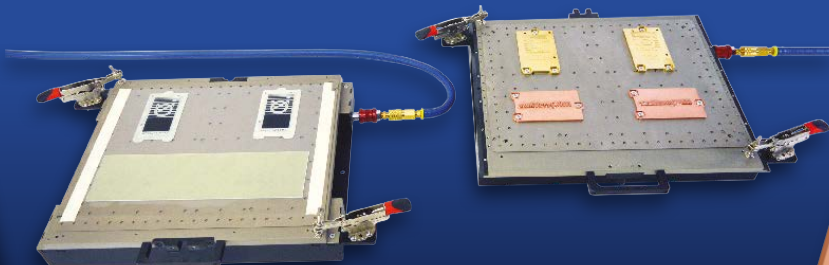
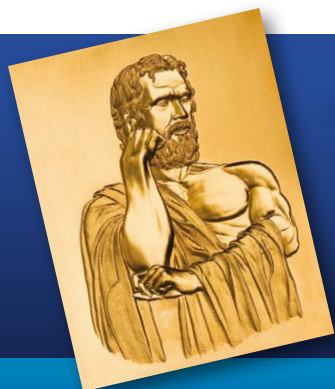
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## “A LACK OF CLARITY IN PRODUCT LABELING INFORMATION COULD RESULT IN A CUSTOMER MOVING TO ANOTHER BRAND”

decision. They're drawn to the label or packaging, and it elicits an emotional response. The functional story comes later for them. Putting too much information on a label isn't necessarily the right thing to do as a brand.

Alexander also recommends sticking to two keywords – simplify and optimize, he says – to create a knockout design. A clean and simple design can be just as effective as a complex one while being more cost-effective to produce. Another tip could be to optimize label size to maximize the printing run and reduce material waste.

Cost-effective short runs can be produced using digital printing, which allows brands to print labels on demand and in smaller quantities. Digital also enables printing special editions, or one-off campaigns.

Storytelling is an integral part of design. Johnny Paton, creative director and founder of Kingdom and Sparrow, says the story

to be told through a brand's packaging depends on the brand itself. Some brands require more complex storytelling, particularly within the craft beer category. For instance, a brewery may have an overarching story that extends across its entire brand, with individual characters featured on each beer's packaging. Conversely, other breweries produce a lot of products and require each beer to have its unique name and story. In these cases, the story may come from the brewery team's experiences or anecdotes, which we then translate into visually compelling designs that align with their vision.

Weedon adds that craft beer and spirits have traditionally focused on the manufacturing process – the ingredients, hops, aging and casks used. However, with so many craft beers now available, these stories can become muddled and difficult to differentiate.

'To stand out, we strive to move beyond process stories and instead create an experiential connection with consumers,' he says. 'This could involve developing a memorable character or mascot or sharing surprising stories about the founder or of the product itself. By focusing on emotional ties rather than process, we aim to create something distinct and different in a crowded market.'

More brands are also focusing on interactive labels. Elements such as QR codes can add an extra layer of information

and engagement to the label.

Weedon says that it's crucial to have discussions with beer and spirit manufacturers about the value of QR codes. Often, there's a misunderstanding of the effort required to ensure that the QR code leads to an engaging and compelling experience. Some may view the QR code as a mere checkbox for interactivity without realizing that it's only the beginning of the customer's journey. Generating content or experiences that enhance the consumer's interest often requires additional resources. Therefore, it's vital to ensure that the QR code adds value to the consumer, rather than being a gimmick for brands looking to incorporate interactivity.

Paton emphasizes the value of staying up to date with the latest technology to be aware of what is possible and achievable.

New-age alcohol brands, especially craft beer manufacturers are coming out with very eye-catching designs, but they are at the risk of missing out on legal requirements, says Ashu Bhargav, an associate at legal advising firm Chandhiok & Mahajan.

'Enforcement of labeling laws is quite aggressive in India and, therefore, focusing on the design of labels at the cost of space for mandatory declarations on the bottles (or cans) can become a problem for new entrants. While all products retailed in India must comply with the provisions of legal metrology laws, alcoholic beverages must

### AA LABELS SUPPORTS START-UP BEER BRAND FOX HAT CRAFT BREWERY

The popularity of craft beer is a testament to brewers that have honed their recipes and experimented with a range of flavors and styles of drink. Fox Hat Craft Brewery – Chapeau de Renard – produces small batches of craft beer to offer a 'voyage of flavors' of beers ranging from a light Goze style to a rich chocolate-orange Stout.

Unusually, Fox Hat Craft Brewery is based in the heart of the Minervois wine-growing region in the South of France. This location inspired the team to encourage beer and food pairing, challenging the local perception that beer is just something cold and fizzy and only drunk when people are hot and thirsty.

Building on its local roots, Fox Hat Craft Brewery encourages the work of local artists on its labels, helping its work reach a new audience.

It was the requirement for these unique labels that led the team to AA Labels. Comments Fox Hat Craft Brewery's Andrew Blakey: 'We needed a label printer able to produce short runs

of high quality water-resistant adhesive labels to a custom size with a short delivery time. Not only could AA Labels support us with this, but its website also makes configuring and ordering labels straightforward.

'What also stood out was the excellent customer service. Ordering from France can cause difficulties with bank payment systems and the disruption caused by post-Brexit regulations, which have caused some companies to stop delivering to mainland Europe. Not with AA Labels. They understood and explained how to get products quickly through customs, making the whole process seamless.'

Continues Blakey: 'The artists who we feature on our cans care about the reproduction of their work. Without exception, they have been blown away by the print quality and accurate color reproduction of their artwork on the labels.'

Find out more about the product range and the artists' supported, at foxhatcraftbrewery.fr



AA Labels supports Fox Hat Craft Brewery with its label requirements for canned beer



AA Labels provides Fox Hat with short runs of high-quality water-resistant adhesive labels to a custom size with a short delivery time



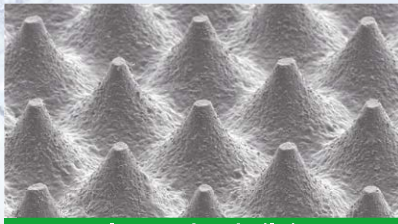
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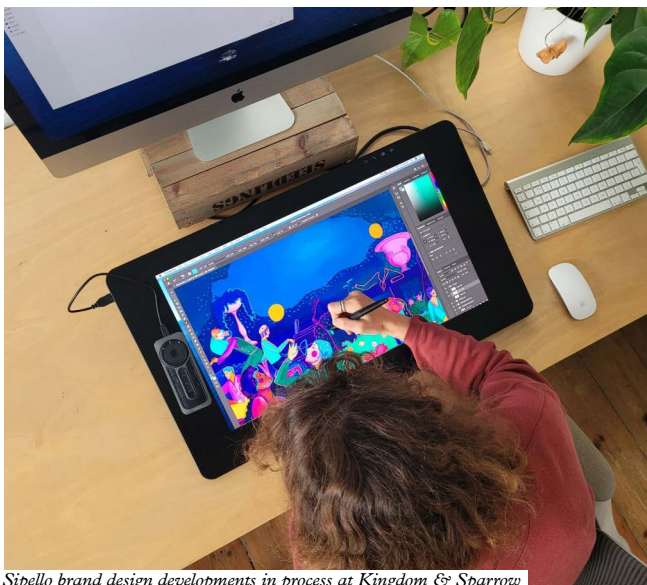
## WHAT DO NEW CRAFT BEER BRANDS LOOK FOR IN A PRINT PARTNER?

Craft beer brands operate in a highly competitive market, with over 8,000 breweries in the US alone. Without the brand recognition of mainstream competitors, craft brewers rely heavily on product labels as their primary advertising platform. Consequently, they are highly selective about their printing partners.

Mike Pruitt, senior product manager, SurePress, Epson America, says that converters need to understand design intent and be able to guide craft beer brands unfamiliar with different printing formats.

'Craft beer labels are often nuanced and complex, with different ink and embellishment requirements from one product to the next. Thus, attention to detail is highly valued. The ability to personalize label printing is increasingly important,' Pruitt adds.

## "FONTS ARE IMPORTANT, MAKING SURE YOUR CHOICE OF TYPEFACE FITS BEST WITHIN YOUR DESIGN"



Sipello brand design developments in process at Kingdom & Sparrow



Fox Hat Craft Brewery encourages the work of local artists on its labels

adhere to additional requirements concerning warnings and alcohol content in a specific manner.'

Established players in the sector are now well-versed with the requirements but novel brands suffer penalties and seizure of inventory for the most trivial of non-compliances. Lack of legal awareness is a major factor there.

'With the high level of creativity in the labels I have been seeing in the market lately, I must say that it is now becoming increasingly crucial for both legal and design teams to work alongside to achieve their goals,' Bhargav adds.

### AVOID ROOKIE MISTAKES

There are some basic dos and don'ts when it comes to beer and spirits label design. Firstly, do not pack too much information. 'Including too much detail on a small sticker will make it hard to read and detract from the overall design, diluting your brand,' Akram says.

Try not to stray too far from the brand personality or color scheme. 'Using custom illustration is a great way to share fun and engaging aspects of your brand's personality, but make sure your label design and colors coordinate with your brand and enhance your message,' he says.

Another mistake to avoid is not considering the labeling needs for its useful life. Consider the wet strength, for instance.

Alexander explains that beer bottles are often exposed to different temperatures – especially cold – and therefore, the labels not only have to withstand these temperature fluctuations and the resulting condensation, but they must also not peel off and crease when exposed to these conditions. Likewise, as the labeled bottles come into contact with one another on the conveyor belt and also on transport in a box or a pack, labels should have good abrasion resistance.

Wet glue and PS labels destined for returnable container deposit schemes or recycling need a wash-off glue solution. Pressure-sensitive labels require a special accelerating processing material, to avoid any negative effects on the process. However, in general, it is good to use nonbleeding inks not contaminating the recycling stream.

Additionally, if a durable label is required, the labels must have good alkali resistance, Alexander recommends.

'At All4Labels, we stand alongside our customers along the whole design development process. All4Graphics, our packaging design unit, integrates innovation, creativity, design and prepress processes with the most modern workflows, from the pilot validation phase through to product realization.'

### PLAY THE LONG GAME WITH SUSTAINABLE LABELS

New craft beer and spirit brands can effectively communicate their commitment to sustainability through labeling. This can include information on reducing emissions, providing eco-friendly packaging, using renewable energy, recycling, production efficiencies, enabling the availability of clean water, or any number of other sustainable practices that will impact the planet positively.

Sustainability can be reflected in the use of recycled materials in packaging decoration. In the beer market, wash-off labeling technology is crucial to enhance the circularity of glass bottles, Alexander says.

All4Labels promotes its own Star range of sustainable materials.

Marzette adds that consumers are now demanding sustainability: 'We have seen more of our recycled films, hemp and barley papers used to enhance a brand's identity.'

### STAYING AHEAD OF DESIGN TRENDS

Akram highlights key design trends for new brands, such as playing with typography. While choosing a new font can be fun, don't forget about function, he says.



## “SOME PREMIUM BEVERAGE TRENDS THAT HAVE MADE THEIR WAY TO CRAFT BEER, WHICH ELEVATES THE INDUSTRY”

‘If you sell your products online, most of your potential customers will be viewing your products through small mobile screens where real estate is cramped and fine details get lost. Large, clean fonts and concise messaging speak more loudly online,’ Akram says.

New-age brands are giving their customers a break from sensory overload by choosing soothing, muted color palettes. Pillowy pastels, rustic earth tones, and wispy watercolors abound in 2023 label designs.

Metallic accents can be added to the label design such as metal foils, metallic ink, and even actual metal pieces (such as metal plates or wires). One of AA Labels’ designers says, ‘If you use gold, especially metallic gold, against black, that creates a nice elegance with a lot of shelf appeal.’

One way to differentiate your brand is with an unconventional label shape, which can be achieved with custom die cutting.

Marzette adds: ‘Some premium beverage trends that have made their way to craft beer and elevate the industry, are the use of tactile varnishes. This attention to detail brings another level of premiumization. Also, the use of a die-cut label allows the brewery to catch the consumer’s attention.’

‘We are seeing more vivid color designs, retro looks, die cuts, eccentric lettering and irreverent characters playing a big part in some of the designs,’ Marzette continues. ‘These trending designs are helping craft beers and beverages stand out and attract the younger consumer market.’

Avery Dennison has a business development resources and prototyping team to help brands learn more about materials and see their branding on different stocks.

Alexander agrees that in general, the main aim is to include special and premium effects to get a disruptive appeal and win the shelf challenge. Examples include: creating graduated metallic mirror effects on reverse-printed labels, which simulates reflected natural light; photochromic

inks which change color when exposed to sunlight; thermochromic inks change colors in different temperatures; or labels that light-up or glow-in-the-dark inks for a fun user experience.

More craft beer brands are making use of social media and gaming platforms as promotional tools, as well as incorporating more interactive consumer journeys, breaking the barrier between the physical and digital experience.

‘Alongside that, we have been seeing a rising request for customization and more individualization,’ Alexander says.

### TESTING THE WATERS

Akram suggests testing the waters before a full-scale launch of a new product. ‘It will help you reduce the risk behind full-scale production and supply of the products. The basic steps which should be taken before launch include checking competitors’ labels, avoid seasonal labeling (initially), and create your own creative color pallets and branding.’

Weedon adds that in the case of craft beers and spirits, feedback from bars and retailers is often more valuable than from consumers because of their deep understanding of the space.

For example, for a spirits brand, ensuring that the bottle is easy to use and the label is easily recognizable from a distance is crucial for bartenders when making cocktails. Understanding how the product will be merchandised in the retail space can also be highly valuable.

Established legacy brands are increasingly being challenged by new players looking to make their mark. By investing in thoughtful, eye-catching label design, new brands can score big with consumers and establish themselves as serious contenders in the game.



*A lot of beer labels are still wet glue applied. To read more about that market, turn to page 62*

### MARKET STATS

According to Fortune Market Insights, the global craft beer market is projected to grow from \$102.59B USD in 2021 to \$210.78B USD in 2028 at a CAGR of nearly 11 percent in the forecast period.

The craft spirits market is projected to register a CAGR of 23.11 percent over the next five years, according to Mordor

Intelligence. The largest market is North America, but Europe is the fastest growing.

People born between the 1980s and 2000s are a large portion of consumers who visit bars, hotels and pubs more often; therefore, they are the biggest consumer demographics for this market.



*French brand Fox Hat Craft Brewery - Chapeau de Renard - produces small batches of craft beer*



*Mirror Twin Brewing canned beer label produced by Turner Labels on its HP Indigo 6900 digital press*

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*Starwash pressure sensitive label by AA Labels for returnable glass bottles*

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# Heidelberg focuses on Gallus' digital future

*Heidelberg's new CEO Dr Ludwin Monz sees the total cost of ownership as key to the success of Gallus inkjet technology.*  
*Andy Thomas-Emans reports*

**W**hen Heidelberg fully acquired Gallus, analysts predicted a wide range of potential synergies. Both companies were major players in the labels market; they both had a strong heritage in offset printing; and Gallus could call on Heidelberg's global distribution and support network.

The real-world situation proved to be rather more complex. Although it is true that Heidelberg is deeply involved in the labels segment, this is on the sheetfed wet glue and in-mold label side of the business where print shops are highly industrialized and consolidated.

Narrow web labels, by contrast, remain a segment where printing and converting is still widely regarded as an art, with low levels of automation and a high degree of fragmentation.

This was one of the key learnings of the early integration period between Gallus and Heidelberg – that these two markets are quite distinct, with their own technology and operating requirements.

It took a little time to realize that the real synergy was not common customers, but a common technology – digital.

There had been some limited cooperation in offset technology with Gallus' RCS development teams but offset remains a small (though important) part of Gallus' overall market.

Digital, however, was quickly seen as a central priority both by Gallus CEO Dario Urbinati and Heidelberg's new CEO Dr Ludwin Monz. And for Monz, the joint development of UV inkjet technology with Gallus has greatly increased the importance of the overall label market to Heidelberg.

'Heidelberg customers in this market are often highly industrialized print shops with optimized processes. They particularly count on the high productivity of our products,' explains Monz. 'While we don't share details for the specific market breakdown, we can confirm that the combined label market – and especially when it comes to digital – is an important growth sector for Heidelberg, representing double-digit growth of print production value over the next three years.'

'This is why retaining Gallus was a strategically important decision for the business, with its impact being felt in a number of positive ways. Not least of all in the many exciting joint R&D projects underway with some interesting innovations. Dario and his team have been a great addition to Heidelberg, complementing our business and adding a new dynamic.'

Monz confirms that Gallus is now 'a key component of the Heidelberg packaging strategy,' complementing the wider portfolio by adding narrow web labels and packaging up to print widths of 570 mm.

'More of our sheetfed customers are multi-site companies who use all technologies including pressure sensitive. For the smaller print shops, we have the Gallus product lines, either digital, offset or flexo. These fit perfectly to that segment.'

## Gallus One

The Gallus One digital press is the first true joint development between Heidelberg and Gallus and was designed 'to remove the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) barrier for the adoption of reel-to-reel digital labels,' according to Monz.

'Gallus in moving its business from a "product price"-based sales



Dr. Ludwin Monz

**"As digital labels continue to grow, we expect low migration inks specifically for cosmetics and food, and UV ink for standard labels, to represent significant and immediate growth for us and the wider industry"**

model to a TCO calculation designed to better serve customers, increase transparency to the 'real costs' of a product purchase and deliver increased customer value.

'Heidelberg will benefit from the increased capacity requirements in this market. Our self-developed ink also offers attractive





Gallus Labelfire 340

**“We can confirm that the combined label market - and especially when it comes to digital- is an important growth sector for Heidelberg, representing double-digit growth of print production value over the next three years”**

potential for recurring revenue in a growing market.’ Automation and connectivity are other important areas for joint development, moving technologies already common in the sheetfed market to the narrow web market.

‘We need to compensate for a lack of labor across the industry – not just skilled labor but all labor,’ says Monz.

‘At Heidelberg, we have pursued automation in sheetfed offset with our Push to Stop technology, our biggest advance over the last 10 years. That is what I would like to see with narrow web label printing. Today it is more a kind of artwork, with many parameters controlled manually and we have to improve that.

‘In our sheetfed label business Prinect is all about automation of workflow, and connectivity is a priority. Machine monitoring to the Cloud for narrow web is something for the future, but online monitoring we can do today and this definitely helps customers with OEE. There are manifold possibilities for future development.’

Monz emphasizes the continued importance of Gallus’ conventional flexo

and offset print technologies and the drive to further automate both processes. ‘I am deeply impressed with the print quality of flexo printing. It has become closer to offset and I would like to see that advanced.

‘However, there is undeniable growth for technologies such as Gallus One and our hybrid press the Gallus Labelfire. And the Labelfire is a key product for many reasons - it’s so modular that it can accommodate almost any customer requirement. What’s more, it’s the ideal bridge between conventional and digital, and for many, the first “comfortable” step into digital labels.’

Monz firmly believes digital labels will become more mainstream. ‘With the Gallus One solving the TCO issue, digital labels will finally move beyond short runs.

Digital automation and connectivity will support labor shortages by including new technologies including artificial intelligence.’

Digital printing will also support the requirements of a new generation of consumers for a different approach to packaging requiring smart connectivity – ‘a physical experience combined with a digital interface.’

### *In-mold growth*

Looking at the sheetfed label segment, Dr Monz believes the growth potential for in-mold labels is particularly high. These labels are typically utilized in the food and cosmetics industries and by companies producing chemicals for household and industrial use.

‘For us, it’s an interesting business. The benefits of the in-mold process lie in its comparatively low manufacturing costs, good temperature and moisture resistance, and resource-friendly characteristics. For example, the polypropylene used for the labels and containers is 100 percent recyclable.

‘Beyond this we are also reviewing manufacturing processes and making those more efficient from the customer’s point of view. With its state-of-the-art technology, Heidelberg is playing a key role in improving the efficiency of in-mold label production and is the technology leader in this segment by some margin. Our company is looking to build on this strong position and is therefore stepping up its investment in the development of new technologies for IML production.

‘IML has a big future, more in the food and cosmetics industry. The focus here is on efficiency and highly automated production. Cost is critical here so digital is too expensive.’

Looking at future digital trends, Monz expects low-migration digital inks to grow in importance. ‘As digital labels continue to grow, we expect low migration inks specifically for cosmetics and food, and UV ink for standard labels, to represent significant and immediate growth for us and the wider industry. Automating the workflow and reducing our dependency on a physical workforce is also an important part of our thoughts.’

Monz points out that the inkjet technology used by Gallus is both modular and scalable.

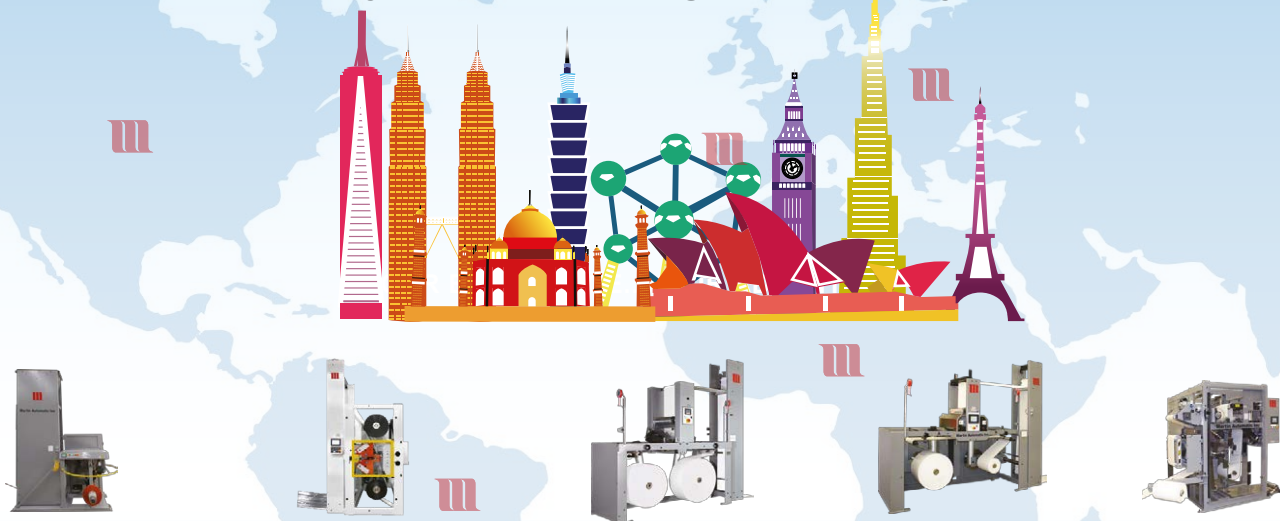
‘As a result, when combined with the expertise of the Heidelberg and Gallus R&D teams, it can be utilized for other applications and markets.’

A key trend identified by Monz is the continued consolidation of the narrow web print industry, and this will impact the label industry’s economics. ‘That supports our view that the future will be all about production cost and flexibility.’



To learn more about the wet glue label market see page 62

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# Mark Andy confident of continued Latin American success

*Two years on from a record-breaking 12 months of sales in Latin America, Mark Andy continues to be bullish about the region's growth prospects – and Mexico in particular. James Quirk reports*

**P**ress manufacturer Mark Andy achieved record sales in Latin American in 2021, with nearly 30 machines sold. Two years later, John Vigna, the company's sales manager for the region, continues to be bullish about growth prospects in the market.

What was behind that record year? Vigna points to a number of factors. Pent-up demand after a slow, locked-down 2020 played a part, he admits. But also important were internal business strategies and local market developments that continue to bear fruit today, and explain the continued optimism.

## Strategy

'2020 was a difficult year, particularly in the US,' he recalls. 'I had taken over from John Cavey [as Mark Andy's Latam sales manager] but the lockdowns made it feel like having a Ferrari in the garage that you couldn't drive. Then toward the end of 2020 we started to pick up some momentum in sales, and 2021 started really well.'

In the meantime, Vigna had been putting some important building blocks into place, including the appointment of Kenjiro Celaya as Mexico sales manager, and contracting a US-based but, crucially, Spanish-speaking financier to provide financing options to customers.

Celaya had previously worked as the plant manager of a leading Mexican label converter and a long-time Mark Andy user.

'Kenjiro's arrival helped us to penetrate the Mexico market more,' says Vigna. 'We wanted someone who knew our machines, and who had experience with our competitors' machines as well.'

The appointment of Celaya echoed the strategy Mark Andy had been successfully adopting in Europe in recent years: adding local expertise. 'We can offer different options,' says Celaya. 'We are a good team.'

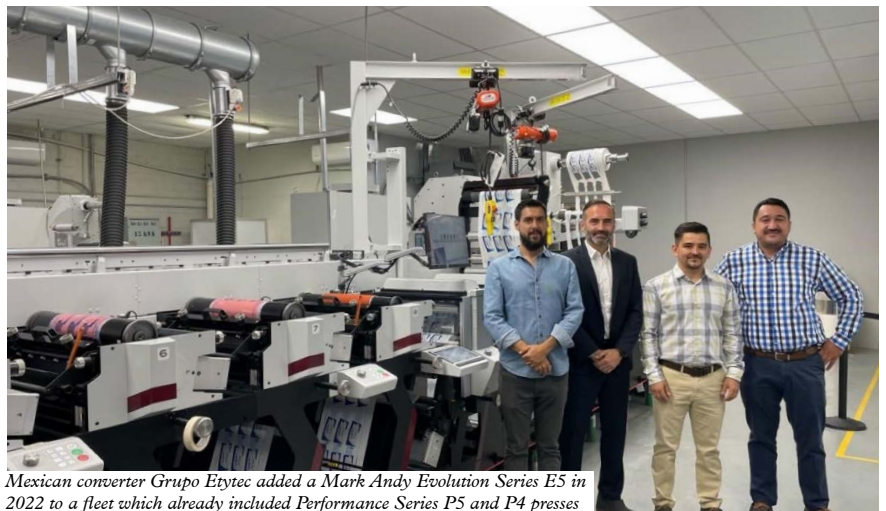
Meanwhile, the new financier knew the Latin American region, could communicate directly in Spanish, and provided 'much better' financing options that suited the local market, according to Vigna.

As economies reopened after pandemic-induced lockdowns, sales soared – nearly 30 machines in the next 12 months, spread across eight countries – resulting



L-R: Kenjiro Celaya and John Vigna

**"The lockdowns made it feel like having a Ferrari in the garage that you couldn't drive"**



Mexican converter Grupo Etytec added a Mark Andy Evolution Series E5 in 2022 to a fleet which already included Performance Series P5 and P4 presses

in the company's record-breaking year. The machines varied widely in model and technical specifications, from the entry-level 10in 2200 Series to a 20in Performance Series P7 and 14 new Evolution Series (13 E5 and one E3) on the flexo front, to a Digital Series HD and Digital Pro 3 in the hybrid market.

Among the many sales were a number of landmark installations. Flexoprint in Brazil installed its first two Mark Andy presses, through local representative Miguel

Troccoli of PTC. Fellow Brazilian converters Gráfica Cometa and Softcolor acquired their first Mark Andy presses: an Evolution Series E3 and 17in Performance Series P7 respectively – the latter the first machine of its kind installed in the country. Autopel bought a Performance Series P5 and then added an Evolution Series E5, the first in Brazil. In Belo Horizonte, Maxcor brought its total of Mark Andy presses to 16 with the addition of three 2200s and an E5. At the same time, international group Sato



acquired a Performance Series P7 for its plant in Brazil and an E5 for its plant in Argentina.

Vigna points to the high specification of many of the presses installed during this period as encouraging evidence of local market development, with many customers across the region moving into the production of shrink sleeves, in-mold labels and flexible packaging. RFID is another area of growing interest. Beontag – now the second-largest RFID supplier globally – installed a 20in Mark Andy Performance Series P7 equipped with a Tamarack RFID unit at its plant in Paraná, Brazil.

But perhaps the most noticeable trend, says Vigna, is increasing interest in digital printing from converters in the region – and, in particular, Mark Andy's hybrid offering, which includes four presses aimed at different market segments. Testament to this was the landmark installation of a 17in Digital Series HD – the first in Latin America – at Guadalajara, Mexico-based Etipress. The hybrid press combines the Performance Series servo platform with a 1,200 DPI 8-color inkjet engine and various add-ons thanks to a modular configuration.

'We are facilitating this growth in the industry through our hybrid range,' says Vigna. 'It brings such flexibility: you can combine any printing process with digital, so it allows our clients to be able to offer something different to their customers.'

Mark Andy's record-breaking 2021 continued into a successful 2022. 'Not quite at the same levels as 2021,' says Vigna, 'but we expected that.' However, the one press technology that has seen even more success than during that record-breaking year is hybrid.

Among the increased number of installations, a Digital Pro 3 and a Digital One were sold to customers in Chile through newly appointed distributor Solugraphics.

In Mexico, hybrid machines installed last year included a further Digital Series HD, among other models.

### Mexican market

'There are lots of dynamic markets in Latin America,' emphasizes Vigna. Mark Andy has seen particular success in recent years in the region's biggest markets: Mexico and Brazil. Chile is also 'performing strongly', while Central America – especially Guatemala and El Salvador – has also proved a fertile hunting ground, says Vigna.

But Mexico – the location in April this year for the first Labelexpo show in Latin America – is providing particular cause for optimism. 'Labelexpo taking place in Mexico shows the strength of the local economy,' says Celaya. 'We are excited to be able to host the show.'



*Solugraphics swiftly sold two Mark Andy hybrid presses in Chile following its appointment as a distributor last year*

## "We are seeing more converters in Mexico focused on serving the US market and exports of labels are rising"

Mark Andy installations in the country have continued apace in the past 18 months, with Etipress, Sama Etiquetas, Grupo Etytec and Standard Register Latam just four of the companies who have recently added presses.

A key legacy of the pandemic has been a shift in attitude toward supply chains. Disruption during the pandemic, increasing geopolitical tensions, and rising labor costs in China have led to many companies seeking to streamline their supply chains and manufacture closer to their consumer markets: a trend known as 'nearshoring'.

Mexico – with its long border with the United States, tax advantages offered by trade agreements, and highly trained workforce – has been a strong beneficiary, though the effects are being felt elsewhere in Latin America too.

The country has seen an influx of foreign companies setting up local manufacturing operations. Foreign direct investment increased by 12 percent in 2022 compared to the previous year, reaching \$35.3 billion USD, according to the Mexican Ministry of Economy, which has identified a further 400 international companies that are interested in making the move.

The Mexican automotive industry is a case in point. It had its largest increase in production in the last eight years in 2022: car production increased by 9.2 percent, according to the National Institute of Statistics and Geography, while exports rose by 5.9 percent. The sector has been further boosted by Tesla's plans to invest some \$4.5 billion USD in a new plant in Nuevo León with the capacity to produce more than a million electric cars a year.

'In the US, there has been a shift in

mentality,' says Vigna. 'Buying goods from China has become less popular. Mexico has been benefitting. We are seeing more converters in Mexico focused on serving the US market and exports of labels are rising.'

'We've seen many foreign technology companies from Europe and Asia setting up facilities in Monterrey and other areas in the north of the country, in order to serve the US market,' echoes Celaya.

Mexico is also seeing strong growth in e-commerce. Despite predictions that it would fall after the pandemic when lockdowns stimulated a surge in online buying, eCommerce continued its inexorable rise with growth of 23 percent in 2022 compared to the previous year, according to the Mexican Association of Online Sales. Online sales are now treble what they were in 2019.

Meanwhile, Mordor Intelligence forecasts that the Mexican market for printed labels is expected to register a CAGR of 5.5 percent between 2021 and 2026, while Mexican association Canagraf estimates that the number of label converters in the country has risen from some 300 companies a decade ago to around 450-550 today.

'Because of nearshoring – and other factors – we are confident that we will maintain good growth in the region in the next few years,' says Celaya. 'It is a good moment for the Latin American market.'

'I've been working in Latin America for more than 20 years,' says John Vigna. 'It is great to see how far the region has come.'



For more on the Mexican label market, turn to page 51



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Edited by Andy Thomas-Emans

A Labels & Labeling Publication  
Tarsus Exhibitions & Publishing Ltd, London

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## Illustrated Self-Adhesive Labels

A technical introduction to self-adhesive label technology, materials specification and end use applications

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## ILLUSTRATED SELF-ADHESIVE LABELS

**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

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# Identilabel unveils thermal transfer alternative

*Brazilian start-up Identilabel's patented linerless system for laser marking is now available for licensing by label converters.*  
James Quirk reports

**A** Brazilian start-up has developed a linerless system for laser marking which it believes has the potential to replace thermal transfer printing.

Identilabel is a resident start-up at CIETEC (the Center of Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Technology), and a business incubator of IPEN (the Institute of Energy and Nuclear Research) at the University of São Paulo. The company is run by Daniel and Derick Arippol, sons of the founder of Brazilian label converter Novelprint, Jeffrey Arippol.

During his five decades with Novelprint, Jeffrey Arippol became well-known for a multitude of innovative technological developments (see L&L issue 6, 2018). A study by the UFRJ (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro) indicated that he was the individual who held the second-greatest number of patents in Brazil from 2000 to 2020.

Before retiring from Novelprint in 2020, Jeffrey Arippol transferred some of these patents from his name to Identilabel, where they form the backbone of the new company's developments.

Identilabel's patented variable data laser marking system is based on linerless technology. The process converts the self-adhesive filmic material (PET or BOPP) into a linerless structure through the lamination of the liner on the front rather than the reverse side. The laser marking system burns through that front layer to create text, barcodes or QR codes, sequential or random numbering, and even security microprinting. When applied, the whole image is underneath the liner, with nothing on the surface.

A further patent covers the insertion of a booklet in between the layers to create a linerless booklet label. Another innovation, not yet granted a patent, could reduce production costs by a further 30 percent.

The technology works with both blank labels and pre-printed rolls. It is claimed to require low maintenance and can be retrofitted into existing production lines. The base material can come from any laminate producer, as long as the linerless material is transparent.

'We are very excited about the potential for these developments, which we believe will eventually replace the already-



L-R: Brothers Daniel and Derick Arippol are excited by the technology's potential

**"It is a development that really follows industry trends towards greater sustainability and less waste"**

ancient thermal transfer marking process,' says Jeffrey Arippol, who is acting as a consultant to the new venture.

## Competitive

The system is aimed at applications such as frozen foods, meats (of which Brazil is one of the world's largest exporters), pharmaceuticals and fertilizers. 'These are segments where supply chain tracking is key, and where products are potentially exposed to different environments and temperatures. Our system is especially competitive when compared to film solutions,' explains Daniel Arippol. 'We aren't aiming at high-speed applicator lines such as beer labeling, for example, because this laser marking system is currently limited to speeds of thermal transfer marking.'

The use of linerless technology and the lack of ribbon application result in significant sustainability benefits. Labels produced by Identilabel's system are claimed to have 53 percent less material than thermal transfer labels. 'As well as the sustainability advantages of eliminating liner and ribbon waste, there are security

benefits such as embedded marking under the transparent film, and performance benefits such as greater resistance to scratches and moisture,' says Derick Arippol.

In the mid-1980s, Novelprint developed a label print-and-apply system for variable data applications, which Jeffrey Arippol describes as a forerunner to thermal transfer printing. 'I resisted the next step – to go into barcodes and suchlike – because I considered the method to be wasteful due to the discarded ribbon,' he recalls. 'I thought that something else would show up. I am surprised that today thermal transfer still dominates the market. But now we have something that can replace it.'

Despite this bullishness over the potential for the technology, Identilabel remains a start-up 'in its early stages', emphasizes Daniel Arippol. The burgeoning company plans to license the technology to label converters, particularly those operating in the sectors previously mentioned as potential target markets. 'The technology is ready to go,' he continues. 'The focus now is on getting a pilot run in

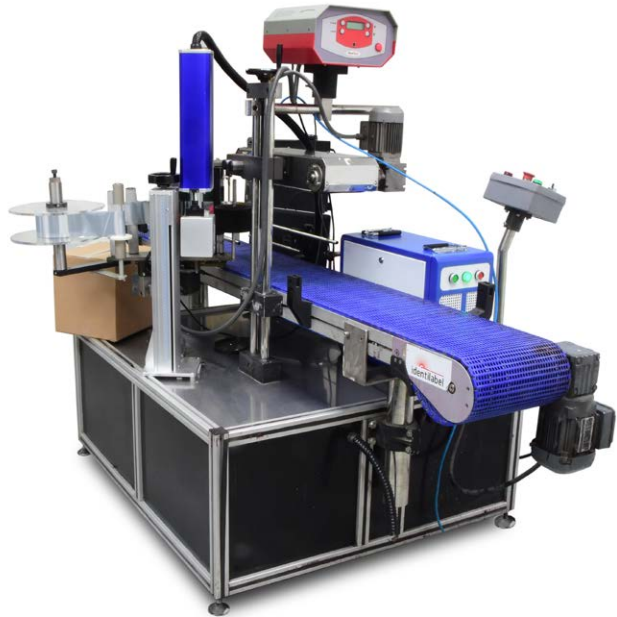


a company, so we can quantify the benefits and raise interest from other potential partners, both in Brazil and abroad.'

Identilabel's base for the past two years has been CIETEC, the University of São Paulo's start-up complex. 'It is the perfect place for new technologies,' explains Derick Arrippol. 'The incubation environment lends itself to innovation. We can meet with other technology companies and share ideas. We have access to professors. We can hire students from the university to help with development – a fifth-year chemical engineering student has just joined the team.'

In December 2022, the company was named one of the 100 most promising and innovative start-ups in São Paulo by SEBRAE (the Brazilian Small Business Support Service).

'We have always been involved in innovation,' says Derick Arrippol. 'While running Novelprint, it was hard to bring in a new disruptive technology. So it's great to be able to focus purely on this. It is a development that really follows industry trends towards greater sustainability and less waste.'



Identilabel's patented variable data laser marking system is based on linerless technology



Visit [identilabel.com.br](http://identilabel.com.br) for more information

## Flexo Wash star breaking stubborn barriers

Defying expectations and breaking through barriers, Paula Andrea Lopez has carved out a place for herself in the male-dominated printing industry. As the country manager for Flexo Wash in Mexico and the founder of her own company, Huella Digital, Lopez's journey is a testament to the power of resilience and determination.

Labels & Labeling caught up with this unstoppable force in the printing for an interview in which she sheds light on her inspiring story that continues to pave the way for other women in the region.

### Carving her own path

With experience spanning Mexico and Colombia, Lopez founded her own company, distinguishing it from her father's offset and digital printing business.

Aiming to prove her capabilities and avoid being labeled a 'daddy's girl,' Lopez relentlessly pursued her own path to success.

Having held various positions at her father's paper distribution company in Colombia, Lopez accrued valuable knowledge and experience. Reflecting on those times, she shared, 'All this information and experience I gathered for years gave me the vision and strength to start my own company in the industry without becoming a competitor to his company.'

Starting her own company was exactly what she did.

### Creating Huella Digital

In 2002, while still in college, Lopez founded Huella Digital. However, it was

not until 2007 that she truly immersed herself in the business. Huella Digital, translating to 'fingerprint' in English, represents the unique identification of each individual and their products. The company supplies label printers with materials and accessories for printing labels and shrink sleeves.

As a woman in the industry, Lopez encountered challenges, particularly in Latin America. Some doubted her ability to create a company separate from her father's.

'At the beginning, it was hard for some people to understand that it was a company apart from my father's, and they did not see me as an entrepreneur, but as his daughter only. I had to demonstrate my own value and knowledge,' she says.

Forming relationships with customers was initially difficult. 'For everybody 17 years ago, a woman did not belong in this industry, and it was hard to rely on me and my capabilities. It was a hard path, but we overcame it, and now I have a great relationship with all my customers and suppliers,' Lopez explains.

### Acknowledging limitations and striving for success

She acknowledges the various limitations she overcame: 'I had different types of limitations. At the beginning, my lack of knowledge of the flexographic industry required me to learn this industry better than (anyone) because I was a young woman entering a man's world with no experience. It took a lot of time to be taken seriously.'



Lopez attributed her success to her work ethic and dedication to building lasting relationships with customers and suppliers.

'From the beginning, I saw myself as the game changer, as someone that wanted to build a company that could be trusted, that runs the extra mile for its customers and engages with their businesses and their people,' Lopez says.

She continues to oversee Huella Digital's operations from a distance, with managers running the business in Colombia, Mexico and the United States. Living in Mexico, she is more involved with the Mexican facility. Her role at Flexo Wash is separate from her involvement in Huella Digital.

### Embracing the future of the printing industry

Lopez is optimistic about the industry's future, as the shift towards digital printing and emerging technologies presents exciting opportunities. However, she notes that staying ahead requires adaptability: 'It's something that changes every day, and you have to keep up with that change.'

by Charlie Edward

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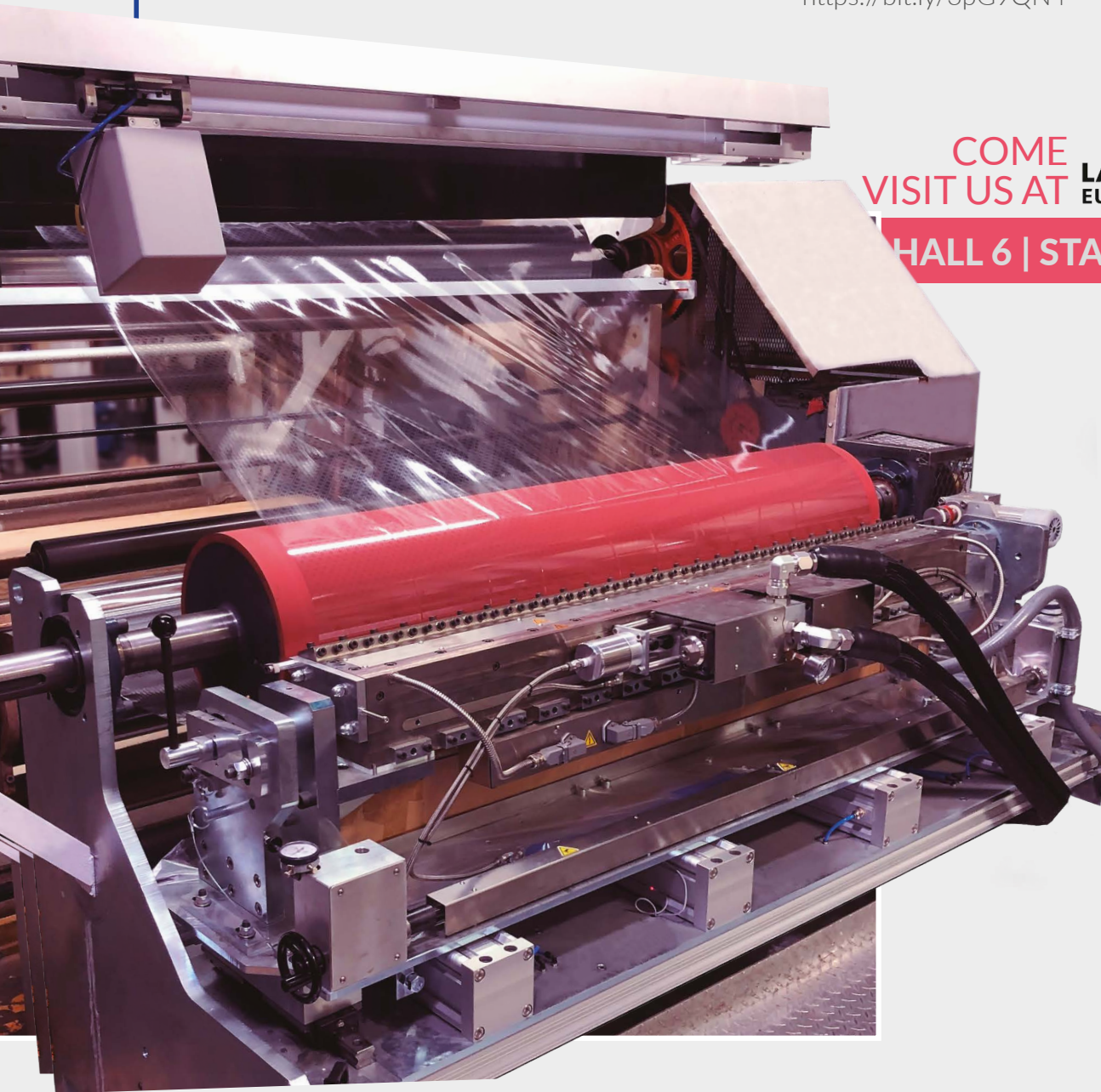
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# Sigma Labels looks to Labelexpo to expand into foils

*Established in UAE in 2010, Sigma Labels looks to expand its application range, Pallavi Choudhary reports*

**U**AE-based Sigma Labels is looking to invest in inkjet printing machinery and converting machinery for aluminum foil, as part of its strategy for growth.

Jagannath M Wagle established Sigma Labels in 2010. The company produces a wide range of self-adhesive labels including product labels, industrial labels and cargo labels. Finishing options include cold foil stamping and lamination.

**“In the MENA region, many startups are open now, so the demand for short-run jobs is increasing”**

Labels at Sigma are UV printed in both sheet and roll form and supplied to industries such as pharma, cargo, steel, food and plastics.

## Turning point

Wagle started his career in labels working at his uncle's printing business named Haroon Labels, where he learned about the processes of making stickers and barcode labels. In 2010, he established Sigma Labels with the knowledge he gained at Haroon Labels.

Wagle's production began with a 3-color flexo press from Mark Andy, followed by a new 8-color flexo press from Multitec. In 2017, he added a new Bobst machine to increase its production capacity.

According to Wagle, 2020 was a turning point for the company as it invested in setting up an in-house plate-making from Esko and then bought the Master M5 flexo press from Bobst.

During Covid, Sigma produced a range of labels for hand sanitizers. After that, in 2022, Sigma installed a brand new Lombardi Synchroline 530 press to print short runs of shrink sleeves. The company added digital print capability with a Konica Minolta AccurioLabel 230.

Wagle says: 'Our primary focus is on self-adhesive labels, so we installed Bobst presses and now with Konica Minolta's AccurioLabel 230 label press, we are targeting the smaller market

for short runs. With Esko water-washable plate-making, we grew and were able to increase our productivity, improve the quality and save time. In July 2022, we invested in Lombardi specifically for short-run shrink sleeves as we found good potential for shrink sleeves in the market. We have software that can provide our customers with a 3D design for jobs according to their requirements and this makes us apart from others in the MENA region.'

Sigma Labels services the food and cosmetic industries with both wet-glue paper and OPP labels.

Now, it is planning to introduce aluminum foil to its applications lineup. Wagle plans to visit Labelexpo Europe in Brussels this September to look for the aluminum foil converting machinery.

Sigma Labels is also planning to invest in an inkjet press

Speaking with Wagle about label trends, he says that businesses are looking for digital printing and high-raised varnishes.

'No doubt, the self-adhesive market is growing and competition is increasing daily, but nowadays, customers in the food and cosmetics industry are doing great for self-adhesive labels,' he says. 'In the MENA region, many startups are open now, so the demand for short-run jobs is increasing. Demand for labels in every industry is growing every day; without this, no product can be introduced in the market and hence, the future of labels is bright.

'Today, many big companies are also concerned about sustainable packaging as they can take the burden, but smaller companies don't have the budget, so they don't practice such things.'

Sigma Labels is also working on anti-counterfeit technology for its brand customers.

One such is an embedded scannable code in the artwork that can't be recognized by human eyes but can be read by the cameras and linked to authentication websites or particular secure locations. Other anti-counterfeit technologies the company is using include holograms and micro text.



For more information on Sigma Labels, visit [www.sigmalabels.com](http://www.sigmalabels.com)



Sigma Labels is exploring foils for high-value decoration



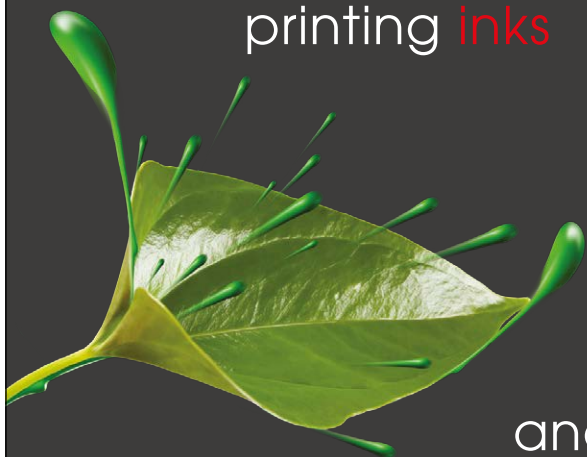
Lombardi Synchroline 530 at Sigma Labels





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# JK Labels to increase focus on new-generation startups

*Start-up brands in food, beverage and personal care are allowing JK Labels to grow creatively, Pallavi Choudhary writes*

**M**umbai-based JK Labels believes in maintaining its quality by increasing the capacity of sticker labels.

JK Labels is a manufacturer of customized self-adhesive labels in India that offers numerous label applications, including product packaging, quality control, tamper-evident, security hologram stickers, check protection, and others that can be used on various substrates. These labels consist of application-on-paper materials and different films (PE, PP, PET). The other printing options the company provides are lamination, barcoding, holograms, cold foil, varnish, numbering and security/specialty inks.

JK Labels mainly provides self-adhesive labels to customers in the pharmaceutical, food and beverage, fast-moving commercial goods, personal care, liquor, automobile, chemical, petrochemicals and paper industries.

In 2008, JK Labels bought its first German machine, Gallus EM 280 flexographic printing machine, which could print up to 7 colors. To complement the machinery, the company added a 7-color and 4-color Orthotec letterpress label printing machine, Omega SR 330 and Omega 270 inspection units, rewinding and slitting systems, various numbering, block making, cutting, bailing, weighing and box strapping machines.

In 2013, JK Labels expanded its business by adding a new 10-color Gallus EM 280 label printing machine equipped with an auto-registration system, ink pumps, corona treaters, a dual sensor system and web tension management. With the help of its new Gallus, the company improved efficiency and eliminated human errors. The equipment also features a turn bar to enable reverse printing.

'This machine widens our printing possibilities with a speed of 150m/min, with 10 color units and Braille printing capabilities,' says Rahul Kapur. This machine is complemented by a new HSR 330 inspection slitter rewinder machine and Omega automatic core cutting machine.

In September 2018, JK Labels again bought new equipment, which helped the company increase its efficiency. It added another Gallus EM 280 flexographic printing press and a label inspection machine from Prati. This was the last installation done by the company. It has a fair amount of spare capacity to add new clients. The company also looks forward to adding new machinery in a year or two if required.

Rahul Kapur, director at JK Labels, spoke about the demand for self-adhesive labels in the growing market, saying: 'We have seen a large number of new startup companies in sectors such as food, beverage, personal care, and more coming up with new and innovative ideas. Everyday, new products are being launched by different companies, so there are exciting opportunities with new



(L-R) - Himanshu Kapur, Karan Kapur and Rahul Kapur, directors at JK Labels at their office.

**"Client meetings have refreshingly progressed towards new product offerings and brainstorming new ideas to enhance the product"**

launches occurring more frequently now than ever.'

Kapur is driven by a desire to work with a new generation. He says: 'The biggest dissimilarity between the new startups from the traditional businesses is the curiosity for learning. The new generation firms are very keen on understanding all the product options, applications and benefits. This makes it even more important for us as label solution providers to be always updated. Client meetings, which used to revolve mainly around single product price points, have refreshingly progressed towards new product offerings and brainstorming new ideas to enhance the product brand value of the customer.'

'At our facility, our advanced equipment ensures that we produce the highest quality labels with reduced lead times. In our commitment to maintaining high standards, we have worked tirelessly with all our multinational clients to provide our finished products following the required compliance norms. Additionally, we provide an end-to-end solution from designing artwork to the final delivery of labels. We choose to take on the complete liability of the assignment since it ensures best quality control,' he concluded.



For more information on JK Labels, visit [www.jklabels.com](http://www.jklabels.com)

## LMAI announces conference dates

Label Manufacturers Association of India (LMAI) has announced the dates for the sixth edition of its annual conference.

The LMAI conference will be 20-22 July 2023 at The Leela Palace in Jaipur. The theme of the conference will be 'Creativity, Innovations and Sustainability.'

Harveer Sahni, a member of the board of directors of LMAI,

said: 'Over the years, the LMAI conference has become the most awaited technology sharing and networking event for the Indian label industry. Since the show is being held after a gap of four years due to the impact of the pandemic, LMAI members are anxiously awaiting to attend, network and party not just with Indian peers but also with global suppliers.'



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# TechNova inaugurates TOUCH Center in Mumbai

*The TOUCH Center will have an HP Indigo 6K digital press running live and will offer a complete experience of HP Indigo digital printing technology, Akanksha Meena reports*



HP Indigo 6K digital press will be shown live at the TOUCH Center in Mumbai



(L-R) Pranav Parikh, CMD of TechNova and A Appadurai, country business manager – Indigo and inkjet business solutions, HP

**T**echNova inaugurated its TOUCH Center at Turbhe, Navi Mumbai in January 2023. The TOUCH Center will have HP Indigo 6K digital press running live and will offer a complete experience of HP Indigo digital printing technology.

Both print service providers, as well as brand owners, will be able to explore new applications and business growth opportunities.

TOUCH is an acronym for TechNova Open University for Change. Launched in 1996, the primary objective of TOUCH is to offer the Indian print industry a platform for learning new skills, experiencing new technology and achieving operational excellence by adopting the latest trends in the industry.

## A learning hub

An extension of HP's Graphic Experience Center in Alpharetta, Barcelona and Singapore, TechNova TOUCH Center will provide services including demonstration of HP Indigo technology, new application development for PSPs and brands, and educational sessions for print-packaging students.

Pranav Parikh, CMD of TechNova, says: 'Our journey in digital printing started in 1993 with our alliance with HP Indigo for marketing their presses in India. Soon thereafter, HP acquired the Indigo business, and aligned the capabilities of the press to suit customer needs.'

The TOUCH Center will also provide learning initiatives and training programs. A Appadurai, country business manager – Indigo and inkjet business solutions at HP says: 'Our mission is to provide a level playing field for the startups and SMBs in high-quality world-class printed packaging. Today HP Indigo converters cater to about 10,000 such startups.'

This aligns with the Indian government's focus on supporting startups. The number of registered startups in India has grown from 4,000 in 2016 to 92,000 today, presenting a significant opportunity for converters.

Appadurai adds that the TOUCH Center will also be used to train students to help address the labor challenges the industry is currently facing.

The manufacturer will also open the center to brands to explore what's possible with labels and packaging. The idea is that this will lead to new customers for converters.

He says that any converter today who has multiple conventional presses will need a digital press in three to five years because of the changing landscape and print runs coming down.

**"Our mission is to provide a level playing field for the startups and SMBs in high-quality world-class printed packaging. Today HP Indigo converters cater to about 10,000 such startups"**

Amit Khurana, deputy CEO – digital and offset print solutions at TechNova, says: 'HP's strategy to create an ecosystem of printers, brand owners, profitable applications and partners is unique. HP's futuristic technology fits in perfectly with TechNova's business strategy of focusing on customers' needs to enhance their profitability.'

Parikh adds that investing in the machine is one part of the process toward growth. Customers also need a roadmap that involves control over their operations, consistency of quality and continuous improvement. The new center will help customers develop these business strategies.

## Sustainable print technology

HP also highlights the sustainability benefits of digital print, including reduced chemicals use, power consumption and material waste. 'Around 28 percent of print packaging material never sees the product,' Appadurai says.

Parikh adds that India's export market is growing as international companies look for partners and expand their presence here. The packaging industry in India has seen high investment rates in the last two years.

Export opportunities also increase with the capability of printing variable data. 'There are 54 countries in Europe and they have multiple government regulations and languages. And they are small populations. A lot of work for them is short-run,' he says.

The government of Nepal has installed two HP Indigo 6K presses for security printing.



For more information on the TOUCH Center, visit:  
<https://survey.zohopublic.in/zs/0DDzwqZ>

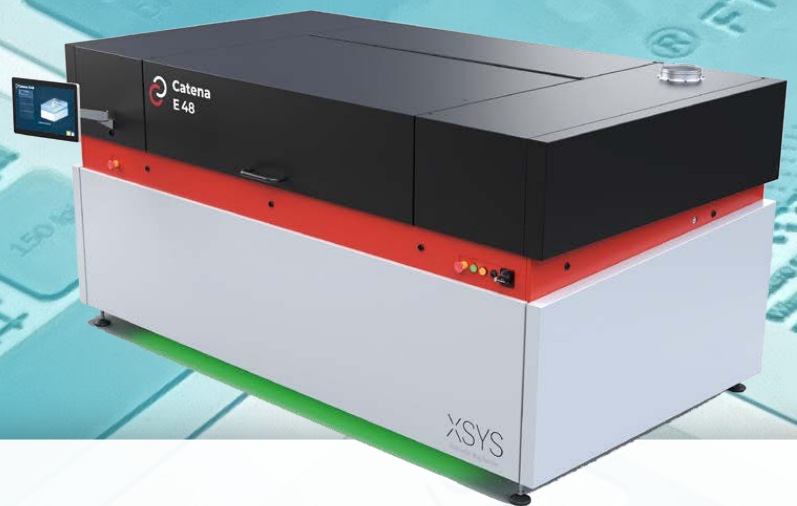


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# EAN Label embraces digital

*Malaysia-based label converter is leading in digital printing with the latest addition of an HP Indigo 25K to its fleet, Akanksha Meena reports*

**T**he label and packaging industry in Malaysia has seen a shift towards digital printing in recent years due to the growing demand for personalization and shorter printing lengths.

EAN Label Industry is a prime example of a company that has taken advantage of this trend by adding an HP Indigo 25K digital press to provide digital printing services to customers in the region.

EAN Label Industry was founded in 2007. Bryan Lim, managing director says: 'We started small—with only three staff members and two letterpress machines, one with printable functionality, and the other with die-cut capabilities and providing labels printing services to local businesses.'

A decade later, the company has grown with over 110 employees to provide digital flexible packaging and label printing for the food and beverage, pharmaceutical, personal care, toiletries and electronics industries in Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, Brunei and the Philippines.

EAN Label Industry also provides services from design to delivery to the market.

'Before I started EAN Label, I was a marketing manager for a cleaning equipment company, I struggled with low service quality, low printing quality and long turnaround time for the labels I ordered. I knew there had to be a better way to order labels—and that's why EAN Label was created to fill the gap in the printing services market,' he says.

EAN comes from a Chinese word meaning 'continuous long-term business relationship'.

The company's owner is known for being passionate about getting on the floor and leading his team to achieve their company goals.

The team is made up of young, talented and energetic individuals with a growth mindset and known for creating and innovating for their clients.

## Adapting to changing times

The company has adapted to the changing market trends in recent years by adding digital printing to its range of services.

In 2014, the company ventured into digital printing with a used HP Indigo 4500 and upgraded to a new HP Indigo 6600 model in 2016. In 2020, it added another HP Indigo 6800 press to keep up with the growing demand for high-quality printing services.

EAN Label Industry has also started servicing the flexible packaging market with its latest addition HP Indigo 25K Press in 2022.

The press can print several products including shrink sleeves, roll-form sachets, three-side seals and stand-up pouches. EAN Label Industry can ship within seven to 14 days or less with its new machine.

The digital label printing industry is growing rapidly in Malaysia. The need for fast turnaround time, last-minute orders, low minimum order quantities, and high printing quality are in high demand in this region.

Interactive features on packaging and labels with a personal touch are popular among brand owners, who also expect brand protection and other features in labels such as anti-counterfeit, contest, warranty and tracking ability to manage data collection.

After the pandemic, the local market is recovering at a slower pace. Labor shortages, unstable supply chains and inflation issues have slowed market growth.

Naturally, the digital transformation activities within the region



*EAN Label team with the company's new HP Indigo 25K digital press*

**"In Malaysia, digital flexible packaging is very new. A lot of people still are not aware of it"**



*EAN Label and HP Indigo organized an open house in Malaysia to educate customers on flexible packaging with HP Indigo 25K press*

have accelerated, causing buying behavior to shift toward an online to offline model.

Brand owners are looking for better services to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their products and marketing campaigns. This has created an opportunity for EAN Label Industry to provide high-quality labels at a faster turnaround.

The converter has also been recognized in the market for providing short-run flexible packaging.

Arnon Goldman, general manager, of Asia Pacific at HP Indigo, says: 'As you witnessed, the owner of the company is passionate and believes in getting his hands on the floor, also leading his team to achieve their company goals. They have a pool of young, talented and equally energetic employees who have a growth mindset to create and innovate for their customers.'



## “EAN Label was created to fill the gap in the printing services market”

The installation of the HP Indigo 25K digital press was completed by HP Indigo and HP Indigo Channel Partners.

‘It is a process that can take time for perfection, and we ensured we had the press ready to meet and perform to the expectations of EAN for the sign-off on. Additionally, the operators are now well trained with HP Indigo trainers on-site,’ Goldman adds.

### Open house

EAN Label hosted an open house event in collaboration with HP Indigo in Malaysia. During the event, EAN Label Industry was able to publicize its services and capabilities to provide short-run flexible packaging.

The company was also able to capture partnership or business opportunities with other flexible packaging companies to address their short-run requirements. It was also able to attract and nurture its current and prospective customer brands by showcasing innovative and creative opportunities for packaging.

‘In Malaysia, digital flexible packaging is very new. A lot of people still are not aware of it. We wanted to spread awareness about it,’ Lim adds. ‘We discussed with HP Indigo Malaysia and organized an open house event. And I can say the event was very effective. We got a very good response from our brand owners.’

The converter plans to add finishing and pouch-making machines to its technology line-up. It also plans to set up a new production facility for pouch making.

EAN Label Industry is focused on developing its IT to reduce transaction costs.

‘IT will play a major role in our future development, we understand the importance of having a strong digital presence, and we’ve made it one of our priorities to allocate more funds towards technology than ever before,’ Lim explains.

‘Besides IT, we will allocate 80 percent of our facilities investment budget towards digital printing equipment instead of conventional. We are confident that this move will be beneficial in the long run given the market conditions,’ Lim explains.



For more news from the Southeast Asia region, visit [www.labelsandlabeling.com/southeast-asia](http://www.labelsandlabeling.com/southeast-asia)

## African packaging honored

The annual AfriStar Awards program, hosted by the African Packaging Organisation, recognizes outstanding packaging produced on the African continent, reports L&L Africa correspondent, Gill Loubser.

Judging in the African Packaging Organisation’s AfriStar Awards for Packaging Excellence covers two distinct categories: packaging produced anywhere on the continent (excluding South Africa) and packaging produced in South Africa specifically destined for other African markets.

Although the original awards ceremony was held during South Africa’s Gold Pack Awards presentation in Johannesburg at the end of 2022, a second session was hosted more recently alongside Propak West Africa at the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel in Victoria Island, Nigeria; and a third showing takes place at Propak East Africa in mid-March 2023.

In this pan-African event, the gold award went to Kenya’s Tetra Pak East Africa for its 500ml Tetra Prisma aseptic carton. Featuring a QR code to provide an interactive experience to runners competing in the Lewa Safari Marathon, this environmentally-sustainable pack is also said to reduce carbon footprint by removing some 300kg of plastics from the packaging mass.

Ghana’s Nestlé Central & West Africa received silver for its Nescafé 3-in-1 coffee packaging. Leading its initiative



Ahmed Omah (center), with Institute of Packaging South Africa’s past national chairman, Susi Moore, and Northern Region chairman, Amith Sukhmandan

for responsible products and packaging, Nescafé has introduced its ‘Cup of Respect’ campaign in West Africa as part of the brand’s passion for crafting great coffee and its commitment to responsibly-sourced products and packaging.

The bronze award went to Nigeria-based Shongai Technologies for the Hypo Toilet Cleaner, which comes in an accessible, affordable pack format. It’s an easy-to-handle, consumer-friendly and recyclable alternative to the standard rigid plastic bottles.

In the second part of the competition, for entries produced in South Africa specifically destined for other African markets, Gayatri Beverage Cans took gold for the Kombat and Kung Fu 500ml energy drink cans.

The judges commented that the energy and dynamic character of these brands is conveyed and enhanced by the challenging design executed using six-color dry offset printing. Intricate prepress origination and detailed technical work are required to ensure these clean and exciting results.

## Guru Labels installs GM DC330Mini finisher

Guru Labels, a label provider in Australia, has installed Grafisk Maskinfabrik DC330Mini finisher. Nick Lowe, founder of Guru Labels, said: ‘Our motto is - when you start with zero customers, you appreciate every customer. Starting from scratch gave us the freedom to think creatively about our products and services, and to come up with new ways to serve our customers better and today we use and rely on the most advanced label finishing technology.’

‘We have worked closely with the Grafisk Maskinfabrik team to identify the perfect machine for our needs, one that would enhance our production capabilities, streamline operations, and contribute to our eco-friendly goals. After careful analysis, Grafisk Maskinfabrik provided us with a state-of-the-art machine tailored



to our requirements. The company’s support team also provided our staff with comprehensive training and technical assistance to our staff, and we are happy to report that the new DC330Mini is up and running and already delivering increased efficiency and outstanding finishing quality,’ Lowe added.

The newly installed DC330Mini is said to reduce waste, energy consumption, and uses environment-friendly materials.

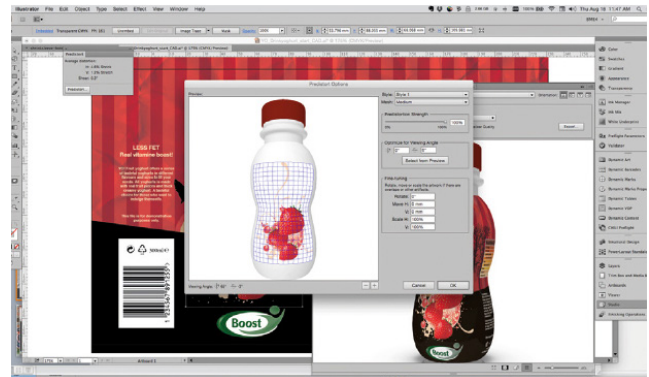
Guru Labels is chosen by over 1,300 other trade printers in Australia.

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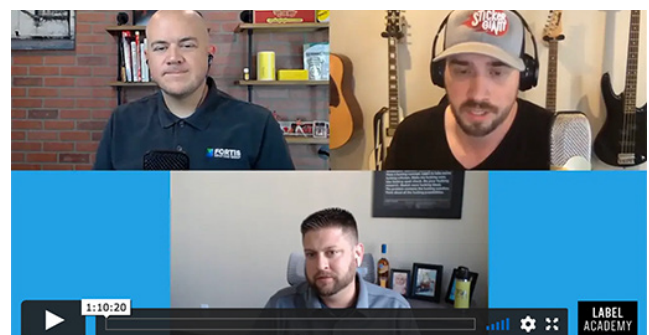
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# RY Label diversifies for growth

*Utilizing a skillful mixture of conventional and digital print and finishing equipment and emphasizing quality has kept RY ahead in a competitive market. Yolanda Wang reports*

**R**Y Label was founded in Shanghai in 2008. In 2019, its new factory in Zhejiang Province was completed, and the company moved its production base out of Shanghai.

Today the company has 70 employees and daily label production capacity is more than 200,000sqm. In 2022, the annual output value of RY Label reached more than 50M RMB (\$7.2M USD).

RY Label is a comprehensive label solution provider, integrating design, printing and post-press processing. Its key end-user markets include tire, logistics, electronics, automobile, steel, clothing, retail and household chemicals.

## History and development

Men Yan'an, founder and general manager of RY Label, has been in the label printing industry for more than 20 years. In 2002, he graduated from the Beijing Institute of Graphic Communication and joined Shanghai Tobacco Industrial Printing Company (later renamed Shanghai Tobacco Packaging Printing Co., Ltd.), where he was responsible for technology and research. Then he joined UPM Raflatac and was responsible for the sales of special label materials. Later, he joined a domestic company as executive vice president.

With this background of professional knowledge and years of working experience, Men Yan'an had a good understanding of the label printing industry and its market requirements. With an optimistic outlook on the future development potential of label products, he was prompted to start his own business. In 2008, Men Yan'an registered Shanghai RY Label, with an initial workshop area of 1,500 sqm. With the company growing rapidly, he set up a new operation in Qingdao, Shandong Province in 2012.

In 2017, Men Yan'an began to build a new plant in Jiaxing, Zhejiang Province. On November 18, 2019, the Jiaxing factory was completed with a total investment worth 50 million RMB (\$7.2M USD).

'With the growth of Shanghai RY Label's business, the existing leased plant was not able to meet the company's production and development needs,' says Men Yan'an. 'The label printing business is an asset-heavy processing industry. Especially for printing equipment, certain requirements need to be met. We believed that investing in a wholly-owned plant would be good for our future planning, development and layout, in terms of plant structure, decoration and other aspects.'

All the production equipment from the Shanghai factory has now been transferred to this new factory, including a Mark Andy flexo press, Lintec letterpress and HP Indigo 4500 digital press. In

**"Raw material shortages, logistics constraints, staffing shortages, will ease slightly in 2023, but consumers' concerns about health and environmental sustainability will continue to affect how they choose goods and services"**

addition, the company has invested in a Weigang inline flexo press, HanGlobal LabStar 330S inkjet press, Reborn digital die cutting equipment, Rhyguan die cutting machine and other equipment.

'Every year, 20 percent of the company's sales revenue is used in R&D and new equipment investment, to ensure that our company's production capacity and technical skills are ready to meet the changing needs of the market,' Men Yan'an says.

In addition to its internal R&D personnel, RY Label also actively cooperates with professional industry R&D institutions and constantly improves its ability to provide multi-process label products. The company has successively patented inventions including a high-speed web adjustment device for a digital printing press, and a flow control device.

## Time to diversify

The increasingly fierce competition and excess capacity in the label printing industry has been particularly evident in the past three years since the outbreak of Covid-19. For label converters, it is more necessary than ever to diversify.

'Label products used in tires, automobiles and electrical appliances, account for a large part in our business, Men Yan'an comments. 'Such labels usually have multi-SKUs and the number is generally not large, which makes them very suitable for digital printing technology. This is the main reason why we continue to invest in digital presses.'

Interestingly, more new orders are coming to RY Label from its industry peers. Such orders usually have special requirements in process, design and labeling. That means it takes more time to communicate with customers, and multiple proofing passes before confirmation for production. RY Label is gradually transferring

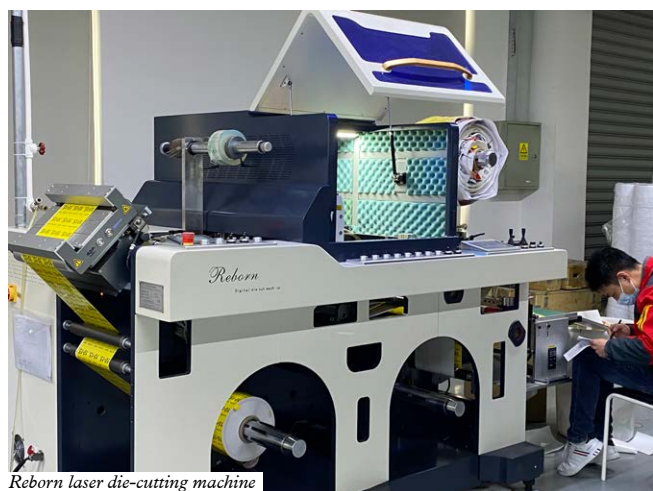


HanGlobal LabStar 330S in RY Label, Li Huiming of HanGlobal and Men Yan'an of RY Label



HP Indigo 4500





Reborn laser die-cutting machine

such orders to its digital press and laser die-cutting equipment to improve efficiency.

RY Label makes a clear distinction: 'Conventional printing technology has advantages in production efficiency and cost for long-run orders, and the printing quality is more acceptable to customers. We use this printing equipment to produce products with large runs and relatively simple process requirements. Compared to personalized and special label orders, these orders still have the largest market share.'

In addition to traditional label products, RY Label also invested in a Hadesheng laminating machine and data writing system to produce RFID, NFC and other intelligent label products.

### Quality is key

RY Label has insisted on providing high-quality products and services since its inception. The company has established a strict and standardized quality management and control system covering all production chains from design to delivery.

'My experience has taught me that quality is of primary importance to brands,' Men Yan'an says. 'Label products, in particular, are not only an important part of the packaging of goods but also a key bridge for brands to communicate with customers.'

**“Label products, in particular, are not only an important part of the packaging of goods but also a key bridge for brands to communicate with customers”**

In addition to continuous investment in equipment and technology, RY Label also organizes regular internal staff training. RY Label has passed ISO9001, ISO14001 and ISO45001 management system certificates in recent years.

High-quality products and services attract a group of loyal customers for RY Label. To date, they have serviced more than 1,000 brand customers, including some well-known brands such as Zara, Goodyear, Hankook, Pernod Ricard, Sam's Club, Unilever, Lion, Panasonic and Philips.

### The future

After the epidemic, there will be new trends in the end-user consumer market, as well as some new development opportunities. 'I think, some difficulties caused by Covid-19, such as raw material shortages, logistics constraints, staffing shortages, will ease slightly in 2023, but consumers' concerns about health and environmental sustainability will continue to affect how they choose goods and services. People will be more inclined to choose goods and services with high quality and market recognition that they trust. This is bound to affect the label products,' says Men Yan'an.

Thanks to the reputation it has built up over the years, RY Label achieved an impressive 45 percent sales growth in 2022. The question now is how to further expand the company's orders, and improve the efficiency of their existing equipment. These will be the main goals in 2023. The company is very confident it can double the growth of business profits in the coming year.



For more information on the China label market, visit Labelexpo Asia in December [www.labelexpo-asia.com](http://www.labelexpo-asia.com)

## King Label opens new factory in Thailand

Chinese label material supplier, King Label has invested 650 million THB, (approx. \$19M USD) into the development of a new factory facility located in Yutay, Ayutthaya, Thailand.

The site located 180 kilometers from the nearest port, will be equipped with four lines, including one silicon-coating, two coating and one surface treatment production line and will have a capacity of 40 million square meters following build completion in May.

The Thailand factory, with a first-phase workshop area of approximately 22,400sqm, is King Label's third production base after Zhongshan and Liyang, Jiangsu Province. At present, the company's production capacity totals 100 million square meters per year, with an output value of 650 million RMB.

King Label commenced the build of the new factory in 2019 after wholly purchasing the land. Currently, the total investment reaches 652 million THB (approx. 18,862USD)

'Southeast Asia is a very important market for us. As the center of Southeast Asia, Thailand covers Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia and other countries. Due to the trade war between China and the United States, many of our brand customers have set up factories in Southeast Asia. The Thai facility will help us to better serve them,' said Vincent Shiao, board secretary of



King Label.

At present, the first batch of equipment has entered the debugging stage, and the second batch is expected to be ready by the end of March, after which full production capacity is expected. In addition to twelve technical and managerial staff sent from China, the rest will be recruited locally and the factory is anticipated to have 100 employees by the end of the year.

In addition to this, King Label invested in a cutting center in Bac Ninh Province, Vietnam in December 2022, which is currently in the renovation phase.



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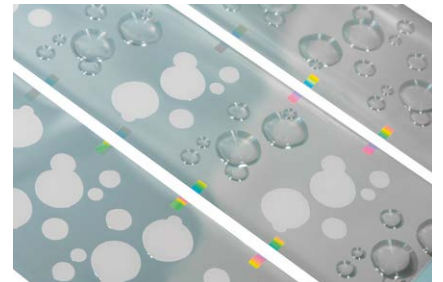
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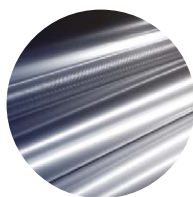
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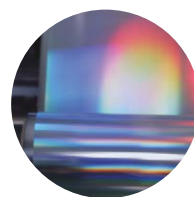
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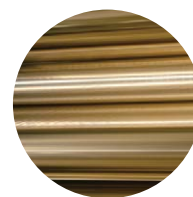
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Cai Yuqin, chairman of Advance Printing

# Women take the lead at Advanced Printing

*Advanced Printing is quickly becoming a leader in the Chinese label printing industry thanks to its tenacious leader, Cai Yuqin. Yolanda Wang reports*

**A**s one of the most successful private enterprises in China's label printing industry, Advance Printing has developed into a modern high-tech enterprise over the last 22 years.

Headquartered in Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, the company has set up three plants in China, located in Tianjin, Guangzhou and Xinjiang, which allows the converter to reach East, South, North and northwest China - the four major economic regions in the Chinese market.

Advance Printing is quickly becoming a leader in the Chinese label printing industry. The success of the company can be attributed to one woman: the 31-year career of Ms. Cai Yuqin, founder and chair of Advance Printing.

## Lifelong career

Yuqin joined Suzhou Dongyi Packaging & Printing Company in 1992. During this period, she learned a lot about label printing technology and sales.

'The more I found out about the label printing industry, the more I was attracted to it,' she says. 'A small label can play a very big role in improving the overall packaging effect of products, such as increasing the shelf appeal and attracting the attention of consumers. But manufacturing that label requires investment in high-level printing and finishing technology.'

According to Yuqin, this inspired her entrepreneurial career.

When she began her career, China was in a period of reform and development, which opened excellent opportunities for China's labels and packaging industry. Many international brands had settled in China's Suzhou Industrial Park, such as L'Oreal, Johnson & Johnson, Philips, Siemens and more.

**"We must continue to enable women and stop assuming there are limits to what they can achieve. Women will have infinite possibilities in the label industry of the future"**

After leaving Suzhou Dongyi in 2000, Yuqin registered Advance Printing the following year. The company was located at Suzhou Jinji Lake, a location perfect for providing high-quality label products and services for these global brands.

The tenet that drives Cai Yuqin is: 'Choose one goal in life,' she says. Over the years, she has remained true to her original aspiration - to make Advance Printing a leading player in China's label market.

This year is Advance Printing's 23rd anniversary. From a single factory in Suzhou, the company has expanded to four production sites, forming a complete supply chain network across China.

## People-focused management

Yuqin has a deep and realistic understanding of how the label industry functions.

'Printing was actually a boring and tiring job, especially in the early days of Advance Printing when label printing technology was



mechanical and manual, which is not so friendly for female operators,' says Yuqin. 'The proportion of female employees in the whole industry is probably not more than 20 percent. With an increase in the automation of print and post-press technology, however, women are much less restricted in the jobs they can take.'

Continues Yuqin, 'As a female leader in this industry, I have a deep understanding of the potential and abilities of our female employees. At Advance Printing, we give women a lot of opportunities to acquire new skills, explore their potential and value, and help them break through and grow, enhancing their happiness and job satisfaction.'

Ms. Xue Aidi, who has been in Advance Printing for 20 years, is now the manager of the company's quality inspection department.

'Advance Printing is not only a job for me to earn a living,' she says. 'Over the years it has become an important part of my life. This job gives me a great sense of satisfaction and achievement. I have personally moved from being a manual quality inspector to operating an automatic inspection machine, and I now manage the entire department.'

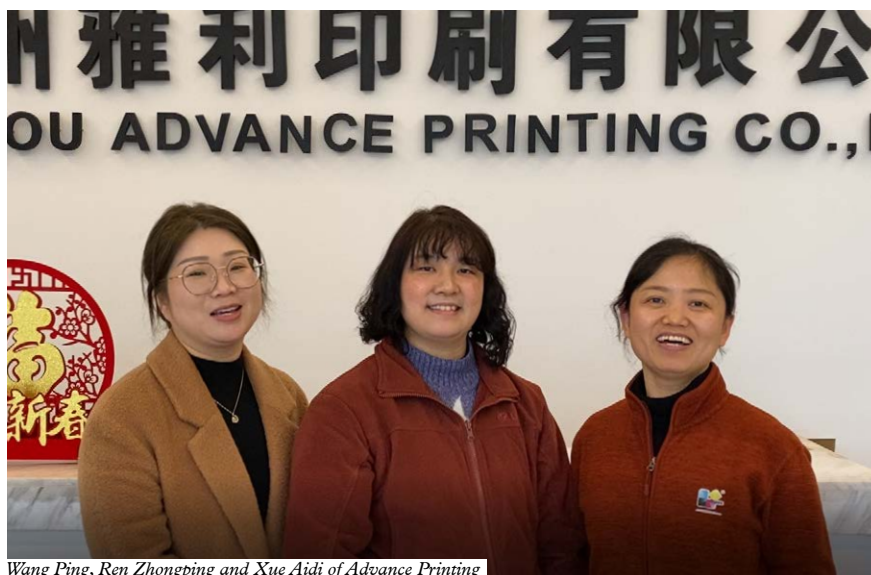
Aidi adds, 'Ms. Cai is a leader who is easy to get close to. She often visits our workshop and communicates with us, not only about our work, but she also cares about our daily lives.'

Wang Ping, who has been in the company for 15 years, has developed her career from a quality inspector, to a supervisor, to customer service. 'Ms. Cai is a very charming, confident and elegant lady,' Ping says. 'She is the collective idol of our female employees, leading and motivating us to be more positive and to keep improving to be the person we can be.'

Ren Zhongpin has been a front-line quality inspector in the company for 12 years. She says: 'Ms. Cai is always a good guide. She is very generous and is always forward-looking. Our quality inspection equipment has always been kept up to date. This is closely related to her planning and investment strategy.'

This type of leadership has allowed Advance Printing to retain a very loyal group of employees, which is one of the main reasons for the company's steady growth in the label industry. Permanent employees - those with more than five years' service - account for more than half of the workforce. Yuqin says that the company gives priority to helping solve the problems of employees' families as well as the challenges they face in their day-to-day working lives.

In addition, Yuqin attaches great importance to cultivating her own



Wang Ping, Ren Zhongping and Xue Aidi of Advance Printing

## **“When she began her career, China was in a period of reform and development, which opened excellent opportunities for China’s labels and packaging industry”**

improvement. In 2022, Advance Printing was certified as a Women’s Business Enterprise (WBE).

### **Investment strategy**

Just as she keeps pushing her own personal development, Yuqin has always insisted that Advance Printing constantly transforms itself and keeps pace with the changing requirements of brands and the market.

Yuqin has shown great courage in her bold investment decisions. For example, Advance Printing was an early investor in inline narrow web flexo presses – most recently including a 10-color Spande S7 press - followed by digital printing technology and AVT automatic inspection equipment. Its hardware investments have put the company at the forefront of the label industry in China.

Advance Printing attaches special importance to its sustainability strategy. The company was certified carbon neutral in September 2022. Among the many measures implemented, the company added thermal insulation to the walls, upgraded equipment with LED-UV curing, installed solar panels on the roof, adopted 'green' delivery vehicles and installed a centralized water-cooling system, along with other measures. Advance Printing has become the first supplier to pilot a new initiative to reduce the carbon footprint of L’Oreal in the North Asia region.

Today, the range of products produced by Advance Printing includes

pressure-sensitive labels, shrink sleeve labels, in-mold labels, traceable anti-counterfeiting labels and personalized labels. Key end-use markets include household chemical, food and beverage, medicine and health care and electronics, serving brands including L’Oreal, Johnson & Johnson, Shell and other global companies.

Yuqin says, 'The development of Advance Printing has gone hand in hand with the growth of our customer’s businesses. Their growth has enabled us to grow, and I am very grateful to all of our supportive customers who have accompanied Advance Printing through every stage of our development.'

For female workers in the label printing industry, she believes that women’s natural strengths of resilience, patience, perception and tenacity should be taken full advantage of. 'We must continue to enable women and stop assuming there are limits to what they can achieve. Women will have infinite possibilities in the label industry of the future.'

Talking to all females in the label industry, or who are considering joining it, she concludes, 'Although the road may be long, it will come to an end; although things are difficult to do, they will be resolved. Let’s make 2023 the year we take action!'



The global label community next meets in China at Labelexpo Asia 2023 in December. To find out more, visit [www.labelexpo-asia.com](http://www.labelexpo-asia.com)

# TLMI

## #LABELUSGREEN

**TLMI Sustainability is challenging the label industry to make a BIG impact to celebrate Earth Day this April!**

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# Donghong Printing undertakes digital transformation

*Donghong Printing installed the first Durst Tau 330 RSC E digital press in Guangdong Province in March 2023, further expediting its digital transformation. Yolanda Wang reports*

**D**ong Hong Printing, established in 1996, is located in Chang'an Town, Dongguan City, Guangdong Province. It produces a wide range of printed products including pressure-sensitive labels, tapes and folding cartons. The company's facilities currently cover an area of 3,200sqm and it has 96 employees. Annual output is over 50m RMB (USD 7.2m).

**“For the past three years, we considered a more comprehensive and long-term investment plan for our new facility”**

Looking back over Donghong Printing's recent history, general manager Li Deyou says: 'Initially we purchased one-color offset printing equipment to produce some simple business forms. In 2005, Donghong Printing imported a Heidelberg multi-color offset printing press and started the production of manuals. In 2007, they purchased CTP plate making equipment and in 2008, they bought another Heidelberg offset press to undertake the processing of folding cartons. Through these investments, the overall production scale and business volume achieved steady growth.'

Donghong Printing 'officially' entered the label printing industry in 2012 with its first Zonten intermittent offset press.

'China's label printing industry had been growing very fast at that time,' says Deyou. 'The continuous improvement of consumers' living standards and the strong growth of e-commerce had greatly increased market demands for label products. At the same time, Donghong Printing's key customers in the stationary and toy sectors were also increasing their demands for label products. Moreover, we found that label printing had the combined advantages of less investment and higher profit margins compared

with other printing products, so we decided to expand the label printing business to meet these demands.'

Donghong Printing purchased its second Zonten intermittent offset press in 2016 to further expand its label production capacity. In addition, the company developed innovative new products including 'Washi' paper-based tapes and a PET tape, converted using its label technology.

At present, the production of PS labels and tapes accounts for over 90 percent of the company's total business volume.

## Digital investment

Donghong Printing had been following the development of digital technology in the label industry for several years, and in 2017 the company installed its first digital press – a Trojan water-based inkjet press.

'Actually, the application of digital printing technology in this industry was not very mature at that time. We mainly use the first digital press to explore our Washi tapes business,' Deyou says. 'Washi tape is generally used for DIY and decoration. Most of such orders are small-run, but have a wide range of patterns and versions, which makes them very suitable for digital printing technology.'

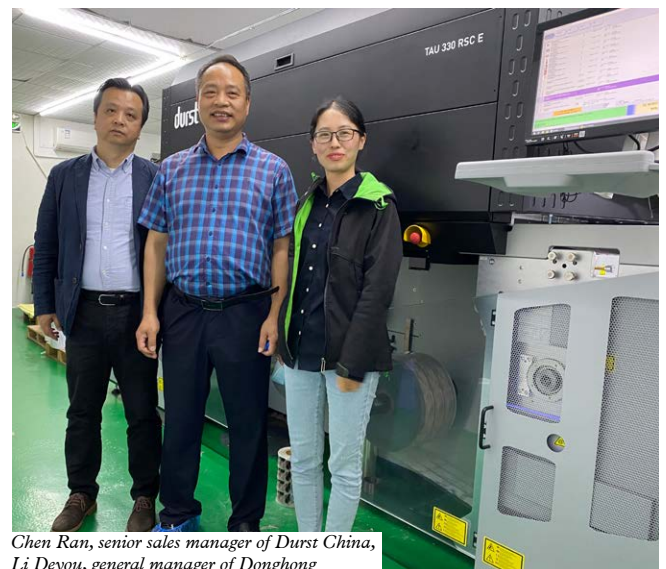
Donghong Printing purchased its second digital press – a Winbosc UV inkjet press – in 2019.

Subsequently, the company purchased several Reborn and Polly laser die-cutting machines, along with digital varnish and foil machines, expanding their digital production into finishing processes.

Explaining the decision to install the Durst Tau 330 RSC E digital press in March, Deyou says, 'In my opinion, the first two digital presses were our initial attempts, and the third one is the result of our deeper research. Especially after Covid-19 for the past three years, we considered a more comprehensive and long-term investment plan for our new facility.'



Durst Tau RSC E installed in Donghong



Chen Ran, senior sales manager of Durst China,  
Li Deyou, general manager of Donghong





Polly laser die-cutting in Donghong



Reborn laser die-cutting machine in Donghong



Zonten offset press in Donghong

**“After the new press is fully in operation, overall digital production capacity is expected to increase by one-third”**

Continues Deyou, ‘We are now the first user of Durst label digital presses in Guangdong Province. Compared to similar products, the overall investment cost of Durst digital press is relatively high, but its printing quality, printing speed and after-sales service have been also confirmed and recognized widely by their users. At the same time, the Durst digital press is fully expandable in terms of printing width, production speed and color configuration, etc, which could well meet our growing and changing production needs in the future.’

At present, digital printing accounts for 50 percent of Donghong Printing’s total output. After the new equipment is fully in operation, overall digital production capacity is expected to increase by one-third, and the proportion of digital printing will exceed 60 percent of total company output.

#### Internet+

Donghong Printing first looked at how they could use the internet as early as 2005, setting up its own online store on the Alibaba website.

Now Donghong Printing had established a professional online service team to provide a comprehensive service including initial inquiry, online quotation, order-placement, delivery and payment.

Donghong Printing has also expanded its overseas business since 2009 by using its internet platform. Currently, overseas orders account for half of their total business volume.

Thanks to such prescient planning, Donghong Printing achieved steady growth even during three years of the Covid-19 epidemic. The total production capacity of the company in 2022 increased by 10 percent compared to 2021.

The overall Chinese economy is recovering after Covid-19, and Donghong Printing is full of confidence for 2023. Deyou says the company will continue to focus on digital printing in the future, and is expected to install its second Durst digital press by the end of this year.



For more stories on Chinese label converters, see pages 99 and 103



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# Label trends

Despite challenges, such as the global macroeconomic downturn and chip and other raw material shortages, the global RFID market is expected to expand further in 2023, according to IDTechEx

Global RFID market value  
**\$14B USD** market in 2023

The biggest source of market revenue is passive RFID tags, equivalent to

**\$8B USD**

It is estimated that 39.4 billion RFID tags will be sold in 2023, a

**20% YOY increase**

## RFID types

Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) is the use of radio waves to identify and track objects wirelessly.

## Common applications

### UHF



Retail apparel and footwear



Medical / health care



Air baggage and cargo

### Passive HF



Contactless cards / fobs



Smart tickets



Passports

### Passive LF



Livestock



Access control



Vehicle immobilizers

## Challenges for growth



Cost



Infrastructure



Software



Customer trepidation



Standardization

Source: RFID forecasts, players and opportunities 2023-2033" by IDTechEx



# Label SOCIETY

*TLMI hosted its annual converter meeting at St Petersburg, Florida in March. The event features educational sessions, networking and Eugene Singer Award for Management Excellence.*

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