



## Digital Embellishment and its Impact on the Printing Industry

Full story page 8



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# 25th YEAR



## ASIAN PACKAGING EXCELLENCE AWARDS: 2026



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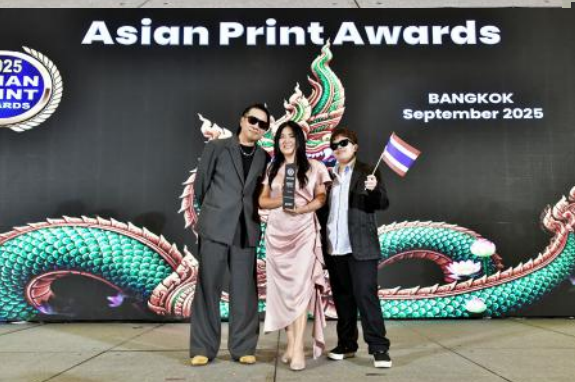
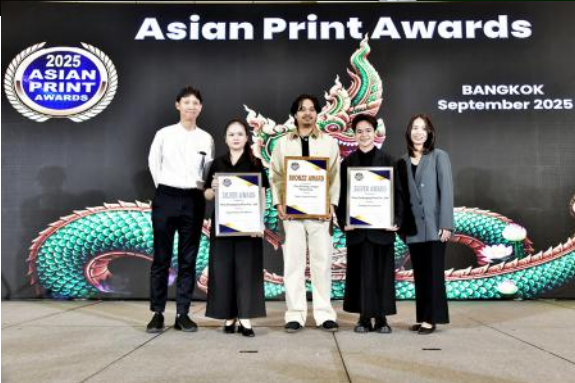




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# The Importance of Print Impact on the Printing Industry

In an increasingly digital world, print continues to prove its relevance by evolving beyond ink on paper. One of the most powerful drivers of this evolution is **print embellishment**—the use of decorative and tactile enhancements such as foiling, embossing, debossing, spot UV, varnishes, textures, and specialty coatings.

Far from being a luxury, print embellishment has become a strategic tool that elevates print, differentiates brands, and reshapes the future of the printing industry.

## What Is Print Embellishment?

Print embellishment refers to post-print or inline processes that add visual, tactile, or sensory value to printed materials. These enhancements can include:

- Foil stamping (hot, cold, digital)
- Embossing and debossing
- Spot UV and raised UV coatings
- Metallic inks and specialty varnishes
- Textured and soft-touch finishes
- Die-cutting and layered effects

The goal is simple but powerful: make printed pieces more engaging, memorable, and emotionally resonant.

## Why Print Embellishment Matters

### 1. Enhancing Brand Perception

Embellished print signals quality, craftsmanship, and attention to detail. Whether on packaging, business cards, book covers, or marketing collateral, embellishments help brands communicate value and prestige. In competitive markets, tactile and visual differentiation can directly influence purchasing decisions.

### 2. Creating Emotional and Sensory Connections

Unlike digital media, print can be touched, felt, and experienced physically. Embellishments activate multiple senses, increasing engagement and recall. Studies consistently show that tactile print

materials are more memorable and trusted than digital-only communications.

### 3. Standing Out in a Digital-Heavy Environment

As consumers are saturated with screens, embellished print cuts through the noise. A raised UV logo, metallic accent, or textured surface captures attention in ways pixels cannot. Print embellishment transforms static print into an interactive experience.

4. Increasing Perceived Value and ROI  
Well-executed embellishments can elevate a simple printed piece into a premium product. This allows brands and printers to justify higher price points while delivering greater perceived value. For marketing campaigns, this often results in higher response rates and stronger brand recall.

## Impact on the Printing Industry

### 1. Driving Innovation and Technology Adoption

Print embellishment has accelerated investment in new technologies, including digital embellishment presses, inline finishing systems, and hybrid workflows. Digital embellishment, in particular, enables shorter runs, personalization, and faster turnaround times—key advantages in today's on-demand market.

### 2. Shifting Printers from Commodity to Value Provider

Traditional print is often seen as a commodity driven by price. Embellishment allows printers to move up the value chain, offering creative

MGI JetVarnish 3DS



solutions rather than just production. This shift helps protect margins and strengthens client relationships.

### 3. Expanding Market Opportunities

Packaging, labels, luxury goods, publishing, and promotional materials are all benefiting from embellishment. As brands seek differentiation on



# Embellishment and Its Industry



shelves and in unboxing experiences, embellished print has become a competitive necessity, not an option.

#### 4. Encouraging Collaboration Between Designers and Printers

Effective embellishment requires thoughtful design and technical expertise. This has led to closer collaboration between designers, brands, and print service providers, positioning printers as creative

partners rather than back-end suppliers.

#### 5. Supporting Sustainability Through Smart Design

While embellishment may seem counterintuitive to sustainability, modern techniques—such as digital foiling and selective coatings—can reduce waste, eliminate dies, and support shorter print runs. When used strategically, embellishment can enhance impact without increasing environmental footprint.

#### The Future of Print Embellishment

As technology advances, print

embellishment will become more accessible, customizable, and integrated into standard print workflows. Personalization, variable data embellishment, and automation will further expand its role. In a future where print must justify its existence alongside digital media, embellishment will be one of its strongest assets.

At the **Asian Print Awards**, Digital Print Embellishment has rapidly evolved from a niche creative technique into a transformative force within the Asian print and packaging industry.

Recent competitions have highlighted entries using advanced digital embellishment technologies—such as digital foiling, spot UV varnish, texture effects and multiple layers of tactile





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finishes—to elevate the visual and sensory impact of printed products. Judges and industry observers at the 2024 and 2025 events noted that these embellished digital prints not only stand out visually among traditional print work but also push the boundaries of what's achievable with short-run and customised production.

For example, winning entries in the Best Digital Embellishment category demonstrated effects like fine texture lines, holographic foil combinations, and high-precision spot UV that are economically feasible only through digital processes, effectively redefining expectations for packaging and premium print items in the region.

The impact of digital embellishment at the awards goes beyond aesthetics. It underscores a broader shift in the print industry toward innovation, personalisation and value creation. As digital embellishment tools become more accessible, smaller and mid-sized printers can compete with larger firms by offering high-impact finishes that attract brands seeking differentiation on crowded retail shelves.

Judges and industry experts have remarked that embellished digital prints often outperform non-embellished counterparts in visual

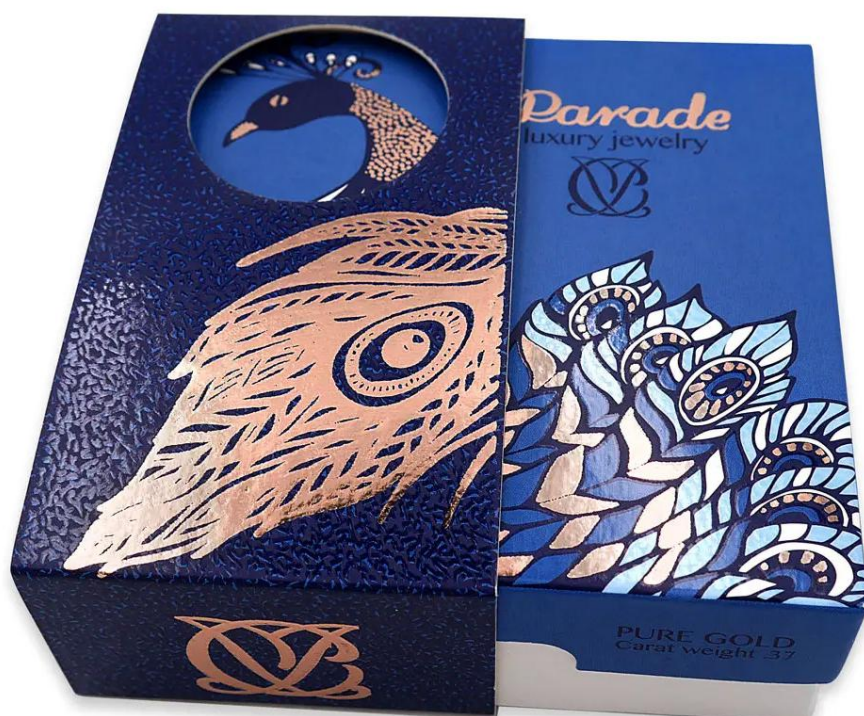
appeal and perceived quality, influencing both award outcomes and market relevance. This trend is helping accelerate adoption of digital embellishment as a strategic business capability across Asia, enabling companies to offer bespoke, premium, and sustainable solutions that align with contemporary consumer and brand expectations

#### Conclusion

Print embellishment is no longer just about aesthetics—it is about strategy,

differentiation, and value creation. By enhancing sensory engagement and emotional connection, embellishment ensures that print remains relevant, impactful, and commercially viable. For the printing industry, it represents a path forward: one that embraces innovation, creativity, and premium experiences in a world that increasingly values meaning over volume.

In short, print embellishment is not just shaping the future of print—it is securing it.







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# Sustainable Trend 2026



## Four trends reshaping labels and packaging in 2026

As we step into a new year the main focus for many will be on EU packaging mandates, global supply shifts, and rising consumer demand for sustainability.

Set against this backdrop, global digital label output is set to soar over the next few years, fueled by sustainability goals, rapid technological evolution, and a resilient consumer goods sector.

They echo the momentum highlighted in last year's look back on a decade of progress in the label industry.

Building on earlier predictions around AI, automation, smart labeling, and the premiumization of food and beverage packaging, here are four major trends that will shape consumer, brand, and label converter strategies in 2026.

Trends that digital printing will become a mainstream driver in helping converters rethink possibilities.

### 1. Regulation-Driven Design Becomes the New Normal

2026 marks the first full year under the EU Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR), in effect since February 2025. This milestone compels brand owners and label converters to embed design-for-recycling, use certified materials, and adopt smart tracking systems right from the start.

The EU has a bold ambition for all packaging to be recyclable in an economically viable way by 2030.

To meet this, compliance now requires proactive circularity, integrating recyclability, reuse, and data transparency directly into packaging development cycles.

Digital label production is uniquely positioned to support this shift. With lower waste, smarter versioning, shorter runs, and traceability, converters equipped with certified materials and recycling-first design





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capabilities will lead the next wave of sustainable packaging innovation.

## 2. Extended Content Labels (ECLs) Step Into the Spotlight

As regulatory requirements tighten across industries, Extended Content Labels (ECLs), such as booklet-style or multi-layered formats, are experiencing explosive demand.

ECLs give manufacturers the space to include complex regulatory disclosures, multilingual content, safety instructions, sustainability messaging and dosage or usage details.

This format is essential for pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and chemicals - sectors where compliance is mission-critical. The pharmaceutical industry, in particular, is driving rapid growth. With aging populations, globalized supply chains, and a wave of new drug approvals, the pharmaceutical labeling market is expected to exceed \$9 billion by 2033 (CAGR 5%) according to a Pharmaceutical Labeling Market 2025-2033 report from analysts Research and Markets. Rising safety standards and patient-centric packaging, paired with digital printing innovations, will continue accelerating demand.

## 3. Compact, Agile Production Lines Define the Next Era of Converting

At Labelexpo Europe 2025, Konica

Minolta introduced the prototype of its newest AccurioLabel press featuring an in-line IQ unit for automated quality control. This innovation reflects a broader industry push toward enabling converters to make their first move into digital, open new market segments and bring outsourced work back in-house.

Integrated production lines on display at the successful show were tailored to high-growth sectors such as retail, pharmaceuticals, and logistics. These highly automated systems simplify onboarding, speed up artwork versioning, and allow near-instant job switching. In 2026, converters will embrace compact, connected, and highly responsive production environments that support faster turnaround times and ever-shorter runs.

## 4. Digital Printing's Rapid Climb to Market Dominance

Digital printing is continuing its steep upward trajectory. According to Smithers, global digital label output is set to double from 5.6 billion to 11.2 billion square meters between 2024 and 2030.

Flexography still represents roughly 41% of total volume, but digital is the fastest-growing process by a wide margin.



### Why the surge?

Unmatched flexibility.  
Shorter print runs.  
Expanded embellishment possibilities.  
Reduced waste and inventory.  
Improved responsiveness to market fluctuations.

Despite global uncertainty, ranging from geopolitical tensions to changing consumer behavior, digital printing remains a stabilizing production technology that empowers converters to move with speed and agility. This shift is prompting converters to rethink traditional workflows and embrace digital routes to embellishment and flexible packaging.

### A Future Built on Innovation

As 2026 progresses, label converters operate in a market defined by transformation, opportunity, and the push for sustainable competitiveness. Cloud-based ERP systems, higher automation, and digital-first workflows will play central roles.

## Digital Transformation Redefining Label Markets

Digital production is enabling a smarter, cleaner, more customized future for the label industry marked by automation, personalization, sustainability, real-time supply chain insight, and reduced inventory waste.

Smithers states the global label market reached 80.2 billion square metres in 2024 (valued at \$46.5 billion) and is forecast to grow to 99.1 billion square metres by 2030. Digital's market share will more than double to 11.3% by 2030, with Western Europe and North America leading the charge.

In Europe, both tighter regulations and booming e-commerce are fueling steady demand for high-quality digital label solutions, with market value expected to reach €19.5 billion by 2027 (IMG research).

And the adoption curve continues steepening: in Western Europe and North America, digital label production is fast approaching offset's 17% share. They have already reached 11.2% and 11.3%, respectively. **Asia-Pacific, while currently at 3.8% digital share, is the fastest-growing region, with projected CAGR of 4.81%.**





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# 6,000 HelioSprint 2 engraving systems installed worldwide.

An impressive milestone for HELL Gravure Systems: 6,000 HelioSprint 2 engraving systems are now in operation worldwide.

This figure not only underscores the technological maturity of the system, but also the continued trust of the international gravure printing industry in a solution that has long been regarded as a benchmark for precision and productivity in gravure cylinder manufacturing.

Universal broadband engraving system HelioSprint 2 is HELL's universal 9 kHz broadband engraving system. Developed to meet the highest demands of electromechanical engraving, the system delivers exceptionally high engraving performance while ensuring uniform cell geometry. This combination is essential for reproducible gravure printing results and stable production processes.

Accordingly, the application spectrum of HelioSprint 2 is broad. It ranges from security and banknote printing

to packaging and decorative printing, as well as the engraving of coating and application rollers. As a result, the system covers virtually all relevant application areas of modern gravure printing and surface finishing.

Flexibility through optional tuning packages

A key success factor of HelioSprint 2 is its modular design. In its standard configuration, the system operates in a screen range from 54 to 100, reliably meeting the classic requirements of packaging and decorative printing.

For special applications, HELL offers optional upgrades. With the "Coarse Screen" tuning, the screen range can be extended to include 48 and 40, opening up additional fields of application, particularly for the engraving of technical cylinders where larger cell volumes are required.

The optional XtremeEngraving tuning goes even further. Thanks to a writing resolution of up to 540 lines per centimeter, the system achieves engraving results whose fineness and level of detail come close to those of laser engraving. For users, this means a significantly expanded performance spectrum while maintaining the proven process stability of electromechanical engraving.

## Proven technology with a future perspective

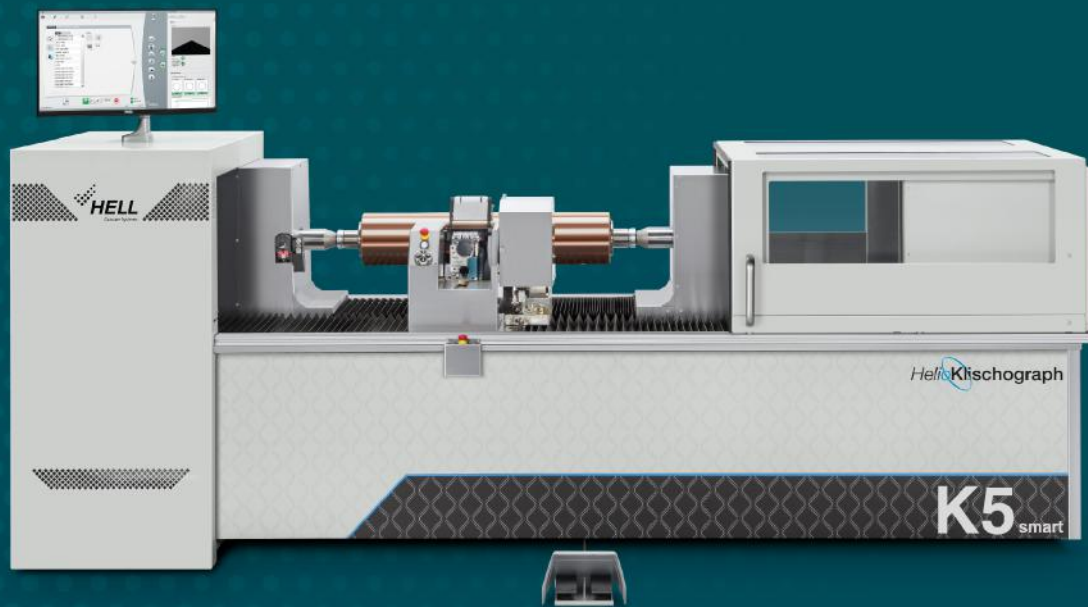
The figure of 6,000 installed systems reflects a technology that has proven itself in the market over decades and continues to evolve. HelioSprint 2 exemplifies HELL Gravure Systems' approach of combining established electromechanical engraving technology with innovative enhancements – ensuring competitive solutions for a wide range of market segments well into the future.

At a time when efficiency, reproducibility and flexibility are decisive success factors, HelioSprint 2 remains a key tool for engraving operations worldwide – and clear evidence that electromechanical engraving will continue to play a vital role in industrial gravure cylinder manufacturing in the years ahead.





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# Hybrid Software Releases PACKZ 11.5 with Customer-Driven Innovations for Label and Packaging Prepress

Introducing Halftone Detection Tool: Precision Screening Control with Harlequin RIP® Technology, Extended CF2 3D Variants, and Enhanced Laneplanner for Digital Printing Hybrid Software, the leading provider of enterprise software for...

Hybrid Software, the leading provider of enterprise software for the label and packaging industry, announces the 11.5 release of its PACKZ PDF editor for label and packaging prepress. This release marks a significant milestone in the company's commitment to customer-driven development.

"What makes this release especially significant is the input from our user community," said Pascal Wybo, Product Manager at Hybrid Software. "Our DNA is to listen to customers and act on their input. For the 11.5 release, we have actively engaged with PACKZ users to gather suggestions, feature requests, and usability insights. This collaborative effort has shaped the development of PACKZ 11.5, making it a reflection of the needs of our industry."

## New Halftone Detection Tool: Precision Screening Control with Harlequin RIP Technology

PACKZ 11.5 introduces the Halftone Detection Tool, a powerful extension to PACKZ Max that features integrated Harlequin RIP technology for unmatched control over screening parameters directly within the PACKZ editor. This high-precision quality control tool is engineered to support print professionals during the prepress phase with fast and accurate measurements of critical screening parameters.

The Halftone Detection Tool evaluates screen frequency and screen angles directly from the PACKZ Max RIP output preview and any 1-bit TIFF file opened in PACKZ. Beyond basic screening metrics, the tool delivers in-depth analysis of dot gain compensation, minimum and maximum dot sizes, and plate linearization, ensuring optimal plate and print quality with

consistent results across production environments.

## Extended CF2 Format Now Supports 3D Variants

In collaboration with technology partners Arden Software, Engview, and TreeDIM, Hybrid Software continues to extend the CF2 standard with the introduction of 3D variants in PACKZ 11.5 and partner products. This powerful new capability allows multiple fold angle configurations—such as fully closed, lid open, or folded flat—to be embedded within a single CF2 file.

These 3D variants are instantly rendered in Hybrid Software's iC3D ray-tracing software and are fully compatible with structural design systems from companies that support the Extended CF2 format and 3D variants. This enhancement significantly streamlines 3D packaging workflows, enabling faster design iteration and improved communication across the production chain.

## True-to-Life Spot Color Rendering Powered by ColorLogic

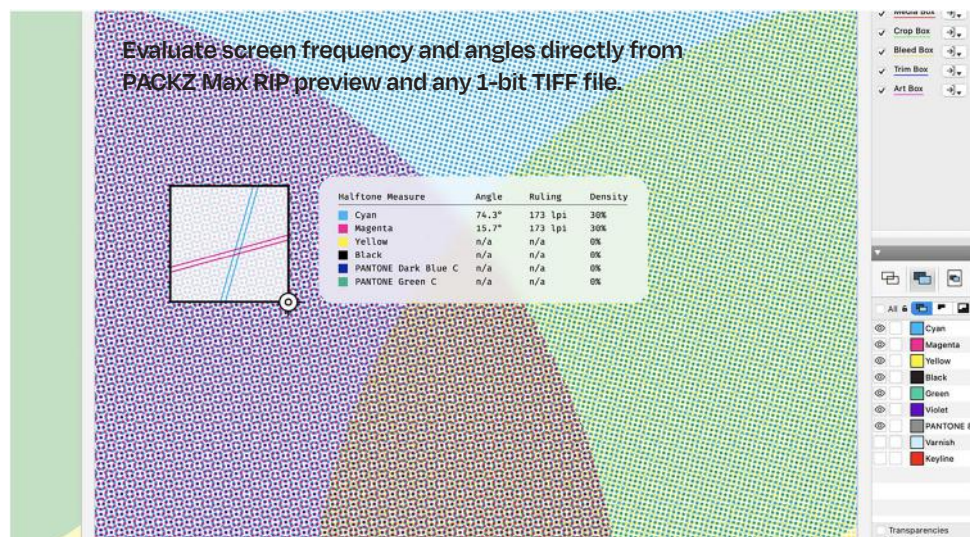
Based on ColorLogic technology,

PACKZ now renders spot colors on screen with exceptional accuracy using their spectral or colorimetric data. The improvements are most notable for spot color tints and blends of spot and process colors, maintaining a consistent hue.

Spot color specifications are retrieved from CxF/X-4 spectral data in a PDF file or from selected color books. PACKZ also supports substrate simulation by selecting Absolute Colorimetric in the display Preferences.

## Laneplanner Enhancements for Digital Label Production

Packimizer Laneplanner introduces new features that enhance production accuracy and efficiency for roll-fed digital printed labels. The Laneplanner now supports maximum roll length specifications in version 11.5, ensuring optimized layouts stay within physical press or finishing equipment limits. Additionally, Laneplanner respects the exact label roll quantities required by customers, allowing converters to fulfill orders precisely without overproduction or waste.

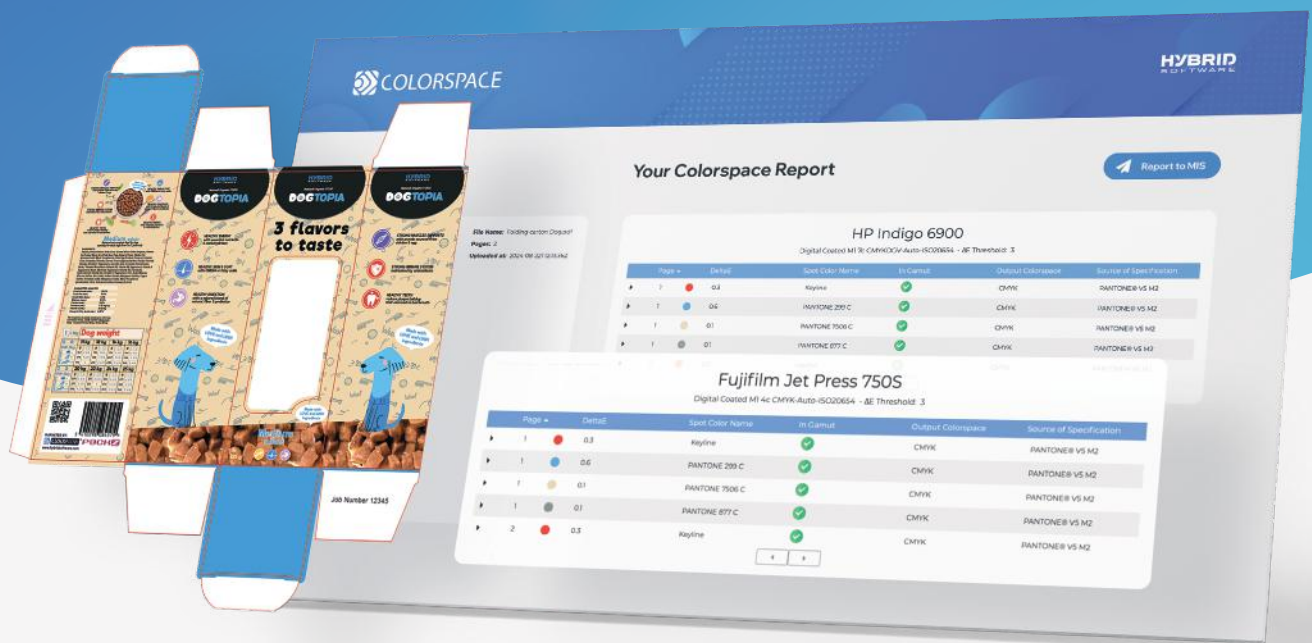






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# Global Bestseller – 1,000th S

## Heidelberg goes to Chinese

- Hoifu Group looking to premium packaging to leverage further growth
- Special configuration with 14 units will operate at Yancheng site
- Efficient inline production, productivity, and service promise key factors in investment decision
- Demand for specialty presses from HEIDELBERG booming in Chinese packaging market

The impressive price-performance ratio of the Speedmaster CX 104 makes it a popular choice among a wide range of customers and therefore the bestseller in the product portfolio of Heidelberg Druckmaschinen AG (HEIDELBERG). The 1,000th press in this series has now rolled off the production line and is destined for the Hoifu Group, a Chinese packaging printer with around 2,500 employees that is enjoying strong growth.

The 14-unit special configuration equipped for UV printing will soon start operating at the new site in Yancheng, where it will be integrated into the company's end-to-end Prinect-based workflow. By making this strategic investment, the Hoifu Group is looking to tap into new markets in the premium packaging segment, especially the luxury food, beverage, and tobacco industry.

### Production efficiency, productivity, and service promise decisive

By making production more efficient, the enhanced automation and stability of the Speedmaster CX 104 also boosts productivity and ensures consistent, reproducible quality. The tried-and-tested color accuracy of this press meets even complex requirements when it comes to printing high-end packaging. What's more, the combination of automation and consistent color reproduction reduces both makeready times and material consumption.

The wide-ranging service promise of HEIDELBERG also played a key role in the investment decision.

"Besides exceptional technology, Heidelberg also offers excellent service support that goes a long way toward ensuring we achieve our

productivity and quality targets in high-end packaging production," says Ou Shun Chou, Chairman of the Hoifu Group, during acceptance testing for the new Speedmaster CX 104 at the HEIDELBERG production site in Shanghai.

"The Speedmaster CX 104 is our global bestseller, and special long configurations – particularly for premium packaging production – are a Heidelberg specialty," reveals Dr. David Schmedding, Chief Technology & Sales Officer at Heidelberg. Long presses combine a whole host of different processes in a single inline operation, meaning end products are available faster and the logistical outlay is minimized.

Especially in the important Chinese packaging market, Heidelberg is seeing booming interest in such specialty



A global bestseller



# Speedmaster CX 104 from packaging printing company

presses, which print shops can use to meet the demand for high-finish packaging in-house. Besides state-of-the-art technology with integrated solutions, customers also expect first-class service, including a reliable supply of consumables and spare parts.

"The Heidelberg ecosystem offers all these things. It also means we can build on our strong position in the crucial Chinese market and the Asia-Pacific region as a whole," Schmedding continues.

## Already the third Speedmaster CX 104 for the Hoifu Group

Founded in 1996, the Hoifu Group quickly became a well-known producer of high-end packaging. The company remains on a growth trajectory, and its latest investment in cutting-edge Heidelberg technology marks a key step toward modernizing



A team from the Hoifu Group, gathered around Chairman Ou Shun Chou (front row, sixth from the left), with HEIDELBERG representatives including Steven Hou, General Manager South China, and Michael Nilges, Managing Director of the Shanghai site (front row, seventh and eighth from the left), during acceptance testing for the 1,000th Speedmaster CX 104 at the HEIDELBERG site in Shanghai.

production operations for high-end packaging. Once commissioned, the new acquisition will be one of three Speedmaster CX 104 presses in the Yancheng site's production

department. The company also operates further HEIDELBERG sheetfed offset systems at other sites.



seller – the Speedmaster CX 104 destined for Hoifu is a special configuration with a total of 14 units.



# Higher brand demands & how printers can respond with modern flexo

Steve Smith, Principal Consultant, Advanced Print Applications at Miraclon, looks at how a modern flexo approach allows printers to respond to what brands now want from their packaging, while becoming more efficient and more sustainable



Brands are laying a challenge at the door of packaging printers: deliver packaging with the same on-shelf appearance and improved sustainability – while driving more value from the print process.

At first glance, competing requests that are difficult to deliver on. For Steve Smith, re-thinking the foundations of flexo give printers the potential they need to be more efficient, without compromising on quality – delivering packaging with optimal shelf impact. They also need to be able to print brand designs on more sustainable packaging, often a difficult ask because of how these more textured substrates behave on press.

**Q. What challenges are printers facing as a result of the priorities brands now have?**

**S.S.** Brands should not have to compromise on quality and they want to get better value from their print process while addressing sustainability. Part of the challenge comes with the higher costs of sustainable substrates too.

The focus now is often on how much value brands can get and what sustainability gains they achieve – not



only through printing, but through their other manufacturing processes – their whole supply chain.

If printers can't find efficiencies in their process, meeting these higher demands and priorities reduces margins and puts downward pressure on profitability.

**Q. How has the shift from traditional to modern flexo changed what flexo printers can achieve?**

**S.S.** Traditionally, flexo was always a whole collection of variables for a printer to juggle. The reference we often make in modern flexo to

foundations is based on a paradigm shift from what people used to be doing in traditional flexo. The whole idea is to reduce or eliminate traditional variables and, instead, control each of those foundations, from plates to inks to anilox. Color management is a key foundational piece too.

Without control over the foundations of the print process, major inefficiencies can occur. For example, using heavier aniloxes to get the right color results on press can mean money down the drain; recently a company used 380 kilos more ink during the course of a run as a result of using heavier aniloxes to achieve the right ink laydown.

It needs to be a process where you're not changing the inks, anilox or selecting multiple tape options – that collection of traditional flexo variables – to find tactical efficiencies in one area or get results.

When comparing different print processes, our industry also relies too much on technical perspectives – viewing packaging through a magnifying glass. Consumers don't look at packaging that way – they just want to have packaging that looks the same on the supermarket shelf. And brands want to make sure the consumer's perception of their brand is right.

With FLEXEL NX Plates we can provide print consistency that has the shelf impact that brands want and consumers see.

"It's building something that is totally repeatable so it can become a modern manufacturing process, not the art form of traditional flexo."

## Modern flexo describes print production where...

- Flexo can achieve visual parity with gravure, offset and digital
- Results are consistent and predictable, enabling printing by numbers
- Jobs are printed with as few colors as possible
- Print conditions offer wide print latitude with clean printing
- Outcomes can be optimized in more challenging environments, including with more sustainable materials





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**Q. How does a modern flexo approach enable printers to address brands demands for better value print?**

**S.S.** When we work with printers, we show them the kind of savings that are possible, identifying the biggest pain points and helping them realize the full set of possibilities that we can work towards, as well as what we can do to support the printer to achieve that. All of this is ingrained in our approach towards modern flexo.

Previously, flexo was a cheaper alternative to other print processes with compromises on shelf impact.

**That's no longer the case.**

For brands, their shareholder responsibility means they are under considerable pressure to show that they're optimizing their supply chain to stay competitive. They may be facing more competition and the rises in the costs of living are also putting their margins under pressure.

Making the foundations of the print process stable and repeatable creates efficiencies and improves press utilization. Take make-ready time – if it takes over an hour to set up a press with multiple variables that's non-chargeable time.

Printers can see the impact of that through their average press speed. Printing for an hour at 400 meters a minute, with an hour make ready,

makes average press speed 200 meters a minute. There's a big opportunity to cut that make-ready, increasing the true average press speed.

"If the printers are prepared to share the savings generated, then it's a pretty compelling story for the brand, because they can instantly see the efficiencies gained, as well as improved sustainability."

**Q. How does ECG and co-printing help printers meet the brand's needs for better value, more sustainable print?**

**S.S.** We talk about modern flexo as a paradigm shift, and for me, ECG (expanded color gamut) printing with co-printing is where the benefits of that shift become clear.

With co-printing, printers can incorporate multiple – usually two or three – designs on one plate. This relies on moving away from spot color use to ECG printing. The predictability and precise ink laydown achieved with FLEXCEL NX Plates – combined with controls across the foundations of the print process – allows printers to confidently print in this way, saving both time and resources by running only one plate at a time.

Modern flexo is premised on the fact that the proof is an accurate representation of the expected results

on press. You can replicate what is on the proof with an extreme level of accuracy. That unlocks co-printing because it eliminates the need to adjust color on press.

With increased SKU variety, there's often packaging that's the same size packet, the same substrate and only the image changes. So, on one plate we have one flavor repeated, then next to it the next flavor repeated and the next – so we could have three packs on one plate. It's highly efficient: setup time is reduced dramatically, changeovers are eliminated – cutting downtime and waste – as well as a reduction in the total number of plates needed.

There's a paradigm shift here too: co-printing needs the brand to have full confidence in the proof to sign off at that stage, not on press.

All of these benefits add up to significant sustainability gains, with much more efficient use of substrate material, plates and press time, as well as less waste.

Printers need to have the conversation with brands about the opportunities of modern flexo. But if the printers are prepared to share the savings generated, then it's a pretty compelling story for the brand, because they can instantly see the efficiencies gained, as well as improved sustainability.

## Co-printing turns 4 short print run jobs into 1 run



1

2

3

4



1

**75% Fewer plates, setups, changeovers & converting**



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**DLE S**

**For High-Quality Pad Printing Applications**

**XSYS**

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XSYS announced the launch of the nyloprint® DLE 60 S, a new direct-engraveable pad printing plate designed to meet the demands of high-quality applications, responding to the industry's ongoing drive for greater efficiency, repeatability, and cost reduction.

Over recent years, pad printers and system suppliers have increasingly turned to process simplification and automation to overcome growing cost and price pressures. This includes the processing of printing plates, where an increasing number of pad printers and system suppliers are transitioning to direct engraving technology.

This innovative approach replaces the traditional analogue process with a single digital engraving step, delivering higher repeatability, improved process consistency, and cost reductions of up to 20% through simplified laser engraving.

#### **Building on Proven Success**

XSYS was among the first to recognize the potential of direct engraving in pad printing. The company's introduction of the nyloprint® DLE 30 S in 2015 marked a turning point, offering a direct-engraveable plate solution.

Today, the high-quality segment, which is dominated by nyloprint® WSA52, WSA52 Digital, and ST52 plates, has also begun adopting direct engraving, bringing new performance requirements. While the nyloprint® DLE 30 S continues to perform strongly, its restricted relief depth

can limit ink transfer and solid area coverage in demanding, high-end print applications.

To address this challenge, XSYS developed the nyloprint® DLE 60 S, which features an enhanced 60 um relief layer that delivers significantly improved ink transfer and superior solid area coverage. The new plate ensures that pad printers in the premium segment can fully benefit from the speed, consistency, and simplicity of direct engraving without compromising on print quality.

"With the launch of the nyloprint® DLE 60 S, we are taking direct engraving in pad printing to the next level," said Dr. Christian Pietsch, Product Manager nyloprint® at XSYS. "Customers can now achieve outstanding print results while enjoying the process efficiency and environmental benefits that come with eliminating traditional analogue steps."

#### **Key Benefits of nyloprint® DLE 60 S**

The new plate delivers exceptional value across multiple dimensions. By eliminating film negatives and defects caused by dust in the analogue processing steps, it reduces plate-related press downtime by up to 70%.

The enhanced print quality comes with no data loss during transfer and outstanding performance in printing finest elements.

The straight cell geometry and enhanced relief profile definition not only provide excellent solid ink density and brilliant ink transfer but also reduce ink consumption by up to 15%. The simplified workflow through digital direct engraving offers better depth control of the printing form.

From an environmental perspective, the nyloprint® DLE 60 S offers an environmental-friendlier plate processing than analogue method by eliminating film negatives, wet chemistry, washout and exposure steps, which also reduces overall waste.

Combining direct engraving efficiency with premium print performance, the nyloprint® DLE 60 S provides a strong alternative to traditional steel and ceramic clichés. It is perfectly suited for high-quality pad printing applications, offering printers a smarter, more sustainable path toward consistent excellence.

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**HEIDELBERG**



# Enhancing Productivity and Quality Control in High-Quality Package Printing

As a trusted partner to printing companies across the Tokai region in central Japan, Suzuki Printing and Paper Processing Co., Ltd. specializes in heavy stock package printing. The company produces a wide range of packaging using heavy stock, such as boxes for industrial products as well as packaging for gifts and souvenirs.

The company has consistently met the high quality requirements and expectations of its clients through advanced technical capabilities that enable it to handle highly complex print jobs as well as ongoing equipment upgrades that reinforce its quality control system.

In January 2025, the company implemented the Lithrone G40 advance EX Edition, a 40" Six-Color Sheetfed Offset Press featuring superior paper-feed performance and advanced automation functions, thereby achieving further improvements in productivity and quality. To learn more about the background and results of the installation, we interviewed Senior Managing Director Yusuke Suzuki and Chief Press Operator Takahiro Sasano.



## Advancing Printing Technology as Specialists in Heavy-Stock Packaging

Since starting with matchbox package printing in 1968, Suzuki Printing and Paper Processing has established a

strong reputation across the Tokai region as a dedicated specialist in heavy-stock packaging, displays, and POP production.

"We actively take on complex printing jobs, including rigid boxes with specialty finishing made by laminating high-quality paper onto heavy stock as well as unique processing using the coater cylinder that is difficult for printing companies specializing in thin paper. Our technical capabilities are highly appreciated by our clients," explains Senior Managing Director Suzuki.



*"We place a strong emphasis on print quality and quality control. By implementing the latest presses, we use advanced technology to address challenges that cannot be solved by human effort alone." Yusuke Suzuki, Senior Managing Director*



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**Direct engravable pad  
printing plate for highest  
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### State-of-the-Art Press Chosen for Its Inspection Accuracy, Backed by Government Subsidies

The decision to introduce the Lithrone G40 advance EX Edition was driven by two main factors: the aging of the existing machine that had been in use for over 20 years and the need to strengthen the production system to meet the high quality standards required by clients.

"To achieve zero-defect production, introducing a high-performance inspection system was essential. Although we had installed a retrofit inspection system on our previous non-Komori press, the Komori press features an inspection system that is integrated from the design stage. This ensures excellent system coordination and enables high-precision quality control, which gave us the confidence to move forward with the investment," explains Suzuki.

In addition, the availability of an energy-saving subsidy also encouraged the investment. "Komori provided a dedicated support team for the subsidy application process, which allowed us to proceed with peace of mind," he adds.

### Advanced Features Improve Quality and the Workplace Environment

The Lithrone G40 advance EX Edition is equipped with unique features such as Smart Inking Flow, DC Blower, and e-Mist, all of which contribute to higher productivity and sustainable printing.

Suzuki commented, "With the DC Blower, the operating noise of the machine has become remarkably quiet. With this machine upgrade, we increased the number of units from five to six, yet the electricity cost has remained almost the same." He expressed high expectations for both improvements in the work

environment and enhanced energy efficiency.

Chief Press Operator Sasano commented on the Smart Inking Flow, noting that "With fewer rollers, color density stabilizes much faster," highlighting the improvement in color management.

"Since the DC Blower releases heat through a duct built into the cabinet, it suppresses both noise and heat. The e-Mist system removes static electricity during dry seasons like winter, so we expect it to improve the stability of paper feeding," he said, describing the actual improvements experienced on site.

### Enhanced Productivity with High-Performance Feeding and Automated Color Adjustment

When choosing the machine, feeder performance was given special importance so it could handle a

DC Blower highly rated for its quiet operation



e-Mist



eliminates static electricity during dry seasons

variety of paper types. "With heavy stock, if the paper has troublesome behavior, the feeding will be difficult, and it sometimes took over an hour just to dial in the paper. All paper used for production is supplied by the customer, so we do not have the option of selecting the paper ourselves. That is why the feeder performance is critically important.

The Lithrone G40 advance EX Edition delivers highly accurate feeding regardless of paper quality, which was another reason for our decision to introduce it," says Suzuki. After the installation, he praised the press, saying "It can feed any type of paper quickly and consistently, which has significantly reduced working time."

"Because the air settings of the feeder are automatically adjusted, there is almost no need for manual intervention. The machine memorizes the characteristics of each paper stock, allowing us to flexibly handle



a wide variety of substrates," Sasano explains.

Color stabilization time has been significantly reduced. "With the new workflow, PPF data is now transferred to the machine to automate the print settings, which has dramatically accelerated the color stabilization process at job start-up. As the Komori machine performs highly accurate automatic adjustments, only slight manual fine-tuning is required by the operator. This has resulted in a substantial improvement in operational efficiency," said Suzuki, praising the machine.

#### Enhancing Quality Control with Inspection Systems and Improving Work Efficiency through Automation

The introduction of the PQA-S V5 (Print Quality Assessment System) and the PDC-SX (Spectral Print Density Control) has significantly strengthened the company's quality control capabilities. The previous machine lacked an integrated inspection system. According to Sasano, "Manual inspection inevitably leads to oversights.

By entrusting the task to the machine, the precision of our quality control has risen significantly. As a result, inquiries regarding quality have decreased dramatically, and operator stress has been greatly reduced. The time saved can now be allocated to other work, improving operational efficiency and boosting productivity," he says.

**Another key benefit is**

#### ease of operation.

"The control screen now features a touch panel interface, which is especially user-friendly for younger sub-operators who are accustomed to touchscreens. In the past, the press operator had to walk to each unit to operate the buttons, but now all tasks can be completed from the operation stand, significantly reducing workload," explains Suzuki.

#### Automation and Labor Reduction Beyond Expectations: Future Prospects

As a final assessment of the installation, Suzuki commented: "The press is now running at full capacity. Compared with our previous machine, printing speed has increased by approximately 50 percent. Even at higher speeds, sheet alignment and print quality remain stable, so we are very satisfied."

Sasano also added that productivity has improved, saying: "We're now able to handle a greater volume of jobs."

Regarding the future, Suzuki commented, "With the introduction of the latest Komori press, we achieved automation benefits that allow us to make better use of our people, far beyond our expectations. To keep pace with the times, we would like Komori to continue proposing advanced solutions, including for peripheral equipment, that enhance automation and reduce labor. By proactively leveraging these proposals, we aim to further enhance productivity and support sustainable growth," he said.





# "ManLing" helps industrial upgrading

In today's era of globalization and coordinated development of regional economies, the power of "Made in China 2025" is going global at an unprecedented pace.

"ManLing", the spare parts and service brand under Manroland China, has emerged strongly since its launch. One of its core products, the UV curing system, has been successfully exported to Japan, Vietnam, India and other countries and regions in Southeast Asia, earning unanimous praise from overseas customers with its outstanding performance and stable quality!

Since its establishment, the "ManLing" brand has been committed to providing high-quality spare parts services and innovative technical solutions for the printing industry. On a high-speed operating printing press, every component is crucial to ensuring quality and efficiency.

Therefore, from its inception, "ManLing" has been rooted in localized services while keeping a global market perspective. It aims to combine German standards with the agility and efficiency of Chinese manufacturing to create value that exceeds customer expectations.

With its leading technological advantages and reliable quality assurance, the "ManLing" UV curing system has successfully entered the Japanese market — where requirements for product quality and environmental protection are extremely stringent — and gained favor among local high-end printing enterprises. In the booming manufacturing markets of Vietnam and India, the system has become the preferred choice for numerous printing factories to upgrade and enhance competitiveness, thanks to its strong stability and excellent cost-performance ratio.

LED UV Curing System: The "Energy-Saving Pioneer" Leading Green Printing Instant Curing, Ultimate Efficiency:

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# If you expect accurate brand colors, you'll love Multicolor

Spot colors are used particularly frequently in packaging printing. But how do you accurately reproduce spot colors in digital printing? And how can jobs be flexibly exchanged between

conventional- and digitalprint? GMG ColorServer Multicolor automatically converts all spot colors into the desired output color space.

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supply + equipment commissioning + after-sales training", encompassing core spare parts supply and customized inline system solutions. With the intelligent upgrading of the Southeast Asian printing market, "ManLing" will continue to rely on Manroland's technology and craftsmanship to expand more overseas markets, bringing "high efficiency, high quality and high adaptability" service experience to printing enterprises worldwide.

**Strong Penetration, Wide Application:** Delivers excellent curing performance for various inks and varnishes, with extremely broad applicability. **Mature Technology, High Cost-Performance:** Offers mature solutions proven by long-term market validation, a reliable choice to ensure production continuity.

**LED + Mercury Lamp Combined Solution:** Flexibly Meets Various Special Process Applications, Suitable for All Types of Packaging and Printing Operations

Today, "ManLing" has built a complete service system covering "spare parts



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# For entry-level users and retrofitters in digital printing

Digital label printing is gaining widespread adoption, with one-third of the market value now produced in roll-to-roll or in hybrid form. A significant development in this trend is the Gallus Alpha, an entry-level digital press introduced by the Swiss press manufacturer at Labelexpo Europe. *By Dieter Finna*

The system is particularly appealing to label printers looking to expand their equipment with a compact roll-to-roll digital press — as well as to companies planning their first step into digital printing. It offers a low-risk, cost-effective solution without the investment in a large, high-performance system.

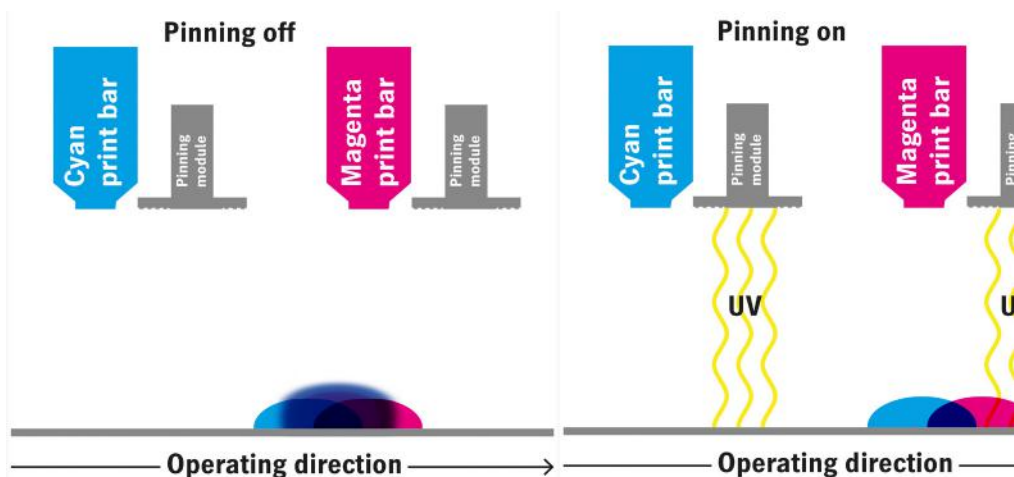
## Compact, High-Performance Design

The Gallus Alpha is ideal for production environments with limited space. Its compact, robust monoblock design ensures easy installation and quick startup. To start production, it only needs to be filled with ink and the substrate qualification carried out. The system's architecture is designed to minimize operator training time and integrates seamlessly into existing workflows, making it a great choice for both beginners and experienced users. Looking at the machine's design reveals that the engineers have focused on core functions and the performance of the digital printing system.

## Cutting-Edge Printing Technology

The Gallus Alpha utilizes Epson D3000-U1R printheads, achieving high-quality prints with a native resolution of up to  $1200 \times 1200$  dpi. Its addressable resolution of  $2400 \times 2400$  dpi is achieved by controlling the droplet generation based on the jetting frequency, droplet size, and print speed.

It operates at a speed of 65 m/min, providing excellent print quality and productivity. The system's inkjet technology, with a droplet size of 3.5 pl, delivers precise, sharp prints, ideal for the demanding label market.



The ink droplets are fixed immediately upon contact with the substrate through single-colour UV curing. (Source: Gallus Ferd. Ruesch AG)

# and budget-conscious printing

digitally

s



The entry-level model: Gallus Alpha in "prototype design". (Source: pack.consult)

## Efficient Operation and Fast Changeovers

With a web width of 345 mm (13.58") and a maximum print width of 340 mm (13.39"), the Gallus Alpha can be configured with either four or six colors, including white. It uses UV LED inks from HEIDELBERG's Saphira UA01 series, ensuring over 85% opacity for white ( $L^*a^*b^*$ -measurement). A non-contact cleaning unit keeps the printheads in optimal condition, reducing maintenance time and minimizing risk of damage.



## Advanced Droplet Control for Perfect Prints

The Gallus Alpha uses single-color pinning technology to control droplet size for each color. This ensures immediate adhesion of the ink droplets to the substrate, preventing color mixing and bleeding. Once all colors are applied, full curing via UV-LED lamps ensures sharp, reproducible results.

## Hands-On Training for a Smooth Start

The Gallus Print Academy offers targeted training to help both beginners and experienced users make a smooth transition to digital printing. The modular training program covers digital workflows, color management, RIP technologies, and more, with a focus on practical, hands-on experience. Customized production support is also available, allowing users to optimize workflows and troubleshoot efficiently.

## Optional Features for Enhanced Efficiency

The Gallus Alpha can be equipped with optional features to simplify operation for both beginners and experienced operators like the Vision System, which automatically visualises the print image on the Human Machine Interface (HMI). This system helps operators detect register deviations and ensures precise alignment of colors. This web-video functionality ensures precise monitoring and control of the printing process, especially at higher speeds where manual inspection is no longer practical.

The Web Video System can be integrated into the Vision System or used as a standalone solution. It also includes features like missing nozzle detection and monitoring for density unevenness in solid areas. Algorithm-driven corrections prevent white lines and unwanted rainbow effects that can cause color drift in solids. The system automatically checks nozzle performance multiple times per day; alternatively, this check can be performed manually by the operator, which requires additional time.

## Variable Data Printing (VDP)

The Gallus Alpha supports industrial Variable Data Printing (IVDP) for QR codes, EAN codes, or variable text, covering up to 15% of the total label area. Full Variable Data Printing, where entire labels or motifs are printed variably, is available as an optional feature.

## Ideal for Both Beginners and Experienced Users

With its user-friendly operation and low maintenance needs, the Gallus Alpha is a great choice for those starting in digital label printing. It also offers a powerful retrofit option for experienced users, seamlessly integrating into existing processes like die-cutting or embellishment. Supported by HEIDELBERG's global service network, the Gallus Alpha ensures fast delivery of spare parts and prompt service, including remote support.

module

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# LEDcure NX – Water-cooled LED UV system

## *Maximum efficiency meets future-proof technology.*

With the LEDcure NX, IST METZ presents a powerful, water-cooled LED UV system for industrial applications. The system offers consistently high curing quality, reduces energy consumption and operating costs, and supports the sustainable optimisation of production processes. Thanks to its modular design, and intelligent process control, it can be flexibly integrated into existing systems.



With the LEDcure NX, IST METZ presents a new, water-cooled LED UV system that has been specially developed for industrial curing processes and impresses with its high energy efficiency, modular adaptability, and improved operational reliability. The system is designed to meet the growing demand for sustainable, process-stable, and energy-efficient solutions in printing and coating applications.

The LEDcure NX is based on water-cooled LED UV technology and achieves an efficiency of 48% at a maximum electrical power of 79W/cm, which is above the typical efficiency level of standard LED UV systems. The optimised radiation characteristics guarantee uniform, reproducible curing results while reducing energy consumption and thermal stress on the substrates.

The modular design of the LEDcure NX allows flexible integration into new and existing production lines. Water cooling ensures a constant operating temperature, which increases the service life of the LEDs and minimises thermally induced process deviations. This contributes to increased plant availability and reduced downtime,

which has a direct impact on overall equipment effectiveness (OEE) for industrial users.

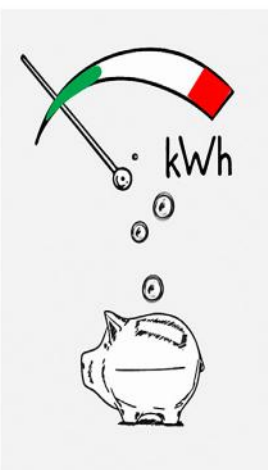
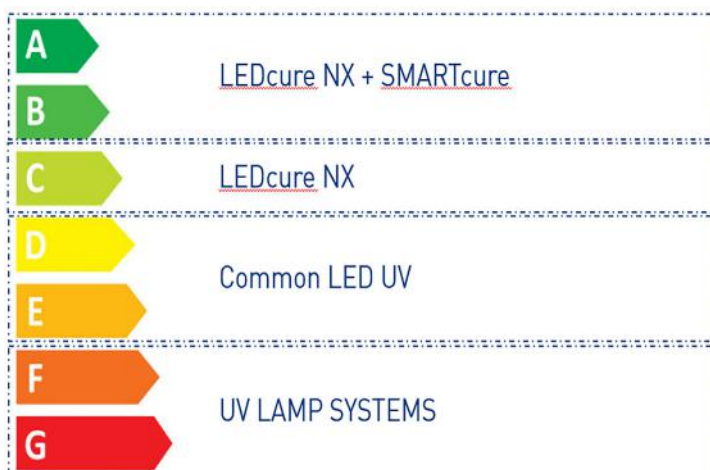
A key advantage of the LEDcure NX is the reduction in operating costs over its entire life cycle. Its high energy efficiency results in lower power consumption and reduces CO<sub>2</sub> emissions during operation – a significant contribution to sustainable production. Water cooling also supports integration into demanding production environments where thermal stability and resource conservation are essential.

For intelligent and efficient process control, the LEDcure NX LED UV system

can be combined with IST METZ's innovative SMARTcure technology. This AI-supported control system analyses production parameters in real time, automatically adjusts the LED output, and optimises energy consumption in line with current requirements. This not only saves energy and resources, but also ensures precise, consistently high curing quality.

The LEDcure NX provides our customers with an LED UV solution that sets new standards in efficiency and future-proofing. Combining high performance, modular design and intelligent process control, the system helps industrial users to optimise their production processes in a sustainable manner while reducing costs.

Thanks to its robust, water-cooled design and the possibility of integration into existing production environments, the LEDcure NX is suitable for a wide range of industrial applications – from narrow web printing processes to demanding coating and curing processes in industry. The durable LED UV technology, coupled with a warranty of up to 10 years\*, provides planning security and contributes to long-term investment security.



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1060



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Width	Up to 1060 mm x 750 mm (41.7 inch x 29.5 inch)
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## Dive into a sea of opportunities

Are you a packaging converter seeking a cost-effective way to print short runs of packaging? Capable of printing at killer speeds, the SpeedSet Orca 1060 sheetfed water-based inkjet press is set to make massive waves in the packaging printing market. With its stunning quality and its capability to handle a wide range of media, this cost-effective solution will enable you to dive into a sea of opportunities.

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# What will tomorrow's printing inks need to deliver?

In the context of packaging, sustainability, food safety and compliance with evolving regulations are rapidly becoming key factors in ink development. In response to this, the NVC Packaging Centre commissioned an academic research project to assess the preparedness of ink technologies for the future.

The study was conducted by Teodora Taşip, a chemical engineering intern at NVC, as part of her graduation research project. She conducted a comparative analysis of four ink types, evaluating them using practical sustainability and safety criteria: water-based, UV-cured, soy-based and algae-based. The result is a clear, neutral and forward-looking perspective on the environmental impact of different inks on packaging.

When it comes to making packaging more sustainable, ink is not usually the first thing we consider. After all, it accounts for less than 5% of a package's weight. However, in practice, inks play a disproportionate role in recyclability, food safety and environmental impact – all of which are key issues as the industry faces increasingly stringent regulations such as the EU's Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR), which is due to come into effect in 2026.

## The four inks at a glance

1. Water-based inks are widely used and offer relatively low VOC emissions. While they perform well on paper and cardboard, they can be difficult to remove during recycling and are not fully biodegradable.

2. UV-cured inks deliver vibrant visuals and durability, curing rapidly under UV light. However, concerns have been raised regarding their use in relation to food safety and recyclability, unless low-migration or EB-curing systems are used.

3. Soy-based inks are partly renewable and easier to deink than conventional options. However, they often still rely on petroleum-based additives and dry slowly unless blended, which



complicates sustainability claims.

4. Algae-based inks are a new addition to the market. They are made from bio-waste and have the potential to be carbon negative. They show great promise environmentally, but are currently limited to black ink and large-scale adoption remains out of reach.

What makes an ink "future-proof"?

## The study defined "future-proof" in terms of eight practical criteria:

- Ink characteristics (durability, printability)
- Energy usage
- VOC emissions
- Environmental impact
- Food safety compliance
- Recyclability
- Scalability for industrial use
- Cost-effectiveness

Each ink was assessed across the full lifecycle, from sourcing the raw materials to the recyclability of the finished product. The result? No ink scored perfectly. Each ink has its own strengths and requires trade-offs in other areas.

## There is no silver bullet, only smart choices

Rather than selecting one winner,

the report emphasises that different inks are suited to different types of packaging. For example:

- Water-based inks may be ideal for high-volume paper packaging where the necessary infrastructure is already in place.
- UV-cured inks are still a good option for applications that demand speed and visual appeal, but where recyclability is not the main priority.
- Soy-based inks are a good compromise, particularly for brands that are already active in North America, where these inks appear to be used more commonly than in Europe. Algae-based inks are still in development but could be a game-changer for branding and secondary packaging with low colour complexity.

## Moving forward: Innovation, Compromise and Collaboration

The future of printing inks will not be determined by formulation alone. Scalable innovation will depend on factors such as how inks interact with substrates, how easily they can be removed, and how well stakeholders across the value chain — from ink producers to printers and recyclers — collaborate.



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Giving Shape to Ideas



# Esko Launches Cape Pack Prime to Drive Cost Savings and Sustainability

Esko has introduced Cape Pack Prime, a new solution designed to assist packaging converters in reducing costs while achieving their sustainability key performance indicators (KPIs).

"As climate change concerns intensify, sustainability is no longer a choice, but a necessity across the packaging value chain," said Esko Marketing Director Jan De Roeck.

Consumers are becoming increasingly environmentally conscious and exerting pressure on companies to adopt less impactful practices, while increasing regulations are applying pressure on brands to take more responsibility for their broader environmental impact.

"While both brands and their suppliers are under increasing pressure to deliver on packaging sustainability, packaging design and development is often undertaken in silos where components are created by different people, in different companies, and at different times," he said. "This fragmented information means it is challenging to optimize packaging for sustainability and to track progress against KPIs."

Cape Pack Prime features a new integrated carbon emission calculation capability, developed in partnership with CarbonQuota®, which enables brands and packaging converters to accurately measure and reduce their environmental impact through automated carbon footprint calculations, helping them meet sustainability goals and comply with evolving regulatory requirements.



"Cape Pack Prime actually enables users to integrate automated carbon footprint reporting within the Esko workflow platform," said Jan. "This new capability and transformative approach further enriches the Esko ecosystem and makes it significantly easier for customers to effectively calculate the carbon footprint of any package or label design."

"Cape Pack Prime offers a complete design and palletization solution that automatically creates all files and metadata for a packaging system," he added. "This groundbreaking platform eliminates any disconnect by standardizing methodologies, streamlining data collection, and providing verified environmental

impact measurements that both brands and converters can trust.

"To do this at the very start of the packaging design process paves the way for the most sustainable packaging solution for the end-user," he said.

## **New Cape Pack Prime enables packaging and label converters to:**

- Create and evaluate palletizing solutions in seconds, for maximum efficiency and minimum waste
- Create CAD assets using dimensional pack data from an actual

product by importing 3D models as the primary pack to reduce the empty space in your packaging

- Evaluate case and pallet solutions for compression strength and economic factors to identify lightweighting opportunities for the best fitting solution
- Automatically generate right-sized CAD files, dielines, 3D models and reports for the chosen solution, increasing project speed and decreasing costs
- Reduce shipping costs by an average of 10% while protecting products from damage
- Instantly calculate pallet loads and shipping quantities for knocked down flat product and shipping containers enabling box converters to obtain efficient and accurate transportation estimates
- Optional integration with Life Cycle Analysis systems for carbon footprint calculations



# Flexo Plate Making Connected

The Esko CDI Crystal XPS sets the benchmark for flexo plate making productivity & quality. High imaging quality and unique exposure consistency result in excellent flexographic print. Automated plate transport and integration with prepress provide for unseen productivity levels.

Esko Print Control Wizard software adds a new level of simplification and turns flexo plate making into a coordinated and streamlined process, enabling operators to quickly create premium flexo plates.

**Esko - Flexo Plate Making Connected**





# From Print to Finished Book

*In today's fast-paced print industry, efficiency, automation, and flexibility are key points. Muller Martini and Hunkeler solutions demonstrate how tightly integrated systems can transform digital print finishing into a streamlined, error-resistant, and highly productive process.*

With its versatile portfolio, Muller Martini and Hunkeler offer a wide range of solutions for various customers and applications – including end-to-end solutions that cover the entire process from the blank sheet or roll to the finished book. From digital presses Hunkeler Plowfolder/Starbook Sheetfolder series create precise book blocks.

The Vareo PRO and the Antaro Digital perfect binder from Muller Martini top notch variable on demand book production. The InfiniTrim trim robot guarantees automated zero set-up trimming.

Depending on the setup, you can configure as needed the output ranging from 600 books up to 2,000

books per hour – with minimal manual intervention.

## **Connex: The digital backbone**

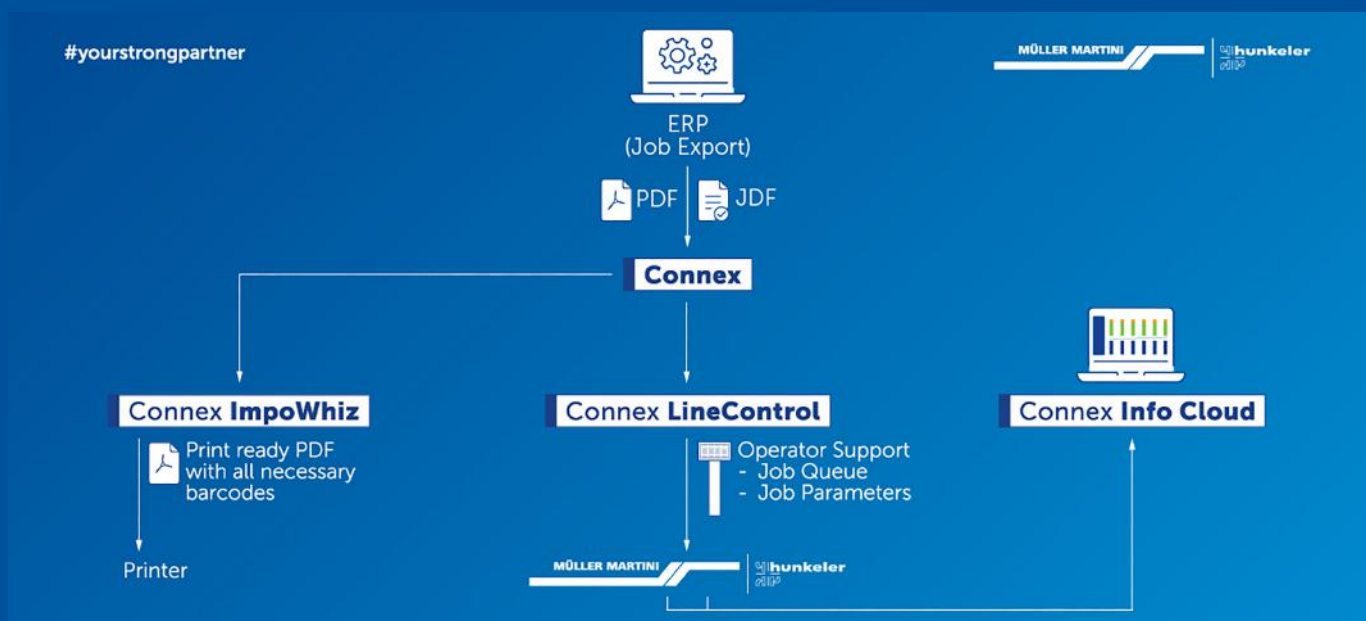
A seamless inline production line does not end with just the hardware. That's why Muller Martini's Connex is also used as a common workflow system for Hunkeler systems. With other words: the heart of this integration is Connex. It ensures:

Fast and automated imposition via Connex ImpoWhiz – even for variable content and covers. Print image correction, preventing misalignment and maintaining visual consistency. Barcode-driven finishing, ensuring each book block is matched with the correct cover. Job and queue management through Connex

LineControl, which communicates seamlessly with digital printing software. Real-time monitoring and analytics via Connex Info Cloud, accessible from any device.

## **Smart Factory in action**

This collaboration exemplifies the Smart Factory concept: a fully automated, data-driven production environment where machines communicate seamlessly, errors are minimized, and setup times are drastically reduced. Whether producing short-run magazines, personalized brochures, high-volume softcover books or high quality hardcover books, the Connex workflow delivers unmatched flexibility and reliability with minimal operator intervention.



*The Connex workflow system enables end-to-end, fully integrated smart factory solutions with machines from Muller Martini and Hunkeler. With its three modules, Connex ImpoWhiz (fast and automated imposition), Connex LineControl (job and queue management), and Connex Info Cloud (real-time monitoring and analysis), machines communicate seamlessly with each other and can be fully integrated into the customer's system*

# Book block production on demand

## Plowfolder book solution

The economic and efficient solution for offset substitution of medium to longer runs: Outstanding features of the Plowfolder book solution are the on-demand production of book blocks with variable page count and format lengths (when using the DynaCut function) as well as perfectly glued book blocks for reliable finishing in the perfect binder. In addition to processing 4-, 6- and 8-page signatures into glued book blocks, it is also possible to produce loose stacks for thread-sewn books. The Plowfolder book solution can be used nearline as well as inline at a printer or perfect binder.



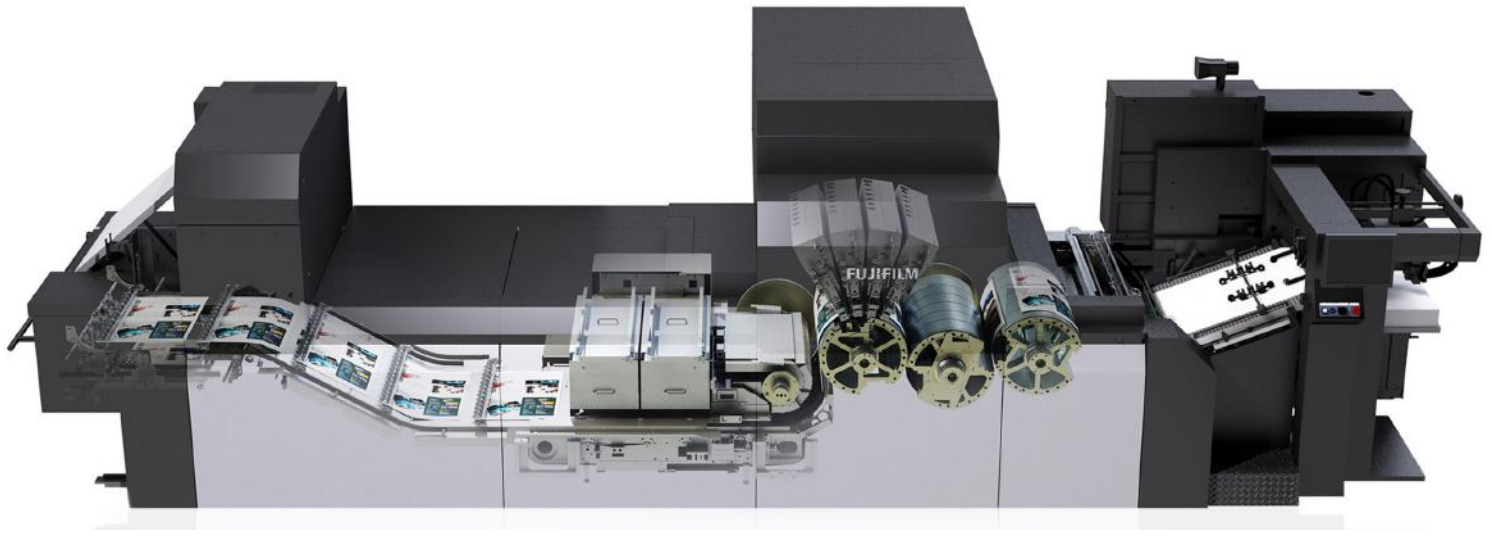
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# Boosts flexibility, quality and sustainability with Jet Press 750

Swedish packaging specialist, Kartongbolaget, has enhanced its production capabilities with a Fujifilm Jet Press 750S, which the company invested in at drupa 2024.

Founded in 1944, Kartongbolaget has built a strong reputation for high quality packaging, working with a wide range of customers from brand owners to start-ups. With 48 employees, the company offers a full-service approach, covering everything from proofing to short-run, highly customised packaging with a focus on fast turnarounds and personalised solutions. The investment in the Jet Press 750S marks Kartongbolaget's first collaboration with Fujifilm.

Visutech's team of skilled Field Service Engineers installed Kartongbolaget's new Jet Press 750S, ensuring a seamless start-up and strong local service. As Fujifilm's distribution partner in the Nordics, Visutech combines technical expertise with long-standing experience in digital print across Scandinavia.

Joakim Johansson, CEO of Kartongbolaget comments: "We installed the Jet Press 750S in December 2024 and began production in January – the impact was immediately noticeable. Not only did it relieve pressure on our offset equipment for shorter runs, but it's also been a game-changer in terms of speed and flexibility, especially when responding to urgent customer

deadlines. It's helped us consistently meet, and often exceed, client expectations.

Our start-up customers benefit from cost-effective short runs with the flexibility to scale, while our more established brands value the fast turnaround and high quality work delivered on demand. It's really strengthened our value proposition across the board.

"We were particularly impressed by the robust sheet transport system, overall machine stability and significantly improved uptime compared to our previous digital press. Uptime alone has been a major upgrade. The colour accuracy has also been exceptional – reproducing 90% of the Pantone range. That level of precision gives us the ability to offer accurate proofs before a full run, which ensures consistent, high quality results every time.

"As a business committed to sustainable practices, we also saw the Jet Press 750S as a strong asset to our environmental strategy as it supports our zero-waste ambitions and helps us deliver a clearer, more powerful message to our eco-conscious customers."

Joakim concludes: "Our experience working with Fujifilm has been seamless from start to finish, from the initial sales conversations through to installation and ongoing support. When the technology performs this well, everything else tends to fall into place.

"We're genuinely excited about the future it's helping us build. Looking ahead, the Jet Press 750S will be central to our continued evolution. It allows for faster planning, greater flexibility and reinforces our position as a key packaging supplier in Scandinavia."

Alexander Tormachen, Service Manager Nordics at Visutech, comments:

"With more than 30 years of experience in the graphic industry, we know how crucial reliable service and local expertise are for our customers' success. Our Field Service Engineers play a key role in ensuring smooth installations and long-term uptime, and we're proud to see the Jet Press 750S now running at Kartongbolaget.

Together with Fujifilm's innovative technology, our strong Nordic service organisation provides Kartongbolaget with the support they need to continue delivering exceptional quality and value to their customers."



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# Square juice bottles, canned wine: Why your food packaging is getting smarter

Square juice bottles, lighter wine bottles and slim cans are set to become a more common sight on supermarket shelves as food and drink manufacturers redesign packaging to be lighter, cleaner and easier to recycle.

As Australians consume more than 7 million tonnes of paper, glass, plastic, metal and wood each year – about 264 kilograms per person – manufacturers are under pressure to cut costs, reduce waste and stay ahead of tightening regulations.

Smarter packaging is also expected to boost margins for major food retailers. More compact designs allow more products to fit on each pallet, improving transport efficiency, lowering fuel costs and reducing breakages in transit.

ANZ head of agribusiness insights Michael Whitehead said packaging plays a powerful role in shaping consumer behaviour.

"Consumers talk about how much their buying behaviour is influenced by sustainability," he said. "Does it irritate you when you see cucumbers wrapped in plastic? And how do I make my muesli stand out on the shelf better than yours?"

Innovation is already reshaping supermarket aisles. Lighter wine bottles and cans are becoming more common, while salad packets now use "tiny laser pinholes" to prevent fogging and keep leaves fresher for longer. Labels are also becoming clearer, making it easier for shoppers to tell what can be recycled and what must go to landfill.

In his latest Food for Thought report, Whitehead said multilayer film packaging is increasingly being replaced with single-type plastics that scanners can detect more easily.



Ready-made meal trays are moving away from black plastic, which is difficult to recycle, and more bottles now feature tethered caps so lids and bottles can be recycled together.

These changes can also unlock new export opportunities. Smart labels and QR codes allow manufacturers to meet different countries' allergen, recycling and regulatory requirements. "One smart change at the factory can open several export markets at once,"

Whitehead said. "Packaging has shifted from an end-of-line cost to a strategic tool that can boost sales, unlock export access and shape brand reputation."

About half of the wine industry's carbon footprint comes from glass bottle production, according to Endeavour Group, which operates Dan Murphy's and BWS and is a member of the Sustainable Wine Roundtable.

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"Traditional heavy glass packaging is estimated to generate about 34 per cent of all emissions from wine production in Australia, excluding transport," a spokesperson said. "Endeavour Group aims to lead the industry by working with suppliers to gradually reduce the average weight of bottles."

Supermarket giants Woolworths and Coles have their own sustainability targets focused on circularity and recycled content. Woolworths is aiming for 60 per cent recycled content in own-brand packaging and has already reached 51 per cent. Coles says 87.6 per cent of its own-brand food and liquor packaging is now recyclable.

#### New rules loom

Food packaging laws, waste management rules and single-use plastic bans vary across states and territories, adding complexity for manufacturers, said Sarah Collier, director of sustainability at the Australian Food & Grocery Council.

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water has flagged further industry consultation to refine national packaging reforms following a late-2024 consultation that attracted more than 400 submissions. Draft regulations are expected to shift the sector from voluntary targets to a mandatory system, setting minimum recycled content requirements and banning toxic chemicals.

"We are hopeful the upcoming consultation will remove the need for states to respond independently," Collier said. "Any regulatory change must reflect the complexity of the food and grocery manufacturing sector and consider the full packaging life cycle as part of a circular economy."

Manufacturers, she added, have already been investing in packaging innovation ahead of the anticipated reforms.

## Miraclon strengthens global service network with appointment of Rajagurulingam Ramalingam as Asia Pacific Service Manager

Miraclon has announced the appointment of Rajagurulingam (Raja) Ramalingam as Service Manager for the Asia Pacific Region. Based in Singapore, Raja will lead the company's regional service organization, driving excellence in customer service and technical support, field performance, and operational execution across the region.

Raja joins Miraclon with more than 20 years of leadership experience in printing inks and packaging production. Throughout his career, he has combined technical expertise with strategic commercial insight, supporting both regional and global growth initiatives with a consistent focus on collaboration and continuous improvement that led to long-term customer satisfaction and success.

"Raja brings an exceptional balance of technical depth, customer understanding and leadership experience to Miraclon," said Andy Yarrow, Regional Commercial Director, Asia Pacific, Miraclon. "His proven ability to drive high-performing teams and deliver value-driven solutions for customers make him an excellent fit to lead our service organization in the region. I'm delighted to welcome him to the team."

Robbert Merkus, Global Commercial Service Business Director, Miraclon, added: "Over the past year, Miraclon has made a considerable investment in its service organization to guarantee continued world-class service and access to our team's exceptional expertise to help our customers stay at the leading edge and maximize



return on their FLEXCEL Solutions investments. Raja's expertise further strengthens the service team and underscores our commitment to ensure customers' long-term success."

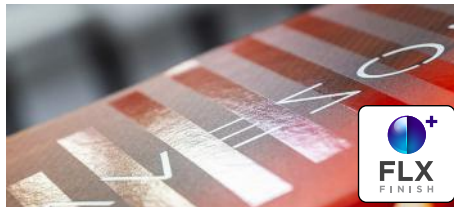
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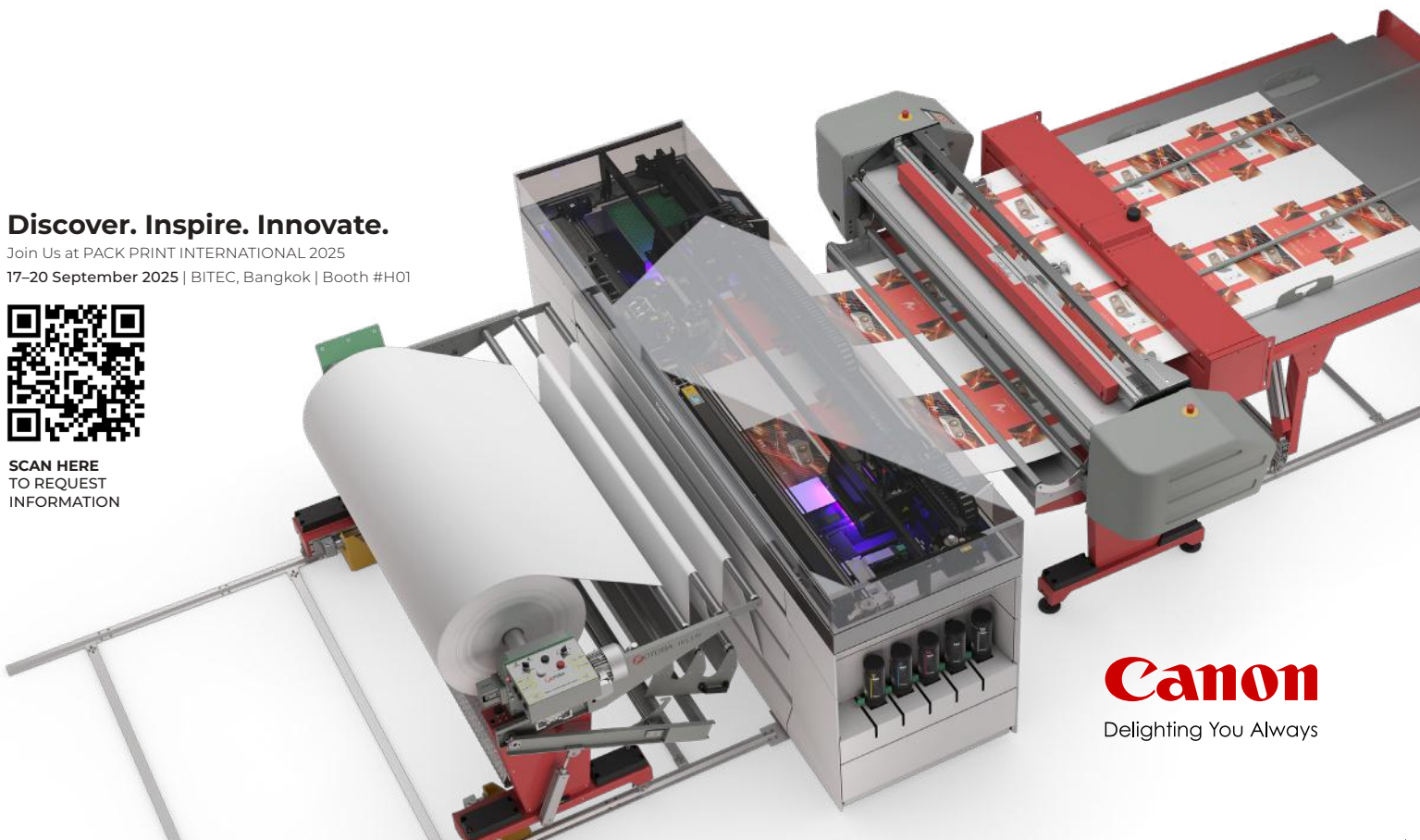
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# *Packaging Power: How Digital Printing for Packaging Elevates Brand Impact and Loyalty*

With nearly four in five (77%) consumers thinking more favourably of brands with prominent packaging, according to Macfarlane's Unboxing Survey 2024, brands are keen to exploit the power of packaging to boost brand perception and connect with consumers on a deeper, more personal level.



Russell Weller, Head of Digital Products, Domino Printing Sciences, shares insights on how converters can leverage digital printing to stand out from the competition and meet evolving consumer expectations.

## **First Impressions: The Value of the Unboxing Experience on Consumer Engagement**

As the first physical encounter with

the brand and product, creative packaging and labelling plays a pivotal role in shaping brand perception and differentiation. According to NAPCO Research's Digital Packaging: The Pursuit of Prosperity Report (2024), personalised, high-graphic packaging designs are now a strategic priority for nearly half the brands surveyed as they push to create memorable unboxing experiences to enhance brand engagement.

The power of unboxing to drive brand value is compelling: on YouTube alone, videos with "unboxing" in their title have received over 25 billion views in a single year. For more than half (56%) of consumers surveyed in Macfarlane's Unboxing Survey

2024, branded packaging encourages repeat purchases; while two-thirds of Millennials and Generation Z consumers consider the unboxing experience important, with 53% of Generation Z respondents considering 'pretty packaging' as the most important factor, according to Mondi Group's eCommerce trend report.

Many brands are now utilising design as a strategic tool, regularly refreshing visuals to maintain momentum and relevance. Limited-edition packaging tied to cultural moments or global events keeps the brand topical, sparks conversation, and sets trends that often ripple across the category.

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### **Making a Connection: The Power of Digital Printing**

Digital printing technology is a key enabler for this new, agile approach to packaging design and production. Digitally printed packaging and labelling removes the traditional constraints of high minimum order quantities, lowering the entry barriers, and helping even smaller brands to access high-quality, custom packaging solutions previously limited to larger players.

Short print runs support the diverse, frequently changing packaging variations required by brands to enhance market presence. Furthermore, digital printing speeds up packaging development cycles through rapid prototyping, and supports greater supply chain flexibility with shorter lead times. In this dynamic scenario, the converter's role is evolving from a transactional printer or brand supplier to a strategic brand partner, supporting brands in achieving packaging design and consumer engagement goals.

Digital printing can also add value when it comes to sustainability, which is close to the heart of many brands, enabling just-in-time production to

avoid printing waste and obsolescence of overrun stock.

### **Connected Packaging: A Platform for Connection and Community**

Looking ahead, digital printing – particularly digital variable data printing – is swiftly becoming one of the key tools for brands seeking to foster long-term loyalty and community. Research already confirms an increasing demand for interactive and smart packaging features, such as QR codes, visual search, NFC tags, and augmented reality triggers, which help brands to continually elevate the consumer experience.

According to Merkle's 2025 Connected Experiences Research Report, over a third (37%) of consumers are more likely to purchase a product because it offers a connected experience. And, perhaps consequently, according to NAPCO's Research, 83% of brands believe it is important or essential for their printing partner to be able to produce personalised or variable packaging with QR codes that enable first party data collection.

### **Why Converters Must Embrace Digital Printing for Packaging**

As consumer expectations evolve, packaging is expected to do more than protect – it is increasingly recognised as a key driver of brand engagement. For converters, this shift represents a clear opportunity to add meaningful value to their brand customers. By offering digitally printed packaging and labels with connected features like QR codes that link to immersive content, interactive experiences, and personalised messaging, converters enable brands to deepen engagement and build lasting loyalty.

By helping brands produce digitally printed packaging that resonates with consumers, converters deliver added value. They can enable brands to harness digital printing, accelerating packaging innovation, and mass customisation, as well as one-of-a-kind packaging that adds a special touch.

As packaging continues to evolve into a strategic brand asset, converters who embrace digital printing will be well-positioned to support innovation, sustainability, and consumer engagement in today's demanding retail landscape.



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# Celebrating 40 Years of Innovation and Growth: The Story of tesa tape Malaysia

In December 2025, tesa, a global leader in adhesive solutions, marks a significant mile-stone: the 40th anniversary of tesa tape Malaysia.

Over the past four decades, the Malaysian organization has played a vital role in driving innovation, building strong partnerships, and advancing technology across multiple in-dustries in the region.

tesa's journey in Malaysia began 40 years ago with a clear and focused vision. The company established a strong foundation in the automotive and electronics industries, delivering high levels of precision, performance, and reliability. Through consistent quality and technical expertise, tesa Malaysia quickly earned its reputation as a trusted part-ner and market leader in these demanding sectors.

Building on this early success, tesa Malaysia has continuously expanded its capabilities and market reach.





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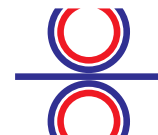
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Guided by a deep understanding of customer needs and a strong commitment to sustainable growth, tesa Malaysia today serves a diverse range of industries, including converting, distribution, and printing and packaging. This evolution has positioned Malaysia as a key strategic hub for tesa's operations across Southeast Asia, highlighting the company's ability to adapt and lead in a dynamic market.

This evolution has positioned Malaysia as a strategic hub within tesa's Southeast Asian operations, reflecting the company's ability to adapt and innovate in a dynamic regional market.

A major milestone in this journey was the inauguration of tesa's new state-of-the-art production facility and converting center in Bandar Baru Bangi in 2023. The 1,200 m<sup>2</sup> site represents a significant investment in local capabilities. By enhancing production and converting capacity, the facility enables tesa to respond more quickly to customer requirements and deliver tailored solutions particularly for the print and packaging industries.

Sustainability is also a key focus of the new center. Designed as an energy-efficient facility and equipped with its own photovoltaic system, the site reflects tesa's commitment to more sustainable manufacturing and innovation. It demonstrates how environmental responsibility and

industrial performance can go hand in hand.

"As we celebrate these 40 incredible years, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to all team members past and present who have contributed to the success of tesa Malaysia. Their dedication, teamwork, and commitment to excellence are the foundation of this achievement," said Andreas Gunnestrand, Head of Region APAC.

Looking ahead, tesa Malaysia remains focused on advancing innovation, supporting sustainable growth, and strengthening partnerships across the region. With a solid foundation and a clear vision for the future, the company is well positioned to continue delivering value to the print, packaging, and converting industries in Malaysia and beyond.

#### About tesa

tesa is a global leader in adhesive tapes and self-adhesive solutions, offering more than 7,000 products across industries such as automotive, electronics, and packaging. With around 5,400 employees worldwide, tesa develops approximately 100 new solutions each year and operates in 100 countries. Headquartered near Hamburg, Germany, sustainability is core to tesa's mission, with a strong focus on emissions reduction, responsible sourcing, and circularity.





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# accelerates quality, efficiency and sustainable growth

South Korea-based flexible packaging company, MYUNGJI P&P, took a leap forward in 2021 when it invested in the BOBST RS 5003 gravure printing press and the BOBST compact multi-technology laminator, from the VISIONLAM 800 series

Founded in 1989 and headquartered in Hwaseong-si, Gyeonggi-do, MYUNGJI P&P has established itself as a one-stop manufacturer specializing in a wide range of flexible packaging solutions, including stand-up, 3-side seal, quad-seal, flat bottom, and pinch bottom formats. The company's cutting-edge rotogravure printing, lamination, and pouching capabilities have earned it a strong global presence, serving 397 customers across sectors like pet food, retortable applications, medical packaging, and coffee & tea. With 60% of production exported, MYUNGJI P&P boasts a strong presence across Malaysia, Germany, Australia, the UK, and the USA – success driven in part by the adoption of BOBST technology.

Vice President Simon Gunwung Park highlights the strategic value of the partnership: "With three



Vice President Simon Gunwung Park

gravure presses, three solvent-based laminators, one solventless laminator, and ten pouch-making machines, MYUNGJI P&P is renowned for excellence in printing and converting. Our five-year collaboration with

BOBST has been pivotal in maximizing efficiency and delivering the superior print quality our customer's demand."

The choice to invest in BOBST equipment was driven by its global reputation and technological edge. The BOBST RS 5003 gravure printing press delivers uncompromising speed and precision with consistent ink distribution even on challenging substrates. Its advanced automation, including the Total Automatic Pre-Register Setting (TAPS), minimizes waste and accelerates job setup, boosting both throughput and sustainability.

The BOBST RS 5003 press is designed to offer superior performance on multiple flexible materials. This gravure printing platform offers high quality printing with no compromise on speed, achieving precise and uniform ink distribution even on challenging substrates. Automation features like its Total Automatic Pre-Register Setting (TAPS) streamline production with



# Efficiency, th



minimal waste, bolstering throughput and sustainability alike. In addition, the RS 5003 makes it easier for operators to run the machine efficiently, helping maintain continuous production and simplify changeovers.

Complementing this, the BOBST VISIONLAM 800 laminator is ideal for medium-to-long production runs of premium flexible packaging. Featuring a 9-meter drying tunnel and motorized rollers, it supports diverse substrates at speeds up to 400 m/min. Its integrated automation and digital connectivity streamline job changeovers and enhance uptime, aligning with MYUNGJI P&P's goals for cost control and sustainability.

Despite pandemic-related challenges, the installation of these sophisticated machines was seamless. The efficiency of BOBST's technology has helped

to reduce waste and downtime, supporting MYUNGJI P&P's cost control and sustainability goals. The easy-to-use interface has been embraced by younger operators, enhancing workforce efficiency and confidence, and BOBST's ongoing support through its HELPLINE service subscription has ensured long-lasting improvements to uptime and performance.

"The new BOBST machines are helping us build both confidence and value," added Park. "They are a good fit for our operators and deliver the productivity and print quality we need to stay competitive. When we first saw them first-hand during a visit to BOBST's Changzhou factory, we immediately knew that this technology was perfect for our requirements."

As customer demand shifts toward shorter runs and recyclable mono-

material packaging, MYUNGJI P&P's investments in BOBST machinery are helping the company prepare for the future. MYUNGJI P&P has already announced plans to expand with a new factory that will increase its pouching capacity, and combined with its BOBST technology and ongoing partnership, it is positioning itself well to capture the growing demand for more sustainable packaging.

"Eco-conscious products like recyclable bags are taking a growing share in the market because they are starting to affect end-users' purchasing habits," said Park. "At MYUNGJI P&P, we treat sustainability as one of our core values, and we are committed to offering 100% recyclable, biodegradable, and compostable packaging options to meet evolving environmental demands. With BOBST as our partner, we are confident in leading this transition."





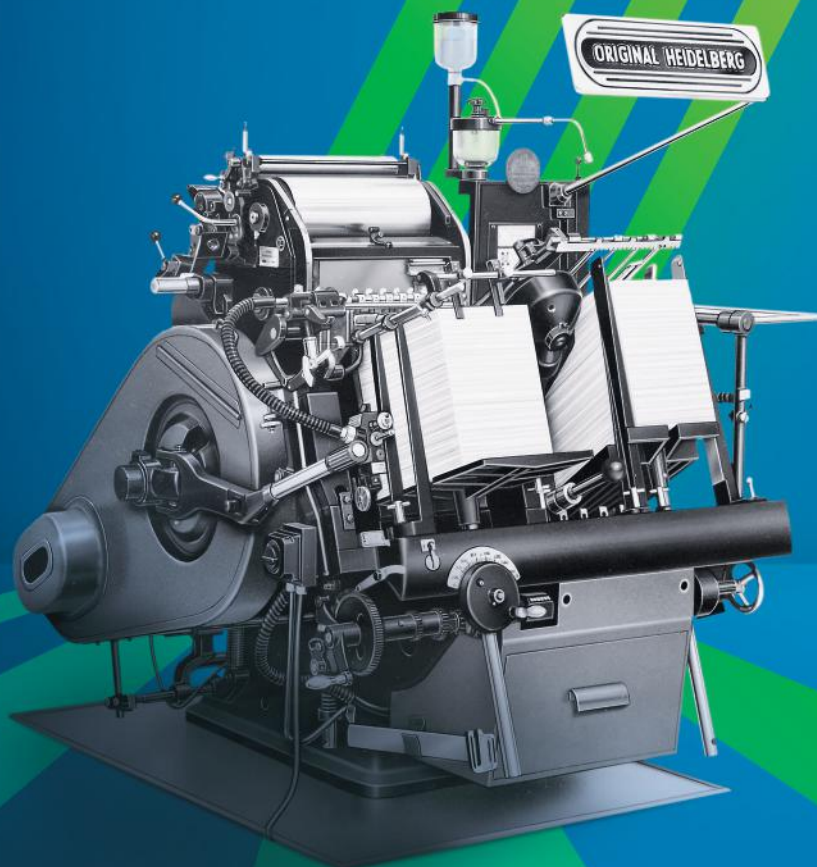
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