



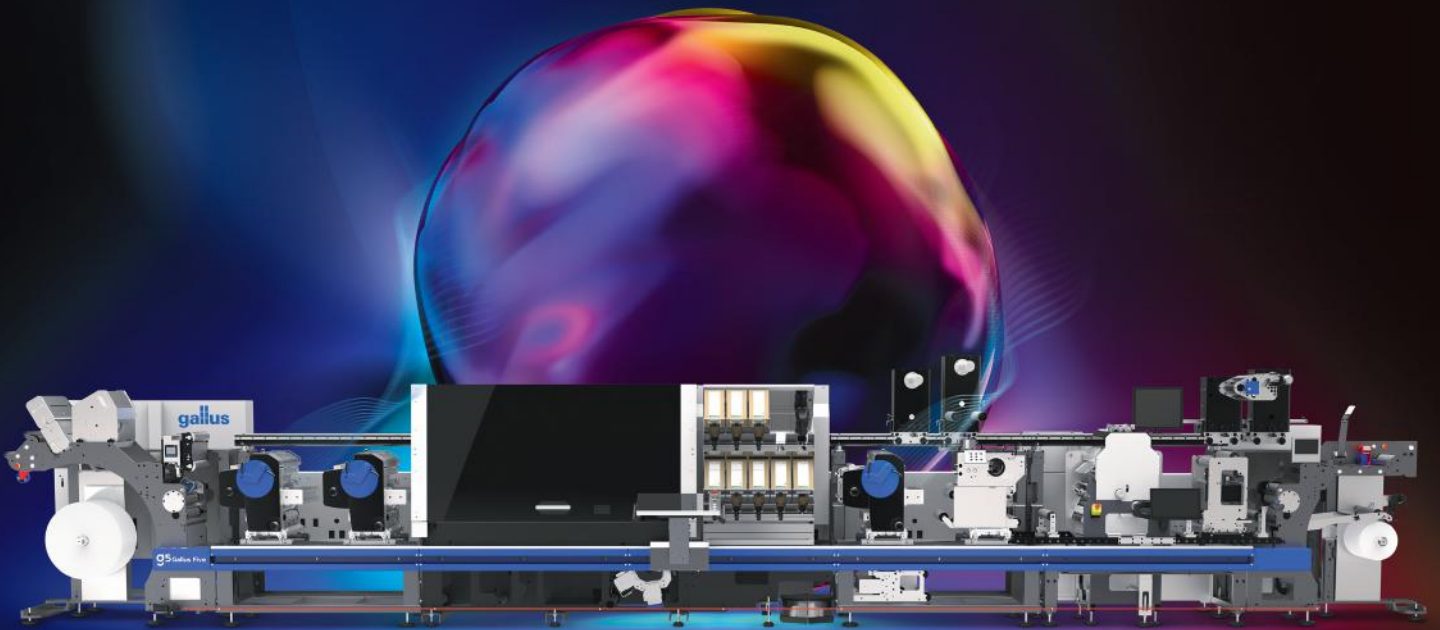
Meeting Asia's Diverse Print and Packaging Demands at Scale

*Katsuya (Kurt) Tode, Director,
Regional Commercial and
Industrial Printing,
Canon Singapore
Page 8*



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ENTRY FORM

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25
YEARS
IN ASIA



The Awards Dinner will be held on October 15th
 Kerry Hotel Shanghai China during
All In Print China Exhibition

FUJIFILM

Best in Digital Award



Best Use of Colour Award



KONICA MINOLTA

Best In Digital Embellishment

HEIDELBERG

Best In Offset Award

Print Impact Award

Pushing Boundaries, Printing Possibilities

Recognising print that drives measurable business and marketing impact.

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New Award Category for



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Advanced Printing Technology Centre
(A Subsidiary of The Hong Kong Printers Association)



香港印刷業商會
THE HONG KONG PRINTERS ASSOCIATION



Offset Printing Only

Categories 1- 12 - Offset Printing Only

1. Offset Calendars
2. Sheetfed Magazines
3. Book Printing - less than 4 colours
4. Book Printing - 4 or more colours
5. Limited Editions & Artwork Reproductions
(under 1000 print run)
6. Web Offset - Coated stock 70gsm and above
7. Web Offset - Light Weight Coated 65gsm or less
8. Offset Packaging - Soft Carton
9. Offset Packaging - Rigid material
10. Offset Posters
11. Offset Restaurant Menu
12. Offset Labels

Digital Printing Only

Categories 13- 27 - Digital Printing Only

13. Book Printing
14. Digital Calendars
15. Digital Personalised or Photo Books - any format
16. Digital Posters
17. Digital Showcards & Point of Sale material
18. Digital Printing Magazines
19. Digital Special Colours
20. Digital Restaurant Menus
21. Digital Limited Editions & Artwork Reproductions
(under 500 print run)
22. Digital Proofing -
(must supply digital proof and the printed product)
23. Digital Packaging - Soft Carton
24. Digital Packaging - Rigid Material
25. Digital Labels
26. Digital Embellishment
27. Digital Wedding Invite

Other Categories

Categories 28- 35 - Other Categories

28. Multi-Piece Productions & Campaigns
29. Innovation/Specialty Printing/New technology
30. Company Self Promotion
31. Design and Layout
32. Security Applications
33. Environmental (any process)
34. Sales Catalog (any process)
35. Education (any process)

ENTRY FORM

Deadline for Entries Submission: **7th August 2026, 5pm** Remember to submit **2 copies** of each job!
Why? - Just in case one is damaged. Maximum 3 entries per category

If you are entering the **PRINT IMPACT AWARD** please tick the box

Recognising print that drives measurable business and marketing impact. Write and tell us why on a separate page

SECTION A

Entered by (Company name): _____

Contact Person: _____ Email _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ Country _____

Category Number: _____ (Example Cat 4)

Title of entry (ie: "Book of Birds"): _____

Printer: _____

Designer Pre Press House: _____

Brand of Printing Machine: _____

Paper used and Supplier Name _____

Ink Supplier _____

How many colour is the job 4-6-8 etc _____

Plates used if Offset _____

X _____

By signing above you accept the rules and conditions of the Asian Print Awards Competition



SECTION B (TAPE this securely to the back of each entry)

Category Number (same as above): _____ Entry number _____
(Administrative use only)

Title of entry (same as above - ie: "Book of Birds") _____

Print method: _____

Number of ink colours (4-6-8 etc) _____ Any Embellishment (foil stamping etc) _____

Quantity produced (Print run): _____ Other technical details (finishing processes etc)
Please supply on a separate page

Send your entries by 7th August 2026 - at 5pm to:

Asian Print Awards Competition 2026

c/o The Thai Printing Association

311, 311/1 Rama IX Soi 15/1 - Huaikhwang District, Bangkok 10310 Thailand Tel +662 719 6685

You MUST fill out these production details

You MUST fill out these production details

The 2026 Asian Print Awards Checklist!

1. Have you pick your **best work** to be judged?
2. Have you checked the work to make sure it's "**1st class quality**" - no hickies - no scuffing - no miss register?
3. Check it **ONE** more time!
4. Are there **2 copies** for each entry and are they packed correctly for shipment?
5. Have you completed the entry form (Section A & B) correctly and paste Section B onto the back of the entry?
6. Have you left enough time for shipment?
Friday, 7th August 2026 - 5pm is the Deadline.
7. Check that you have written the **address** correctly

Send all entries to
Asian Print Awards Competition 2026
c/o The Thai Printing Association - 311, 311/1 Rama 9 - Soi 15
Huaikhwang District, Bangkok 10310 Thailand
Tel: +66 2 719 6685

PLEASE ALLOW TIME FOR CUSTOMS CLEARANCE WHEN SHIPPING ENTRIES

Declare "No Commercial Value" for Printing Competition on the courier ticket by Friday, 7th August 2026

All entries are **non-returnable**

The Awards Dinner will be held on October 15th at Kerry Hotel Shanghai during
All in Print China Exhibition

at the Shanghai New International Expo Centre
For more information go to <https://www.allinprint.com/en/>
email: paul@printinnovationasia.com Tel.: +61 422 869728

The annual Asian Print Awards was founded **25 Years Ago** to recognise outstanding achievement in the print and packaging industries across Asia. With more than half the world's population represented in this fast growing area, communication in the form of printed matter links Asia's diverse cultures. It is imperative that such print achievements do not go unrecognised, especially among the population base that Asia enjoys.

The Awards are judged on a wholly quality-oriented set of criteria to ensure that fair play is enacted at all times.

The **Independent Judging Panel** comprises highly qualified personnel from within Asia and around the world. The independent judging panel has no knowledge of the actual entrants details. **ALL ENTRIES ARE NUMBER-CODED**. Entries must be commercially produced work.

The Asian Print Awards is the **only regional print quality competition of its kind in Asia**. Supported by leading industry-supply companies, any progressive quality print house should enter and prove that they are the best - by winning the Gold, Silver or Bronze award. Proving pride in quality awareness is what customers love to see. Win and you can prove it!

26th YEAR



ASIAN PACKAGING EXCELLENCE AWARDS:



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Meeting Asia's Diverse P Demands at Scale

As the Asia-Pacific print and packaging industry faces rising costs and growing pressure to operate more efficiently, print service providers need production platforms that can keep pace. The Canon imagePRESS V1350 is built for exactly that environment, combining industrial-speed output, broad media versatility and a high degree of automation to help providers handle more diverse demand at scale, without compromising on quality or productivity.

Print service providers across Asia-Pacific are under immense pressure. Customers are demanding faster turnaround, consistent quality and the flexibility to move across a broader mix of applications, from high-volume marketing collateral and direct mail to point-of-sale materials and selected packaging work.

At the same time, labour costs are rising and the tolerance for production inefficiency is shrinking. Automation adoption rates in APAC print equipment environments are increasing by over 20% annually, driven by the need to combat labour shortages and maintain output consistency as skilled operator availability continues to tighten. Put simply, the market is asking print providers to do more with less, and to do it reliably.

The Case for Digital Workflow

Against that backdrop, the industry is accelerating its shift away from traditional offset production toward highly automated digital workflows. Where offset requires significant setup time, manual calibration and considerable preparation before a single sheet is printed, digital platforms consolidate those steps, reducing touchpoints and enabling providers to respond more quickly to fragmented, varied demand with less overhead.

For providers still running significant portions of their work through conventional offset, the question is no longer whether to make that transition, but how to do it without compromising the output quality their customers expect. That is precisely the challenge that Canon imagePRESS V1350 is designed to address.



PRISMAsync for Canon V1350



Katsuya (Kurt) Tode, Director, Regional Commercial and Industrial Printing, Canon Singapore

Print and Packaging



Canon imagePRESS V1350 - In use

Built for Volume and Versatility

The imagePRESS V1350 is Canon's answer to a market that can no longer afford to separate speed from quality, or productivity from flexibility. The press runs at up to 135 pages per minute and supports media from 60 gsm to 500 gsm, giving providers the range to move between lightweight brochures and heavy premium stock on a single platform.

For print environments serving diverse customer segments, this removes the need to route jobs across separate production lines based on media weight or application type. From bulk direct mail to premium lookbooks and heavy-stock folding cartons, the V1350 is engineered for high-speed versatility,

maintaining peak performance across every application.

Automation as a Business Enabler

Print versatility is only valuable if output quality and consistency can be maintained at pace. The V1350 is designed with that in mind. Features such as automated colour adjustment, an inline spectrophotometric sensor, precise registration, and efficient cooling work together to reduce the production burden on operators and uphold standards across demanding jobs. For busy print environments, this means fewer interruptions, less time spent recalibrating and more jobs delivered to standard the first time.

BRD Printing, a commercial print provider that installed the V1350 in 2024, experienced this directly. The press enabled the company to expand into new applications, streamline turnaround times and deliver consistently high output quality to demanding clients including print brokers and advertising agencies. As BRD Printing CEO Dave Lee noted, quality concerns that had previously complicated production decisions were effectively resolved with the V1350 in place.

The numbers behind the press reinforce this. With a monthly duty cycle of 2.4 million pages and a 72 million-sheet durability rating, the

Canon imagePRESS V1350



V1350 is designed for sustained, day-to-day production at scale. Providers can take on both volume-heavy work and demanding premium jobs with confidence, knowing the press will maintain performance over time.

Capturing a Growing Market Opportunity

The V1350 also opens doors to adjacent revenue opportunities at a moment when the broader market is moving in that direction. As print and packaging demands continue to converge across the region, providers are looking for ways to broaden their application offering without overcomplicating their operations. The V1350 supports folding carton applications, making it a practical option for providers who want to explore packaging work without stepping away from their core commercial print business.

The broader context matters here. Asia-Pacific already commands the largest share of the global e-commerce packaging market, accounting for over 51% of revenue in 2025, with the global market projected to grow at a CAGR of 17.9% through 2033. For providers already equipped to handle diverse media and short-run packaging jobs, that represents an attainable growth

“Print remains a critical medium for brands across Asia-Pacific, but realising its full potential in today’s market requires a shift toward higher agility. We developed the imagePRESS V1350 because print providers can no longer afford to choose between high-volume efficiency and premium output quality; they need a platform that eliminates that compromise.

By bringing together productivity, versatility, and image quality, the V1350 provides the scalable foundation businesses need to move seamlessly into high-growth areas like e-commerce packaging. Ultimately, it gives print providers the confidence to do more on a single, dependable platform—an ability that is becoming increasingly valuable as they pursue new revenue opportunities.”

Katsuya (Kurt) Tode, Director, Regional Commercial and Industrial Printing, Canon Singapore



opportunity rather than a distant ambition.

A Partner in the Industry

At Canon, our commitment to the print and packaging industry extends beyond the equipment we make. We are proud to continue supporting the community as a sponsor of both the Asian Print Awards and the Asian Packaging Excellence Awards, the region’s only independent print quality competitions. These are platforms that recognise and elevate the craft of print across Asia, and it is a commitment that speaks to something we believe deeply: that print remains one of the most powerful tools available to businesses looking to engage customers and stand out in a competitive market.

Realising that potential, however, requires the right foundation—purpose-built platforms that deliver the speed, consistency, and scalability necessary to outpace shifting market demands. The Canon imagePRESS V1350 is built exactly to provide that.

For print businesses across Asia-Pacific ready to scale output, broaden capability and serve more diverse customer needs, it offers a single, dependable platform built for what the market demands today and where it is heading next. In a market where efficiency increasingly determines who leads and who falls behind, providers who invest in the right production infrastructure today are the ones best positioned to capture what comes next.



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Canon

Delighting You Always

DISCOVER MORE >>



Turning paper into high-performance packaging

Henkel and Windmüller & Hölscher are proving that paper can do more than ever before. Together, the partners have developed a solution that makes paper-based packaging recyclable, high-performing, and ready for a broader range of demanding applications.

Rethinking Packaging from the Ground Up

Sustainability has become a defining factor in packaging decisions. Brands are looking for alternatives to plastic that meet regulatory requirements while still delivering the performance needed on shelf and in production.

But replacing established materials is not a simple switch. It requires rethinking materials, processes, and machine technology – making close collaboration essential. By combining their expertise, Henkel and W&H have enabled paper to meet functional requirements that were long considered exclusive to plastic-based structures.

From Concept to Industrial Reality

The key lies in an inline process that integrates functional coating directly into the printing process.

Using Henkel's water-based AQUENCE BC 5100 RE and W&H's inline printing unit technology, barrier and sealing functionalities are applied in a single step. This eliminates additional coating steps and turns paper into a material that performs under real production conditions.

The result is a solution that:

- Provides reliable barriers against moisture and grease
- Enables strong and consistent heat sealing
- Runs efficiently on packaging machines at industrial speeds

In short, paper becomes a viable option not only from a sustainability perspective, but also from an operational one.

Designed for Circularity

A key advantage of the solution is its compatibility with existing recycling



systems. Certified by cyclos-HTP, the material structure supports established paper recycling streams – an essential requirement for true circularity.

At the same time, the inline approach simplifies the overall process:

- No separate coating step
- Reduced energy consumption
- Lower process complexity

This combination of material innovation and process efficiency creates tangible value across the entire value chain.

“Paper is a strong material for sustainable packaging, but it needs coatings to achieve the required performance. With this solution, we can apply barrier and sealing properties inline on a W&H machine, which makes the process efficient and practical for industrial use.”

– Diana Matibag, Application

*Engineering Business Development,
Henkel Adhesive Technologies –
Packaging Europe*

A Practical Alternative to Plastic

The solution is designed for high-throughput production environments and can be implemented within existing converting setups. For converters and brand owners, this opens up a realistic path to replace plastic with paper – without compromising on performance or efficiency.

Moving Ahead

This collaboration shows what can be achieved when material science and machine technology are developed hand in hand. Henkel and W&H will continue to develop this approach further, enabling new applications, improving efficiency, and supporting the transition toward circular packaging.



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.

www.gmgcolor.com/products/colorserver

UPM introduces a new portfolio of label solutions designed for packaging recyclability

UPM Adhesive Materials, a global supplier of high-performance self-adhesive products, introduces the new UPM ProCycle™ portfolio of recycling compatible label solutions.



and markets, and independent testing assures specific label functionalities, such as clean release.

"As packaging recyclability requirements and regulations evolve, UPM ProCycle helps converters and brands navigate the changes and stay compliant. Backed by UPM's adhesive and sustainability expertise, the portfolio makes it easy to select label solutions for recyclability performance," states Suvi Rasa, Manager of Circularity and Sustainable Product Design at UPM Adhesive Materials.

The portfolio brings together advanced adhesive technologies and circular products in a coherent offer, to help converters and packaging brand owners select solutions that deliver recognized recyclability performance.

The label materials currently included in the portfolio are suited for rigid PET and HDPE packaging in beverage, food, and home and personal care applications. The adhesive technologies, such as wash-off, ensure that materials separate cleanly during mechanical plastic recycling, including washing and grinding, supporting high-quality recycle.

UPM ProCycle solutions are designed to deliver consistent adhesion, efficient converting and high print quality for plastics, fiber and glass

packaging. All products in the portfolio are externally recognized as recycling compatible* across packaging types

The portfolio will continue to expand with adhesive technologies and label products, addressing evolving circular packaging needs.





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DISCOVER THE WAY AHEAD

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With innovation that inspires you, expertise that elevates and support that guides you, we're with you at every step.

My Take on ECG in Opportunity, Discipline

ECG, or Extended Colour Gamut, is being talked about more and more in labels and packaging, and I can understand why. *By Paul Myatt*

The market is changing. Brand owners want faster product launches. Retailers want more choice on the shelf. Marketing teams want seasonal promotions, regional versions, limited editions, and shorter product cycles. At the same time, converters are being asked to produce shorter runs, more SKUs, faster turnaround, and repeatable colour — usually with the same pressure on cost and margin.

That is exactly where ECG starts to become interesting.

At its simplest, ECG uses a fixed ink set, normally CMYK plus orange, green and violet, to reproduce a wider range of spot and brand colours. Instead of changing spot colour inks from job to job, the converter can run more work from a controlled ink set.

The benefits are easy to understand.

- Less spot colour changing.
- Fewer wash-ups.
- Shorter make-ready times.
- Less waste.
- Better repeatability.
- More productive press time.
- More flexibility for multi-SKU work.

For label converters, those points matter. In narrow web production, small inefficiencies repeated across

many jobs can quietly eat into margin. A few extra minutes here, a wash-up there, a colour adjustment on the next job — it all adds up.

But this is where I think the ECG discussion needs to be more realistic. ECG is sometimes presented as if it is simply a press feature. Add more colours, expand the gamut, and the problem is solved.

In reality, running seven colours and running ECG properly are not the same thing.

The press is only one part of the story. The real work sits around the process: prepress, profiling, colour management, proofing, substrate selection, ink laydown, measurement, press stability, validation, operator training and customer expectation management.

If the basic CMYK process is not stable, ECG will not fix it. In fact, it will probably make the problem more visible.

That is why I see ECG as a production discipline, not just a technology upgrade.

Every press, ink set and substrate behaves differently. The profile needs to reflect how the press actually runs in production, not how we hope it runs during a demonstration. A profile built under ideal conditions is not much use if the real pressroom condition moves all over the place.

This is why proper testing and characterisation are so important. Coated paper, uncoated paper, white film, clear film, low-migration inks, UV inks, different coatings and different surface treatments can all behave differently. Each one can affect colour, density, dot gain, drying or curing, adhesion and final appearance.

There is also a practical production question: does the converter have enough suitable work to justify ECG as a workflow?

ECG makes the most sense when jobs can be grouped, substrates can be standardised, and changeovers can be reduced. If ECG jobs are mixed randomly with traditional spot colour jobs throughout the day, a lot of the benefit can disappear very quickly.

In other words, ECG needs planning. It is not just a prepress decision. It

Labels *Time and Reality*



Colourful finished labels and packaging in front of a narrow-web press, showing the commercial impact of wider colour capability.

will not deliver its full value. Artwork needs to be prepared correctly. Colour targets need to be agreed. Proofs need to be realistic. Jobs need to be imposed efficiently. Operators need clear control points. Quality needs to be measured, not guessed.

Customer expectation is another major point.

Traditionally, many customers think of a spot colour as a single mixed ink. With ECG, that same colour may be produced from a combination of process colours. That changes the conversation.

Some colours will reproduce very well. Others may require a practical tolerance or an agreed compromise. That does not mean ECG has failed. It simply means the colour needs to be managed properly from the beginning. The worst time to have that conversation is when the job is already on press.





simple ECG workflow visual — CMYKOGV ink set, prepress/profile, proofing, press and finished labels.

For brand owners, ECG can be very attractive. It can support faster artwork changes, more packaging variations, better repeatability and shorter launch cycles. For converters, it can help reduce downtime, waste, ink inventory and production complexity.

But only if it is managed as a system.

Sales teams need to understand what ECG can and cannot do. Prepress needs the right tools and training. Operators need to understand how colour is being built and controlled. Management needs to understand that ECG is not just a sales message. It is an operational commitment.

This is where the best companies will separate themselves.

The ones that treat ECG as a complete production workflow will gain a real advantage. The ones that treat it as “just add orange, green and violet” may get a colourful result, but not necessarily a profitable one.

My honest view is that ECG has real value in labels, especially as the market continues to move toward shorter runs, SKU proliferation, faster turnaround and more demanding brand colour expectations.

- But ECG is not magic.
- It is process control.
 - It is workflow discipline.
 - It is colour management in the real world.
 - It is a business decision as much as a technical one.

The press may carry the ink, but the business has to carry the process. That is where ECG will either succeed or fail.



Paul Myatt is an experienced regional print and packaging professional with more than 30 years' experience across offset, flexo, digital inkjet, labels, packaging, coding and marking technologies. He has worked extensively across Asia Pacific in service, technical support, commercial development, distributor management and regional operations.

His focus is on practical print technology, service-led business growth, workflow improvement and helping converters and OEMs turn technology into real production value.



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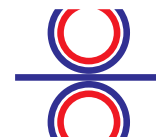
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Designed to help print service providers

Agfa unveiled the latest version of its award-winning Asanti workflow software at FESPA Barcelona as part of its comprehensive 'beast for every need' showcase.

Designed to help print service providers produce faster, more accurately, and with greater confidence, Asanti combines powerful automation, smarter color management, advanced connectivity, and enhanced performance to raise the bar for industrial-scale converting efficiency.

The new StackFlow feature transforms the way high volume, multi destination print jobs are organized by automatically arranging printed items according to delivery location. This eliminates manual collation, cuts labor costs, and speeds up fulfillment for large campaigns or multi site rollouts. StackFlow is currently available for the Speedset Orca, and future updates will extend this functionality to the Onset Panthera.

Asanti 8 also introduces intelligent media handling, improved layout automation, and new Hot Ticket tools such as auto-placement and auto-snapping. These enhancements embed logic directly into the workflow to minimize media waste, reduce errors, and accelerate job preparation. Further improvements to Pantone® rendering provide improved matching for out-of-gamut colors, contributing to measurable improvements in color difference and better hue preservation.



The release also adds broader hardware and systems integration with extended connectivity with the Fotoba XL cutter series, including automatic custom barcode generation via Fotoba Cloud for hands-off cutting setup.

FESPA visitors were able to experience Asanti 8 live, alongside a broad selection of Agfa's wide-format systems, including the Onset Panthera, Jeti Tauro H3300 UHS, and Jeti Bronco H3300 HS.

Michael Dupré, Head of Software Digital Printing Solutions at Agfa, said: "At Agfa, we're deeply proud of our

ability to offer a solution for every print need, and with Asanti 8, that capability reaches a new level. The new StackFlow feature is designed to help print service providers dealing with high-demand campaigns, seasonal rollouts, and high-mix folding carton work by making it easier to fulfil multiple different printed items to hundreds or even thousands of locations accurately and on time. By automating the journey from order data to ready-to-ship stacks, we help businesses offer sophisticated fulfilment services that were previously too complex or costly to manage at scale."

"Plus, with new automation tools in Hot Ticket, including auto-placement and auto-snapping, Asanti 8 just got even better at simplifying complex operations for short runs or personalized jobs. Together with our wide-format lineup, Agfa can deliver a tailored workflow and hardware combination for every customer. Come visit the Agfa team to learn how Asanti 8 can support your business and see the Agfa wide format herd for yourself!"





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We find out why CTV is widely recognised by

In this indepth interview with Brenda Pang, the Executive Director of Advanced Printing Technology Centre (APTEC) on why CTV is fast becoming the norm when Printers look to the future and how to streamline their operations

Q: Please introduce yourself and your industry experience

B.P: My name is Brenda Pang, the Executive Director of Advanced Printing Technology Centre (APTEC). Brenda joined prepress industry since her graduation and joined APTEC in 2001. With her over 30-year experience in printing-related education and technology transfer, she has led to disseminate the latest printing technology and printing certification to China. She had initiated several important international conferences and ISO/TC130 meeting in Hong Kong.

Brenda is a member of the National Printing Standardisation Technical Committee since Dec 2007, and has attained Fogra PSO Partner as well as ISO/TC130 Expert in 2010. In 2019, she and her team initiated the application of Colour Tone Value (CTV) and obtained the support from HKSAR government in 2024 for promoting CTV.

Q: Please introduce your company and its background

B.P: APTEC, established in 1999, jointly organised by The Hong Kong Printers Association and Vocational Training Council, funded by the Innovation and Technology Fund of HKSAR government. APTEC aimed at assisting the industry migrating from traditional workflow to digital workflow.

After the completion of the project, APTEC has been wholly owned by the Hong Kong Printers Association, APTEC has an important role as a technology transfer centre, facilitating the dissemination of the latest technologies to the printing and related industries, and supporting skills upgrading.

Through technology transfer seminars, training courses, consultancy services and testing services, APTEC works to enhance the industry's capabilities.



Brenda Pang the Executive Director of Advanced Printing Technology Centre (APTEC).

One of the most prominent areas is printing standardisation.

APTEC is the first organisation in China introduced G7 and printing standardisation in 2007. Currently,



has been
the industry.



APTEC's colleague serves as an ISO/TC130 Expert, Fogra PSO Partner and Fogra Digital Print Partner.

In 2019, APTEC started the testing on CTV. In 2024, the Hong Kong Printers Association obtained the funding and support from the Cultural and Creative Industries Development Agency (CCIDA) of the Hong Kong SAR for promoting Colour Tone Value (CTV) press calibration method, implemented by APTEC.

Up to date, APTEC has trained 24 CTV Certified Printing Companies, covering both China and Malaysia. In 2025, APTEC initiated the adoption of CTV as the first Greater Bay Area standard in the printing industry. CTV has been widely recognised by the industry.

Q: Take us back to basics and please explain what CTV is.

B.P: CTV, as the ISO standard, is a press calibration and colour control method based on the colorimetric values obtained from spectral data.

The key is to use colour values (LAB), instead of density, to obtain a consistent and reliable visual result, such as a result where 50% of the dots have the same colour appearance as 50% of the printed colour, and effectively monitor the dot and dot colour changes.

CTV is able to monitor both colour and tonal values, and can be applied to different printing methods, spot colour printing, 4C printing and multi-

colour printing. It can bring better print performance as compared with other calibration methods.

ISO published "ISO 20654: Graphic technology - Measurement and calculation of spot colour tone value" in 2017, which is mainly used for spot colour control. APTEC researched and applied it to process colour with ideal results.

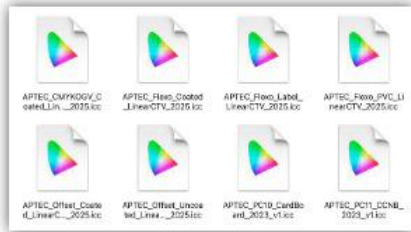
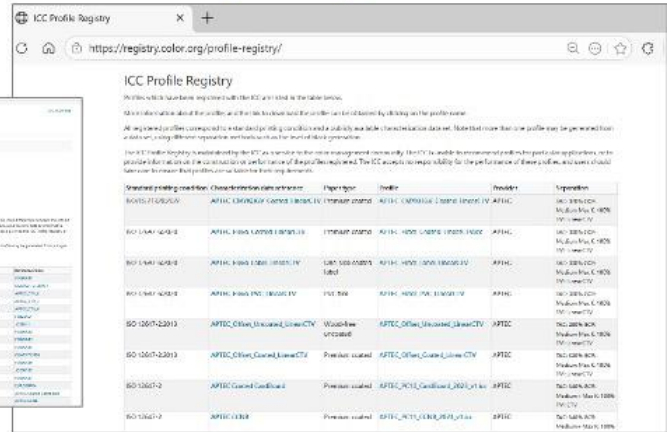
Q: How will this CTV really benefit Printers be it Commercial Offset / Digital or any form of Packaging production

B.P: - Colour matching is easier (proof to print, different printing machines, post-processing vs. unprocessed), reduces printing paper waste, shorter

Eight Characterisation Datasets and ICC by using CTV uploaded to ICC website

Offset

- Coated paper (CMYKOGV)
 - Uncoated paper
 - Coated paper
 - CCNB
 - Cardboard
- ## Flexo:
- PVC
 - Label
 - Coated paper



<https://registry.color.org/cmyk-registry/>
<https://registry.color.org/profile-registry/>

press-make ready time, higher efficiency

- Different factories and locations can achieve very similar printing colours

- Similar to traditional printing control methods, but easier to master and more accurate, i.e. monitor print dots while monitoring colour

- High colour reproduction capability: achieves consistent visual effects between printed products and originals

- Widely use: can be applied to spot colour, 4C and multi-colour printing; can be applied to different printing methods (offset, flexographic, digital and gravure); can use any ink, any substrates; can use any screen ruling or screen type (AM amplitude modulation, FM frequency modulation, hybrid screens, continuous tone); can use any ink, any substrates

- Especially for multi-colour printing, CTV is the perfect solution to control all colours

Testimonials from CTV Certified Printing Company:

"Applying CTV in reprint jobs delivers superior reproduction of light tints, shortens make-ready time by 33%,

and enhances overall efficiency."
 Zhuhai Haomai Industrial Co., Ltd.

"By integrating CTV into extended-gamut printing, time for press make-ready and colour reproduction are cut by 30%, increasing throughput and significantly reducing waste due to colour reproduction process."
 Ningbo Sinso Printing Co., Ltd

"The CTV calibration method enhances calibration efficiency by roughly 8% and reduce paper consumption by approximately 5%."
 Safe Power Printing & Box Mfg. Co., Ltd.

"CTV allows us to complete output much faster and is a very simplified

method, of which it has given us less failure and frustration when we are on it." Kinta Press & Packaging (M) Sdn. Bhd.

Q: Are there any limitations to what CTV can do, in regard to equipment printers must use

B.P: Basically, for the offset printers and flexo printers, there are no limitations. But there are some basic requirements as below:

- Spectrodensitometer (suggest to be autoscan in pressroom)
- CTV curve calculation software
- Output RIP which can apply CTV curve
- Stable press machine



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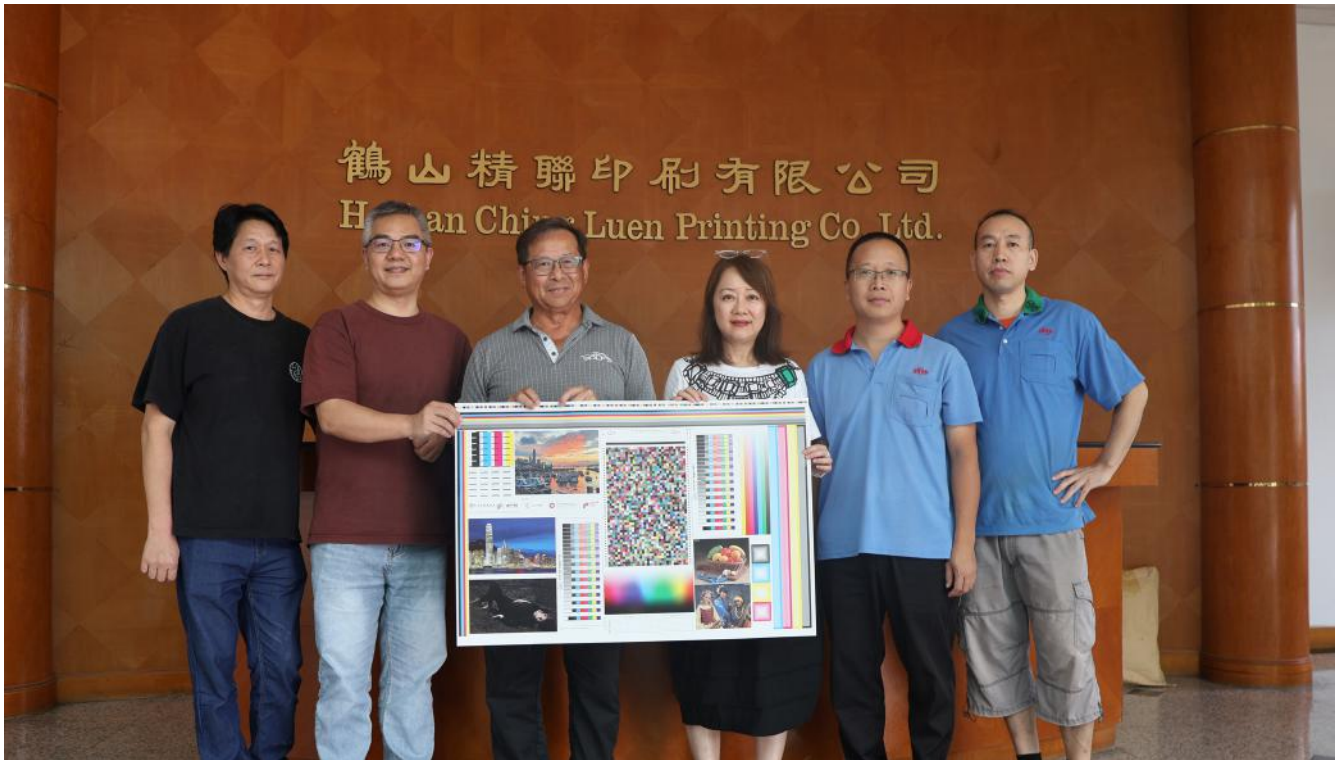


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For CTV in digital printing, it needs to use calibration curve together with ICC colour management.

Q: What is the process to get CTV into the production cycle of all types of printers

B.P: It is the press calibration method, but the calculation is different from other methods. For offset, flexo and gravure, the process is as following:

- Controls the output curve of the RIP, similar to the TVI calibration curve
- Measures the colour values of tones
- Calculates dot values using Lab/XYZ colour data
- Does not measure density and does not require the use of RGB filters for measuring and calculating dots
- Use linear curve to calculate colour values
- Measures the LAB colour values of tone graduation of each plate in CMYK 4C printing

For digital printing, it has to work together with ICC colour management, with creation of ICC profile after calibration.

Q: What would be the first major impact a company would see when they utilize CTV and would this benefit the ultimate brand owner/ print buyer

B.P: Colour accuracy and consistency between proof to press is higher bringing shorter make-ready time; image quality is better, especially for the details, contrast and gradation; enhances the colour reproduction ability, from the design file (CMYK) to print.

Q: What will the future for CTV and the Print / Packing Industry be like, do you think it will become standard practice

B.P: I believe that it will become standard practice as it has been recognised by ISO, especially for packaging industry as spot colours are very popular in print products. For example, for multi-colour printing, CTV is the only press calibration method.

Q: Why did APTEC decide to create a new category for the Asian Print Awards and the Asian Packaging Excellence Awards

B.P: We hope to promote CTV in different applications and CTV Certified Printing Company program.

Q: Any other thoughts you would like our readers to know about, any last words and how can they contact you for more information on CTV

B.P: CTV is a proven and effective press calibration and colour control method.

It is not just a certification; it is also used very practically in the pressroom. Moreover, because of its strong colour reproduction capability, it will be an important factor for brand owners' concerns.

For interested parties, please contact Ms. Brenda Pang at brendaok@aptec.hkprinters.org. Website: <https://www.ctv-aptec.org>.





tesa® Softprint neXt

Foam plate mounting tape: FLEX Product Design

tesa® Softprint neXt, a double-sided foam tape, with the new innovative adhesive package enables an effortless plate handling through unique features now for every step. This makes tesa® Softprint neXt an unrivaled solution for unmatched efficiency and user satisfaction.

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- Outstanding performance against edge lifting during printing
- Innovative plate side adhesive for improved and easy removal avoiding damage to the printing plate during demounting



New
Launch!

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to learn how our solution can
transform your operations.



Asian Print Awards & Asian Packaging Excellence Awards

CTV Excellence Awards

NEW CATEGORY



Promoted by APTEC, CTV (Colour Tone Value) is a press calibration and colour control method based on the colourimetric values obtained from spectral data. Its key advantage is that it uses colour values (LAB)—rather than density—to achieve consistent and reliable visual results. CTV can monitor both colour and tonal values and can be applied across a range of printing methods, including spot colour, 4C, and multicolour printing. As a result, it helps improve tonal quality, contrast, and gradation.

About CTV Excellence Award:

Objective: To promote wide application of CTV (Colour Tone Value) press calibration method.

Requirement: Participating companies must be CTV Certified Printing Company.

The companies MUST use CTV in printing

Judging criteria: based on measurement (solids and tone), visual (print sheet versus digital proof) and level of difficulty.



Printing specification:

The participating company can choose:

- 1 Colour: 4C, 5C, 6C or 7C
- 2 Printing method: Offset
- 3 Substrate (based on the provided substrate data):
 - 3.1 Coated paper
 - 3.2 Uncoated paper



Printing specification:

The participating company can choose:

- 1 Colour: 4C, 5C, 6C or 7C
- 2 Printing method: Offset or Flexography
- 3 Substrate (based on the provided substrate data):
 - 3.1 Coated paper
 - 3.2 Uncoated paper
 - 3.3 Clay Coated Newsback
 - 3.4 One-side coated board
 - 3.5 PVC (for flexo)
 - 3.6 Label (for flexo)

Submission procedure:

1: After received the application, the participating companies will receive the "colour-separated" PDF file from APTEC.

2: For APA, please send 10 print sheets to the organiser.

3: For APEA, please send 10 print sheets and 3 pieces of dummy product to the organiser. Dummy product is for display only.



CTV Excellence Awards



Free Entry Form

Company name: _____

Contact person: _____

Contact no. (office) _____ (mobile) _____

Country: _____ Email address: _____

Wechat no. (if any): _____ Whatsapp no. (if any): _____

Please choose your participating Award and your choices of printing specification, maximum 3 entries per Award (must fill in the following combination for each entry in separate Form).

Asian Print Awards

Submission deadline: Aug 7th, 2026

Print Method - Offset (default)

Colour (choose only one item)

- 4C
- 5C (4C + Orange)
- 6C (4C + Orange + Green)
- 7C (4C + Orange + Green + Violet)

Substrate (choose only one item)

- Coated paper
- Uncoated paper

Asian Print Awards dinner Oct 15, 2026 at Shanghai
Asian Packaging Excellence Awards dinner
Nov 13, 2026 at Jakarta

Send all entries to -

CTV Excellence Awards 2026
c/o The Thai Printing Association
311, 311/1 Rama 9 - Soi 15
Huaikhwang District, Bangkok,
10310, Thailand
Tel: +66 2 719 6685

Asian Packaging Excellence Awards

Submission deadline: Sept 4th, 2026

Print Method (choose only one)

- Offset
- Flexography

Colour (choose only one item)

- 4C
- 5C (4C + Orange)
- 6C (4C + Orange + Green)
- 7C (4C + Orange + Green + Violet)

Substrate (choose only one item):

- Coated paper
- Uncoated paper
- CCNB (Clay Coated Newsback)
- One-side coated board
- PVC (for flexo)
- Label (for flexo)



"Humble beginning with Vision"

Speedmaster CX 104 - Percetakan Konta Sdn. Bhd.

From humble beginnings in 1980, Percetakan Konta Sdn. Bhd. has grown into one of the leading packaging companies in Penang, Malaysia. Percetakan Konta is, today, both ISO 9001 and FSC certified, offering a wide range of printing solutions, including packaging color boxes, fluting displays, leaflets, cards, and other offset print products.

With vision to be productive to achieve cost efficiency in carton folding packaging thus equipment of high capacity and output such as HEIDELBERG Speedmaster printing press is preferred.

Today, Percetakan Konta has integrated Suprasetter CtP with Speedmaster presses via Prinect workflow while carton boxes quality is assured by Diana Eye 55, offline inspection system.

Driving Robust Growth in the Packaging Printing Market in Malaysia

Despite steady growth in carton folding boxes, Percetakan Konta sees the changing trends and demands of print buyers. To stay competitive, besides being highly productive, Konta realizes the importance of flexibility when it comes to carton box production, when run length is getting shorter with more SKU's.

It becomes critical to motivate the production team to implement shorter



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Co-organized by:  Shanghai Printing Industry Association

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make-ready time and reduced make-ready waste which is stressful yet ensuring high quality carton boxes are delivered to print buyers on time.

HEIDELBERG comes into the picture by offering complete solutions from Prinect workflow, Suprasetter CtP, Speedmaster presses, Polar cutting systems and MK Postpress complimented by Saphira Consumable, Service and Parts support, including trainings under HRDF program.

Boosting productivity in the era of short runs.

“With the installation of Speedmaster CD 102, efficiency of daily operation

has been enhanced significantly. The press enabled the company to adapt swiftly to evolving market demands by shorter make ready time, reduced waste and improved productivity. Its strong performance and reliable operation boost the confidence of the team for further expansion, leading to the installation of second unit Speedmaster CD102 just one year after the first.

To ensure stable production, both presses are integrated with Prinect and adapting Saphira consumables. The strategic move reinforced the company’s commitment to deliver superior quality consistently with short

delivery time. We see HEIDELBERG as trusted solution provider thus strengthen the partnership.”

Prinect is the enabler. With the integration, as well as high automation and Intelli- systems on CX104, the press has delivered impressive result again. Despite 10% reduction in average run length, the company has maintained high level of Overall Equipment Effectiveness (OEE) and 15% faster make ready time.

Within just three months, CX104 handled over 1,000 job changeovers with increase in net output. Additionally, Percetakan Konta receives positive feedback from operators because they can focus better when stressful manual tasks are smartly automated. The CX104 investment is clearly the right move when company gains better productivity while the operational team is motivated.

Citing Mr. Ling, Director of Heidelberg Malaysia Sdn. Bhd., “Penang remains one of the most important markets for us. We are pleased to see HEIDELBERG technologies are well used to achieve excellent results in productivity, thus improved competitiveness. Our efforts to support printing industry will continue to be strengthened.”



Speedmaster CX 104. Our global bestseller.

Built for quality, efficiency, and reliability – with over 950 installations in more than 60 countries, it is the globally best-selling press from HEIDELBERG of the current generation. The Speedmaster CX 104 impresses with flexible configurations, seamless integration into the Prinect workflow and strong performance in everyday use. A genuine HEIDELBERG – made for print shops that won't settle for less.

➔ heidelberg.com/en/cx104





A journey built on trust between W&H and Jayshri Propack

Founded in 2009 in Ahmedabad, Jayshri Propack Pvt. Ltd. has grown into a trusted global manufacturer of high performance barrier flexible packaging, serving leading food and FMCG brands with advanced multilayer film solutions. From the outset, Windmüller & Hölscher (W&H) has been an integral partner in this journey.

The collaboration began in 2009 with the installation of Jayshri Propack's first 5 layer VAREX II blown film line. What started as a strategic technology investment quickly evolved into a long standing partnership built on shared vision, technical excellence, and mutual trust.

As market demands grew more complex, so did Jayshri Propack's commitment to innovation. The company continued to strengthen its capabilities with W&H's advanced technologies, commissioning a MIRAFLEX printing press, followed by 7 layer and 9 layer AQUAREX blown film lines enabling greater versatility, consistency, and performance across a wide range of applications.

In 2026, the partnership reached yet another milestone with the installation of a 7 layer VAREX II blown film line, reaffirming Jayshri Propack's focus on efficiency, precision, and sustainable film production.

Today, Jayshri Propack operates across 3, 5, 7, and 9 layer blown film technologies, delivering innovative packaging solutions that enhance product protection, shelf life, and visual appeal – true to its guiding philosophy of "Protection, Preservation, and Promotion!"

Beyond machines and milestones, what truly defines this collaboration is a progressive mindset – a relentless drive to adopt future ready technologies while remaining firmly

aligned with customer needs.

"Our association with Windmüller & Hölscher has been instrumental in our growth. Their technology gives us the confidence to meet evolving customer expectations, while their unwavering support ensures we are always prepared for the next stage of expansion."

– Team Jayshri Propack Pvt. Ltd.

"Jayshri Propack embodies the spirit of innovation and commitment we value in our partners. Their readiness to invest in advanced technologies and continuously push boundaries makes this collaboration truly meaningful. Together, we are building a partnership defined not just by progress, but by purpose."

– Mr. Anuj Sahni, Sales Director, Windmüller & Hölscher India

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ALPHA FLEX

- **Focused** on what matters
- Designed to ensure reliable and efficient operation with W&H's **best-in-class** print quality
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There's No 5-Step Guide to Digital Print Finishing

Moving into digital printing is one thing. Doing it well is another entirely. Across Asia Pacific, I've started to notice a familiar pattern—one that explains why so many printers get it wrong when it comes to finishing.

By Sven Ladefoged Olsen, Managing Director, Asia Pacific at Muller Martini

Moving into digital printing is one thing. Doing it well is another entirely. Across Asia Pacific, I've started to notice a familiar pattern—one that explains why so many printers get it wrong when it comes to finishing.

A printer decides to adopt digital printing.
The demand looks promising.
Then comes the next big question: finishing.

And that's where the challenge begins.

In-line? Near-line? Stand-alone?

Each approach can be right. And each can be wrong.

Why? The reason is simple: most printers make the finishing decision without understanding their future print job profile.

Will the plant run jobs of 10, 100, or 1,000 copies?

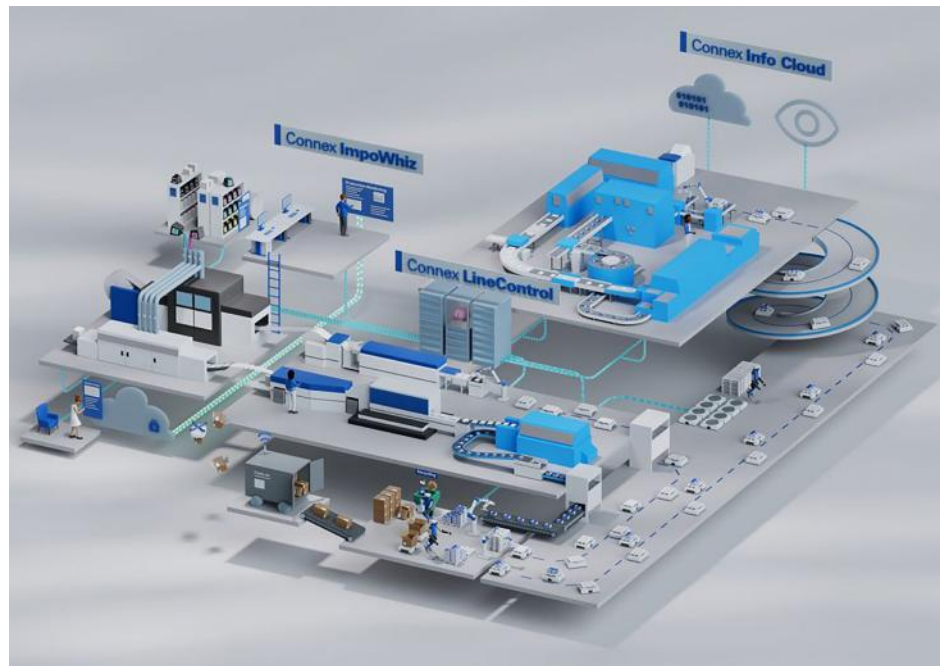
Will orders arrive in waves or as a steady flow?

Will changeovers matter more than raw speed?

Small details—big consequences.

Digital printing offers freedom:

Short runs
Backlist titles



Print on demand
Less warehousing

Faster response to sudden demand
Finishing must match that reality. A setup designed for long, stable runs can struggle when work becomes mixed, fast, and unpredictable.

On paper, an in-line system may look elegant. A stand-alone solution may appear flexible. A near-line setup can seem like a fair compromise. But once production begins—different formats, substrates, batch sizes, and

automation levels—the neat textbook solution quickly disappears.

Here's what I've learned: choosing digital finishing is less about buying a machine and more about understanding workflow.

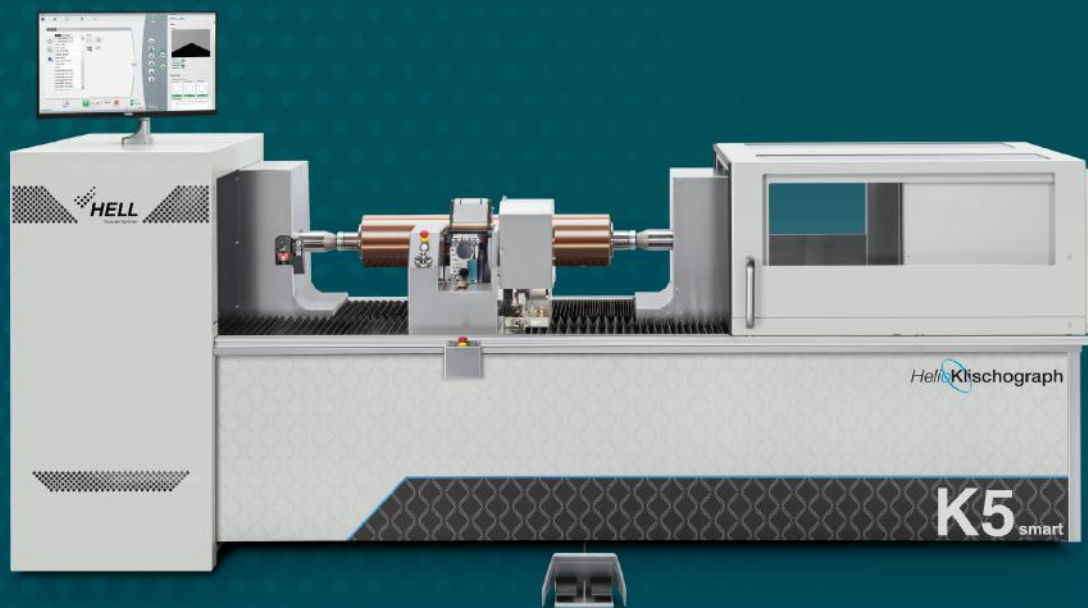
What enters the plant
How fast it changes
Where bottlenecks appear
Which jobs disrupt rhythm
Many printers get their first setup wrong. There's no shame in that. Digital finishing remains a moving target in many market segments. The best choice today may require adjustment tomorrow.

An old proverb still applies: Measure twice, cut once... then be ready to measure again.

Smart digital printing isn't about guessing the future perfectly. It's about creating a finishing setup that can thrive amid uncertainty.



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Agfa and Hybrid Software join forces to bring full variable data capability

Agfa and Hybrid Software announce a collaboration to help folding carton converters unlock the full potential of variable data printing and accelerate their transition toward more efficient, fully digital production.

Agfa and Hybrid Software today announced a collaboration designed to help folding carton converters unlock the full potential of variable data printing and accelerate their transition toward more efficient, fully digital production workflows.

As brand owners increasingly demand shorter runs, faster turnaround times, and greater versioning, folding carton manufacturers are under growing pressure to evaluate traditional production models. The integration of Hybrid Software's advanced packaging design, prepress, and smart digital front end workflow software with Agfa's digital printing solutions – notably the SpeedSet Orca single-pass digital packaging press and Asanti software – enables converters to efficiently produce folding cartons with changing graphics, text, languages, or artwork from carton to carton.

Together, Agfa and Hybrid Software provide an agile and scalable digital

production environment while maintaining the high quality and consistency required for packaging applications.

Agfa's SpeedSet Orca digital folding carton press brings the advantages of digital production – including rapid job changeovers and reduced waste – into high-volume folding carton environments.

Designed to operate where traditional production models begin to fall short, this apex predator combines digital primer, advanced water-based inks, and inline varnish. Broad substrate compatibility across paper and micro-flute supports a wide range of packaging applications within one digital production platform.

The integration of SmartDFE from Hybrid Software's OEM business, Helix, enables complex inline variable data printing. SmartDFE uses patented AI software to optimize system

configuration in real time, resulting in faster, more efficient production – even for highly versioned jobs. The addition of color management software from Hybrid's ColorLogic ensures consistently accurate brand colors across versions and substrates.

"This collaboration reflects a shared commitment to helping folding carton producers navigate the shift from analog to digital production, especially as demand for versioning and customization continues to grow," said Michael Dupré, Head of Software Digital Printing Systems at Agfa.

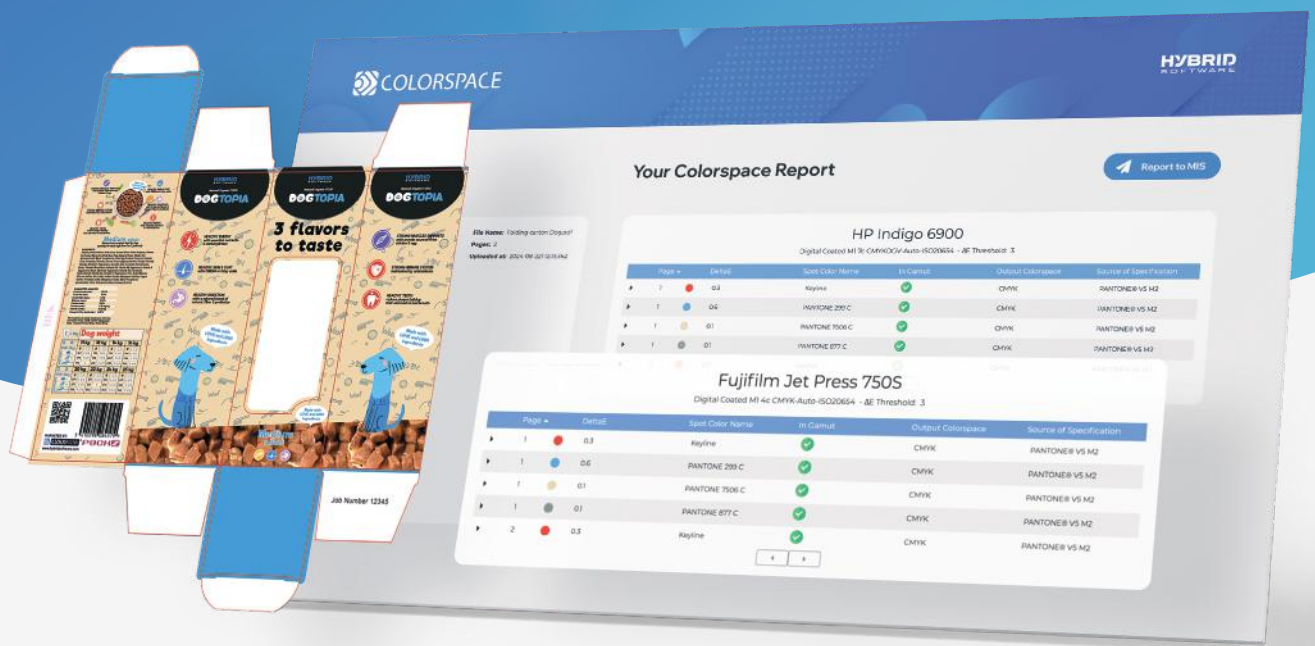
Lawrence Geere, OEM Sales Director EMEA at Hybrid Software Helix added: "By combining the expertise of the Agfa and Hybrid Software engineering teams, we aim to help converters unlock the full potential of digital production. This collaboration provides a clear, practical path to compete in a rapidly evolving market."





Our integrated color management solution in prepress and production workflow.

- ✓ Achieve cost optimization with Extended Color Gamut printing
- ✓ Spot-on brand color matching
- ✓ Fewer plates, less ink, and digital clicks
- ✓ Increase press uptime



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To achieve further cost reduction and efficiency in publication printing

Sanhe Rong Zhan Printing Co., Ltd. is a rapidly growing printing company based in Hebei Province, China, with a core focus on publication printing

The company offers a one-stop service including design, platemaking, sheet-fed printing, and offset web printing to bookbinding and delivery to customers. The company became the first in China to introduce an integrated system combining an RMGT printing press with a roll sheeter manufactured by Hinix. Since the company primarily handles publication printing orders, this innovation was a crucial step toward cost efficiency.

We spoke with Mr. Sun Zhan, the company's General Manager, about their objectives for production line improvements, the background of their decision to implement the RMGT printing press and roll sheeter system, and the benefits they have achieved.

Continuous innovation supports business growth

The foundation of Sanhe Rong Zhan Printing was laid by the printing company founded by Mr. Sun Zhuan's

father in Northeast China. The company expand-ed its business and moved to Sanhe City, near Beijing, in 2016, changing its name to the current Sanhe Rong Zhan Printing. The company specializes in publishing-related printing and has been designated as a publishing and printing enter-prise by the Hebei Province News and Publishing Bureau.

The company's policy is to pursue innovation and sustainable development with an emphasis on environmental considerations. In 2019, the company aggressively promoted digital transformation (DX) and, during the same period, introduced automated transportation robots (AGVs) and industrial robots in rapid succession.

These efforts dynamically reformed the production system by automating and improv-ing efficiency across the entire printing process. Regarding

the purpose of automation, General Manager Mr. Sun Zhuan explained: "We aim to improve the overall level of our factory. Because enhancing the overall factory efficiency per unit of time will become more essential than standalone machines."

An industrial robot installed for palletizing finished products.



RMGT 1060TP-8 tandem perfecter connected with roll sheeter

We said “entry level”
– and created a beast



WINDMÖLLER & HÖLSCHER

wh.group/alpha



"The impact of automation is evident in numbers. For example, our workforce before automation was about 120 employees, but it is now reduced to 85. However, downsizing the workforce is not the core objective of automation. Instead, the goal is to reduce the workload on employees and allow more of them to focus on technical tasks."

Win-win relationship with clients

The key players in the company's printing department are the four RMGT presses introduced consecutively over two years from 2022 to 2024. Among them, one RMGT 1050TP- 8 and the RMGT 970PF-8 are equipped with roll sheeters. Regarding the integration of roll sheeters with RMGT presses, Mr. Sun Zhan stated: "In our publishing printing operations, paper is supplied by our clients. Previously, publishers used roll paper for large-volume jobs

and sheet paper for small-volume jobs. This purchasing method was complicated and increased pre-purchase preparation costs. By using roll sheeters, publishers can simplify procurement and benefit from cost reductions.

Meanwhile, our company can eliminate the need for separate cutting processes by standardizing on roll paper. This creates a win-win situation for both us and our clients." Mr. Sun Zhan also emphasized the advantages of the roll sheeter integration:

" The real advantage lies in the flexibility of cutting paper. We are not restricted to the paper sizes supplied by publishers but can determine the most efficient cut-ting sizes with our technology. This is a highly meaningful aspect of having a roll sheeter in-house."





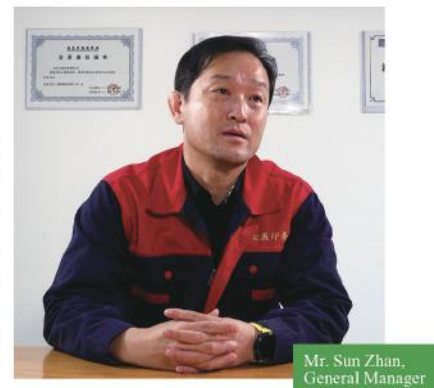
automation. The ability to integrate these seamlessly in a short period was crucial.

The RMGT printing press is compatible with IoT functions. We took our time to consider the first installation and, in the end, connected our own MES system through RMGT's MIS connection software. This could not have been achieved without the cooperation of RMGT's Chinese distributor, DINGA." (Mr. Sun Zhan)

Promoting full automation with the smart factory

Since its establishment, the company, led by Mr. Sun Zhuan, has been advancing its transformation toward a smart factory, primarily through a partnership with RMGT and DINGA.

Regarding further efforts toward a smart factory, Mr. Sun Zhuan stated: "We became the first printing company in China to establish a production style that involves printing with an 8-color press and a roll sheeter while using AGVs for transportation. We have taken a solid first step toward printing automation. Moving forward, we plan to achieve full automation of the entire workflow, from paper



Key points in upgrading the printing press

The RMGT printing press was the perfect match for the company's automation strategy. "The key factors in choosing a printing press were digitization and

supply and printing to paper delivery, by combining RMGT presses with roll sheeters. We will continue striving toward our vision of building a smart factory, including this automation."

An AGV that automatically transports printed sheets to the bookbinding process

Focus on efficiency, consistency and smarter workflows delivers measurable improvements

Hauke Liefferink, Managing Director of leading South African flexo premedia provider Acme Graphics, is a man on a mission — to change how printers, converters and brand owners in the competitive local market think about ink consumption.

It's a campaign in which Acme is enjoying considerable success, helped by an ongoing program of investment in FLEXCEL NX Technology from Miraclon, which began in 2020 and has recently been boosted with the addition of PureFlexo™ Printing, triple-form plate surface patterning available through Miraclon's FLEXCEL NX Print Suite for Flexible Packaging. Says Hauke: "GSM yield is the conventional measure of ink, anilox and plate performance, but PureFlexo Printing, changes the game. We can show customers that with the right pattern and FLEXCEL NX Plate, we can run the same color and achieve the same ink opacity with lower volume aniloxes and a reduced ink film weight."

49% savings on ink costs

As an example, he points to a recent job for rice bags where they enabled the printer to reduce ink GSM by 22% after switching to FLEXCEL NX plates with PureFlexo Printing. "Then, by adding expanded color gamut (ECG) printing to the mix, it increased the savings figure to 36%. On another job – surface print on low-density polyethylene — we cut ink costs by 49% using our MultiGamut color management system with PureFlexo Printing and ECG.

"These are impressive numbers, because ink consumption is a big pain point for printers and converters, and a major cost contributor that hits brand owners too," continues Hauke. "Other key challenges for printers include getting up to color faster, increasing press speeds, and reducing press stoppages for cleaning.



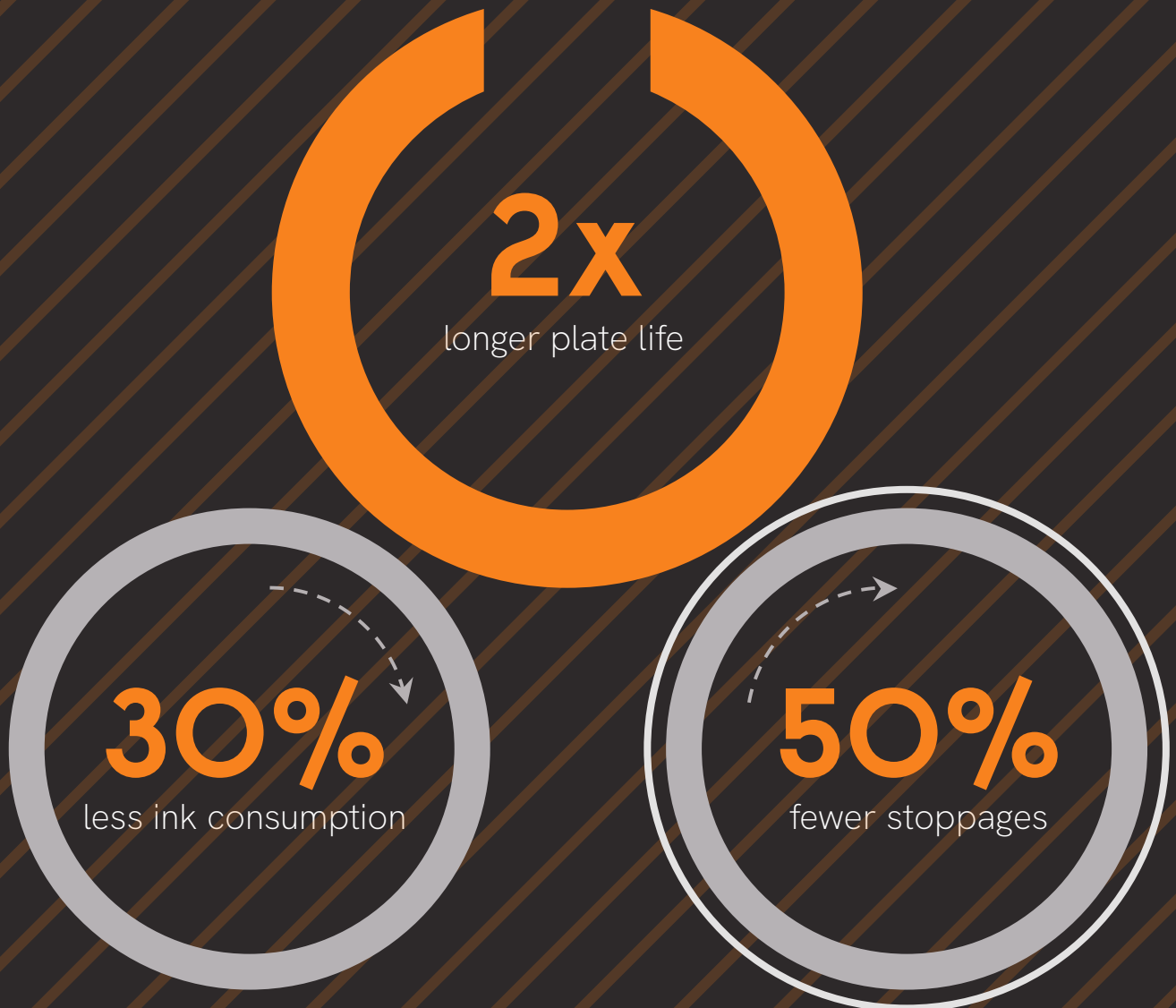
FLEXCEL NX Technology and PureFlexo Printing help ease this: For example, a customer printed just over five tons of flexible packaging over 12 hours and only stopped once – to clean the white – compared to seven stops previously for the same job."

Pushing the boundaries of flexo

Acme Graphics is also helping customers address emerging challenges such as ink efficiency, drying performance and press productivity, particularly as interest grows in water-based ink systems



Flexo Plates. With Impact.



Our unique **FLEXCEL NX** System has delivered these print results.

What impact will you make with modern flexo?

miraclon.com/go/modernflexo



for flexible packaging applications. He continues: "In Miraclon and the FLEXCEL NX System, we have found a valuable partner and enabling technology to help us address customers' pain points. For example, recently a customer easily produced a job of over 6 million meters – with one set of FLEXCEL NX Plates!"

The company is also supporting customers as they explore new production approaches, including extended color gamut printing and the transition toward more efficient and sustainable processes. "ECG is a big talking point in South Africa," says Hauke. "With our MultiGamut color management system, we've created a practical pathway that allows printers

to start with conventional processes and expand into ECG or even digital printing over time — all within a single-color management framework."

Building on a proven foundation

These results are driven by Acme Graphics' continued focus on improving ink performance through advanced plate technologies. "Patterning plays a key role in what we do," says Hauke. "It allows us to control ink transfer more precisely, and PureFlexo Printing builds on that to deliver even greater consistency and efficiency on press."

As the only flexo premedia trade shop in South Africa equipped with FLEXCEL NX Technology – a FLEXCEL

NX Mid System at its Durban plant and FLEXCEL NX Wide System in Cape Town, Acme has established a clear point of differentiation in the market. "It gives us something genuinely different to talk about," he adds. "It opens doors with customers and allows us to demonstrate real performance advantages in a very practical way."

Towards 'smart' Industry 4.0 manufacturing

Founded in 1997, the Acme Graphics group of companies employs more than 80 staff across four production sites in Durban, Cape Town, Johannesburg and Springs, the latter known as Mpact Flexo Graphics, specializing in corrugated packaging. Over the past four years, the company has expanded its national footprint, increased imaging capacity, and broadened its capabilities to serve a wider range of packaging applications.

At the same time, Acme has evolved beyond traditional premedia to become a developer of integrated digital solutions. "Over the last few years, we've transformed our business," says Hauke. "We're no longer just supplying plates — we're developing software that integrates with what we produce, enhancing and complementing our products."

This includes AcmeRobot, a cloud-based platform that enables workflow automation, MIS integration, reporting and color management across proofers and presses; Proofify, a cloud-based artwork approval system; and MultiGamut, Acme's proprietary approach to extended color gamut (ECG) printing across flexo, digital, litho and gravure processes.

"Our focus is on connecting physical products with digital systems," he concludes. "That allows our customers to eliminate manual processes, reducing errors and enabling a more intelligent, data-driven production environment. These systems are increasingly used by customers, enabling seamless data flow from job costing through to artwork creation and plate production without the need for re-entering information."

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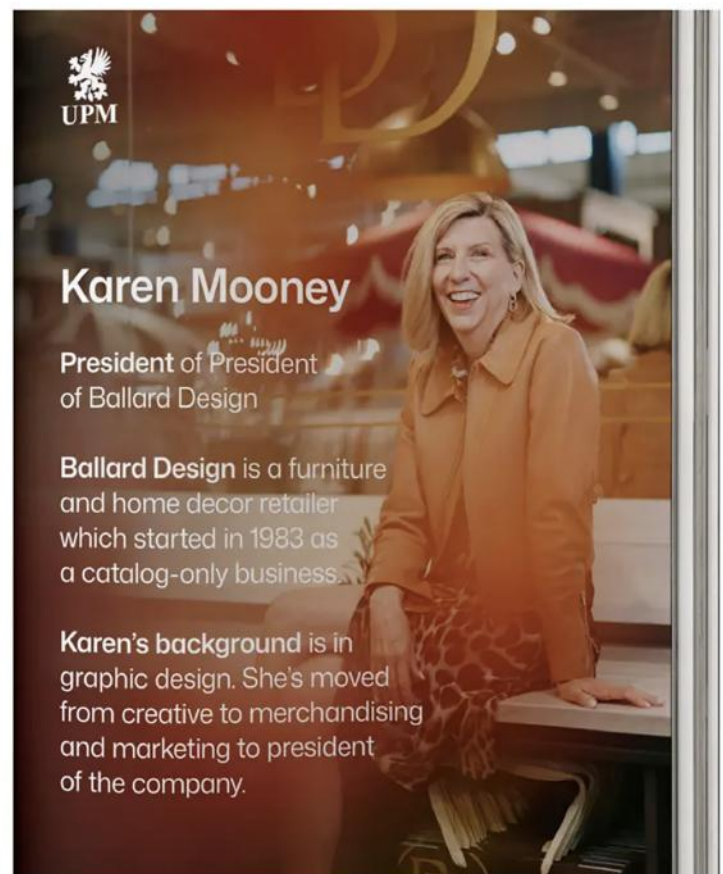
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People allow themselves time to linger over print- *Karen Mooney*

Karen Mooney is the President of Ballard Designs, a multi-channel furniture and home decor retailer which started off over 40 years ago as a catalog-only business. Today, the catalog remains a key part of their marketing puzzle, she says.

"I loved catalogs and magazines when I was growing up. My favorite was the Martha Stewart one, the way it was shot and presented was so compelling and beautiful and different to anything I had seen at the time. Growing up in Atlanta, I also received the Ballard Designs catalog and absolutely revered it. I'd dog-ear the pages, imagining what I could buy if I had the money.

It was always an aspirational brand for me. So when I started my career as a graphic designer, I targeted Ballard Designs as a place I wanted to work. Now, 25 years later, I've moved from creative to merchandising and marketing—and four years ago, I became president.

I'd dog-ear the Ballard Designs catalog pages, imagining what I could buy if I had the money.

I regularly do company refreshers or inductions for new employees, introducing them to the business. One of the things that always surprises some of the younger employees is that Ballard Designs started as a catalog business – and why. When Helen Ballard started it in 1983, it was the only way to get in front of people without having a store and this idea sort of blows everyone's mind.

Browsing products online is just not the same as opening up a catalog, holding it in your hand and getting that visceral and emotional connection.

There has been a material shift in what catalogs are used for. They used to be strictly sales tools, but for us now they are a marketing tool and a point of inspiration for our customers.

Back then, the Ballard catalog used to contain every detail – every single color and dimension – but now all that information can live online. The internet is a very transactional place and it can be hard to find inspiration unless you really know where to look. If you're on our site or another home decor retailer site, you're mostly browsing products. It's just not the same as opening up a catalog, holding it in your hand and getting that visceral and emotional connection.

There's this myth that younger generations don't like print, but we haven't found that to be true. It's not about age; it's about preference.

There's this myth that younger generations don't like print, but we haven't found that to be true. Over the years, around the same percent



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Put it on paper.**

UPM Communication Papers



of 35-year-olds like getting catalogs now as they did back then. That hasn't really shifted. It's not about age; it's about preference. Some people enjoy engaging with print, and others don't.

What's key is how these elements complement each other. Catalogs, retail stores, and digital all work together to create a well-rounded business.

We've never believed that the catalog is dead, but with paper, printing and postage costs going up, we had to get strategic about those who valued it in their mailbox and those who did not. We needed to focus on how to make the most of every mailing we did. We've streamlined the catalog and invested those savings into our digital offering. But what's key is how these elements complement each other. It's not one or the other — catalogs, retail stores, and digital all work together to create a well-rounded business.

The tactile experience of flipping through the catalog becomes part of our customers' brand interaction.

Cost has always been a consideration in producing our catalog. We have done tests using cheaper paper quality but that's a slippery slope — it may not decrease your quality of demand right now but over time, it can degrade the image of your brand. Last year,

we started to test mailing our best customers with half receiving the paper we currently use and the other half receiving a catalog with premium, perfect-bound stock and a nicer cover.

We found that the nicer catalog performed better. That doesn't mean we are going to send it out to every customer, but there are those that we know appreciate it. Even if they don't buy today, our catalog stays with them. The tactile experience of flipping through the catalog becomes part of their brand interaction. This reflects how we think about the catalog holistically. It's not just a tool for driving sales; it's about crafting the full brand experience. If it helps increase the average order value or customer lifetime value, then it's worth the investment.

Last year, we started to test mailing our best customers with half receiving the paper we currently use and the other half receiving a catalog with premium, perfect-bound stock and a nicer cover. The nicer catalog performed better.

Everyone refers to our catalog as a magazine, which is telling. And we've found that some of our older customers have held onto catalogs for months, sometimes years. That is because they use it for decorating or inspiration and not as something disposable. Each medium offers something unique. It is

a fundamentally different experience to hold something in your hands as opposed to seeing an email that gets quickly deleted. People allow themselves time to linger over print, which we don't get in digital, where we are almost impatient with ourselves.

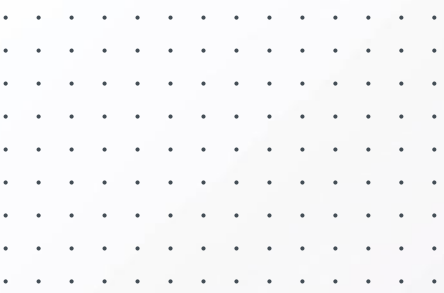
People allow themselves time to linger over print, which we don't get in digital, where we are almost impatient with ourselves.

Internally, we've had to shift our mindset: the catalog isn't just a sales tool anymore, it's a key part of the marketing puzzle. We think hard about how to use it to create emotional connection, how it supports retail, how store associates can use it to help customers visualize their space.

The biggest challenge is balancing our marketing spend across channels. We don't want to create a self-fulfilling prophecy by pulling back on something just because it's expensive. The catalog is still an important part of our customers' lives.

It really matters to them. We're committed to keeping it funded because we believe in the value it delivers. So yes, we've always been—and still are—big believers in catalogs."

The catalog is an important part of our customers' lives. It really matters to them.



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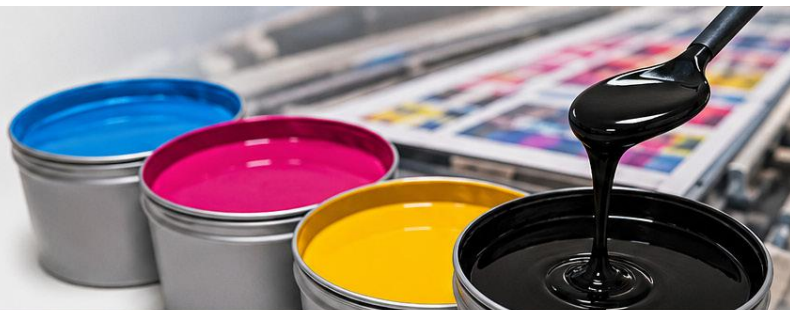
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IS IT TRUE THE PRINTING & PACKAGING INDUSTRY IS RUNNING OUT OF INK?

The industry is **not literally** running out of ink, but global shortages of key raw materials, rising oil prices, and geopolitical tensions—especially the Iran conflict—are making ink more expensive and harder to source.



KEY RAW MATERIALS UNDER PRESSURE



NITROCELLULOSE

Essential for fast-drying inks used in flexible packaging and labels. Supply tightened due to geopolitical tensions and increased military demand.



PETROLEUM-BASED CHEMICALS

Naphtha and other oil-derived materials are key ingredients in inks, coatings and packaging.

THE IMPACT OF THE IRAN CONFLICT



The Strait of Hormuz—one of the world's most important oil shipping routes—has been affected by tensions and disruptions.



This impacts the global supply of naphtha and petrochemicals used in ink production.



Result: Higher oil prices, supply uncertainty, and increased ink and raw material costs worldwide.



REAL-WORLD IMPACT



In Japan, snack giant Calbee switched to black-and-white packaging for some products due to shortages and rising prices of colored inks linked to oil supply disruptions from the Iran crisis.

WHY THE PRESSURE IS GROWING



Geopolitical tensions and conflicts



Shipping disruptions and higher freight costs



Rising oil and energy prices



Stricter environmental regulations



Need for new, safer and sustainable formulations

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE INDUSTRY



Higher ink and chemical prices



Longer lead times and supply uncertainty



Tighter inventory and procurement planning



Simplified packaging designs and reduced color usage



Increased shift toward digital printing and ink-efficient technologies

THE OUTLOOK

Packaging demand continues to grow worldwide, and ink manufacturers are investing in innovation, alternative raw materials and sustainable solutions.



The industry isn't running out of ink—it's facing a new era of complexity, cost, and supply chain challenges.



“When oil supply is unstable, every industry that relies on petrochemicals feels the impact—including printing inks.”

The printing and packaging industry is not literally running out of ink, but it is facing increasing pressure from shortages and rising costs of the raw materials used to manufacture inks, coatings, and packaging chemicals.

One of the biggest concerns is the supply of nitrocellulose and petroleum-based chemicals that are essential for flexible packaging inks. These materials are widely used in food packaging, labels, and high-speed printing because of their fast drying and strong adhesion properties. However, global supply chains have become increasingly unstable due to geopolitical tensions, shipping disruptions, higher energy costs, and stricter environmental regulations.

The ongoing Iran conflict has further intensified the situation. Concerns surrounding the Strait of Hormuz — one of the world's most important oil and chemical shipping routes — have disrupted the supply of naphtha and other petroleum-derived materials used in ink production.

Since many printing inks and coatings rely heavily on petrochemical ingredients, any instability in oil supply quick-

ly affects ink manufacturing costs and availability.

The impact is already being seen in the market. In Japan, snack manufacturer Calbee temporarily introduced black-and-white packaging designs after shortages and price increases affected the availability of coloured inks linked to oil supply disruptions from the Iran crisis. This unusual move highlighted how global political tensions can directly affect something as simple as the packaging consumers see on supermarket shelves.

At the same time, the industry is also dealing with sustainability pressures. Brand owners and governments are demanding safer, recyclable, and low-VOC packaging solutions. Ink manufacturers are being forced to reformulate products to meet environmental standards while still maintaining print quality, food safety compliance, and production efficiency. This transition requires new technologies and alternative raw materials, adding even more strain to already fragile supply chains.

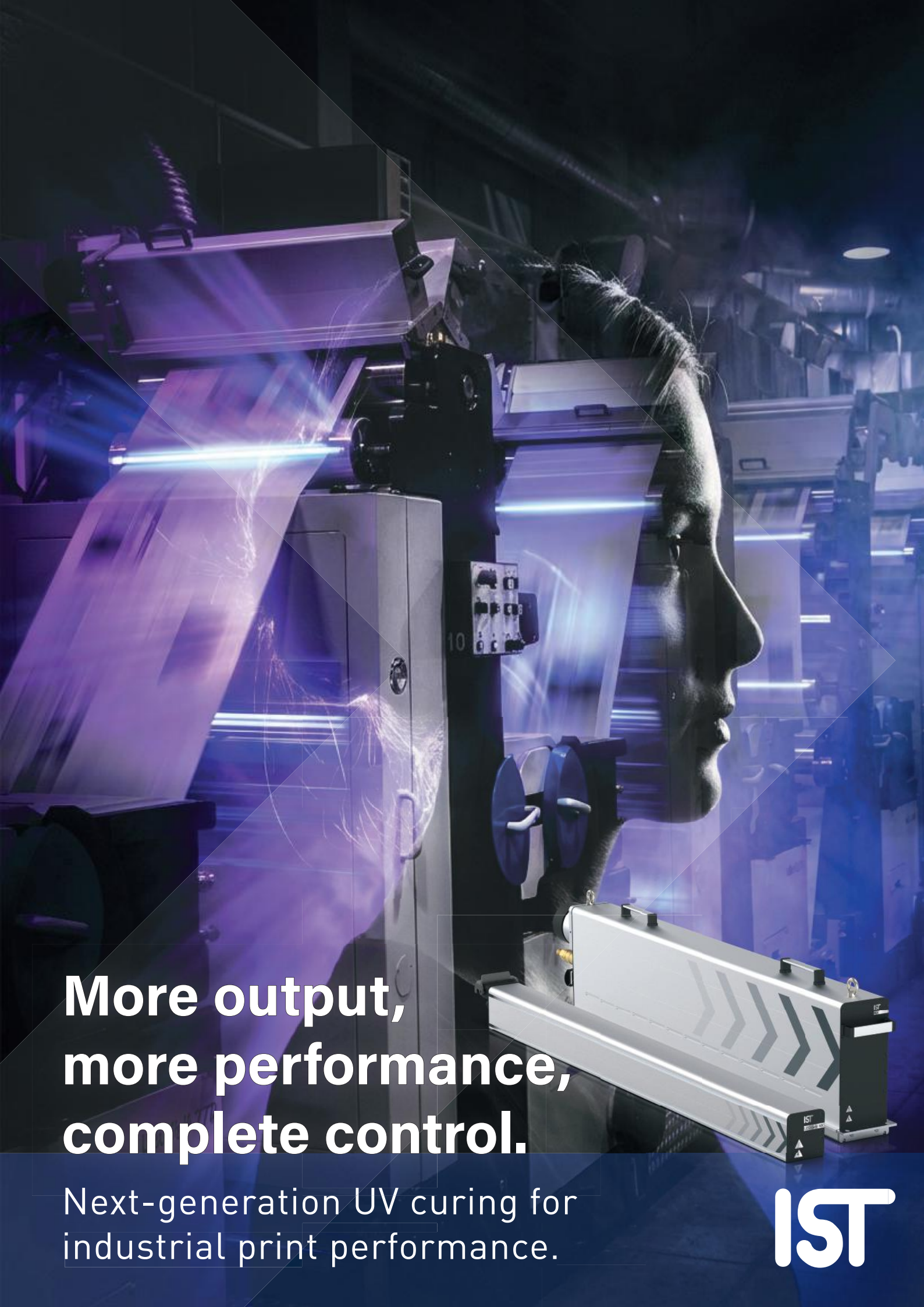
For printers and packaging converters, the challenges are becoming increasingly difficult to ignore: higher ink and chemical prices,

longer lead times, tighter inventory management, and growing pressure from customers to absorb rising costs without increasing prices.

Some companies are already simplifying packaging designs, reducing colour usage, or investing in digital printing technologies that use ink more efficiently.

Despite these challenges, the packaging industry itself remains strong. Demand for food packaging, e-commerce packaging, and consumer goods continues to grow globally. Major ink manufacturers are continuing to invest in innovation and alternative formulations to stabilize supply and reduce dependence on vulnerable raw materials.

So, the industry is not truly “running out of ink.” The real issue is that the global supply chain behind ink production is becoming more expensive, unpredictable, and vulnerable to world events than ever before. The combination of geopolitical conflicts such as the Iran crisis, raw material shortages, freight disruptions, and sustainability demands is reshaping how the printing and packaging industry will operate in the years ahead.



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Why the 'Dark Factory' Needs Bright Minds

The infrastructure is set, and the software is humming away. Now, it's over to the people. In the 'Dark Factory' of 2026, success isn't defined by hardware, but by a radical rethink of company culture. We've already done the deep dive into the technical milestones in our recent posts.

Today, we're shifting the spotlight to the cultural shift that really matters. Those who champion diversity, embrace human-robot collaboration, and invest in high-tech learning will win the war for talent. Everyone else will simply be managing expensive, hollow shells.

From the shop floor to the director's chair

Let's look past the nuts and bolts of autonomous production for a second. We've spent plenty of time on this blog discussing how robots shift paper stacks or how sensors monitor

the press. The technical foundation is a set. But those who take the 'Dark Factory' label at face value—reducing it to machines simply operating autonomously in the dark—are missing the point entirely.

A walk through today's most advanced plants shows that the real revolution isn't happening in the control cabinets; it's happening in the mindset. We're seeing a total role reversal. The machine has finally stepped in as the 'brawn', allowing the human to ascend as the all-important 'brain'. Anyone still trying to run a smart factory with

a 20th-century hierarchy will find themselves losing out on the best talent. Digital natives aren't looking to be cogs in a machine—they want a stage where they can actually be creative.

Cobots and the 'Creator Economy' vibe

The traditional print job is being reinvented from the ground up. In the past, the print room was often synonymous with back-breaking work and oily rags. Today, collaborative robots (cobots) are taking on the 'dirty, dull, and dangerous' tasks. These are

the colleagues that never get tired. When a cobot handles the heavy lifting, it's not a threat to the human worker; it's a promotion.

This shift moves the job description firmly into the realm of IT and process management. This role perfectly fits the values of the young, tech-savvy 'Creator Economy'. Emerging talent wants to build, optimise, and see results without the physical burnout. In the modern print shop, the operator is a director. They orchestrate complex workflows and troubleshoot via a monitor before a problem ever hits the press. This makes the industry a magnet for a demographic that would previously have vanished into software houses or creative agencies.

Diversity: A business necessity, not a tick-box exercise

To win the war for talent, the print industry has to kill off an old cliché: the idea that the print room is a 'boys' club'. Leaving half the population out of the equation isn't just bad optics—it's bad business. The industry needs to become more diverse as a matter of survival. This isn't about meeting quotas; it's about the raw necessity of



fresh perspectives to drive innovation. Successful initiatives like "Girls Who Print" or "Women in Print" are leading the charge. They prove every day that women in technical roles bring the exact kind of problem-solving

grit required for today's complex environments. These networks provide the visibility that young women need to see the print world as a place where strategic thinking counts—regardless of gender. Companies that actively

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THE FUTURE IS INTEGRATED



People



Process



Technology



Sustainability

Together, we print a better tomorrow.

promote diversity report a far better problem-solving culture. It's about creating an environment where talent can actually thrive rather than hitting a glass ceiling.

Immersive learning over dusty manuals

Another catalyst for change is how we pass on knowledge. Gen Z has zero interest in wading through dusty manuals or weeks of passive shadowing. They want interactive, digital, 'just-in-time' learning. This is where immersive tech comes in, taking knowledge transfer to a whole new level.

Instead of taking an expensive press out of production for training, we now use Digital Twins. With mixed-reality training, new starters stand in front of the machine wearing AR glasses that overlay every move they need to make. Setup procedures and maintenance can be rehearsed in a safe, virtual environment until every movement is second nature. This slashes error

rates and makes onboarding move at lightning speed. Learning becomes an experience that's actually engaging while ensuring surgical precision.

The new face of leadership

When the machine is the brawn and the human is the brain, the old 'command and control' style of leadership is dead in the water. Modern leadership is about clearing obstacles and giving teams the space to find creative solutions.

Hierarchies are flattening because the expert knowledge regarding new tools often sits with the younger generation. A healthy culture acknowledges this and fosters a genuine exchange of ideas. In the Print 4.0 era, a manager is more of a coach.

They ensure the data flows, the teams are diverse, and the infrastructure allows for frictionless work. Empathy and communication are now core competencies in a world that functions technically perfect. Only those who

make this cultural leap will truly reap the rewards of automation.

Switch on the lights in management

The 'Dark Factory' might not need the lights on to produce, but for the people steering it, the light needs to shine brighter than ever. We no longer need button-pushers; we need strategists, data analysts, and creative problem-solvers.

By 2026, the print industry has emerged as a high-tech pillar of the communication world. The machines are impressive, but they are ultimately replaceable. The real competitive edge remains the people. If you invest in tech without modernising your culture, you'll end up with an expensive, empty shell. But if you embrace diversity and elevate the role to IT management, you'll become a talent magnet. The factory floor might be dark, but the future of the talent steering it has never looked brighter.

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Proven Proofing & Extended Color Gamut for Demanding Production

*"CGS ORIS software, proofing systems, inks and media are essential to our business and a vital part of our success."
Lars Hansson, Co-owner of HL Repro*

Since 1973, HL Repro has supported brand owners and printers in developing print products that are both visually accurate and production ready.

Today, the company operates globally with customers in more than 50 countries, offering services that range from prepress and plate production to large-format printing and campaign execution.

This allows HL Repro to simulate final print results under real production conditions. Both 4-color and 7-color proofs can be produced with a high level of accuracy, giving customers confidence before going to press.

Accurate proofing for flexo and brand approval

In flexo production, reliable proofing is critical. HL Repro uses CGS ORIS Flex Pack to create both flat proofs and realistic mock-ups for converters and brand owners.

This allows HL Repro to simulate final print results under real production conditions. Both 4-color and 7-color proofs can be produced with a high level of accuracy, giving customers confidence before going to press.

Extended colour gamut in production

To improve efficiency in flexo printing, HL Repro relies on X Gamut. The system allows n-colour separations based on a fixed ink set consisting of CMYK plus Orange, Green and Violet. This approach reduces the need for

frequent spot colour changes on press.

X Gamut also functions as a colour server. It converts incoming customer data, for example ISOcoated v2, into the exact measured colour space of each press.

A key advantage is the 4-dimensional conversion technology, which preserves the black channel. This leads to more stable results compared to conventional CMYK to Lab to CMYK conversions.

Consistent results in large-format printing

HL Repro applies the same colour logic in its large-format production. Within the HL Print division, X Gamut is used in combination with the principles of Press Matcher to align output with industry standards such as ISOcoated v2.

This is particularly important for international clients with strict brand requirements. One example is a global textile retailer with more than 1,000 stores, where display materials must match across all locations.

Quality control and certification

To maintain consistent output, HL Repro uses CGS ORIS Certified for process control and validation.

The system supports print certification across devices and substrates, spot colour validation and full 7-color certification workflows. This ensures that production results remain consistent across different print runs and locations.

Long-term partnership

The collaboration between HL Repro and CGS ORIS has developed over many years.

Lars Hansson highlights both the technology and the support: "CGS ORIS software, proofing systems, inks and media are essential to our business and a vital part of our success. We have consistently experienced fast and reliable support from both CGS Nordic and CGS ORIS headquarters."

What waits ahead: cxf-based spot colour workflows

HL Repro continues to refine its colour workflows. With the goal to further improve predictability and accuracy in complex production environments where colour consistency is most critical.

"In the future we will investigate the power of CxF data driven spot colour via CGS ORIS CxF Toolbox."

Your Color Everywhere.



**Color consistency from design
to delivery with CxF Toolbox.**

Inclusion of automatic splicing technology

Automatic splicing of paper reels maintains continuous production, boosting productivity and paper efficiency

Contiweb, a specialist manufacturer of web-handling equipment and provider of integrated technical solutions for web offset printing, web inkjet printing and packaging production, announced that Moderna Printing, a Belgium-based commercial printer, has installed the first continuous web-to-sheet configuration of its kind in Europe. This solution combines the efficiency of web offset with the flexibility of sheetfed, maximizing productivity and efficiency in response to shorter print runs and increased cost pressures.

Central to the installation is the inclusion of automatic splicing technology from Contiweb, which brings web-fed production principles directly into the sheetfed environment. By enabling reel changes to take place without stopping the press, automatic splicing supports continuous operation and higher overall equipment efficiency, reducing downtime while maintaining stable production conditions throughout the run.

The investment reflects a broader shift in the periodical printing market. As print runs continue to fall, publishers still demand fast turnaround and high quality, but the volumes are not always suited to heatset web offset production. For printers with a strong background in web offset, the challenge is to extend their competitiveness into shorter runs while preserving the strengths of high-volume production.

Moderna Printing has addressed this by expanding its sheetfed capabilities. Previously, sheetfed production was primarily used for covers, while inside pages were produced on heatset web offset lines. The new configuration



enables the production of complete magazines on the sheetfed press for shorter runs, while higher-volume work continues to run efficiently on its heatset web offset. This allows Moderna Printing to retain customers whose requirements are shifting towards lower volumes, while continuing to serve higher-volume work in the most efficient way.

"In the past, a large share of our production consisted of door-to-door advertising leaflets," explains Eric Bongaerts, CEO of Moderna Printing. "Today, the focus has shifted much more towards magazines, catalogues and special-interest titles, typically produced in shorter runs."

Plant Manager Marijn Poelmans adds: "With this investment, we have strategically expanded our portfolio. We want to continue serving our customers, which also means remaining competitive for shorter runs. That is why we chose a modern sheetfed press configuration."

The new line is based on a Heidelberg Speedmaster XL 106 equipped with a CutStar reel sheeter and a Contiweb

CB-N Non-Stop Unwinder, enabling web-fed production within a sheetfed press line.

Unlike conventional sheetfed presses, paper is supplied from reels rather than stacks. By eliminating interruptions during reel changes with Automatic Splicing, the setup supports continuous production and improves the productivity of the sheetfed line. At the same time, it allows Moderna Printing to retain the familiar advantages of working with paper reels, including workflow continuity, cost efficiency and the ability to cut sheets to the exact required size, reducing paper waste compared to standard sheet formats.

"We are proud to see this configuration now successfully implemented in Europe," says Rob Bosman, Sales Director at Contiweb. "Following the first installation in the United States, this project with Moderna Printing confirms the growing interest in combining web-fed efficiency with sheetfed flexibility and we expect to see similar configurations in the future."



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From glossy samples to informed decisions

Something that looks good at a trade fair may not necessarily be practical in everyday use. Print samples presented under ideal conditions cannot always be replicated in real production environments.

Those who base their decision solely on their initial visual impression may overestimate actual performance. This article shows you how to evaluate samples systematically and measurably, helping you to make an informed investment decision.

First impressions can be deceiving

In recent years, inkjet systems have reached an impressive level of maturity. However, this also makes it more difficult to realistically and objectively assess the performance of specific systems. While manufacturers want to demonstrate performance with impressive print samples, not every sample is suitable for an objective comparison. Therefore, request specific comparison prints on different materials and do not rely solely on visual appearance. Instead, apply clear measurement criteria. Only by combining subjective impressions with objective analysis can a reliable basis for decision-making be established.

From 'looks good' to measurable quality

It's nice when it looks good. But, of course, that's not the whole picture. The actual quality only becomes apparent when you take the figures into account as well. When evaluating samples, therefore, pay particular attention to the following technical indicators:

- Optical density and colour accuracy: What looks rich and brilliant at first glance may not be as impressive under the magnifying glass. Only precise measurements reveal how colour-stable and reliable a printing system really is. It is particularly important to check whether the density values remain consistent when printing on different materials. This clearly indicates whether the machine delivers stable results in everyday production, rather than just in the showroom.
- Colour space (gamut): Not all systems reproduce colours equally well on

paper. The decisive factor is how large the colour space is and how reliably it can be used. Those who regularly work with corporate colours or have to meet Pantone specifications will benefit from a broad, easily controllable colour space. The closer the system gets to the desired colour value, the less readjustment will be required later with profiles and corrections.

- Resolution and detail sharpness: Fine lines, tiny fonts and clear contours are a real challenge for any printing press. This reveals how accurately and cleanly the system handles details. Above all, uniform sharpness at edges, whether in light or dark areas of the image, reveals whether tone value transitions are reproduced consistently and without fluctuation.

Beyond the purchase price: the right questions to ask in a technology check. As with any long-term investment, it is important to consider more than just the initial cost. Operating costs and process details are also crucial

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factors to consider when making an assessment. When talking to manufacturers, you should therefore ask the following questions:

- **Speed versus quality:** How quickly was the sample printed, and how does high resolution affect this? The decisive factor is whether the machine can produce clean results at reduced speeds. The system is only suitable for everyday use if quality and stability are maintained at realistic production speeds.

- **Ink consumption and colour profiling:** Colour profiles are more than just a setting; they significantly impact ink consumption. A well-calibrated, neutrally balanced profile demonstrates the system's true efficiency. If the sample appears unnecessarily 'bold', this may indicate excessive ink application, which directly affects the budget.

- **Primer use:** Has the substrate been pre-treated? If so, it is worth taking a closer look. Targeted, selective primer application can reduce costs without compromising quality. It is interesting to compare samples with and without primer, as this indicates how adaptable the system is to changing materials.

- **Total Area Coverage (TAC):** Total area coverage is a critical factor, especially with strong colour areas or difficult substrates. If TAC is too high, it can lead to drying problems, instability, or poor

adhesion, particularly at high printing speeds. An effective system strikes a balance between colour effect and production reliability.

Investing in the future: maintenance, automation and reliability

A modern printing workflow extends beyond the print head. Therefore, you should also consider the long-term costs and expenses associated with the following:

- **Maintenance and wear:** How robust are the print heads during everyday use, and how frequently do they require cleaning or replacement? Although many processes are now automated, it is worth taking a close look at maintenance intervals, cleaning cycles, and unplanned downtime. After all, reliable planning requires a system that performs well not only under ideal conditions, but also experiences minimal downtime during normal use.

- **System integration:** Does the new machine integrate seamlessly into your existing processes, or does it require complex workarounds? Ideally, modern systems can be connected directly to your MIS or ERP environment. Interfaces such as JDF or JMF ensure that job data is transferred automatically. This streamlines the workflow and reduces sources of error, which is particularly advantageous when personnel resources are limited.

- **Quality assurance:** The sooner an error is identified, the easier it is to correct, and modern AI-supported inspection systems excel at this. They detect deviations in real time and intervene automatically before rejects occur. An effective system does more than just report errors; it also actively ensures that processes remain stable and that quality is reproducible.

Material matters: Focus on substrates and sustainability

The ink transfers the motifs onto the substrate. This affects the outcome in terms of both economy and quality.

- **Ink chemistry:** Water-based inks are considered more environmentally friendly and are particularly suitable for graphic applications on paper or cardboard. UV inks, on the other hand, are ideal for specific requirements, such as printing on non-absorbent materials or enabling immediate further processing. In both cases, the advantages only become apparent if the ink is compatible with the existing workflow.

- **Material diversity:** Request samples of the materials you actually use. The more substrates that are compatible, the more flexible and future-proof your offering will be.

Only what is measurable protects your investment

Upgrading to a new printing solution involves more than just that. It's a strategic decision. This was clearly demonstrated by the developments showcased at the last drupa exhibition. Inkjet technology is now ready for practical use. However, the choice of system should be based on clear, verifiable criteria.

Colour fidelity, density and edge sharpness, coupled with transparent performance values such as print speed, ink consumption and primer requirements, enable systems to be compared. This transforms uncertainty into a competitive advantage. Prioritising measurability is a wise and forward-thinking investment strategy.



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ABOUT THE AWARDS

The Asian Packaging Excellence Awards have been awarding quality in Packaging Excellence for the last 25 years across Asia

IT'S NOT EASY TO WIN

Note:

NOTICE

Awards Dinner held in Jakarta Indonesia on the 13th November 26. Will you join us on stage?



TRADE HOUSE OF
THE YEAR
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DIRECTIONS FOR USE

You must start collecting your best 2026 packaging work to submit no later than September 4th - 2026

INGREDIENTS

Open to the following industry sectors: Flexographic - Gravure - Offset - Digital in fact any area of Packaging Production are welcome to join the competition



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Flexographic Categories

Categories 1- 7

1. Narrow Web Flexo (up to 500mm)
A. Paper/Board B. Film
2. Mid Web Flexo (501mm to 914mm)
A. Paper B. Film
3. Metalized Substrate
4. Wide Web Flexo (915 width and more)
A. Paper B. Film
5. Flexo Carton & Cups
6. Post Print for Corrugates
7. Pre Print for Corrugated

Label Categories

Categories 8- 17

8. Flexographic Labels
9. Letterpress
10. Offset Labels
11. Gravure Labels
12. Combination Printing (different processes)
13. Labels Non Pressure Sensitive Materials
14. Digital Labels - 4 colours
15. Digital Labels 5 colours
16. Digital Labels 6 colours
17. Digital Labels 7 + colours

Gravure Categories

Categories 18- 22

18. Gravure Paper/Board
19. Metallised Paper (surface print)
20. Aluminium Foil
21. Gravure Film
A. Surface Print B. Reverse Print
22. Specialty Gravure (must provide written explanation)

Other Competition Categories

Categories 23- 36

23. Embellishment
24. Digital Embellishment
25. Mock-up/Sample
A. Rigid or B. Soft
26. Digital Mock-up/Sample
A Rigid or B Soft
27. Digital Packaging
A. Soft Carton or B. Rigid Material
28. Hybrid Printing
29. Offset Packaging
A. Soft Carton or B. Rigid Material
30. Company Self Promotion
31. Packaging - Point Of Sale
32. Digital Food Pouches
33. Innovation New Technology
34. Packaging Proofing
35. Digital Packaging - Wide Format
36. Offset Packaging - Corrugated

Trade House of The Year

37. Open to all trade houses. **The jobs must be printed in Asia.** You must supply prints of your choice of the best work produced by you and the printers. If any special process used please provide on a separate paper.

Look out for the new Award Category for CTV - Sponsored by



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ENTRY FORM ASIAN PACKAGING EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2026

Deadline for Entries Submission: **4th September 2026, 5pm**

Remember to submit **2** copies of each job! Why? - Just in case one is damaged.

Maximum **3** entries per category

SECTION A

You **MUST** fill out these production details

Category Number Entered (See opposite page) _____

Printing Company _____

Company Address _____

Country _____ Contact Number _____

Title of Entry _____

Your Name _____ Email _____

Signature _____



SECTION B - TAPE THIS TO THE BACK OF THE ENTRY

You **MUST** fill out these production details

Category Entered _____ Number of colours _____

Title of Entry _____

*Brand of Machine _____ *Ink Supplier _____

*Plate Supplier _____ *Tape Supplier _____

*Pre Press by _____ *Printed Quantity _____

*Paper/Board/Film/Label supplier _____

Send all entries to - **APEA Competition 2026**
c/o The Thai Printing Association - 311, 311/1 Rama 9 - Soi 15 - Huaikhwang District,
Bangkok 10310 Thailand Tel: +66 2 719 6685

PLEASE ALLOW TIME FOR CUSTOMS CLEARANCE WHEN SHIPPING ENTRIES

Declare "Non Commercial Value" - Printing Competition on courier ticket

All entries are **non-returnable**

email:paul@printinnovationasia.com Tel.: +61 422 869728



The 2026 Asian Packaging Excellence Awards Checklist!

1. Have you pick your **best work** to be judged?
2. Have you checked the work to make sure it's **1st class quality** - no hickies - no scuffing - no miss register?
3. Check it **ONE** more time!
4. Are there **2 copies** for each entry and are they packed correctly for shipment?
5. Have you completed the entry form (Section A & B) correctly and pasted Section B onto the back of the entry?
6. Have you left enough time for shipment?
Friday, 4th September 2026 - 5pm is the Deadline.
7. Check that you have written the **address** correctly
8. If you win YOU MUST attend the awards dinner to receive your award



Send all entries to
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The Awards Dinner will be held on November 13th in Jakarta Indonesia

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The annual Asian Packaging Excellence Awards was founded **25 Years Ago** to recognise outstanding achievement in the packaging industries across Asia. With more than half the world's population represented in this fast growing area, communication in the form of printed matter links Asia's diverse cultures. It is imperative that such print achievements do not go unrecognised, especially among the population base that Asia enjoys.

The Awards are judged on a wholly quality-oriented set of criteria to ensure that fair play is enacted at all times.

The **Independent Judging Panel** comprises highly qualified personnel from within Asia and around the world. The independent judging panel has no knowledge of the actual entrants details. ALL ENTRIES ARE NUMBER-CODED. Entries must be commercially produced work.

The Asian Packaging Excellence Awards is the **only regional print quality competition of its kind in Asia**. Supported by leading industry-supply companies, any progressive quality packaging print house should enter and prove that they are the best - by winning the Gold, Silver or Bronze award. Proving pride in quality awareness is what customers love to see. Win and you can prove it!