

PRINT & PACKAGING INNOVATION ASIA MAGAZINE

Serving Printing, Packaging and Publishing Industries across Asia Pacific since 1985 - Issue 4 2026



Messe
Düsseldorf
Asia

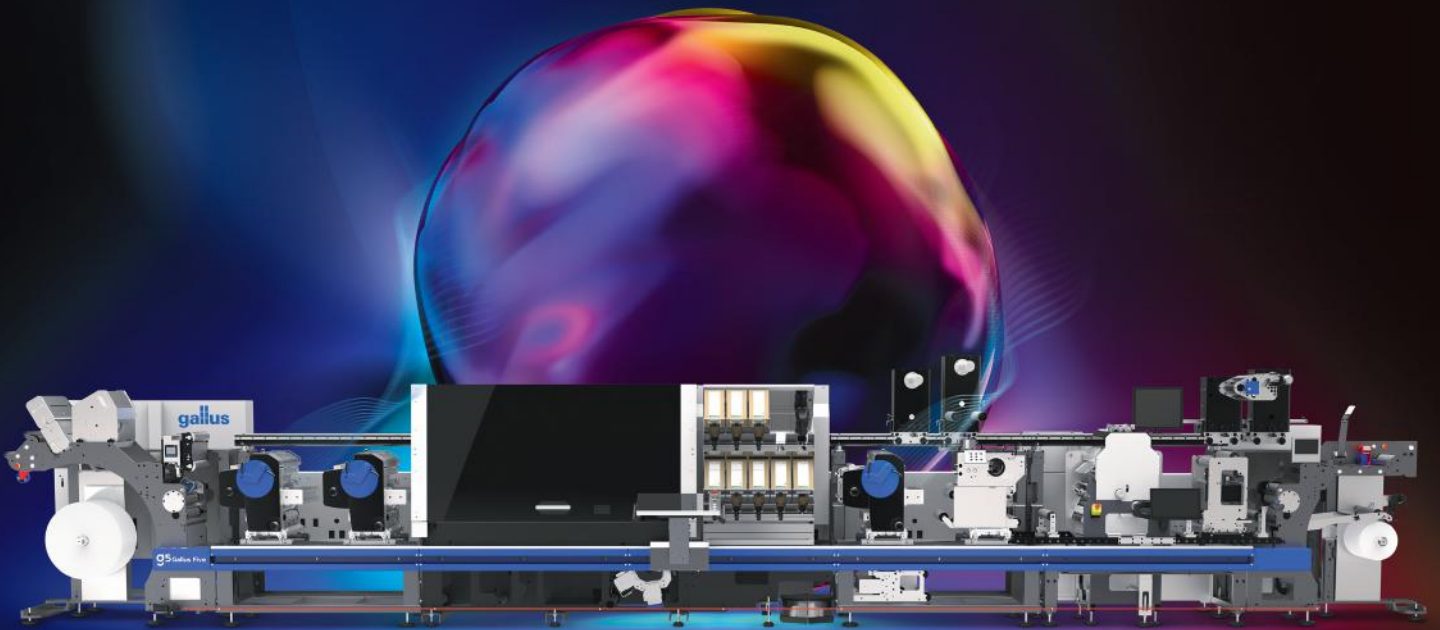


Interview with new
Managing Director
Messe Düsseldorf
Lars Wismer

Page 12

Printing the Pace

With the New Gallus Five



One System. Built for Speed. Ready for Anything.

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g5 Gallus Five



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ENTRY FORM

Recognising the best in Print production from across Asia Since 2001

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.

Tell us why your work is driving print forward on a separate page

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KONICA MINOLTA

Look out for the new Award Category for



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印刷科技研究中心
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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MÜLLER MARTINI





1981 LITHRONE series

1988 NEW LITHRONE series

2002 LITHRONE SX/S series

Technologies and Challenges Through 100 Years of Komori

- In 1981, Komori launched its first original sheetfed press, the "Lithrone 40".
- With features such as PQC (Print Quality Control) and APC (Automatic Plate Changer), it improved productivity and reduced costs, enhancing printing efficiency.
- A diverse lineup and rapid updates expanded its market, surpassing 10,000 units sold by 1999.
- Structural and component innovations enabled world-class performance at 18,000 sheets per hour.
- The eco-friendly "Lithrone GX/G advance" series delivers energy efficiency, high quality, and fast turnaround, driving sustainable printing.

The Lithrone series by Komori was introduced in 1981 with the Lithrone 40, a high-speed offset sheetfed printing press. It represented a major shift for the company, as it was developed primarily using Komori's own proprietary technology rather than relying on European designs.

(double-sided) printing. By the end of the decade, the series had become a comprehensive lineup serving a wide range of printing needs. Continuous improvements focused on reducing makeready times, increasing automation, and enhancing overall productivity.

As competition intensified globally, printing speed became a key performance benchmark. Komori worked to increase output from the early 13,000 sheets per hour to 15,000 and beyond, overcoming technical challenges related to durability, vibration, and component wear.

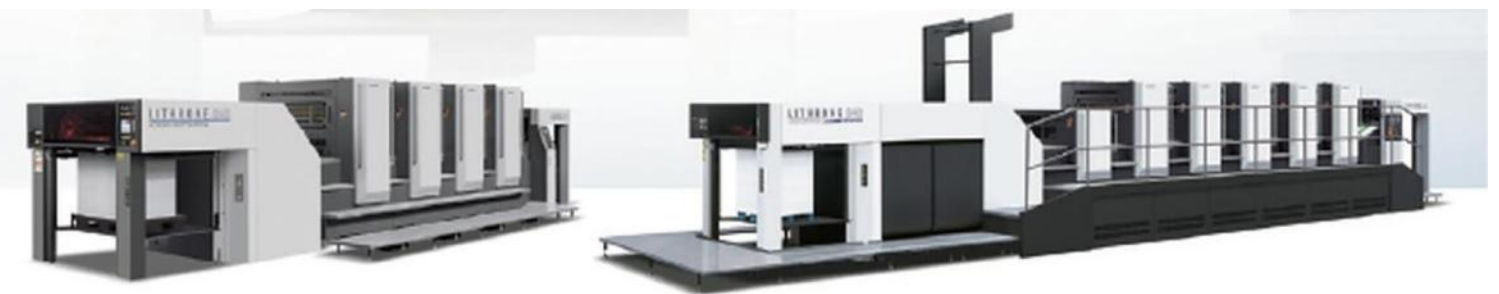
Featuring innovations such as Print Quality Control (PQC), remote operation, and the Komorimatic dampening system, the Lithrone 40 delivered high print quality, efficiency, and reliability, helping Komori expand its presence in global markets.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Komori launched the NEW Lithrone series, a major redesign developed in a short period based on customer needs and advanced engineering. These presses incorporated features such as the Automatic Plate Changer (APC) and Automatic Make-Ready (AMR), significantly improving efficiency and reducing downtime. Additional models introduced multi-color perfecting capabilities, allowing printing on both sides of a sheet in a single pass, which greatly increased productivity.

By 1993, the company successfully developed a 15,000 sheets-per-hour press, and continued innovation led to even faster machines. By the late 1990s, cumulative Lithrone sales exceeded 10,000 units worldwide, establishing it as a leading global series. In the 2000s, Komori introduced next-generation models such as the Lithrone S40 and SX40.

Following its successful debut, Komori rapidly expanded the Lithrone lineup throughout the 1980s. New models were introduced in a variety of sizes—from compact presses to large-format machines—and with diverse capabilities, including single-color, multi-color, and perfecting

These presses featured significant redesigns, with many newly engineered components, improved safety and durability, and compatibility with digital workflows. Printing speeds



2011 LITHRONE GX/G series

2020 LITHRONE GX/G advance series

Too Much Color for CMYK.

CGS
ORIS

X
GAMUT



Go Beyond the Limits of Four.

Replace Spot Colors. Expand Your Gamut.



increased further to 16,000 and eventually 18,000 sheets per hour, while automation systems reduced labor and operational costs. Enhanced feeder and delivery systems, along with precise ink control, ensured consistent high-quality output at high speeds.

From 2011 onward, the Lithrone G series reflected a growing focus on environmental sustainability. These presses reduced electricity consumption, paper waste, and carbon emissions, while also shortening preparation times.

Technologies such as H-UV curing and KHS-AI automation enabled faster turnaround, improved print

consistency, and lower overall costs, balancing ecological benefits with economic performance.

More recently, the Lithrone GX/G advance series has further refined performance, automation, and return on investment. Improvements in feeder and delivery mechanisms allow stable handling of a wide range of paper types, from thin sheets to heavy stock.

Enhanced dampening systems and integration with digital workflow solutions, such as advanced quality control and color management systems, ensure precise, efficient production. The series also supports expanding sectors like

packaging printing, with specialized configurations and features designed for high-volume and high-quality output.

Today, the Lithrone series remains Komori's flagship product line and a symbol of its technological strength. With a legacy of continuous innovation, it combines high speed, advanced automation, and environmental performance. Looking ahead, Komori continues to focus on next-generation developments, including greater energy efficiency, smarter automation, and sustainable printing solutions, ensuring the Lithrone series remains at the forefront of the global printing industry.





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UNLEASH CREATIVITY WITH THE 5TH COLOUR TONER

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C14010/C14010S/C12010/C12010S

DISCOVER THE WAY AHEAD

To face the challenges of today and tomorrow, you need a trusted partner by your side. Reach new peaks of performance, efficiency and reliability, giving you the freedom to conquer new markets and be more adventurous than before.

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

Our responsibility is to where the industry can

We welcome new Managing director of Messe Dusseldorf Asia, Lars Wismer with an in-depth talk about Pack Print International /CorruTec Asia and what they have in store moving forward.

Q: Please introduce yourself and your industry experience

My name is Lars Wismer (**LW**) and since December 2025, I have been serving as Regional Head for Messe Düsseldorf for Asia, and I have been with Messe Düsseldorf for quite some time now. It has been a very rewarding journey. Over time, I have had my hands in building trade fair platforms across different regions, and what I have learned is that the magic happens when you get the right mix of regional players and global

companies in the same room. That's where real business gets done.

Q: Please introduce your company

LW: The Messe Düsseldorf Group is one of the world's leading trade fair organisers, with a strong international footprint and a well-established presence across Asia. Under Messe Düsseldorf for Asia, or MDfA, our regional network spans key Asian markets including China, India, Japan, and Southeast Asia.

Within this framework, Messe Düsseldorf Asia serves as the Southeast Asian hub, developing and delivering trade fair platforms that connect industries across markets, companies, and ideas. Our role goes beyond organising exhibitions. It is about facilitating meaningful exchange, business opportunities, and long-term partnerships.

Q: Tell us where the direction of PPI and CorruTec are heading

LW: We are increasingly shaping both exhibitions as broader industry platforms rather than narrowly defined industry events. The direction is very much towards building a more complete ecosystem, one that reflects where the printing, packaging, and corrugated sectors are heading today.

That means strengthening international participation while also focusing on the issues that matter most to the industry, such as sustainability, automation, digitalisation, and production efficiency. Together with our co-organisers for PACK PRINT INTERNATIONAL - The Thai Printing Association and The Thai Packaging Association, we are continuing to refine the strategic direction of the



GO FURTHER

to provide a platform where everyone can come together



Managing director of Messe Dusseldorf Asia,
Lars Wismer

which is always an encouraging sign, and at the same time we are attracting interest from new players, including companies from other parts of Asia. That kind of mix tells us the exhibitions are continuing to generate the right momentum. With close to 50 percent of space already reserved, the outlook for 2027 is shaping up well.

Q: What other activities have you and your team planned for the shows in 2027

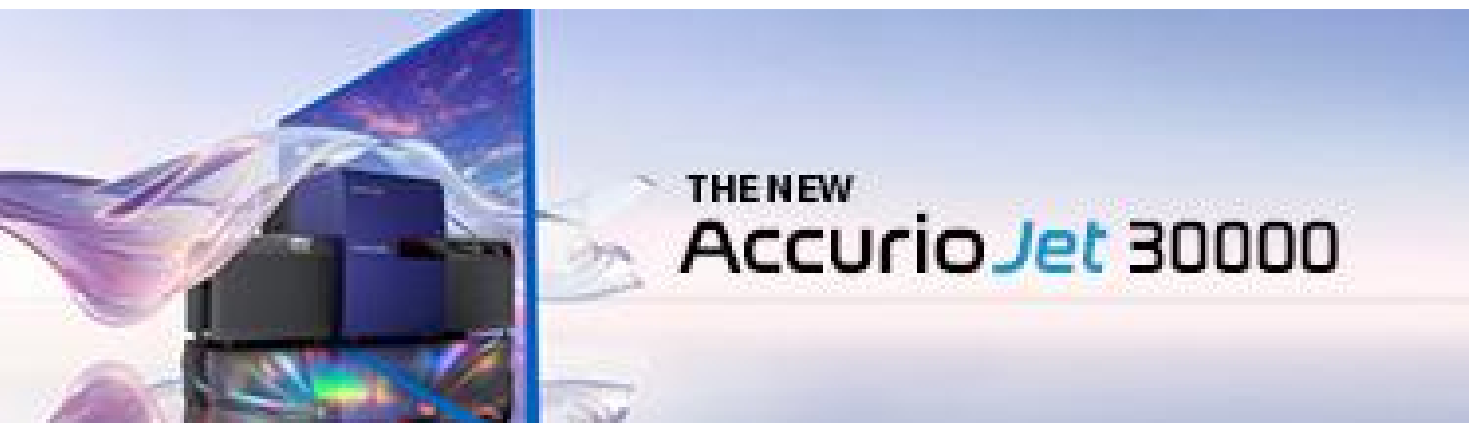
LW: We are placing greater emphasis on the content and engagement around the exhibitions, not only the show floor itself. This includes stronger conference programming, continued support for initiatives such as the Asian Print Awards, and more deliberate networking opportunities that create value beyond individual exhibitor booths.

We are looking at the full exhibition journey, before, during, and after the

event, because today the exhibition is only one part of the broader industry experience.

Q: What are your thoughts about the next drupa

LW: drupa remains the global benchmark for the printing and packaging industry. I believe the next edition will be especially significant because themes such as automation, AI, and sustainability will be even more





central to industry conversations. These are not only global priorities, but also very relevant to what we are seeing in regional markets across Asia. drupa continues to set the tone for where the industry is heading.

Q: Do you see any impact on the events due to AI, and if so where

LW: Definitely. AI is already starting to influence how we think about exhibitions and how value is delivered to both visitors and exhibitors. On the visitor side, it can improve matchmaking and help connect the right audiences with the right exhibitors more effectively. On the exhibitor side, it can support smarter lead qualification, more personalised engagement, and even stronger product demonstrations. In that sense, AI is beginning to change not just the content of events, but also the mechanics of how they work.

Q: Do you see this expanding

LW: Yes, absolutely. Southeast Asia continues to grow in economic importance, industrial capability, and market sophistication. We see strong long-term potential for PACK PRINT

INTERNATIONAL and CorruTec ASIA in this region. There is clear appetite for larger, more internationally connected platforms, and that gives us room to grow. We will continue looking at how the exhibitions can expand in step with industry demand, including by bringing in additional sectors and adjacent areas relevant to the printing and packaging value chain.

Q: What about the Chinese manufacturers

LW: Chinese manufacturers are already a visible and important part of the exhibitions, and I believe that presence will continue to grow. Many Chinese companies are looking well beyond their domestic market and are actively seeking opportunities to export and build stronger footholds in Southeast Asia. Our exhibitions provide a natural platform for that. If you look at drupa, for example, Chinese participation has grown very significantly over the years, including large-scale group participation. We see



Where Innovation Connects Industries



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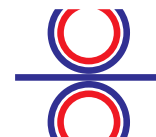
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THE THAI PACKAGING ASSOCIATION



The Thai Printing
Association



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Asia



similar interest building here, and as demand increases, we would certainly consider how to accommodate that growth in a meaningful way.

Q: Will you ever consider moving the show from Thailand

LW: Thailand has served the exhibitions very well. It offers strong infrastructure, good regional accessibility, and a proven track record as a host market. At this stage, the more strategic approach is to strengthen and build on what we already have there rather than shift the location. Thailand works well as a hub for the region, and that remains a strong advantage.

Q: What is it like to now be permanently stationed in Singapore

LW: It makes a real difference to be based in the region full-time rather than travelling in and out. Singapore is exceptionally well connected and puts you within easy reach of Southeast Asia, China, India, and Japan. More importantly, being based here allows me to stay closely engaged with our markets, our partners, and the evolving needs of the industries we serve.

That proximity is important, because it allows for more continuity, better insight, and stronger relationships.

Q: Any other thoughts you would like our readers to know about, any last words

The printing and packaging industry is going through a period of major transition, but I see that as an exciting development rather than a difficult one. The industry is asking important

questions about sustainability, the role of technology in production, and how supply chains will evolve in the years ahead.

Our responsibility is to provide a platform where the industry can come together to explore those questions, exchange ideas, and identify where the next opportunities lie. That is very much what we want these exhibitions to do.





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UPM Specialty Materials

"On the retail shelf, there is NO room for error."

In today's highly competitive packaging industry, attractive print quality may capture attention in a split second, but what truly determines whether a product is "perfect" lies in the small details that many tend to overlook.

For P.K. Press Center, quality does not end when the ink dries on paper. Instead, it is defined and proven during the Postpress process, the final stage before delivery, where a brand's image is ultimately judged on the retail shelf.

"Quality must be controlled at every step, not just finished" emphasizes Mr. Chanont Jutanopparat, CEO of P.K. Press Center Co., Ltd. This short statement reflects a strong management philosophy: good print production is not just about meeting deadlines, it must also maintain consistent standards across every production lot, every job line, and every situation.

P.K. Press Center offers comprehensive printing and packaging services, covering Offset, Flexo, and digital systems - supporting blister packs, offset laminated corrugated boxes, and precise variable data printing.

The company collaborates with leading brands that demand high standards, color consistency, and uniform quality in every batch.

From a management perspective, the most important factor is not simply "beautiful printing." Even the sharpest print loses its value immediately if cutting is inaccurate, die-cutting is misaligned, or defects slip through to the customer. Small deviations in postpress can quickly undermine a brand's credibility:

- A box that doesn't fold properly
- A diecut line that's slightly off
- Uneven or rough edges

These may seem minor to manufacturers, but to consumers, they are the first impression of whether a product is truly premium. For P.K. Press Center, the Postpress stage is not a



mere final step in manufacturing—it is the heart of true quality. It is where perfection is truly tested before reaching the customer.

An Investment Beyond "Increasing Capacity"

As production volumes increased alongside higher quality expectations, the company made a strategic commitment to strengthen its postpress operations. One significant

Mr. Chanont Jutanopparat, CEO of P.K. Press Center Co., Ltd.



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 CAPT China Academy of Printing Technology

 Messe Düsseldorf (Shanghai) Co., Ltd.

International Supporter:

 Messe Düsseldorf GmbH
- organizer of drupa

Co-organized by:  Shanghai Printing Industry Association





step was the addition of another POLAR 115 PF cutting system. Although cutting may appear to be a basic step, it is in fact the starting point of precision for the entire workflow—any deviation at this stage will immediately affect die-cutting, folding, and gluing.

The new system helps reduce work-in-progress backlog and keeps production lines moving continuously, while minimizing downtime caused by bottlenecks in the production process and supporting greater long-term cost stability. At the same time, the company invested in a second Easymatrix 106 CS die-cutting machine after seeing clear results from the first unit, particularly in terms of high die-cut position accuracy and shorter makeready times.

“The second machine is not only about improving production flow—it enables us to maintain the same level of quality control across every production line.” Complementing these investments, P.K. Press Center also implemented the Diana Eye 55 inspection system to strengthen quality assurance before delivery, enabling defects to be detected with near-perfect accuracy.

When machines deliver consistent results and quality can be verified with confidence, stability becomes a strategy for growth—not simply increasing capacity, but building capacity that can be controlled and trusted.

A Partnership Beyond Machinery Supply

Choosing HEIDELBERG technology was driven not only by its global reputation but by proven performance in daily operations. “We didn’t choose HEIDELBERG simply because the machines are new: we chose them because they deliver the same results every day, every shift, every lot.”

For P.K. Press Center, consistency is the key: machines must produce predictable results with stable quality. Equally important is the responsive and professional technical support from HEIDELBERG, ensuring production continues smoothly whenever challenges arise. The relationship therefore goes beyond a supplier transaction—it is a long-term partnership that helps reduce production risks, control costs, and maintain consistent quality.

More Than Capacity Expansion - A Commitment to Higher Standards

The direction of P.K. Press Center is clear: to continuously invest in technologies that elevate quality, reduce waste, and strengthen production standards at an international level. For the company, growth is not measured by the number of machines installed, but by the ability to deliver consistent quality under every circumstance.

While postpress is often seen as the final stage of production, at P.K. Press Center it is where the strength of the entire process is proven—because when the final step is precise, every step before it gains meaning. Ultimately, the company’s goal goes beyond producing packaging that meets specifications. It is about growing alongside its customers, delivering work where every detail reflects the same precision, the same responsibility, and the same commitment to protecting the brands entrusted to its care.



Additional Value for Commercial Applications. Easymatrix 106 C/CS.

With Easymatrix 106 C/CS, you can offer customers the comprehensive service they expect. This includes finishing, because die-cutting and embossing are now regarded as an integral part of quality commercial and packaging printing. Short make-ready time and straightforward operation deliver an unprecedented level of productivity. The workflow is much more effective because automation largely eliminates errors resulting from manual intervention. With an output of 7,700 sheets per hour and short set-up times, the Easymatrix 106 C/CS stands for productivity and cost-effectiveness up to the 106 format. It processes materials from 90 to 2,000 g/m². Even corrugated board up to 4 mm thickness can be processed.



Engineered to Elevate

Introduces the Premium Sta

For ambitious converters, the operational equation is clear and uncompromising. Success hinges on a precise balance of best-in-class material performance, forward-thinking product innovation, and industry-leading sustainability.

Recognizing this, UPM Adhesive Materials offers a premium line under the UPM Raflatac portfolio—engineered specifically to deliver flawless application, advanced technical features, and a premium brand experience across a diverse spectrum of end-use requirements.

Premium Materials, Premium Support

The UPM Raflatac premium offering is designed for performance-critical applications, targeting end uses across

wine and spirits, pharmaceuticals, industrial chemicals, durables, and other demanding segments. These label solutions are tailored by industry vertical, ensuring that converters are equipped with the exact substrate and adhesive technology needed to support a wide range of converting and packaging needs—from high-speed dispensing lines to extreme environmental resistance.

As the force behind the UPM Raflatac brand, UPM Adhesive Materials combines high-quality raw material sourcing with deep adhesive formulation expertise. Our knowledge is not theoretical; it is validated through rigorous testing at UPM's global technical centers. Because we speak the language of the converter, we understand the nuances of your processes, the complexities of the regulatory landscape, and the evolving demands of the market. Rather than offering generic solutions, we work alongside you to tailor UPM Raflatac products to your specific application requirements, empowering your business with industry-leading quality and a service model built to support operational success.

Sustainability Without Compromise

With environmental regulations tightening and consumer scrutiny on the rise, sustainability is now integral to premium branding. UPM Adhesive Materials provides that clarity with verified data and materials designed to reduce environmental impact.

The UPM Raflatac portfolio features lower-carbon and recycled-content

materials, backed by transparent product carbon footprint data and recyclable constructions. This level of data integrity allows converters and brand owners to meet customer expectations and regulatory requirements with absolute confidence without sacrificing performance.

Expert Support and Regulatory Guidance

When your reputation is on the line, you need more than a material supplier—you need a partner who navigates complexity with you. UPM Adhesive Materials provides comprehensive expert support that extends from initial specification and lab testing through to compliance documentation and certification readiness. Whether you are executive decision-makers, or printers & converters, our technical team bridges the gap between material science and commercial reality.

This responsive, partnership-driven service model is built on a foundation of collaboration and deep industry understanding. Supported by a global network of technical experts, we enable you to move quickly, qualify new applications faster, and enter the market with confidence.

Reliable Global Supply for Sustainable Growth

Premium performance is meaningless without reliable availability. The UPM Raflatac line is backed by the consistent quality and scalable capacity of UPM Adhesive Materials, one of the world's leading suppliers of self-adhesive solutions. This global



te: UPM Adhesive Materials Standard with UPM Raflatac



supply security ensures that as your business scales across new markets and diverse end uses, your material partner is ready to grow with you.

With UPM Raflatac, you receive more than a product specification sheet. You gain access to the full resources of UPM Adhesive Materials—a true partnership dedicated to enabling your growth trajectory. We renew the everyday with label material performance.



Full integration into technology ensures process stability and less waste

- The only solution on the market that prioritises grey balance and other process parameters in colour control, thereby minimising colour fluctuations in overprinting
- Compensation for process variables and reduction of make-ready times
- Product development and life-cycle support are held exclusively by Koenig & Bauer – ensuring higher added value for users, seamless integration into the Koenig & Bauer ecosystem, and faster innovation

To strengthen the competitiveness of its customers, Koenig & Bauer acquired all activities related to the renowned Instrument Flight® measurement and control technology for new sheetfed offset presses and inline measurement technology from System Brunner in December 2025, fully integrating them into its own portfolio.

While the solution was previously available as an OEM product, further development and support are now entirely in the hands of the press manufacturer. In doing so, Koenig & Bauer has secured an absolute unique selling point in sheetfed printing: while conventional systems primarily regulate individual density values, Instrument Flight also evaluates and controls the overprinting of process colours – and thus visual perception – using grey balance and other parameters.

With Instrument Flight, Koenig & Bauer offers its customers unique added value for professional colour management in printing. Print service providers using the feature on their sheetfed offset presses report significantly shorter colour matching processes and, at the same time, consistent colour results throughout the entire print run.

For existing customers and new users, there is a further advantage: service, training, and technical development all come from a single source.

Less waste, more stable production

For printing companies, Instrument Flight is much more than just another software solution. In addition to achieving colour and ink densities, the central challenge in the modern



pressroom is maintaining colour and grey balance throughout the entire run. "While previously only individual solid-density control was common, Instrument Flight enables control within colour regulation based on technical and visual parameters. The fascinating part, however, is the automatic inline regulation according to printing standards," says Christian Ziegenbalg, Chief Design Engineer at Koenig & Bauer Paper & Packaging Sheetfed Systems, describing the core benefit of the technology.

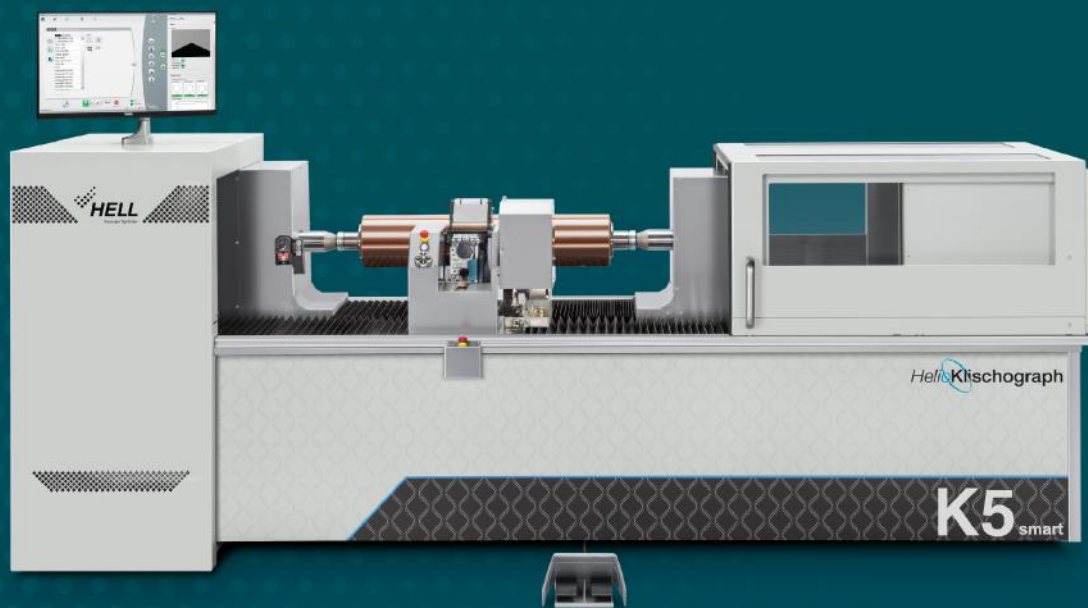
By prioritising extensive measurement parameters alongside visual criteria, the system detects and corrects optical deviations that standard colour control systems on the market cannot identify. The result is drastically higher consistency in colour impression, even when external process parameters such as paper, ink, or dampening solution fluctuate. For the customer, this translates directly to the profit and loss account: less waste during job changes and more stable production phases allow users to print for longer before blankets need washing.

A powerful tool for reproducible, top quality

The incorporation of Instrument Flight technology into the Koenig & Bauer portfolio also opens the door for deeper technical integration. Via the proven Instrument Flight star system, the quality achieved remains easy for press operators to understand and transparent at all times; it also makes it child's play to comply with and verify standards and control metrics such as PSO, FOGRA, or G7.

Markus Weiß, CEO of Koenig & Bauer Paper & Packaging Sheetfed Systems: "Today's market no longer forgives inefficiencies. Our customers must reduce waste, minimise make-ready times, and simultaneously deliver the highest reproducible quality. With the full integration of Instrument Flight technology, we are putting the most powerful tool on the market directly into their hands. We don't just deliver the machine; from now on, we provide maximum process reliability for perfect colour stability from a single source."

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XSYS Prepress NV and Hybrid Software announced the signing of a strategic collaboration to integrate Hybrid Software's Tectonics plate layout and workflow optimization software with XSYS's Thermoflex (formerly: ThermoFlexX) Imager devices. The partnership will be supported by a joint quality certification label for its users.

Under the agreement, XSYS will offer a digital flexo production workflow solution designed to enhance interoperability, streamline plate layout operations (also called "merging"), and provide customers with a modern migration path from the Multiplate software currently used for plate merging in XSYS's Thermoflex production workflow offering.

The collaboration will establish a framework for XSYS to market and distribute Tectonics as an OEM product under the FlexoFlow brand alongside Thermoflex devices, giving access to new features such as automated plate layout, patching for corrugated plates and various cutting table outputs.

"We are pleased to formalize our collaboration with Hybrid Software," said Steven Vandevoorde, General Manager Prepress at XSYS. "This agreement marks an important milestone in our efforts to deliver a more integrated and future-ready



workflow for flexographic customers. By combining our technologies, we can offer a more advanced flexo plate merging solution that supports an open workflow approach and strengthens our digital flexo portfolio. FlexoFlow will be compatible with any workflow software generating standard 1-bit TIFF files."

From Hybrid Software's perspective, the agreement reflects a shared commitment to innovate and create

customer value across the flexographic plate production workflow.

"Tectonics was developed to help customers improve efficiency, consistency, and usability across plate merging workflows," said Bert Van der Perre, VP/GM Labels & Packaging at Hybrid Software. "Working with XSYS enables us to combine complementary technologies and bring a more connected, future-proof solution to the market for flexo customers looking to modernize their operations."

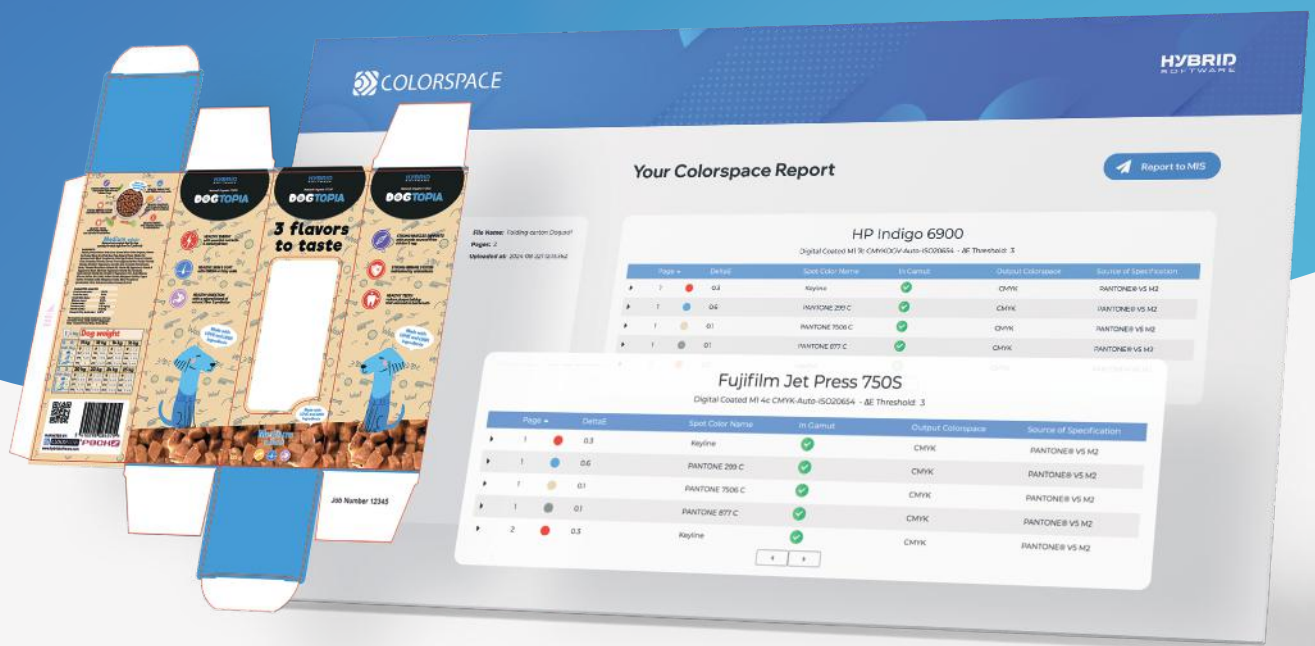
As part of the collaboration, the companies will introduce a jointly defined "Certified Solution" label to verify interoperability and provide customers with added confidence in the combined offering. The agreement also supports a phased migration pathway for existing Multiplate installations across XSYS's customer base, subject to technical feasibility and the agreed commercial framework.





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"Just another low-cost press? That would completely miss reality."

It was supposed to be a simple, scaled-down press for the entry-level segment. Looking back at the development of the ALPHAFLEX, Head of Development Dr. Björn Feldhaus smiles.

"We realized that this idea made no sense. It simply doesn't fit the reality of modern flexographic printing. So we started all over again and asked ourselves: what kind of machine really makes sense today? What do you need in production – as a newcomer, as someone switching technologies, in a small business or a large operation?"

In this interview, Dr. Björn Feldhaus talks about misconceptions in machine design, intuitive operation and why the ALPHAFLEX even managed to surprise its own engineers.

At K 2025, W&H demonstrated that the new ALPHAFLEX can achieve a continuous printing speed of not only 400, but 500 m/minute – even with complex designs.

Q: *With the ALPHAFLEX, W&H is offering a flexographic press aimed at the entry-level segment for the first time. Isn't there already plenty of competition? Can W&H really compete on price?*

Dr. Björn Feldhaus: To be honest, that's exactly what we asked ourselves during development. The first design concepts focused on reduction – less complexity, fewer features, maximum accessibility. We thought the goal was clear: a lean press line, attractive price point, eight colors.

But the result didn't feel credible. Because anyone investing in new equipment today expects more than just "enough."

So we went back to the drawing board – technically, structurally, in terms of controls and ergonomics. The result is a press that deliberately breaks with traditional entry-level thinking. In the end, we built a system that still surprises us today, in a good way. In some areas, we even exceeded our own expectations, especially in real print performance.

Q: *So the ALPHAFLEX is not a stripped-down W&H press?*

Feldhaus: The ALPHAFLEX is not a reduced machine. It is a fully capable press with all the features that matter today. It's not designed to be cheap –



Dr. Björn Feldhaus

it's designed to set new standards in its class. Yes, in web width, number of colors and price it sits in the entry segment, but what you get for that changes the definition of the entire class.

We made a conscious decision to allow ourselves a little more



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freedom in pricing, which enabled an outstanding balance between price and performance. [laughs] In many details, we developed so far beyond expectations that we surprised ourselves.

Q: "Customers came with their most difficult designs – and were speechless." You said you surprised yourselves. How so?

Feldhaus: For example, in the way we designed and integrated the inking unit into the print deck. That resulted in exceptionally smooth running and precise axis control – far beyond anything previously seen in this class. We achieved the lowest bounce rate in the entire printing industry.

For our customers, that means they can print even the most demanding designs at full speed – 500 meters per minute. We've demonstrated this live at K 2025, because that number isn't theoretical. It's proven.

We invited printers from several countries to our Technology Center and asked them to bring their toughest jobs. They were speechless. Jobs that usually run at 200 or maybe 300 m/min in their production ran effortlessly at 500 m/min on the ALPHAFLEX, with hardly any adjustment. One customer turned around and said, "My god, it's a beast!"

And while delivering that performance, the press still saves up to 25% in drying energy consumption.



Q: It sounds like the ALPHAFLEX is defining a new class. How do you develop something like that?

Feldhaus: Curiosity and humility help a lot. A good press is not born at a desk or on a screen. It comes from observation – visiting customers, being on the shop floor, talking with operators and production managers.

That is exactly how we developed the ALPHAFLEX: together with small and mid-sized printers as well as international players. Reliability and efficiency are just as essential for global converters as for a family-run business.

Performance is not only about bounce rate or a single technical feature. It's about the entire process: job changes, varying operator skills and increasingly complex print demands. That's why our main goal was simple – everything had to become easier.



EASY Setup and other software components drastically simplify job changes and set-up procedures – even for less experienced operators.

Shorter setup times. More efficient use of resources and energy. The in between color dryers that switch off automatically when not needed, reducing operating costs without affecting production. The result: up to 25% lower energy costs. And, true to our German engineering roots, we made sure that was verified and certified immediately.

Q: What kind of company is the ALPHAFLEX designed for?

Feldhaus: Today, technology must be thought of independently of company size. The same goes for usability and flexibility. "Easy to use" doesn't mean simplified by omission – it means smart reduction through careful observation.

What really matters at half past three in the afternoon during a job change? You can't compromise – not in a small shop, not in a corporation. Not on quality, not on service, not on support. This business doesn't allow it. Cutting

corners costs production time, volume or operator satisfaction – and then you lose your operators. Everyone in the industry knows that.

The ALPHAFLEX is our answer. It adapts to different organizational structures. It's designed for companies that want to expand their production without rebuilding their entire operation. There are no compromises in quality, performance, or ease of use.

It even assists operators during job changeovers and warns against small but critical mistakes. Ask the night-shift operator – he'll tell you. And his supervisor's too: "Finally!"

Q: Flexographic printing involves complex adjustments and growing demands. How do you make that easier?

Feldhaus: Many printers face the challenge of finding and retaining experienced staff. The ALPHAFLEX was developed precisely for this

reality. Its operating concept is clearly structured; and assistance systems such as EASY Setup provide targeted support without adding complexity.

Even less experienced operators achieve consistent results quickly, while experienced teams benefit from reproducible processes and high repeat accuracy. Printing becomes more predictable, more stable and more efficient.

As I said, curiosity and real-word feedback from the production floor help immensely. Our job is to design for those realities – not just to add one more feature.

Q: Is the ALPHAFLEX really an entry-level press?

Feldhaus: I don't think those categories fit anymore. We wanted to make CI flexographic printing more accessible without lowering standards.

The ALPHAFLEX is powerful, intuitive and fits naturally into different production environments. Not because we wanted to offer less, but because good technology performs best when it's easily accessible.

We developed it for a segment where ease of operation and cost efficiency matter most. And that is exactly where the ALPHAFLEX sets new benchmarks – a combination of productivity, stability and user-friendliness that simply didn't exist before.

Whether as an entry solution with room to grow or as an addition to existing production lines, the ALPHAFLEX is ideal for first-time CI flexo users, smaller printers demanding more from this class, and large converters seeking to scale or diversify production flexibility.

Q: What comes after the ALPHAFLEX?

Feldhaus: [smiles] Let's just say this: ALPHA was only the beginning, quite literally. We plan to redefine how much productivity you can expect in each class and how easy it can be. Stay tuned for 2026. It'll be worth it.

Signs that modern flexo is taking off in Southeast Asia

After a recent visit to Vietnam, Miraclon's Chief Marketing Officer, Emma Weston, looks at how the high expectations for flexo growth in Southeast Asia are finally materializing – as the demands for flexible packaging change, while continuing to grow...

New opportunities for flexo are taking off, and fast in Vietnam. Traditionally in Southeast Asia, gravure printing has dominated in flexible packaging production; while flexo has typically been reserved for corrugated packaging or label applications. For many years, flexo has been forecast to hit high growth levels across the region, but the advent of modern flexo – and its adoption by some pioneering printers here – means the industry is now realizing it's a viable companion or alternative to the traditional gravure process for flexible packaging.

Modern flexo can meet the most demanding graphic reproduction requirements while delivering many other things that local and global brands need: shorter run lengths, the ability to accommodate rapid design changes, the drive towards environmentally-friendly packaging and a more sustainable supply chain. These are all areas where a modern flexo process can add value.

"Ultimately, I think it's important to remember that brands are focused on getting the product they want, at the right cost, within the required time frame. Flexo is a powerful tool in a printer's toolbox to meet these needs."

Shifting perspectives

The amount of packaged goods in the region continues to grow quickly, not just from local brands selling to the Vietnamese consumer market, but from multinational brands selling regional variants of their product lines. The modern flexo process is ideal to meet those needs, but the universal acceptance, especially amongst brands, that flexo quality and consistency can compete on a level playing field with gravure still has a way to go.



The mindset is definitely changing though, with pioneering printers employing both flexo and gravure print production across a single product range, selecting the best process for the job each time based on run length, turnaround time and design flexibility requirements.

They have worked with brands to agree on a 'process agnostic' approach where the printer decides on the appropriate production process and the brand has confidence that their specifications will be met regardless. It represents a step change in the region for flexible packaging production, and the acceptance of flexo, and it's a successful business strategy. These printers are enjoying volume and revenue growth.

Ultimately, I think it's important to remember that brands are focused on getting the product they want, at the right cost, within the required time frame. Flexo is a powerful tool in a printer's toolbox to meet these needs.

There's a massive opportunity for forward-thinking printers who have already invested in modern flexo. Having those state-of-the-art facilities ready to go, and the brand discussions underway, is key to real and rapid growth over the next few years.

As the demand for the production of packaged goods grows in Vietnam, there are clear signals that the industry is ready to invest in its future.

What the future looks like

I'm especially excited about the young, diverse workforce here. Globally, the print industry faces real challenges finding new people with the skills it needs, but in Vietnam, there's lots of promising young talent coming in.

That's undoubtedly helped by the level of investment that's happening, and the rapid growth of the market here. It's especially encouraging to observe so many women in key roles, from management to press operators. Those are all positive signs for the future of flexo – not just in Vietnam, but right across Southeast Asia.

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PT Apecmas marks 23 years of Esko partnership.

Jakarta-based prepress supplier makes new highest standard in flexo available in South East Asia



PT Apecmas Utama Indonesia, a leading provider of prepress, press and finishing machines, has celebrated its 23-year relationship with Esko by being the first to introduce the new flagship CDI Quartz ecosystem to the regional market.

Hailed as the pinnacle of flexo platemaking, the Esko Quartz ecosystem complements the leading Crystal technology as a top-of-the-line addition to the Esko digital flexo solutions portfolio. The Esko Quartz ecosystem offers a dual optics system that supports both legacy and forward-looking flexo platemaking with optimized Quartz Screening, enabling converters to achieve incredible new standards in flexographic print quality.

"As Esko celebrates 25 years of innovation in Indonesia, we are thrilled to mark 23 years of strategic partnership with the company by introducing this latest innovation to the regional market," said Vera Tjandra, Director of PT Apecmas Utama Indonesia. "Since 2003, we have worked with Esko to power Indonesia's transition from conventional platemaking to fully digital, automated flexo ecosystems - driving measurable

performance gains, technology upgrades, and competitive advantage for converters across the Indonesian archipelago.

"PT Apecmas has led that transformation on the ground, helping converters modernize, scale, and outperform with Esko innovations," she said. "When the market was still dominated by traditional processes, we introduced Esko digital imaging solutions that enabled letterpress converters to significantly increase plate accuracy, reduce remake rates, improve print consistency and ultimately win higher-value jobs.

"As flexographic printing became the industry standard, we then deployed innovative Esko LED exposure technology, delivering faster processing cycles, energy savings, stable dot reproduction, improved plate durability and a reduced operating cost," she said. "Now, PT Apecmas leads again, introducing Indonesia's first Esko Quartz ecosystem for the flexible packaging industry."

New Quartz optical technology enables users of the new system to image higher frequency surface

structures at 2000lpi (Q-Cells) with an imaging resolution of 4000ppi, providing a major leap forward in flexo plate imaging speed and print quality. Imaging at 4000ppi is nearly double the current industry standard, and microcells engraved in the solid ink areas at a 2000lpi resolution is proven to significantly boost ink transfer, delivering a way for print converters to match gravure print quality in flexography.

Arnab Maiti, Esko General Manager of SEA, GCH & OCE, Digital Flexo Solutions said it was fitting that PT Apecmas was the first supplier to make the latest flagship technology available in Indonesia.

"From Jakarta to nationwide territorial coverage, PT Apecmas has supported converters through every major technological shift, backed by 25 years of Esko leadership in global innovation," he said.

"This new, top-of-the-line complete flexo platemaking solution raises the bar on quality to the very highest level. The Esko Quartz ecosystem truly enables flexo printers to achieve the optimum results for their customers.

"This anniversary - and the continuation of our partnership with the introduction of the Esko Quartz ecosystem - marks another potential turning point for converters across the region who are looking to automate, are ready to scale or for those leaders ready to dominate their segment," he said.

PT Apecmas Utama Indonesia is Indonesia's leading provider of Esko digital imaging and flexographic solutions, serving converters nationwide with advanced technology, technical expertise, and strategic industry support. For more on its range of products and services, visit apecmas.com



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Navigating the new era of label regulations: how BOBST is helping converters to stay ahead

The labels industry is entering one of the most complex regulatory periods in its history. Authorities are tightening rules governing packaging sustainability, chemical safety, food contact materials, and product information.

For converters and brand owners, compliance has become a central element influencing materials selection, print technologies, and production workflows.

While these regulations aim to improve consumer safety, environmental performance, and supply-chain transparency, they also introduce significant operational challenges for the industry. In this context, industry leaders like BOBST can play an increasingly important role in helping converters adapt quickly and confidently to the evolving regulatory landscape.

A rapidly evolving regulatory landscape

The new Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation (PPWR – Regulation (EU) 2025/40) represents one of the most significant changes to packaging legislation in decades. Unlike the previous directive, the regulation applies directly in all EU Member States from August 2026.

The PPWR requires all EU packaging to reach 70% recyclability by 2030, with stricter targets by 2038. These targets directly affect labels, which must not interfere with the recyclability of the packaging they are applied on.

From 2028–2029, EU wide standardized symbols will be

introduced to help consumers correctly sort packaging, including pictograms showing material type and disposal instructions. More products will also carry digital markers such as QR codes that provide additional information about recyclability, material composition, and return systems.

In parallel, authorities are strengthening controls on substances used in printing inks, particularly for food-contact packaging.

The updated Swiss Ordinance (latest updates fully implemented on 1 February 2026) – widely regarded as the world's most comprehensive ink regulation and often used globally

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as a de facto standard – introduces a positive list of permitted substances and requires detailed documentation of potential migrating substances.

Updates to the German Inks Ordinance (GIO) are expected on 1 January 2027 and will introduce additional substance lists and migration limits for packaging intended to be in indirect contact with food.

A compass for converters to navigate the regulations

For converters, the rapid pace and complexity of regulatory change present major challenges.

In this disruptive environment, BOBST has developed an integrated ecosystem of machines, inks, and solutions designed to support converters through this period and in the future.

BOBST's Thalia inks are a new generation of UV digital inks designed to meet the highest standards of compliance. For label converters, Thalia offers peace of mind that they are using inks compliant with the current and upcoming regulations without compromising on print quality or productivity. Thalia inks work on all BOBST digital presses for label production without hardware upgrades, maintaining an impressive 100 m/min speed.



BOBST helps customers understand and align with compliance requirements through clear documentation and hands-on support. All potential migratable substances are identified and assessed according to toxicological thresholds and food contact norms, giving customers full confidence in compliance. BOBST can support customers with compliance and migration assessments and issue authorized migration certificates based on certified laboratory testing and modelling.

The release of Thalia is supported at BOBST by a dedicated Food Contact Material (FCM) governance framework – designed to deliver predictable

compliance, high performance digital printing, and long-term regulatory resilience.

Regulatory compliance also requires absolute accuracy in printed information. BOBST addresses this through technologies such as ACCUCHECK, which performs 100% inline inspection to verify the integrity of label content.

Meanwhile, digital platforms such as the DIGITAL MASTER series integrate printing, inspection, embellishment, and converting within a single process, increasing traceability and reducing risks of human error.



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Multilayer labels: digital and flexo solutions

As regulations such as the new EU regulation 2024/2865 on fold-out labels demand more information, multilayer or extended content labels are becoming essential, especially for sectors such as chemicals, food, and pharmaceuticals.

From short to long runs, BOBST's flexo platforms, including the VISION M1 and MASTER M5, enable highly efficient one-pass production of multilayer labels with minimal waste. These are highly automated platforms renowned for their flexibility, allowing quick, easy and effective configuration and web path changes according to the job requirements, which is a crucial factor when printing diverse applications and multilayers.

For more flexibility and even shorter runs, BOBST addresses this need with



FLEXJET, a fully digital printing module that enables single-pass production of multilayer labels, as well as digital glue-side or liner-side printing. When integrated into a DIGITAL MASTER series label press, it enables a one-pass and fully digital printing process of complex extended-content labels making short runs even more profitable.

Looking to the future: more regulations and a greater role for AI

Most industry observers expect regulatory pressure to intensify. The EU's Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability and ongoing REACH updates are likely to introduce further restrictions on substances used in packaging and inks.

Sustainability initiatives will continue to tighten recyclability requirements and regulate environmental claims. Countries such as the United States, China, and South Korea, are strengthening their own chemical safety and hazard communication frameworks, meaning converters operating globally must prepare for an increasingly demanding regulatory environment.

BOBST's solutions ensure converters can future proof their businesses, and the company will continue to innovate to help customers stay ahead of the curve.

Artificial intelligence and digital technologies are emerging as valuable tools for the future of regulatory compliance in many ways, providing:

- Automated label artwork validation against regulatory requirements for symbols, warnings, and mandatory information could help reduce manual errors and allow companies to update labels quickly as regulations change;
- Enhanced traceability with serialization and smart digital markers, track-and-trace systems, and digital labeling elements such as QR codes. AI will help make compliance faster, more accurate, and more scalable.

The rise of label regulations reflects a broader transformation toward safer, more transparent, and more sustainable packaging. Converters who adapt quickly can turn regulatory complexity into a source of differentiation. With advanced machines, compliant inks, inspection technologies, and integrated workflows, BOBST provides converters the tools to stay ahead – not just comply.

BOBST continues to innovate so that converters can face regulatory change confidently and turn it into an opportunity for growth.

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Next-Level Curing for Asia's Coating Industry and Future Compliance with F

The printing and converting industry in Asia is undergoing a profound transformation. Rapid growth in e-commerce, rising consumer expectations, and increasing regulatory pressure are fundamentally changing production requirements. Converters are expected to deliver higher output, consistent quality, and sustainable production — all while maintaining cost competitiveness in highly dynamic markets.

In this context, curing technology has evolved from a supporting process to a decisive performance factor. It directly influences line speed, energy consumption, product quality, and ultimately profitability. Two recent developments from IST METZ — FREEcure and LEDcure NX — illustrate how different technological approaches can address the key challenges faced by Asian converters today.

Speed as a Competitive Driver: The FREEcure Approach

In many Asian markets, productivity remains the primary lever for competitiveness. High-volume production, particularly in flexible packaging, labels, and industrial roll-to-roll applications, requires curing systems that can keep pace with increasing press speeds.

FREEcure represents a significant shift in UV curing technology. Instead of relying on photoinitiators to trigger polymerization, the system utilizes high-energy UVC radiation below 220 nm to directly activate molecular bonds within the coating. This fundamentally changes the curing mechanism and unlocks new performance levels.

In practical terms, this translates into exceptionally high curing speeds. In printing applications, line speeds of up to 250 m/min can be achieved, depending on the formulation and process configuration. For converters operating high-throughput production lines, this represents a substantial increase in output without requiring additional equipment or floor space.

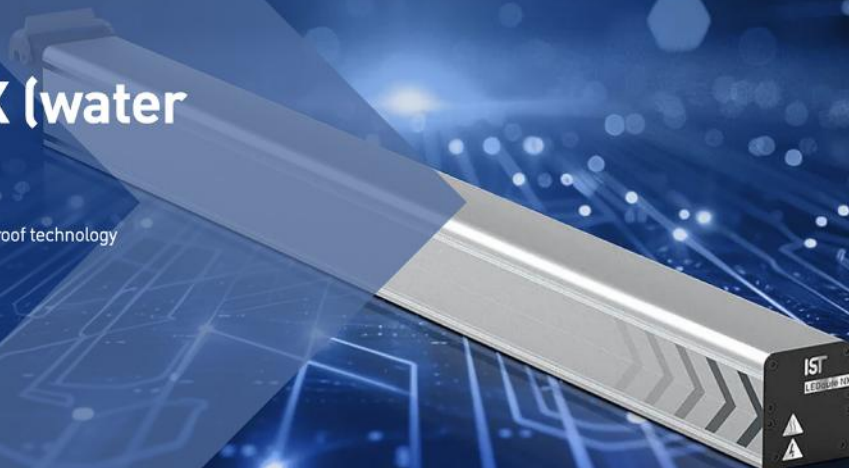
Beyond speed, FREEcure addresses one of the most pressing challenges

in packaging production: the role of photoinitiators. Conventional UV systems depend on these substances, which can contribute to migration and odor — a growing concern in food packaging and sensitive applications. By significantly reducing or even eliminating photoinitiators, FREEcure offers a pathway toward low-migration formulations while maintaining high curing performance.

Another important aspect is process simplification. Traditional UV curing often requires inertization with nitrogen to overcome oxygen inhibition. FREEcure, by contrast, enables efficient curing without this additional infrastructure. This reduces operational complexity and lowers both capital and operating costs — a decisive factor for converters in cost-sensitive markets.

LEDcure NX (water cooled)

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Converters: Speed, Efficiency REEcure and LEDcure NX



From an economic perspective, the technology also delivers compelling benefits. Energy consumption can be reduced by up to 75%, and the number of required curing units is often lower compared to conventional systems. As a result, investment payback periods can be as short as 1.5 to 2.5 years, making the technology particularly attractive in fast-growing Asian markets where return on investment is a key decision criterion.

Efficiency and Stability: LEDcure NX in Modern Production

While FREEcure focuses on maximizing speed and enabling new coating formulations, LED technology addresses another central requirement: energy efficiency combined with process stability.

With rising energy costs and increasing sustainability targets across Asia, converters are placing greater emphasis on reducing operating expenses and environmental impact. At the same time, production processes must remain stable and predictable, especially in applications with frequent job changes and demanding quality requirements.

The LEDcure NX system has been developed with precisely these priorities in mind. Based on water-cooled LED UV technology, it achieves an efficiency level of up to 48%, exceeding the typical performance of standard LED systems. This high efficiency directly translates into lower power consumption and reduced CO₂ emissions.

A defining feature of the system is its water-cooled design, which ensures a stable operating temperature. This thermal stability is critical for maintaining consistent UV output over long production runs. As a result, converters benefit from reproducible curing results, reduced process deviations, and improved overall product quality.

In practical operation, these characteristics contribute significantly to overall equipment effectiveness. Reduced thermal stress extends the service life of the LEDs, while stable operating conditions minimize unplanned downtime. For converters, this means higher machine availability and more predictable production performance.



Another important advantage lies in the system's modular architecture. LEDcure NX can be integrated into both new and existing production lines, allowing converters to upgrade their equipment step by step. This flexibility aligns well with investment strategies commonly seen in Asia, where gradual modernization is often preferred over complete system replacement.

Intelligent Control as a Key Enabler

As production environments become more complex, digitalization and process transparency are gaining importance. Modern curing systems are no longer isolated components but part of interconnected production ecosystems.

LEDcure NX can be combined with intelligent control solutions such as SMARTcure. This AI-supported system continuously monitors relevant process parameters and adjusts the curing output in real time. By aligning energy input precisely with production requirements, it ensures optimal curing performance while minimizing energy consumption.

For converters, this means not only improved efficiency but also greater process reliability. In the long term, such systems open the door to predictive maintenance and further automation, supporting the transition toward fully digitalized production environments.

Adapting Technology to Market Needs The diversity of applications in the Asian market requires a flexible approach to curing technology. There is no one-size-fits-all solution; instead, the optimal system depends on specific production requirements.

FREEcure is particularly well suited for high-speed roll-to-roll processes and applications where low migration and regulatory compliance are critical. Its ability to combine high throughput with simplified process conditions makes it an attractive option for large-scale production environments.

LEDcure NX, on the other hand, excels in applications where energy efficiency, process stability, and flexibility are paramount. Label printing, short-run production, and heat-sensitive substrates benefit especially from the controlled and efficient nature of LED curing.

In many cases, hybrid configurations that combine UV lamp and LED technologies provide the best overall solution. Such setups allow converters to leverage the strengths of both approaches, adapting their production processes to changing market demands.

A Strategic Perspective on Curing Technology

The ongoing transformation of the printing and packaging industry in Asia is characterized by increasing complexity. Converters must simultaneously address productivity, cost efficiency, sustainability, and regulatory compliance.

Curing technology sits at the intersection of all these factors. It determines how fast a line can run, how much energy is consumed, and how reliably products meet quality and safety standards.

FREEcure and LEDcure NX demonstrate how targeted technological innovation can address these challenges from different angles. One focuses on maximizing speed and enabling new formulation concepts; the other on optimizing efficiency and ensuring stable production.

For converters in Asia, the key lies in selecting and combining these technologies in a way that aligns with their specific production goals. Those who succeed in doing so will not only improve their operational performance but also position themselves for long-term competitiveness in an increasingly demanding market.





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Digital packaging printing: What has happened since drupa 2024?

Digital packaging printing was one of the hottest topics at drupa 2024, and most experts agreed: it will turn the industry upside down! Not later, but very soon. Today, almost a year later, we take a look at the subject to see which developments have actually materialised and which may need to be reassessed.

One of the key predictions at drupa 2024 was that the use of digital printing for short-run personalised packaging would increase. This trend has been confirmed over the past year. Brand owners, particularly in the food and beverage sector, are using digital printing to produce short-run and region-specific packaging to increase customer loyalty and respond more quickly to market changes.

In addition, the advances in digital printing technology unveiled at drupa 2024 have made it possible to economically produce runs of more

than 1,500 copies. This development has broadened the scope of digital printing, allowing greater flexibility and efficiency in meeting different market demands.

The big roll-out is still pending

While smaller brands in particular have already embraced digital printing, many big brands are still reluctant to use the technology on a large scale. At drupa 2024, it was expected that major brands would soon be using digital printing on a large scale for versioning and seasonal packaging. In the past year, a number of major

brands have also launched pilot projects, but widespread adoption is still a long way off.

It seems that multi-stakeholder decision making in large brand organisations is still slowing down implementation. Purchasing, development, creative, legal and sustainability all have different requirements and risk tolerances, and it is still difficult to align these functions in large organisations. This is why converters need to continue to invest time in educating their brand clients not only on the technical

capabilities of digital, but also on its operational and strategic benefits.

Risk aversion favours tried and tested solutions

Although digital packaging printing is playing an increasingly important role, it is still largely a complement to existing systems rather than a replacement. For high-volume applications in particular, the cost-effectiveness of 'old' technology – coupled with an infrastructure that has been in place for decades – is still hard to beat.

The optimism of last year and the view that all market players are 'hungry for new ideas' has partly come true. The curiosity is there, but risk aversion remains an important limiting factor, and is likely to have increased given the challenging macroeconomic outlook.

So it's not technology, it's the culture. In this sense, the predictions and hopes of drupa 2024 were neither exaggerated nor premature. But they were clearly based on an optimism that underestimated the complexity of the change. What we are experiencing today is not a digital revolution, but a continuous evolution.



Technology is becoming more sophisticated and business applications more strategic. The biggest change is not technological, but cultural: More and more stakeholders understand why digital is important, even if they don't yet understand how it

works. With drupa 2028 on the horizon, the next few years are likely to be defined by how well vendors manage to build partnerships, provide end-to-end support and reduce innovation risks for their brand customers.

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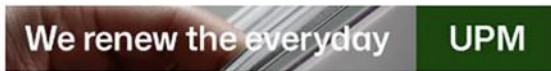
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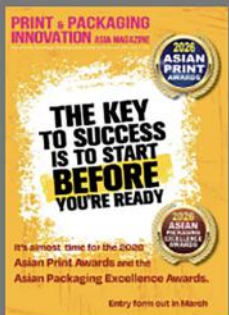


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Asian Print Awards & Asian Packaging Excellence Awards

CTV Excellence Awards



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.

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.



Printing specification:

- 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)



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



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 Packaging Excellence Awards
Submission deadline: Sept 4th, 2026

Print Method - Offset (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)

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



Catching up with the world record print volume with the Alegro

With its new Alegro perfect binder from Muller Martini, Czechia's largest sheetfed offset printer, Triangl Print is not only able to cope with the high output of its printing presses, but also has a high degree of delivery reliability for its numerous time-sensitive periodicals.



The figures are impressive: in mid-February, the counter on the touchscreen of the Alegro, which was put into operation at the Prague plant at the end of last summer and has been running around the clock in 24/7 mode ever since, showed 6,656,400 copies produced. Not least thanks to the significant reduction in makeready times, Triangl Print has doubled its output of softcover products compared to the previous model from another manufacturer.

High performance is one important advantage that the new 7000-cycle perfect binder from Muller Martini brings to the largest sheetfed offset company in Czechia. The second is its high flexibility. The Alegro is reconfigured up to 20 times a day.

600 periodical titles

As a partner to publishers and catalog producers, Triangl Print, which prints 70 percent for the domestic market, is the Czech market leader in the production of catalogs, magazines, and brochures. Its core business is the printing of periodicals with around 600 different titles and various formats – almost exclusively in offset.

Their total monthly circulation is almost 6 million copies, with print runs ranging from 1,000 to 300,000 and an average of around 10,000 per title. One-third of these are perfect bound, while the remaining two-thirds are saddle-stitched. Although the total circulation is declining slightly, the number of titles remains stable, not least thanks to the continued popularity of special interest magazines.

First invested in printing, then in finishing

Six months ago, Triangl Print invested in the comprehensive Alegro line with a 3694 gathering machine with 18 stations and Asir PRO sheet control system, rejection switch, criss-cross delivery, hot melt spine and side gluing unit, PUR spine nozzle (this means that Triangl can process PUR in an extremely simple manner, in addition to hot melt), drum folder feeder, Book Data Center, FA 650 front trimming unit, Solit PRO three-knife trimmer, and CB 18 book stacker, there is one primary reason, according to CEO Petr Kotýnek.

“We have recently invested primarily in new and more powerful printing presses and print around 16,000 tons of paper per year. Heidelberg has certified that we hold the world record

High-end book production

Starbook Plowfolder

The automated Hunkeler Starbook Plowfolder enables extremely efficient production of digitally printed books starting from print run 1. Format flexibility for each print run is guaranteed by the completely variable page count and spine length per book, as well as semi-automatic changeover of different fold types within three minutes. Outstanding book block quality with perfectly straight, square, and flat book blocks make the Star Plowfolder the ultimate solution for the production of softcover and hardcover books.



More information:



hunkeler.ch



The Solit PRO three-knife trimmer ensures a clean cut, while the CB 18 ensures perfect product stacking.

with 86 million sheets per year on one machine. In order to cope with the high print volume, we have upgraded our finishing equipment. This is because the timelines for periodical production are extremely sensitive. Delivery times must be adhered to down to the hour so that the magazines arrive in subscribers' mailboxes and at newsstands on time."

Machine operators involved

The deciding factor in purchasing the first Muller Martini perfect binder in the company's 35-year history was not least the many years of positive experience with three Muller Martini saddle stitchers in terms of efficiency. One Primera PRO is in operation at the Triangl plant in Prague, and two Primeras are in operation in Milovice.

However, it was also important to Petr Kotýnek that his machine operators were involved in the evaluation of the new perfect binder, which included visits to several other graphic arts companies as well as a demonstration at the Print Finishing Center (PFC) in Zofingen.

"Nowadays, it's not easy to find good specialists. That's why it's doubly important to involve employees when investing in new machines. And I'm all the more pleased that they are just as satisfied with the Alegro as I am after

its first few months of operation," says the company owner.

Ice hockey as a baptism of fire for the profession

In order to quickly get to grips with the modern technology of the new perfect binder, two Triangl machine operators attended a one-week training course at the PFC. According to Petr Kotýnek, they not only received many tips and tricks for their daily work, "but they also learned a lot about the design and maintenance of the system, which I consider very important."

Petr Kotýnek, who took over the company in 2010 from his father Antonio Kotýnek and his two partners – hence the company name Triangl – is confident about the future of his business. "With our machinery and 160 employees, we are in an excellent position. Of course, the market is highly competitive, but that's where my many years of experience as a professional ice-hockey player have come in handy. Ice hockey requires a certain toughness that is also beneficial in professional life."



Triangl Print also relies on three Muller Martini saddle stitchers in its two plants – one Primera PRO (pictured) in Prague and two Primera machines in Milovice.



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

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

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

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How Hell Gravure Systems Is Building the Future of Engraving Technology in Schwentinental

When a company like Hell Gravure Systems relocates its headquarters, it is far more than a simple change of address. It is a statement. During VerpackungsDruck & Converting's visit to the company's new headquarters in Schwentinental near Kiel, it quickly became clear: this new building represents a clearly articulated vision, a long-term growth strategy, and an uncompromising commitment to technological excellence.

Together with the management team – Adam Rid, CEO of Heliograph Holding, Andreas Scheffer, CEO of Hell Gravure Systems, and Ulrich Busche, Vice President Sales at Hell Gravure Systems – we were given a transparent and impressive insight into a company that is actively shaping its future while consciously committing to Germany as an industrial location.

A Strategic Milestone in the Company's History

The relocation last year marks a significant turning point in the long history of Hell Gravure Systems. With the decision to move to the approximately 30,000-square-meter site in Schwentinental, the company has not only expanded physically but has also created new structural and organizational perspectives.

“The relocation was not only a logistical decision but above all a strategic one,” Adam Rid explained during the tour. “We wanted to consolidate our research and development capabilities, optimize processes and workflows, and create the conditions to support our customers worldwide even faster and more efficiently.”

With a total area of around 10,000 square meters – including approximately 600 square meters dedicated to the Heliograph Customer Center – a highly functional industrial campus has been created that not only enables further growth but actively prepares for it.

Architecture and Infrastructure: Functionality with Foresight

Upon entering the building, it becomes clear that the focus here is not on representational effects but rather on industrial functionality. Short distances, clear structures, and a carefully designed separation – while maintaining connectivity – between office, production, assembly, and service areas define the architectural concept as a whole.

The new site is also designed with the future in mind from an energy perspective: a photovoltaic system that can be expanded in the future, three powerful heat pumps, and specifically climate-controlled areas – including offices as well as the engraving and laser head assembly departments – underscore the ambition to consistently combine efficiency and sustainability.

History as a Commitment: The Museum in the Entrance Area

A particularly noteworthy feature right at the beginning of the tour is the company's own museum in the entrance area. Here, the development of Hell Gravure Systems – from its technological beginnings to its current role as a global technology leader – is documented.

The museum is far more than a historical retrospective. It illustrates that innovation at Hell is not a coincidence but part of the company's entrepreneurial DNA. Past, present, and future are visibly interconnected – a message directed equally at employees and visitors.

The Heliograph Customer Center: Customer Proximity as a Lived Principle

A central element of the new site is the state-of-the-art Customer Center. Across approximately 600 square meters, customers will find everything they need to make

The company's own museum in the entrance area. Here, the development of Hell Gravure Systems – from its technological beginnings to its current role as a global technology leader – is documented





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Source: Hell Gravure Systems

The centerpiece of the new site is the large production area, complemented by spacious storage facilities and a powerful logistics zone. The facility is designed for maximum flexibility; an expansion from two to up to four production lines has already been prepared

well-founded investment decisions: system demonstrations, engraving tests on gravure cylinders, elastomer flexographic printing forms, and embossing rollers under real production conditions, as well as training sessions and professional exchange – all in a deliberately open and dialogue-oriented atmosphere.

“The customer gets everything they need here” is the clear philosophy. From joint test runs to personal discussions, the Heliograph Customer Center is designed as a meeting space for all Heliograph products.

Live Technology You Can Experience Firsthand

A particular added value of the Customer Center lies in the opportunity

not only to learn about the latest Hell technology in theory, but also to experience it live under real production conditions and test it in a practical environment. Customers thus gain a direct impression of the performance, process integration, and operating concepts of current systems. Investment decisions can therefore be made on the basis of reliable production data.

Currently available in the Customer Center are the K5 Auto, the PremiumSetter, and CellaXy; in the near future, the latest products from the other Heliograph subsidiary companies will complement the portfolio. Together, these systems form a representative cross-section of the fully integrated, automated process chain increasingly required in modern gravure and flexographic printing operations.

■ **K5 Auto: Automated Gravure Cylinder Production**

The K5 Auto is a highly automated engraving machine for the electro-mechanical production of gravure cylinders and part of the AutoCon line of Heliograph Holding. The modular system can be flexibly adapted to different production requirements and offers high productivity with HelioSprint 2 or optionally HelioSprint 3, while at the same time safeguarding the customer's investment.

Inline measurement systems such as CellEye, automatic cutting-angle measurement, and Certified Engraving ensure reproducible quality, process reliability, and complete documentation – within a compact design and with minimal operating effort.





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Source: Hell Gravure Systems

A particular added value of the Customer Center lies in the opportunity not only to learn about the latest Hell technology in theory, but also to experience it live under real production conditions and test it in a practical environment.

■ **PremiumSetter:
Laser Direct Engraving for
Flexo**

The PremiumSetter is a high-precision laser engraving system for elastomer flexographic printing sleeves and plates. By consistently eliminating chemical processing steps, it enables efficient and environmentally friendly plate production. High-resolution fiber lasers with up to 5,080 dpi, integrated 3D engraving, and powerful software modules allow precise, reproducible relief design and a largely automated workflow.

■ **Cellaxy:
Universal High-End Laser
System**

With Cellaxy, Hell Gravure Systems presents a universal high-end laser system for the direct engraving of gravure, embossing, and coating

forms. Digital parameterization, high laser power, and intelligent algorithms enable maximum flexibility – from line and halftone engraving to 2D and 3D structuring of metal surfaces. Cellaxy stands for high quality, productivity, and future security in packaging, decorative, and security printing applications.

■ **Production and Logistics:
Scalability as a Success Factor**

The centerpiece of the new site is the large production area, complemented by spacious storage facilities and a powerful logistics zone. The entire facility is designed for maximum flexibility: an expansion from two to up to four production lines has already been prepared.

Crane systems and hall structures are already dimensioned for significantly larger laser systems. Around half of the production capacity can be used for the manufacture of laser systems. All goods receiving and shipping processes take place in enclosed halls – a clear advantage for process reliability, working conditions, and on-time delivery.

■ **Assembly Expertise
and Service**

The laser head assembly area is particularly impressive. The cleanroom area has been doubled compared with the previous location and is consistently designed for further growth. Highly qualified employees work here under strictly controlled

conditions: wearing hairnets, safety glasses, overalls, and specialized shoes, every single component undergoes intensive quality inspection before being incorporated into the assembly of a laser system.

Lasers for rapid replacement at customer sites are permanently kept in stock. A separate, strictly access-restricted area is reserved exclusively for the research and development of new laser systems, underscoring the high importance placed on innovation even within the service environment.

In addition, engraving head assembly has been significantly upgraded at the new location. Today, more than 6,000 HelioSprint engraving heads are in operation worldwide; every year, hundreds of these highly precise units are inspected, serviced, and overhauled in Schwentimental – an impressive testament to the global importance of the site as a service and competence center.

■ **Research and Development:
The Technological Backbone**

Within its research and development department, Hell Gravure Systems continuously works on advancing both electromechanical engraving and laser direct engraving – for gravure cylinders, elastomer flexographic printing forms, and embossing cylinders. These capabilities form the technological backbone of the company and secure its globally leading market position.

■ **A Site with Signal Effect**

The new headquarters of Hell Gravure Systems is far more than a modern industrial building. It represents a clear attitude: thinking long term, leading technologically, operating close to customers, and taking responsibility for location, employees, and markets.

With its investment in Schwentimental, Hell Gravure Systems is sending a strong signal – for growth, for innovation, and for industrial excellence “Made in Germany.” For the industry, this site sends a clear message: the future of engraving and laser technology is being actively shaped here. ■

All goods receiving and shipping processes take place in enclosed halls – a clear advantage for process reliability, working conditions, and on-time deliver



Source: Hell Gravure Systems

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New Slitter Scorer SR C boosts efficiency in the corrugator

BHS Corrugated introduces the new Slitter Scorer SR C as a key addition to the Corruverse ecosystem, designed for maximum efficiency at frequent order changes and digitally printed jobs.

The "C" stands for Combined, reflecting its ability to unite multiple configuration and performance levels within one machine concept.

With fast changeovers, modular upgradeability and a compact footprint, the SR C supports corrugated board producers in meeting today's increasing flexibility and performance demands – fully aligned with the connected, data driven workflows in the Corruverse.



Instant positioning, faster changeovers
At the core of the SR C is its instant positioning. In this machine, all scorers and knives are equipped with direct positioning, allowing them to reposition individually and automatically. Especially for scorers, this results in a significant reduction in positioning time, allowing a new order setup to be prepared within two seconds.

The fast positioning system also enables the SR C to handle another growing market requirement driven by increasingly demanding packaging solutions: Narrow scoring patterns, which require tandem production using two scoring sections. Order changes between mentioned tandem runs, can be processed at impressive speeds without the need for additional equipment – making the SR C the fastest solution in the market. Therefore, Auxiliary stations are only required for special scoring profiles or to support fast tandem order changes.

Modular design that grows with customer needs

The SR C features a modular, upgradeable design that allows all machine configurations to be realized

within the same mechanical frame and software architecture. It can be equipped with different knife and scorer configurations to meet specific performance and budget requirements. The machine can be started with a simple scorer-knife configuration and upgraded step by step to additional knife and scoring sections as production demands increase.

Precision and quality without compromise

The proven cut from below principle delivers excellent results for demanding applications, including preprinted and print-ready sheets. Seamless width changes within the paper further increase flexibility in order planning and production scheduling.

Compact, flexible and ready for the future

Despite its high performance, the Slitter Scorer SR C features a compact design, making it suitable for plants with limited space. It is available for all BHS Corrugated lines – CLASSIC, FLEX, SPEED and WIDTH Line – and can be configured for multiple working widths and station combinations. Its short

positioning times for all tool bodies make the SR-C future-proof for all upcoming challenges in the box plant, as the trend is significantly pointing towards shorter order runs and narrow scorings.

Key benefits of the SR-C:

- **Short order handling:**
The SR C is designed to handle short orders at 25 m order length at speeds of up to 350 m/min, providing a significant advantage in production environments with a growing share of short runs, digitally printed orders, and shorter throughput times.
- **Peak production performance:**
Order change speeds for orders above 25 m peak at 400 m/min, making it the industry's highest performance. Production speeds aside from order changes are not limited by the SR-C and can go up to 450 m/min.
- **Flexibility:**
Configurable for multiple working widths and combinations of knife and scorer stations. The machine can be upgraded at a later stage, allowing customers to grow without major modifications to the existing setup.

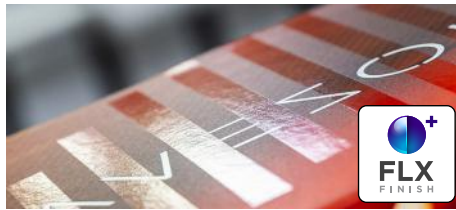
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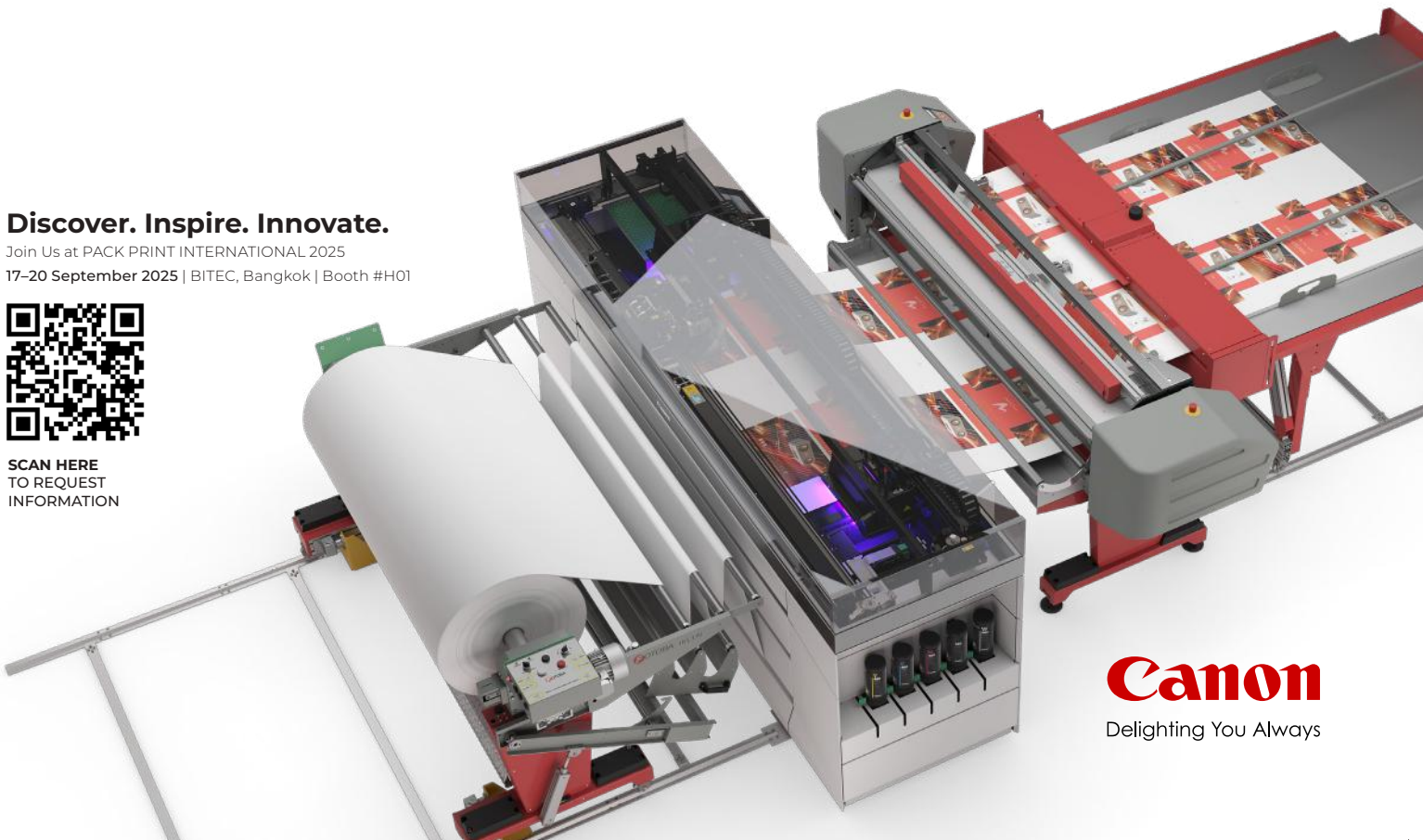
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Embracing automation and digitalisation - *a global solution to labour shortages*

The challenges of labour shortages, especially of skilled labour, are not unique to Germany or the printing industry. Developed and ageing economies around the world are facing similar circumstances.

The European Commission, for example, predicts that while overall population growth will stagnate, the proportion of people aged 65 and over will rise from 20 to 30 per cent by 2050. Businesses therefore need to adapt to these changing circumstances and develop strategies to deal with them. A study conducted by the F.A.Z.-Institut for Heidelberg highlights the strategies being pursued by German small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and provides insights into how automation and digitalisation can help SMEs to adapt.

Lack of skilled labour hampers business opportunities

The results of the study reveal a clear trend: automation and digitalisation are no longer optional, but essential for survival in today's economy. In the study, nine out of ten German SMEs report a skills shortage, with almost half experiencing a serious impact on their business. This reflects wider global challenges as industries struggle to fill critical roles amid changing demographics.

For the printing sector, companies such as Heidelberg and others at #drupa2024 showed how automation

can help address this shortage. They are already tackling the issue by providing all kinds of automation solutions from prepress to postpress and everything around it.

The introduction of advanced technologies in print shops, such as the implementation of robotic systems that work alongside human operators, helps to streamline workflows and reduce dependency on large numbers of staff. Automation therefore helps companies maintain or increase productivity. But it also redefines jobs, making them more attractive to a wider range of workers. For example,



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for a greener print



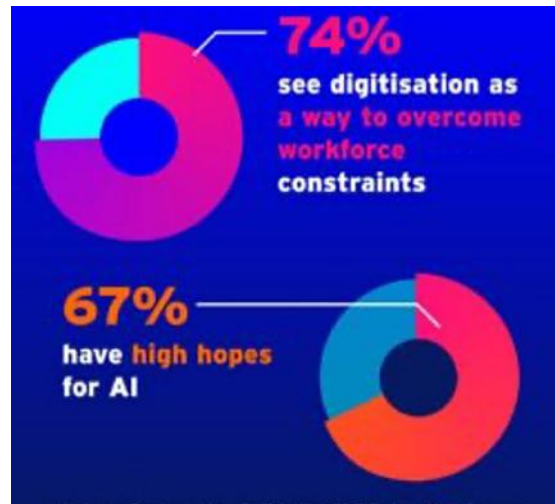
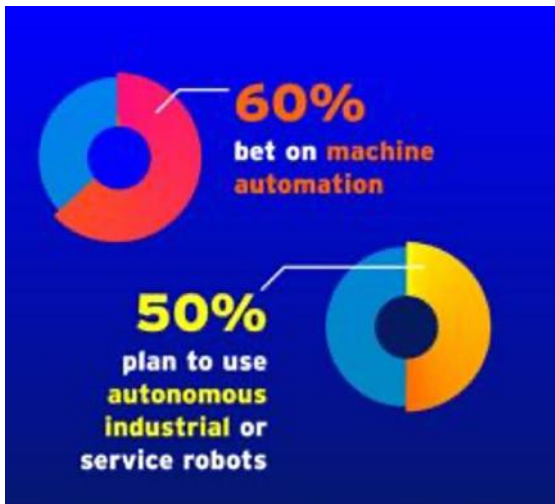
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companies can use automation to improve routine processes and focus their workforce on higher-value tasks.

Big hopes for AI

In conjunction with automation, the role of digitalisation is equally critical. The study found that 74 per cent of German SMEs see digitalisation as a solution to staffing challenges, with 67 per cent citing artificial intelligence as a particularly effective tool. In general, digitalisation is seen as a way to improve operational efficiency, enhance decision making and increase resilience to labour shortages. While the benefits are clear, the journey to adopting these technologies isn't without its challenges.

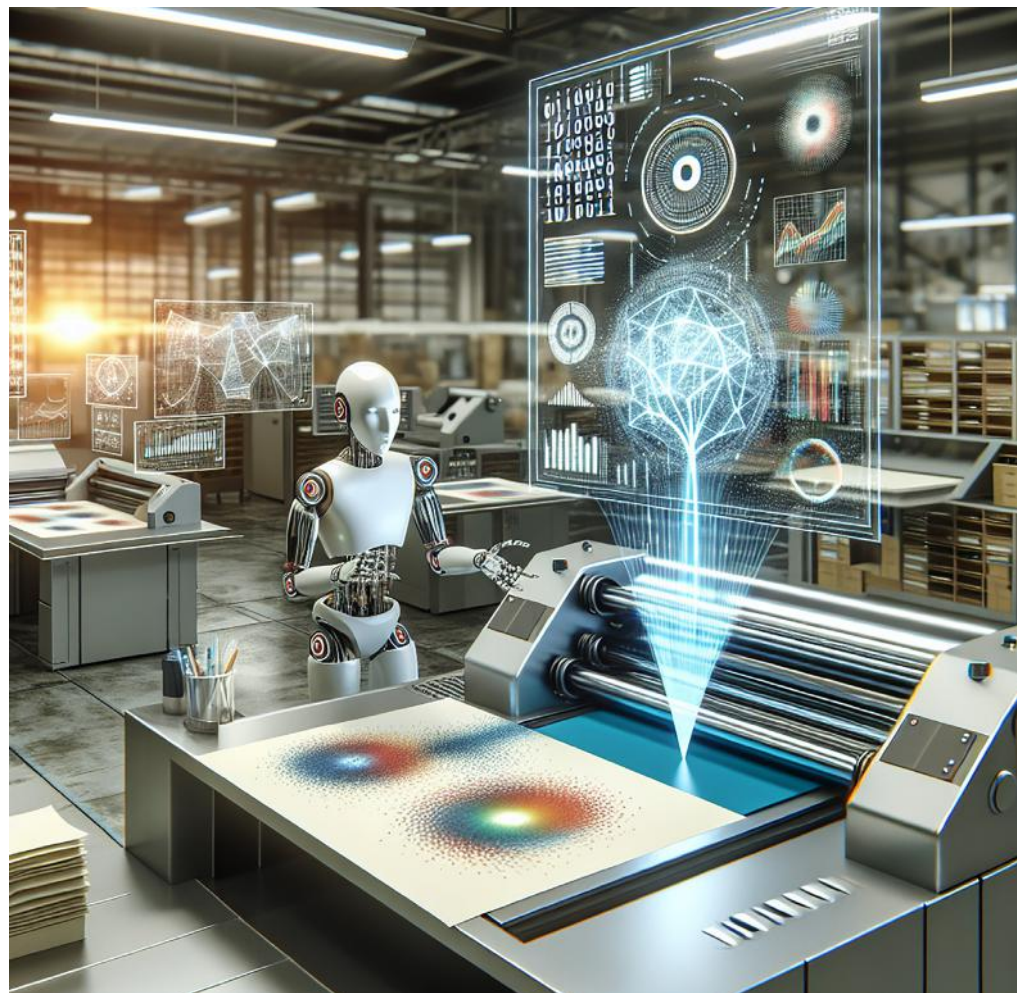
High costs, bureaucracy and resource constraints often hinder progress, according to participants in the German study, where seven out of ten SMEs rated German companies' digitalisation efforts as mediocre at best. Three strategies in particular could help overcome these barriers: Partnering with technology providers can help businesses adapt scalable, affordable tools.

By advocating for policies that encourage digital transformation, such as subsidies or tax breaks, they can secure government support for their modernisation efforts. And by investing in training and upskilling programmes to prepare employees for a more technology-driven workplace, they can ensure that their workforce has the necessary skills to operate efficiently in the new environment.

Automation and digitalisation: A shared responsibility

To remain competitive in the face of chronic skills and labour shortages, SMEs need to embrace digitalisation and automation. Some 91 per cent of SMEs surveyed agreed that Germany's economy is not competitive without digitalisation and automation, so German companies say they have a lot of room for improvement.

The tools, from artificial intelligence to digitalisation and automation, are becoming more sophisticated and easier to implement. B2B platforms for consumables and service parts, software for controlling the entire workflow in the printing process, and web-based remote diagnostics for press maintenance are just a few examples that are already on the shelf. But you need the vision to use it. Visitors to drupa were able to catch a glimpse of a future that is just around the corner.





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Step into the future of flexo platemaking with the all-new CDI Quartz. Combining cutting-edge Quartz optics, high-resolution imaging, and sustainable innovation, it surpasses gravure-level results with unmatched efficiency.

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For further details please contact:

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Andrew Dunn - Sales Manager - Digital Flexo Solution -Oceania (andrew.dunn@esko.com)



ENTRY FORM



Recognising the best in Packaging production from across Asia Since 2001



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
+
BEST IN SHOW
US\$4000.00
CASH

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



Best in Show will win US\$4000.00 . Can this be your company?

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
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



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The Awards Dinner will be held on November 13th in Jakarta Indonesia

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

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!