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FLEXURE PRINT N PACK ACHIEVES REMARKABLE MILESTONE IN FLEXOGRAPHIC PRINTING



Digital packaging market sees surge – insights from Redington VP



Charting India's inkjet odyssey – lessons from Global Print Konnect



Pelican's rotogravure press and turret slitter at PlastFocus 2024

SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS DRIVE PRINTING TRENDS

UFlex's gearless CI flexo press and combi lamination machine at PlastFocus

MAHAN HAZARIKA

At the PlastFocus 2024 exhibition, held at Yashobhoomi (IICC) in Dwarka, New Delhi, UFlex presented the technological advancements and capabilities of its innovative machines. Among the highlights were the CI flexo and combi lamination machines.

Building on this legacy, UFlex has embarked on the manufacturing of a CI flexo printing press with a web width ranging from 800 to 1600 mm, supporting up to 10 colors. This collaborative effort with Comiflex, based in Italy, has yielded a machine with exceptional performance. Capable of achieving printing speeds of up to 400 meters per minute, the press features modern connectivity that enables seamless communication with UFlex's service team. Through remote monitoring, diagnostics, and troubleshooting, clients benefit from real-time assistance, ensuring uninterrupted operations and optimal performance.

Additionally, UFlex's combi lamination machine features a digital AC vector drive and AC vector grade motor technology, offering versatility and efficiency in the lamination process. With speeds up to 300 meters per minute for solvent-based processes and 450 meters per minute for solvent-less operations, this advanced system encompasses various coating and lamination units, ensuring high-quality output.

"UFlex has been striving to maintain a competitive edge in the industry. In pursuit of this goal, we have introduced several groundbreaking products that were previously unavailable from any Indian manufacturer in the Indian subcontinent. Among these innovations, we unveiled a CI flexo in 2018, followed by extrusion coating lamination. Additionally, we are on the verge of launching the ELS, a state-of-the-art rotogravure printing machine capable of achieving speeds up to



Sanjay Malik Sabharwal, joint president and COO, UFlex's Engineering Business at PlastFocus 2024. Photo: The Packman

500 meters per minute," said Sanjay Malik Sabharwal, joint president and COO, UFlex's Engineering Business.

CI FLEXO WITH GEARLESS TECHNOLOGY

Rotogravure printing technology has been a mainstay in India for many years, with major converters still relying on rotogravure machines for their printing needs. However, the introduction of CI flexo, particularly with the advancement of gearless technology, has steadily garnered increased business in the industry. Recognizing this trend, UFlex has decided to innovate further by integrating gearless technology into its CI flexos, paving the way for new advancements in the field.

"At UFlex, we prioritize thorough research and preparation to minimize potential challenges. Our journey towards CI flexo began in 2007, during which we engaged with every major manufacturer worldwide to gain insights and understanding. Guided by the vision of our chairman, Ashok Chaturvedi, our objective was clear – to develop a product that could rival the best globally while maintaining a cost advantage for Indian manufacturing," said Sabharwal.

"Over a decade, we meticulously honed our approach, ensuring that when we unveiled our own CI Flexo in 2017-2018, it stood shoulder to shoulder with the finest offerings worldwide. The extensive gestation period of 10 years allowed us to perfect our recipe, resulting in a product that faced minimal challenges upon launch," he added.

CI FLEXO EMERGES AS OPTIMAL PRINTING PROCESS

"In the foreseeable future, it's evident that we are entering an era dominated by CI flexo printing. Several discernible factors contribute to this shift. Firstly, there's a growing demand for sustainable laminates, which necessitates a focus on single-family polyethylene-based products. Given the stretchable nature of these materials, CI flexo emerges as the optimal printing process among known manufacturing methods. Therefore, embracing sustainability inherently entails a move towards flexographic printing," Sabharwal said.

CI flexo printing is poised to dominate the printing landscape due to several key factors identified by Sabharwal. The demand for sustainable packaging

solutions, coupled with the rise of new companies and startups, highlights the viability and efficiency of flexographic printing. As sustainability concerns continue to shape consumer preferences, CI flexo emerges as the optimal printing process, particularly for single-family polyethylene-based products.

FLEXIBLE PACKAGING INDUSTRY EXPERIENCES ROBUST GROWTH

Sabharwal also expressed optimism regarding the future growth of the flexible packaging industry.

With a growing population and increased mobility driving demand for packed items, the industry is positioned for sustained expansion. Sabharwal highlighted that the flexible packaging sector is thriving, providing sustained opportunities for growth and innovation. ■

ENHANCING PRINT QUALITY, REDUCING COSTS

Echaar Equipments introduces cost-effective geared CI flexo press at PlastFocus

At the PlastFocus exhibition held at Yashobhoomi (IICC) in Dwarka, New Delhi, Echaar Equipments presented its array of machinery, including CI flexo, stack flexo, and both solventless and solvent-based lamination machines. Of particular note was the unveiling of its latest innovation – a geared CI flexo machine.

Discussing the new geared CI flexo, Kirti Panchal of Echaar Equipments said, “The new geared CI flexo is a cost-effective solution for companies seeking CI technology within budget constraints. This innovation provides high-quality printing comparable to other CI flexo machines in the market but at a more affordable cost due to its geared technology. Customers benefit from top-class printing with reduced investment, making it a compelling option. Geared CI flexo machines are widely popular globally, with thousands already in operation worldwide. We offer two models – one features fast job change-over with sleeve technology, while the other employs roller-type technology suitable for printing on challenging films like LDPE, shrink sleeves, and PVC.”

“In addition, we are presenting our high-end solventless machine aimed at LD to LD lamination, for challenging substrates like Alu films. This technology features a minimal distance between coating and nipping, optimizing efficiency and performance. We are excited to present this new offering to the Indian



Team Echaar Equipments at the PlastFocus 2024 exhibition held at Yashobhoomi in Dwarka, New Delhi. Photo: The Packman

market, reinforcing our dedication to innovation and meeting the dynamic requirements of our customers,” he added.

Echaar’s new geared CI flexo machine is designed with the milk market and hygiene sector in mind, serving companies that produce shrink PVC labels. Additionally, it offers an effective solution for wrappers commonly seen on products such as mineral waters and beverages.

Utilizing geared technology enables substantial savings in motor drives and other automation expenses, unlike gear-less CI flexo. “However, it’s important to note that we are not compromising on technology; we are solely employing CI technology. The significant advantage lies in obtaining CI technology at a reason-

able cost, which is one of the key benefits. For instance, jobs that can be printed in gravure at 100 m/min on substrates like LDPE can be achieved at 250 m/min with our geared CI flexo, representing a remarkable speed enhancement,” explained Panchal.

Regarding the new exhibition venue, Panchal said, “I am extremely pleased with our experience here. The facilities are excellent, and the connectivity with the metro is highly convenient, despite the travel time. We have currently set up a stall, but we are contemplating showcasing a machine at the next show due to the outstanding quality of this venue. The response from visitors has been overwhelmingly positive, with a significant number of focused customers attending.” ■

– Mahan Hazarika