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Growing Trends in Consumer Packaging



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Editorial

“GROWING TRENDS IN CONSUMER PACKAGING”

Packaging is an all-encompassing industry term for the technology and design work going into protecting or enclosing every sort of product destined for storage, shipping and sale. Packaging also takes into account the product manufacturer's marketing efforts. For leading manufacturers, the way they package their products signifies their brand. They view packaging as an essential part of their business model, that's next to producing an excellent product, of course

Consumers live fast-paced lifestyles, which has drastically shifted the way brands pack their products over the years. The need for consumption convenience is a critical factor that has contributed to the rise in popularity of packaging that is easy to store, easy to open and can possess the ability to reseal. In custom packaging, the appearance of a product plays a big role in attracting consumers to a product. Hence, the packaging holds as much importance as the product itself as a marketing tool for businesses. The challenge for the brands is to make the packaging eye-catching to boost sales. Making the unboxing experience more personalized and unique is the key to creating a lasting impact so that customers come back to the brand.

Many packaging trends have emerged over last few years as a result of changing consumer needs and changing awareness about environment. Sustainable packaging has become essential part of packaging designs. E-Commerce has been the need of the day due to various digital platforms. Packaging needs have to match the requirements of e-commerce business trends to meet the needs of the new generation. Digital printing solutions are emerging to meet the quick change-overs and requirements of variety of packs with small lot size orders.

Consumer trends for effective packaging solutions have drastically changed over time. One packaging trend that has always been a key preference for industries such as food and beverages, retail and electronics, is flexible packaging. When it comes to the weight of the packaging, rigid packaging is heavier than flexible packaging. That's because rigid packaging is often made from denser and thicker materials. Flexible packaging is often used in low-cost products in the food and cosmetics industry. Chips, biscuits, bread, milk, frozen food, sauces, creams – all come in flexible packaging. Flexible packaging is dominating food packaging trends. That's because of its protective properties. Flexible packaging is easily customizable. You can choose from multiple printing methods to add any color or graphic that reflects your brand. Moreover, the shape and size of flexible packaging can be easily customized.

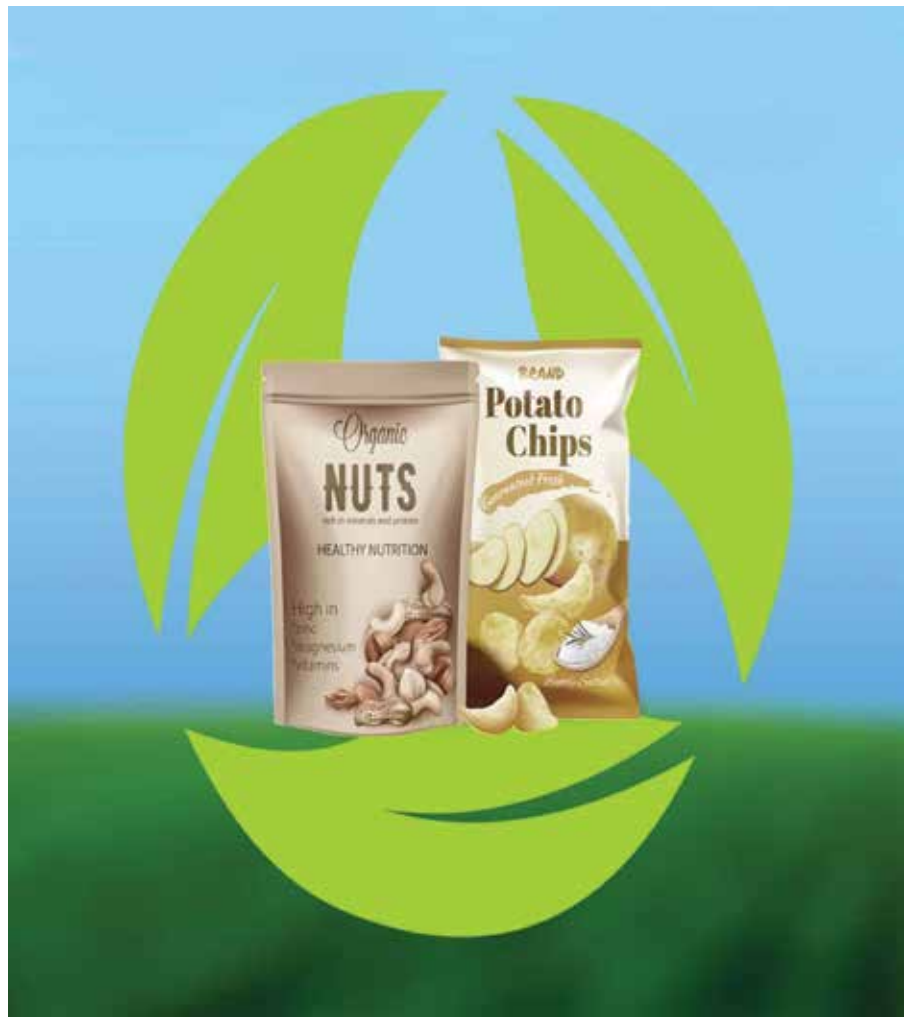
Innovations in packaging are constantly required to meet the changing trends. Innovations are required in creating new shapes, sizes, materials, printing technologies and so on. Innovations are required to meet supply-chain demands right till the product reaches the consumers. Innovations are required in reducing the material usages, wastes, thereby reducing the impact on environment. IFCA Star Awards events are excellent platforms to showcase the innovations that meet the Growing Consumer Trends.

Vilas Dighe - Editor

GROWING TRENDS OF SUSTAINABILITY IN THE PACKAGING INDUSTRY

The role of sustainable materials has grown

exponentially in packaging sector. Packaging Industry is taking longer strides towards green solutions, as brands and businesses are opting for sustainable packaging more than ever. Sustainable Packaging is not only considered critical to the circular economy and environment friendliness but is now becoming important among consumers as well. Ever since the pandemic outbreak, it is interesting to see consumers getting more inclined towards sustainable packaging, not just to enjoy the virtues of safely packed consumables but also with a view to contribute their part in protecting the environment for a comfortable living.



So, What Exactly is Sustainable Packaging?

'Sustainability' is no more a buzzword in the business environment it has become the need of the hour. In the world of packaging, Sustainable packaging is any packaging that includes environment friendly materials during the course of manufacturing and leaves behind no or very less environmental impact during its entire life cycle. In the quest to

peddle the movement of circular economy, use of sustainable materials in developing new packaging is a viable alternative that leaves a positive impact on the environment. Therefore, any packaging that is recyclable, safe for the environment, uses renewable and reusable raw materials and implements environment friendly manufacturing practices with minimal impact on natural resources falls under the classification of sustainable packaging.



Conventional ways of manufacturing of flexible packaging employ various formats of plastics in form of layers. These layers demand not just complicated methods of manufacturing and recycling but also leave behind a detrimental impact on the environment. Adopting green packaging solutions is the most effective way to combat this problem. With rising conscience towards safe packaging, hygiene and environmental awareness the adoption of sustainable packaging is gaining grounds to become one of the most recent trends in flexible packaging sector. Packaging converters and brands are embracing various sustainable packaging options solutions to check the green packaging requirements. Some of these include:

Replacement of Fossil-Fuel-Based Plastics With Bioplastics:

With growing focus on sustainability, use of bio-plastics in packaging industry is on the rise. Bioplastics are made from biodegradable, renewable resources such as corn starch, proteins, and polylactic acids. Bioplastics leave far lesser carbon footprint and decompose much faster than traditional plastics. Bio-plastics are made of natural composition due to which they can be naturally recycled by biological process.

Using Sustainable Inks and Dyes

A world without ink would essentially be a world without colour. Beyond the mandatory elimination of heavy metals from printing jobs such as cadmium, lead and mercury, alternative eco-friendly inks today come in various forms such as water-based, biodegradable, latex, UV & EB curable inks and more. Inks based on natural ingredients consist of a major percentage (50 to 90%) of renewable resources in the form of inedible plants and algae, which do not hurt the food supply whilst also lowering carbon footprint with lesser consumption of water and energy. With Sustainability on the rise use of solvent-free and water based inks are gaining momentum as they complement ease of recycling and help brands step closer to their sustainability goals.

Sustainable Adhesives:

With sustainability taking the centrestage use of sustainable adhesives in flexible packaging is gaining acceptability. Sustainable adhesives such as solvent-free, recyclable, compostable and biodegradable adhesives taking foreground and with their introduction packaging manufacturers and brands have been able to elevate their sustainable footprint in the ecosystem. Sustainable adhesives leave less environmental impact and carbon footprint and VOC (volatile organic compounds) and its use is gaining prominence for printing and packaging jobs in the recent times.

Utilizing Recyclable and Reusable Materials:

Switching from single-use plastics such as thermocol, styrofoam to recyclable materials

like corrugated cardboard, paperboard, etc. brands are now considering a wide range of materials that are fully recyclable. Paired with reusable packaging, this strategy meets the demands of the increasingly aware consumers who want more sustainable options while keeping in mind environmental concerns. It also lessens disposal costs for consumers, reduces waste and is very beneficial for a circular economy.

Rightsizing – That Extra Packaging:

A fairly new trend, it refers to the “practice of reducing packaging size, fill material and paper waste through conscious design choices”. This helps in minimizing space in addition to protecting the contents resulting in a reduction in the amount of waste per package.

In its pledge towards creating a plastic waste free planet, UFlex has been recycling plastic for more than three decades. The company has established recycling units in its plants that converts MLP Waste into Pellets and that are used to manufacture industrial and household products. The company has also installed post-consumer plastic waste and post-consumer PET bottle waste recycling lines at its strategic locations across the globe. Focusing on transforming plastic waste into wealth,

UFlex is also working on packaging solutions that approach stronger towards sustainability and aims at keeping plastic in the economy but out of the environment. ■

Source: <https://www.uflexltd.com/blog/growing-trends-of-sustainability-in-the-packaging-industry/>



Unpacking the Future of PACKAGING



If there were binoculars to decode the future of packaging on the trends we all are observing today, it would not be difficult to say that technology that authenticates, and materials that are eco-friendly are set to traverse the future of packaging to an entirely unimaginable territory.

The sector is going through a massive shift, be it the use of mono-materials, **Biodegradable Packaging** materials, digitalization of packaging, the advent of innovative user-friendly packaging structures, and increase in eco-conscious consumers. However, the challenge for businesses remains to accommodate consumer expectations while finding the middle ground between the



e-commerce boom, technology, sustainability, and delivering smart **Flexible Packaging** solutions.

According to research by Smithers in The Future of Packaging: the global packaging market is set to expand by almost 3% per annum, to reach over \$1.2 trillion. The switch from mass manufacturing toward customized and innovative packaging has a major force to drive this growth and provides a full-fledged experience that appeals to the consumers' mind, emotions, and senses in ways that transcend beyond the brand as a product.

What is Trending in the World of Packaging?

Edible packaging is an integral part of food and is eaten as a consumable coating around the food that generates practically no waste! Sourcing raw materials from algae, starch, fruits and vegetables' skins, etc, have opened doors for innovative packaging solutions. This trend will not only help tackle the problem of plastic but it would also be a whole new experience for customers to see what goes beyond the packaging too! According to Transparency Market Research, a global research firm, demand for edible packaging could increase on average 6.9% yearly until 2024 and could become a market worth almost \$2 billion worldwide.

Similarly, **Smart Packaging** formats are emerging to be a unique digital bridge between brands, retailers, and buyers. Tech innovations are set to add new functionalities to what is currently used as a packaging material to protect the product inside. It is interesting to note that packaging is gradually becoming more communicative, with a rather digital touch. **Smart Packaging** is usually of two types- intelligent and active packaging. Active packaging interacts with the contents and helps extend the shelf life, often using light filtering materials, oxygen and ethylene absorbers, moisture-regulating compounds, etc. Intelligent packaging refers to technologies that monitor and provide information on the state of the products, from source to destination. With the use of indicators, data carriers, and sensors, directly incorporated into the packaging, a new realm of communication is slowly but strongly emerging. According to Grand View Research, smart packaging revenues came in at \$10.8 billion in 2015 and are expected to reach \$26.7 billion by 2024.

The rise in innovative design concepts for products not only helps in being cost-effective but going forward will become vital for functional packaging. The packaging of tomorrow will call for a diverse range of shapes and sizes, maximizing space, storage, and service. The use of RFID labels and smart tags by manufacturers will help secure their products' authenticity as well as integrating printed electronics will improve brand identity, offering flexibility,

and efficiency with a more sustainable approach. Smaller but smarter spaces might just become the new standard!

The Rising Wave of Sustainability

With sustainability becoming the most dominant trend in packaging, brands are aggressively focusing to incorporate **Flexible Packaging Solutions** across their product range, representing their strong commitment to keeping the earth green. With restrictions, stringent compliances and different types of bans getting enforced across the world, recycled packaging options are more preferred by brands and even by environmentally conscious consumers. Survey by new age agencies such as Survey Monkey indicate, 35% of respondents would purchase a product that is better for the environment over other products that may be slightly cheaper. Packaging solutions companies are working toward eliminating plastic waste, increasing the use of sustainable materials such as mono-materials and corrugated boxes that reduces the pressure of plastic waste on land and help build a circular economy.

Walking In Tandem With The Trends at UFlex

Redefining customer experience, progressing toward more efficient and sustainable practices, and venturing into new territories with technology will soon become the future of packaging. The brands that can adapt and accommodate these new trends into their packaging solutions will be the ones a step ahead of the game.

India's largest multinational in flexible packaging solutions, **UFlex** has been delivering innovative, optimized, and efficient packaging solutions for decades now! Serving as a one-stop-shop for a multitude of flexible packaging needs, **UFlex** has a diverse range of futuristic world-class products including **BOPET** (Bi-axially oriented polyethylene terephthalate) films, **BOPP** (Bi-axially oriented polypropylene) films, **CPP** (Cast polypropylene) films, **Metallized films**, **Alox Coated films** and up to 100% PCR content **PET Films** **Asclepius**. The company is second largest supplier of thin polyester (BOPET) films in the world used for manufacturing flexible packaging applications.

The focus on quality innovation emanates from the conviction to deploy advanced technologies coupled with best-in-class equipment that add maximum value to the customer's business. We remain committed to our efforts in providing world-class operational excellence by methodical elimination of losses in each area of operation. The focal point incessantly lies in sustainability as we progress to reduce plastic waste and create products & solutions that are recyclable, biodegradable, and non-fossil fuel-based and traverse the gamut of packaging to a territory of faith and virtue. ■

Source: <https://www.uflexltd.com/blog/unpacking-the-future-of-flexible-packaging/>

TRENDS ON INKS AND ADHESIVES

“Going green is no longer a ‘want’, it’s a ‘need!’”: A look at sustainability trends in the inks and adhesives markets



Rajesh Srivastava, VP Sales and Marketing at Chemicals Business, UFlex argues that sustainable practices in the inks and adhesives markets remain of the utmost importance.

Sustainability has certainly become a buzzword in the packaging industry today. Each brand is working on a war footing to make its products as green as it can. With irreparable, global climate change looming over our planet, nations, companies and consumers alike have begun scrambling to do things more sustainably. Almost all brands across the spectrum are upgrading in response to the demands of more environmentally friendly production and packaging practices.

Consumers previously used to be impressed by packaging that looked good, without much caring about the impact on our environment. Today, they are a lot more aware and want packaging practices that don't leach harmful chemicals into their body and don't pollute the planet by sitting in a

landfill or our oceans. They take great pride in owning a product that will in no way harm the environment. In fact, a study by Fairtrade International involving 5000 participants across Europe found that most shoppers account for a brand's sustainable practices when making purchase decisions.

This is a mandate we all must follow in an endeavor to keep our planet green and it provides both opportunities and challenges for inking and printing practices in the packaging industry. When it comes to inks and adhesives, pigments today may only account for about 20% of the product packaging, but the type of ink and coating used to print on the package ultimately impacts the compostability, biodegradability, and recyclability of the package, which is why it is crucial for businesses to understand that ink in packaging can be any colour these days, as long as they remain “green”.

For packaging companies, not only are sustainable practices eco-friendly, they make for a viable business strategy as well, and are set to mark the future of packaging and printing segments. In fact, every ink and adhesive manufacturer today has to take the lead to demonstrate use of sustainable practices and materials to make their products.

The economic value of ink: Why do “green” and sustainable inking practices make sense?

A world without ink would essentially be a world without colour. Our earth would be just black and white without them.

In Europe, nearly 1 million tonnes of coatings and ink worth €3 billion is consumed by printers of myriad products each year. This is equal to nearly 2kg of ink for every citizen of Europe - enough to print nearly 35 newspapers! In fact, the gross value of all printed labels and packages in Europe stood at €89 billion in 2019. And this is only the tip of the economic iceberg. It is also the reason why inking practices directly impact the life of every citizen on earth, and the planet itself.

This direct impact is the reason why we must be aware that even though we have come a long way since the days of conventional “solvent-based inks” that consisted of fossil fuel-based carriers, not all inks available in the market today are completely free of chemicals or non-renewable resources.

Beyond the mandatory elimination of heavy metals such as cadmium, lead, and mercury, alternative eco-friendly inks today come in various forms such as water-based, biodegradable, latex, UV & EB curable inks and more. Nature-based inks typically consist of a high percentage (50 to 90%) of renewable resources in the form of inedible plants and algae, which do not hurt the food supply whilst also lowering carbon footprint with lesser consumption of water and energy.

Regulatory interventions

The raw materials and production of inks and adhesives which are designed to be printed onto food contact materials are regulated by EuPIA (The European Printing Ink Association), Swiss guidelines and Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP). This includes the safety of the raw materials going into formulations, their potential to migrate, the composition of inks, as well as quality control and hygiene management.

Scientifically, the three terms that commonly define the sustainability of inking in packaging are: biodegradable (micro-organisms should be able to break them down), renewable (is derived from natural/organic sources) and eco-friendly (can be used again and again in a circular economy).

Despite printing inks accounting for less than 2% of the overall carbon footprint of printed paper or packaging, a great deal of attention is given to their overall “eco-friendliness”. This includes the sourcing of the raw materials to make ink, the environmental impact of those raw materials as well as the ability to remove the ink from printed materials (or the “de-inking”).

Today, the use of “green” and eco-friendly techniques is on the rise, with environmental regulations specifically addressing the content of ink, e.g. - the European Union’s EN 134323 standard for packaging compostability. In Europe particularly, REACH is the dominant regulation – applying to both, the make of the chemicals as well as the risks these inks can pose to public health and the environment. The Bio-renewable Content (BRC) program by NAPIM

is another regulatory program that quantifies the use of renewable or bioresources in ink formulations.

Tackling the challenge of economics in adoption

One of the biggest barriers to the wide adoption of sustainable best practices is pure economics. The financial viability of eco-friendly toners depends on the price of oil. For instance, if the price of oil rises, purchasing bio-derived inks looks like an attractive option. The challenge lies in sustaining the purchase and use of such products at the same price point as a standard toner. The alternative is to persuade companies to pay more for renewable toners. Legislation can itself be a catalyst for change in this regard, which will result in an increased uptake of sustainable inks. Eliminating the use of solvent-based inks and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) will reduce the reliance on fossil fuel and even side-step the need for costly pollution abatement programs in companies.

The future of ink and adhesives must be eco-focused

In a circular economy, we need to incorporate the 3Rs - Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle – for all leftover inks and adhesives sitting on the shelves. That is why ink and adhesives formulators, suppliers, manufacturers, and citizens alike currently have the crucial duty of showing environmental stewardship through the reduction of VOCs, streamlining processes, and making packaging safe for all. Supporting these associations and partnerships at a global scale, in a legislated manner, will be key in the journey towards building a 100% sustainable printing and packaging industry.

Green printing practices at UFlex

At UFlex, our focus has always been on the safe printing of the non-food contact side of primary food packaging. Adoption of sustainable practices throughout the various phases of product design, processes employed in our facility, use of raw materials for waste minimization, and movement of goods in the supply chain are given utmost importance. This has led to the development of water-based inks and adhesives, LED/UV inks and coatings, and solvent-less adhesives with low VOCs content that help reduce environmental footprint. Toluene and methyl ethyl ketone (MEK)-free NTK inks that are compliant with food packaging regulations in Europe have also been developed.

Next, we are focusing on creating next-gen inks and adhesives with the idea of achieving reduced solvent residue/VOC and a printing quality that enhances product values. Work on developing sustainable inks for the inclusion of renewable sourced vegetable oil rather than mineral oil as an ink solvent is also underway. We hope that this technology will allow for faster degradation during recycling, lower rates of VOCs and CO2 emissions and lower levels of contaminants such as heavy metals.

As ink and adhesive suppliers, it’s critical for us to collaborate with converters and brands to achieve their sustainability goals and cater to a consumer base that needs environmentally friendly products. Remember, going green is no more a “want”, it’s a “need”! ■

Source: <https://packagingeurope.com/going-green-is-no-longer-a-want-its-a-need-a-look-at-sustainability-trends-in-the-inks-and-adhesives-markets/762>. article



UFlex launches range of products

UFlex Limited, one of the India's leaders in flexible packaging products and polymer sciences, has launched a wide range of advanced products across business segments to meet the changing needs of its customers.

Summary of product innovations by UFlex in the quarter ended September 30, 2022:

Flexible packaging

Henna paste pack for Nat Habit (startup in beauty and wellness space)

Organic natural products formulated without preservatives require quality packaging structure to preserve their quality and freshness for long. The absence of preservatives in a product can reduce its shelf life. To address this requirement, the flexible packaging business division of UFlex has developed a special high-barrier packaging format that prevents degradation and preserves the natural properties of such products while increasing their shelf life. Nat Habit, a startup in the natural beauty and wellness space, required a packaging solution for its natural preservative-free henna paste. UFlex's flexible packaging business division created a stand-up, center-seal pouch with a side gusset. This pouch provides ultra-high barrier against moisture, gases, UV rays, and assures protection to the natural ingredients of the henna paste. It extends the shelf life of the product by preventing it from oxidative degeneration and delays bacterial growth, thus preventing it from contamination. The unique lacquer

coat provides a very organic feel that resonates with the brand positioning.

MPP and WPP large packaging bags

The flexible packaging business of UFlex has pioneered the art of developing WPP bags. Taking note of this capability, Terasol, a large player in agriculture products, approached the UFlex team to develop a packaging solution with added security features that not just gives a facelift to the pack but also prevents it from security risks during transit. With extensive research, the UFlex flexible packaging research team developed a packaging structure with MPP/Poly Propylene- (EXTRU) to pack the water-soluble Terasol fertilizer. The packaging structure of a block bottom pouch with a seal of quality via hot foil stamping was well received by the brand. The packaging structure has successfully passed mechanical tests and delivers on the aesthetics requirements of the brand.

Chemicals business

Patent for Solvent-Free Pigmented White Adhesive

The UFlex chemicals business has been awarded a patent for solvent-free pigmented white adhesive – an innovative, environment-friendly energy saving

product. The present disclosure relates to a two-component adhesive composition and the process for its preparation. The adhesive composition of the present disclosure is solvent-free and works well on existing solvent less lamination machines. It helps reduce the use of white ink, thus significantly reducing white ink's cost. According to UFlex, as a result, consumers get the freedom to have a green and cost-effective adhesive. In addition to the above benefits, the brand's visual appeal gets significantly enhanced owing to the enhanced opacity on a variety of surfaces. The product is generating demand from customers worldwide. This patent has been sanctioned and licensed under the Patents Act 1970, (Patent number 406417) valid for 20 years w.e.f. March 4, 2022.

Flexseal Ecocoat

With an increase in on-the-go consumption, the need for packaging structures and containers for instant consumption is gaining momentum. However, since the conventional formats suffered from shortcomings such as non-compatibility with the temperature of food and beverage, the need for a product that supports such structures was long felt by large beverage brands. Taking note of the gap, the UFlex chemicals business division has developed Flexseal Ecocoat, an

eco-friendly aqueous dispersion application coating specially designed for the inner side of paper cups as a replacement for PE coating. This product offers heat-seal properties. This coating is primarily used on paperboard for paper cups via gravure or an air knife application process. Besides offering added convenience to consumers, it also contributes to sustainability by enabling easy recycling of paper products, post consumption.

Flexcure Sheetfed “Bio” Series for Offset Application (with >40% BRC)

Every brand seeks to impart high visual appeal to their products. UFlex consistently develops newer and advanced products that allow brands to stand out by offering them a variety of options in printing solutions to enhance the visibility of their products. The Flexcure Sheetfed “Bio” series represents a new generation of UV inks for offset printing especially designed using high bio-renewable content ingredients. This series provides an environment-friendly alternative to standard UV offset ink. It is a low odor ink series and is well suited for all kinds of paper and board substrates.

Flexcure Low Migration “Nutri Series” for aseptic packaging

Flexcure Nutri series represents a new generation radical mechanism designed especially for food packaging, pharmaceutical and hygiene applications demanding low migration & odour. It can be applied to a wide range of plastic materials and other substrates (lacquered aluminum). It is suitable for processing with all in-line types of UV Flexo label or packaging printing. These inks are suitable

only for use in the non-food contact side of food packaging, provided that they are applied using the relevant GMP and as per guidelines mentioned in the TDS.

Holographic business

Sustainability in textile products

As brands consciously embrace sustainability, many companies actively seek to develop products, which have minimum impact on the environment. Customers expect brands to take responsible decisions and move toward a circular economy. One of the leading fashion and clothing brands in the world was looking to procure BPA (Bisphenol A) free sequins material from India for textile applications. UFlex catered to this large requirement through a leading exporter, meeting the stringent international test requirements and approvals for an overseas customer, a first from an Indian company. UFlex is determined to see the use of more sustainable and eco-friendly materials usage in this segment.

High-end security solutions in pharma packaging

Increased awareness of the dangers of duplication has led pharmaceutical companies to explore anti-counterfeiting solutions to preserve the integrity and safety of products. Easy visual detection to determine the authenticity of the product is the first line of defense against such spurious duplication. UFlex’s Holography division has developed a High Reflex Index Film with an extremely high metallic sheen for the surface of the packed cartons, to address this vital requirement of its pharma customers. An essential feature of this film is the customer logo which is embedded; it does

not disappear even under heat and pressure applied during the post-lamination processing operations.

Flexible packaging films business

High barrier BOPET film F-AFR-M

In order to meet the exceptional barrier requirements for oxygen and moisture sensitive products e.g., milk powder, coffee packaging or beverage packaging, the flexible packaging films business division of UFlex has developed a barrier BOPET film ‘F-AFR-M’ with metallization on one side and the option of corona treatment on the other side. F-AFR-M offers metal bond strength of more than 600gm/25mm that allows easy handling and machinability. Owing to its high oxygen and moisture barrier properties and easy recyclability, the film has emerged as a successful replacement for aluminum foil used in dried packaging application, enabling brands step closer to their sustainability goals.

Special Recognition Awards

Appreciation certificate from National Safety Council 2022

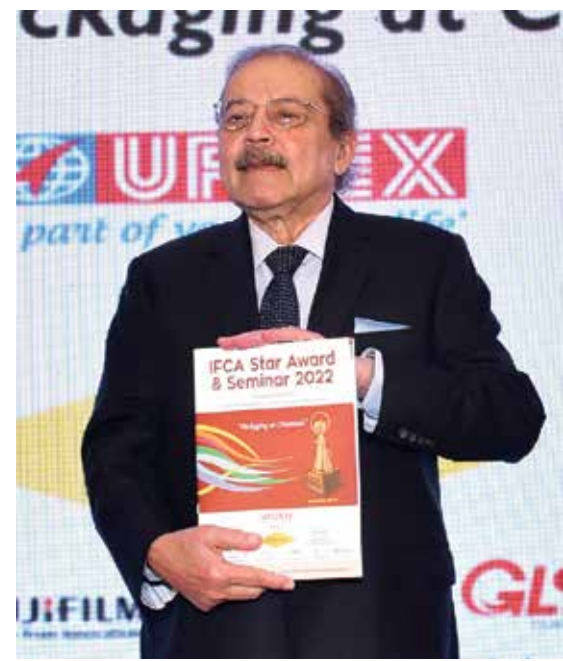
The UFlex chemicals business division has been conferred with a ‘Certificate of Appreciation’ award by the National Safety Council of India Safety Awards during 2018-2020. This has been awarded in recognition for appreciable achievement in Occupational Safety & Health.

UFlex received 18 awards at the IFCA Star Awards 2022 for global recognition for excellence in Innovations and Creativity. ■

Source: <https://www.labelsandlabeling.com/news/new-products/uflex-launches-range-products>



IFCA Star Awards 2022 -





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