

Packaging

SOUTH ASIA

The Magazine for Modern Packaging



10 ways to reduce food manufacturing costs



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ROTOFLEX PVT. LTD.

ONE OF ASIA'S
LARGEST ROTOGRAVURE
PRESS MANUFACTURERS

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Positivity in the packaging ecosystem

UFlex exhibits laser embossed cylinders at PlastIndia

Priyanka Tanwar

The UFlex Cylinder Division exhibited its laser-embossed cylinders at the PlastIndia exhibition in February in New Delhi. The cylinder business produces three different types of cylinders – conventional electro-mechanical engraved, robotic laser engraved, and laser-embossed cylinders.

“We have a cost leadership strategy for our electro-mechanically engraved cylinders and we have a strategy for value-added robotic laser engraved cylinders and laser embossed cylinders. Since we use our robotic engraving line from Think Laboratory, we can produce low gsm ink laser cylinders for water-based sustainable inks,” says Parwez Izhar, CEO of Cylinder Business, Senior VP at UFlex.

The upcoming trend in flexible packaging is for eco-friendly solutions where you need cylinders compatible with sustainable inks and solutions and we are able to produce these, adds Izhar. “Earlier, converters used solvent-based inks but now they’re gradually switching to water-based inks as using solvent-based inks means they might be using toluene which is very hazardous and the cost is also very high. Our cylinders are the best fit for sustainable inks,” he shares with *Packaging South Asia*.

Innovations in gravure cylinders

A flagship innovation of the division is its laser-embossed cylinders. “We have been making hand-embossing effects for table covers, curtains, and wallpapers. Earlier, these came from China and I went there in 2019 just before Covid started, and saw skilled workers making very fine flowers and designs on the cylinders with their own hands. However, we developed these designs through our technology because our chairman believes in three things – product innovation, latest technology, and sustainability,” he shares.

UFlex has also developed cylinders for metal embossed sheets for home interiors and out-of-home applications – for decorating modular kitchens, false ceilings, and furniture. “These sheets are also getting good responses from industries such as corporate sign boards where people are making lift and metal wall decorations. Companies such as Jindal, JSW, and Tata Steel, are approaching us for our cylinders for embossing metal sheets. We are expanding our capability and capacity in that direction so that we can have better orders from those companies which are ready to pay us premium prices,” confides Izhar.

Gravure vs Flexo

“Gravure is something which is not going to be diminished because the features that we can achieve from gravure are very high quality. Flexo plates cannot match the quality which we get from gravure cylinders. On the other hand, flexo plates have some advantages – the make-ready and turnaround time, and the costs are all less,” he goes on to say.

UFlex has two types of flexo plates – the Flexcel NX Miraclon plates and the DuPont flexo plates. “Both have their own advantages but Flexcel NX plates are the preferred choice for printing flexible jobs. The reason is the unique laser square spot imaging technology which gives 100% flat top dots which are able



Parwez Izhar, CEO of Cylinder Business and Senior VP at UFlex.
Photo PSA

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to produce 1:1. What you are seeing on the screen and the result you're going to get after printing will match 1:1. The reproducibility and the reputability are very high, ink laydown is very good, make ready time is very short and fast for the converters. Ink savings again can be very high in the range of 20% if solid white ink or other solids are a part of the design.

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Indian converters switching to water-based gravure

“The Digicap pattern in Flexcel NX plates has been developed in collaboration with Japanese manufacturer Toyo Inks which is present in India, and it is a big success in the case of water-based inks. All the converters are gradually switching to water-based ink applications and we have aligned our product according to the requirement of our customers,” Izhar shares.

All three types of gravure cylinders are produced at Uflex's parent facility in Noida. The electro-mechanical engraved cylinders and elastomer sleeves are manufactured in the Jammu facility while the DuPont flexo plates are produced in the Asepto liquid packaging plant in Sanand.

“PlastIndia exhibition happens after every three years and the footfall was very high considering that took place after five years. Visitors friendly to understand the products on show. Covid depressed many in the industry and I am now seeing a lot of positivity in the entire ecosystem. Many customers or vendors are coming from local as well as from far away places in the country or abroad,” he concludes. ■

EPL will implement the Cyrel Fast thermal workflow

EPL works on process sustainability with DuPont

EPL Limited, the world's largest specialty packaging company, is upgrading its flexo platemaking process with solutions from DuPont Cyrel. The DuPont Cyrel Fast thermal system processes flexographic printing plates without the use of solvents or water. EPL will implement the Cyrel Fast thermal workflow across its global manufacturing sites in North America, South America, Europe, and Asia, marking one more step towards its sustainability commitment. The new Cyrel Fast thermal system from DuPont offers speed and quality to EPL's current flexo print process.

Ram Ramasamy – COO at EPL says, “After a thorough evaluation of the systems available in the market today, we choose the latest thermal platemaking system from DuPont as our technology partner which will benefit both EPL and its customers. The global presence of DuPont in terms of support & their continued efforts to reduce the carbon footprint with their technology made it easy for EPL to take this decision. This is a step forward to fulfill both high quality and sustainability commitments we have made to our customers and investors.”

Jan Scharfenberg, business leader East at DuPont Cyrel Solutions, says, “We are pleased that EPL has chosen the DuPont Cyrel Fast workflow for upgrading their flexo platemaking process after an intense selection procedure. We look forward to being a trusted partner to EPL on their sustainability goals, enabling them to serve their customers with the highest agility and quality level on a global scale.” ■



(L to R) Rajesh Bhogavalli, gead - Global Supply Chain, EPL, Ram Ramasamy, chief operating officer, EPL, Gururaj B Kirsur, Sales leader - South Asia, DuPont Cyrel, and Shrihari K Rao, senior vice president – Printing Technology and Sustainability, EPL.

Pioneering sustainable, green & cost-effective solutions

UFlex's water-based inks, pharma inks & LED inks at PlastIndia

Priyanka Tanwar

The Chemical Business division of UFlex manufactures inks, adhesives, and coatings primarily for the packaging industry. At the recent PlastIndia show in New Delhi, the division promoted its water-based inks for flexible packaging and corrugation, Alu Alu pharma inks, and LED curing inks for sheetfed and labels business.

"UFlex has taken the initiative to provide sustainable, green, and cost-effective solutions. After Covid, the demand for packaged food has gone up and everybody is looking for a unit pack. As a leading Ink and adhesive manufacturer, we are investing substantially in water-based and LED technologies. LED inks are the primary energy savers for the labels industry and energy-saving is one of our sustainable initiatives," said Rajesh Srivastava, senior vice president of the Chemicals Business at UFlex.

"As we know, Inks are a very expensive component for any packaging, and it impacts the overall cost of laminate when it comes to the efficiencies, speeds, and costs reductions" he explained. "We offer state-of-the-art products that reduce overall ink consumption. While the brand owners are pushing for competitive prices, raw material prices are going up. Hence, we have to offer solutions where flexible packaging converters can save either on the solvent cost or overall ink consumption. We offer a total solution-based approach where the inks, adhesives, cylinders, and the overall machine can play a significant role in combination," he said. UFlex manufactures its range of sustainable inks at two plants – in Noida Sector 57 since 1994, and the Jammu plant since 2008. The Jammu plant was initially aimed to support the Jammu UFlex divisions, but now it has started selling to outside customers as well.

Specialized inks aimed at the food & pharma segments

UFlex manufactures a range of toluene-free water-based inks meant for food packaging applications. "After the ban on toluene as per the Bureau of Indian Standards IS 15495: 2020, I can proudly say that all of UFlex's businesses and converting companies are completely toluene-free now. Our Jammu plant is completely toluene-free, and our inks are compliant with UPA compliance and safety compliance," Srivastava said.

The pharma sector is making a big turnaround, and in particular, the packaging is moving beyond foil-based applications. "There is a new generation of Alu-Alu foils, which require different kinds of laminate structures, and sometimes getting a good bond is a big challenge. We have developed PU inks for pharma applications and we have been supplying to leading pharma manufacturers with polyurethane-based inks for alu-alu applications. Our second offering is for laminating adhesives. Most of the pharma adhesives are being imported from Korea and other parts of the world. As part of the 'Make in India' campaign and as an Indian company, we are ready to support the industry by sharing application and product knowledge," Srivastava said.



Rajesh Srivastava, senior vice-president of the Chemicals Business at UFlex

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Cost Wars

Srivastava says cutthroat price pressure has always been present in the inks segment. During the Covid-19 pandemic, prices shot up because of the disruption in the supply chain and raw material shortage. Getting good speed machines, good ink quality, good printing quality, and good dot transfer – became a big challenge for business owners.

“On one hand, business owners are looking at the price per kg product, and on the other hand, they are also looking for peace of mind so that the ink runs flawlessly for hours and hours. Consistency and quality are non-negotiable, and at UFlex we have very stringent measurements in terms of raw material selection, manufacturing processes, products, their stability, and shelf life. We are working in totality to offer complete, seamless performance,” he added.

According to Srivastava, price is not the only driving factor; good ink quality and cost-effective performance are some of the challenges that his organization is overcoming as a leading ink manufacturer. At the end of the day, as packaging becomes safer, the inks are also getting safer. The kind of inks prevalent in the market a few years ago has completely changed. “We have already launched and commercialized water-based inks and I hope that there will be a lot of sustainable inks as the entire world will keep on changing,” he says.

“This event (PlastIndia) is happening almost after five years – a big turnaround cycle with huge crowds. I hope that the market is also opening up. People are looking at alternatives from China as a substitute for packaging suppliers. We see many visitors from Kenya and other African and Middle Eastern countries. With several clients in East Africa, South Africa, and West Africa. The African continent is a significant contributor to our business.” Srivastava concludes. ■



UFlex Chemicals has commercialized a lot of products that improve the functionality and also help to reduce the overall inks, adhesives and solvents reductions. Photo PSA

‘Will create awareness about sustainability, recycling’

PlastIndia was a grand success: Jigish Doshi

Plastindia 2023 was a grand success and the exhibition would help change the face of the industry by creating more awareness about sustainability and recycling, says PlastIndia Foundation president Jigish Doshi. The PlastIndia Foundation, an apex body of major associations, organizations, and institutions connected with plastics, organized the five-day mega event in Delhi’s Pragati Maidan, drawing big names from across the plastics industry and allied sectors.

According to Doshi, the Plastindia Foundation is focused on promoting the plastics industry and related materials. The aim of the foundation, he says, is to facilitate the export-led growth of the Indian plastics industry, both in volume and revenues.

Spread across 150 acres of exhibition space with a total built-up area of 4.2 million square feet in Pragati Maidan, the event was very well received and sold out, Doshi said.

“I am delighted to say that Plastindia 2023 was a grand success. Since this was a business-only exhibition with the entire range of offerings from industry, right from raw materials, to machinery, to finished goods showcased under one roof, both exhibitors and visitors found it very beneficial,” he said.

More than 90 industry leaders and CEOs attended a CEO conclave presided over by Union Minister of Chemicals & Fertilizers and Health & Family Welfare Mansukh Bhai Mandaviya. They deliberated on how the Indian plastics industry can reach its full potential. They agreed on the need for the industry and the policymakers to walk hand in hand so that policies can be encouraging to the industry. ■

– Aayush Pandey



Jigish Doshi, founder of PlastIndia Foundation

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