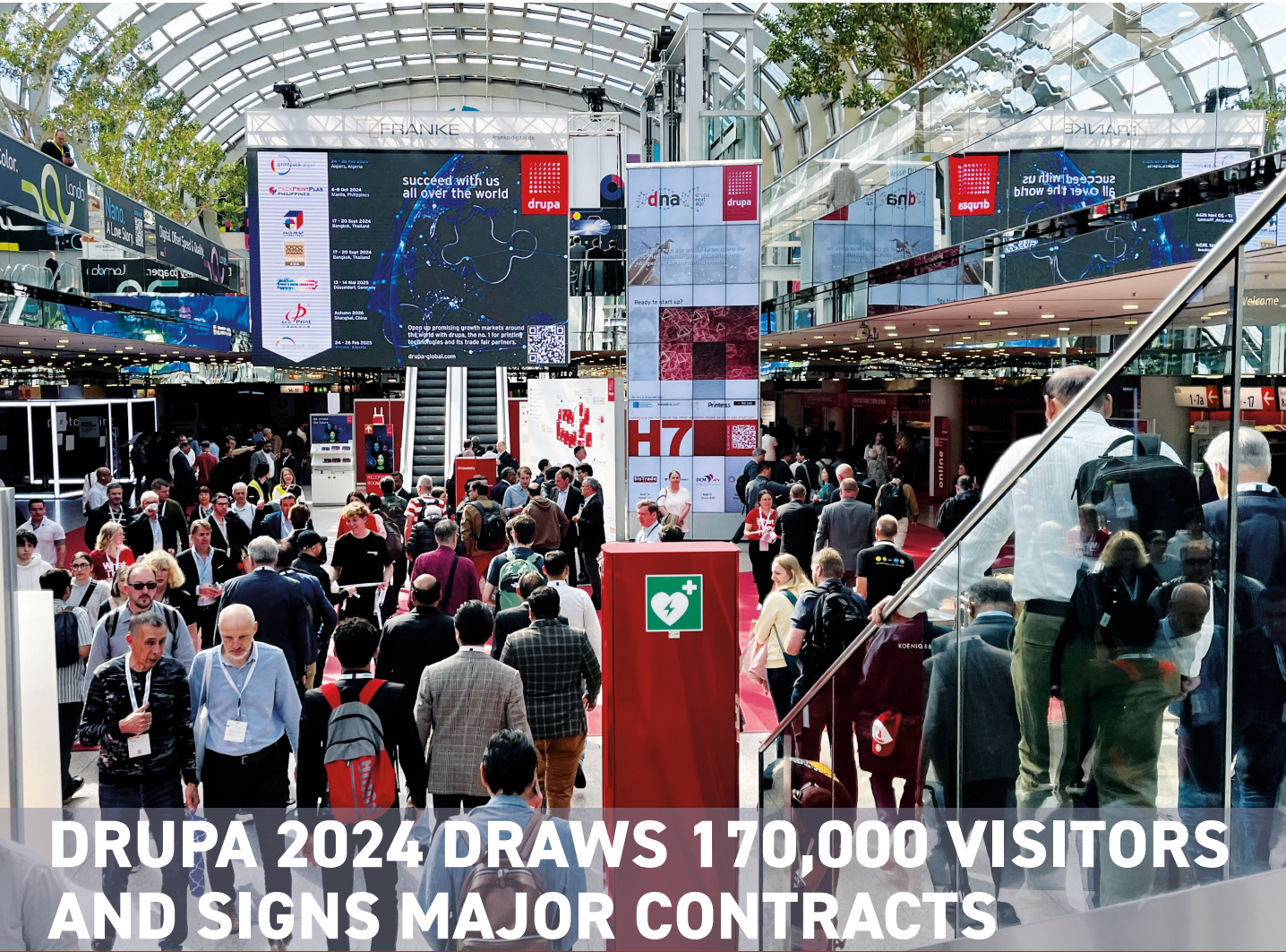


THE PACKMAN

India's Premier Magazine for Modern Packaging



DRUPA 2024 DRAWS 170,000 VISITORS AND SIGNS MAJOR CONTRACTS



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REMAINS STEADFAST AMIDST MARKET UNCERTAINTIES

UFlex's materials science evolution on display at drupa 2024

MAHAN HAZARIKA

UFlex, India's largest multinational flexible packaging and solutions company, made a significant impact at drupa 2024. The company unveiled its latest advancements and pioneering solutions across its diverse business segments, focusing on enhancing efficiency and sustainability in the printing and packaging sector. Notable among its showcased products were the high-end CI flexo printing press Uflexo-1308, a Combi lamination machine, and an advanced ReLAM recycling machine.

Anantshree Chaturvedi, vice chairman and CEO of Flex Films International, elaborated on the company's objectives and goals for participating in drupa 2024. He emphasized that drupa is primarily a machine show, providing an ideal platform to highlight UFlex's engineering and technological capabilities. Chaturvedi explained, "Our main objective is to showcase our engineering, holography, chemicals, and cylinder divisions – essentially, the machine and tooling sides of our business." He highlighted that, whereas other trade shows such as Interpack and PackExpo center around UFlex's film products, drupa provides the opportunity for the company to showcase its other business segments. This illustrates UFlex's evolution from solely a packaging company to a materials science company.

This transition, according to Chaturvedi, hinges on the seamless integration of UFlex's various verticals to produce excellent products both independently and collectively. He said, "UFlex is a one-stop shop, fully vertically integrated. We aim to demonstrate how our different divisions work together in tandem to deliver superior products."

One of the remarkable machines featured at the UFlex stand was the CI flexo press Uflexo-1308. Although



Anantshree Chaturvedi, vice chairman and CEO of Flex Films International, at UFlex's stand at drupa 2024. Photo: The Packman

introduced earlier, Chaturvedi described the machine's presence at drupa as a second debut, intended to address a previously missed market opportunity. He highlighted the machine's balanced position in the market, noting that it combines high-end engineering with cost-effectiveness. Chaturvedi explained, "The Uflexo-1308 represents the pinnacle of our engineering prowess. It serves a market segment that demands high-quality, optimized production with reasonable costs and local service, positioning it between the high-cost European and American machines and the lower-cost South Asian machines."

Addressing the absence of the Uflexo-1308 from the market in recent years, Chaturvedi cited the necessity for redesigning and enhancing the machine's components. "We had to revisit the machine's design, incorporating new servers and other elements to ensure it meets current engineering standards," he said.

Another innovative product displayed was the flexo sleeves, designed to elevate the print quality of flexo

machines to match that of rotogravure presses. Chaturvedi noted that these sleeves offer durability and superior print stability, with a lifespan five times longer than regular flexo sleeves. He remarked, "These sleeves bring excellent print quality, substrate compatibility, and robust durability to the market."

Discussing global packaging demand, Chaturvedi provided insights into the contrasting market dynamics in the East and West. In the West, he observed a shift in consumer behavior influenced by inflation and rising costs, leading to a competitive landscape where packaged goods are now competing with fast food chains. He stated, "Prices have surged significantly during and after COVID, creating a situation where consumer goods on retail shelves are now vying for attention with fast food alternatives." In contrast, emerging economies in the East, with their diverse retail formats and less premium retail spaces, have not experienced the same level of price inflation."

Recognizing the prevailing global market dynam-

ics characterized by gradual recession, Chaturvedi emphasized the importance of adaptability and cost optimization. “The world is experiencing a stage-by-stage recession. The good part is that we all are not in a recession together,” he observed. “As we go through this stage-by-stage recession or discretionary recession, we have to be primed how we have to optimize our cost structure to withstand it—and that’s precisely what we’re doing.”

Chaturvedi also highlighted the growth of the packaging industry, noting a shift towards generic brands and supermarket-owned labels as large consumer packaged goods (CPG) companies grapple with rising raw material costs. He explained, “Packaging is now shifting towards generics and private-label supermarket products, which are less impacted by premium shelf costs.”

In closing, Chaturvedi emphasized UFlex’s resilience and strategic positioning amid market challenges.



Uflexo-1308 CI flexo press at drupa 2024. Photo: The Packman

He said, “Despite the global market turmoil, UFlex remains steady, achieving excellent results. Our focus

is on new products, developments, and providing the best value to our customers.” ■

DRUPA 2024

Kao Chimigraf’s new polymer technology simplifies flexible packaging recycling

At drupa 2024, we had the opportunity to interact with Marc Granero, inkjet sales manager at Kao Chimigraf, a global leader in inkjet printing technologies. Granero shared insights into some of the latest innovations Kao has introduced, focusing particularly on the key consumable component in inkjet printing – inkjet inks.

Granero highlighted the company’s extensive global presence, with offices and production sites in America, Japan, and Europe. He emphasized the diverse range of ink technologies Kao has developed over the years, including UV inks, thermal inkjet (TIJ) cartridges, solvent inks, and oil-based inks. Recently, their focus has shifted towards water-based inks, showcased in two separate stands at drupa. These include water-based inkjet inks for direct film printing and their latest breakthrough, deinking technology.

Marc elaborated on this innovative deinking technol-



Kao’s stand at drupa 2024. Photo: The Packman