

FLEXO

Market News[®]

The Bi-Weekly News Publication Serving The Flexographic Printing Industry

McDonough Wins Lifetime Achievement Award

Meeting at the FINAT World Congress in Paris on 17 June, the international judging panel for the Label Industry Global Awards 2008 selected the winner of the R. Stanton Avery Lifetime Achievement Award. Neil McDonough, President of FLEXcon Company Inc., is the overall winner who came top from the submitted online votes against the Awards criteria.

The President of FLEXcon Company, a global polymeric coater and provider of pressure-sensitive films and adhesive products, Neil McDonough has dedicated a quarter of a century to the label industry and has always been a force of inspiration to his colleagues and peers. Before becoming President of FLEXcon in 1990 McDonough held a variety of positions in manufacturing, sales, and management, including Director of Marketing.

Among the innovations he fostered as President was the 'no-label' look for glass bottle labeling with Clearly Canadian in the 1990s — a concept that is now a staple of the labeling industry.

In recent years, McDonough has led the initiative to provide more choices to label converters and other customers

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Seeing Is Believing:

Masco Makes The Move To Digital Plates

by Greg Kishbaugh

People, by and large, respond adversely toward change. Those in the flexo industry are no different. "There wasn't a single positive thing I could say about digital plates," said Kevin Hood, flexo press operator with Masco Support Services. "The bottom line was that I just didn't like them."

So when the Cumberland, Indiana, facility decided recently to in-



Kevin Hood (left) holds up an ExSpect digital plate from PRPflexo that he and Jay Jones (right) have used to improve Masco's print quality.

corporate digital plates into its workflow, replacing their familiar conventional plates, there was naturally a bit of hesitancy from the workforce. But, as the old saying goes, sometimes seeing is believing.

"I've had to take back every bad thing I've said about digital plates," said Hood. "They have been amazing."

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Masco (Cont'd from Page 1)

The plates in question are newly developed patent pending flat top digital plates from PRPflexo called Digital ExSpect™.

Masco Corp. manufactures a number of brand named consumer products for the home and family, including Behr coatings and Delta faucets. Until 1993, Masco Support Services provided printing services solely to Delta



The Digital Exspect plates help eliminate fluting when direct printing on corrugated.

Faucet Company, but now produces flexo labels and blister cards to several Masco companies and has recently begun to consider moving into markets outside the core Masco companies.

The company currently produces labels on three Mark Andy presses, a two-color press and two 8-color 2200 presses. "The Mark Andy presses have been totally reliable," said Jay Jones, Production Manager. "As a matter of fact I don't think we've ever had a maintenance call in all the years I've been here."

Printing on the Mark Andy presses, the new ExSpect plates tackle one of the most difficult obstacles faced by any printer: Consistency. "The problems of consistency have been totally eliminated," said Jones. "These plates come right up. We run three shifts here so the ability for the third shift to come up to color and print exactly the same consistency as was done on our others shifts is key."

In addition, setup times with the plates have been greatly reduced, according to Jones. "I would say our setup times are about 20 percent faster with the digital plates. We match to proofs very quickly and the density is almost perfect from the start."

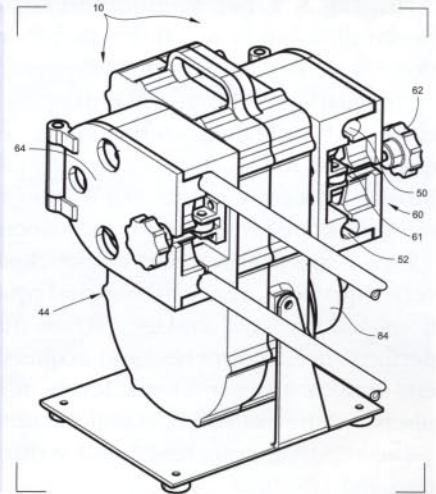
Although Masco has proven the positive effects of using the ExSpect plates for running labels, PRPflexo

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feels the market that may reap the greatest rewards from the new technology is the corrugated arena. "We have direct printed using 200-line screen in tests at Clemson on a Bobst press using a banded roll, and the problem of fluting associated with printing on corrugated board was completely eliminated," said PRPflexo Sales Manager David Price.

The plates offer sharper bevels and, said Price, 1/3 more relief depth than conventional plates. "Whatever we ablate in mask, that is the size of the dot," he said. "There is no change." In addition, PRPflexo has been able to consistently image 1-point type.

In order to assist customers in achieving higher levels of print quality, PRPflexo has instituted something it calls Print Champions, a program whereby the company can analyze everything a printing company is using, from boards and inks to the type of press it employs, in order to assess what changes may need to be made. "Printers like to have numbers to shoot for," said Chris Green, PRPflexo's Business Development Manager. "Printers want hard science. Saying that printing is an art puts a lot of pressure on press operators and makes it nearly impossible to achieve consistent results. The only way to achieve consistency is through measurable results."

Getting Results

One area in which PRPflexo has focused its attention on recording measurable results is in trying to discern just how long the ExSpect digital plates will last in a typical pressroom operation. "On one of our fingerprint trials we decided to run 1,500 sheets in order to find out when they would get dirty. But after the 1,500 sheets, that still hadn't happened," said Price.

Masco Support Services has experienced much the same results. When asked how often the ExSpect plates had to be replaced, Hood said, "We honestly don't know yet. After four months, we are still on our first set. Our guess at this point is that they last about three times longer than our conventional plates and cost roughly about the same price."

PRPflexo plans to continue testing the plates, said Price, with an eye on quantifying the product's abilities. In a recent test run at a converter in the Chicagoland area, for example, 1,400 line anilox rolls were used on a Comco press.

In order to ensure comprehensive test results, PRPflexo is currently seeking flexo printers for additional trials of the ExSpect digital flexo plates. Participants will be asked to utilize the new plates on their presses to run existing work where comparisons are available.

In return for participation, printers will be provided the plates at no charge for a mutually agreed upon job. PRPflexo asks that documentation of the run data must be provided. This will help PRPflexo continue to turn quantifiable results from the plant floor into hard science, which printers can then turn into increased productivity and elevated levels of flexo quality. Those interested in participating in the trials can contact Chris Green at (317) 783-3226 ext. 1148.

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