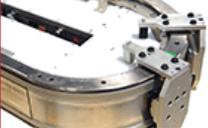


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Rotogravure, flexo, offset and a pinch of digital

Uteco celebrates thirty years in business with a series of new machines and technologies that enrich its offer in various fields of application, in packaging and in labeling. Looking forward to drupa.

April, May and June were "hot" months for Uteco, which was engaged in managing an intense before-during and after-Converflex, both at the fair proper and otherwise: at the new ConverDrome, unveiled last autumn at the concern's Dutch DGPS facility, the Veneto-based concern presented its latest achievements in the fields of rotogravure, flexo and offset, and a collection of technological advances made in working closely with its R&D partners (Kodak, to name one).

The key events of the year were without a doubt the global preview last April of the NEXT450 rotogravure printer, and the global open house in May, concurrent with Converflex, where new flexographic solutions were presented (the compact central drum Onyx XS, the Crystal 8C-CI for food packaging and the hybrid Onyx 812 HBY 8C-CI for large formats). These were followed by the launch at DGPS of the Thallo offset sleeve, with flexible packaging printing demos using web offset technology.



Next generation rotogravure

The name, Next 450, refers to features that make the machine suited for short and medium runs, with which Uteco steps up its penetration of the rotogravure printing sector. The system represents a high concentration of technology, with 1000 to 1500 mm web width and 450 to 920 mm print width, operating with water-based and solvent inks and reaching a speed of 450 m/min. Its primary characteristic is flexibility, the designers emphasize, which translates into quick changeover (in the demo, with 9 colors, 15' was measured, but this will be reduced further, Editor's note), reduced setup times, the use of an energy-saving ventilation/drying system, and central control of all function and monitoring parameters through a touch screen.

Many innovative solutions have been developed in order to achieve these results, starting with electric axis control with the new Tune&Go system,

which during the startup phase dynamically takes motor parameters according to the cylinder used, guaranteeing register precision both while accelerating and at constant speed. The concern's R&D then worked to enhance inking, which has been encapsulated in order to eliminate emissions and spray, with a doctor blade module that is both highly rigid and lightweight. There is great flexibility in positioning the doctor blade system according to formats. When a process is completed, the used cylinders are expelled, after being washed, and, with the help of a semi-automatic trolley system, the ones for the next job are immediately inserted, greatly reducing down times (considering that the NEXT 450 operates with shaft or hollow cylinders).

Particularly efficient, compact and quiet is the ventilation/drying system of this machine, called Cube, which is noteworthy for its performance. It is equipped with two hoods with operational length from 2.4 to 10 meters, which can be opened laterally to facilitate maintenance and feature air blades with a new shape that enhances the efficiency and uniformity of flows. Finally, the touch screen monitor can be used to manage settings and check print parameters from a single operator station.

Remarkably modular, the NEXT 450 owes much of its efficiency to the quality of its "auxiliary" equipment, produced by indispensable partners: from the G26 vibrating viscometer by Gama to the BST Eltromat register control, the innovative Mero corona treatment and Enulec's ESA 1000 multifunction electrostatic print system. For the print demo, Rossini sleeves were used, as well as rotogravure cylinders supplied by ICR and Inci.flex.

The machine can be customized with various in line technologies, including lamination, hot and cold glue application, PVDC spreading, digital printing heads, and laser and EB modules.

The demo was a success: at the end of the open house, three concerns, Italian and foreign, signed orders to purchase the system.



More flexible with digital

The Global Open House organized by Uteco during Converflex, on the other hand, focused above all on flexographic technology, giving an encore of the one organized by Uteco North America in March.

At the ConverDrome® in Colognola ai Colli, printing demos were given not only with the Next 450 but also using a Crystal 808 equipped with the Flying Deck Make Ready System, as well as an Onyx 812 Hybrid version for printing with water-based, solvent and EB inks and Kodak inkjet heads.

Visitors also appreciated the presentation of an 800 m/min Diamond HP and the color module of the new DGPS/Uteco rotogravure/offset system Thallo, for which an ad hoc demo was then given in a 6 color offset + 1 color flexo process. This system represents the next step on the concern's way to drupa, where Uteco has

already announced new developments will be unveiled.

The combined flexo/digital solution deserves a brief digression: the performance of this solution were tested on an Onyx 812 optimized for WetFlex printing using EB inks (Uteco EB2 technology). The machine was equipped with 2 S20 model Kodak Prosper inkjet heads, which print in black plus one color, and variable data were printed on film at a speed of 300 m/min, with installations by Fitolito Veneta using the Kodak Flexcel NX system. The superior yield in terms of brilliance and color was maximized by the use of pigment-based inks, which feature high levels of consistency and a remarkable resistance to scratching and water on a wide range of supports.

Kodak's Flexcel NX system, it's worth keeping in mind, reproduces flat head dots and eliminates oxygen from the plate production process, thus guaranteeing a high definition image reproduction with superior quality. The Prosper S20 Imprinting System is based on Kodak Stream Inkjet technology, which enables operating on a print width of 10.6 cm at a speed of up to 900 m/min and a max resolution of 600 x 600 dpi (the print area can be positioned horizontally or vertically), combining quality and flexibility.

The latest. In late June **Uteco Group** was awarded during the InnovAreaDay project for its "capacity for success in a difficult market": a recognition of its technical and managerial innovation, promoted by the Ca' Foscari science complex and Confindustria Veneto.

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Italiano



