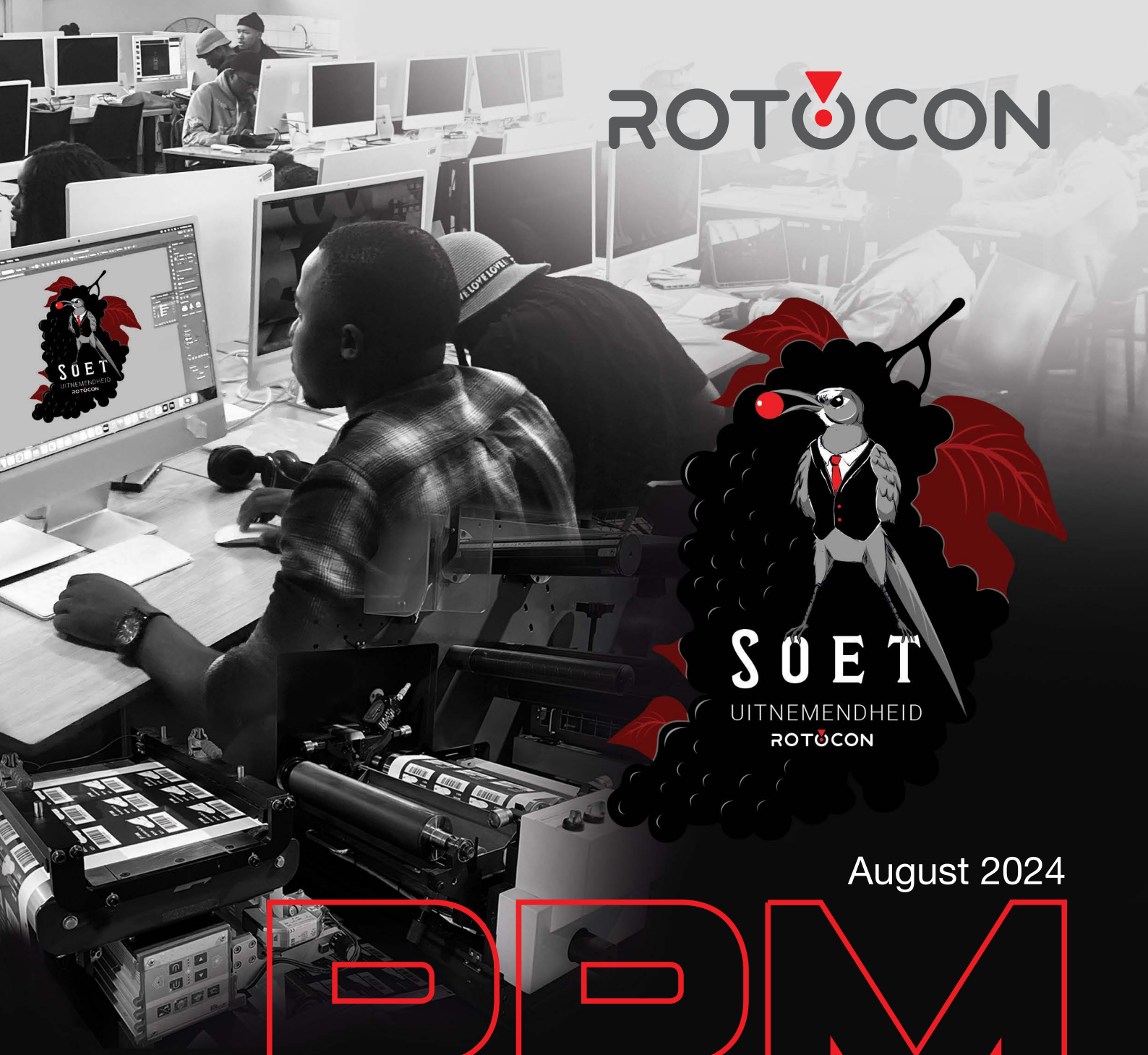


August 2024

PPM

The industry voice of Africa

COVER STORY ■ SA Litho & ROTOCON team up to champion young label design talent

SPECIAL REPORT ■ Spotlight on women shaping print and packaging's future

PRINT MATTERS ■ Flexo forum | Developments in inks & coatings

CONVERTING MATTERS ■ Updates on label substrates | Paper & board innovations | Navigating challenges in flexible packaging

FMCG PACK ■ End-of-line machinery showcase

RECYCLE YOUR GLASSINE LABEL LINERS WITH FIBRE CIRCLE!



Did you know that glassine liners for pressure-sensitive (self-adhesive) labels are recyclable?

These liners contain high-quality fibres that should not end up in landfills. If your brand uses glassine-based self-adhesive labels, it's time to make a positive impact on the environment.

Fibre Circle, the producer responsibility organization for the paper and paper packaging sector, has launched an initiative to recycle glassine coated label backing paper. By participating in this project, you can demonstrate your commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship.

Join the Fibre Circle Glassine Liner Recycling Programme today and divert your used glassine liners from landfills. Our programme offers an easy and efficient way to recycle these valuable materials, helping to create a more sustainable future.

Why Recycle Glassine Liners?

- Environmental Impact: Reduce waste and contribute to a circular economy.
- High-Quality Fibres: Preserve the valuable fibres found in glassine liners.
- Sustainability: Demonstrate your brand's commitment to environmental stewardship.

Contact Fibre Circle for more information on how your brand can participate in our glassine liner recycling programme. Together, we can make a difference.

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Putting people, paper, and the planet at the centre of the circular economy

The future is female

WELCOME to the August edition of *PACKAGiNG & Print Media (PPM)* magazine.

This issue is all about celebrating the phenomenal women who are pioneering their way through South Africa's packaging and print industry. These remarkable women aren't just participants, they're the architects of the future.

Historically, the packaging industry has been a man's world. But, today, we stand in awe of the dynamic female leaders who are transforming this landscape. Bringing unique perspectives, problem-solving skills and creativity to the packaging and print industry, these women are setting new standards and inspiring the next generation of leaders.

Prior to 1980, a small percentage of packaging industry roles were held by women. According to *SP Global*, that number has jumped up by an estimated 25% and is steadily increasing. But, we still have work to do. In an effort to continue to close the gender gap, it's important to highlight the strides women have made and the impact they have on the industry. *Forbes* research shows that companies with more women on their boards outperform those without by a significant margin. Organisations with greater gender diversity among senior leaders are also more profitable.

Yet, despite significant progress, women are still under-represented as CEOs, MDs and board members. The reality is we need more women in leadership positions. It's not just good for women, it's good for business. A diverse workforce is an innovative workforce. Women represent a significant economic force and provide valuable consumer insights. They often excel at the soft skills required for business leadership.

Closer to home, a recent study by *SNG Grant Thornton* on Women in Business (WiB) indicates that progress for women in senior management roles in South Africa has been remarkable, with a 9% increase in the number of female CEOs in 2024, rising from 30% to 39%. This positive incremental shift, indicates a continuous positive trend towards women occupying senior positions within mid-market businesses in the country.

In this special edition, we honour these innovators who have forged their paths with tenacity and grace. Their stories are a testament to the power of perseverance and visionary leadership, showcasing narratives of overcoming obstacles, pioneering new approaches and achieving remarkable milestones.

Take the World Packaging Organisation's Nerida Kelton, for instance, whose revolutionary work in sustainable packaging has garnered international acclaim. Her innovative strategies and relentless dedication make Nerida a beacon of change, inspiring countless others to pursue sustainability with equal fervour (turn to page 63).

Then there's Sarah Sonnenberg, MD of Synchron Markings, whose transformative leadership has created a more inclusive and empowering corporate culture. Her commitment to mentorship and advocacy has cultivated an environment where women can thrive, proving that true leadership is about lifting others as you climb (see details on page 49).

These stories aren't just about individual achievements, they encapsulate the future of our industry – a future thriving on inclusivity, innovation and diverse voices. The women featured in this edition are actively shaping this future, creating opportunities and inspiring others to dream bigger and reach higher.

Beyond celebrating these remarkable women, our August issue also delves into key industry features, including label substrates, flexible packaging, paper and board and more. Each section offers insights into the latest trends and advancements, highlighting how our industry continues to evolve.

We invite you, our readers, to share your stories. Whether you're a seasoned professional or just starting your career, your experiences and insights are invaluable. By sharing your journey, you contribute to a collective narrative that uplifts and empowers. Together, we can build a community where women support each other, celebrate successes and overcome challenges together. As you read their stories, may you be inspired to pursue your dreams with renewed vigour and confidence.

Here's to the women who shape our industry – today, tomorrow and beyond.



Samantha Moore

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PACKAGiNG &Print Media
The industry **voice** of **Africa**



This month's cover story

SA LITHO LABEL PRINTERS and ROTOCON are raising a glass to the future of label design with their dynamic partnership in the ROTOCON Student Wine Label Design Competition.

This creative collaboration champions young talent and ignites innovation in the industry. Cheers to shaping the designers of tomorrow, one label at a time.

For details, see pages 6-7.

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Cultivating the label makers of tomorrow

SA Litho Label Printers and **ROTOCON** have uncorked a vibrant partnership to cultivate the next generation of label design talent. In a strategic move that bubbles with creativity and promise, they've joined forces to support the ROTOCON Student Wine Label Design Competition. This collaboration is a testament to their shared passion for nurturing young talent and sparking innovation in the design and printing industries. Cheers to crafting the future, one label at a time.

THE ROTOCON Student Wine Label Design Competition showcases the talent of young South African label designers. Hosted in collaboration with Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), the competition attracts entries from third- and fourth-year students in the Integrated Communication Design (ICD) programme. This year's competition, held alongside the WineLand & ROTOCON 30 Under 30 Awards, celebrated the vibrant minds shaping South Africa's wine label design sector.

Michael Aengenvoort, CEO of ROTOCON, highlights the significance of such events: 'An event like this helps identify future leaders, shaping our country's destiny.'

The competition's second year saw a remarkable influx of entries, showcasing TUT's ICD students' creativity and potential. 'The competition's standards align with international benchmarks, offering students unparalleled real-world exposure. This exposure is invaluable, providing students with networking opportunities and a platform to launch their professional design careers,' comments Banie Stafford, owner of BCreative. He spearheaded the initiative to extend the competition's reach beyond the Western Cape to Gauteng, offering students unique insights into the wine industry.

Renowned converter SA Litho Label Printers joined the initiative by printing the winning and runner-up wine labels at its Parow Industrial facility near Cape Town. This involvement provided students a tangible platform to showcase their creativity and skills.

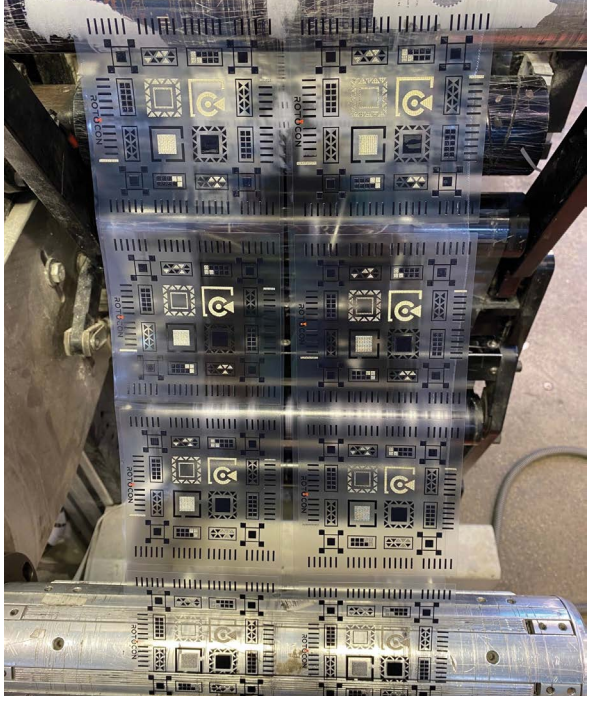
Student exposure

Zenele Nkambule, an advanced ICD diploma student, won the competition with his design, 'Route 62'.





Winner of the ROTOCON Student Wine Label Design competition Zanele Nkambule (left) with SA Litho Label Printers' general manager Dawrian Salies (centre) and runner-up Syamdumisa Mbele (right).



His creation pays homage to Stellenbosch's scenic beauty, infusing landscape imagery with elements from the Ndebele heritage. 'The inspiration behind my design was straightforward,' Zenele shares modestly. 'I started with landscape imagery and infused it with elements from the rich cultural Ndebele heritage, giving it a modern twist.' His design earned him a R30 000 cash prize and an all-expenses-paid trip to the WineLand & ROTOCON 30 Under 30 Awards luncheon in Paarl.

Syamdumisa Mbele, a third-year ICD student, claimed the runner-up position with his design, 'Soet Uitnemendheid' (Sweet Excellence). His work featured the Cape Sugarbird, symbolising refinement and sophistication. Syamdumisa explains: 'I incorporated the waistcoat to convey refinement, sophistication and a sense of excellence.' His design earned him R15 000 and a trip to the awards ceremony.

A commitment to skills development

SA Litho Label Printers' partnership with ROTOCON extends beyond sponsorship, it represents a shared commitment to skills development and education. Dawrian Salies, general manager of SA Litho, believes investing in youth and education is key to South Africa's future. 'Education is necessary for individual progress. We have financed and encouraged staff members in various training and learning opportunities,' he states proudly.

SA Litho's commitment to continuous improvement is evident in its focus on root cause analysis and welcoming new suggestions to enhance business and product performance. This culture of learning and development has been fostered through partnerships with various facilitators, enabling employees to expand their skills and qualifications. 'We believe education helps everyone at different levels to speak the same language and understand each other better,' Dawrian asserts.

Bridging the gap

Dawrian's passion for youth development was evident when he personally guided the student winners, Zenele and Syamdumisa, through a tour of SA Litho's production facility. 'We're very passionate about the growth of this country and development of youth skills. It's our way of giving back to the community,' he says. During the tour, the students gained valuable insights into the printing and finishing processes, from raw materials to the final product. 'Not many people have the opportunity to walk into a production site like that, and once you do, it's like your whole mindset changes,' he reflects. This hands-on experience not only inspired the students but also ignited a passion for the industry.

'Bringing a design to life requires not just the right look, but the right feel,' Dawrian enthuses. 'Collaboration and interaction with the customer are essential. Our goal was to provide differentiation and emphasise value by selecting the perfect combination of elements – such as paper choice, texture, micro-embossing, foiling and high-build effects – to create standout, finished labels.'

Involving two interns from SA Litho's DTP prepress department, Christal Alicer Hartman and Lebona Nooi, in the printing process of the winning labels further demonstrated the company's commitment to youth skills development. These interns were given the opportunity to lead the project, make decisions and learn from the experience. 'It was important for us to put our interns on the same journey where we could give them sufficient exposure. It compelled them to do a bit of lateral thinking and to explore various options,' Dawrian explains. The interns' involvement was a valuable learning opportunity, allowing them to develop their skills while contributing to a high-profile project.

A shared passion

SA Litho's partnership with ROTOCON is rooted in a shared passion for youth empowerment and education. 'Michael and I share the same passion of giving back, teaching students and investing in the growth of this country. And I think it's a very well-balanced fit between technology, design and production,' Dawrian notes. This alignment of values has created a powerful synergy between the two companies, driving innovation and nurturing the next generation of talent.

SA Litho Label Printers' partnership with ROTOCON in supporting the Student Wine Label Design Competition is a shining example of how industry leaders can positively impact youth development. By providing students with real-world experiences and opportunities to showcase their talents, SA Litho and ROTOCON are not only shaping the future of South Africa's design and printing industries but also investing in the growth and potential of the country's youth.

Exciting investment

AS SA Litho Label Printers and ROTOCON continue their partnership, there is a sense of excitement for the future. SA Litho's recent purchase of a Pantec RHINO 340 flatbed hotfoil embossing unit integrated with a ROTOCON CHROME RDF digital finishing machine signifies its commitment to staying at the forefront of printing technology.

As general manager Dawrian Salies eagerly awaits the arrival of this new equipment, he envisions even greater opportunities for collaboration and innovation. *PPM* will publish more details of this exciting technological investment in future editions.

Extrupet Group Achieves AA+ BRCGS Certification!

In the global landscape of business and manufacturing, standards of quality and safety have never been more critical. The BRCGS (Brand Reputation Compliance Global Standards) has established itself as a beacon of excellence, offering a rigorous framework for companies to demonstrate their commitment to high safety standards, operational excellence, and product quality. Achieving certification from BRCGS is a significant milestone for any organization, and it reflects a dedication to maintaining superior standards that resonate across the global market.

Extrupet Group, has recently attained the prestigious AA+ certification from BRCGS,



underscoring its unwavering commitment to excellence in its operations. This certification, which is one of the highest achievable under the BRCGS standards, highlights Extrupet Group's dedication to maintaining the utmost levels of safety and quality in its recycling processes.

BRCGS certification is not just about meeting the minimum requirements; it's about exceeding expectations and continuously improving processes to ensure the highest standards are upheld. For a company like Extrupet, which prioritises sustainable practices and circular economy initiatives, achieving the AA+ certification is a testament to its role as a leader in the industry. This certification not only enhances the company's reputation but also assures customers and stakeholders that Extrupet is committed to providing the highest quality recycled materials, produced under stringent safety and operational protocols.

The BRCGS standards encompass various aspects, including food safety, packaging materials, and consumer products, providing a comprehensive framework that helps organizations manage risks, meet legal obligations, and protect the end consumer. For Extrupet Group, adhering to these standards means that the recycled PET



(rPET) it produces meets the highest quality standards, ensuring it is safe for use in food-grade applications and other consumer products.

Moreover, the AA+ certification aligns with Extrupet's vision of promoting a circular economy,

where plastic waste is not just reduced but repurposed and reintegrated into the production cycle. This achievement is a reflection of the company's commitment to environmental stewardship, sustainability, and innovation.

The rigorous standards set by BRCGS guarantee that our products are safe and reliable.

This certification provides our partners and clients with the confidence that Extrupet Group is dedicated to maintaining the integrity of our processes and products.

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The next generation

Reifenhäuser Group announces leadership changes

MARCEL PERREVORT has stepped into the role of chief sales officer (CSO) at the Reifenhäuser Group, succeeding Ulrich Reifenhäuser, who held the position for over 25 years. This move marks a significant step in the ongoing generational transition within the family-owned machinery and plant manufacturing company.

Marcel brings over a decade of experience within the Reifenhäuser Group, having held various sales and management positions, including his most recent role as managing director of Reifenhäuser Blown Film. As CSO, he will be responsible for driving the Group's sales and service strategy, with a strong emphasis on expanding international sales and enhancing customer-centric operations.

'I'm excited to take on the responsibilities of CSO and to focus on reinforcing our market leadership,' Marcel says. 'A key priority will be further developing our global sales and service network to better serve our customers.'

Ulrich Reifenhäuser expresses confidence in the leadership transition, stating: 'Having worked closely with Marcel for many years, I am confident in his deep understanding of our business. I am at ease knowing that I am handing over this role to someone so capable.'

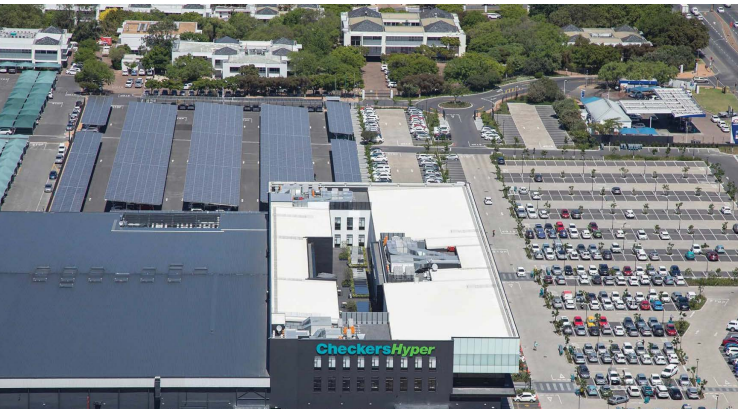


Marcel Perrevort has stepped into the role of chief sales officer (CSO) at the Reifenhäuser Group.

Succeeding Marcel at Reifenhäuser Blown Film is Eugene Friedel, who will now lead the business as part of the dual management team alongside Dr Andreas Neuss. With a degree in business administration and over 25 years of experience in various sales positions at Reifenhäuser Blown Film, most recently as sales director, Eugene is well-equipped for the role. 'Thanks to his many years in sales, Eugene knows the challenges and expectations of our customers very well,' says Bernd Reifenhäuser, CEO of the Reifenhäuser Group.

Shoprite tests electricity wheeling at Cape Town HQ

THE SHOPRITE GROUP is wheeling renewable electricity at its home office in Brackenfell, Cape Town, marking its third site to implement this innovative energy solution.



The retailer is one of the first businesses in South Africa to wheel renewable electricity through the city's energy grid. Wheeling involves the buying and selling of electricity between private parties, using an existing grid to transport power from where it's generated to an end user. It creates greater access to affordable renewable energy and contributes to relieving the country's electricity crisis. Excess electricity generated by Checkers Hyper Brackenfell at Fairbridge Mall is purchased by Enpower Trading, a NERSA-licensed electricity trader, who then facilitates the sale thereof back to the Shoprite Group for use at the retailer's adjacent home office campus.

'In 2023, our consumption of renewable energy nearly doubled to 103 234MWh from 54 138MWh in the previous year,' remarks Sanjeev Raghubir, chief sustainability officer at the Shoprite Group. 'With renewable electrons now flowing through Cape Town's energy grid, we are another step closer to our climate goals of being carbon neutral by 2050.'



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Constantia's EcoPeelCover wins German Packaging Award

CONSTANTIA FLEXIBLES has been honoured with the German Packaging Award 2024 in the sustainability category for its groundbreaking innovation, EcoPeelCover.

EcoPeelCover is a revolutionary thinned lid solution designed specifically for PP cup materials in the dairy sector. 'Our goal was to develop the thinnest punched aluminium plate on the market without compromising on the high mechanical standards typical of standard die cut lids,' comments Claus Dworschak, product manager for German dairy key accounts and strategic product manager for die cut lids.

EcoPeelCover stands out for its impressive material and energy efficiency, significantly reducing both material usage and energy consumption. This is achieved by lowering the aluminium thickness to 25µm and the extrusion coating to just 13g/m². 'Despite its reduced thickness, EcoPeelCover maintains exceptional performance, matching the puncture resistance, corrosion protection and peel properties of standard die cut lids,' he explains. 'Additionally, it provides excellent barrier values, offering superior protection against water vapour and oxygen, which helps ensure the freshness and quality of dairy products.'

Mpact sells Versapak for nearly R268m

MPACT, the JSE-listed packaging manufacturer, is selling its Versapak division to Greenpath Recycling, an owned subsidiary of Sinica Manufacturing, for R267.7-million.

The disposal is in line with Mpact's portfolio optimisation plan and followed a strategic review in 2021. Greenpath will acquire the business as a going concern and the employees will transfer to the buyer.

Versapak's net asset value was R239.28-million as at 31 December, 2023, and the purchase price would be adjusted based on the amount of stock on hand, according to a JSE regulatory notice.

The deal excludes all cash, debtors and creditors of the Versapak business and two properties from which the business operates, which the purchaser aims to lease.

Versapak produces polystyrene and PET trays and punnets, as well as vinyl cling film from two plants – in Paarl, Western Cape and Roodekop, Gauteng. The lease agreements relate to the two properties where the business operates.

Sinica makes and supplies plastic packaging products, including polystyrene meal boxes and trays, vinyl film and polyamide ethylene vinyl alcohol vacuum bags.

ABG set to shine at Labelexpo Americas 2024

A B Graphic International (ABG), a provider of print finishing equipment, is making a substantial impact at Labelexpo Americas 2024 with a 371m² stand and an additional 60m² in the FlexPack Factory. Celebrating its 70th anniversary, ABG aims to showcase a range of innovative solutions and strengthen customer connections at stands 3223 and 6786.

From 10 to 12 September at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Centre in Chicago, ABG will display 12 state-of-the-art machines, including its flagship Digicon Series 3, which features ABG Connect for automated job changeovers. Other notable solutions include the SRI3 and Vectra AutoSet.

A standout at the show is ABG's new NSU Lite, an entry-level model with non-stop technology and a compact footprint, showcased alongside the latest Converter platform and Vectra ECTR Turret Rewinder. ABG's latest patented automatic waste stripping technology will also be on display, reducing downtime and enhancing productivity. In the FlexPack Factory, ABG will feature its shrink sleeve solutions, including the Turret Seaming Rewinder (TSR) and Doctoring Machine (DR).

Al Spendlow, ABG's MD for North America, states: 'Labelexpo Americas 2024 is a fantastic opportunity to showcase our solutions and engage with customers. We're excited to demonstrate the innovations driving our growth.'



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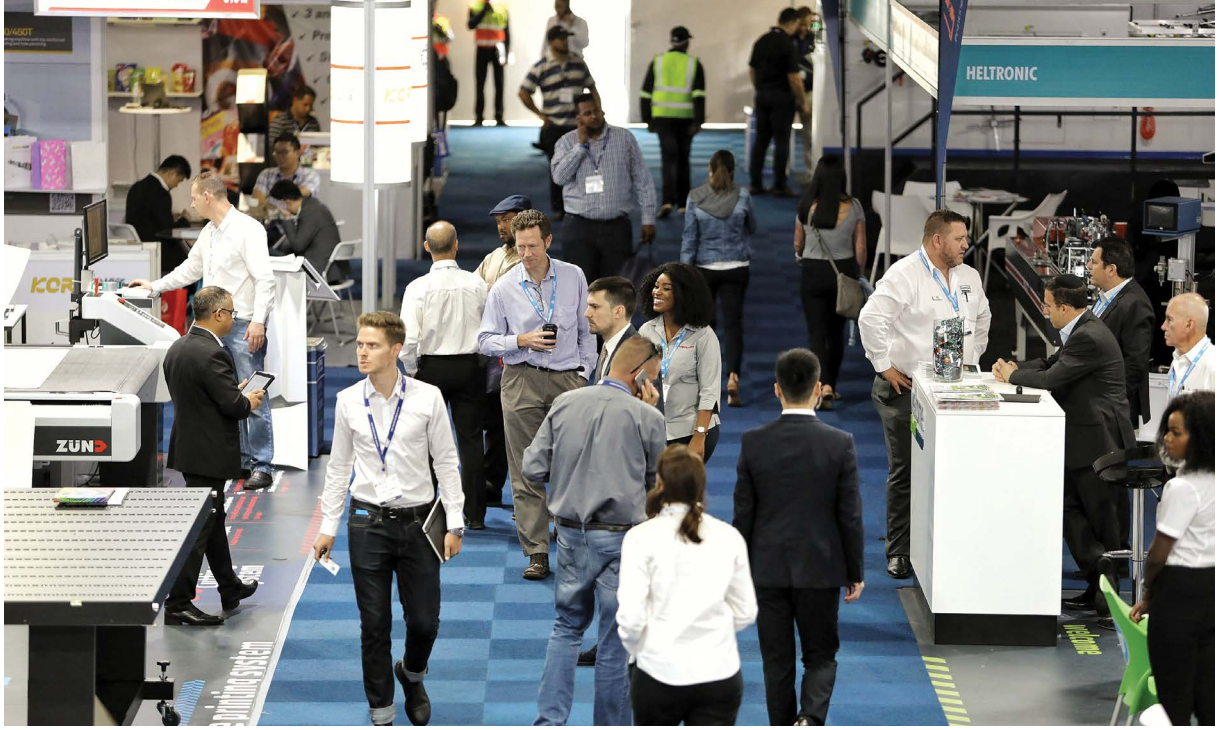
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Propak Africa 2025: staying ahead of the curve

As industries across the globe undergo a digital transformation, the push for smarter, more innovative solutions has become a business imperative. The packaging and related industries, in particular, are at the forefront of this shift, where the pace of technological advancement is not merely an option but a vital component of survival and success.

TRADE exhibitions have long been the cornerstone of industry innovation, offering a unique platform for companies to showcase the latest trends, technologies and solutions to a broad and engaged audience.

Among these, Propak Africa stands out as the premier trade exhibition for the packaging, printing, food processing, plastics and labelling industries on the continent. This triennial event has earned a reputation as the must-attend show for industry professionals seeking to stay informed and competitive.

Scheduled to take place at the Expo Centre in Nasrec, Johannesburg from 11-14 March 2025, Propak Africa is set to host over 500 exhibitors, each presenting cutting-edge technologies and innovative products that are shaping the future of these industries. The exhibition promises four days of unparalleled access to the newest ideas, strategies and tools that could propel businesses to new heights.

Mark Anderson, portfolio director at Specialised Exhibitions – a division of Montgomery Group and the organisers of the show – emphasises the significance of Propak Africa in driving industry advancement. 'Propak Africa offers an unparalleled opportunity to engage with the latest industry developments,' he explains. 'It's where industry frontrunners across packaging, printing, food processing, plastics and labelling come to showcase state-of-the-art technology, advanced equipment and forward-thinking approaches that are setting the standard for the future.'

Attendees can expect to see the latest trends in action, from smart packaging solutions and sustainable materials to the newest advancements in automation and digitalisation. The event will also feature live demonstrations, giving visitors a first-hand look at how these innovations can be applied in real-world scenarios. This hands-on approach not only allows attendees to better understand the potential impact of these technologies on their businesses but also offers the opportunity to engage directly with experts and innovators.

Propak Africa's significance is further underscored by the support it receives from key industry bodies such as The Institute of Packaging SA (IPSA), Packaging SA, Printing SA and Plastics SA. This backing from leading organisations ensures that the exhibition remains at the forefront of industry developments and continues to deliver value to its participants.

'For businesses in the packaging, printing, food processing, plastics and labelling sectors, Propak Africa 2025 is an unmissable event. It provides an invaluable opportunity to stay ahead of industry trends, connect with thought leaders and explore new possibilities that can drive growth and innovation,' Mark concludes.

For more info, go to ***www.propakafrica.co.za***

Ardagh upgrades air quality with new technology

LAST YEAR, Ardagh Glass Packaging Africa made a significant move to enhance air quality by installing an electrostatic precipitator (ESP) at its Wadeville production facility.



This cutting-edge device filters particulate matter from gases, allowing Ardagh to eliminate dust and smoke before they enter the atmosphere, thereby meeting stringent emissions standards.

The installation of the Wadeville ESP in late 2023 involved a substantial investment of over R100-million, aligning the facility with global air quality standards. Wadeville is the latest of several Ardagh locations in South Africa to receive this upgrade, following installations at Bellville in the Western Cape and two of the three furnaces at the Nigel facility.

Ardagh is actively installing ESPs at the remaining Nigel furnace and the Clayville facility in Gauteng to ensure all furnaces comply with the minimum emission standards by April 2025.

'We're committed to continuous improvement in all aspects of our business to demonstrate that we make packaging for good,' CEO Paul Curnow told *Engineering News*. 'In addition to using the latest technology, we aim to reduce the use of virgin raw materials, increase recycled glass content in our production process and lightweight our containers. These efforts help reduce emissions and lower energy consumption, aligning with our sustainability targets.'

Amazon ditches plastic pillows for paper fillers

IN a significant move towards sustainability, Amazon has replaced 95% of the plastic air pillows in its North American delivery packaging with paper fillers.

The company aims to completely eliminate these plastic pillows by the end of the year, marking a major step in its ongoing efforts to reduce packaging waste.

This initiative is part of a broader, multi-year effort to eliminate plastic delivery packaging from North American fulfilment centres. Once completed, this will be Amazon's largest reduction of plastic packaging in the region, potentially preventing the use of nearly 15 billion plastic air pillows annually.

Pat Lindner, vice-president of mechatronics and sustainable packaging, comments: 'It's a great example of how we thoughtfully test and scale new solutions to protect our customers' experiences,' he states. 'We're working towards full removal in North America by the end of the year and will continue to innovate, test and scale to prioritise curbside recyclable materials.'



Reasons to attend Propak West Africa



PROPAK WEST AFRICA, taking place from 10-12 September in Lagos, Nigeria, is the premier event for professionals in the packaging, plastics, processing and printing industries across the continent. Here are compelling reasons why attending this event is a must for anyone looking to expand their knowledge, network and business opportunities in these dynamic sectors.

Propak West Africa attracts over 5 000 visitors and more than 200 exhibitors from across the globe, providing an unparalleled opportunity to connect with industry leaders, potential customers and suppliers. Whether you are looking to form strategic partnerships, source new suppliers or simply exchange ideas, the event offers a platform to engage with key stakeholders in the industry.

The event features a comprehensive programme of **seminars, workshops and panel discussions** led by industry experts. Attendees can gain insights into the latest trends, innovations and best practices in packaging and related industries. Topics will cover everything from sustainable packaging solutions to advancements in processing technologies, ensuring you stay ahead of the curve.

Propak West Africa is renowned for showcasing the **latest technological advancements and innovations**. Exhibitors will display cutting-edge machinery, equipment and materials, offering visitors a firsthand look at the tools and technologies that are shaping the future of the industry. This is an excellent opportunity to see live demonstrations and explore new products that could enhance your operations.

For businesses looking to expand into the West African market, Propak West Africa provides valuable insights and opportunities. The event brings together regional and international companies, providing a **platform to understand market dynamics, consumer preferences and regulatory landscapes**. Engaging with local and international players can help you identify opportunities and strategies for market entry or expansion.

Attending Propak West Africa also means being part of an event that celebrates excellence in the industry. The event often features **awards and recognitions, highlighting outstanding achievements and innovations**. Participating in such an event can enhance your company's reputation and visibility within the industry.

Propak West Africa is not just an exhibition, it's an essential event for anyone serious about thriving in the packaging, plastics, processing and printing industries in Africa. Don't miss this opportunity to connect, learn and grow. For more details, go to ***www.propakwestafrica.com***.

Nigeria to ban single-use plastics by 2025

NIGERIA is set to implement a nationwide ban on single-use plastics by 2025, as confirmed by the country's deputy minister of environment, Iziaq Salako. The ban will cover items such as straws, cutlery, plastic bottles and small water sachets.

This move follows the Federal Ministry of Environment's recent discontinuation of single-use plastics in its headquarters and agencies, effective from 25 June, as a preparatory step towards the broader ban.

Iziaq emphasised that the government's actions are aimed at preparing Nigerians for the upcoming changes and setting an example for the nation. The ban is part of Nigeria's National Policy on Plastic Waste Management, adopted in 2020, which outlines a strategic approach to tackle plastic pollution.

Nigeria, the only virgin plastic resin producer in West Africa's coastal areas and Africa's largest oil producer, faces significant challenges in managing plastic waste. According to a WACA programme report commissioned by the World Bank, the country produced 498 kilotons of virgin plastic resin in 2019, with polyethylene, polypropylene and PET being the primary types. However, domestic production falls short of meeting the country's demand for virgin resins, with nearly two-thirds of this demand being met through imports.

Plastic waste management remains a critical issue in Nigeria, with less than 12% of plastic waste being recycled. The country has eight operational plastic waste recycling plants, with 18 others in various stages of completion. The remainder of the plastic waste ends up in landfills and dump sites, contributing to environmental degradation.

A major contributor to single-use plastic waste in Nigeria is the widespread use of water sachets, which are popular for selling pre-filtered or sanitised water due to their lower production costs compared to plastic bottles. It's estimated that over 60 million plastic sachet water bags are consumed and disposed of daily in the country, highlighting the urgent need for effective waste management solutions.

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Some of the signatories of the Zimbabwe Pact for Carton Packages.

Zimbabwe launches liquid board packaging pact

MAJOR dairy industry value chain stakeholders – including recyclers, collectors, producers, packaging material and machinery suppliers, government and NGOs – signed the Zimbabwe Pact for Carton Packages to kick off the recycling of liquid board packaging in the country.

The initial phase of the pact aims to create value for the local economy by utilising this recyclable commodity by setting up adequate collection infrastructure and establishing a value chain within Zimbabwe. 'The collected used carton packs will then be exported to South African paper mills, leveraging existing recycling capacity within the region,' reports Masale Manoko, sustainability manager at Tetra Pak Southern Africa.

Key objectives outlined in the pact include compliance with environmental regulations, developing a robust recycling infrastructure and supporting Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) initiatives.

According to Tendayi Marecha, secretary general of the Dairy Processors Association of Zimbabwe, one of the pivotal aspects of the pact is the legal recognition of liquid board packaging as a recyclable commodity under the Environment Management Act, as well as adherence to internationally recognised standards for waste paper. 'This legal recognition sets a solid foundation for the implementation of efficient recycling practices across the country.'

Tetra Pak's recycling renaissance in Southern Africa

TETRA PAK SOUTHERN AFRICA is making waves with its impressive recycling surge, tripling the Liquid Board Packaging (LBP) recycling rate to over 20% by mid-2024. This growth, fuelled by collaborations with industry giants like Mpact and Gayatri Paper Mills, is part of a grand vision to hit 40% by 2030.

With an additional R3.5 million investment and an innovative schools programme, Tetra Pak is spearheading a recycling renaissance. Their partnership with PETCO is expanding the recycling focus beyond PET to include LBP, driving circularity across the packaging industry.

Leading the charge, Tetra Pak's managing director Klaus Plenge and sustainability manager Masale Manoko emphasise the power of partnerships in driving this green revolution. Their school initiative in the Eastern Cape, collecting over 270 000 LBP packages, is just one example of their commitment to eco-education, earning them a prestigious PETCO Award.

Tetra Pak's mission is clear: revolutionise recycling and build a sustainable future, one carton at a time. 'Recycling is a team effort, and we're calling everyone to join us,' urges Klaus. With their ambitious targets and relentless innovation, Tetra Pak is not just keeping up with the sustainability trend – they're leading it.



Ed's note: We'll feature a more in-depth version of this article in our September issue.

INTO AFRICA

Cultivating progress in food science

The role of women in food science remains a powerful yet underappreciated narrative. **Ingrid Woodrow**, CEO of the **South African Association for Food Science and Technology (SAAFoST)**, exemplifies the influence and importance of women in this field.

INGRID's journey, shaped by a deep passion for food science and a dedication to quality, offers a glimpse into the vital work being done behind the scenes to ensure the food we consume is safe, nutritious and sustainably produced.

Her path to food science began with her academic pursuit of a BSc (Agric) in Dairy Science at the University of Pretoria, a decision that would lay the foundation for her lifelong commitment to the industry.

Her first role in quality control at a dairy factory introduced her to the intricate processes involved in transforming raw materials into finished products. 'This was an excellent learning curve,' Ingrid reflects, 'and I maintain that any student needs to start there to understand the production of raw materials in processing, storage and transportation and the importance of quality and food safety at all levels.'

Ingrid's words underscore the critical nature of quality control in the food industry, a sector where even the smallest oversight can have significant consequences. Her experience highlights how foundational roles in food science, often perceived as routine, are essential in maintaining the integrity and safety of the food supply chain. For women entering the industry, these roles provide not just a job, but a responsibility to the public's health – a duty that Ingrid embraced wholeheartedly.

After a period in Europe, Ingrid returned to South Africa and re-entered the food industry, driven by an enduring passion for food science. From 2010, she was fully immersed in the field again, coordinating technical sales with application and new product development.

Throughout her career, Ingrid discovered the unique strengths women bring to food science. 'Women can play an important role in food safety and quality control as they are usually meticulous and consistent in their work. Women are also important in R&D, new product development and application roles; they come up with practical and sometimes even wild ideas, just different from men.'

Ingrid's insights point to a broader truth about diversity in food science: the industry thrives on varied perspectives. Women's attention to detail and innovative thinking are not just complementary but necessary to drive the sector forward. As companies face increasingly complex challenges – ranging from sustainability to climate change – their ability to innovate and adapt depends on harnessing the full spectrum of human creativity and expertise.

Yet, the journey for women in food science is not without its hurdles. Ingrid candidly shares one of the most significant barriers she faced: balancing career and family. 'When I started my career, things were very different and after the birth of my child, I had only six weeks off work.' Ingrid's solution was to step away from her career to raise her children, a decision that, while fulfilling, highlights the challenges many women still face today. Her advocacy for more flexible working hours for parents underscores the need for the industry to evolve and support the diverse demands of its workforce.



SAAFoST CEO Ingrid Woodrow with Gary Coulson, founder of Formulation Creations.

As CEO of SAAFoST, Ingrid now champions the development of future food scientists through mentorship and education. She believes that one of the most effective ways women can support each other in the industry is through mentorship, particularly by those who have retired. This form of guidance is invaluable for young professionals navigating the complexities of the food industry.

Looking back on her journey, Ingrid offers a powerful reflection: 'I would not have learned the lessons I needed to be who I am today, so I would not have changed anything in my life. I am extremely thankful for the blessed life I have lived so far.'



Print Matters

FLEXO FORUM

Unlocking the future of flexo with CAE's eCell

Absolute success for SONO demos

Sharp solutions for doctor blade efficiencies

Improved throughput with Sandon Global anilox rollers

WOMEN IN PACKAGING

Midcomp's Angelique Greer is a dynamic doyenne in digital printing

Banbury's Ursula Webber exemplifies the power of female leadership

INK & COATING DEVELOPMENTS

INX International's groundbreaking ink technology

Flint Group inks that embody efficiency, vibrancy and sustainability

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A paradigm shift in anilox transfer technologies

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Unlocking the future of flexo with CAE's eCell

As the printing industry evolves, technological advancements have greatly enhanced the capabilities and quality of flexographic printing. Among these innovations, **CAE's eCell technology** stands out as a groundbreaking development, transforming the way printers achieve superior results, explains technical director **Paul Rich**.

ECELL technology marks a significant advancement in the precision and efficiency of anilox roll and sleeve engravings. Traditional engraving methods, while effective in their time, often struggle with limitations in controlling ink release, managing dot gain and minimising print defects. eCell technology addresses these challenges by utilising advanced laser control and sophisticated software to create a new generation of cell patterns, now exported to 75 countries, delivering unprecedented on-press results.

This specially designed cell structure is designed to optimise ink transfer, reduce common print defects and enhance colour consistency. eCell technology is particularly advantageous for applications requiring high-quality output, such as extended gamut printing.

How eCell works

At the heart of eCell technology lies a revolutionary approach to cell geometry design. Unlike conventional cells, which often struggle with ink release and uniformity at high speeds, eCell patterns are meticulously crafted with precise control over the depth, shape and volume of each cell. This precision ensures consistent ink transfer to the substrate, regardless of printing speed or the complexity of the image.

The advanced cell design also enhances ink flow, leading to significant ink savings on-press compared to older technologies, which have been outpaced by eCell's dynamic capabilities. This is especially crucial in high-speed printing environments, where even minor inconsistencies can result in major quality issues.

The advantages of eCell

By offering precise cell geometry, eCell ensures efficient and uniform ink release, leading to consistent colour density and sharper images. This technology significantly reduces print defects, which is crucial for high-resolution applications, enhancing the overall quality of printed materials.

Moreover, eCell technology boosts productivity by allowing printers to operate at higher speeds without sacrificing quality. This efficiency increases production rates, reduces downtime and ultimately improves profitability. The advanced laser engraving techniques used in eCell technology also extend the life of ceramic anilox rolls, reducing wear and tear, which translates to lower maintenance costs and less frequent roll replacements.

For print service providers (PSPs) working with an extended colour gamut, eCell technology provides the consistency required to accurately reproduce a wide range of colours, resulting in more vibrant and true-to-life prints.

The true potential of eCell technology is realised when combined with CAE's Black Pearl Ceramic Coatings. These coatings are robotically applied to ensure superior quality and durability, perfectly complementing the intricate eCell geometry. This synergy creates a robust solution for PSPs seeking the highest standards of print quality and efficiency during production.

Future of flexo printing

As the demand for high-quality, cost-effective and sustainable printing grows, the adoption of eCell technology is set to expand both locally and internationally.

eCell technology is more than just an incremental improvement – it's a transformative innovation that is redefining the capabilities of flexographic printing. By enhancing ink transfer, reducing defects and extending the life of anilox rolls, eCell technology is setting a new industry standard for quality and efficiency.

Ed's note: Paul Rich is CAE's technical director, with extensive experience in the manufacture and refurbishment of ceramic anilox rollers and sleeves.

Absolute success: SONO demos well received

ABSOLUTE has reported a substantial increase in SONO inquiries following a series of successful installations of its patented on-press ultrasonic anilox roller cleaning system. With orders and inquiries rising weekly and both versions – 'pit' and 'portable' – being produced simultaneously at its UK facility, Absolute took the opportunity to present these award-winning products to a select group of customers and industry experts during a week-long series of tailored open days.

It was the perfect opportunity to give our customers firsthand experience of the system's effectiveness in cleaning anilox rolls and its ease of use.' Customers were impressed with the system's 'operator-led' design, which eliminates the need for lifting equipment or maintenance crews. Not only did the rollers look visibly cleaner, but the data also confirmed that they were indeed cleaner.

The SONO pit version is designed for over-pit presses with automatic anilox exchange capabilities, such as BOBST NT RS models. According to Antony, it delivers exceptional cleaning results while the press is in full production, significantly enhancing productivity.

For the pit version demonstration, Absolute used a five-year-old roller provided by a major integrated customer, which was severely clogged. Originally, the roller had a volume of 4.5cm³/m², but this had deteriorated to 2.0cm³/m² (45% of the original volume). After just 10 minutes of cleaning with the Pit SONO, the volume recovered to 3.8cm³/m² (85% of the original volume).

For presses that lack an automatic anilox exchange in a pit, Absolute offers a portable SONO version. This includes a pod with all the necessary electrical and software systems, a cleaning bar that attaches to the anilox roller and smart guides to ensure a perfect fit every time.

Customers observed a cleaning cycle on the portable machine designed for a 110"/2 800mm BGM line, where an anilox roller with an original volume of 7.0cm³/m² had deteriorated to 4.3cm³/m² (61% of the original volume). After a 10-minute cycle, the roller returned to 6.8cm³/m² (97% of the original volume).

This system allows the print operator to move from unit to unit, cleaning the anilox in situ within 30 minutes, reducing the time required to clean the entire roller by approximately 75% compared to most

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other methods. This significantly decreases printer downtime and enhances profitability.

SONO's ability to clean without removing the anilox roller is a major advantage for all customers, whether they choose the portable or pit version. 'Safety is a key consideration for our customers and eliminating the need to remove anilox rollers from the press is a significant factor in ensuring operator safety,' Antony enthuses.

Ed's note: Absolute SONO is represented and distributed in South Africa by Beswick Machinery.

Sharp solutions for doctor blade efficiencies

IN flexo printing, the often overlooked yet crucial component of the doctor blade plays a significant role in maintaining print quality and productivity. PrimeBlade offers innovative doctor blade solutions that enhance efficiency across the flexographic value chain.

Ronny Eriksson, PrimeBlade's area sales manager, notes that traditional carbon steel blades wear quickly, leading to frequent blade changes, increased downtime and wasted material.

Long-life doctor blades, like those offered by PrimeBlade, address these challenges by significantly extending blade durability and performance. Made from advanced materials such as nano-treated steel, refined stainless steel and micro-alloyed tool steel, these blades resist wear and maintain their structural integrity over extended periods. 'This durability is crucial for maintaining consistent ink transfer and reducing issues like back doctoring and print defects,' Ronny explains.

One primary benefit of long-life blades is the reduction in downtime. Traditional blades require frequent changes due to wear, disrupting production and increasing operational costs. In contrast, long-life blades allow press operators to spend more time printing, improving overall equipment effectiveness (OEE). Additionally, these blades contribute to better print quality by maintaining a stable contact angle against the anilox or printing cylinder.

While long-life blades may have a higher upfront cost, their extended lifespan results in fewer blade replacements, reduced material waste and lower labour costs.

PrimeBlade's Nano series, developed by PrimeBlade Sweden AB, exemplifies the innovation behind long-life blades. 'These blades use patented Nano treatment to enhance wear resistance and surface quality, extending blade life,' Ronny notes.

Ed's note: PrimeBlade is represented and distributed in South Africa by Ipex Machinery.

Anilox rollers: improved throughput

IN a highly competitive and cost-sensitive market, flexo printers seek ways to enhance efficiency. Anilox technology has emerged as a crucial factor in improving throughput and sustainability.

Paul Mitchell, Sandon Global's sales manager for the UK and Ireland, highlights the challenges posed by low-durability anilox designs. 'Poorly constructed sleeves can cause issues with fitting on air mandrels, leading to deformities, slower production and shorter lifespans due to wear and tear,' he notes. This results in more frequent replacements, increasing inefficiencies and waste, which is counterproductive for businesses focused on throughput and environmental impact.

Substrate corrosion is another issue affecting anilox longevity. Paul explains that if an anilox coating isn't fully impervious to liquid, it can oxidise over time, particularly with water-based inks and coatings, degrading print quality and necessitating replacements.

Sandon Global's patented sleeve construction extends sleeve life, reducing the need for frequent changes. Its Enhanced Densification Treatment (EDT) further protects against substrate corrosion by making the Cr2O3 coating liquid impervious, thus prolonging anilox lifespan and improving print performance.

To address the inefficiencies associated with changing the anilox for different applications, Sandon Global developed combination engravings such as HVP and Fluid FP. HVP, designed for wide web flexo printing, supports both solid and tonal prints on a single plate, reducing anilox inventory and press downtime. Fluid FP enhances print flexibility with controlled ink flow, minimising pinholing and ink spitting and is ideal for high opacity white printing.

Ed's note: Sandon Global Wide Web is represented and distributed in South Africa by Ipex Machinery.

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Dynamo doyenne

In a field historically run by men, the packaging and print industry is now seeing a fabulous infusion of female power. Enter **Angelique Greer**, the dynamic force at **Midcomp** who juggles the roles of group marketing director and assistant sales manager with flair. With her business management qualification and a rugged past in corporate mining, Angelique has been with Midcomp for 13 years, skillfully crafting marketing strategies and steering sales initiatives.

ANGELIQUE's leap into the packaging and print world was a surprise twist in her career plot, but her knack for efficiency and productivity made it a perfect match.

'I was brought on board to shake up Midcomp's service and sales CRM systems,' she says with a smile. The hurdles of organisational change didn't deter her, instead, they fuelled her passion and led to bigger roles and a newfound love for the industry.

Angelique's enthusiasm for Midcomp's culture is contagious. 'With founders Rob Makinson and Andrew Pine, plus managing director Sean Da Silva at the helm, the atmosphere here is vibrant and positive, drawing in the industry's top talent,' she beams.

According to Angelique, Midcomp isn't just a catalyst for growth for customers, but a launchpad for employees too, both personally and professionally. 'Most of the staff have been here for over 15 years, and I'm lucky to witness such stellar leadership and camaraderie all under one roof.'



Merit over gender

Angelique believes that while gender equality is essential, the focus should be on merit and skill, qualities that women possess in abundance. 'Representation should not be based solely on gender but on the value and skills women bring to the table,' she asserts. Her insights challenge the status quo and inspire a shift towards a merit-based industry culture.

To attract young women to packaging and print, Angelique emphasises the importance of finding value and self-fulfilment in one's work. 'It's an exciting time to be part of this industry as technology evolves rapidly, and the call for global sustainability takes centre stage,' she notes. Working with esteemed brands like HP and Zünd, Angelique is actively involved in implementing strategies that align with global sustainability goals.

She highlights the need for patience among young professionals, quoting Robert Collier: 'Success is the sum of small efforts – repeated day in and day out.' Angelique stresses that mistakes are valuable learning opportunities and encourages the next generation to integrate into the workforce with reasonable expectations and perspective.

Balancing motherhood and a top management role is a challenge, not a barrier, Angelique reflects. 'Historically, the path has been less strenuous for men. However, if you look closely at the values and management of the organisation you want to work for, you can find a business that doesn't make you compromise your professional aspirations.'

Angelique champions the idea of imparting knowledge and skills as vital for personal and professional progress. 'One needs a village not only personally but also in the workplace,' she says. By teaching those she manages everything she knows, Angelique elevates those around her, fostering a collaborative and supportive environment.

Through her insights and leadership, Angelique Greer exemplifies the dynamic role women play in shaping the future of packaging and print. Her journey inspires others to pursue their aspirations and make meaningful contributions to the industry.

Quirky Q&A

Read any good books lately? *Open* by André Agassi.
Spirit animal? Tasmanian Devil.
Two nonessential items you would want if shipwrecked on a deserted island? Tweezers and a razor. Don't want to look like a wild animal when I'm found.
Name one song to play every time you walk into a room? Thunderstruck by AC/DC.
If you could have any superpower? Calorie immunity.
Which actress would play you in a movie about your life? Julia Louis-Dreyfus.
Your last meal? Don't care so much for food, but a good Pinotage is non-negotiable.

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New ink technology: printing's bright future

Gone are the days when ink was merely a medium to transfer images onto paper. Today's inks are engineered marvels, combining advanced science with sustainable practices to deliver unparalleled print quality, efficiency and environmental stewardship.

BUT it's not just about pushing the boundaries of visual excellence; sustainability is at the heart of these technological strides. The industry is seeing a significant shift towards bio-based and recycle-ready inks, a response to the growing demand for environmentally friendly printing solutions.

Renee Schouten, vice president of marketing at INX International Ink Co., highlights INX's innovation in this area: 'Our INXHRC natural-based inks are a breakthrough, replacing petrochemical ingredients with clean, renewable ones without compromising on performance. These inks are designed to meet the rigorous demands of modern printing processes while significantly reducing their environmental impact. This shift not only helps printers align with global sustainability goals but also offers a compelling value proposition for brands eager to showcase their green credentials.'

One of the most exciting advancements comes in the form of INX Genesis washable inks, which have the potential to revolutionise recycling processes for plastic films. Traditional inks have long been a stumbling block in the recycling of printed plastics, often contaminating the recycling stream and limiting the usability of recycled materials. 'With Genesis inks, we're able to produce high-quality recyclable materials,' she explains. The unique formulation allows the ink to be easily removed during recycling, minimising contamination and enabling the production of new, clear bottles from recycled plastic. This innovation not only supports a circular economy but also addresses the critical issue of plastic pollution in our oceans.

Advances in drying and curing technologies have also played a crucial role in enhancing the efficiency and sustainability of the print process.



The advent of LED UV curing, for instance, has transformed the way inks bond to substrates. 'The INXCure line, which cures with minimal energy, is a prime example of how we're cutting down on power consumption and improving the lifespan of printing equipment,' remarks Renee. Unlike traditional UV curing, which generates significant heat and odours, LED UV curing is a cleaner, more energy-efficient process that aligns with the industry's shift towards greener operations.



In addition to these groundbreaking inks, specialised coatings are making their mark in the packaging sector. Functional coatings like INX Ecostage GBX are designed to protect products from environmental factors while enhancing the recyclability of packaging. 'These coatings are truly transformative,' she asserts. 'By enabling mono-material packaging, they simplify the recycling process and reduce the reliance on multi-layer films, which are notoriously difficult to recycle. This not only extends the shelf life of products but also contributes to the reduction of food waste –another significant benefit in the fight against climate change.'

The print industry's future is not just about what's new – it's about what's next. As Renee puts it: 'We're constantly pushing the envelope to deliver inks and coatings that not only perform better but also support a more sustainable world.' With each new development, INX and other industry leaders are proving that innovation in ink technology is about more than just making things look good; it's about making them last, making them sustainable and ultimately, making a difference.

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Modern inks are not just about aesthetics, they're the secret sauce for operational efficiency and eco-friendliness. This ink evolution is fuelled by the dual demands for dazzling print quality and a steadfast commitment to sustainability.



AS Amy Millington, marketing manager for paper and board at Flint Group, aptly puts it: 'Ink developers are addressing the demands of printers for more efficient, cost-effective production tools, while also responding to industry trends pushing for sustainable practices and circular economies.'

According to Amy, inks today must minimise waste and print rejects while being compatible with a wider range of substrates. 'This focus is not just on performance but also on sustainability, with raw materials chosen for their low-to-no volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and ability to perform at higher press speeds,' she comments. The aim is clear: inks that are recyclable, de-inkable, durable and visually impactful.

The industry is witnessing a surge in demand for energy-curable and water-based technologies. Amy believes UV/LED-cured inks offer speed and high colour vibrancy, enabling printers to boost throughput while maintaining top quality. These innovations align with evolving regulatory landscapes and the push for sustainability. In particular, the development of dual-cure chemistries – capable of being cured using both traditional UV lamps and LEDs – marks a significant trend. 'Dual-cure chemistries help printers transition to more efficient, sustainable ink chemistries, maintaining their benefits while reducing the environmental impact of UV printing,' she adds.

Precision in colour

The precision of modern ink dispensers has revolutionised colour application and control. These systems, which utilise digital databanks to record formulations, ensure exact quantities are dispensed for accurate spot colours. Amy explains: 'Gravimetric dispensers enhance precision by using weighing scales to self-correct in case of overdosing, ensuring accuracy in every batch.'

However, the success of ink dispensing still heavily depends on consumables. The alignment and configuration of ink components are critical for maximising colour control and optimising ink dispensing. 'With precise dispenser management, colour control is maximised and ink dispensing is optimised,' she highlights.

The role of coatings in the print and packaging industry has expanded significantly. 'Coatings must now deliver more than ever,' Amy asserts. They need to be sustainable, compliant with regulations and safe for a range of applications. The challenge lies in achieving performance at lower coating weights while accommodating diverse materials and end-uses.

She reveals that coatings which enhance packaging aesthetics and tactility are particularly in demand. 'From soft-touch and rough-touch to pearlescent and reticulating coatings, these innovations appeal to consumers' senses while protecting printed surfaces.'

Digital colour management

Digital colour management is redefining design consistency and brand recognition. Flint Group's VIVO Colour Solutions is at the forefront of this transformation. 'Digital colour management drives efficiency and reduces waste, allowing printers to reduce lead times and achieve right-first-time production quality,' Amy remarks. She asserts that VIVO Colour Solutions offers a comprehensive digital platform that integrates with the packaging print workflow, eliminating waste, reducing downtime and enhancing quality output.

Flint Group's commitment to minimising the environmental impact of the printing industry is evident in its approach to inks and coatings. 'Updating product portfolios, reformulating chemistries and exploring new areas are critical to fulfilling this commitment,' Amy states. This includes providing inks and coatings designed for printing on recycled substrates and ensuring raw material suppliers meet sustainability credentials.

AQUACode, Flint Group's water-based ink series, exemplifies this commitment. It reduces printing costs, ensures product safety and offers new sustainability benefits. The range includes TerraCode Bio, which incorporates bio-renewable and recycled materials, offering excellent print quality and resistance properties.

'Our customers expect inks that deliver quality, reliability and a reduced environmental footprint while complying with global and regional regulations,' she concludes.

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HEIDELBERG's ink-spired innovations

In an industry where precision and efficiency often take precedence, it's the quiet revolutions in ink and coating technologies that truly drive change. These are not the headline grabbing advancements, but rather the meticulous, science-driven innovations that reshape the way packaging is printed.

WITH a deep dive into HEIDELBERG's latest offerings, Bruce Saunders, consumables business driver at HEIDELBERG Southern Africa, reveals a world where inks and coatings are not just substances on a substrate, but active participants in the push toward greater sustainability, quality and efficiency in print.

One of the most noteworthy developments from HEIDELBERG is the Saphira Eco Series. These quick-drying inks are entirely mineral oil-free, signalling a clear shift towards more eco-friendly printing solutions. Bruce highlights the special ink types designed for extended washing intervals, reducing downtime and increasing efficiency in the printing process. 'The introduction of HEIDELBERG's Saphira BoFood MU and BoFood Organic range – the first offset ink capable of direct contact printing on the inside of food packaging – marks a significant leap forward, especially for the food packaging industry,' he comments.



As the industry strives for precision, HEIDELBERG's advancements in dispensing systems have taken centre stage. Bruce notes that colour management systems have become increasingly sophisticated, allowing for precise ink laydown on any print substrate. 'With these enhancements, colour is automatically controlled and adjusted, ensuring that the first sellable sheet matches the last with optimal ink laydown,' he explains. This consistency not only enhances colour quality, but also minimises waste – both in inks and materials – by reducing the need for reprints and lowering the risk of downtime. It's a subtle but profound shift that could save printers substantial costs over time.

The evolution of the ink dispensing mechanisms themselves, such as ink pumps and cannisters, reflects ongoing research and development. These improvements are crucial for maintaining the delicate balance between ink and water, a key factor in achieving consistent quality across print runs.

The coatings sector is no less dynamic. HEIDELBERG's specialised coatings, particularly for food-grade applications, complement its ink innovations. Bruce mentions the growing popularity of the matte drip-off effect in packaging as well as the increasing demand for barrier and blister coatings. These coatings are not just about aesthetic appeal, they're designed to enhance the durability and functionality of packaging. This dual focus on form and function is becoming increasingly vital as brands look to stand out on the shelves while ensuring their products are protected and preserved.

Clever colour

In terms of colour control, HEIDELBERG's latest software advancement, MultiDot, is setting new standards in print quality and efficiency. Bruce describes MultiDot as the next step in screening technology, following the legacy of Stochastic screening. 'MultiDot is designed to produce high-quality print results while offering cost savings in terms of ink, water, time and energy,' he says. By reducing ink consumption by up to 25%, MultiDot is not only cost-effective, but also a more sustainable choice. It tackles common print issues such as misregistration and mottling, while also reducing paper wastage, which further underscores its environmental benefits. The release of MultiDot 2.0, combined with HEIDELBERG's inline colour management system and Prinect software, promises to shape the future of packaging and commercial print jobs.

Sustainability remains a cornerstone of HEIDELBERG's innovation. Bruce highlights the company's push-to-stop technology on new presses, which integrates seamlessly with its advanced coating systems. 'The ability to change over an anilox roller and switch from gloss to matte coating with no manual intervention within minutes is a game changer,' he notes. This reduces downtime, coating wastage and manual labour, all contributing to a more sustainable and cost-effective printing environment.

Ultimately, HEIDELBERG's ongoing advancements in ink and coating technologies reflect a broader industry trend towards sustainability and efficiency.

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The power of female leadership

In the vibrant world of packaging and print, women are breaking barriers and driving innovation like never before. Leading this transformative wave is **Ursula Webber**, the managing director of **Banbury Colour & Dosing Solutions**. Ursula exemplifies the blend of expertise, vision and tenacity that is propelling the industry forward.

UNDER Ursula's leadership, Banbury has evolved into a beacon of sustainability and innovation, thriving in the competitive African market. 'We assist customers in making sustainable products cost-effectively and efficiently,' Ursula proudly states, capturing the essence of Banbury's mission.

Reflecting on her journey, Ursula recalls her early days in the industry: 'I started in administration, handling most of the internal functions for Banbury. Many women in our industry begin this way and then move into more strategic positions.' Her keen marketing skills and customer engagement experience quickly propelled her into roles that involved working closely with suppliers and customers, showcasing the dynamic progression opportunities available within the field.

Ursula emphasises the critical importance of women's representation in packaging and print. 'Women's attention to detail in critical areas of the business is vital,' she asserts. 'From quality control to customer trials and marketing, women excel in areas that are crucial to the industry's success.' She notes a promising trend of more women moving into technical roles, which she believes should be encouraged to diversify and strengthen team dynamics.

Engaging young women in the industry is a cause close to Ursula's heart. She passionately advocates for showcasing the vibrant and exciting career paths available. 'Our industry offers so much, from chemistry to advertising and everything in-between. The world is constantly changing and products and technology are becoming better and better,' she explains. Ursula calls for educational institutions to offer courses aligned with the industry and for companies to provide internships that offer hands-on experience. For women already in the industry, she suggests instilling a passion for the field in their daughters from a young age, fostering the next generation of female leaders in packaging and print.

Navigating the challenges of her career, Ursula reflects on the significant hurdles she has faced, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic. 'Turning the business around has been a hurdle, but we have definitely seen significant growth since then.' Despite these difficulties, Ursula's resilience and leadership have propelled Banbury to new heights.



Quirky Q&A

Read any good books lately? *Care and Wholeness* by Madz Deyzel.
Name one song to play every time you walk into a room? *This is Me* from *The Greatest Showman*.
If you could have any superpower? To change people's hearts to see more of the beauty around them.
Which actress would play you in a movie about your life? Jennifer Lopez.
Your last meal? Seared salmon.



Converting Matters

LABEL SUBSTRATE UPDATE

Avery Dennison's green and gutsy label substrates

Rotolabel balances substrate sustainability and practicality

CCL Label and Siyaka integrate more recycled content in their label substrates

PAPER & BOARD

EUDR got you stumped? FSC's got your back

Shave & Gibson makes a bold leap into retail experience innovation

Iron Forest Packaging masters the art of packaging design

WOMEN IN PACKAGING

Colmax Trading's Samantha Schepetin smashes stereotypes

Mpact's Penny Ntuli paves the way for women

Rebsons Labels' Debbie Sacher leads with heart and grit

Synchron Markings' all-women team empowers growth through inclusivity

Taigan's Tailei Mer – packaging is in her blood

LABELLING & NARROW WEB

Morgancoat – where innovation meets local craftmanship

FLEXIBLE PACKAGING

Trempak's playbook to innovate amid supply chain chaos

Packaging World navigates supply chain turbulence

Adex on seizing export opportunities

Nurscon outmanoeuvres cost crunches

Mtech flexes forward

Avery Dennison's label evolution

As the environmentally responsible packaging revolution gains momentum, **Avery Dennison** is crafting label substrates that are as green as they are gutsy. Its dynamic suite of products is engineered to supercharge recycling, boost reuse, and streamline material efficiency.



Mark Ellis, commercial director and country manager of Avery Dennison's Materials Group Sub-Saharan Africa.

AVERY DENNISON is rewriting the rulebook on label manufacturing by blending cutting-edge materials science with innovative design. Its Sustainable ADvantage portfolio exemplifies the company's commitment to promoting a circular economy through innovative label solutions. A key component of this portfolio is Avery Dennison's line of solutions made with recycled and renewable components, including facestocks with up to 100% recycled content.

According to Mark Ellis, commercial director and country manager of Avery Dennison's Materials Group Sub-Saharan Africa, this approach conserves natural resources and significantly reduces energy consumption. 'Our labels are also designed to minimise resource consumption, utilising less oil, water and energy while maintaining a smaller carbon footprint compared to conventional label materials,' he comments.

Additionally, the company uses materials made from biological byproducts, which provide the same functionality and appearance as traditional materials but with reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

In the realm of recycling technologies, Avery Dennison has achieved notable advancements with its AD CleanFlake™ technology. This innovative solution enables food-grade bottle-to-bottle recycling by ensuring the clean removal of labels during PET recycling. Accredited by the Association of Plastic Recyclers, AD CleanFlake complies with critical guidelines for both PET and HDPE recycling, along with Extrupet validation. Avery Dennison has also developed solutions for mono-material recycling of high-density polyethylene (HDPE) containers. These solutions allow labels to remain on the container without contaminating the recycling process, streamlining the recycling of HDPE products.

A semi-industrial trial initiated by Avery Dennison and performed by The National Test Centre for Circular Plastics (NTCP) presented compelling evidence that Avery Dennison's standard adhesion filmic label solutions for FMCG applications can be fully released from HDPE packaging during the recycling process, even under cold washing conditions. 'The results of this trial not only challenge the common belief that self-adhesive labels hinder HDPE packaging recycling but also confirm that our standard filmic label solutions are already compatible with current recycling processes,' Mark enthuses. He adds that the findings highlight the potential for recycling associations and regulatory bodies to revise their existing design for recycling guidelines for HDPE decoration.

The company's wash-off adhesive technology is another critical innovation for glass recycling, ensuring that labels remain intact during consumer use but can be effortlessly removed during the recycling of glass bottles, thereby facilitating efficient reuse and recycling.

With the increasing importance of e-commerce, the demand for durable and efficient packaging has surged. Avery Dennison has responded with a range of products tailored for the e-commerce distribution chain. Their offerings include variable information labels for both shorter and longer life options, providing flexibility and durability for various e-commerce applications. In line with the growing demand for sustainable packaging, Avery Dennison's linerless labels eliminate liner and matrix waste and reduce the need for additional collection and disposal efforts. 'We continue to drive innovation in label technology, with significant developments that enhance recycling efficiency and product performance,' says Mark.

The company's portfolio of core prime paper products utilises lightweight face and liner components, optimising cost, performance and sustainability compared to traditional alternatives.

The rDT, the first recycled non-top-coated direct thermal (DT) paper on the market, incorporates 15% post-consumer waste in its construction, making it an ideal choice for thermal applications prioritising sustainability. 'It delivers performance on par with our standard-grade facestock. AD XeroLinr DT™ further enhances productivity, sustainability and safety, maintaining the high standards of performance and quality associated with Avery Dennison,' Mark comments. He believes this solution offers up to 60% more labels per roll compared to conventional DT labels, leading to longer uptime and less frequent roll changes on thermal printers. 'It also reduces logistics costs by allowing more labels per truckload, warehouse and delivery, while cutting down on liner waste disposal. Additionally, it improves safety by eliminating the slip hazard from liners on the floor,' he remarks. 'Our commitment to sustainability sets a high benchmark in label innovation, aligning our efforts with the evolving needs and regulations of diverse industries.'

CM



Examples of labels with wash-off adhesives printed by Rotolabel.

Label substrates: balancing sustainability and practicality

CONVERTER Rotolabel – a division of Bidvest – actively utilises innovative label substrates and technologies to meet evolving environmental and industry demands. However, as managing executive Wicus Maritz and national sales executive Grant Watson emphasise, this progress is not without its challenges.

The push towards thinner materials is one of the most notable advancements. As Grant explains: 'The industry is downgauging on materials, especially on the backing paper of labels, which equates to thousands of tons of material saved per year.' This trend towards reducing material thickness is not just about cutting costs, it's a crucial step in minimising the environmental footprint of label production. Thinner substrates mean less waste and more efficient use of resources, aligning with broader sustainability goals.

Yet, the conversation doesn't stop at material thickness. Adhesives play a critical role in the



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recyclability of labels, especially in the context of PET packaging. Grant highlights the importance of Avery Dennison's CleanFlake technology and UPM Raflatac's PP Wash Off, which both offer washable adhesives designed to support PET recycling.

'We're the first South African converter to use Avery Dennison's CleanFlake and we're probably the largest user of this material option in the country,' says Grant. 'These technologies are game changers, allowing PET to be recycled into food-grade materials, thereby closing the loop on packaging waste. However, these innovations also come at a slightly premium price tag.'

The journey towards fully sustainable label substrates is fraught with obstacles. One of the most pressing issues is the lack of differentiation in the recycling stream. Grant points out that 'there's no logo or on-package certification that distinguishes washable adhesives from non-washable adhesives.' This lack of clear identification complicates the recycling process as collectors and recyclers are unable to easily differentiate between labels with washable and non-washable adhesives. The result is a system that, despite its best efforts, is still vulnerable to contamination and inefficiency. Wicus says there's a big onus on brand owners and converters to 'do the right thing' by opting for sustainable solutions whenever possible. 'Consumers need to trust brand owners, while brand owners must rely on converters to use the appropriate materials.'

He underscores the complexity of this issue, noting that 'increased cost walks in at the front of the house and trust walks out at the other end.' In a highly competitive market, where cost-cutting is often a priority, the temptation to use cheaper, non-approved adhesives is strong. Without stringent regulation from producer responsibility organisations (PROs), the integrity of the recycling stream is at risk, leading to potential setbacks in achieving sustainability goals.

The conversation also touches on the challenges of incorporating post-consumer recycled (PCR) content into labels. 'We've initiated one of the first projects with Woolworths on this,' comments Grant. 'However, the adoption of PCR content is slow, largely due to high costs and limited availability. The demand for PCR labels is still in its infancy and without significant volume, the economic feasibility remains uncertain.'

Improving infrastructure

Rotolabel's experience highlights the broader issue facing the label substrate industry: the gap between innovation and infrastructure. While technologies such as CleanFlake and PP Wash Off represent significant strides forward, the lack of a robust recycling infrastructure means that these innovations are not always fully realised. As Wicus aptly puts it: 'Without proper infrastructure, the benefits are limited.'

While the label substrate industry is making commendable progress in sustainability, the path forward requires more than just technological innovation. It demands a concerted effort (in partnership with government) to build the infrastructure necessary to support these advancements, along with a commitment to integrity and trust within the supply chain. Only then can the true potential of these innovations be unlocked, paving the way for a more sustainable future in packaging.

The rise of recycled content in label substrates

THE push for sustainability is transforming every facet of production, with label substrates being no exception.

'Integrating recycled content into filmic substrates is on the rise,' comments Marika Knorr, head of sustainability and communication at CCL Label. This shift towards sustainability is seen in various forms, from mechanically recycled post-consumer waste to chemically recycled resins.

These advancements are crucial, as they align with global legislative trends that mandate higher recycled content in packaging materials. Marika points out that these innovations aren't limited to plastic. 'When it comes to paper label substrates, especially in the wine and spirits industry, there are recycled-content papers and many options based on renewable sources such as cotton.'

Marika emphasises the importance of floatable label and sleeve materials in the PET recycling process, a critical area where significant progress has been made. 'Our EcoStream and EcoFloat brands are made from low-density polyolefin materials, designed to detach easily during the recycling process, ensuring it separates from PET flakes in the sink/float separation step.'

Beyond recyclability, these advancements are also responding to regulatory shifts. Marika notes the growing importance of reusable packaging, particularly in Europe where regulations are increasingly requiring brands to adopt reusable schemes for beverage bottles. 'To meet these demands, we've developed WashOff label technology, which ensures labels detach automatically in hot water during the washing process. This technology is critical for maintaining the efficiency and cleanliness of reusable packaging systems, as it prevents ink and adhesive contamination in the washing water.'

One of the most groundbreaking developments from CCL Label is the new generation of EcoStream labels for one-way PET bottles. 'These labels now detach at lower temperatures, allowing recyclers to reduce the washing water temperature, leading to significant energy savings and a lower carbon footprint,' she explains. Another notable innovation is the EcoFloat WHITE shrink sleeves. These sleeves feature built-in light-blocking properties, enabling brands to switch from opaque PET or HDPE bottles – often challenging to recycle – to transparent PET bottles that can be recycled back into food-grade packaging.

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Rethinking label substrates

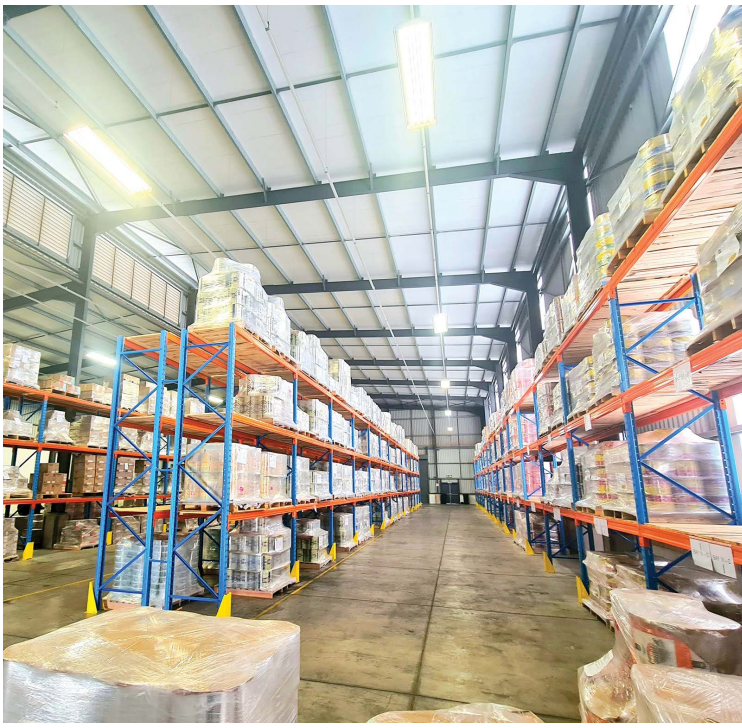
SUSTAINABILITY has shifted from a buzzword to a business imperative. For brand owners, this means taking a closer look at every element of their packaging, particularly the labels that adorn their products.

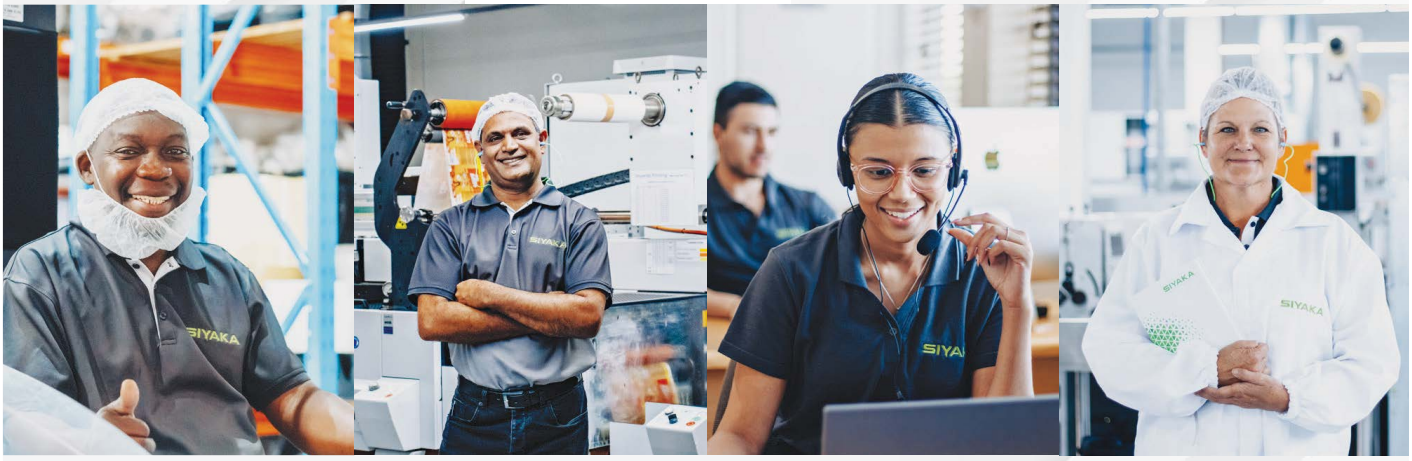
But where does one begin? Jessica Busa, head of special projects at Siyaka encourages brand owners to start by asking themselves: 'How much do I know about the recyclability of my product? Is it made with recycled materials? What can I do to improve?'

For those grappling with these questions, Siyaka offers a guiding hand. The company's specialised team dives deep into the components of a brand's current labels – inks, adhesives, laminates and liners – to identify opportunities for enhancement that align with both budget and brand identity.

Siyaka brings a suite of sustainable solutions designed to elevate packaging while minimising environmental impact. Jessica explains: 'One of the first steps in this process is transitioning to PET liners, which significantly improve the recyclability of the backing paper. By adopting thinner liners, brands can optimise production and reduce transportation costs, thanks to the lighter weight,' she says.

According to Jessica, incorporating organic materials into the liner ensures it breaks down naturally, reducing the burden on landfills.





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‘Additionally, water-based adhesives make the recycling process more efficient by allowing labels to be removed with ease, while solventless adhesives eliminate hazardous chemicals, making the production process safer and greener.’

Another critical improvement lies in downgauging facestock and substrates, which conserves resources and enhances production and transportation efficiencies. Siyaka also advocates for the use of materials certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), a move that supports responsible forestry practices. ‘Reverse printing on transparent laminates eliminates the need for additional facestock, further reducing resource consumption,’ she remarks.

A crucial aspect of sustainable labelling is the label’s ability to detach quickly and effectively from containers – whether glass, plastic or aluminium –

> “Incorporating organic materials into the liner ensures it breaks down naturally, reducing the burden on landfills.”

ensuring that the container can be recycled or reused. Siyaka’s collaboration with global substrate innovators guarantees the supply of advanced packaging solutions tailored to meet specific sustainability goals.

As the drive for sustainability intensifies, Siyaka can help brand owners navigate the complexities of more environmentally responsible packaging. By asking the right questions and providing targeted solutions, these collaborators are not just adapting to change – they are leading it.

EUDR got you stumped? FSC’s got your back!

THE recent implementation of the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) is poised to be a game-changer for South African paper packaging manufacturers exporting to Europe.

This legislation, which aims to curb deforestation and forest degradation globally, mandates stringent due diligence from companies to ensure that their products are not linked to deforested or degraded land post-31 December 2020. While it is a European regulation, its ripple effects extend far beyond, impacting global supply chains, including those in South Africa.

Gerard Busse, marketing and communications manager for the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Southern Africa, emphasises the critical role that robust certification systems will play in helping companies navigate this complex regulatory landscape.

The EUDR’s scope covers a range of products, with wood-based items facing some of the most stringent requirements. As Gerard highlights: ‘Wood products, deeply connected to harvesting, are now under even greater scrutiny with “degradation-free” requirements. FSC’s established framework aligns closely with these expectations, offering a reliable pathway for companies to demonstrate that their products meet the new standards.’

FSC is not just resting on its laurels but actively aligning its certification standards with EUDR requirements to support its certificate holders. By 31 December 2024, businesses must be fully EUDR-compliant, which involves proving that their forest-based products are legal, not sourced from deforested lands, and do not contribute to degradation. ‘We’re taking the guesswork out of compliance,’ he adds. ‘Our FSC Aligned for EUDR Regulatory module and risk management tools take care of identifying and mitigating risks.’

The EUDR mandates that exporters to Europe establish a due diligence system. FSC’s Aligned for EUDR module enables data collection on transactions and risks, generating reports for authorities. FSC certificate holders can use FSC Trace, a secure blockchain, to trace products back to their source forests and share essential data, ensuring EUDR compliance.





S&G's bold leap into retail experience innovation

Shave & Gibson (S&G) has taken a strategic step forward with its recent acquisition of Barrows Khula's corrugated division.

THIS move not only strengthens S&G's capabilities in the paper and board sector, but also marks the company's ambitious entry into the point-of-sale (POS) and corrugated pop-up display business. Richard Downes, managing director of S&G, elaborates on this transformative acquisition and its potential to revolutionise retail experiences in South Africa.

Richard opens up about the origins of this acquisition, highlighting the established relationship between S&G and Barrows Khula. 'We've had a long-standing relationship with Barrows Khula. They often have campaigns where they manage the point of sale (POS), the actual display sets, and we have assisted with the printing on a larger scale on the packaging side,' Richard explains. This synergy between the two companies laid the groundwork for a deeper collaboration, ultimately leading to the acquisition of Barrows Khula's corrugated division.



The acquisition was not merely about machinery and facilities, but about integrating processes to optimise production. 'The shorter runs are geared for high-value, multiple component promotional materials, while high-volume orders can be efficiently managed by our folding carton division,' he elaborates. This dual capability ensures that S&G can cater to both bespoke promotional campaigns and large-scale packaging needs.

Expanding into the POS market

S&G's foray into the POS and corrugated pop-up display business is a significant expansion, catalysed by the acquisition of Barrows Khula's corrugated division. Barrows Khula is renowned for creating immersive retail experiences and S&G now takes over the manufacturing side of the corrugated display side of the broader Barrows business. 'There's a lot of potential growth and future prospects in the point-of-sale market in South Africa,' Richard asserts. 'We're going to try and incorporate our expertise to really grow the pop-up display and in-store promotional experience for brands and retailers.'

The focus on corrugated displays presents a specialised offering compared to Barrows' emphasis on electronic, metal and plastic displays. Richard highlights the advantages of corrugated displays, noting their cost-effectiveness and durability. 'Although cardboard displays could be considered more temporary in terms of its product lifecycle, they can last for months, if not years,' he points out.

Navigating the integration process

In addition to the physical re-siting of the plant, integrating Barrows Khula's corrugated division into S&G's existing framework presents its own set of

challenges and opportunities. Richard acknowledges the complexities involved in this integration, especially considering the distinct nature of the POS market. 'This will be a stand-alone division within S&G's operation,' he explains. The primary focus is on streamlining operations and ensuring a smooth transition before exploring potential synergies.

S&G is also mindful of the differences in customer bases between the traditional packaging services and new POS division. 'Although the customers are similar, the people that we deal with in both divisions are totally different,' Richard says. This necessitates a tailored approach to customer management and service delivery.

Embracing digital innovation

The shift towards digital printing is another exciting aspect of this acquisition. While digital printing offers quick makeready times and flexibility, it also presents challenges in terms of cost and quality. 'The big drawcard of digital versus litho printing is the quick makeready times,' Richard notes the make-ready advantages of digital printing, while also acknowledging the ongoing competition between digital and traditional litho printing.

S&G is keen on exploring digital solutions to enhance its offerings. 'We'll definitely explore it. The digital presentations at drupa were extensive, and digital print is growing. But, there's still a fight back from litho,' he observes. The integration of digital elements could unlock new creative possibilities and efficiencies in production processes.



Looking ahead

With the acquisition of Barrows Khula's corrugated division, S&G is poised to expand its product offerings and enhance its service capabilities. Richard is optimistic about the future, emphasising the potential for innovation and creativity. 'I think the ambit of the product offering within the paper sphere has certainly grown,' he says. 'The addition of the POS and corrugated pop-up display business opens new avenues for S&G to deliver unique, high-impact retail solutions.'

Barrows will continue to operate in the more permanent and digital display solutions. sg displays (the official name of the new division) will continue working with Barrows in the short-term while the new entity is transitioned into the S&G stable. On a longer term basis, Barrows and sg displays' partnership offers a comprehensive solution to customers.

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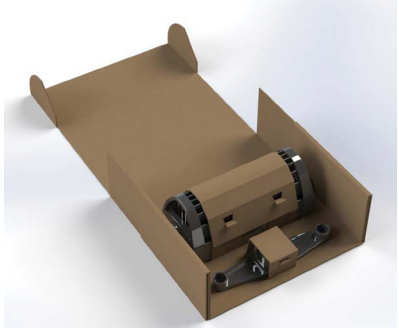


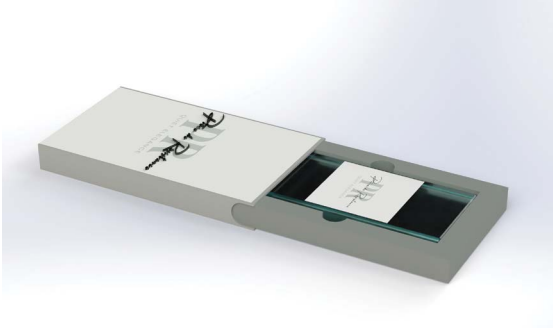
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Mastering the art of packaging design

In the competitive world of board packaging, where the demand for sustainability and innovation drives business decisions, **Iron Forest Packaging (IFP)** has been redefining carton packaging with a sharp focus on technical design that balances environmental responsibility with cost efficiency.

WHAT began as a side hustle for IFP's managing director Bernard Verwey soon transformed into a fully fledged business. He started out creating packaging designs for automotive parts. But this grew into something much bigger, especially during the pandemic when companies reached out for hand sanitiser packaging solutions. That's when IFP officially came into existence in September 2020.

During the early stages, IFP partnered with some of the most robust corrugated and cartonboard converters in South Africa. This collaboration allowed the company to provide high-quality packaging quickly, meeting the urgent needs of businesses during the global crisis. However, the company's breakthrough moment came when it was approached by an automotive component manufacturer facing severe damage issues with its exported bicycle carriers. IFP's innovative redesign of the packaging not only solved the damage problem, but also significantly reduced the environmental impact by replacing polystyrene inserts with self-locking corrugated inserts.

Customer-centric innovation

IFP's technical design capabilities push the boundaries of what packaging can achieve. The designs are not off-the-shelf solutions, but bespoke creations that cater to the specific needs of each customer.

Bernard and his team are committed to finding eco-friendly solutions that meet the complex needs of customers. 'We wanted to do things differently,' remarks Dorette Calitz, the company's technical sales manager. 'Our approach is not just about meeting a specification, it's about understanding our customers' processes, identifying their struggles and offering innovative solutions that improve efficiency and reduce environmental impact.'

By conducting thorough assessments of customers' packaging needs, the team can provide solutions that save money not just on packaging materials, but also on process times, damage reductions and returns. 'We don't just sell boxes,' Bernard asserts. 'We offer a comprehensive service that includes design, implementation and ongoing support, ensuring that our solutions continue to deliver value over time.'

By leveraging advanced CAD software, IFP is able to create packaging designs that maximise strength and durability while minimising material usage. This technical precision translates directly into cost savings for customers. For instance, by reducing excess material in packaging without sacrificing integrity, businesses see significant reductions in raw material costs and shipping expenses.

Moreover, IFP's team shares insights into their process of continuous testing and iteration. They conduct rigorous stress tests on prototypes to identify potential weak points and optimise the design accordingly. 'This not only enhances the product's protection, but also prevents costly product damage and returns, further saving businesses money,' Bernard adds.

Expanding horizons

Key to IFP's success is its small but highly skilled team. With over 12 years of experience in the automotive industry, Bernard brings a wealth of knowledge in process optimisation and design. Dorette, a trained packaging technologist, has a deep understanding of packaging materials and extensive experience in the printing industry. Her expertise in ISO 9001 standards and manufacturing processes adds a critical layer of quality assurance to IFP's offerings.

Dorette's contributions have already yielded significant results. She recounts a project with GM Graphix where a simple redesign of packaging for printing plates resulted in savings of nearly 60%. 'It's about more than just saving money,' Dorette explains. 'It's about improving the entire process, from the way materials are handled to how they are stored and protected. Our solutions extend the lifespan of products and reduce waste, which is a win for both our customers and the environment.'

IFP is not content with resting on its laurels. The company has big plans for the future, including the potential establishment of a small production facility in Gauteng by 2025. This facility will further strengthen IFP's ability to support converters and offer specialised services such as die cutting, hand gluing and stitching. 'Although we've flown under the radar without a proper facility,' Bernard admits, 'we're now ready to take the next step and scale our operations.'

Smashing stereotypes

Samantha Schepetin, director at **Colmax Trading**, has been rocking the packaging world for over two decades, smashing stereotypes and proving that women belong front and centre in this industry. With insights as sharp as a box cutter, she's championing the cause for women everywhere to break the mould and make their mark in packaging and print.

SAMANTHA's career began 23 years ago in Boksburg with a label company, a role she secured through a friend's recommendation. Initially, she sold labels, but soon transitioned to supplying pressure-sensitive label stock to printers – a pivotal move that kept her captivated by the industry.

This shift allowed Samantha to forge strong relationships with customers across South Africa, relationships that have endured over the years. 'Honestly, if I had continued trying to sell labels, my career in print would have been short-lived,' she reflects. Instead, becoming a supplier allowed her to engage with a diverse range of people and see her products come to life on store shelves, a source of immense satisfaction.

Samantha emphasises the significance of women's representation in print and packaging. 'It has generally been a male-dominated industry,' she explains. 'It's so important for the industry to see and understand that we should be closing that gender gap and allowing strong, confident women to spread their wings.' She believes that when women are given the opportunity to develop and grow in this industry, it leads to more influential roles being offered up, fostering an environment of inclusivity and growth.

Samantha advocates nurturing young female talent by educating and promoting their involvement in the industry. 'Our industry members should focus on creating an environment where people from all walks of life are welcomed, nurtured and valued,' she says. 'By doing so, they can cultivate talent that thrives at all levels, ensuring diverse voices contribute to the future.'

Navigating challenges with resilience

Being a woman in a predominantly male industry has not been without its challenges. Samantha acknowledges that women need to develop a 'thick outer shell' to navigate the working environment. Early in her career, she sometimes felt her ideas weren't taken seriously. However, with experience and resilience, Samantha learned to walk with confidence and purpose, making her voice heard. 'It wasn't about bullying my way in, but working hard, forging relationships and gently reminding the industry that even as a woman, I had value to offer,' she asserts.

Throughout her career, Samantha has been fortunate to work alongside remarkable women who uplift and encourage each other. She believes in identifying and encouraging women to be the best versions of themselves, reminding them that their best is good enough. 'A good old pat on the back and receiving a "well done" or "good job" is always well received,' she shares. Samantha's approach to supporting women is simple yet powerful: be that woman who encourages others to thrive.

> "Be true to who you are. Be bold and confident, but not arrogant. Take it all in and thank the people along the way who give you time, advice and their pearls of wisdom."

Reflecting on her journey, Samantha offers valuable advice to her younger self and future generations: 'Be true to who you are. Be bold and confident, but not arrogant. You are never so well-versed that you have nothing to learn. Take it all in and thank the people along the way who give you time, advice and their pearls of wisdom.' These words encapsulate her philosophy of continuous learning and gratitude, guiding principles that have shaped her successful career.

In the ever-evolving world of packaging and print, Samantha's journey inspires us to break barriers, support one another and create a more inclusive industry for all.



Quirky Q&A

Read any good books lately? *Rise* by Siya Kolisi.
Spirit animal? Bear.
Name one song to play every time you walk into a room? *Girl on Fire* by Alicia Keys.
If you could have any superpower? Invisibility.
Which actress would play you in a movie about your life? Anne Hathaway.
Your last meal? Well-done lamb chops on the braai.



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Paving the way for women

Driven by a commitment to sustainability, an instinct for innovation and a fierce advocacy for gender diversity, **Penny Ntuli**, group communications manager at **Mpact**, is more than a player in the industry, she's a force shaping its direction.

PENNY's journey in the packaging industry began at Tetra Pak, where she served as the director of communication for Southern Africa and GMEA: cluster lead for public affairs.

It was here that Penny discovered the profound impact packaging can have – not just on product preservation, but also on sustainability and public health. 'What made me stay in the industry was the opportunity to contribute to meaningful change – promoting innovations that not only protect and preserve products, but also minimise environmental impact,' she recalls.

For Penny, the packaging industry is more than just a career, it's a platform for driving change. This passion is evident in her advocacy for women's representation in the sector. 'Women's representation in packaging and print is crucial because diversity in perspectives leads to more innovative solutions,' she explains. Penny firmly believes that when women



are involved in decision-making processes, the industry benefits from a broader range of ideas and approaches, particularly in areas like sustainability, design and consumer engagement.

But Penny's journey hasn't been without its challenges. Navigating a male-dominated industry and balancing work-life responsibilities have been significant hurdles. 'One of the most significant barriers I've faced has been gender bias,' she notes. However, these challenges have also shaped her resilience and determination, fuelling her advocacy for greater equity and support for women in the industry.

Inspiring the next generation of women to pursue careers in packaging and print is another cause close to Penny's heart. She emphasises the importance of showcasing the industry's potential for creativity, innovation and impact. 'Offering mentorship programmes, internships and educational workshops can help young women see the diverse opportunities available,' she suggests. Penny believes that highlighting the stories of successful women in the industry can serve as powerful inspiration, showing that women, too, can lead and innovate in this field.

Her commitment to supporting other women in the industry is unwavering. Penny advocates for the creation of networks where women can celebrate each other's successes and offer guidance during challenges. 'Women can support each other by actively mentoring and sharing opportunities,' she says. Moreover, Penny underscores the importance of advocating for policies and practices that promote gender equality in the workplace, ensuring that all women have the resources and support they need to thrive.

Reflecting on her career, Penny offers sage advice to her younger self and, by extension, to the next generation of women in packaging: 'Embrace every challenge as a learning opportunity and never underestimate the power of persistence. Don't be afraid to take risks and remember that your voice and perspective are valuable.'

Quirky Q&A

Ready any good books lately? *The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment* by Eckhart Tolle.
Your spirit animal? Lioness.
Two non-essential items you would want if shipwrecked on a deserted island? Comfortable blanket and chocolate.
Name one song to play every time you walk into a room? *Rise Up* by Andra Day.
If you could have any superpower? Ability to heal others.
Which actress would play you in a movie about your life? Jessica Chastain.
Your last meal? Home-made food (dumplings, beef stew, chicken and veggies).

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Morgancoat: where innovation meets local craftsmanship

Morgancoat isn't just another name in the self-adhesive label-stock market – it's a brand that breathes life into the labels you see every day. At the heart of this South African company lies a commitment to quality, sustainability and innovation, all driven by a passion for crafting exceptional pressure-sensitive label materials.

'WE pride ourselves on quality and service,' comments managing director Marc Black. 'From barcode labels to full-colour product labels, there's a good chance that the labels you encounter daily started life right here in our factory.'

Morgancoat excels in local coating and laminating, offering expertise in crafting application-specific, custom-tailored solutions to meet unique product requirements. The company sources high-quality raw materials, including paper, film and adhesives, from the world's leading mills. These materials are then transformed into top-tier pressure-sensitive label stock at Morgancoat's state-of-the-art smart factory in Durban. The facility boasts multiple converting lines, guaranteeing a reliable supply of high-quality material to support Southern Africa's thriving market.

Capacity has been further enhanced with the addition of a new high-speed, fully automatic hotmelt coating line, designed for export opportunities and speciality products. 'With a potential annual single-shift output of 100 million square metres, we have ample capacity to meet a significant portion of market demand without straining our operations,' Marc says.









Morgancoat's customers, who operate some of the industry's most advanced label printing equipment, trust the company's products to deliver exceptional results. Once printed and die-cut, the converted rolls of labels are supplied to brand owners and end-users, ready for application across a diverse range of products.

'Our factory is designed for efficiency,' Marc explains. 'Nearly every process has been systematised and automated, not to replace our team but to elevate their capabilities and allow them to focus on their core strengths. Our dedicated team of in-house software developers, expertly led by Tom Van Den Bon, our lead developer and systems architect, ensures these systems run seamlessly and are continuously improved.'

Smart solutions for a rapid market

To keep pace with the fast-moving demands of today's businesses, Morgancoat introduced **MC Express**, an on-demand delivery service tailored for Cape Town and its surrounding areas. MC Express operates like clockwork, leveraging a live online catalogue that lets customers order their stock directly from a dedicated portal. Within four to six hours, pre-made label stock is delivered, ensuring that customers have what they need, exactly when they need it.

'MC Express is our way of adapting to the needs of a market that demands speed and reliability,' remarks sales director Brendon Toontas. 'We carry a variety of common sizes, and if you need something specific, let us know – we'll make sure it's available on demand.' According to Brendon, the swift success of MC Express indicates that expanding into other regions or territories is likely on the horizon, with a potential franchise model also being considered.

Morgancoat's success isn't just about machines and materials – it's about people. The company's 60-plus staff are the backbone of its operations, and their welfare is a top priority. A fully equipped on-site restaurant provides balanced meals throughout the day, while top-notch entertainment facilities and a functional gym ensure that employees stay fit, healthy and happy.





'We believe that a healthy, well-cared-for team is key to our success,' Marc states. 'It's not just about providing a job, it's about creating an environment where people can thrive.'

Sustainability at the core

Morgancoat's commitment to sustainability goes beyond words – it's a driving force behind every decision. As a proud member and certified FSC certificate holder, Morgancoat ensures the chain-of-custody for all its paper products, supporting responsible forestry practices. The company is also a registered member of EWASA, actively participating in recycling initiatives and the reduction of landfill waste.

'Sustainability is a key priority in all our decisions, which is why I accepted a position on the board of directors at EWASA,' Marc emphasises. 'We're constantly working on projects to reduce our carbon footprint and create products that support the drive towards being carbon neutral.'

Morgancoat's efforts include a grid-tied solar array that generates almost 50% of the factory's energy needs and innovative product development that offers up to a 15% yield benefit, reducing the carbon footprint with more labels per roll, more rolls per box and more boxes per load.

Looking ahead

Morgancoat's journey is far from over. With a portfolio that includes fully-recyclable paper alternatives for traditional multi-layer packaging, an entry into the shrink sleeve market and a relentless focus on innovation, Morgancoat is poised to lead the industry into a sustainable future.

'Why not support local?' asks Marc. 'Do your labels come from Morgancoat?'

With over 160 active customers, 258 product lines, 17 MWh of solar energy generated monthly and four tons of CO_2 reduction each month, Morgancoat isn't just making labels – it's making a difference.

Joining forces with women-owned equity partners

IN 2022, Morgancoat took a significant step in its growth journey by partnering with SummerPlace Equity Partners. SummerPlace, a women-owned and managed private equity fund, focuses on investing in medium-sized South African businesses with strong growth potential and sustainable employment creation.

'Joining forces with SummerPlace has opened new avenues for us,' MD Marc Black enthuses. 'We're now the only BBBEE-rated label stock manufacturer in the country with a level three rating. It's not just about financial growth; it's about aligning with partners who share our values and our vision for the future.'

Leading with heart and grit

In the bustling heart of Johannesburg, **Debbie Sacher** is the powerhouse sales director at **Rebsons Labels**. She's not just steering the ship, she's the engine driving it full throttle. With her relentless drive and sharp expertise, Debbie is a force of nature in the label printing industry, commanding both respect and admiration.

HAVING transitioned from London to South Africa, Debbie has dedicated many years to Rebsons, climbing the ranks through sheer determination and passion. Her journey, as Benny Friedman, owner and managing director of Rebsons Labels, recalls, began humbly in sales, culminating in her current role as the sales director. 'Debbie embodies the spirit of dedication and loyalty. Her journey with us is a testament to her resilience and commitment,' Benny notes.

Working alongside industry stalwarts like her father-in-law, Benny, and her brother Ivor, Debbie has crafted a legacy within the company. Her ability to seamlessly integrate into every facet of the business – finances, sales, dispatch and even the factory floor – speaks volumes about her versatility and comprehensive knowledge. Benny adds: 'Debbie is not just a leader; she's a role model who isn't afraid to get her hands dirty. Her technical prowess is matched only by her willingness to jump into the trenches with her team.'

Debbie's reputation for forging strong, lasting relationships with customers has been instrumental in attracting major accounts. Her approach is straightforward and authentic, a trait that customers and colleagues alike have come to admire. 'Debbie doesn't just close deals, she builds partnerships. Her knack for connecting with people is unmatched,' Benny elaborates.

In the high-pressure environment of label printing, Debbie remains a steady hand, known for her calm demeanour and composed leadership. Her ability to stay collected under pressure inspires confidence in her team, fostering an environment where everyone can perform at their best. 'When the going gets tough, Debbie remains our pillar of strength,' Benny observes. 'Her energy is infectious, and her presence is reassuring.'

Debbie's fierce advocacy for women empowerment in the workplace is particularly noteworthy. She actively mentors and uplifts female employees, encouraging them to transcend perceived limitations. Benny highlights Debbie's commitment to nurturing potential: 'She's a champion for female advancement, always urging women to aim higher and recognise their own potential. Debbie's mentorship has transformed careers and her impact is felt company-wide.'

Debbie's leadership style is a blend of assertiveness and empathy. Her petite frame belies a formidable presence that commands respect without overshadowing her innate compassion. 'Debbie is a force of nature – resilient yet kind. She supports staff in their professional and personal lives, always ready to lend a helping hand,' Benny remarks.

For those at Rebsons Labels, Debbie is more than just a boss. She is a confidant, a mentor and an unwavering ally. Her leadership is characterised by a delicate balance of strength and sensitivity, making her both a formidable executive and a beloved figure within the company. As Benny succinctly puts it: 'Debbie leads with both heart and grit. Her influence extends far beyond her title, leaving an lasting impression on everyone she encounters.'

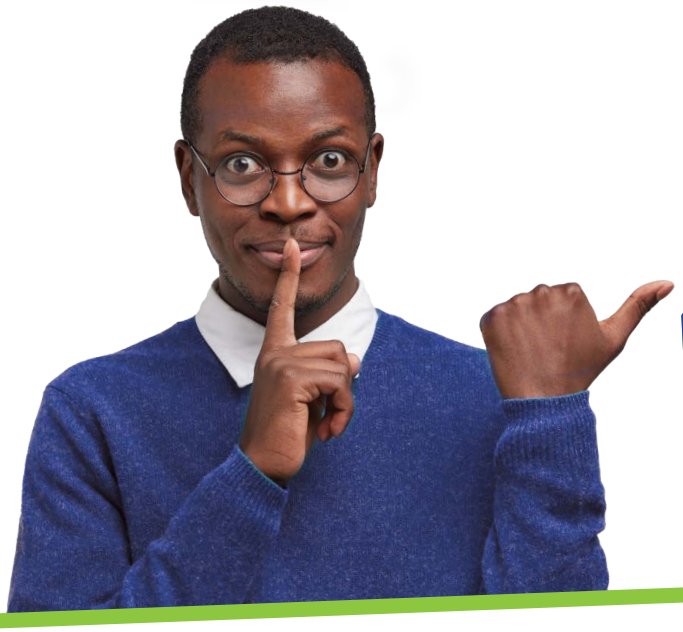
As she celebrates her 59th birthday on 29 August, Debbie continues to inspire and empower, embodying the true essence of leadership in the labelling industry. Her story is one of passion, perseverance and profound impact – a narrative that continues to unfold with each new challenge and triumph.



Quirky Q&A

Read any good books lately? *The Fugitive Princesses of Dubai* by Heidi Blake.
Your spirit animal? Dolphin.
Two non-essential items you would want if shipwrecked on a deserted island? Laptop and internet (to do some work and binge my Netflix shows).
Name one song to play every time you walk into a room? *Summer of '69* by Bryan Adams.
If you could have any superpower? Ability to equally divide time between work and home.
Your last meal? Prawns, sole and salmon with lemon butter sauce, and a huge pack of wine gums.

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Lynne Robertson (sales consultant), Phumzile Dlamini (sales and marketing manager) and Sarah Sonnenberg (managing director).

Empowering growth through inclusivity

When you step into the **Synchron Markings** offices in Cape Town, the vibrant energy of its all-women team is immediately palpable. This dynamic team, represented by MD **Sarah Sonnenberg**, sales consultant **Lynne Robertson** and sales and marketing manager **Phumzile Dlamini**, represents a compelling narrative of growth, strategic leadership and innovation in the packaging industry.

SARAH's journey into the packaging world began serendipitously with a holiday job at Synchron Markings. Her father, Alan Gillet, purchased the company in 1991 and Sarah, fresh from varsity in 1994, found herself immersed in this burgeoning industry.

Through dedication and a keen understanding of market needs, Sarah carved out a niche in brand protection and document authentication, leading projects such as providing security foils for prepaid phone cards across the African continent. With a 13-year tenure on the board of Bowler-Metcalf and a role as regional chair for Africa for the Young Presidents Organisation (YPO), Sarah exemplifies the dynamic influence women bring to the packaging industry. Her passion for the industry deepened as she pursued courses through the Institute of Packaging South Africa (IPSA) and forged strong partnerships, notably with the highly innovative Leonhard KURZ.

Sarah advocates strongly for women's representation in packaging and print. 'Women are the biggest consumers of goods, often the purchasers and users. Having women involved right from the design and concept stage gives a better perspective on finding innovative solutions within the field,' she asserts.

Synchron Markings is a testament to this ethos, with women organically rising to leadership roles. 'I've often tried to reflect how that happened. I think having women in leadership roles made other women feel safe and that they could have aspirations within the organisation,' Sarah muses. This inclusive environment fosters a unique dynamic, enriching both work teams and boardroom discussions.

To attract young talent to the packaging sector, Sarah stresses the need for greater collaboration between educational institutions and the industry. 'There's a definite disconnect between the industry and design and packaging academies and universities,' she observes. 'Bridging this gap is vital for nurturing the next generation of designers and innovators.'

Sarah's career has seen its share of challenges, particularly in navigating the complexities of a family business. Her involvement with YPO has provided a global network for learning and leadership development. She emphasises the importance of mentorship, advising: 'Just do it. Take the risk and make the mistakes. Tap into real knowledge and ask for input.'

Quirky Q&A

Your spirit animal? Eagle.
Two non-essential items you would want if shipwrecked on a deserted island? My mountain bike and a friend.
If you could have any superpower? Infinite energy.
Your last meal? Lamb chops and mashed potatoes.

Power of mentorship

The experienced Lynne Robertson, sales consultant at Synchron Markings, has been a key advocate for women's involvement in the traditionally male-dominated packaging and print industry. Her journey began unexpectedly with a three-year in-house apprenticeship as a photolithographer after matriculating. 'Starting in a male-dominated industry

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was challenging,' Lynne reflects. 'Finding acceptance was a significant hurdle, but perseverance and dedication paid off.'

At Synchron Markings, specialists in architectural fabrics, foil stamping for packaging and labelling design and decorative adhesive paper, Lynne leverages her extensive experience to provide bespoke solutions that enhance operational efficiency and product quality.

She affirms the importance of women in the industry, stating: 'Women bring a different element to print and can offer skills and expertise from a unique approach.'

Lynne emphasises the power of mentorship and networking, advocating for a supportive community that fosters growth and development. Her advice to her younger self encapsulates this philosophy: 'Life is an unpredictable journey and nothing, nor you yourself, are perfect. So don't take things so seriously.'

Drive and creativity

Phumzile Dlamini, the sales and marketing manager at Synchron Markings, epitomises the drive and creativity propelling the packaging and print industry forward. Her career began with a temporary admin role at Novus Holdings, which transitioned into the Print Sales Trainee Programme at Novus Academy. 'The programme offered in-depth, on-the-job training that covered everything from pre-press to planning and printing,' she explains.

Phumzile's passion for design and the industry's continuous evolution fuels her commitment to the packaging and print sector. 'Seeing our work on store shelves and knowing it helps brands connect with customers is incredibly rewarding,' she says.

Phumzile underscores the importance of diverse perspectives. 'Women bring creativity, innovation and a balanced approach to decision-making,' she asserts. Her mentors, all women, have guided and inspired her, reinforcing the need for more female representation.

Phumzile emphasises showcasing the creative and innovative aspects of packaging and print to attract young women to the industry. 'Highlighting successful women through interviews and mentorship programmes can inspire the next generation,' she suggests. Despite the challenges she has faced, including transitioning from public management to a technical field, Phumzile's resilience has driven her success.

Her advice to her younger self highlights the importance of continuous learning, taking calculated risks and upholding values and ethical standards.

The collective achievements of Sarah, Lynne and Phumzile highlight the transformative power of women in the packaging and print industry. Their journeys inspire future generations of women ready to make their mark in this dynamic field. At Synchron Markings, the future is bright, led by a team of dedicated, innovative and resilient women.

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Trempak's playbook: innovating amid supply chain chaos

AS the flexible packaging industry in South Africa grapples with unprecedented challenges, companies like Trempak are pioneering adaptive strategies to maintain resilience and foster growth. Brenda Harris, head of marketing, provides a candid overview of the current landscape, highlighting both obstacles and opportunities.

According to Brenda, the most pressing issue isn't the shortage of raw materials but the extended shipping periods exacerbated by delays at South African ports. 'These disruptions, coupled with the industry's shift toward recyclable film structures, have intensified reliance on imported substrates.'

She emphasises that this reliance necessitates significant investment in stock, tying up capital and demanding additional warehousing space. 'Compounding the problem, soaring shipping costs have tightened margins, making it imperative for businesses to rethink their approach to supply chain management,' Brenda comments.

In response, Trempak has doubled down on digital printing and matching finishing technologies. 'These innovations support just-in-time (JIT) supply chain strategies, enhancing flexibility and allowing smaller, local businesses to compete with global brands. The result is a more dynamic market, filled with a diverse range of products that benefit consumers with increased innovation and competitive pricing,' she explains.

Moreover, Trempak is emphasising cost-saving initiatives, waste reduction and on-time-in-full (OTIF) deliveries. Brenda believes collaborative efforts with customers to streamline costs across the supply chain are crucial in maintaining efficiency despite the hurdles.

She underscores the value of human insight in this technology-driven environment, particularly in understanding and anticipating market trends. 'As companies continue to integrate advanced ERP systems and tailor their platforms to customer needs, the blend of human expertise and cutting-edge technology will be key to navigating the complexities of the flexible packaging industry,' Brenda concludes.

Navigating supply chain turbulence

In the face of ongoing supply chain challenges, the flexible packaging industry is navigating a complex landscape marked by raw material shortages, shipping delays and fluctuating costs. Yet, amid these difficulties, companies such as **Packaging World** are embracing innovation and investment to maintain a competitive edge.

JILL CELLIERS, managing director of Packaging World, offers an insightful perspective on the current state of the industry and the strategic moves the company is making to address these challenges.

'Right now, the supply chain is our biggest hurdle,' Jill explains. 'It's a double-edged sword. On one hand, we have local customers hesitant to place orders far in advance due to market uncertainties. On the other hand, the raw materials, whether locally sourced or imported, all face import-related complexities. The South African economy is showing growth in some areas, such as retail, while others are not faring as well. It's a conflicting market environment.'

Despite these challenges, Jill highlights the robustness of the South African packaging industry. 'South Africans are incredibly resilient,' she remarks. 'We adapt to economic volatility and labour cost increases in ways that our counterparts in more stable economies might not fully grasp. At Packaging World, we've seen notable growth this year, particularly in the fresh produce and spice sectors. South Africans consume a lot of spices, often driven by our meat-rich diets. This demand, along with growth in the pharmaceutical sector, has provided us with exciting opportunities.'

Packaging World is proactively addressing these challenges through strategic investments in technology and infrastructure. The company recently announced its plans to install a state-of-the-art Windmöller & Holscher (W&H) ALPHAFLEX CI flexo press at its Pinetown facility by early 2025. This

move underscores Packaging World's commitment to leveraging advanced technology to enhance productivity, reduce costs and shorten lead times.

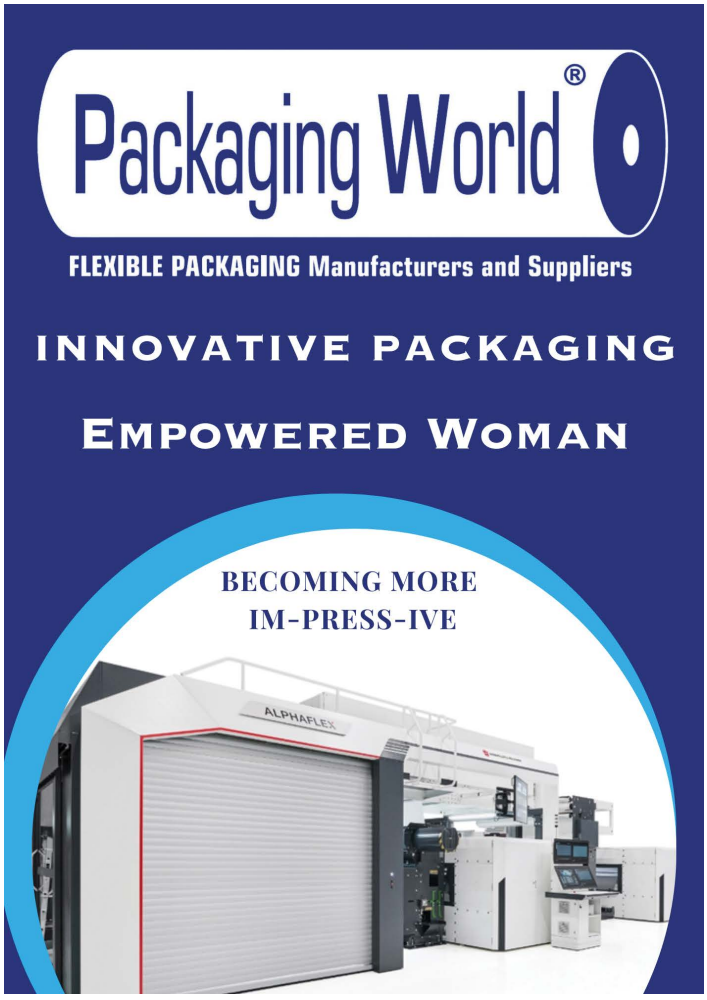
'We're thrilled about the new ALPHAFLEX press,' she shares. 'This press will open doors for us to explore new market avenues and increase our production efficiency. By moving to a wider platform, we can streamline costs and potentially pass savings on to our customers. It's not just about increasing capacity, it's about unlocking new opportunities across our production line. We're planning to expand our workforce significantly to accommodate this new press and the growth it promises.'

Jill also acknowledges the importance of education and skills development in sustaining industry growth. 'We're working with Printing SA and the Institute of Packaging South Africa (IPSA) to develop training programmes tailored to flexible packaging,' she notes. 'There is a noticeable gap in education for this field, which we need to bridge. Young people need to see the potential in this industry. It's about creating excitement and awareness at school level, showing them the possibilities in print and packaging.'

As the flexible packaging industry continues to evolve, Jill emphasises the need for South African manufacturers to expand their reach both locally and internationally. 'We export a significant amount, particularly in the fresh produce and seafood sectors,' she says. 'However, there's untapped potential in Africa. We need to increase our exports to and imports from African markets. It's a crucial area for growth that we're actively exploring.'

> "South Africans are incredible resilient. We adapt to economic volatility and labour cost increases in ways that our counterparts in more stable economies might not fully grasp."

Packaging World's response to the challenges facing the flexible packaging industry highlights the company's resilience and forward-thinking approach. By investing in cutting-edge technology, expanding its market reach and fostering education and skills development, the team is setting a standard for navigating the complexities of the modern supply chain. As Jill aptly puts it: 'It's a balancing act, but with the right strategies and investments, we're poised for continued growth and success.'



An advocate for empowerment

IN the context of our Women's Month special, Jill Celliers reflects on the pivotal role of women in the print and packaging industries.

She emphasises her advocacy for empowering women, highlighting that nearly 80% of Packaging World's management and sales teams are women. 'This represents a significant shift from my earlier career at Nampak, where I was often the only female in management. There has been some serious progress made towards female leadership in these fields,' Jill comments.

She believes that the key to impactful leadership lies in embracing the unique qualities women bring to the table. 'Historically, women have been apologetic about their softer, gentler approach to business,' Jill observes, 'but we should embrace who we are and empower our female workforce.' She notes the importance of fostering environments where women can lead authentically, without conforming to traditional male leadership styles.

Jill's insights highlight the ongoing evolution in the industry, where women are increasingly stepping into leadership roles.

Flexible packaging: seizing opportunities in export

Despite having access to world-class technology and a wealth of industry expertise, South African flexible packaging manufacturers are struggling to make their mark on the global stage. While the potential for export is undeniable, numerous challenges are holding back the industry. **Paul Clark**, managing director of **Adex Plastics & Machinery**, sheds light on these hurdles, revealing why South African companies, despite their innovation and resilience, are not exporting as much as they could be.

IN the dynamic realm of flexible packaging, few voices resonate with the experience and insights of Adex's Paul Clark. Established in 1998, Adex has become a cornerstone in the southern African packaging industry, supplying machinery and setting up plants specialising in flexibles, recycling, film blowing and much more. However, despite the cutting-edge technology available and the innovative strides made by companies like Adex, the South African packaging industry faces significant hurdles, particularly in exporting its products.

Paul's journey is as robust as the industry he serves. From starting as a machine operator to managing a recycling plant, later supplying conversion equipment and eventually founding Adex Plastics & Machinery, Paul has witnessed the evolution of the industry firsthand. 'We've been supplying machinery and completing projects all over southern Africa since then,' he recalls, highlighting Adex's contributions, from film blowing machines to recycling plants and high-speed bag-on-roll machinery. Yet, despite this success, Paul emphasises the persistent challenges that stifle the growth of South African companies on the global stage.

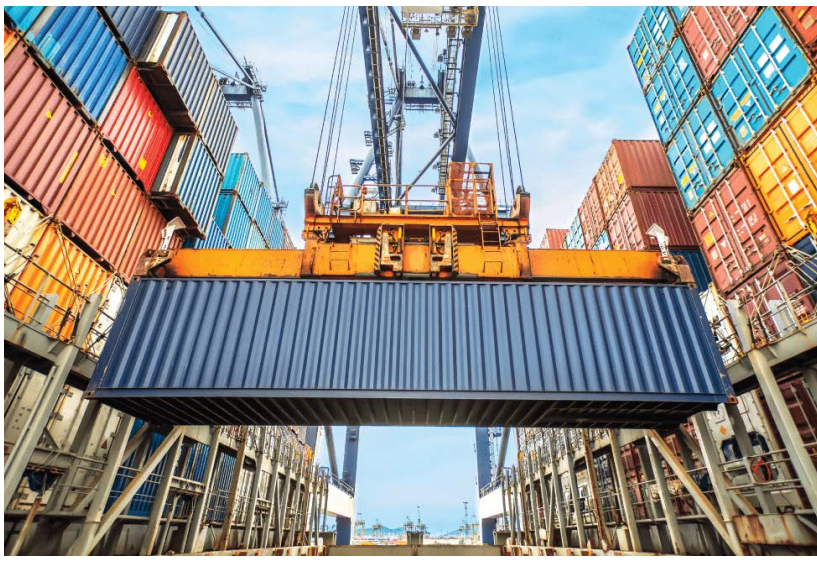
One of the most pressing issues is the high cost of importing parts and technology. 'International OEMs haven't dramatically increased their machine prices; it's our currency that's the problem,' he explains. The volatile exchange rates and hefty import duties make it challenging for local companies to stay competitive. A simple machine part can quickly balloon in cost due to VAT, import surcharges and shipping fees. These added costs make it difficult for South African companies to justify the investment in the latest technologies, which are essential for competing globally.

Moreover, the logistical nightmares of load-shedding and port delays add further strain. 'Load-shedding can take 50 tons out of a company's production – that's 30% of the turnover, which is its profit,' Paul notes. The ripple effect of these challenges is profound, with companies forced into a vicious cycle of cash flow struggles, escalating costs and reduced output. 'The infrastructure failure, whether it's rail or port issues, just escalates the costs for everyone,' he laments.

Yet, despite these obstacles, Paul sees resilience and innovation as the industry's saving grace. 'South Africans are innovative. For example, what we've been doing with recycled refuse bags is well in advance of what many other countries are doing,' he says. This spirit of innovation is crucial as the industry faces increasing pressure to improve sustainability and efficiency levels.

The question then arises: why aren't South African companies exporting more? Paul attributes this to a combination of political and logistical factors. 'We're paying for the same technology as companies anywhere in the world. So why can't we encourage exports? It's because we're so focused on internal political and labour issues rather than taking the whole country forward,' he asserts. The lack of incentives for training and employing people in the industry further exacerbates the issue, making it difficult to attract and retain young talent.

While the South African flexible packaging industry is brimming with potential, unlocking it requires overcoming significant challenges. As Paul suggests, it's time to shift the focus towards creating opportunities for export and investing in the technology and people that will drive the industry forward. Only then can South Africa truly capitalise on its innovative spirit and compete on the global stage.



Outmanoeuvring cost crunches

As the South African flexible packaging industry faces rising raw material costs and soaring shipping expenses, companies are innovating to stay competitive. **Dhiren Patel**, managing director of **Nurscon Flexibles**, offers a glimpse into how the company is navigating these challenges, driving advancements and setting new standards for efficiency and sustainability.

NURSCON FLEXIBLES, established by the Dosani family in 1997, has evolved from a modest operation into a leading force in flexible packaging. From its 14 500m² state-of-the-art production facility in Longmeadow to an additional brand new 5 000m² standalone production facility in Linbro Park, Johannesburg, the company caters to diverse sectors, including confectioneries, snack foods and detergents. Despite its impressive growth and technological advancements, Dhiren acknowledges the mounting pressures on the industry.

'There are no shortages of raw materials per se,' Dhiren explains. 'The real issue lies in the soaring shipping costs, which impact our ability to maintain consistent pricing for our customers. Unexpected and inconsistent cost fluctuations mean that by the time we can adjust our prices, the costs often revert to their original levels, leaving us unable to recover our expenses.'



This volatility forces Nurscon to order raw materials well in advance – typically three to four weeks – thus affecting cash flow and incurring additional costs. Dhiren notes: 'This pre-emptive ordering helps mitigate delays, but inevitably strains our financial resources.'

Technology for enhanced productivity

Despite these challenges, Nurscon is committed to enhancing productivity through cutting-edge technology. Dhiren highlights several key advancements driving efficiency in flexible packaging.

'Printing machine manufacturers are pushing boundaries by increasing machine speeds and improving drying systems,' he says. 'Recent investments include better inking systems, which have



reduced ink usage by 20% on our new Windmöller & Holscher machines. This not only optimises resource consumption, but also aligns with sustainability goals.'

Nurscon is also investing in auto wash-up systems to minimise solvent usage and exploring solvent recovery systems, a pioneering move in the South African market. Dhiren reveals: 'While we're in discussions with a European supplier to implement such systems within the next two years, our goal is to enhance our environmental footprint while improving operational efficiency.'

Additionally, advancements in substrate technology are noteworthy. 'We're seeing innovations such as high-barrier clear films that replace metallised films, reducing environmental impact. Similarly, new adhesives are being developed to lessen their usage in lamination processes, which lowers the final product's weight,' he explains.

Adapting to supply chain pressures

The supply chain landscape is equally challenging. Dhiren criticises the lack of support from local manufacturers who, he argues, exploit the situation by increasing prices in response to higher shipping costs. 'Local converters have no choice but to pass these increased costs onto their customers, which ultimately affects the end consumer,' he states.

This unsupportive environment compels companies such as Nurscon to remain agile and forward-thinking. The management team's approach underscores the importance of continuous investment in technology and strategic planning to navigate these turbulent times.

While the flexible packaging industry faces significant challenges, Nurscon Flexibles' proactive stance on technological investment and strategic material management reveal both the pressures and the innovative solutions driving the sector's evolution.

Flexing forward

Mtech is leading the charge against the flexible packaging industry's biggest headaches: raw material shortages and skyrocketing shipping costs. With clever strategies and cutting-edge technology, the team have managed to deftly navigate these choppy waters, steering towards smoother sailing.

THE flexible packaging industry is grappling with significant challenges due to rising raw material and shipping costs. According to Barry Le Roux, CEO of Mtech, these costs inevitably trickle down the value chain. 'The escalating prices of raw materials and shipping have led to increased costs for brand owners, affecting consumer prices,' he notes.

To counteract this, Mtech has been proactive in developing local raw material sources, which helps reduce dependency on imports. 'By sourcing locally and down-gauging packaging solutions, we're minimising material use and optimising costs,' Barry explains.

National sales manager, Patrick Munyembate, adds that collaboration with large local raw material producers is crucial. 'We're working closely with local manufacturers to develop materials that were previously imported,' he states. 'Additionally, purchasing bulk quantities offshore allows us to reduce costs per kilogram.'



Mtech recently acquired a Super Combi 5000.

Mtech's commitment to technological innovation is evident in its significant investments in printing and converting technologies. Barry emphasises the importance of boosting productivity through equipment upgrades. 'We've focused on increasing line speeds by upgrading existing machinery or acquiring new, high-speed wide-web equipment,' he says. 'This directly impacts our cost efficiency, allowing us to offer competitive prices.'

Patrick highlights the recent acquisition of the Super Combi 5000, which has revolutionised operations. 'Our laminating and printing line speeds have increased to 450m/min, improving efficiency by 50% on duplex laminates and 200% on triplex and quadplex structures,' he explains. The slitting department's speed has also been enhanced to 800m/min, with the integration of turret rewind technology significantly reducing downtime. 'The rewind shafts never stop spinning and downtime between slit sets is reduced by over 65%,' Patrick adds. Mtech has further streamlined the printing process with additional trolleys, enabling offline job set-ups and eliminating washup downtime.

> "We're working closely with local manufacturers to develop materials that were previously imported."

Supply chain adaptations

In response to raw material shortages, Mtech has adopted a forward-thinking approach by exploring alternative suppliers. Barry explains: 'We're widening our local supplier network, giving smaller companies with lower overheads a chance to contribute.' This strategy not only ensures efficiency but also supports local businesses.

Patrick points out the role of enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems in improving production processes. 'Investing in a leading European ERP system has been transformative,' he asserts. 'It provides live analytics on raw material usage and forecasts, enabling proactive measures to ensure a steady supply and on-time deliveries.'

Sustainability is a key focus for Mtech, as global companies increasingly demand more environmentally responsible packaging solutions. Barry acknowledges the challenges associated with transitioning to sustainable materials. 'Sustainable structures are more expensive, posing cost management challenges,' he notes. However, recent technological advancements offer converters more cost-effective options. 'We're exploring new technologies to find sustainable solutions that align with cost management goals.'

Mtech's journey highlights the ever-changing landscape of the flexible packaging industry. By embracing innovative strategies, investing in technology and focusing on sustainability, Mtech is pushing the boundaries of what's possible. As the industry evolves, Mtech is prepared to adapt with forward-thinking packaging solutions.

CM

Packaging is in her blood

In an industry where innovation meets tradition and where creativity intertwines with practicality, women are making significant strides, leaving indelible marks on the packaging and print landscape. One such inspiring figure is **Tailei Mer**, sustainability strategist at **Taigan Group**.

TAILEI's path to her current role at Taigan Group is as diverse as it is impressive. With honours degrees in Visual Studies and Branding Communications from the University of Pretoria and a Bachelor of Law from the University of Witwatersrand, Tailei's academic background is a testament to her multifaceted expertise. 'I joined several creative agencies and gained experience in SEO, social media, activations, events management, marketing as well as customer services,' she shares.



Her journey didn't stop there. Tailei pursued further studies at the Institute of Packaging South Africa (IPSA), obtaining a One-Year Diploma in Packaging, and completed her articles at Roodt Inc. Her diverse skill set and relentless pursuit of knowledge led her to join the family business in September 2023. 'My roles and responsibilities include legal and compliance, occupational health and safety, packaging sustainability, branding and marketing, employment equity and all general operations,' she explains.

The Taigan Group of Companies, founded by Peter and Ethel McCullough in 2005, stands as one of southern Africa's leading packaging suppliers of multilayer t.nano cast stretch film. Based in Pomona, Johannesburg, Taigan boasts a national footprint with operations in Cape Town, Gqebherha and Mbombela. 'Packaging is in my blood and once the packaging bug bites you, it never leaves you,' says Tailei, reflecting on her deep-rooted connection to the industry.

Inspiring the next generation

Tailei passionately advocates for greater female presence in the packaging and print sectors. 'As women, we think differently and often our climb up the corporate ladder is filled with "other" and "different" challenges. It's this difference that makes our contributions to the packaging industry and broader business so important,' she asserts. Tailei believes that every women's unique perspectives bring diversity in thinking and approaches, which are crucial for innovation and growth in the industry.

Having more women in the industry not only creates equal opportunities, but also inspires other women to explore career possibilities they might not have considered. 'Seeing other women in a mostly male-dominated sector makes women feel included, valued and respected,' she emphasises. Tailei points out that the packaging and print sector influences many household decisions, highlighting the importance of women being part of this decision-making process.

Mentorship and exposure are key to attracting young women to the industry, according to Tailei. 'I think mentorship and greater exposure to possible packaging and print career opportunities should be better advertised,' she suggests. Career days at schools and universities often focus on conventional paths, missing the opportunity to engage future packaging specialists. Tailei's own career path, combining legal expertise with branding and communications, serves as a powerful example of the diverse opportunities within the industry.

Overcoming barriers

Finding a role that allows her to be both structured and creative has been one of Tailei's significant career challenges. 'Finding the right job, where I am able to be both structured (legal hat on) and creative (branding and comms hat on) within the same position has always been the challenge,' she shares. Her journey underscores the importance of perseverance and adaptability in navigating career challenges.

Tailei believes in celebrating the differences that women bring to the industry and supporting one another. 'By celebrating our difference and the contributions that difference makes in the industry, women can foster a more inclusive and dynamic sector.'

Reflecting on her journey, Tailei offers sage advice to her younger self: 'Relax and believe in yourself more. The right opportunities will come on your path at the right time.' Her words resonate as a reminder to all women in the industry to trust in their abilities and remain open to the possibilities that lie ahead.

CM



FMCG Pack

END-OF-LINE MACHINERY

Mosca set for strapping exhibition at FachPack

WOMEN IN PACKAGING

C-Pac's co-packing queens

Francoise Palmer is anchored in honesty and integrity

Mosca set for strapping exhibition at FachPack

MOSCA will showcase its comprehensive packaging solutions at FachPack – held in Nuremberg, Germany from 24 to 26 September – emphasising its integrated approach that combines strapping and stretch-wrapping technologies with digital solutions and data-driven consulting services.

According to Alex Jesser, product manager: marketing, the packaging systems supplier recognises that modern packaging requires more than just materials and equipment. 'We are continuously expanding our range of products and services to provide optimum support,' he explains. This includes offering digital technologies alongside manual and automated strapping and stretch-wrapping machines, complemented by consulting services on transport safety and maintenance.



The fully automatic KZV-111.

At the heart of Mosca's offerings are its efficient strapping and stretch-wrapping technologies. Notable machines on display include the KZV-111 and the Saturn S6 from Movitec. The KZV-111 employs SoniXs ultrasonic technology to strap palletised loads safely and with low emissions. The Saturn S6 stretch wrapper allows for flexible processes, wrapping up to 120 pallets/hour with customisable programmes and top-film options for added protection. The RO-M Fusion strapping machine and the HUG battery-powered manual strapping tool (also on display) provide sustainable and cost-efficient solutions for various needs, from fully automated processes to small batch operations.

Connected production

Alex says Mosca's machines are designed with interfaces that integrate seamlessly with robotic and conveyor technologies, enabling fully automated processes even in compact spaces. A prime example is the MP-6 T strapping machine, featuring a Pinger



Mosca's Saturn S6 ring wrapper.

Robotic arm that handles small packages efficiently. 'Tabletop models and other machines in our portfolio help expand existing lines, providing versatile downstream support,' he notes.

The TR-Connect, another key exhibit, underscores Mosca's dedication to connected production. Enhanced with an integrated WebHMI, it enables real-time visualisation of performance data such as availability and quality. 'This upgrade simplifies commissioning and operation, allowing operators to monitor the SoniXs TR-Connect's performance and enhance efficiency,' Alex enthuses.

Mosca's TechCentre in Waldbrunn, Germany, offers customers an opportunity to optimise packaging solutions through stress tests and data-driven consulting. 'Whether customers seek safe or sustainable solutions, our data-based consulting approach enables them to comprehensively adapt existing packaging concepts,' comments Johannes Wieder, sales manager: logistics. At FachPack, the TechCentre will feature its Tilt Testing Tool, which assesses the stability of combined loads and carriers, helping determine the ideal transport packaging.

Through these innovations, Mosca will demonstrate its commitment to delivering efficient, cost-effective and connected packaging solutions that address the diverse needs of its customers.

Attendees at FachPack can witness Mosca's holistic approach to packaging technology firsthand at stand 3C-351 in hall 3C.

For more info, go to ***www.goldpack.co.za***

Ed's note: Mosca is represented and distributed in South Africa by Goldpack.

FMCG

Co-packing queens

In the bustling industrial district of Montague Gardens, Cape Town, a remarkable story of perseverance, innovation and leadership unfolds at co-packers **C-Pac**. But what truly sets C-Pac apart is its women-led workforce and management, proof of the power of female leadership in a traditionally male-dominated industry.

C-PAC is a co-packers business co-owned by Michelle Theron and Gary Kieswetter. Since its inception in 2000, C-Pac has specialised in the packing of mainly dry food products through vertical form fill seal, horizontal flow wrapping, shrink wrapping, hand work, composite can filling, labelling, palletising and consolidated container loads.



C-Pac's women-led team is run by co-owner Michelle Theron and production manager Enya Theron.

Michelle's journey into the packaging industry was unexpected. Initially, she began her career in banking. However, after becoming a mother, she shifted gears and joined Gary Kieswetter and former shareholder Bob Cork in the packaging business. 'I knew nothing about packaging. Bob and Gary threw me into the deep end and with their guidance, I had to learn to swim. That's how you make things happen,' Michelle recalls. This hands-on, learn-as-you-go approach has shaped her management style, which she now imparts to her team, including her niece and production manager, Enya Theron.

C-Pac stands out for its technical capabilities as well as its commitment to empowering women. With roughly 60 female employees and just one male, Michelle firmly believes in the multitasking abilities and strength of women. 'Even if we have to move a heavy machine or operate a forklift, I say: 'Let's harness our female power. Our women are incredibly strong and resilient,' she asserts. This belief is exemplified by Enya, who, at just 22 years old, manages production, quality control and FSSC compliance with remarkable proficiency.

Enya's journey at C-Pac highlights the power of mentorship and a willingness to learn. 'I soak up knowledge,' she says. Often, she learns to fix machines over the phone with the guidance of Gary's technicians or by watching and learning from them on site. Enya's practical approach and strong work ethic, inherited from her family, have made her an invaluable asset to C-Pac. 'Our family are not lazy people. We're hard workers. Michelle and I get along quite well, which makes it a lot easier. We have good communication,' Enya shares.

Breaking stereotypes

Working in a male-dominated industry comes with its challenges, but Enya embraces them with confidence. 'My favourite thing about working here is that men often come to our factory and think I'm the receptionist, but once they see me doing the heavy lifting or operating the forklift, the look on their faces is priceless,' she quips.

Michelle adds: 'When Enya started working here, I said to her: 'You're a young female, so respect from staff and customers won't come easily and will have to be earned. She did just that by learning how to drive a forklift, fixing machines and running production with a great deal of success.'

Establishing C-Pac's credibility was challenging, especially in the early days. 'In the beginning, we had to do a lot of convincing to prove we could handle our customers' business,' Michelle admits. 'We've established long-standing relationships with customers who have been with us for over 20 years. We're very blessed and grateful for all the support that we've had from our loyal customers throughout the past 24 years. The key is to focus on what you know best,' Michelle advises.

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The events organised by the Institute create a forum where people from the packaging and allied industries can meet and discuss matters of mutual interest – from packaging design and marketing to technical innovation and new legislation.

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Anchored in honesty and integrity

Francoise Palmer's career in the packaging and print industry isn't just about breaking barriers, it's about redefining them. As the national sales director at **Anchor Technical Tape**, she navigates a field often dominated by technical expertise and male counterparts, not by following the usual path, but by creating her own.

FRANCOISE's career began in the packaging industry when she was offered a role as a young sales representative, with hardly any experience in sales or packaging. 'I embraced the opportunity and set personal goals to succeed,' she shares.

Her journey, marked by both challenges and triumphs, has been one of continuous growth. 'The sales environment has changed enormously and the ability to remain at the forefront of this ever-changing industry has been crucial,' she explains. It's a testament to her adaptability and drive that she remains as passionate about the industry today as she was when she first started.

Francoise has led the sales team at Anchor Technical Tape with a strategic vision which has culminated in exponential success. This is evident in the growth of the brand in the packaging sector. For her, leadership is not about authority, but rather about inspiration, motivation and teamwork. Francoise believes in leading by example and her unwavering principles, anchored in honesty and integrity, are professional as well as deeply personal. 'My beautiful family is my pride and joy and my inspiration in life,' she shares, highlighting how her personal and professional lives are intertwined in her pursuit of excellence.

Francoise's leadership is also characterised by her belief in the power of women in the industry. She sees the packaging and print sectors as ripe with opportunity for women, noting that 'equal opportunities should be non-negotiable in any industry.'

In what is often perceived to be a male-dominated environment, Francoise highlights the unique strengths women bring to the table. 'Women have the ability to demonstrate commitment, competence and confidence. This is evident in today's print and packaging industry,' she comments. She sees women's representation as a crucial game changer, bringing innovation, creativity and a personal touch to the industry.

Her experience and ability to build meaningful professional relationships have been fundamental to her success and continue to drive her thriving career.

Francoise is a leader and a mentor, advocating for the next generation of women in packaging and print. She sees the industry as dynamic and fast growing, with numerous opportunities both locally and globally. 'We need passionate young women to embrace these opportunities and make a difference,' she emphasises.

Francoise believes we need to break down the barriers of stereotypical mindsets and create access for young women to enter and explore this dynamic industry. 'We should encourage our industry bodies to work more closely with education and training institutions, motivating young women to consider the opportunities available. Together with companies in this market segment, we must make a concerted effort to be role models – inspiring, embracing and training young women,' she advises.

If she could give advice to her 25-year-old self, Francoise would emphasise self-belief. 'Believe in yourself a little more and trust in your own abilities – if you try, you're already halfway there,' she reflects.

In Francoise, we see a woman who has not only thrived in a challenging industry, but has also paved the way for others to follow. Her story is one of passion, perseverance and the belief that with the right mindset, everything is possible.



Quirky Q&A

Your spirit animal? Leopard.
Two non-essential items you would want if shipwrecked on a deserted island? Pillow and a coffee machine.
Name one song to play every time you walk into a room? *Don't Stop Believin'* by Journey.
If you could have any superpower? To bring peace and love into the world.
Which actress would play you in a movie about your life? Cameron Diaz.
Your last meal? Sushi and prawns.

FMCG

Sustainability in flexography

AS the global drive for sustainability intensifies, the South African flexographic printing industry faces significant pressures from environmental concerns, regulations and evolving consumer preferences. This article, the first in a two-part series, explores the current state of sustainability in this printing sector, focusing on the challenges, solutions and the vital role of the Flexographic Technical Association of South Africa (FTASA) in this transformation.

The push for greener practices in South Africa is driven by regulatory compliance and environmental responsibility. The country's commitment to international environmental standards has led to stricter regulations on emissions, waste management and resource use.

For flexographic printers, adopting sustainable practices is essential not only for compliance but also for showcasing environmental stewardship. ISO 14001 certification, for example, helps companies establish effective environmental management systems, ensuring they meet regulatory requirements while demonstrating a strong commitment to sustainability.

Consumers today are more environmentally conscious, particularly in the packaging sector, where the demand for sustainable materials is rising. Sustainability is also becoming integral to corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies, as printers strive to balance profitability with environmental and social responsibilities.

The industry is increasingly adopting eco-friendly inks and coatings. Water-based inks, for instance, are favoured for their low volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions, though they may require process adjustments due to longer drying times. UV-curable inks offer rapid curing with minimal VOC emissions, but they demand energy-intensive UV lamps, prompting South African printers to explore energy-efficient systems and renewable energy sources. Additionally, low-migration inks are essential for food and pharmaceutical packaging, ensuring consumer safety and regulatory compliance, despite their higher cost.

The next part of this series will delve into sustainable substrates, energy efficiency and overcoming challenges associated with these green initiatives.

18 September is the closing date for entries in the **2024 FTASA Print Excellence Awards**
Save the date: 15 November 2024 is the FTASA's Awards Luncheon.



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Leading the charge on sustainable packaging

In celebration of Women's Month, we feature an enlightening conversation with **Nerida Kelton**, executive director of the Australian Institute of Packaging (AIP) and vice-president of sustainability and save food at the **World Packaging Organisation (WPO)**. Nerida's insights on sustainable packaging design, infrastructure challenges and the evolving role of women in the industry provide a compelling narrative on the future of packaging.

CAN you elaborate on the importance of integrating end-of-life recyclability into the design process?
Absolutely. One of the primary challenges we face is ensuring that packaging is designed with its entire life cycle in mind. Traditionally, packaging designers focused primarily on functionality and aesthetics without considering the end-of-life stage. However, with the shift towards sustainable design, we now encourage designers to think about the recyclability and environmental impact from the outset. This means selecting materials that are recyclable and ensuring that packaging can be easily collected and processed within the country where it is used.

How significant is the role of infrastructure in the success of sustainable packaging?
Infrastructure is pivotal. We can educate designers to create recycle-ready packaging, but, without the necessary collection and recycling facilities, it becomes a significant challenge. In many developing countries, basic infrastructure, such as disposal bins, is often lacking, which hinders the entire recycling process. That's why the WPO team emphasises the importance of being recycle-ready even if the infrastructure isn't currently in place. When the facilities do become available, the packaging will be prepared for the circular economy.

Let's talk about the cultural aspect. How does a lack of infrastructure affect consumer behaviour and designer motivation?
It's a substantial barrier. If designers know that there are no adequate facilities to recycle their packaging, it can diminish their motivation to prioritise recyclability. Additionally, consumer education plays a critical role. Without proper education and disposal options, littering becomes prevalent, leading to environmental issues such as waste ending up in waterways, landfills and the environment. Every country faces different challenges and there isn't a one-size-fits-all solution.

Moving on to the role of governments, was there often resistance to implementing environmental regulations in the past?
Interestingly, we're witnessing a positive shift. More governments are now enacting regulations to reduce single-use plastics and illegal dumping sites.



For instance, the Philippines has made significant strides in eliminating illegal dump sites. Moreover, the Global Plastics Pollution Treaty has garnered the support of over 150 countries. While progress may seem slow, the momentum is definitely building.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) often struggle with sustainable packaging due to perceived costs. What can be done to support them?
The challenges for SMEs are indeed daunting. Sustainable packaging can be perceived as an added cost, making it overwhelming for smaller businesses. Associations such as AIP and WPO are crucial in providing education and training to these businesses, demonstrating the long-term value and benefits. We've trained around 8 000 SMEs in Australia over the past six years, emphasising that sustainable practices can lead to significant advantages. Additionally, governments could support SMEs through funding and incentives to offset capital expenditure on new equipment.

> Creating safe spaces and support networks for women in the industry is essential for sustained progress."

Have you seen any innovative sustainable packaging designs recently that stand out?
There are numerous innovative designs emerging. For example, the WorldStar Packaging Awards showcase impressive entries such as recycled content and material, lightweighting and fibre alternatives. Japan, in particular, has made strides with fibre-based solutions for bulky items traditionally packaged in polystyrene. Their innovations are a testament to the possibilities in sustainable packaging.

Let's touch on the role of women in the packaging industry. What progress have you observed?
The representation of women in the packaging industry is improving, with notable increases in countries like South Africa, the USA and the UK. However, challenges remain, particularly in finding mentorship and support. It's heartening to see women in leadership roles, such as Luciana Pellegrino becoming the first female president of the WPO. Creating safe spaces and support networks for women in the industry is essential for sustained progress. I'm optimistic about the future of sustainable packaging and the evolving role of women in our industry.

Eastern Cape Golf and Bowls Day

ON 11 July, the Institute of Packaging South Africa (IPSA)'s Eastern Cape committee hosted an engaging golf and bowls day for regional packaging professionals.

The event drew strong participation, with eight four-ball teams competing at the Port Elizabeth Golf Club and eight teams at the Mill Park Bowls Club. Following an afternoon of spirited competition, participants gathered for a prize-giving and dinner at the golf club. The prestigious Institute's Fellowship Award was presented to Jill and Ronnie Jorgensen in memory of the late Ronnie, a pivotal figure in the Eastern Cape packaging community. Additionally, Nicole Nicholls was honoured with her Overview of Packaging Technology (OPT) Diploma and named the top student.









Save the date

IPSA's website (*www.ipsa.org.za*) features a comprehensive list of upcoming national and regional events. Visit the site for full details and to secure your spot. Here's a snapshot of key dates to mark on your calendar.

13 September:	Ladies' Lunch Celebrating Women in Packaging, Café 28, Sandton, Gauteng
18 September:	IPSA Southern Region Annual Quiz Night, Greenpoint, Cape Town
21 September:	IPSA joins International Coastal Clean-Up, Milnerton Beach, Western Cape, Hobie Beach, Gqerberha and Anstey's Beach, Durban
26 September:	Student Gold Pack Awards Ceremony, Barnyard Theatre, Emperor's Palace, Gauteng
18 October:	IPSA Southern Region Breakfast Seminar: Packaging in a Digital Age, Mowbray Golf Course, Western Cape
25 October:	IPSA KZN End-of-Year Function
14 November:	Gold Pack Awards Ceremony, Vodadome, Midrand, Gauteng

Gold Pack 2024: meet the judging panel

As the Gold Pack 2024 judging process kicks off, anticipation builds for this prestigious celebration of packaging excellence. From its humble beginnings in 1973 – marked by a casual awards ceremony in a Durban pub – the **Gold Pack Awards** have evolved into a premier event showcasing regional packaging innovation and expertise.



THE judging process reflects the high standards of this evolution, with a panel of seasoned experts tasked with evaluating the diverse and creative entries.

The initial phase of judging involves an 'online' scoring system, where judges review each entry's supporting materials and assign scores across various criteria over several weeks. This pre-scoring phase is crucial for familiarising the judges with the entries but is not the final determinant of the awards. The real scrutiny begins when the panel gathers for face-to-face discussions, debating the merits of each entry to determine the medal winners. This stage is intense, as the judges apply their collective knowledge and experience to assess every aspect of the entries.

Meet the judges

Gunnar Sigge: A stalwart in the food industry, Gunnar has been with SAAFost since 1997 and is now an associate professor at Stellenbosch University. His deep understanding of packaging's role in reducing food waste and enhancing shelf life adds significant value to the judging process.
Jane Molony: Jane brings a wealth of knowledge in pulp, paper and recycling. With a background in Fine Arts and an IMM marketing diploma, she now leads the Paper Manufacturers Association of South Africa (PAMSA) and champions sustainable practices in the industry.
Annabé Pretorius: With over 32 years in the plastics sector, Annabé is known for her dedication to recycling and extended producer responsibility. As Plastics SA's executive of technical operations, she offers invaluable insights into plastics' role in packaging.
Wendy Knowler: Renowned for her incisive consumer journalism, Wendy has been a Gold Pack judge since 2013. Her focus on greenwashing and misleading labelling ensures a critical evaluation of entries from a consumer perspective.
Janusz Luterek: A legal expert with degrees in chemical engineering and law, Janusz provides essential legal insights into packaging regulations. His experience with various legislative submissions enriches the panel's understanding of compliance issues.
Vanessa von Holdt: A long-standing judge, Vanessa's dual qualifications in marketing and packaging management have been instrumental in her roles with Nampak and IPSA. Her extensive experience in education and skills development for the packaging sector adds depth to the panel.
Bill Furniss: Joining the panel for the first time this year, Bill's encyclopaedic knowledge of the packaging industry and its history, combined with his appreciation for collaboration, will contribute a unique perspective to the judging process.

Additional support comes from Shabeer Jhetam, Charles Muller and Kishan Singh, who will provide scoring and comments on all entries ahead of the final evaluations. Coordinating this extensive process is Bill Marshall, who continues the legacy of his predecessor, John Marriot, in managing the Gold Pack Awards.

Get ready for the glitz and glam

The Gold Pack 2024 Awards will also include the African Packaging Organisation (APO) AfriStar Awards, adding a pan-African dimension to the event. The winners will be announced at the awards ceremony on 14 November at the Vodadome and Vodaworld in Midrand. Booking for the ceremony will open in September.

The support from industry sponsors underscores the awards' importance and prestige. This year's increased entries highlight the significance of these awards in promoting world-class packaging design and technology and fostering collaboration across the packaging supply chain.

Yours irreverently . . .

Top gags from the Fringe

Edinburgh's annual Fringe is the biggest arts festival in the world and takes place every August. Here are some of this year's top-rated one-liners from stand-up comedians:

'I was going to sail around the globe in the world's smallest ship but I bottled it.' **– Mark Simmons** (*voted the funniest, in fact…hmm?*)

'My desire to spontaneously sing *The Lion Sleeps Tonight* is always just a whim away.' **– Olaf Falafel**

'The Romans invented Vaseline. Or was it Ancient Grease?' **– Chris Turner**

'I've been taking salsa lessons for months, but I just don't feel like I'm progressing. It's just one step forward... two steps back.' **– Alec Snook**

'Ate horse at a restaurant once. The starter was alright but the mane was dreadful.' **– Alex Kitson**

Great signs

Outside a veterinary clinic: Dogs prepare you for babies. Cats prepare you for teenagers.

Outside a photographic studio: We can shoot your wife and frame your mother-in-law. If you want, we can hang them, too!
Outside a pub: Treat your mom to a margarita – you're probably the reason she drinks.

Great signs #2

At a famous Tex-Mex restaurant in Texas, The El Arroyo, you'll find a beloved marquee sign that tells a new joke to passing motorists every day, for more than 25 years now.

- I'm so tired of babysitting my mom's grandkids.
- Studies show the most expensive vehicle to operate is a shopping cart.
- Procrastinators unite! Tomorrow!
- Top three hard things to say: 1. I was wrong. 2. I need help. 3. Worcestershire Sauce.
- Congrats to all the recent medical grads from Google U.
- Kids' ears are for decorative purposes only.

Ageing WitBits

After thirty, a body has a mind of its own. **– Bette Midler**
Time may be a great healer, but it is a lousy beautician. **– Anonymous**
The really frightening thing about middle age is that you know you'll grow out of it. **– Doris Day**

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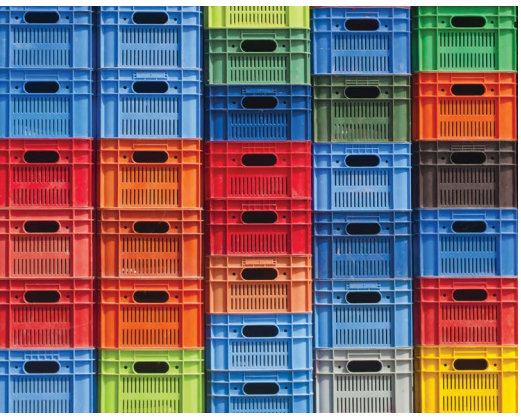
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