What's driving digital label printing growth?

Issued by Pyrotec

30 May 2019

A report published by Smithers Pira last year, explores the many drivers for growth in the digital print for packaging industry. The company's research reveals that as populations increase and consumers in industrialised regions enjoy growing income, packaging demand continues to rise. Meanwhile, in more developed regions average household sizes are falling, reducing average print runs and therefore playing to the strengths of digital packaging. The variable data capability of digital presses also allows for versioning and personalisation, as well as enabling rapid response of short runs. Also, because of stringent labelling requirements, the use of late-stage customisation to print the final details of a pack or label is being used more.

Five key benefits of digital label printing

Fast turnaround times – Unlike flexographic printing, digital printing doesn't require plates. And, because set-up time is significantly reduced, this means customers receive their orders faster especially where multiple product versions are required.

Attention-grabbing high quality – With shelf shout key to products being noticed in store, a product label carrying high-quality graphics and colours is essential. The Durst Tau 330 RSC digital label press, recently purchased by Pyrotec PackMedia, offers eight colours including white ink for beautiful graphics reproduced on clear and metallic materials, achieving between 95% and 98% of the Pantone colour gamut.

Short runs – Digital label printing is ideal because only the number of labels you need immediately need to be ordered, thus minimising inventory.

Cost saving – Customers order only the number of labels they need, saving on storage space and ensuring that changes to on-pack product information can be made quickly and with very little waste.

Design flexibility – Digital presses offer great flexibility, especially for variable or personalised data printing. For customers who need to print variable text or images across their label range, digital printing technology enables version changes on-the-fly without losing valuable time. This is also very beneficial for on-pack changes that need to be made quickly, or for promotional campaigns or seasonal changes.

"The digital printed packaging and label industry is growing rapidly and doesn't show signs of slowing down any time soon in this fast-moving market. Estimated to be worth $7.3bn in 2013, the digital print for packaging market was forecast to hit $15.3bn last year," says packaging research and consultancy group, Smithers Pira.

Their 2018 report also explores other drivers behind the evolution of digital print – one of which is the capacity to produce short print runs economically as packaging buyers continue to search for ways to engage with customers using innovative methods. Digital printing means less waste, ensuring that new packaging or graphic designs or changes in ingredients don't result in redundant stock. Technological developments in inkjet mean that digital print is becoming increasingly accessible and cost-effective for all kinds of companies, big and small.

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