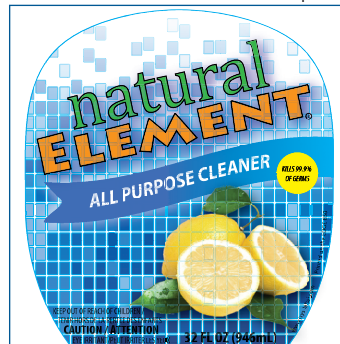# iSys Label – edging ahead

Brand owners have seen the benefits that digital print can offer. iSys Label works in this market producing print solutions capable of answering their needs cost effectively.

The penetration of digital technology into label production seems relentless, with over 1700 high end colour systems currently in operation across the world. These can cost from £100 to 600,000, with finishing and workflow on top. There are other ways to enter the sector at much lower cost, with specialist systems offered to converters and also label users to produce in-house, on-demand.

iSys Label is a Canadian company, with its head office in Calgary, where it develops LED and inkjet print systems. It began as the small plotter division of Veritas Geophysical in 1990, and was bought by the employees in 2000. There has been good growth since then and iSys now provides leading performance printers for the oil and gas industry, government agencies, engineering consultants, aerospace, military defence, marine, manufacturing, commercial art, graphic design and newspapers. It focuses on developing customised product configurations to fit customers' needs and has identified a market for short to mid run digital label printers.

The company offers two toner based label machines, the APEX 1290 and the more compact EDGE 850 that boasts a top speed up to 9 metres per minute (30 feet per minute) in four colour with a maximum print width of 209 mm. The machine produces photo quality images at 1200 x 600 dpi at 160 lpi. The new EDGE 850 is a desktop label printer that can print on a variety of die cut, kiss-cut or roll substrates.
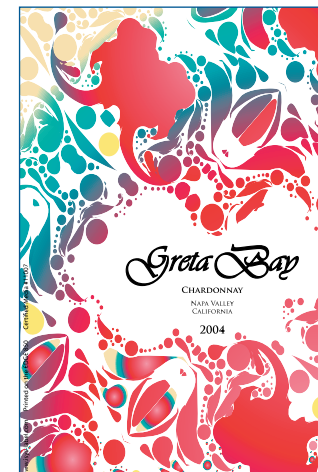Compact and powerful The EDGE 850 is a single pass, four colour, digital label press solution ideal for short run label production. This means that customers will no longer need to order large quantities of pre-printed labels, but can instead produce shorter runs quickly and efficiently. Designed for in-house production of labels, users will be capable of printing 2000 average sized labels in less than 20 minutes and have the finished roll ready for immediate application.

The printer and feeder is 660 x 434 x 546 mm and weighs just under 50 kg with the rewinder at 12.5 kg, so it can be accommodated almost anywhere. It takes 203 mm maximum diameter reels and features automatic page width registration and there is automatic adjustment form synchronisation to minimise waste when using pre-cut stocks. There is also a cut on the fly function to deliver individual or very short runs, and the rewind system can deliver the same 203 mm rolls for application.

The device was designed to be easy to operate using the supplied EDGE2PRINT software, allowing operators to set up a job in minutes. Mark Hopkins, president of iSys Label, says that it is 'probably the easiest, yet most powerful software a user could want'. The RIP included in the software allows for

The EDGE 850.

colour management, ICC profiling and Pantone spot colours.

The device is able to easily handle variable data output meaning that users can add value to their print and output a range of personalised applications. It is also versatile in substrate handling, accommodating a wide range of substrates including self-adhesive paper and film label stocks, die cut, kiss cut or plain roll substrates such as matte, semi gloss, high gloss, textured and foil papers, tag stock, fabric, PETs, vinyls and approved synthetics. The EDGE is designed to operate with approved consumables and the Certified Media Library to ensure superior print quality and consistency. Maximum media width is 216 mm and the system can print lengths up to 213.4 metres.

New opportunities

Mr Hopkins says his target customers are: 'Not just label makers, rather label 'needers'.' The machines are aimed at in-plants, for example wine, fruit/vegetable farm shops, jams and preserves. 'The technology allows us to open new opportunities because our solutions are so small and robust. In the USA we are leasing the EDGE 850 for under $335 per month over five years with no money down. This allows customers to essentially have a new business by using the printer; we are using the idea of a water bottle label business as a case study example. We see in-house labelling, on-demand as a great opportunity.' The use of toner means there is no special maintenance or cleaning needed, and the printers can be left unused for some time and simply switched on before printing at full speed.

It is not just in-house, existing flexo converters can use the iSys machines to handle very short run jobs, and free up their flexo press lines for bigger jobs better suited to analogue printing.

The company has announced a partnership with UK based Impressions Technology Europe. The first joint product offering is a combination of the EDGE 850 with the Eclipse LF3 Digital Cutter to create a complete solution for short run labels using plain reel stock. The Eclipse LF3 Digital Cutter is a label finishing system that delivers accurate single point registration cutting with lamination, waste matrix removal, slitting and rewind system. 'The demand for finishing equipment has intensified, especially in the digital environment. Pairing iSys's label printing technology with the LF3 finishing system results in a finished label that looks great but is also protected from the elements and has extra durability for repeat handling,' said Mr Hopkins.

The APEX 1290

iSys Label's other well established machine is the Apex 1290, which comes equipped with a 305 mm OD rewinder, that is adjustable to match the continuous media output while winding labels, making the rolls ready for the finisher or applicator. It features large capacity toner cartridges and large capacity media spools, as well as cutting on the fly, allowing it to print a variety of jobs one after the other. It is supplied with a Harlequin RIP to allow for colour management, ICC profiling and converting Pantone spot colours. The optional variable data package allows the production of barcodes, data and graphics in full colour.

The APEX 1290 can print on a variety of die cut, kiss cut or roll substrates such as matte, semi gloss, high gloss, textured and foil papers, tag stock, fabric, PETs, vinyls and approved synthetics. ■■