

LABEL PRINTING

How To Stay Ahead In The
Label Printing Industry



HOW TO STAY AHEAD IN THE LABEL PRINTING INDUSTRY

INTRODUCTION

Label printing machines are significant capital investments. Label equipment is purchased at the end of a lengthy decision-making process and may cost more than £100,000; and that's not to mention the time needed for implementation and training!

With this in mind, it's understandable that most businesses want to ensure they use their equipment to its full potential. Replacing or upgrading their machines when they are still perfectly serviceable seems counter-intuitive.

A high quality printing machine can work reliably for decades with the right maintenance schedule in place and spare parts available. Flexo-graphic Presses, in particular, are workhorses of the print industry and are built to last.

This is one of the main reasons why many businesses make do with older machines, or try and wait before upgrading, even when their current assets are reaching the end of their life cycle. After all, why spend additional money if the current equipment works perfectly well? The above notion is common sense, but in 2017, this is not always the best economic decision to make for your business. The print industry is undergoing a new technological revolution. New, super-efficient machinery is changing the face of label printing.

The companies that stay ahead of the game over the next five, ten or fifteen years will be those who make investments in modern equipment now.

Not spending money on new machines could actually be more expensive in the long run!

In this e-book we make a strong case that, due to the rapid advancements in print technology, the best way to remain competitive is to regularly invest in new print machinery. We are aware that this involves a series of ongoing capital investments, which must be planned for strategically.

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While printing assets are not throwaway purchase decisions, the cost of new technology is becoming less expensive all the time, lowering the bar to entry. Furthermore, affordable credit and monthly payment plans let businesses spread the cost of asset purchases, allowing you to see the cost benefits of your investment from day one.

Focus Label are here to help you make the best investment choices for your business. A decision rarely comes overnight, so we provide a transparent sales process along with all the information you need to make an informed choice.


There is no hard sell or pressure to make a decision. Our purpose is to empower you to make the right choice, and to encourage 'buy in' from all the stakeholders in your business, from the shop floor to the boardroom.

In fact, investing in new printing equipment will have far-reaching effects for everyone in your company. It will make your print operation more productive, freeing up more time, as well as allowing you to make smarter decisions when it comes to staff resources. It will cut your operational costs and give you more flexibility over prices, allowing your business to be more competitive and more profitable by accepting more sales orders.

All this is made possible by intelligent investments in the latest print technology and a regular schedule of upgrades. Remember that while you are not taking this decision to upgrade, many of your competitors are, and they may already be seeing the benefits.



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ABOUT THIS E-BOOK


There are two parts to this e-book. The first part summarises the business case for investing in new equipment, while the second explains the new technologies that are bringing about a profound transformation in the way the label printing industry works.

After reading this guide, you will hopefully be in a position, if not to purchase straight-away, then to at least begin a conversation within your business about the practical ways in which a new asset investment will benefit you. At Focus Label, our doors are always open and the kettle is always on, so please feel free to get in touch for an informal chat, discuss your options, and perhaps come along and see some of our machines in operation.

Should you wish to take the next steps our contact details and an outline of our sales process are provided at the end of this guide.



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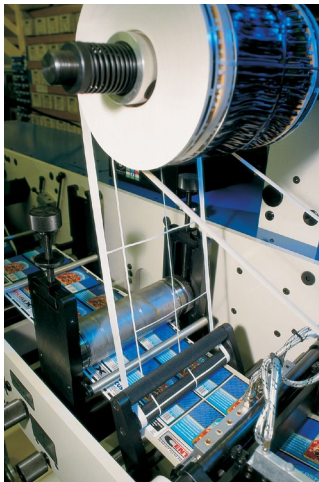
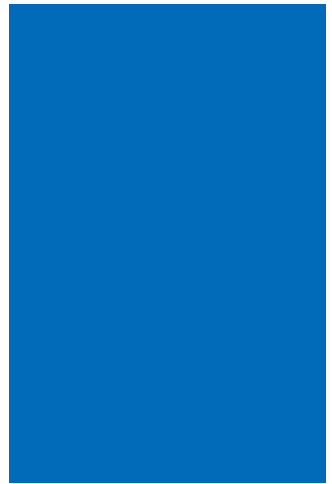
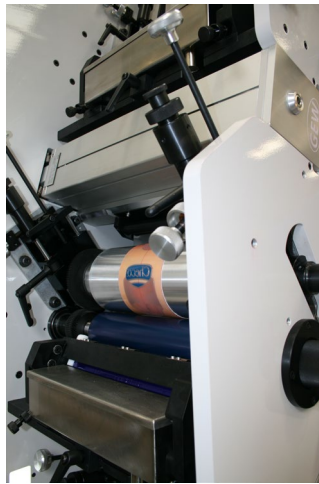
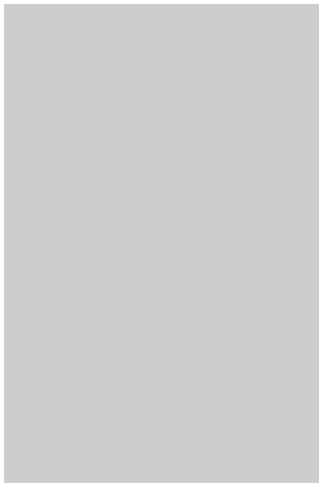
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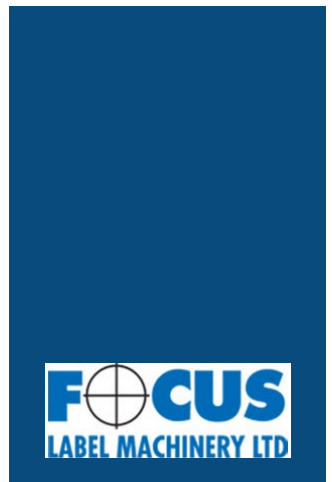
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**A BUSINESS CASE FOR
INVESTING IN NEW
EQUIPMENT**



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A BUSINESS CASE FOR INVESTING IN NEW EQUIPMENT

In recent years there has been a compelling case for business owners to invest in new printing machinery sooner rather than later.

The factors giving this argument its urgency are as follows:

- » Firstly, the new generation of emerging digital and hybrid print technologies
 - » The emerging digital and hybrid print technologies.
- » Secondly, the innovations in inks, consumables and substrates

The specific benefits and cost savings will vary from business to business. Please feel free to give our team a call if you need help putting together a detailed benefit proposal to help your board make a purchase decision. We will be happy to explain how the new technologies can help your business, as well as discuss your business' potential return on investment.

INCREASED PRODUCTION SPEED




The latest press designs ensure rapid changeover of jobs with reduced down time & less waste. The latest digital and hybrid printing machines are superfast combing printing & converting in a single pass. After investing in new equipment, many customers are surprised at the increase they see in production speed. In practical terms, this means you can do more jobs in less time, increasing your work capacity and reducing the pressure on your employees and machinery.

REDUCED STAFFING COSTS

New printing machinery is less labour-intensive, with many computerised and automated functions. This reduces your staff requirements on the shop floor and frees up your skilled operatives to focus on other tasks.



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MORE RELIABLE



The older the machine, the greater the likelihood of it developing a serious fault. To prevent this, a regular schedule of planned preventative maintenance is necessary - which costs money. This is not always successful with older machines, and breakdowns can be very expensive, in terms of both the repair bill and lost business productivity.

Newer machines are far less likely to break down by virtue of their age, and due to the fact that modern label machinery is more reliable by design. When you invest in a new machine, you will therefore see an immediate reduction of your repair and maintenance costs.

INCREASED CAPACITY


The latest generation of label machinery is far more flexible than earlier models, allowing you to diversify your output and take on a wider range of projects. With new machinery, you will likely find that you can take on new work that you would previously have had to outsource or turn away.



GREATER EFFICIENCY

New printing machines are less wasteful and more efficient. This means you will spend less on your consumables, substrates and raw materials.

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GREATER PROFITABILITY

Improved reliability, increased capacity and greater efficiency all result in higher profits for your business. This is especially true on smaller print runs, where digital machinery has a clear advantage over flexographic machinery. This makes it economically viable for businesses to take on a larger number of small projects.


INCREASED COMPETITIVENESS

Your investment in new print technology will make your label printing business more dynamic and responsive. You will be better equipped to meet the needs of your customers, and to seek out opportunities which were previously unavailable or unprofitable to pursue.

Across the world, hundreds of label printing businesses are upgrading or investing in new assets. This is bringing about some exciting changes in the industry, which we want your company to be part of! A new label printing machine from Focus Label puts you in an extremely strong position to exploit the new opportunities in the printing industry, while staying ahead of your competitors.



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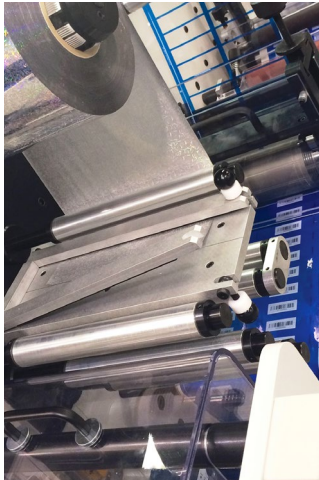
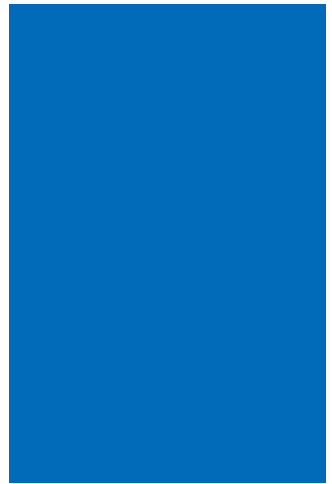
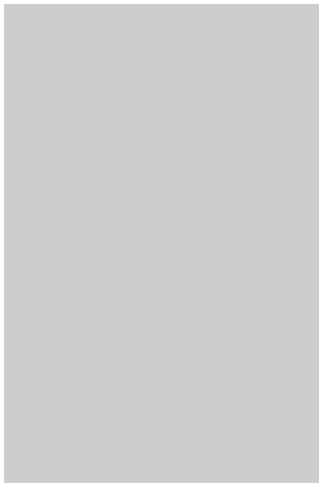
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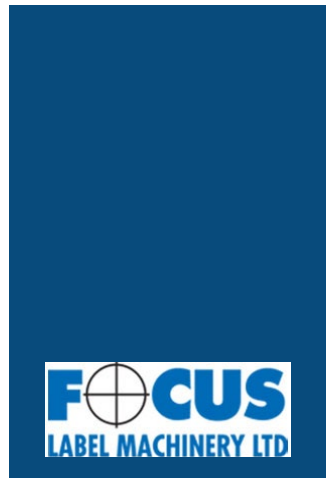
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THE CURRENT STATE OF PRINTING TECHNOLOGY



HOW TO STAY AHEAD IN THE LABEL PRINTING INDUSTRY

THE CURRENT STATE OF PRINTING TECHNOLOGY

The printing sector is an industry in transition. Having been in the print manufacturing business for nearly 40 years, we have seen a lot of changes. The next few years are going to be particularly exciting because we are living through a widespread transition from traditional flexo-graphic printing technologies, to a diverse range of digital and hybrid solutions.

This is how print technology currently stands: on shop floors around the world, most label printing is carried out by non-digital flexo-graphic equipment. The workflow is well-established and is governed by international standards such as the ISO.


Broadly speaking, the print process uses an original file and progresses through distinct stages of colour separation, height, cylinder changes, screen changes and finally the press stage. A whole range of media, inks and print colours have arisen to serve this industry; although not all of them can meet the requirements of modern branding and packaging.

Digital printing breaks the mould by simplifying and speeding up the print workflow, while allowing greater flexibility to accommodate different colours and substrates. There are currently no international standards governing digital inkjet printing, which gives manufacturers a huge degree of freedom.

Digital printing is still in a minority position in the industry, largely due to initial investment cost. However, as technology progresses, prices fall. We are nearly in a position where digital and hybrid printers cost about the same as conventional technology. When parity is achieved, which will happen sometime around 2020, if not before, the entire landscape of the industry will change very rapidly. It is the early adapters who will have a clear advantage in this changed industry. The early adapters will be the ones to shape the norms and best practices of the next generation.



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THE DRAWBACKS OF FLEXO-PRINTING

Why have printer manufacturers been searching for an alternative to flexo-printing? Especially considering flexo-printing has served the industry incredibly well for more than a century!

The answer lies in some of the well-known drawbacks of flexo-printing, which includes:

Printing Plates: Flexo technology requires several printing plates, separated for each colour. These have a known cost which on some occasions will not be possible to pass onto your client.


Small orders: Due to the lengthy setup required for flexo-graphic printing jobs - small print runs have always been problematic. Unless the preparation and downtime can be reduced between each print job, small orders are rarely cost-effective.

Turnaround: Fast turnaround orders present a challenge to flexo-printing. Even the best flexo-graphic printers require a routine clean up and can have a reset time of upto an hour, which adds to your cost per label and cuts into your profit margin.

Automation: The trend in the label printing business is heading towards shorter production runs - with the shortest jobs only being on the press for a few minutes. This increases the pressure on label printers to turn around as many print runs within each shift as possible. Older Flexo-graphic machines, with their cumbersome setup and limited automation options, are poorly equipped to deal with these challenges. Only the latest Servo drive machines will be able to cope with these challenges.



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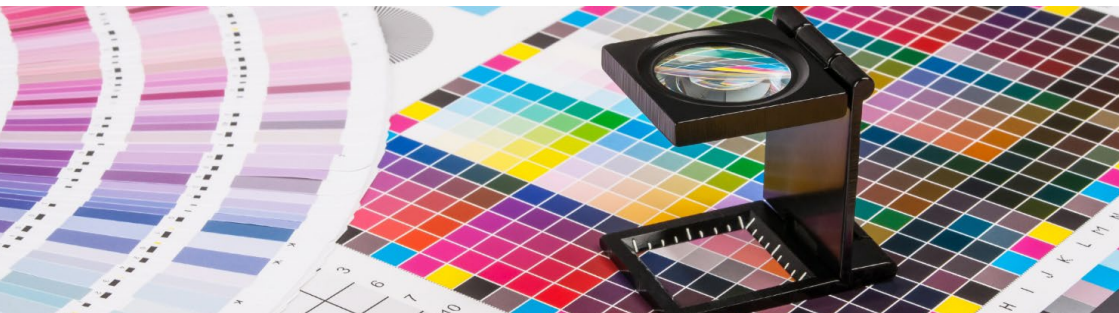
DIGITAL PRINTING

Digital printing goes some way to overcoming these issues by reducing the 'make ready time', and reducing changeover requirements and they do not require printing plates. Digital print runs are highly automated and can be changed over at the touch of a button, often within seconds. They also allow printing onto a wide range of substrates with Digital UV Inks that give a better spectrum of colours.

However, the cost of digital technology has limited its wider acceptance and ability to adapt to different projects. Furthermore, for large-scale print runs, conventional flexo-graphic technology remains more effective. While costs per unit for flexo-printing remain more or less constant regardless of volume. Digital print runs start off being extremely cheap for small volumes, with prices increasing on a steady, upward curve. By the time you reach a print run of 1,00 to 2,000 linear metres the digital cost per unit exceeds that of flexo-graphic printing.

Digital machinery has – until recently at least – been notoriously unreliable, with repairs being frequent and expensive.

Overcoming these drawbacks to meet the requirements of a changing industry is the biggest challenge facing print technology manufacturers.



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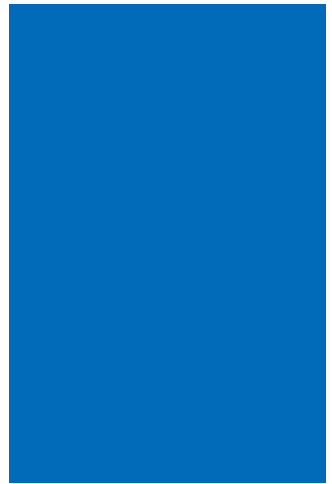
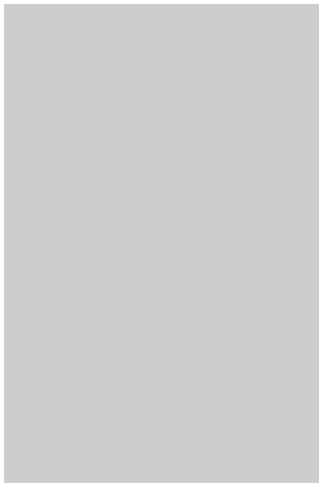
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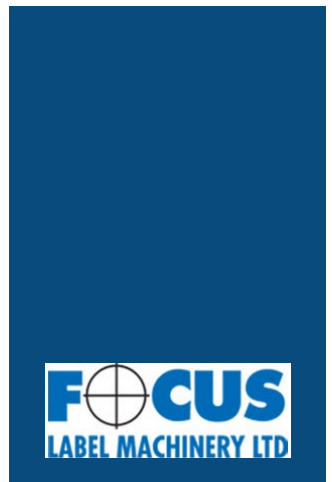
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TRENDS IN THE LABEL PRINTING INDUSTRY



HOW TO STAY AHEAD IN THE LABEL PRINTING INDUSTRY

TRENDS IN THE LABEL PRINTING INDUSTRY


At Focus Label, we have set ourselves several challenges to meet the current trends in the label printing industry. This includes the following:

- » To design a new generation of printer that builds on the reliability for which traditional flexo-graphic machinery is famous
- » To create a digital technology that is responsive and cost-effective for both small and high volume print runs
- » To maximise automation and control, and minimise change over time
- » To create versatile machines that accommodate the widest range of substrates
- » To overcome the weaknesses of digital printing; namely capital investment cost, maintenance and high production costs for large volumes

With our new D-Flex printing machine, we have found an innovative solution to these problems. The D-Flex machine is built around a hybrid solution, combining elements of both flexo-graphic and digital print methodologies.



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WHAT IS HYBRID TECHNOLOGY?

To look at, the D-Flex is a digital machine. It accommodates small production volumes economically and can incorporate graphics and variable information on a wide range of label substrates. It has no printing plates, and jobs can be changed over in a matter of seconds.

However, underneath this exterior the D-Flex is a true hybrid, as it combines ink jet technology with several flexo-graphic print configurations.

Key features include:

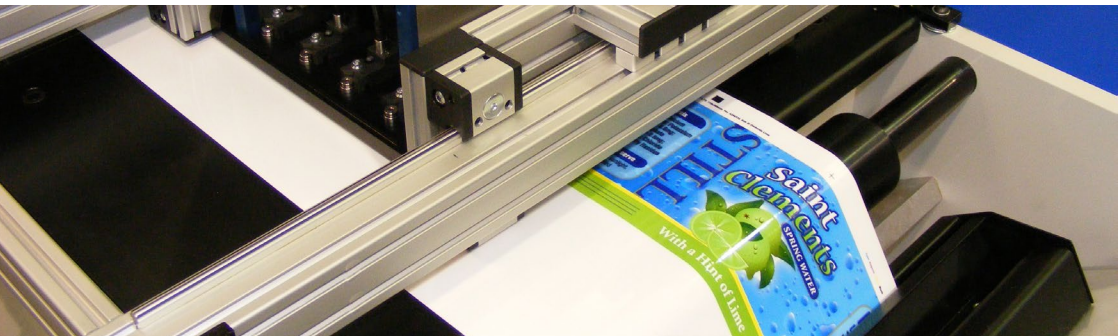
- » Mono technology and 4 colour options
- » A choice of web widths
- » UV drying systems and single colour rotary flexo-head for pre-coating
- » Flexo Printing and over varnish
- » Plus, in line converting and finishing systems

With the addition of finishing equipment such as the Focus Reflex, you can also convert and finish pre-printed digital labels.


The D-Flex also allows users to adopt a more flexible approach to the following:

- » The latest advances in UV Digital ink
- » Consumables and substrates
- » Finishing and drying options
- » Software applications

Let's examine each of these in turn.



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ADVANCES IN PRINTER INKS

Inkjet is not subject to the same limitations as their equivalents for flexo and offset printers. This gives a greater range of colours as well as improved purity. Some inkjet machines can accommodate six or even seven colours.

These are usually:

- » CMYK + orange + green or; / White
- » CMYK + green + red + blue / violet/White

This gives you the opportunity to faithfully reproduce a greater range of brand colours on customer orders. It also reduces the time needed for multi-colour print runs, as you will not need to clean the print heads between each colour change.

CONSUMABLES & SUBSTRATES


D-Flex print heads take only an hour to install and can last between three and five years, with minimal cleaning requirements. This is a huge time saving advantage compared with other Digital systems with monthly service & click charges per print.

Substrates produced specifically for the digital printing market are still expensive, which is one of the factors that frequently puts off businesses thinking of investing in new equipment.

Nonetheless, are a growing number of high-quality, standard substrates available which can be easily adapted with the addition of an inexpensive coating. This has a great impact on your costs and makes digital printing a far more competitive option for label substrates.



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FINISHING & DRYING

The D-Flex is compatible with advanced finishing and drying equipment, which further increases your production options. These include the Focus Reflex - a high-speed, full rotary system that provides perfect pre-registration facilities. This can be used either for independent production, or in conjunction with your D-Flex machine.

The Focus Reflex provides all the production flexibility of a flexo-graphic printer, with the efficiency of a digital model. There are a range of finishing programmes you can take advantage of to get the precise result you need, including:

- » Spot colour checking
- » Cold foil lamination
- » Substrate coatings (see above)
- » Die cutting




SOFTWARE

The entire label printing workflow can be optimised and managed through advanced planning software. Our D-Flex printing machine incorporates operating software by Global Inkjet Systems (GIS), who are widely regarded as one of the most innovative printer operating systems available. This allows your machine to print variable data and sequential numbers, including a series of barcodes. Each label can incorporate up to four variable colour images, without having to change your print heads.

Jobs can be set up and scheduled in advance, or pre-programmed to be triggered at the press of a button when required. The software can be adapted to respond to changing order priorities and short turnaround print runs.

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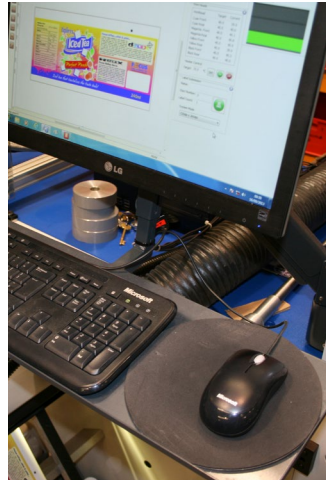
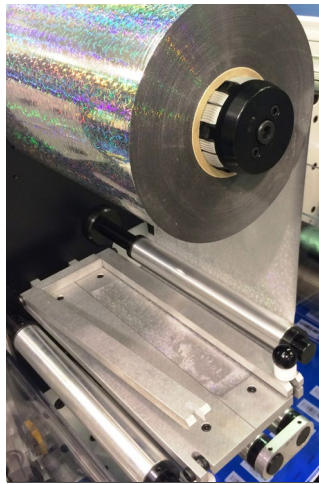
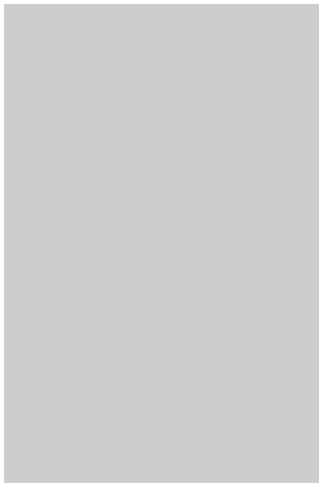
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**INVESTING IN A
FOCUS LABEL'S
D-FLEX**

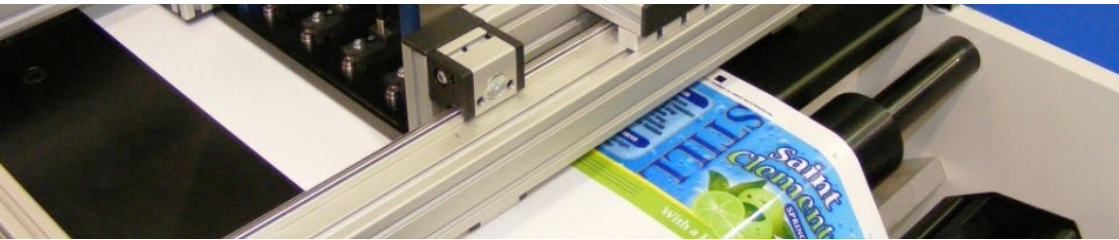


HOW TO STAY AHEAD IN THE LABEL PRINTING INDUSTRY

INVESTING IN A FOCUS LABEL'S D-FLEX

By now you should already be aware of some of the main advantages of adopting digital or hybrid print technology. Our new range of D-Flex hybrid machinery features the best of both worlds: the versatility of digital printing and the cost-effectiveness of flexo-technology.

Many of the strengths of flexo-printing have been retained, such as low production costs on medium to large print runs, as well as the availability of inexpensive substrates. We also offer the same diverse range of finishing and curing options as the latest flexo-graphic models. On the other hand, the weaknesses of flexo-printing, most notably the time needed to change over colours and the high cost per unit on small print runs, has been successfully overcome.



The D-Flex is more reliable than earlier generations of digital technology, while incorporating an even more advanced suite of software and automation options.

Furthermore, the financial barrier of adopting digital print technology is now lower than ever, with credit and monthly payment plans available. This means you can take advantage of the benefits of new print technology straight-away, while offsetting the costs of a new capital investment.

Investing in new technology gives you a lot to think about. At Focus Label's we believe in the importance of trust as the foundation of a great supplier relationship. We would therefore like to spend the final section of this guide giving you some more information about our business, our engineering philosophy and the way we work.

Our engineering team are experienced, highly-qualified and passionate about the print industry - but above all we are approachable! There really is no substitute for direct, personal communication with the engineering team who design, build and install your printing machines. We are here to help you make a great investment decision for your business. Get us involved with the decision-making process, and we will clearly explain your options and answer any questions you might have.

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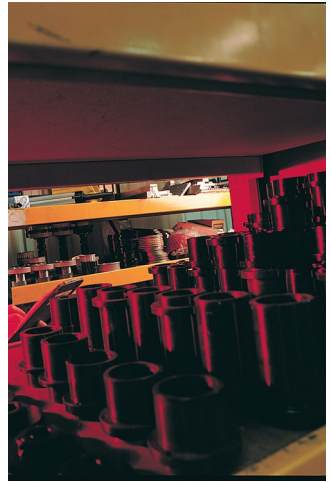
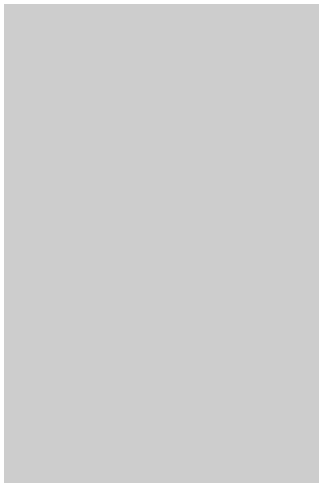
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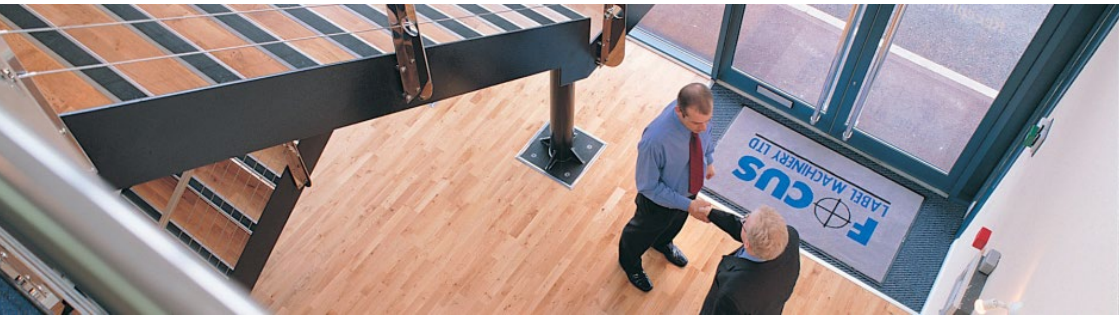
ABOUT FOCUS LABEL



HOW TO STAY AHEAD IN THE LABEL PRINTING INDUSTRY

ABOUT FOCUS LABEL

Focus Label Machinery Ltd was set up in 1981, so at the time of writing this e-book in 2017, we have just celebrated our 36th anniversary of continuous operation as a business! Our background before we started Focus Label was in manufacturing print machines for the narrow web label and packaging print industry - a sector in which we had already accrued more than 30 years previous experience.




Improving Efficiency Through Innovation

Printing technology has moved on quite a bit since 1981; and we have become one of the world's leading manufacturers of narrow web printing and converting, with clients all over the world. We are an established name in the industry, placing a strong emphasis on innovation to continually improve the performance of our print machines.

We try and set the gold standard for other manufacturers to follow, with ongoing investment in research and new product development. In a competitive global environment, our commitment to new technology alongside our team of highly experienced support technicians gives our clients the edge in minimising wastage, reducing costs and completing assignments on schedule.

It's fair to say that we are proud of our achievements. Our patented advanced label printing technology allows the fastest colour changes on any press on the market today, with less downtime, less wastage, faster production, higher output and improved quality!

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WHY CHOOSE US?

Investing in a high-quality D-Flex press, with the right consumables and strong technical support, is the best way of guaranteeing on-time production and consistent quality across your print runs.

At Focus Label, we believe we have the right combination of expertise, professionalism and creativity to provide you with the modern print solutions you need. With every build we combine cutting-edge design, high engineering standards and after sales support to help you get the best return from your investment.

Here are five main strengths of our business model that set us apart from our competitors, both in the UK and abroad:

1

Engineering And Build Quality

All our printing presses are designed, engineered and assembled at our facility here in the UK. We don't outsource any part of the process, so when you visit our workshop – which you are very welcome to do – the engineers you meet are the same people who will be working on your machine.

This is how we combine cutting-edge technology with personal service, and is one of the main benefits of buying from a UK manufacturer. We are always available to answer your questions throughout the process.


As technologies change, we will be able to update your press with upgraded modules, so you can maintain your competitive edge. All our designs are 'future proof' in this way, to guard against obsolescence and give you greater long-term value for money. Every press comes with our full build quality assurance and product warranty.

2

Reliable Components

We sometimes use third-party suppliers to provide electrical components, such as servo drives, control systems, gearboxes and UV systems. We are completely transparent in this and only ever use reputable UK and European supply partners. We never try to cut corners by sourcing electrical components from the Far East.

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3

Innovative R&D Department

A print business that fails to innovate rapidly falls behind its competitors. We are therefore always working to give our customers a technological edge by innovating new products and components to improve the performance of our printing presses. We never simply replicate what other companies are doing, but instead try to lead the field ourselves by approaching problems in a new way.

4

Custom Solutions

We manufacture a range of market leading printing presses that can be ordered, manufactured and installed within a short turnaround time. However, we are not in the business of selling off-the-shelf presses. Every one of our products can be customised and upgraded to suit your unique requirements. We can also provide tailored and bespoke solutions for non-standard applications. Simply get in touch with one of our team to discuss your requirements and find out more.

5


Excellent Technical And After-Sales Support

We pride ourselves on our excellent technical support and after sales customer service. Wherever in the world you are based, we can offer you fast, expert support through our global network of representatives and distributors. Our rapid response service gives you access to spare parts and engineering services whenever you need them.

Our support begins even before installation, with our comprehensive training package. We want to ensure that your team are confident in operating your new press so you can start running at full efficiency straight-away. We therefore offer full training as an inclusive service. We have a showroom at our Nottingham headquarters that features working models of all of our presses. Furthermore, you are more than welcome to invite your team here for a full demonstration.

Alternatively, we can carry out your training at your location. Simply let us know what works best for you. You can drop into our showroom at any time for top up training or to speak to one of our engineers. It is always a pleasure to meet our customers face-to-face!

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GET IN TOUCH

Many thanks for taking the time to download and read this guide. We hope you found out a few new things about new digital print technologies. We also hope you will give serious consideration to ordering a new press from Focus Label.

If you would like to discuss our products or services, please do not hesitate to get in touch with a member of our experienced customer service team.

We would be delighted to meet you in person and show you around our manufacturing facility.

For a quote to suit your budget, please give us a call on **01949 836 223** or send us an email to admin@focuslabel.com

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