

SMAG weds Aquaflex after velvet divorce from GIDUE

■ After its velvet divorce from GIDUE, and having installed 26 of the Italian manufacturer's presses in France, SMAG has formed a new partnership with Aquaflex (F. L. Smithe), a manufacturer specialising in flexographic presses for labels and flexible packaging.

In 2004 Aquaflex was acquired by F. L. Smithe, the manufacturer of envelope-making machinery. Aquaflex today employs 250, split between its plant in Duncansville, Pennsylvania and an engineering office in Montreal, Canada. The US plant is fully integrated with in-house metalworking, sheeting, electricals, paint shop and assembly.

"After acquiring Aquaflex we first concentrated our marketing on North and South America," says F.L.Smithe vice-president Stuart Roberts. "We didn't want to take on the European market without having a competent partner able to operate Europe-wide."

"When we learned that SMAG was ending its agreement with GIDUE it was a golden opportunity and we jumped at it. SMAG has good European coverage but for a start we will be concentrating on France and Italy."

"We plan to launch this operation in a big way with a stock of parts and a demonstration press installed at SMAG's plant by September. A wide product range, well established and highly competitive on the American market, plus a favourable dollar/euro exchange rate will mean we can move into this market quickly."

With Aquaflex SMAG has an experienced partner making fully servo-driven machinery for both label and flexible packaging sectors, with web widths from 250-1000mm. SMAG will concentrate its marketing on the ELS series in web widths from 200-420mm and the FPC series for flexo printing and converting flexible packaging in widths from 500-1000mm.

TICKER

■ Marquip promotion

MarquipWardUnited has promoted Pete Bickford finishing division sales manager for North America. He will lead four regional sales executives selling MarquipWardUnited finishing equipment in the US and Canada.



Pete Bickford