

Digital converting

The rise of digital label printing has spawned a multitude of specially designed new substrates, coatings and converting equipment. Market leader HP Indigo has accredited a small number of suppliers, including two of Europe's major narrow web machinery manufacturers, AB Graphic and SMAG.

UK-based AB Graphic International (ABG), which has facilities in several European countries and in North America, makes and markets converting lines including laser diecutting technology, camera inspection systems and rewinders. SMAG's manufacturing plant near Paris, France, makes narrow web screenprinting presses and a range of converting equipment. SMAG Sales and Marketing Manager Stéphane Rateau reckons that finishing equipment for digital labels could be one of the few really bright spots on the European label industry's radar this year.

"It's a field where expertise and innovation count for more than price," says Rateau, "which makes it easier for euro zone manufacturers to compete even in difficult markets like the USA." Both ABG and SMAG will be exhibiting at Labelexpo Americas in Chicago in the fall of this year.