

SMAG and AQUAFLEX

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

In 2004, Aquaflex was acquired by F.L.Smithe, the world's leading 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, electrical dept, paint shop and assembly.

Commenting on the new partnership Stuart

Roberts, VP of F.L.Smithe, said "After acquiring Aquaflex we first concentrated our marketing on North and South America. 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 demo press installed at SMAG's plant by October 2008. 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.

Stéphane Rateau, CEO of SRAMAG-SMAG commented: "This is really an exceptional opportunity. With Aquaflex we have an experienced partner making fully servo-driven machinery for both label and flexible packaging sectors, with web widths from 250 to 1047 mm (10" to 42"). SMAG will concentrate its marketing on the ELS series, for flexo printing/converting labels and flexible packaging in web widths from 200 to 420 mm (8" to 16"), and the FPC series for flexo printing/converting flexible packaging in widths from 500 to 1067 mm (20" to 42")."