

Forming labels for 60 years

Label-form has withstood the test of time – reaching 60 years in the print industry and adapting to an ever-evolving market as it has done so. *Taylor Sinclair* visited the Maidenhead-based label printer to hear its story.

Monday 10 August 1964: the Vietnam War is gathering pace; The Beatles' 'A Hard Day's Night' tops the charts on both sides of the Atlantic; and in the sleepy Berkshire town of Maidenhead, label printing business Label-form opens its doors for the first time.

Initially, the company specialised in producing labels and dart flights using silk screen, letterpress, flexo and foil processes. Today, the company has added digital printing capability to the mix, and has sold into a wide range of markets, including cosmetics, confectionery, industrial and drinks.

That digital breakthrough came in 2015, when Label-form purchased a 720dpi Durst Tau 330 inkjet system, and this was then updated in 2022 to a newer Durst press, a 1200dpi Tau 330 RSCE.

The wide-scale shift towards digital is a change in the market that the company has embraced, and Stewart Serls, commercial director, believes investment is key to the company's success. 'The inkjet from Durst has been a saviour,' Mr Serls says. 'We have been in control of our own destiny, and with the support of Durst we introduced the Tau. We were one of the first people 10 years ago to introduce this technology.'

Debbie Mellett, managing director of Label-form, continues, 'Digital is much faster, and there is no need for plates, which can be costly. It

has opened the doors to the digital market, fulfilling the need for quick turnaround times.'

While the addition of digital print has improved operations at the company, both Mr Serls and Ms Mellett honour the company's roots using conventional printing presses, attributing much of its success to Label-form's ability to utilise multiple print methods for its customers. Looking ahead, they add that the company will look at investing in a combination press, bringing together digital with foiling and varnishing in a single system, a single pass.

Milestones to make

In celebrating its 60 years of successful business, Label-form also knows the importance of plotting its future course. If it is to clock up another 10, 20 or 60 years, the company must continue to adapt to the market, seeking opportunities that will set it above the competition. It has an experienced management team - Mr Serls quips that they have all been working for the company for over 100 years combined - so hiring the right people to move the company forward is crucial to future success.

Ms Mellett continues, 'It is very much against the norm for a company to stay for this amount of time. I think it is because of the characters that have been involved in the company along the way.'

She adds that to reach the next milestone in 10 years' time - which she would like to help the company achieve - the company must get the right staff into the right jobs because without them, Label-form will not be able to thrive.

It is clear to see that Label-form has drawn from a wealth of knowledge from those who have stood with the company for many years. Loyalty cannot be underestimated and the joint effort towards success is what has kept the company on track and competing in the industry. With plans in place, and a keen eye on the gaps in the industry, the company looks poised for ongoing success. •

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