

Cannex comes up trumps

At risk of wearing out the gambling metaphors, delegates at Cannex in Las Vegas might have expected a lottery but actually hit the jackpot. Mónica Higuera, John Nutting and Daniel Searle outline some more of the highlights in this second report

Overbeck reaps benefits from Cannex comeback

Following its comeback to the metal packaging industry at last year's Cannex in Singapore, German specialist in grinding equipment Overbeck came to Las Vegas reporting a "very good year" with sales growing four-fold, general manager Pello Rodríguez said.

Overbeck was promoting its IRC-400 precision grinding machine, which is a redesign of the previous IR-400 model. The new equipment is said to improve grinding results with a roundness tolerance of less than one micron. Meanwhile the IRD-400 model features an integrated linear motor and three-axis interpolation

Overbeck was bought by Spanish-group Danobat in 2002.

Easy-open food cans get the coloured tab treatment

Coloured tabs for easy-open food cans in the US could be more than just a novelty if Golden Aluminum has its way.

The Colorado-based tabstock manufacturer reckons that it can offer quantities small enough to make market tests and promotions more cost effective.

This summer its coloured stock will be used again for a Coors Light promotion, following its success last year when half a million pounds of tabstock was produced for use on the brewer's cans.

Now the company is working with end manufacturer Sonoco-Phoenix, with a view to producing coloured tabs for easy-open food can ends.

The company is suited to supplying aluminium for promotional tabs, as Jeffrey



Frim, vice president of market and business development explained.

"We have a relatively small mill which gives canmakers the option of a low minimum order of around 5,000lbs of aluminium," he said. "We can ship aluminium in one of our 12 standard colours within ten days, and have custom colours ready in 30 days."

Golden Aluminum supplied coloured stock for oil can ends in the Asian market, and also for wine closures. But it's beverage can tabs that hold the most potential at the moment, says Frim: "The energy drink market is always looking for something new. With our fast turnaround, when the marketing person decides they want coloured tabs, we can have it ready almost straight away."

And it's already spread from the US; Golden is currently supplying Crown in Carlisle, UK, with coloured tabstock.

Temperature control for each inker unit

An ink temperature control system that's already enabling beverage can manufacturers to improve their lithography and save consumables will soon be tested at one of the world's most up-to-date aerosol can plants.

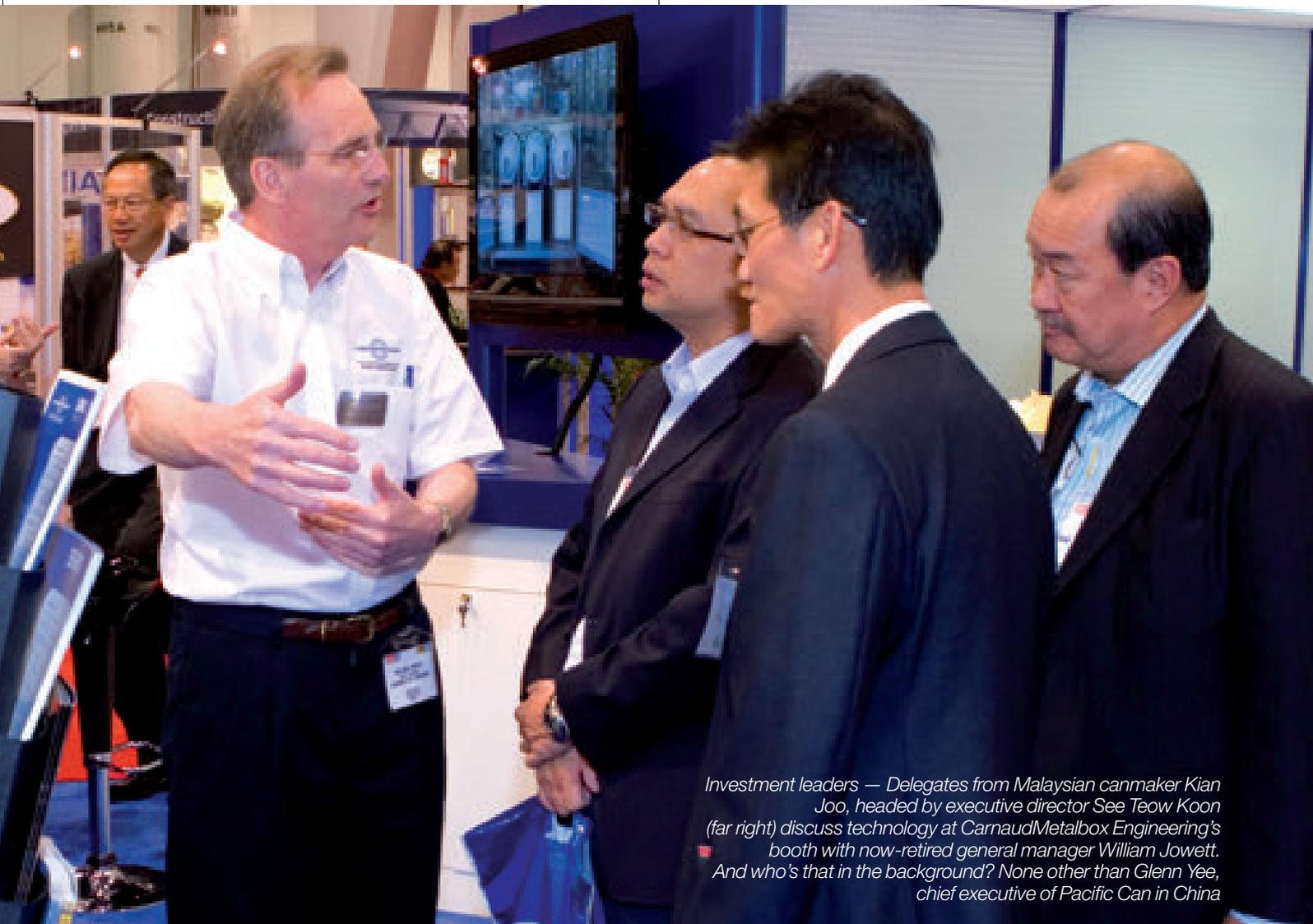


Cannex
de las Américas

Following successful tests, the TS-500 system developed by Total Process Control was installed by Rexam at its Chicago plant in March and was due to be installed at a Mexican canmaker's plant last month.

Although decorators are delivered with a rudimentary system that feeds water to the ink fountains, the TS-500 is more sophisticated. It uses hot and cold water mixed to maintain the optimum temperature at the inker units and fountain rollers, cutting ink consumption by up to 30 percent by reducing misting. A key feature of the control units are that they enable the temperature to be controlled for each ink.

For canmakers keen to test the process, TPC has also developed a trial version of the system, which controls the temperature of two inkers, two fountain rollers and a varnish tank. The controlled and



Investment leaders — Delegates from Malaysian canmaker Kian Joo, headed by executive director See Teow Koon (far right) discuss technology at CarnaudMetalbox Engineering's booth with now-retired general manager William Jowett. And who's that in the background? None other than Glenn Yee, chief executive of Pacific Can in China

uncontrolled systems are then monitored for comparison.

The trial unit is being used by Ball at its plant in Williamsburg, Virginia, but TPC hopes to move it on soon, as president Ben Day explains: "Ball is using the trial unit to measure consumption of thermal chromatic inks, which are particularly well-suited to the system due to their cost. They've now ordered a full unit, so we're hoping to pass the trial system on to DS Containers' aerosol can plant in Batavia, Illinois, which uses similar decorators."

On-line adjustment for Swiss presses

Swiss press maker Bruderer's entire line of high-speed presses now have the ability to be adjusted while producing ends, vice president of operations Ron Randall said.

"We are able to adjust bottom dead center while the press is running by monitoring the exact position and making adjustments accordingly," Randall said.

"The advantage is customers can speed up and slow down the press without



Pride Engineering's Bruce Allyn presents the company's air bearing grinding equipment to potential customers

affecting the quality of the produced part. Now every part a customer makes is a good part, so they don't have to throw away lids."

Randall said recent inroads also have been made in servo feed technology. Currently, all of Bruderer's presses are capable of using servo feeds, but only about ten

percent of current orders call for the upgrade, which costs roughly four times as much as mechanical feeds.

"The servo feed technology has improved dramatically over the years and the cost of electronics keeps coming down," Randall said. "In five years, most everything will have servo feeds." ▶



Above: Specially-formulated coatings have been developed by Actega DS to laser-etch sales promotions.

Right: Partners in research — Wim van Rijswijk, from steel producer Corus, and a team from coatings supplier Valspar share expertise



Global end compound made locally

It sounds almost too good to be true, but the goal of offering a sealing compound that is suitable for all beverage ends in all markets around the world looks achievable.

Compound manufacturers have been racing to bring such a specification to market — along with a number of other benefits — for about four years.

At The Canmaker Conference in Las Vegas, Dr Teresa Ramos outlined why RB-1006-Z2, a compound from Actega Artistica, the Spanish-based manufacturer that's part of the Altana group, has managed to grab a significant part of the market since it was first introduced at the end of 2004. Since then around 25 billion cans have been sealed using the product.

Originally developed as a sealant free of OPP bactericide, RB-1006-Z2 is a water-based compound that is said to be easy to handle, provides a soft film that adapts to tight seams and thin gauges, and has low iron pick up. A key feature, said Ramos, is that in addition to returning positive taste results from beer and soft drinks manufacturers (it's been approved by Coca-Cola, Heineken and Anheuser-Busch), it has good flavour neutrality, which is why it is used by water manufacturers such as Perrier.

Furthermore, it offers wide process latitude with narrow film weight tolerances on a variety of lining machines, along with the potential for up to 20 percent savings from the use of lower film weights.

Artistica has been working to produce the compound in a number of locations and is currently running a qualification programme with customers in the US. "We have developed a global compound specification that is produced locally," said

Ramos. "We will hopefully enter the US market in the second half of 2007."

Other manufacturers have been developing compounds with similar specifications. Both Darex and Henkel announced products at Cannex and The Canmaker Summit last year.

Tooling manufacturer to raise its game

US-based tooling specialist Oberg Industries used Cannex in Las Vegas as a launch pad to raising its image within the canmaking world.

Founded in 1948 in Pennsylvania, the precision manufacturing company is remarkably diverse with customers in the aerospace, medical, computer, housing construction as well as in container manufacturing. It even has a division making aftermarket parts for motocross bikes.

But Mark Paolillo, director of international sales, thinks that awareness of the service that Oberg offers — it makes shell, copper, ironing, necking and end tooling as well as tab tooling — could be better. Less well known is its high-speed end-handling system project management service.

Paolillo explained: "We want the Oberg name to be immediately recognizable in any canmaking plant anywhere in the world." Currently, the canmaking business delivers less than ten percent of its world sales of \$120 million.

To help, Oberg has hired John Ward, formerly with Alcoa and Impress, as a marketing consultant.

"They can do it on quality alone," said Ward. "They're a benchmark. But we want to bring greater visibility to the product range. For example, bottle tooling is an

opportunity, as is expansion of carbide tooling."

Different prize winning images on any item

A coding system for sales promotions that creates text and images on crowns and cans at high-speed with improved food-contact properties was launched to the industry at Cannex by DS-Chemie. This is the company now known as Actega DS following the creation of the Actega group of coatings and sealants manufacturers, which are in turn part of Altana AG based in Germany.

Using steered-beam lasers, the process enables graphics to be applied to the inside of crowns and the external coatings of cans at up to 2,000 items per minute depending on the complexity of the images or text.

It requires the use of specially formulated sealants or coatings, the colour of which is changed by the laser but a key feature is that they are free of heavy metals. David Coulter of Actega DS said that they use a proprietary chemistry without the inclusion of tin antimony oxide.

At Cannex an on-line or stand-alone version of the Nd: YAG laser produced by Alfalas, a division of Tampoprint in Germany was demonstrated for closure applications.

A typical run for marking the inside sealant of 10,000 crown corks for a prize promotion allows for a small number to be printed with graphics showing ten baseball caps, five tee-shirts and 20 free drinks, and all in different languages.

Security is provided by the programming, which cannot be altered by an operator unless the complete system is changed. ▶

More product development from Nordson Corporation

Nordson Corporation is increasingly investing in product development for the canmaking industry. Company sales are around US\$800m, with the canmaking sector representing some \$30m and growing between seven and ten percent annually, said Nordson's Mark Novotny.

The company is working on process monitoring systems that enable canmakers to react quickly to data provided and make adjustments on their manufacturing lines accordingly.

To improve process control over the inside spray system and achieve lower coating weights, Nordson's iTrax spray control system monitors flow and pressure of inside lacquer spray guns and pumping systems online. Two leading US canmakers have reported drop weights of 20 percent by using the module, said Novotny.

A timer has now been added to the system to also control spray time, in addition to the so-called PRX pressure control module, which allows canmakers to keep "recipes" and change pressure settings for different can sizes or labels at the touch of button, he said.

Two-piece decoration specialists debut at Cannex

UK-based Unimaq, which refurbishes two-piece decorating equipment as well as providing spare parts and technical assistance, had a booth at Cannex for the first time.

Established in 1993 as Display Consultancy, the company changed to Unimaq Limited in 2006 and currently employs 15.

This year Unimaq has supplied six inkers to Amcor in Australia, a decorator to Rexam at Recklinghausen in Germany,



Delegates from around 50 countries went to Cannex in Las Vegas to do business and celebrate the successes of the metal packaging world

and a basecoater for Crown in Cambodia.

The company has also developed parts such as a cleaning scraper assembly, form roller arms that allow changeovers in 20 minutes compared to 3.5 hours, and a "more robust" backlash gear assembly, marketing executive Roman Lozano said.

He was impressed by the quality of visitors at Cannex: "At other trade shows you end up talking to people who aren't even interested in your product. Here they come knowing what they are after and what they need."

Fully-automated assembling for cigar boxes

Among the products on display at Cannex was a small, two-piece hinged cigar box made possible by Italian transfer press specialist BMV.

One key feature of the cigar or mint box, which is a square with four-inch sides, is that it is produced already assembled by fully-automated machinery at speeds of

120ppm, according to project manager Luca Vignolini. BMV employed its T4/40 transfer press for the project.

"It's very complicated," said Vignolini, who added that the project was commissioned by Impress for its plant in the Netherlands. "It took us six months of study to develop and construct the system. A circle is easier because you only have one axis of reference, but a square box has an axis and four sides of reference. The challenge is that the tools must be very precise."

BMV, which started working with aerosol tops in 1972, today designs about 25 percent of its high-speed automated systems for that purpose. It also constructs transfer presses that produce tops for products such as fish cans and printing ink containers. Its packaging customers include Coleman, Impress and Crown Holdings, Vignolini said.

"We design systems according to the solution that is needed," Vignolini said. "For us, no project is ever the same as another."

• For contact information refer to *The Canmaker Directory* on p44. 

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