

## Industry boosters flaunt facets of flexo at Drupa

Normally flexo plays a walk-on part at the Drupa shows. This time an alliance of 19 graphic arts suppliers intend to raise its profile and "change perceptions about using the process in packaging printing". The platform is Flexo4All, which has organized The Flexo Tour. Accompanied by a guide, visitors will visit partners' booths to see examples of best practice and flexo applications, including labels, shrink sleeves and cartons.

This attempt to boost flexo's market position – which continues after the show – coincides with some important trends. In Europe, the growing influence of rotary offset is challenging UV flexo at the premium quality end of the market. Meanwhile, established and emerging digital color printing techniques have extended the short-run threshold and, while largely complementary, could effect flexo usage. Many manufacturers already include the flexo and offset processes in their label and package press portfolios. Gidue is one of them. Its president, Federico d'Annunzio, is also a vocal champion of offset, but as a Flexo4All partner his sentiments naturally favor flexo: "Flexo still has a lot to say in the flexible packaging industry, especially thanks to the development of food-compliant UV/EB ink and curing technologies. The traditional ink stability of UV technology will be enhanced by the advantages of UV flexo as a clean and environmentally-friendly process. The Flexo Tour is a really good opportunity for all Flexo4All partners to combine their experience and knowledge to show visitors how flexo can improve their business and support a sustainable activity."

Other narrow web partners include DuPont Packaging Graphics, Eckart, EskoArtwork, Gallus, Sun Chemicals, Hartmann Druckfarben, Omet, Praxair, Rotatek and Tesa. Their aim, they say, is not to merely to sell products or services. Rather, they want to encourage networking within the flexo industry and create active cooperation among all partners. It all sounds very laudable; disparate companies and competitors working together, each sharing their experience and knowledge to perfect flexo packaging printing and promote its advantages and innovations.