



The Salerno production team

Cross-selling key to sheet-fed growth at Nuceria

Nuceria Adesivi is one of Italy's leading label converters with more than 35 narrow web presses. But a significant proportion of its output is printed sheet fed offset for wet glue application. Nick Coombes reports from its new plant in Salerno

The company founded in 1989 by Antonio Iannone to print tapes is a far cry from the package printing Nuceria Group of today. The business, which is still owned and managed by the Iannone family, has grown to become one of Italy's premier suppliers, with a staff of more than 250 located across four production plants in Milan and Turin in the north, and Nocera and Salerno south of Naples.

The label division opened in 1989, and by 1992 the first international client, Johnson & Johnson, had joined what is now a 'who's who' of premium brands in Nuceria's portfolio. Other milestones include the opening of a commercial office in Turin in 1997, the inauguration of the 9,000sqm San Giuliano plant in 2002 and the dedicated pharma department launched in 2012. In 2014, the company acquired Appia Etichette, in the wine-growing area of Piedmont, giving it another 6,000sqm of production space, making a total now of 45,000sqm.

Second generation Paola Iannone, today's sales director, explains the philosophy behind the company's continued growth and success: 'For major brand owners, cost saving is no longer the prime concern – what they demand is added value in both product and service. They look to us for predictions of market trends, so investment in our own R&D is essential if we are to be able

to respond with creativity and innovation.'

The policy has been highly successful, with Nuceria's sales rising from 33m EUR in 2011 to a forecasted 68m EUR this year – and most of this has been organic growth funded from Group reserves.

Principle markets served are home and beauty care, which accounts for 42 percent, pharmaceuticals – 21 percent, food – 20 percent, and beverages – 17 percent. Nuceria lists P&G, Sainsbury's, Lidl, Asda, Colgate, M&S, Tesco, Aldi, Morrisons, and Unilever among its international customers. To supply such demanding companies, Nuceria has invested 15m EUR in the new production facility in Salerno, some 75km from Naples, a sum that will rise to 25m EUR over the first five years of operation. The 30,000sqm facility houses the company's sheet-fed offset printing and finishing capacity for wet-glue labels and folding cartons, and employs 60 staff.

Cross-selling

It is the company's ability to cross-sell its variety of package print techniques that gives it strength, especially for the top brands, and led to the major investment in wet-glue production technology. Self-adhesive and wet-glue labels serve the same or similar markets, and wet-glue and folding cartons both use sheet-fed offset and



Diego Matarazzo and Paola Iannone plan to push sales through 68m EUR this year

off-line finishing techniques. By using all of the Group's production capability, Nuceria is able to offer single source supply of labels, sleeves and cartons to the major brands, and grow its business organically.

Although relatively small by value compared with the self-adhesive label section, Nuceria's wet-glue label capacity is considerable and growing, as production team director Diego Matarazzo explains: 'We have two Heidelberg Speedmaster CX 102 presses with a third due for installation later



One of the two current Heidelberg CX 102 presses with six colors plus coater

in the year. Both are 6-color with coater, and one is on a raised plinth to allow us to handle carton stock more easily. The much needed third Heidelberg press will be similarly specified.'

With the oldest press being five years, the company has the latest sheet-fed technology, which is proving invaluable for its venture into in-mold and wet-glue labels printed on specially coated papers and filmic substrates, notably PP and PE. The papers, which are printed with non mineral-oil based inks, are also treated with a special glue and protected with a high resistance water-based varnish. Curing is by UV. A typical run length for wet-glue labels at Nuceria is 12,000 B1 (700 x 1000mm) sheets, printed CMYK plus a special pantone color and a coating.

The latest machine to be added to the impressive plant list at Salerno is a Bobst VisionFoil 104H die-cutter/hot foil/embosser, which was chosen to mirror the added-value capability of the company's Nilpeter MO narrow web offset press. Capable of converting at 7500sph, depending on the job, the Bobst, which is well-known in the folding carton market, has opened new label opportunities for Nuceria. The Bobst also has holographic capability as well as micro embossing, and both techniques are highly prized in the security and anti-counterfeiting sectors. Each year, Nuceria invests 4 percent of its turnover in R&D to develop innovative products and new designs, including creative ideas for anti-counterfeiting measures. One current project of which it is very proud is called 'Labels to be drunk by eye' and involves use of highly decorative techniques for the wine industry that 'compel' the consumer to buy the bottle.

Converting is carried out initially on a Polar XT 115 guillotine fitted with a diamond tip knife that uses high pressure but low force to cut the sensitive materials. The cut labels are then fed into a Polar DCC-M ram punch, which works with counter pressure, and is also ideally suited to the special materials, such as plastics and metal foils that Nuceria uses.

Matarazzo describes some of the company's pioneering work in sheet-fed label production: 'There is one wraparound job that we print on 65-micron BOPP with a density of 35gsm. We print the 6-color job 16-up at 1000sph using UV inks and a special water-based varnish that adds gloss but is also non moisture-sensitive. Another job is printed on 65-micron BOPP but this time with a 59gsm density because it needs to withstand the 270 deg C that is needed for in-mold application to fruit and vegetable boxes made from recycled plastic. Both of these products have been researched and developed here and have created new market opportunities for us and the customers involved.'

Variety

Nuceria has the capacity to realize a variety of package print products with print and finishing techniques that have both consumer appeal and essential practical characteristics, such as resistance to thermal shock and abrasion. Finishes include high gloss, transparency, dishwasher resistance, pasteurization resistance, oxygen and sunlight barriers, and metal effects. One example of the latter is a job that uses 68gsm metallized linen paper for application to a glass bottle. To keep the finished label from curling, Nuceria uses low energy UV inks that allow the IR constituent in the curing process to be reduced – it also adds a special water-based lacquer.



The Bobst VisionFoil 104H is the latest addition for label enhancement

The result is a flat label that in appearance is identical to its 'curly' forebear, but is 10 percent cheaper to print, and can be applied 20 percent faster on the bottling line.

'We need to communicate our capabilities in both directions, to our customers and to their packaging designers. If one or neither understands what the new technology has to offer, then our investment is partly wasted. One recent success was with the label for a well-known lime scale remover, which was previously printed on an expensive cast-coated stock. Now we use a single sided paper and add the metallized effect on the Bobst VisionFoil, which reduces stress on the substrate, saving 50 percent of its cost, and allowing for more added value finishing,' explains Matarazzo, who believes that all involved in package printing need to do more lateral thinking.

Currently on triple-shift operation Monday to Friday, the Salerno plant, like others in the Group, is strict on its program of cleaning, maintenance and servicing. Believing prevention is better than cure, Matarazzo uses weekends to keep the production plant in good order. The company also has its own in-house training scheme, which not only increases skill levels, but also rotates staff across different machines to add flexibility.

Having the opportunity with the new Salerno factory to lay down a production workflow that fitted machines and logistics perfectly has created an efficient environment. This is one of the reasons that Nuceria is easily able to conform to the latest international standards of ISO. It also holds BRC, FSC and PEFC accreditation, and complies with the UNI EN 13430:2005 standard for recycling of packaging materials. Saying that compliance is 'a given' in today's market, Paola Iannone adds: 'We don't believe in restraints here – we listen to our customers and use our expertise to find a solution. It's not about hitting targets, it's about being in tune and responding to change. The days of being just a supplier are over – converters now have to offer much more if they want to work with the major brand owners.'

The Group sees its multi-plant structure as an advantage, allowing the flexibility to manage its global business with workflow that uses shared technology and procedures. By using the same supply chain management for every department, product and customer, production has a transparency that breeds efficiency. That is vital for a company that converts 70 million B1 sheets each year, in addition to the 50 million square meters of substrate it processes on its rotary presses. Hardly surprising then, that Nuceria remains one of Italy's top performing package printers.



For information on Nuceria's move into flexible packaging, see L&L issue 5 2014 p47 in the archive at www.labelsandlabeling.com