



# TRUE HYBRID

## THE FUTURE OF NARROW-WEB LABEL PRODUCTION

**FREE RESOURCE**

## THE DEMAND FOR DIGITAL

Digital has taken over narrow-web label and packaging production. As an industry previously dominated by offset and flexo, we're all witnessing the incorporation of new digital production methods. According to a study by LPC Inc, 50 percent of label presses sold in 2016 were digital devices and it is predicted that by 2020, three out of every four presses sold will also be digital. A process complimentary to flexo, digital allows mass customization through VDP and efficiency through versioned graphics.

One of the main drivers of digital growth is new requirements by converters' customers—the brand owners. As shelves become more crowded, more hard work is being done to conceptualize value-add labels and packaging. Standing out is critical if a brand wants to maintain market share. With an average of 39,500 SKUs in the typical North American grocery store, SKU proliferation is rampant.

**This equates to a 400 percent increase in the number of goods available for purchase in the last 30 years.**

That also results in more opportunity for a label converter to win new business and support a new pressroom asset.



## BREAKING DOWN THE BUZZWORD

Shelf appeal requirements mandate differentiation. That's where hybrid comes into play versus conventional digital process.

**Digital hybrid is a printing method that leverages the advantages of digital printing with the proven capabilities of flexo in a single piece of equipment.**

**DIGITAL  
PRINT**



**FLEXO  
PLATFORM**



**INCREASED  
PRODUCTIVITY &  
PROFITABILITY**

A hybrid production unit combines traditional flexo embellishment, inline converting and digital printing into a single solution. In the past, all of these necessary label production steps would need to be done using several processes and pieces of equipment. Offering a profitable solution for label converters, hybrid technologies maximize the long-lasting success achieved with flexographic capabilities while providing printers with the opportunity to stay current with market trends and meet the needs of customers.



# THE MANY FACES OF HYBRID PRINTING



## SEMI

A multi-company integration for digital printing and flexo converting

In recent years, many OEMs have brought hybrid digital solutions to market. That said, hybrid comes in many forms: **semi-, modular and true**. Semi-hybrid devices use nearline finishing methods and consist of multi-company integrations. For these types of presses, two or more companies buddy-up to support digital printing and finishing components of the label production process.



## MODULAR

A retrofit solution that adds digital capability to flexo machines

Modular hybrid solutions are digital retrofits for flexographic equipment. Offered through programs like Mark Andy's Digital Plus Program, solutions of this nature aim to allow converters to enhance existing assets with the benefit of digital without having to invest in a new, standalone piece of equipment. This type of solution is well-suited for the converter with a specific application need, such as VDP or marking. Additionally, modular hybrid solutions are great for companies facing capital constraints or those wishing to make better use of an underutilized legacy press.



## TRUE

A single source integration for digital and flexographic press elements

The last and arguably most efficient classification of hybrid is true. True hybrid provides single-source production platforms with web handling, digital print, converting and finishing in one pass. As of early 2018, there were more than 90 pieces of Mark Andy true hybrid equipment in production, ranging from dry-toner units to high-output UV inkjet devices.

**Data shows true hybrid brings two shifts of flexo work down to one and reduces ink and substrate costs by up to 20 percent.**



## THE TRUE HYBRID ADVANTAGE

Many converters are making the shift to true hybrid due to the clear advantages of the process. Inline converting is the standout differentiator. Blank rolls of material put on the press are transformed into expertly crafted labels and packaging ready to be sent to customers, all in a single pass of production. Substantial time and waste savings are achieved; **Mark Andy digital hybrid customers are reporting 50 percent and 20 percent savings, respectively.**

True hybrid also reigns king when evaluating the ability to differentiate through decoration. This is especially important in craft industries, where highly embellished output is the standard. True hybrid presses enable the same degree of customization flexo provides. **A printer can utilize cold foil, varnishes, laminates, digital special effects and intricate die cuts in a single pass.** With semi-hybrid solutions, this is only achievable with ancillary equipment or secondary decoration processes, leading to more downtime.

Another clear advantage of true hybrid solutions is the single source nature of the product. Adopters of true hybrid are clear who to reach out to with any questions, as opposed to with semi- or modular hybrid solutions. If there are questions about new application development or substrate compatibility, the OEM is always available and knowledgeable. One company stands behind your business, your equipment and your success.

The same concept rings true when addressing upgradability of true hybrid. Unlike semi- or modular solutions, true hybrid enables a clear upgrade path with a longstanding partner.



## THE FUTURE OF NARROW-WEB IS HERE

There is no denying flexography has a stable place in package printing, but the future of flexo isn't the humble tape press from our industry's infancy; rather, the intuitive digital hybrids engineered in the last few years. Hybrid comes in many shapes and sizes, and every converter's need is different. Luckily, Mark Andy's hybrid portfolio covers all the bases. These range from entry-level standalones like Digital One to production level digital assets like the Digital Series press line.

With inline converting and decoration, a clear upgrade path and rock-solid support, true hybrid provides a future-proof platform with the flexibility to change as individual business needs and the market require.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TRUE HYBRID SOLUTIONS, PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE:**

[www.digital.markandy.com](http://www.digital.markandy.com)

Mark Andy Inc. helps converters realize their potential by creating and delivering innovative solutions that increase productivity and deliver profitability. As the world's number one manufacturer of narrow and mid-web printing and finishing equipment, we supply leading global brands, including Mark Andy printing presses and Rotoflex finishing solutions, as well as a complete line of Mark Andy Print Products consumables and pressroom supplies. All products are supported by the largest customer support team in the industry, dedicated to supporting partners throughout the lifecycle of their equipment and offering a variety of services including spare parts, technical service, retrofits and rebuilds, PM programs and superior training through Mark Andy University.