

Press information

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PrintFlex Graphics Expands Capacity with Gallus One & New Gallus Labelmaster from HEIDELBERG

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PrintFlex Graphics continues to expand its capacity and innovate with new product offerings less than one year after installing the first Gallus One in North America. Thanks to the digital label press's exceptional print quality and ease of use, the once flexographic-only printer, who specializes in on-pack and in-pack promotions, has lowered production costs for its short runs and less complex jobs. PrintFlex, looking to further boost capacity and production efficiency, is also set to install a new Gallus Labelmaster from HEIDELBERG later this summer.

User Friendly, Top Quality

After the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the St. Louis-based company's need to expand into new markets and invest in more efficient production methods, PrintFlex began tracking the amount of existing short run work it could move to a digital press. Equipped with a fourteen-unit Gallus EM 280, PrintFlex, who has historically specialized in applications like peel and reseal labels and folded promotional booklets that are applied on or inserted inside of a package, set its sights on the compact Gallus One digital press from HEIDELBERG. The machine, which prints CMYK+W at up to 230 ft/min (70 m/min) and achieves 85% white opacity at top running speed, was installed in December of 2023.

“Our EM 280 was really designed to handle complex promotional pieces,” said Liz Pecha-Poelker, CEO of PrintFlex. “We’ve been able to offload short runs, even some longer run jobs onto the Gallus One, and it just makes sense.” Not only is the machine more economical for the company's less complicated work, but it opens up capacity on its flexo presses for improved throughput as well as enabling PrintFlex to expand its digital market presence. She added, “We believe the Gallus One enables us to achieve the lowest total cost of ownership for digital label production.”

Additionally, as this is the company's first digital press, according to Pecha-Poelker, “we’re having some fun finding the sweet spot for this machine and continue to find ways to enhance our product offerings with it.” With a web width of up to 13 3/8” (340mm), the Gallus One enables PrintFlex to print material for base wraps for the first time – offering additional in-store promotional opportunities for its customers. The company has also begun producing hybrid work – printing different layers on its digital and flexo Gallus presses for versioning purposes.

Since PrintFlex started production on its Gallus One, customers have been impressed with the machine's print quality. “The color and registration is great. Everyone is thrilled with the results,” said Pecha-Poelker. The Gallus One utilizes Fujifilm Samba printheads and HEIDELBERG's Prinect Digital Front End and features 1200 x 1200 dpi resolution and a live video monitoring system to ensure quality during the press run.

Thanks to user-friendly design and exceptional ease of use, PrintFlex's Gallus One is successfully operated by a member of the company's prepress team. “He had no previous experience running a press,” said Pecha-Poelker, “but with outstanding training from the HEIDELBERG Gallus team, he was able to learn quickly. It's very easy to run and clean.”

Production Efficiency with Labelmaster

Looking for ways to further boost efficiency throughout its production, PrintFlex is set to install a new Gallus Labelmaster from HEIDELBERG later this summer. The new Labelmaster is a multiweb ten-color press, equipped with three die-cutting stations and an AeroLED UV curing system. The highly specialized machine will take over production of one of the company's older flexo presses and run alongside its existing EM 280. According to Pecha-Poelker, "This Labelmaster will be an overall upgrade for us – increased efficiency, better quality, and registration." After the company's operators are fully trained on the machine, day to day production will be much easier thanks to the machine's simple and intuitive operation, exceptionally short set-up times, and super-fast job changes.

Started in 1995, PrintFlex made its first commitment to Gallus with the investment of the EM 280 a little over five years ago. "That was a pivotal moment for us," said Pecha-Poelker, "Thanks to the success of the EM 280, we have a lot of confidence in HEIDELBERG Gallus technology and engineering. We're excited to continue this partnership moving forward."

About PrintFlex Graphics:

Some print companies dabble in label and packaging print work. At PrintFlex, flexographic printing for on-pack and in-pack communications is the company's specialty. From labels and stickers to inserts and booklets, PrintFlex helps clients launch new products, increase product awareness, and communicate critical information to customers. This level of focus means the company's seen and overcome a wide array of hurdles and honed a level of experience that's unmatched in the industry.

Figure 1: Liz Pecha-Poelker, CEO of PrintFlex & Chris Collins, Gallus One Operator at PrintFlex

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