

# Sihl advances position in packaging

*Flexible packaging printed using aqueous inkjet is the target of Sihl's latest innovations. David Pittman reports*

**S**ihl is introducing new products to expand the market for aqueous inkjet printing of flexible packaging.

The company's core competency lies in developing inkjet coatings for different applications. These are developed for all inkjet technologies, applied to numerous kinds of material, and are suitable for labels, tickets and tags, commercial printing, and other graphic arts applications.

Flexible packaging is a more recent addition to its portfolio, launched at the start of 2018.

The first grade of flexible packaging material suitable for aqueous inkjet printing was introduced in September last year.

David Radtke, head of group marketing at Sihl, comments: 'Our detailed analysis of market needs, our core competence in coating materials and our reliable network of external system partners enabled us to bring the packaging material, ink, printing head, hardware and software in line in order to create an innovation for narrow web converters.

'If you look at the likes of printing head manufacturers for aqueous inkjet in dye and in pigmented ink, we're getting to speed and quality levels where it's very interesting. We believe now is the right time.'

Ronny Kunze, Sihl's head of global business development, packaging, adds: 'We carried over our experience in how to coat and treat substrates to enable printability, and have applied and modified them to match the demands of flexible packaging. As a result, Sihl created a packaging film, printable via aqueous inkjet in best quality up to high speed with functional properties like barrier, sealability with heat



*All of Sihl's flexible packaging products are sold by the company directly under the Artysio Packaging brand*

**“With aqueous inkjet, the opportunities are fantastic. With Artysio, we are aiming to open up the opportunities to an even wider audience of narrow web converters and end users”**

or ultrasonic, tightness boost, flex-crack resistance, easy opening, and proven machineability on diverse packing and filling lines in both vertical and horizontal form-fill-seal machines.'

All of Sihl's flexible packaging products are sold by the company directly under the Artysio Packaging brand. They have been developed for direct contact with food and to Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) principles. The portfolio is being extended with new grades to include PET and OPP, in super white, transparent, metallized and barrier coated with suitable oxygen and water transmission rates (OTR/WTR). A pure PP product has also been developed.

#### **All-in-one**

An Artysio Packaging concept for narrow web print and pack has also been introduced. This all-in-one printing and packing system allows customers to enlarge their business models for gift and event packaging. Alongside this, time to market, waste and warehousing will also decrease to a minimum by printing and packing on demand.

Sihl has cooperated with various component manufacturers to create a system that allows small quantities of flexible packaging to be produced in custom designs. Press add-ons for converting facilitate end-to-end production for short runs, both at converters and for small-batch in-house production by end users. The system is configurable for a number of flexible packaging formats, and pitched as suitable for packaging for tea, coffee, snacks, nuts, confectionary, chocolate, pet food and detergents.

The first machines have been sold into the market and Kunze notes: 'Sihl supplies a new packaging material for the production of functional packaging solutions printed with an eco-friendly aqueous inkjet method. Thanks to an excellent market knowledge and a reliable network of partners it's possible to advise our customers on the process of aqueous inkjet printing and converting of flexible packaging.'

#### *Sihl's recycling efforts*

Sihl has developed a pure PP grade of flexible packaging material which allows it to be recycled. The independent auditing company Interseroh has confirmed the recyclability of single-material polypropylene packaging films from Sihl's Artysio range with the 'Made for Recycling' certificate. These products scored a maximum 20 out of 20 possible points in the audit.



Watch a video explaining the Artysio platform at [tinyurl.com/y2wvsu8g](https://tinyurl.com/y2wvsu8g)