GFIA Winner Profile

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**Teruel-Papéis Amalia combine innovation and sustainability to strike Silver in Global Flexo Innovation Awards**

***Global brand converts from gravure to flexo thanks to the benefits offered by the KODAK FLEXCEL NX System***

“Consumer consumption patterns are changing, and brand owners have to adapt. That’s the point where our work begins, where we create innovative solutions.” Nelson Teruel is reflecting on the Silver Award won by his company, Teruel-Papéis Amalia Ltda, in the Miraclon-sponsored Global Flexo Innovation Awards (GFIA), for the Brazilian packaging converter’s conversion from other print processes and commitment to sustainable print.

Among other achievements, the award recognized the company’s use of FLEXCEL NX Plates to implement gravure-to-flexo conversions of personal care packaging for leading brand Colgate-Palmolive. Other entries submitted showcased the company’s innovative work with International Paper and Amparo Chemistry. They impressed the judges on a number of counts: the company not only proved to a global brand in a competitive market that flexo could match gravure for quality, they also developed new, 100%-recyclable substrates to replace hard-to-recycle plastic packaging, and devised new, streamlined time- and cost-efficient production workflows.

**Defining characteristics**

Innovation and sustainability have been defining characteristics of Teruel-Papéis Amalia since Nelson’s father Amadeu started the business in 1969, and one reason it is now part of the Italian Gualapack Group that acquired Teruel-Papéis Amalia shortly after their GFIA success.

At the production plants in Jaguariúna and Ouro Fino, Teruel-Papéis Amalia prints in up to eight colors on plastic, paper and cardboard applications bound for the US, Latin America and Europe. “Because they’re subject to international standards and certifications, these are demanding markets that value innovation,” says Nelson, adding that “the way we see it, what’s ‘new’ lies only a few millimeters beyond what’s ‘known’. So, innovation simply means doing something differently. We regard our role as being to create and develop innovations based on our customers’ needs and the challenges they face.”

**30 patents testify to innovation**

Some 30 patents provide concrete evidence of these innovations, most of them focused on improving the sustainability of products and processes. ‘Green Pack’ and ‘Green Touch’ are prime examples. ‘Green Pack’, a paper-based structure for pouches and sachets, replaces plastics with plant resins to create waterproof packaging that is 100% compostable and recyclable. ‘Green Touch’ takes a new approach to applying sealing resins to flexible packaging, applying them only where they’re really needed and reducing costs and consumption. A process currently under investigation — Nelson calls it ‘un-printing’ — is aimed at removing ink from the material used during set-up so that it can be reused again and again, saving tons of film and cutting costs, and offering sustainability benefits.

**A decade of progress**

In Nelson’s view, the company’s success in the Global Flexo Innovation Awards says a lot about how far both Teruel-Papéis Amalia and the flexo-printed flexible packaging sector in general have come over the last decade. “The fact that a leading global brand such as Colgate-Palmolive trusted us to convert SKUs from gravure to flexo is proof that the market recognizes that flexo matches gravure in terms of quality and stability, and outperforms it in cost-effectiveness and sustainability.”

Nelson gives credit for both flexo’s transformation and the company’s success to FLEXCEL NX Plates, which Teruel-Papéis Amalia has worked with since 2010 after being alerted to the technology by prepress partner Clicheria Blumenau. “Technology in the prepress sector moves so fast that we prefer to outsource it to a trusted partner,” says Nelson.

Today some 85% of the company’s production is on FLEXCEL NX Plates. Speaking of the impact FLEXCEL NX Technology has had on flexo packaging printing, Nelson describes it as “a disruptive technology” and draws a parallel with how computer-to-plate impacted litho production. “No other product offers the equivalent multiple advanced plate surface patterning features— micro-engineered screens on top of the flat-top dots that optimize ink transfer and laydown, delivering excellent quality and stability whether you print on traditional or other, more renewable substrates. There are other sustainability benefits, too — for example, ink consumption is reduced, and the plates are up to 50% more durable than some alternatives.

“FLEXCEL NX Technology revolutionized flexo, which was something that really needed to happen. At that time, we felt there was a complacency in flexo — it was happy in its own comfort zone, with no one addressing its limitations. FLEXCEL NX Technology changed all that. Gravure, on the other hand, hasn’t adapted at the same speed.”

**The brand owner’s dilemma**

The winning GFIA entries — three in all — amply demonstrate what’s now possible with flexo using KODAK FLEXCEL NX Plates. In common with other brands, Colgate-Palmolive faced a dilemma: how to adapt a gravure-based production model to the smaller volumes and shorter print runs caused by consumers’ desire for greater product variety. “It’s a particular issue in the hygiene and personal care sector,” says Nelson, “and it’s making gravure increasingly unviable, both on cost grounds — a set of cylinders can cost up to $3,000 — and because gravure’s longer production cycles make it difficult to respond quickly to changing consumer expectations.”

Working together, Teruel-Papéis Amalia and Clicheria Blumenau successfully convinced Colgate-Palmolive that flexo could overcome these issues. The first challenge was demonstrating the quality and consistency that can be achieved, explains marketing executive Livia Virgilio: “Their approval standards are highly demanding, so we had to perform the exercise several times. A typical approvals process would involve three steps: first, sending a PDF for approval to the clients’ marketing team in Mexico City; second, sending a digital proof for approval; and finally sending production samples. At every step, the quality and visual aspect had to be identical. The FLEXCEL NX plates played a big role in maintaining the same – or even better – quality as well as consistency, which was crucial as we were also switching to renewable substrates that would typically be more challenging to print on.”

The company’s achievements went beyond quality and consistency, with each of the entries innovative in its own way, particularly for enhancing the products’ sustainability credentials. For Palmolive soap wrappers, Teruel-Papeis developed a new substrate to replace the paper laminated with plastic, which was problematic when recycled. In contrast, the new material comprised two layers of PET bonded using special adhesives manufactured from natural resins and was totally recyclable.

The packaging for International Paper’s Chamex copier paper also posed a recycling challenge, as well as additional complexity in manufacture. Made of paper and BOPP, production involved printing, laminating and rewinding. It weighed around 80gr/m2, used glue for sealing and, due to the paper component, frequently curled during production. Teruel-Papéis Amalia replaced it with the company’s patented Microdots material, a single-layer, 100%-recyclable BOPP film wrapper, thus eliminating laminating and gaining around two days in production time. The thickness was reduced to just 45gr/m2, saving 43.7% in transportation and waste.

For the Amparo Chemicals’ Flor soap bars, Teruel replaced the previous plastic/paper combination material with an impermeable flexible paper that is recyclable, pulpable and biodegradable, using natural resins to provide resistance to humidity, water, grease, fungi and bacteria. The process only applies polymer specifically to the closing areas, so it amounts to less than 5% of the wrapper.

**$50 million injection**

As part of the Gualapack Group, Teruel-Papéis Amalia has a springboard from which to develop even more innovative products and processes, helped by the injection of up to $50 million over two years by its new parent. Nelson is also looking forward to what Miraclon has in the pipeline, because, as he puts it, “Miraclon is like us — never afraid to evolve and innovate.”

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**About Miraclon**

Miraclon is the home of KODAK FLEXCEL Solutions, which have helped transform flexographic printing for more than a decade. The technology, including the industry-leading FLEXCEL NX and FLEXCEL NX Ultra Systems, and FLEXCEL NX Print Suite that enables PureFlexo™ Printing, maximizes on-press efficiency, delivers higher quality and overall best-in-class results. With a focus on pioneering image science, innovation, and collaboration with industry partners and customers, Miraclon is committed to the future of flexo and continues to be positioned to lead the charge. Find out more at [www.miraclon.com](http://www.miraclon.com), and follow us on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/miraclon-corporation/) and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAZGpziB6Lq_Kx8ROgoMdCA/featured).