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# packaging europe

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## FACHPACK 2015

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# FAST, FLEXIBLE AND RELIABLE PRINTING

With its headquarters in Plymouth, Minnesota, USA, Primera Technology, Inc. is a leading developer and manufacturer of speciality printing equipment including colour label printers, label applicators, laser marking systems, label presses and digital finishing systems. Elisabeth Skoda spoke to Andreas Hoffmann, managing director of Primera Europe GmbH, about exciting developments in the field of label printing and to find out more about what lies behind the company's success.



Primera boasts over 40 years of experience in building specialised printers and has sold well over 1.5 million printers to the industry.

"Part of this high number is thanks to our plastic card printing business which we sold in 1998, and which today operates under the name of HID Global. We gained a wealth of experience over the years, and we are busy working on developing new technologies every day," Mr Hoffmann says.

Primera is divided in three separate business units: Primera Disc Publishing, Primera Label, and Primera Healthcare.

"Primera Disc Publishing provides printing equipment for CDs, DVDs, Blue Ray and other media. We started out with standalone printers, and this grew to robotic systems and complete production systems which can burn and print quantities of discs in one step," Mr Hoffmann explains.

### State-of-the-art technology

Primera Label has seen impressive growth in the past few years. One milestone was the LX800, which was launched in 2006 as the first wide format desktop label printer on the market providing a printing width of 216mm. And the innovations just kept on coming, as Mr Hoffmann points out.

"Our smaller inkjet printer, the LX400e offering high resolution inkjet technology, was launched at the end of 2007, followed 2008 by the AP label applicator series. Primera's AP-series label applicators are the perfect semi-automatic labelling solution for cylindrical containers as well as many tapered containers, including bottles, cans, jars and tubes," he adds.

In 2009, the CX1200e printer was introduced, allowing simple and easy production of labels in house, which is ideal for individualisation and smaller print runs, together with the FX1200e finisher, which was launched in 2010.

"With CX and FX we are able to offer a complete production machine, where prints of any size and shape can be printed and laminated," Mr Hoffmann is proud to point out.

Since 2011, Primera has a third area of expertise – Primera Healthcare, offering speciality printers for labs and pharma industry, including Signature Cassette Printer, Signature Slide printer, and label and wristband printers.

### A steady stream of labelling innovations

Mr Hoffmann highlights the new LX2000e label printer and AP550e flat surface label applicator as the most recent innovations, which incorporate the essence of customer wishes.

"LX2000e is our fastest pigment inkjet label printer, offering good value for the industry thanks to large, separate ink cartridges and print speeds of up to six inches per second. Our customers want low cost per label and speed. We addressed these issues with LX2000 and made clear improvements thanks to a new HP technology. Another key customer request was for long lasting labels, for labels used outside, to prevent them from fading and making them waterproof. New pigmented inks provide this extra level of durability. Labels printed on the LX2000e are ideal for outdoor use. What also sets the LX2000e apart is its connectivity. It can be connected not just via USB, but also via Ethernet and W-Lan, and also supports several devices in one room. As is always the case with our products, it is low maintenance and can be operated by anybody." ▸









The AP550e Flat Label Applicator was also created following customer wishes, asking for printing on a wider range of packs. “The AP360e and AP362e enabled us to label bottles and round containers, but labelling packs such as crisps packets, tins, and oddly shaped boxes was still a challenge. With the AP550e it is possible to precisely apply product and identification labels onto a wide range of flat surfaces such as rectangular or tapered bottles, boxes, packages, bags, pouches, lids and tins. Labels are applied straight without wrinkles or folds in exactly the location desired. To operate, the container is put in the mechanism, and the arm is pulled to the container, when the label is automatically applied,” Mr Hoffmann explains.

Primera also recently introduced the Primera Trio, the world’s smallest and lightest all-in-one printer. It also has a built-in scanner and makes photocopies for working people who are “on the go.”

“It weighs just one kilogram and allows the user to scan and print post cards, photos, A4 documents. It is easy to use and extremely portable,” Mr Hoffmann says.

“There is still a lot to do in the area of labels. What is important especially in the area of label print is that we are at home with all technologies, be it ink, thermo transfer, and laser technology, and our new devices will also feature this technology.”

### A wide reach

Primera’s main production is situated in the USA, in Plymouth/Minneapolis, Minnesota where all of its devices are developed and prototypes are built. There is an additional factory located in sunny and warm Montego Bay, Jamaica, BWI. A small part of the work, such as final packaging, localisation, modifications and accessories also takes place in Germany. In addition, the FX400e, a small foil imprinter is manufactured in Germany.

The main markets in Europe include Germany, the UK, France, Italy and Spain, followed by Scandinavia.

“There is a growing demand in eastern European countries, but the challenge is that customers still want to save money, and often prefer to buy cheaper machines providing less functionality,” Mr Hoffmann points out.

“Personalisation, which is a major trend for example in the UK and Germany, has not progressed as much in some countries for cost reasons.”

Trade fairs are important for Primera as a forum to show off its latest innovations. Important upcoming events include Labelexpo in Brussels, followed by Speciality & Fine Food Fair 2015 in London, Anuga in Cologne, and Empack in Madrid. Partner trade fairs include Scanpack, Fachpack and Empack in Portugal and Brussels.

“We try to pick out big fairs focusing on labelling and packaging, and also small specialised fairs for certain product segments such as cosmetics, beverages or food. After all, a wide range of products do need labels,” Mr Hoffmann points out.

### Room for growth

Mr Hoffmann sees the biggest growth potential for Primera in the labelling market. “This market is unlimited, as there are so many applications, be it promotional materials, marking or packaging. The possibilities are endless. We have been innovating and developing ideas, but we are still at the beginning, and are busy with research. Printing technologies will be expanded in the future, that maybe will enable us to print directly on advertising materials, pens or even food. There are plenty of ideas floating around.”

Primera serves a wide range of industries, but the main markets at the moment are drinks, food and cosmetics.

“Industrial applications are catching up. Packaging for screens, screw boxes etc. is gaining popularity as the product has to be labelled from the outside. With our new LX2000e we address the industry directly. Another growing branch is the printing of shipping labels. I’m predicting that the mix in industry will grow even further,” Mr Hoffmann says.

Mr. Hoffmann sees a strong trend towards more individualised products. “Big brands like Coca Cola are following this trend with individual name labels. This new trend creates a need for more and more flexible printers, which we are well equipped for.”

Primera’s printers cater for advanced industry demands. “Global developments are working in our favour with demands for higher security and traceability of production processes, which allows for strong growth. The same is true for the food industry, where barcodes show what is in a product, who manufactured it and where it comes from are key factors pushing the market forward. We are in an ideal position to cater for these demands, so we are looking forward to exciting times,” Mr Hoffmann concludes.

Visit: <http://primeralabel.eu>



**Andreas Hoffmann,**  
managing director of Primera Europe