

2 November 2021

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Deanna.klemesrud@flintgrp.com**DS Smith secures print quality and sustainability benefits with Flint Group Packaging Inks' AQUACode range of water-based inks**

November 2021: Operating in more than 34 countries worldwide and proudly employing over 30,000 people, DS Smith is a leading provider of corrugated packaging solutions. With more than 200 manufacturing sites, producing 8.6 billion m² of retail ready, display and corrugated packaging destined for a wide range of markets, the organisation requires an innovative and reliable inks and coatings partner that delivers.

Flint Group Packaging Inks is a trusted partner to the packaging operations of DS Smith and is today supplying its production sites with its new AQUACode range of water based inks and coatings.

Designed to meet the needs of specific paper and board packaging and print applications, the AQUACode range delivers a host of operational and quality advantages for paper and board printers, as well as providing new sustainability benefits.

The AQUACode Pilot Programme*Just three months from start to finish*

Robert Olsson, Print Performance Development Manager, Packaging Division at DS Smith Packaging, comments: "We've worked with Flint Group for a number of years and began our conversion to the new AQUACode range in 2019 having heard about the technical and commercial advantages of this new water-based line of products.

"We conducted a very diligent pilot programme with six sites to begin with, carrying out an array of lab and full scale trials with Flint Group support. The whole process was extremely well organised, and we received good feedback and input to the project continuously from the Flint Group team. Within only three months, our questions were answered and the AQUACode range could be rolled out across all our sites."

AQUACode secures operational benefits*Waste down, quality and efficiency up*

Today, the DS Smith operations are predominantly using HexaCode, an ink series from the AQUACode range, specifically designed for pre and post print corrugated board applications. The company is also using the OctaCode series for pre-print packaging applications that require high resistance to oils, fats and chemicals, while protecting against scuffing and scratching.



Olsson comments: “We have found a number of technical benefits and commercial advantages using the AQUACode range. First, the inks have great resolubility. When we have a sudden stop on press, we have less waste on restarting, which is always important in saving time and cost. AQUACode inks are also much more stable on press, which boosts both our operational efficiency and quality performance. In addition, the possibility of higher pigment density is really useful when we are needing to achieve that extra boost in printing. In these cases, the strength of the ink is a real advantage for us.

“We use a range of flexographic plates across our sites and we’ve also identified that the inks benefit us in plate cleaning; cleaning down more quickly, again saving us time and boosting efficiency.”

DS Smith is looking forward

Technical support, innovation and sustainability are key

Flint Group Packaging Inks works with a central team at DS Smith to support print operations across the business.

Mr. Olsson said, “We have a handful of key contacts at Flint Group Packaging Inks who support us across the business. These individuals respond in a timely fashion whenever we have questions and are always providing great feedback to guide us.”

“Importantly, we’re a business that isn’t standing still. We need our partners not just to deliver today, but into the future. We’re innovators and always looking forward. We know that Flint Group recognises this, and they have truly become a trusted partner to the business delivering a number of ink and coating innovations to support us.”

“Like many corrugated businesses, we are subject to variations in materials due to demand for low cost and recyclable materials, as well as experiencing demand for new circular solutions. We have to manage our quality performance extremely carefully and always keep an eye to our colour management standards. We do this well but there is always a pressure on the business to perform, especially around the complexity that develops with lots of short run work. We are developing digital capability, but it will be an interesting adoption due to the challenges of corrugated printing. Developments like the AQUACode range for our flexo business really help us deliver against today’s market trends.

“We are seeing a lot of potential in new renewable and circular packaging designs and were delighted to see the new TerraCode bio-renewable series in the AQUACode range, reflecting its innovation ethos, which is very much aligned to our own. As our customers seek to drive even more sustainable solutions into the market, I’m sure we will be exploring the opportunities that series presents too.”

“What we see with Flint Group Packaging Inks is a good partnership, collaboration, and a company



that is supporting us at all levels. Its commitment to developing the AQUACode range demonstrates it understands our business, but even more importantly, the technical support package that goes alongside it truly makes the difference to us on site, regionally and centrally.”

For more information on the AQUACode range of water-based inks and coatings from Flint Group Packaging Inks, please visit www.flintgrp.com or email info.packaginginks@flintgrp.com.

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About Flint Group

Flint Group is dedicated to serving the needs of the global Flexible Packaging, Paper & Board, Narrow Web and Publication industries, both conventional and digitally printed. The company develops, manufactures and markets an extensive portfolio of printing consumables and equipment, including: a vast range of conventional and energy curable inks, coatings and additives for Flexographic, Gravure & Offset applications; pressroom chemicals and printing blankets. Furthermore, Flint Group designs and manufactures digital printing presses for labels, corrugated packaging, document and commercial applications. The company is a leader in colour management solutions which are supported by a Global Colour Centre to ensure colour consistency and standardisation. Flint Group strives to support its customers through a relentless focus on developing: innovative products, exceptional levels of service and the security of supply. Headquartered in Luxembourg, Flint Group employs some 5,600 people. Revenues for 2020 were €1.5 billion. On a worldwide basis, the company is the number one or number two supplier in every major market segment it serves. For more information, please visit www.flintgrp.com