

# Value added markets tempt converters

**Carton printers in the US are expanding their market opportunities by attaching a range of promotional products to the inside of cartons. Andy Thomas reports on Ga-Vehren's modular solution**

For carton converters looking to add value in a fiercely competitive market, US company Ga-Vehren is now selling a system to attach literature or a range of promotional products to the inside panels of folding cartons.

The Ga-Vehren system is fully modular. A range of infeed options includes infeed/alignment units for handling anything from promotional sachets, leaflets and smart cards to 3-D objects. Other switchable modules include a roll patch unit and folder/gluer. Standard carrier size is 17in x 17in.

This system could be particularly interesting to carton converters in the pharmaceutical sector. Attaching printed leaflets to the blister pack carton allows printers to take in-house what would normally be an extra inserting operation carried out on the client's packaging line.

Printers would need to tie themselves more closely to their customer with barcode-driven MIS systems to ensure accurate reconciliation. The Ga-Vehren system can incorporate barcode inspection systems, and carton converters in the US are already using this to verify pharmaceutical leaflets attached to cartons.

The launch of the system into the European market also comes at an interest-

ing time for printers of cereal and fast food cartons. A recent EU ruling has thrown into doubt the legality of manufacturers including loose toys or other promotional items with packs containing foodstuffs. Officials in Brussels are unhappy that manufacturers are not doing enough to separate gifts from the food in which they are contained. The Ga-Vehren system can attach a broad range of promotional items onto any printable substrate. Windowing and patching can be incorporated in conjunction with the straight line gluer option.

Ga-Vehren systems are already being used by carton converters in the US for applications including attachment of folded cross-promotional leaflets into a standard Alka-Seltzer product carton. A tissue carton produced for Procter & Gamble used the system to cover a die cut hole with a printed promotional window patch which also acts as a form of tamper evidence. This product, produced for Procter & Gamble, was run at speeds of 28 - 30,000 an hour. Riverwood Cartons is attaching phone cards to the inside of Tango multipacks.

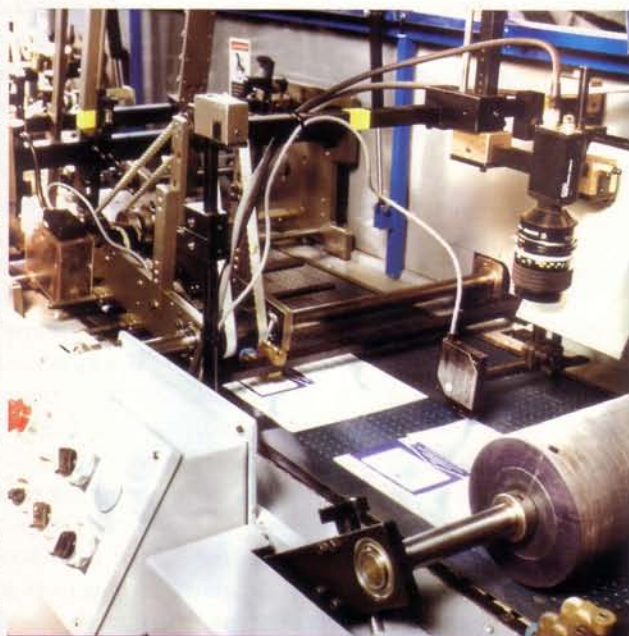
One US carton printer has gone so far as to take sachet printing in-house to offer a one-stop promotional service for attaching shampoo sampling packs onto cartons. This saves the client the expense and lead time of sending the printed cartons to a contract packing house, and allows the printer to cement a value-added relationship.

The Ga-Vehren systems operate at a maximum speed of 27,000 attachments an hour, depending on format, with a placement accuracy of 0.8mm. For secure applications, where it is vital that correct personalised cards, leaflets or products to be

attached to personalised products, verification cameras can be mounted onto the system. Data can also be taken from the magnetic stripe on plastic cards or through barcode matching. Ga-Vehren in the UK, through its agent Press & Bindery Systems, has formed a working partnership with Lake Image Systems, who now supply the inspection/verification systems. Lake utilises intelligent OCR-based technology to confirm alphanumeric, bar code, magnetic stripe, MICR and smart card data, allowing audit trail reporting for customers.

Optional inkjet heads can be mounted onto the machine and connected to the verification system to obtain data from the carrier or a plastics card. Inkjet personalised information can then be printed onto the carrier or card. In a joint development with Lake Image Systems and ink jet-specialist Domino, Ga-Vehren's UK agent Press & Bindery Systems is now offering the ability to feed plastics cards randomly onto the finishing line and print with variable information from over a million data fields. The Lake system scans the card details and passes the information to the Domino controller, which pulls pre-specified information from a database in the time it takes the card to travel from infeed to printhead, then prints the personalised details onto the carrier card.

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Ga-Vehren's system allows converters to verify attachments