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Siegwerk congratulates Eximpro on winning the AWA International Sleeve Label Award 2021 for its recyclable cPET shrink sleeve bottle printed with Siegwerk inks

The recent awarding of Siegwerk's Mexican customer Eximpro with the annual AWA International Sleeve Label Award does not only confirm Siegwerk's development success of deinkable ink systems, but also sets the recyclability of PET bottles to the next level towards full circularity.



Siegwerk, one of the leading global providers of printing inks and coatings for packaging applications and labels, congratulates Eximpro, one of its long-time customers, on winning the AWA International Sleeve Label Award 2021. The Mexican specialist in manufacturing and printing of shrink sleeves received the “Best of Show” award in the “Environmental Contribution” category for its recyclable cPET shrink sleeve solution for PET bottles of the sustainable brand ZenWTR Alkaline water, the only beverage in the world in bottles made of 100% recycled and certified ocean-bound plastic.

Shrink sleeves are widely considered as a modular enabler for rigid plastic packaging in the sense of a circular economy. Next to benefits in terms of 360° marketing opportunities at the point of sale as well as relevant optical and technical barrier properties for the protection of the filling good, they can - in form of full body shrink sleeves - also avoid mass coloring of the wrapped plastic and thus enable a higher recovery of high-quality recyclates. “Even though shrink sleeves offer a variety of benefits for packaging, their deinking properties are often problematic,” explains Dr. Miguel Gama, Head of Technology North LATAM at Siegwerk. “Non-removed ink layers can have a significant impact on the quality of the recyclate and therefore on the potential of its re-use. That’s why labels and bottles are typically separated for recycling.” Eximpro’s winner bottle now sets a new standard for the recycling of PET bottles as it uses a cPET shrink sleeve solution printed with a solvent-based washable gravure ink system from Siegwerk that offers outstanding deinking properties which enables a recycling of the sleeve along with the PET bottle without negatively impacting the quality of recovered recyclates.

Siegwerk’s proprietary washable ink technology has already been accredited by the Association of Plastic Recyclers (APR), the national trade association of the US plastics recycling industry, for meeting its guidelines for the quality improvement of recycled PET bottles and therefore confirmed the ink system’s technical recyclability. The company’s innovation enables that ink layers can be

easily removed with an alkaline solution from the printed film maintaining its high transparency level and thus enabling its use to produce new PET bottles. “Our technology allows safe and efficient deinking of crystallizable PET shrink films and thereby avoids possible downcycling of recycled PET material,” adds Enrique Palacios, Commercial Director North LATAM at Siegwerk. It is another good example for the ink manufacturer’s ‘Design for Recycling’ approach under which it develops innovative ink technologies to facilitate high-quality recycling.

Eximpro’s shrink sleeve bottle solution is one example of the company’s development efforts to make its packaging more sustainable and contribute to the implementation of a circular economy. “We are clearly committed to play our part for a more sustainable packaging industry,” says Clemente Gonzalez Marco, Director General Adjunto at Eximpro. “With Siegwerk, we have found a deinking expert as partner to work on a new circular product solution for our sleeve application portfolio. That the solution’s environmental contribution has now been awarded as ‘Best of Show’ makes us very proud and proves that we are on the right track.” The International Sleeve Label Award is annually granted by AWA, a global market intelligence company called Alexander Watson. The competition was launched in 2014 to recognize the industry’s outstanding achievements in stretch-and shrink-sleeve labeling and product decoration. With its “Environmental Contribution” category the global sleeve competition especially highlights innovative solutions with a minimized environmental impact.

“We are proud to be part of Eximpro’s outstanding solution that shows one more time the power of collaboration along the supply chain. Together we are able to develop innovative packaging solutions for a sustainable and circular future,” adds Ralf Hildenbrand, President Packaging Americas & Global Technology, PSR and Circular Economy at Siegwerk. “Congratulations to our partner and all other award winners - we as packaging industry are on a good way. Let’s keep things up.” Siegwerk itself is strongly committed to support and enable circular packaging solutions, contributing to various industry initiatives and sharing

know-how from the printing ink perspective with other experts along the supply chain to drive the development of sustainable packaging with improved recyclability up to complete circularity.

That's why, the ink manufacturer is constantly working on new sustainable ink technologies and functional formulations that improve packaging recyclability and enable new circular packaging applications. Here, deinking is a strategically important development topic for the company - not only to avoid downcycling by enabling true plastic recycling but also to actively contribute to the creation of forward-looking and environmental-friendly recycling situations for all kind of packaging structures. "By improving the recyclability of PET bottles is already an essential first step to avoid plastic waste worldwide," says Alberto Cendejas, Cluster Head North LATAM at Siegwerk. "But we also want to improve recyclability for full packaging circularity in other growing packaging segments as well." That's why Siegwerk is also working on enhanced deinking opportunities for other packaging structures, like e.g., for folding cartons, a packaging segment of steadily growing relevance.

More information about a conducted study using Siegwerk's washable ink solutions for shrink sleeves can be found at the Ink Safety Portal.

To learn more about Siegwerk's commitment to a circular economy please visit Siegwerk's circular solutions.

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