

INSIDE FINISHING

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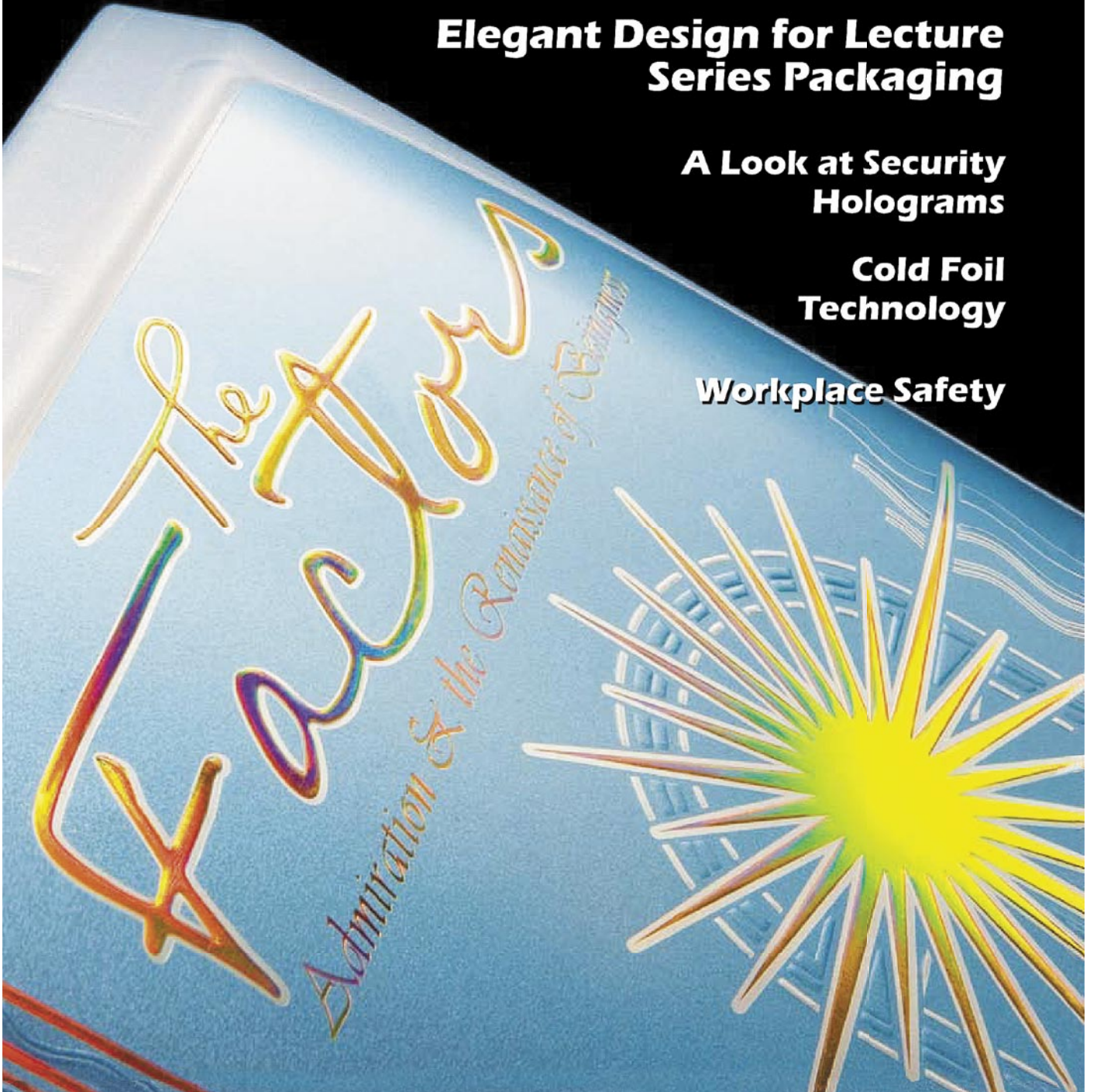
Communication for the Graphic Finishing Industry

Elegant Design for Lecture Series Packaging

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AWARD-WINNING DESIGN SPOTLIGHTS GOLDEN ERA PRODUCTIONS

by Dianna Brodine



Golden Era Productions recently received the Gold award from the Foil Stamping and Embossing Association (FSEA) in the category of Best Foil Stamped/Embossed Miscellaneous Item for a presentation piece known as 'The Factors'. Created for parishioners of the Church of Scientology across the globe, the full package included the labels for a molded plastic outer case, two cd containers, and two booklets, which hold transcripts of cd lectures and glossaries.

The labels for the presentation pieces were foil stamped, embossed, and diecut to add an elegant look to the durable packaging. This same lecture series and design were produced in 16 languages, so the international distribution required the foil stamped and embossed covers to be translated into each language for the packaging.

Printing and More

Golden Era Productions is located in Southern California on a 500-acre property devoted to producing all the audio

and visual materials for the churches of Scientology. The majority of work is done on-site using Golden Era's cd plant, printing lines, 80,000 square foot film studio, film laboratory and film editing facilities, SFX studio, two state-of-the-art music studios, recording studios, rehearsal halls, and more. Golden Era, part of the Church of Scientology International, has 406 employees, with 60 employees working exclusively in the area that produces the lectures on cds.

Golden Era Productions was created in the 1970s to produce the Church's instructional films. In the 1980s, Golden Era added the production of the recorded lectures of the Founder of Scientology, L. Ron Hubbard, originally recorded from the 1950s to the 1970s. In 2001, Golden Era started transferring these lectures to cd and is still working to reproduce all of them (over 3000, most running sixty minutes in length). Golden Era also is translating these lectures into 16 languages, with a goal of translating the works into more than 50 languages in the near future.

The Golden Era print shop and finishing areas have been carefully organized to mass-produce these lecture series packaging, as well as to replicate the cds. All machinery, sequences, specifications, and designs are coordinated for rapid, on-demand production. The organizational know-how from L. Ron Hubbard's writings was employed to work out the exact flows and lines to create maximum efficiency for such an in-house operation. A key maxim was used to establish and organize the Golden Era shop floor:

"Organizational genius is composed only of arranging sequences of action and designating channels for types of particles. That's all it is." (September 1970)

The Design

Each major lecture series produced by Golden Era Productions, comprising over 3,000 lectures from 1950 through the early 1970s, has its own exact design that corresponds to the subject matter. The lecture series, 'The Factors', was given in the spring of 1953 in London, England as a professional course on the application of Scientology. In these lectures he covers numerous breakthroughs on the basic maxims and laws of life. Designed by the Golden Era Production Art Director Henning Benndorf and Packaging Design Officer Rikard Rodin, the package was chosen to befit the contents of these lectures, with the premise that the quality of presentation needed to represent the quality and importance of the lectures themselves. The keynotes of these lectures are increased wisdom, ability, communication, and freedom, so the art colors, design, and foil were chosen to reflect those keynotes.

Catherine Fraser, the public relations officer for Golden Era, explained the decision to go beyond traditional printing. "When lectures were issued earlier on cassettes, the packages were not foiled. When we went to in-house production of the cds, the switch was made to using foiling and embossing as the hallmark of the labels. Foiling and embossing are symbolic of quality of communication, as surveys have shown, and no other process attempted in the R&D came close to the impact and look."

This particular design of 'The Factors' lecture series has not yet been released to the public. However, similar packages on compact disc have been released and sold over the past three years, selling hundreds of thousands of such sets. By doing all production in-house, the cost per item is minimal.

Producing 'The Factors'

'The Factors' lecture series was foiled, embossed, and diecut on a Therm-O-Type NSF with two foil passes, one embossing pass, and then the labels were diecut. The production of the package involved 12 copper foil dies and a plastic counter die used for the emboss on the front cover, with all dies created by Universal Engraving Inc. (UEI) in Kansas. In total, 15,000 of 'The Factors' cd lecture sets were produced. After

foiling and embossing, the labels had double-sided adhesive backing applied to them on a Ledco HS-30 "Thoroughbred" laminating machine, which was run cold.

"The foiling is done separately from the plastic containers and then adhered to the containers with double-sided adhesive material," explained Dave Henderson, foiling/embossing/diecutting-in-charge for Golden Era. "The labels are adhered to the containers by hand with the use of a specially-designed jig to ensure the label fits exactly on the contoured plastic containers."

The job required tight registration on the foiling, embossing, and diecutting passes to create an exact silver outline and background for the main holographic gold foiling. The foils, a gold holographic foil and a matte silver foil, were from Great Western Foil Company in California. The Therm-O-Type was ideal for the registration, being able to hold an exact constant position and adjust down to .004 of an inch. The diecutting (kiss cutting) had to be in exact registration as there is a foiled border around the edge that had to remain equidistant from the label edge, per the design.

The diecutting, also done on the Therm-O-Type NSF at speeds up to 4,000 impressions per hour, created a tailored, curved shape for the labels for the front and back of the cd containers. The steel rule dies were made by Custom Converters, also in southern California. The plastic cases, both the outer case and the smaller cd containers that fit inside the outer case, are specially made for Golden Era Productions by Peerless Injection Molding Company.

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The small booklet covers and the labels for the module-like cd containers were run two-up, while the main booklet and overall container covers were each run one-up. The production entailed 200,000 impressions on the Therm-O-Type machine, including three diecutting passes (front label, back label, and small module container labels two-up) to create 15,000 packages in English and foreign languages.

All printing for the cd packages was done in-house at Golden Era, including the cd art, the black and white for the booklets, and for other lecture series, the color art for the labels and covers. 'The Factors' design, along with four other lecture series by L. Ron Hubbard, was unique in that it did not employ any color printing, strictly foiling, whereas another 100-plus lecture series use both color printing, foiling, embossing, and UV coating. The black and white printing for this job was done on Golden Era's Xerox DocuTech 100s.



The Challenges Involved

Detailed finishing work for a curved plastic substrate created several challenges to overcome. “The substrate tended to crack when embossed heavily,” said Henderson, “so very exact makeready was done to even out the pressure on the counter die so as to avoid lessening the deepness of the counter die.” The dies were made with built-in die expansion factors to account for the heat so that the passes all lined up one to the next. The cover design presented the challenge of having foil areas of both small detail and large surface on the same impression, calling for exacting makeready and jockeying heat and pressure factors to get the foil to stick in the large areas without debossing the small detailed areas.

“Even on larger presses, done by outside foiling companies on earlier similar designs (prior to the set-up of our in-house operation), press operators had to use sand paper passes to “rough up” the paper to enable the foil to stick,” explained Henderson, “but this was circumvented by very exact settings of the Therm-O-Type machine that were carefully recorded and the use of a more flexible makeready plate material (polyurethane). The biggest challenge, however, was to match the “one-off” prototype on all 15,000 sets without deviating from that standard and still make a tight production schedule.”

Overcoming the challenges involved in creating ‘The Factors’ was easier than one might expect, thanks to the experience of the Golden Era production team. “The research and development was primarily done on earlier similar jobs of lecture series packages, so all the bugs had been ironed out on our overall production line for this type of item,” said Fraser. “The set-up of the in-house operation was several years in the making, with thousands of man-hours to search out the best equipment, materials, and procedures for our purposes.” In addition, Golden Era has tested numerous types of foils, substrates, dies, printed matter, and laminate to be sure the materials were compatible and created the highest quality product, while still being within the specifications of the machinery.

Building on Success

While the central dominating aspect of ‘The Factors’ design is foiling and embossing, many of the other lecture series cd packages are more elaborate and even more challenging to foil as they are a combination of digital color printing, foiling, laminating, UV coating (with matte finish ink on the background areas of the art), and embossing, all exactly registered one to the next.

Congratulations to Golden Era Productions for its success in bringing home the gold. ■