

# IML Innovation

A look at the very best in-mold labeling and in-mold decorating technologies.

The In-Mold Decorating Association is an organization that includes molders, printers, material suppliers and equipment manufacturers who are committed to the development and growth of in-mold decorated products, technologies and markets.

The aim of the IMDA is to enhance and support member companies' business by raising the level of awareness and acceptance of in-mold decorated durable products and in-mold labeled packaging by OEMs, brand owners and marketers.

One of the highlights of the IMDA yearly calendar is its annual awards competition, where the association spotlights and celebrates the best in in-mold labels and in-mold parts. As is the case across just about all industries and subsets of industries, due to the coronavirus pandemic caused by COVID-19, the 2020 IMDA Awards program was canceled. In light of this, now is an optimal time to look at the projects and partnerships that earned top IMDA honors in the 2019 competition.

*L&NW* was fortunate to catch up with two of the key collaborators on one of the winning entries. Submitted by Taylor Communications in the Best In-Mold Decorated Durable Part category, this entry in particular highlights a new and unique capability of IML and IMD technology. The winning entry from Taylor Communications was for Heritage Pistol Grips, from Brand Owner Heritage Manufacturing, Inc. When thinking of pistol construction, the conventional method of manufacture has been to make the "grip" part of the pistol from wood. But that's not the case here, as after years of extensive R&D, Taylor engineers – through a collaborative effort with specialty inks and coatings supplier Cyngient – came up with a solution for an in-mold decorated gun handle. This an innovation that Taylor believes is truly one-of-a-kind.

Taylor Communications partnered with Heritage Manufacturing to extend and diversify Heritage's pistol product line. Taylor's development – with the help of Cyngient – of flexographic 3D formable inks and custom 5-axis trim cell enable high-quality, custom graphics like woodgrain, metallic, pearlescent and other effects to be applied to the IMD process.

The development of the IMD technology through this partnership has created new and exciting opportunities for future growth. Tracy Nixon, IML director of sales and marketing for Taylor Communications, and Andrew Wasserman, managing partner for Cyngient, recently sat down with *Label & Narrow Web* to discuss the winning project, as well as their partnership, in greater detail.

## BEST IN-MOLD DECORATED DURABLE PART

### "Heritage Pistol Grips"

**Submitted By:** Taylor Communications

**Brand Owner:** Heritage Manufacturing, Inc.

**Molder:** Widgets Ltd.

**Label Supplier:** Taylor Communications



**L&NW:** *Congratulations on the award and the development of this innovative approach to manufacturing pistol grips. How did this special project come about?*

**Tracy Nixon:** We had worked with some clients on developing topcoats that were formable and durable – those used in some automotive applications, for example. So we had some success there. And when Heritage approached us for parts decoration – in this case for the gun handles, which were previously made of wood – we were excited to get involved.

We were able to develop the right tooling and created sample parts where we could print any design we wanted, based on what we formed.

With gun handles normally made from wood, we were presenting a solution that was truly unique and different. Cyngient played an instrumental role in working with us to develop the right ink formulation – a formable ink that we could use on press, along with a topcoat, and laminated to achieve the desired effect for the customer.

**L&NW:** *What were some of the key challenges you faced during the R&D process?*

**Tracy Nixon:** The challenge was in developing an ink that when you stretch it, it doesn't crack, it cures at high speeds, and does not denigrate the print quality during the thermoforming process.



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