

HOLOGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

Q1] Welcome to Modern Trends Packaging Trends Rohit Mistry... You have been in the business of holograms for around 15 years or so? Tell us in brief, about the growth of the industry from the time you set up your company?



A] The industry has developed well over the last ten years and since setting up the business in India. Originally most of the applications were in the security and authentication areas, now the packaging is seeing increasing use of the hologram day by day. Now you see holograms in both flexible as well as in rigid packaging like cartons.

Q2] What exactly motivated you to enter into this area of business?

A] I discovered holograms in 1980; and I credit this to Nigel Abraham who introduced me to holography. He was looking for someone who could help him to produce holograms for him. I was recommended to him by industry colleagues as the one who could help in putting hologram image into plastic film. I had heard of holograms and seen some in a gallery that required special lighting to view them in dark environment. Now he presented me with a hologram that could be seen in normal white light, this is the unique quality of embossed hologram. I was so excited that I started to develop hologram embossing machine and in effect became one of the pioneers of this technology in the UK.

Q3] It must have been an exciting event when holograms were first introduced. What was the reception like? Were packagers ready to accept the idea?

A] In those years the early eighties the mood was very optimistic and hologram soon became the talk of the town. Credit card companies introduced hologram as a security device and then there were the National Geographic magazine front covers giving the hologram a big boost. I did many hologram jobs for many large companies like British Aerospace, Ford Motor Co, Coca Cola Co, and we even did a hologram of Indira Gandhi. The packaging industry did not show a positive response as the early holograms were in PVC and they wanted holograms in polyester film, so it was not until later that the PET hologram was developed and as they the rest is history.

Q4] How are holograms designed and printed?

A] Hologram is based on the principle of optics and requires a laser to make holograms. In fact, Dr. Gabor invented the process and gave the name hologram in 1948 and he was awarded a Nobel Physics prize in 1970. Dr. Gabor had to wait for the development of the laser to prove his theory and get recognition. Today holograms can be easily designed on the computer using any of the various drawings software and utilising the data to produce computer generated holograms on special optical equipment. Though the computer can be used to design a hologram it cannot transmit a holographic image nor can it reproduce a hologram on its screen. Hologram master is the key to security, it is like buying a lock, greater the specification, greater the security. A master is produced once so it is advisable to get the most appropriate specification for the application. The hologram master is used to make embossing plates to emboss metallised PET film and then it is treated with various coatings to suit end applications and finished off to meet customer's requirement.

Q5-6] Today, virtually most products carry this insurance against theft and misuse -- from bank notes to credit cards to company logos. Do holograms ensure 100 per cent product safety?

A] Hologram is the most effective product to combat counterfeiting. One of the reasons being -- it is successful because the hologram is based on optical technology and to date hologram cannot be copied, scanned or electronically transmitted, unlike all other forms of printed graphics. Hologram when correctly specified for an application is very difficult and any copies or attempts to copy are easily identified. Holograms help the user to identify and authenticate a branded product or a document. It cannot on its own stop counterfeiting, but it helps one to identify the duplicate. That is why Microsoft is a big user of holograms, without holograms it would be

difficult to identify one CD from another. Using a hologram is like building a 12 feet protection wall around your home, around your home, the burglar will attack a home with lesser protection.

Q7] In a seminar organized by FICCI exclusively on counterfeiting a few years ago, alarming statistics were related by heads of various industries including multinational companies like paint to cosmetics -- on the rampant counterfeiting taking place, pointing out that the counterfeiting industry is a big thriving business by itself! Would you like to comment on that?

A] Yes, counterfeiting is certainly a menace for all the successful brands, in fact one can say that one is not successful until one is copied. But why let someone enjoy the fruits of your labour, protect your brand and your profits. Counterfeiters want profits and they don't care for the safety of the consumer, or an allegiance to a brand, they will copy any successful brand. In order to successfully combat counterfeiting, one need to employ a multifaceted anti counterfeit strategy comprising of legal, physical, and technological elements. Legal is the domain of the legal profession eg: patents, trademarks, copyrights, etc. The hologram can address the physical and the technological aspects. Physical the application of the hologram - the 24x7 guard and the technical complexity in the hologram image both overt and multi level covert elements, greater the specification, greater the security.

Q8] What effective measures, is the Government taking?

A] Government stand is that there are sufficient statutes to stop counterfeiting. However, there are calls to make counterfeiting of medicines a non bailable offence and some even suggesting that the offence of medicine duplication should include capital punishment. It actually I believe that it requires a separate cell in economic offence just like the one for white collar crimes manned by specialists to handle any complaints appropriately. At present one has to lodge all counterfeiting complaints in the local police station. They are not equipped to handle such matters and are too busy with other pressing matters.

Q9] You also have an association of around 15-20 hologram manufacturers headquartered in Delhi. How active and how effective is the association? Do you organize seminars and meetings?

A] The Hologram Manufacturers' Association of India (HoMAI) is a very active association, it has 30+ members to date. The association has worked hard in guiding the Indian hologram manufacturers to be ethical and responsible hologram producers, and to a large extent it has been successful in achieving this. Seminars and other methods of dissemination of

information in the associations' programme, note at present HoMAI has a web site (www.homai.org) which gives a lot of information. Recently HoMAI was featured in the Economic Times highlighting the success of the hologram as the premium product for brand protection and to combat counterfeiting.

Q10] Though holograms are commonplace today, they still remain a mystery in the minds of common people. What can be done to popularize the concept?

A] Essentially hologram is an authentication device and companies themselves need to educate and inform their customers about the hologram and what to look for very much on the lines of RBI advertising and informing the public regarding security features of the Rupee 500 notes. Companies could run campaigns involving hologram, it could be competitions, collecting holograms, offering a free gift for a certain number of holograms collected, etc. This kind of activity would help to promote the product and make people more aware of the hologram and how to identify the original product.

Q11] The problem of counterfeiting is worldwide. In the West, other tamper-proof methods are also becoming popular like color codes, etc. In India, we now see more of shrink bands and shrink labels to discourage tampering. The general impression one gathers from published literature abroad, is that even as newer measures are devised to discourage counterfeiting, smarter ways to beat the system are also being looked into. Sorry for the long question! Would you like to comment on this aspect?

A] Today all brands are at war. In war everything is in a flux, nothing remains constant. Similarly in a world of brands where large money is involved counterfeiters are constantly attacking successful brands, they leave alone brands with good anti counterfeit measures. Good anti counterfeit protection involves a multi faceted strategy, remember there is no one product panacea, it requires technology in all aspects of the product, manufacturing, product, packaging, etc. One cannot say I have a security device, now I am safe. One has to keep "raising the bar" to keep a step ahead of the counterfeiters, very much like protecting ones' home: 1" a door bolt, then a pad lock, then a grill, high wall, electronic surveillance, alarm, the list keeps getting longer. Security has to constantly evolve to meet the the risks faced by the brand by evolving the hologram specification to meet desired requirements. Hologram when combined with other techniques, is still the most formidable product to combat the counterfeiters, and the counterfeiters hate it. That is why over 80 currencies around the world use holograms.



Who is Stealing your Profits

A brand can make or break the reputation of an organization. The secret to your hard-earned success is the result of a winning brand and nurturing it to perfection. But there's danger lurking around the corner. Whether you like it or not, your brand is sitting target for many counterfeit product manufacturers in our country. Your brand requires protection like the way you protect your prized possession : leave nothing to chance. So why take a chance with your best selling brand? Protech your brand with Holotechs.

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Holographic Security Marking Systems P. Limited

109, Blue Rose Ind. Estate, W.E Highway, Borivali (E), Mumbai-400 066. Tel : +91-22-6375 1000, Fax : +91-22-2854 0872

e-mail : holographic@vsnl.com, rajan@holotechonline.com ● www.holotechonline.com