



Patrick Aengenvoort (ROTOCON), Akhmuth Sayed (ROTOCON), Devlin and Wade Brodowicz (Blue Print Labelling) and Pascal Aengenvoort (ROTOCON).

Pinetown perseverance: Blue Print's story, printed bold

Two brothers, one temperamental single-colour press and a grandfather's garage in Pinetown. That's how the story of **Blue Print Labelling** began. Today, it's a story of scale, grit and growth – capped by the installation of a ROTOCON CHROME RFP 450, the machine that signals both ambition and arrival.

THE vibration of machines has always been a kind of background music for Devlin and Wade Brodowicz. Not the pristine, choreographed hum of a shiny new press, but the uneven cough and sputter of an old single-colour relic that never quite registered properly. It was 2008, and their 'factory' was their grandfather's garage in Pinetown.

They didn't have investors or industry mentors. What they had was something harder to define but easier to feel: grit. Call it 'Pinetown perseverance' – a mix of resilience, survival instinct and a refusal to believe the odds. And slowly, label by label, they carved out a business.

Today, Blue Print Labelling has grown far beyond that garage. With factories in Durban and Lusaka, a customer base spanning multinationals and entrepreneurial start-ups and a reputation for both quality and agility, the company is now one of South Africa's most talked about independent converters. Its latest milestone is the installation of the ROTOCON CHROME RFP 450 flexographic press, a move that fuses technology with vision.

The machine that matters

For Devlin and Wade, the CHROME RFP 450 is a declaration. 'We wanted a multitool – a Leatherman for labels,' Devlin says. 'Something versatile enough to handle premium work, but also flexible enough for Africa, where smaller pack sizes and shorter runs are exploding.'

The machine's modularity and efficiency ticked all the boxes: fast changeovers, low waste, peel-and-read units, hot foiling, UV and LED curing and smart gap controls. Instead of bolting on extras later, they bit the bullet upfront, configuring the press for complexity from day one.

But beneath the engineering specs lies something subtler: confidence. Confidence that a label converter from Pinetown could run with the industry's biggest players. Confidence that a partnership with ROTOCON could deliver not only machinery but momentum.

If Blue Print's perseverance is one half of the story, ROTOCON is the other. The partnership is rooted in shared



The ROTOCON CHROME RFP 450 in action.



DNA: entrepreneurial grit, family-driven leadership and a refusal to play it safe.

'Some converters still hesitate about Chinese-built machinery,' Wade admits. 'But the stigma is outdated. ROTOCON presses might be Chinese-built, but they're German-engineered. What we've got here is proper manufacturing, customised for our needs. Uptime sits at 96-97%. That's world-class.'

The difference, he stresses, is ROTOCON's role as more than middleman. It creates a feedback loop: listening to converters like Blue Print, relaying requirements and refining each iteration. Servo packages, software tweaks, auxiliary specs – everything is fed back, adjusted and delivered.

'It's not just buying from China,' Devlin says. 'It's buying from ROTOCON, with all the engineering intelligence and market context that comes with it.'

The result? A machine that doesn't just meet spec sheets but expands Blue Print's capacity to play at scale.

diluted that focus, but the new press lets us bring back balance.'

For the brothers, labels are both product and principle. 'We're not in the business of buying machines,' Devlin insists. 'We're in the business of selling labels. Machines are just tools. If you forget that, you drift.'

From the outside, Blue Print's rise might look like luck, timing or market opportunity. Inside, it feels more like trench work: late nights, trial-and-error, resilience in the face of load-shedding, drought and supply chain delays.

'Our success has never been about a good economy,' Devlin says. 'We've never known one. We just keep moving.'

Relationships are equally central. Customers, suppliers and staff – each treated as part of what the brothers call 'the family'. It may sound cliché, but it isn't lip service. Neighbours, siblings and cousins all work in the business. Loyalty and trust are both currency and culture.



ROTOCON's Akhmath Sayed with Blue Print Labelling's machine operators, Terrence and Jonathan.

Zambia: testing the perseverance

If the CHROME RFP 450 signals ambition, Zambia embodies persistence. Encouraged by multinational customers to explore the market, the brothers set up shop in Lusaka with a second-hand press from Australia. What followed was less expansion and more initiation by fire.

'Zambia isn't just South Africa north,' Wade says. 'Culturally, the way of doing business is different. You can't just copy and paste.'

Then came the 2024 drought, the worst in 40 years, which gutted the hydroelectric grid. Generators became essential, costs ballooned and several customers shut their doors.

But Blue Print persisted. It adapted to smaller pack sizes – 100g cheese packs outselling 400g because fridges couldn't keep food fresh. It learned that throughput wasn't about tonnage, but about item count. It aligned with blue-chip customers hungry for local supply. And slowly, it earned trust.

Today, the Lusaka factory hums with permanent staff, growing volumes and additional presses en route. It remains a frontier where determination meets possibility.

Blanks, brands and balance

Blue Print has always balanced glamour and graft. High-end labels for cosmetics and FMCG brands sit alongside the unsung hero of its business: blank labels.

'Blank labels are our white gold,' Wade says. 'At one stage, they made up 50% of our business. Growth elsewhere

It's this mix – perseverance, relationships and the willingness to bet on itself – that explains why Blue Print is thriving.

The CHROME RFP 450 is already pushing boundaries, but the brothers are clear-eyed about the next phase: auxiliaries, finishing and semi-rotary kit for shorter runs.

'We call it the sausage machine,' Wade says with a grin. 'It makes the sausage. Now we need the casings, the packaging, the finishing. That's the next step.'

It's not only about hardware, though. It's about people – operators to run the new lines, staff to handle the swelling order books and young talent like long-serving pressman Aziz Sayed who's growing alongside the business.

Another driving force behind Blue Print's success is Lizelle du Preez. Since joining the team six years ago, she has played a pivotal role in steering growth, particularly in the high-end sector. 'Lizelle championed the introduction of advanced ink management systems, ISO 22000 and other initiatives that have raised our standards across the board,' notes Devlin. Her recent appointment as partner and director marks a natural progression of her influence and leadership, giving directors Wade and Devlin the confidence to push ahead with new projects while knowing Blue Print continues to run seamlessly under her guidance.

It's tempting to frame this narrative as inevitable: two brothers, hard work and eventual triumph. But Blue Print's story resists neat packaging. It's not inevitable. It's improbable and it's about perseverance – the kind that turns setbacks into stepping stones and a garage press into a flexo powerhouse. The kind you might call Pinetown perseverance.