

Year 18 • issue 1

Long live hand painted brick walls

Quo vadis - digital print shows?

From small to very large with EFI Fiery

Onlineshopz.nl puts trust in Durst P5 350 UV

Changes in the production of printed textile

Promic and Jansen become Showdown Displays Europe

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Sourcing out or do-it-yourself.

Making it or buying it – that's a question

By **Ton Rombout**

Buying finished signs, flags or other halfway products from other companies gives you greater flexibility in terms of the range you can offer and the capacity you need to produce it. However, the added value for each order will be less and that's ok providing you keep this in mind. Your customers may be more important than your product assortment. Working with a minimum number of staff, your turnaround is high enough to realise a reasonable profit even though your expenses are higher.

However, if your added value is decreasing and your profit margin is much lower while outsourcing, you might have a problem. Some types of administration enable you to do a lot of business without necessarily seeing the end result over time. Purchasing semi-finished products is now so common that all of the companies we visit take advantage of it. Purchasing prints has now also been added to the list. The time when a sign maker's workshop looked like a carpenter's workshop or forge is truly behind us. Some new companies have established themselves as resellers.

The proportion was quite high in the period of between 2008 and 2012. Sign makers minimised their manpower. A few years later buying better quality became the norm and there was a definite trend to replace not just the photograph or image but the entire frame. Exhibition walls became complete stands. Profiles are becoming lighter,

making transport cheaper. Rigid boards were replaced by textile.

More and more companies have bought laser and cutting equipment in recent years, enabling them to produce integral products in-house in combination with a wider format printer. This primarily relates to 1.6 m wide self-adhesive media and most recently UV hybrid and flatbed printers. In particular mid range sign companies and those with a narrower range outsource non-self-adhesive materials such as flags, banners and rigid boards, partly in non standard formats or on 'difficult' materials such as wood, metal, etc. Quite a number of sign companies are consequently printing in-house, but the volume and number of print service providers is also quickly rising. Although textile is a growing market, it is still a specialised one, which means that textile prints, ranging from logos and letters to ready-made, are mostly purchased.

LED illuminated advertisements are often integrated from stand-alone into other advertisements. Meanwhile, illuminated advertising has also become part of the range on offer from virtually all companies in the sign market.

What is the current situation? In some businesses order managers tend to communicate more with suppliers than with customers. Purchasing can be done via the website and sign companies often have a login to the system and can purchase from

the sales organization online, direct from their own order administration.

Last but not least, there are the freelance fitters and the assembly companies. They do benefit from these developments but are usually self-employed, although they are in fairly regular contact with the sign companies they work for.

We at SignPro Europe wish you all well and hope you find the right way forward.

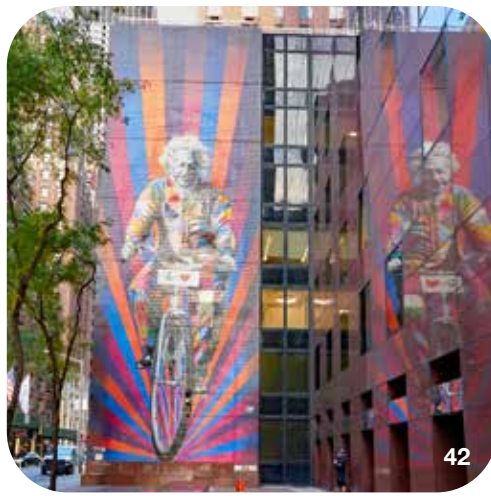
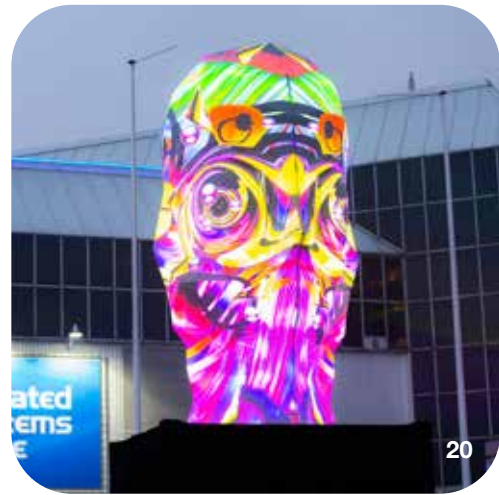
**Ton Rombout, Editor-in-Chief
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Ton Rombout

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SignPro Europe February 2020



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Roland DG demonstrates at EuroShop 2020
personalization solutions

Roland DG was present at EuroShop, the leading global trade show for retail in Düsseldorf (Germany). Thousands of professionals from the retail sector, ranging from representatives of leading global brands to ambitious self-employed people, visit this trade fair. At EuroShop they want to find out more about emerging trends, exchange ideas and discover new solutions for the changing retail landscape. Roland DG therefore presents a show-case of advanced solutions for in-store and online personalization of products, which will have a major impact on the global retail experience. Personalizing products remain an important global trend for retailers because consumers are willing to pay more for products that are personalized and unique. Roland DG offers retailers various customer-oriented solutions for personalizing products. They can integrate the technology quickly and easily into their store and online platform and thus offer a unique and interactive shopping experience. By offering a 'one-stop' package of hardware, software, ink, consultancy and service, Roland's solutions can be fully adapted to the brand, product range and market segment of every retailer. An incredibly wide range of items can be personalized, including clothing, accessories, carrier bags, jewelry, posters, stickers, smartphone cases, stationery, gifts, electronics and more. This makes the Roland DG solutions ideal for the promotion of brands, stores or e-tailers. The solutions add value to the existing product lines of a retailer and distinguish a company from the competition. This ensures higher visitor numbers and ultimately more profit.

Info: www.rolanddg.eu



MultiPress now available in Poland

Dataline appoints Integart as its new channel partner in the country. At Remadays (Warsaw, 12 – 14 February) was the first public demonstration of MultiPress MIS/ERP software to the Polish graphic arts industry. Dataline, the Belgian producer and supplier of ERP/MIS solutions to the graphic arts industry, is proud to announce it has entered into a new channel partnership in Poland with Integart. Integart is one of the leading players in the graphic arts industry and a distributor for HP, Zund, 3M and many more products. Their expertise, their drive for innovation and large customer base, make them the perfect partner for Dataline.

Tomasz Melzacki, Sales Director Integart: 'We recognized a strong need for robust MIS/ERP software, specifically with our large format print customers. With Dataline, we have found a rock-solid partner that – with flagship MultiPress – has proven itself on several hundreds of sites in Europe.'

Dirk Deroo, CEO Dataline: 'Along the lines of our strategy, Dataline is continuing its expansion into Europe, with Poland as the next stop. We are proud to be supported in that effort by one of the most prominent suppliers to the graphic arts industry in Poland.'

At Remadays, Integart was introducing MultiPress MIS/ERP for graphic production companies.

Info: www.dataline.eu



The Dataline team (left) with Dirk Deroo, CEO, Serge Clauss, International Business Development Manager Large Format and Matthieu Delessard, International Business Development Large Format.
The Integart team with Tomasz Melzacki, Sales Director Integart and Remigiusz Pokuciński, Product Manager.



Agfa introduces Oberon RTR3300

Agfa recently announced a new addition to its large-format inkjet printer assortment. The Oberon RTR3300 is a dedicated 3.3 m high-end roll-to-roll machine that combines extreme productivity and quality with an extensive media scope and a unique ease of use.

The new Oberon RTR3300 comes in a four colour plus white, and a six colour version, depending on user needs and preferences. In 'express mode',

the Oberon RTR3300 hits an impressive 150 m²/h, while still delivering Agfa's well-known exceptional image quality. In 'Production mode', the Oberon reaches a consistent 85 m² per hour. The dual-roll option is capable of handling two rolls each up to 1.6 meters wide, doubling the total output. The UV LED inks on the Oberon RTR3300 were optimized for flexible media and excel in the smooth printing of solid colours. They obtained the highest category of Greenguard Gold certification, which means they meet some of the world's most rigorous chemical emissions standards and can be used in sensitive indoor environments like schools or healthcare facilities.

The Oberon RTR3300 covers significant media diversity and a wide range of applications, enabling print service providers to execute all their customers' creative wishes, while also inspiring them to explore new directions.

In addition to its air-cooled LED curing lamps, the Oberon RTR3300 features a unique water-cooled table that keeps the printing zone at room temperature. Therefore, print service providers can smoothly process any kind of heat-sensitive roll material, including lower cost media. The dedicated mesh printing functionality makes printing on mesh (with or without liner) more convenient than ever.

The smart multi-queue functionality guarantees effortless job planning in view of the available materials. The free fall option, which may be used to print on demand, reduces media waste. A light box next to the printing area allows for on-the-spot quality inspection of backlit prints, while a double light curtain ensures that jobs don't get interrupted and media wasted, even when an operator accidentally moves into the safety zone. The Oberon RTR3300 made its debut at the CIPrint show in (Lyon, France) and is on show at FESPA (Madrid, Spain, 24-27 March 2020).

Info: www.agfa.com

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Reklama 2020 Moscow: 22-25 September 2020 – a must for your agenda!

By Ton Rombout



Entertainment at Reklama.

Reklama 2020, the trade show for manufacturers and advertising customers, will take place from 22-25 September 2020 at the Expocentre exhibition ground in Moscow.

Judging by the feedback received from exhibitors and visitors of Reklama 2019, we are sure that we are staging a leading advertising show in the Russian market that really meets the needs of professionals engaged in the production of advertising structures, materials and products.

Reklama 2019 - a success story

We have high expectations because Reklama 2019 recorded a steady growth in the number of participants, showcased products and visitors. 237 companies showcased their products and the number of exhibitors increased by 29%. The exhibition was attended by 17,380 people, which is 17.4% more than in the previous year. The support programme featured a Matrix of Advertising Forum focused on the production of promotional materials, a session on digital marketing and a textile printing conference. Overall the programme comprised 26 events, which were attended by more than 4,000 people.

Indoor advertising market

Moscow's indoor advertising market continues to clock up moderate growth. The increase in the number of advertising structures in the autumn of 2019 amounted to 6.5% compared to September 2018. As a whole, the growth in advertising structures across Russia for the same period amounted to 23.5%. The most optimistic trends are predicted in retail, particularly in food retail. Many retail chains, including those in the regions, plan to install advertising structures in 2020. Digital advertising tools are also steadily expanding into the medical sector: screens have been installed in health care facilities and in pharmacies in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

Filling stations

They have remained unchanged for the period. However, the segment is expected to develop rapidly with city light posters at the entrance to filling stations, disinfectant monitors, the replacement of previously installed panels, Face ID cameras and Wi-Fi routers to target a specific audience. A filling station has now become an advertising space, with indoor and outdoor structures that introduce visitors to advertising messages.

Shopping malls

As an advertising segment, shopping malls continue to develop in terms of both quantity and quality. Nearly all new shopping malls design digital advertising structures that are rapidly developing in cities with a population of 300,000-500,000. Interesting technology-based interactive solutions such as holograms, navigation touch panels, etc. are also being introduced. Seamed video walls are being replaced by modern seamless structures. LED-7 screens between floors are attracting more and more prominent clients. The segment is becoming particularly attractive to federal customers, given that the platform delivers quality and facilitates remote communication with a positive audience ready "to part with the money". It can also provide entertain-

ment as more and more people spend their leisure time in shopping malls.

New segments

Another positive trend is the development of totally new segments. The Russian Post (national postal operator), for example, is penetrating the indoor market offering unique "on the spot" coverage, despite the complex and passive image of its audience. In some regions of Russia where post offices have two or three surfaces available, plans for 2020 include 8,000-10,000 structures. The Russian Post itself is actively trying to enhance its image by renovating its post offices, increasing its product range, making online ordering available and analysing its audience, using above mentioned Face ID and Wi-Fi routers. In due course this should have a positive effect and this channel will definitely have to be taken seriously when planning campaigns targeted at certain types of customers.

Airports

The introduction of new digital tools, based on approved concepts, by Domodedovo and Sheremetyevo in 2018 represented a great leap forward. The potential volume of this segment in Russia is estimated at 1.5 billion roubles. •

For more information and exhibitor feedback visit www.reklama-expo.ru/en/



An overview of the Reklama show.

Exhibition

How the market for digital textile printing is gaining market opportunities

By Ton Rombout



Close-Up Tiger-Mkl Print Result.

Whilst screen printing is still by far the main print technology (almost 97%) in the textile printing business, digitally printed textiles are on the up. However, the growth rate is not the same for every segment in the textile market and also differs per region. For example, digitally printed sportswear may well be increasingly popular, also bought via the internet.

The value chain of the different kinds of textile printers we come across nowadays in the media and at exhibitions gives us an insight into the opportunities and bottlenecks in textile printing using smaller printing systems throughout the entire value chain.

Trends and developments

First a few thoughts on the popularity of buying online. Although I refused to order online for many years, I did notice that more and more people in my area increasingly started to buy stuff online, i.e. the weekly shop, that new iPhone charger, those divine shoes, etc. A Zalando employee told me over the phone that during peak times on Black Friday they receive 7,200 orders per minute, which is why she had not had time to respond to my e-mails yet...

240 million packages were ordered in the Netherlands alone in 2018, equivalent to approximately 650,000 a day. In a major city such as New York more than one and a half million packages are delivered every day. In 2009 that number was less than 360,000. Online shoppers mainly tend to buy clothes and shoes. According to YouTubers, one of the main benefits of ordering clothes online is that you have access to an infinite number of collections.

Having a presence on the internet you can show clothes that have yet to be made to order. This has led to some small but notable changes in the market with respect to textile printing on demand, which can be produced with smaller printers, in small amounts or even as a run of just one. There's no longer a need for large screen printing systems in this case.

Exclusivity

Fashion clothing is basically meant to offer people exclusivity. However, most of the time it isn't all that exclusive and one still has to pay considerable amounts of money to get an individual jacket, trousers or bikini. We should, therefore, look at the opportunities in the



Second hand T-shirt.

market and on the internet in terms of showing and providing examples of an item of clothing on a website, giving people the opportunity to decide what they would like before it is actually produced. This would perhaps eliminate the considerable expense associated with a fashion show.

Having said that, buying clothes online is still a tricky business, because we all have individual measurements, resulting in a real risk of clothes not fitting properly. Just ask yourself how many times you sent things back for that very reason.

Demand first, then production

Selling clothes via the internet has one major advantage: you have an exact overview of the numbers you have to produce. Moreover, there's no need to guess how many copies of a jacket or other item you will have to produce for a specific city, region, country or indeed worldwide.

Secondly, this could also be better for the environment, another recurring issue when it comes to deciding whether or not to print digitally. Less, or no, waste is a big deal in retail

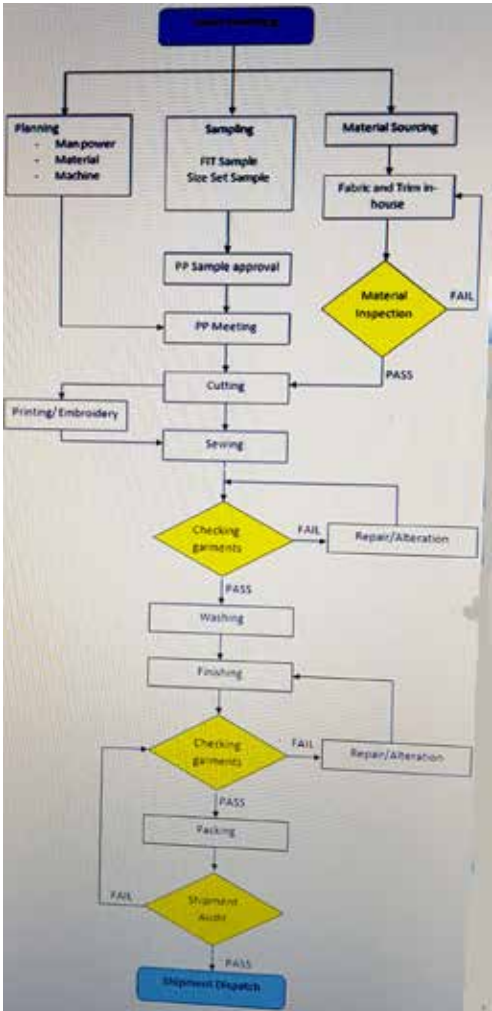
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Developments

SignPro Europe February 2020



Sustainable textile-H&M.



Production scheme for textile.

nowadays and we have already come across some rather fascinating solutions in this respect. Some companies devote a lot of attention to this issue, e.g. the Houdini Half-Earth project. Claiming to be a trailblazer in sustainable innovation in its quest to become regenerative, the Stockholm based Houdini Sportswear (outdoor sportswear) company continues to break new ground. Examples of lifestyle aspects that will be explored as part of their initiative include:

- Having a significantly smaller wardrobe that lasts longer and caters to a wider range of needs, including spending time in the outdoors.
- Accessing a shared wardrobe through product-as-a-service solutions, catering



Cotton likes to have by preference a green certificate.

- to an unlimited range of activities whilst being more resource efficient.
- Being part of a connected community for peer-to-peer sharing of gear and experiences, open source innovation and sharing of knowledge and insights.
- Multiple outdoor experiences and exposure to the natural environment focused on wellbeing, which would lead to a decrease in advertising exposure.
- Values shifting towards less material consumption, more time spent being active and communing with nature. Also making walking, bike commuting and ski touring the preferred alternative to motorized mobility and local adventures or sustainable travel destinations the preferred choice for holidays.



HP Stitch S300 Standard for Textile printing.

- Greater awareness and behaviours shifting towards less impactful and regenerative lifestyles.

Wow, that's quite a tall order in terms of possibilities. The report has assessed the impact of Houdini's fibre use, from understanding how sheep farming and grazing affects the impact that wool garments have on biological diversity in local ecosystems, to its

impact on climate change on a global scale. "With its constant and innovative focus on circular production, the Stockholm based Houdini Sportswear company continues to break new ground within the clothing industry. Garments in each collection are designed to maximize user experience, comfort and functionality, combined with sustainability and recycling. Taking the next step Houdini now composts worn clothing and cultivates vegetables to be used for a unique fine dining menu composed by the celebrated chef Sebastian Thureson." Okay, let's take a positive approach to this initiative.

Funny Virtue is another example. Virtue, the creative agency of Vice, has developed an AR shirt for the Scandinavian fashion retailer Carlings. You can scan 'The Last Statement T-shirt' via Instagram's new target tracking. The print in 'augmented reality' on this T-shirt comes to life and will constantly change because it is linked to around 100 prints. You buy one physical T-shirt but you have access to a new political statement all the time. Because it involves only one item per person it is considered a particularly sustainable idea. Love the idea, but what kind material was used to make this T-shirt?

Obviously companies in India and/or Pakistan that were originally confection companies are going to focus on the entire value chain going forward, buying printing equipment and selling via the internet.

Sustainability

"I am looking forward to the day when it will be normal to visit a store and exchange your old favourite T-shirt for a recycled T-shirt made



A ReSpun-recycled T-shirt.

from other people's old favourite shirts," stated Michael Natenshon, founder and CEO of Marine Layer, a San Francisco based fashion label best known for its soft T-shirts. "There's a kind of poetry in knowing that your T-shirt was reincarnated from another T-shirt." Marine Layer recently launched a new collection of men's and women's T-shirts, referred to as Re-Spun and made of 50% recycled cotton T-shirts and 50% other sustainably sourced recycled and virgin fibres. The brand partnered with a textile factory in Alicante (Spain) developing a new recycling technique that requires no chemicals, dyes or even water. The Recover factory can process virtually any garment to recoup the fibres within. Marine Layer wanted to focus first and foremost on T-shirts, partly because that is what the company is best known for. Natenshon realized that much of this first collection was about introducing consumers to the concept of a circular system for the production of T-shirts and, perhaps more broadly, all other garments. "We thought it would be easier to tell the story by focusing on a single familiar object such as a T-shirt," he commented. There was also a practical reason to get customers interested in T-shirt recycling. With the Re-Spun collection Marine Layer relied on customers to provide the raw material, so it was important to make them feel that they had a vested interest in the process. It is a smart insight. Consumers are increasingly concerned about the fate of the planet and are looking for ways to decrease their environmental footprint. People actually sent in more than 5,000 shirts within the first 48 hours of Marine Layer putting out the call. The company has collected 75,000 shirts to date, with more arriving every day, which opens up new possibilities. Natenshon stated that 40% of these shirts are



henM-key achievements being green.



T-Shirts on the wall (courtesy Sonja Angerer).

coming from people who had never previously purchased from Marine Layer, i.e. a side effect of the Re-Spun programme is that it is introducing new people to the brand.

High volume production

Meanwhile larger digital production printers are set to gradually replace the screen printers in the field. They still print rolls but the prints are different, far fewer metres and different designs, more on demand and mostly a few hundred instead of tens of thousands from a screen printer previously. Some systems will make it possible to mechanically cut many layers of fabric on a table. These machines are fully programmable and will cut different designs in the desired numbers and sizes. A company such as Zara, with numerous shops all over the world, assesses weekly which sizes of a certain design have been sold and sends this data

back to the manufacturer. During the final stage the designs are delivered to a sewing workshop, which adds regulatory and design labels, packs the clothing and sends it to the brand's distribution centre. Because this method assumes that the distribution centre is closer to the final phase - in this case the stores - the Zara distribution centre, for example, is located in Morocco rather than Sri Lanka. •



Piece-rate-operator.

Not all trade shows are the same

Expo 4.0 – WETEC for the DACH printing industry

By Sonja Angerer



Expo 4.0 Stuttgart attracted 12,518 visitors, mainly from the DACH region.

Following Viscom Düsseldorf's less than stellar results, expectations were low for Expo 4.0 in Stuttgart less than one month after, and approximately 400 km away from, the struggling trade show old-timer.

However, Expo 4.0, which was first introduced back in 2012, did not disappoint or fail to impress the DACH (Germany, Austria, Switzerland) community. Significant queues of happily chatting visitors in the cloakroom in the basement of the Stuttgart trade fair ground indicated that this would turn out to be quite a successful show.

Germany's economic powerhouse

Whilst outside the weather excelled with beautiful blue skies and plenty of sunshine, many high spirited visitors flocked to the "Dach + Holz" ("Roof + Wood") trade show for carpenters and tile fitters. The organizers of Messe Stuttgart later confirmed that 28% of the 12,518 trade visitors to EXPO 4.0 had travelled more than 300 km to visit Stuttgart. On the morning of 30th January, however, at the cloakroom counter it seemed as if everyone came from just around the corner. Not surprisingly, as the area is known as Germany's economic powerhouse.

Visual communication and haptic advertising

Expo 4.0 is a three day trade fair association focused on visual communication and haptic advertising. When it was first staged back in 2012, it was kind of wrapped around TV TecStyle Visions, a leading show for textile print, finishing and promotion. Nearly half of the 262 exhibitors had an international background, which is not surprising as the show is said to attract quite a number of visitors from the ISPO Munich sports goods show, which was staged a good two hour drive away and ended on 29th January. To some extent TV TecStyle Visions looks a bit like a sports goods show, with all major manufacturers of shirts, sweaters, hoodies, bags, caps and other apparel/accessories present with large booths. In the digital Micro Factory nine companies, coordinated by the DITF (German Institute for Textile and Fibre Research Denkendorf), illustrated the possibilities of digitalization in manufacturing.

From 3D design and conception to printing

A polo shirt was created in just one hour, from 3D design and conception to printing, heat setting, cutting and making up. The show

offered plenty of educational and networking content with the Style Fashion Show, trade forum and 'Charlie's Corner'. With barely 50 exhibitors, the 'GiveADays' show for promotional products was by far the smallest of the trio of shows. However, the leading PSI show had been staged just three weeks earlier. Wetec, which is dedicated to sign making and digital printing, hosted 103 exhibitors, including industry leaders such as Mimaki Deutschland GmbH, H. Brunner GmbH, IGEP Systems GmbH and 3M Deutschland GmbH. Senior Product Specialist, Andrea Leimbach, explained that SAI exhibited in Stuttgart for the first time, promoting its RIP subscription model to the German speaking markets. Sylvia Dommer-Kroneberg, CEO and owner of the nearby Dommer Stuttgarter Fahnenfabrik, seemed happy with the show. As was the Mimaki Germany crew, whose spacious booth was home to one of the highlights of the show, when they presented the winners of a gin label contest. Whilst the bottles on display at Mimaki's were obviously not filled with alcohol, it seemed appropriate to toast the Expo 4.0. It appears that the DACH printing industry got off to a positive start in 2020 after all! •



Several key exhibitors, including Mimaki, Roland DG and SwissQprint, were present with a booth but not really showcasing any new products at the Wetec show.



All major apparel manufacturers were represented at the TV TecStyle Visions show in Stuttgart from 30th January to 1st February 2020.

Exhibition

"Much more than just a hole in a bagel"

Bagelstein and Caldera

By Ton Rombout



Design of a standard Bagelstein restaurant.



Bagelstein restaurant: impressive interior.

Starting with its first restaurant in 2011, Bagelstein has been a 'made in France' success story, which has since expanded to include 107 branches across Europe in just nine years. Caldera is thrilled to play its part in this journey – enabling Bagelstein to create a multitude of extraordinary and entertaining visuals to build the brand's unique identity across all of its stores.

Thierry Veil, who is a co-founder and CEO of the company, is very clear about how the partnership between Bagelstein and Caldera is a key element of the brand's communication strategy. He commented: "As far as we're concerned Caldera is the vital link, which keeps our passionate spirit at the heart of our in-store communication."

Powerful marketing message

In fact Bagelstein's commercial strategy is focused on the creation of a powerful marketing message that makes the company stand out from the crowd. "Ever since Bagelstein was established in 2011 we have maintained a fast track marketing strategy," Thierry explained. "Suddenly Bagelstein was everywhere. Our research and development department is huge and we are constantly

rethinking our recipes, coming up with new jokes, products and lines of communication. Communicating our story requires a lot of printing in all our stores, with constantly changing point-of-sale advertising material. Our advertising and in-store communication can change on a daily basis and Caldera allows us to respond quickly to the demands of the business."

Caldera VisualRIP+

The company uses Caldera VisualRIP+ to drive its digital printers – it is a comprehensive workflow solution, which is ideal for creating all the Bagelstein visual communication collateral. Having been designed with growing businesses in mind, VisualRIP+ has worked particularly well as the company has expanded. It utilises a powerful ICC colour calibration engine and the range of optional modules allows further functionality to be added if needed. An intuitive and easy to use GUI and the ability to handle print-to-cut production suits Bagelstein's demanding requirements to a tee.

Thierry Veil continued: "For us Caldera is the airlock between the street and the Bagelstein universe – a world of brilliant images, spoof newspaper headlines and great jokes. We

KEY DATES

- 1683: invention of the bagel by a Viennese baker (Austria)
- 12 January 2011: opening of the very first Bagelstein boutique in France (Strasbourg)
- 30 May 2027: a member of the Bagelstein family will be elected President of the Republic. What's your opinion?

KEY FIGURES

- 107 - the number of Bagelstein stores in France in 2017
- 18,251 - the average number of bagels produced daily by our bakers (as per 10/25/2014)
- 284 - the number of people working at and on behalf of Bagelstein every day
- 3 - the number of babies delivered in the toilets of our stores
- 24 - the number of broken plastic spoons each day. It's 24 extra!
- 2,982 - the weight of chocolate used in our desserts.

need consistently high quality prints to reproduce this humour and maintain our brand image. We choose Caldera for its quality – it provides us with a flawless finished product. Maintaining quality is key for Bagelstein – in both its products and its communication strategy. •

Case

SignPro Europe February 2020

13

France's graphic industry beyond strikes and yellow vests

C!Print 2020 hits the bull's eye with record numbers of visitors and exhibitors

By Martin Kugler

Trade shows are the bread and butter of any industry. This is where the players, big and small, meet up to network, show off and demonstrate products and services. Over the years the C!Print show, held at the Eurexpo exhibition ground in Lyons, has become the gathering place for the famous and not so famous names of the graphic, sign and printing industries in France, setting the standard for media coverage and visitor attendance.

The culinary attractions of Lyons make that the city shines as the thriving gastronomic capital of France, but 656 Éditions, the organisers of the C!Print show, have succeeded in turning their annual exhibition into the national print event not to be missed in your calendar. The 2020 edition took place in early February, boasting more than 250 exhibitors bringing together well over 16,000 faithful attendees.

A range of interests

C!Print does not really focus on any particular area but appeals to a range of interests. Working demonstrations of wide format digital printers are always impressive and C!Print is no exception. Agfa wowed their visitors with two UV printers featuring LED curing technology: the 1.65m wide Anapurna H1650i LED as an entry model able to handle rigid substrates, sheeted and roll media, and the 3.3m Jeti Tauro H3300 LED as a robust hybrid machine for heavy duty industrial applications. And they displayed the new Oberon printer! Roland proudly announced their first wide format flatbed UV printer, the IU-1000F able to print, beyond colours, also primers and varnishes directly onto a large range of rigid substrates up to 2.50m wide. Also on demo was their multi-purpose VersaUV LEC2-300 printer-cutter.

Growing range of substrates

On the media side delegates were spoilt for choice. The big manufacturers offer an ever increasing range of substrates for marking, printing and decorating applications. 3M claims their architectural DI-NOC film adds luminosity and elegance to glass surfaces and their 2080 range is a wrapping film, which is particularly

easy to install offering extended durability. Arlon want to improve productivity with their SLX Cast Wrap featuring an easy to remove liner. Their DPF 4200 is dedicated to interior design and can be fitted without laminate. Hexis launched a series of new media: two new banner films for curtain-sided vehicles, the printable VTB901WG1 and the TB9000S for cutting plotters. Their new PC Forged, a 110 micron cast vinyl laminate, is part of the Hex'perience design concept intended for decorating applications.

Large number of service providers and accessory vendors

Caldera showcased the latest version of their RIP software with special emphasis on textile printing. Promic and Jansen, merged under their new Showdown Displays parent, showed off their clever zipper-wall display system. UV component manufacturer Phoseon had a static display of their ever-growing line of powerful LED UV systems for OEMs and retrofitting to inkjet and offset printing machines. The well attended vehicle wrapping competition C!Wrap, jointly organised by 3M, Arlon and Hexis, brought together six teams of five installers each fitting full wraps non-stop over the three days with a jury of industry professionals judging design, quality and finish. •

www.salon-cprint.com



Caldera emphasized textile printing.



The new Roland IU-1000F large format UV-LED flatbed printer.



Hexis emphasised deco media.



Zipper-Wall mobile presentation systems at Showdown Displays.



The new Agfa Oberon RTR3300 UV.

Exhibition

Even more extensive product range with brand new product categories

Promic and Jansen become Showdown Displays Europe

By Ton Rombout



Showdown stand at the viscom exhibition in Germany.



Merge of the logos of Promic and Jansen under the 'roof' of Showdown Displays.

Earlier this year Promic Display Systems and Jansen Display joined forces under a new name - Showdown Displays Europe - creating a new partnership with the same focus on quality, service and personal contact as before. In fact it was a logical conclusion following the events of last year.

In October 2018 Sign-Zone, a leading display manufacturer in the North American market, became the new owner of Jansen Display, whilst in May 2019 Promic also became part of the Sign-Zone Group. Having operated as two independent entities for some months, it soon became clear that Promic and Jansen Display would be even stronger if they joined forces and that's exactly what happened at the beginning of this year.

Joining forces to serve you better

Both Promic and Jansen have built up an enviable reputation across Europe as providers of high quality displays and signage systems.

The merger of the two companies and being part of Showdown Displays Worldwide, makes the new Showdown Displays Europe the largest supplier/manufacturer of promotional signs, display systems and POS materials on this continent.

"Having a shared commitment to delivering quality at the right price and aiming to become the first choice for resellers, Promic and Jansen Display decided to combine their efforts going forward. "This merger enables us to deliver the best possible service to our customers," commented Vít Zajíček, President of Showdown Displays Europe and former CEO of the Jansen Display Group.

Extended product range with brand new services

"An analysis of our product ranges shows that Promic and Jansen Display truly complement each other," Zajíček continued. "Together we can now offer a product range that covers all our customers' requirements. Illuminated signs, photo back walls, digital displays and hospi-

tal equipment: you name it, we've got it." In addition to expanding its product range, Showdown Displays Europe is also focusing on further development of its printing services. "We are in the last stages of setting up a brand new printing hall at our manufacturing site in the Czech Republic."

Better for our customers

Zajíček concluded: "Bringing high-end products and quality prints together, our reseller customers can now come to us for immediately available, ready-to-use display products. From now on we will be a one-stop-shop in support of their own success story, offering:

- + a more extensive product range with brand new product categories
- + more in-depth knowledge and interesting developments
- + in-house manufacturing of a ready-to-use product (print included)
- + even more extensive services than before."

Exhibitions

Showdown Displays Europe was attending and will attend several European exhibitions this year, including viscom, C!Print, Euroshop, FESPA and Reklama Polygraf.

"We would like to invite all our Promic and Jansen Display customers to come and familiarise themselves with the new brand," Loes Heintges, Marketing Director at Showdown Displays Europe, added. "You can still find us under our 'former' names, with the same logos and the same websites, but as of May 2020 we will switch to the name and new visual style of Showdown Displays Europe." •

Join Europe's flagship eco-friendly printing companies

Print the Change cooperative makes Cradle to Cradle printing possible

By Ton Rombout



Picture of the founders.



PrinttheChange, picture © ThomasVogel.

Three green printing companies have created an innovation in their sector: the international Print the Change cooperative. Every printing company with a sustainable mindset can become a member – thus immediately joining the premium segment in eco-friendly printing and offering pollutant-free, recyclable printed products.

A tremendous competitive advantage without protracted and pricey research and development effort. A revolution for the printing sector in Europe!

Sustainable management and production is increasingly becoming a crucial competitive advantage for printing companies too. The price pressure is increasing, the optimisation options are declining and differentiation is needed. At the same time, environmental legislation is becoming stronger, while customers and consumers are becoming more critical – questioning the origin, ingredients and environmental impact. If you can develop answers for these questions early on, you will be well placed for the future - yet switching to sustainable production takes time and money. So three European printing companies have created a community that can perceptibly accelerate this transition: the Print the Change cooperative.

Getting into green printing made easy

The cooperative's role is to share the expertise in healthy and residue-free printing, the circular

economy and Cradle to Cradle certification that the founding companies have acquired over two decades with other printing companies in Europe, as well as jointly undertaking research, development and procurement, and working the markets together. Members can request site certification as soon as they have signed the contract, and print using the existing Cradle to Cradle certified materials – so they can operate in the market as a supplier of the world's highest ecological printing standard. There is no need for protracted and pricey research and development processes, as the founding companies have already taken these on. Currently over 20 certified materials and a wealth of experience are available to members.



Illustration © gugler.

From a community to a cooperative

The founders of the Print the Change cooperative are Ernst Gugler (CEO of the gugler* printing company in Austria and Chairman of the cooperative), Kasper Larsen (CEO of KLS PurePrint in Denmark) and Markus und Renato Vögeli (CEOs of Vögeli AG, Switzerland). The cooperative's registered office is in Melk, Austria.

The cooperative emerged from the Print the Change Community that gugler* created in 2015 to scale his pioneering achievement Europe-wide. In 2011 the eco-friendly printing company from Lower Austria was the first company in the world to supply Cradle to Cradle certified printed products – and it is still the only one in Germany and Austria. Now the Community has acquired a strong framework in the form of the cooperative.

The end of take-make-waste

Cradle to Cradle is a principle underlying the circular economy, in which thanks to the nature of a product's ingredients, it can be returned again to biological or technical cycles when its useful life has expired – putting an end to take-make-waste. This protects resources and prevents waste, because waste becomes sustenance. This principle is already being applied in many sectors, from furniture or clothing manufacturers to cleaning product producers.

Healthy printed products

Cradle to Cradle printed products may only be printed with "healthy" substances. All the ingredients used for paper, ink, varnish and glue are ecotoxicity tested all the way to the last subcontractor and replaced if necessary – only what is good for people, animals and nature is allowed to be part of the printed products. This is guaranteed by the Cradle to Cradle certificate. These printed products are 100 percent reusable, as even the recycling residues can be fed back into the biological cycle. This is why Cradle to Cradle is regarded



as the highest sustainable printing standard in the world. You can't get greener than that!

Ernst Gugler

Ernst Gugler, gugler* (Chairman of the Print the Change cooperative), Austria: "Doing business in line with the Cradle to Cradle principle not only brings competitive advantages, but also makes a major contribution to climate protection. With the Print the Change cooperative we are saying goodbye to competitive thinking in favour of cooperation – a principle for the future."

Kasper Larsen

Kasper Larsen, KLS PurePrint, Denmark: "For us it is a great advantage being able to share the costs of project management, certification and market preparation with our partners in the cooperative. Our cooperation means we can develop new products much faster than we could on our own. The members have

become our most important strategic partners for a greener future."

Markus Vögeli

Markus Vögeli, Vögeli AG, Switzerland: "Thanks to the Cradle to Cradle certification we have become the market leader in the sustainable print products segment in Switzerland. Society will soon understand that our future has to be recyclable. When the demand for this rises, we are ready. And with the cooperative, we will always be at least one step ahead of the competition."

Become a 'friend of the cooperative'

If you do not want to become a full member of the cooperative right away, and would just like to gauge the reactions in the market step by step, you have the option of starting off as a "friend" of the cooperative – and having individual orders printed by gugler* or one of the other partners as a subcontractor, in Cradle to Cradle quality and naturally with customer protection. When what you have to offer is accepted by the market, joining the Community is a secure investment. It couldn't be easier to join the flagship companies of eco-friendly printing. •

Information at printhechange.coop



PrinttheChange_Logo © gugler.

New, Mid-Volume Roll-to-Roll LED 3m and 5m Printer Line

EFI provides applications producing Top-Quality Prints

By Ton Rombout

During the world wide users conference Connect last January in Las Vegas Electronics For Imaging, Inc. was launching a new mid-range roll-to-roll printer line. A week later, these printers were shown in their European showroom in Zaventem, near Brussels.

According to EFI these printing systems help sign and display graphics companies to produce more volume with high-end digital print for endless applications and designs. Plus new, Clear inks and add-ons were also introduced.

Totally new range

According to EFI the new EFI VUTEK D3r and D5r LED inkjet printers leverage many of the advanced capabilities from EFI's highly successful VUTEK 3r+ and 5r+ printers, offering a mid-range solution for an even wider variety of high value applications thanks to its combination of white and clear inks, as well as its Museum print mode. The new printer line also supports the unique collection of options for VUTEK roll-to-roll LED printers, providing a full system for higher efficiency and a lower total cost of ownership. These options were introduced by Hanan Yosefi, GM & Vice President, EFI Inkjet Israel (former Matan).

Collection of options

With those options, a wide format production printer is not just a printer anymore, it's far more than that, while the term 'production system' is becoming more true than ever before, because there is also functionality added such as cutting, feeding, and many more of these options, making daily live production much faster and easier. The optional power tools have the best versatility, supply even more speed, easy use, and in some way even much more a full end-to-end system: Wrinkle Analyzer, Y-slitter, White, Media Spreaders (with the 5r+), Clear Ink, Sheet collector, Auto Block out, Auto Backlit, Vacuum plate, Mobile operator station (not fixed to the machine), Super Duty Winder, Heavy Roll Loader, Motorised Winder, Software Productivity Pack, X-cutter, Roll & Tape, 7-Colours, ID Backprint, and EFI Go!



EFI VUTEK D5r from the rear.



EFI-VutekD3r stock foto.

Why not all are built in

On my question "Why did you not all of these options build in into the systems?", Mister Hanan Yosefi replied that not everybody needs and/or wants all the options. The most commons are built-in, depending on the D3r or Dr5, but quite a few are not necessary for everybody, but very useful for somebody, depending on the systems you have already installed in your company, for instance cutting

equipment or even other printers, in case you have not a rigid printer installed, but sometimes you have jobs for rigid printing. Then you can use the Vacuum Plate option to 'change' the system periodically in a rigid printer.

D for Design

"The 'D' in the name for these new printers is for 'Design,' and they are absolutely designed to offer the right mix of features, productivity

and cost to create new opportunities for signage and graphics professionals," said Ken Hanulec, EFI's vice president of Worldwide Marketing. "We listened very closely to our customers for feedback to create a mid-volume solution that will be the technology of choice for print providers seeking to profitably grow their businesses with high-end applications."

EFI VUTEK D3r

The first one is the VUTEK D3r, which prints up to 2,540 square feet per hour, was making its worldwide debut at the EFI Connect users' conference, Jan. 21-24 in Las Vegas, and making its European debut at the EFI EMEA Ignite event on Jan. 29 in Brussels, Belgium.

EFI VUTEK D5r

The second printer in the new mid-range line, the VUTEK D5r, prints up to 3,068 square feet per hour (285 m2). Early D5r users such as Thomas Printworks in the United States and Allgraf in Italy have purchased the new printer line for its performance capabilities to meet growing demand for high-end signage, décor, outdoor graphics and other applications.

First user statements

"We were looking to upgrade our 5-meter printing capabilities, and when we found the EFI VUTEK D5r, it checked all the boxes related to speed, quality, cost of operation, and efficiency," said Bryan Thomas, president at Thomas Printworks. "The quality of the machine was so impressive that it gave us the added benefit of also replacing a 3-meter printer within our fleet."

Agostino Allegris, CEO and president at Allgraf in Italy: "The printing resolution, the possibilities of white printing and the inline clear ink are

unique features and they give us a competitive edge. Now, we have the ability to print a full flood or selective clear ink in glossy or matte. We are excited of the possibilities of printing a whole series of innovative applications and materials."

High-end UltraDrop Technology and high efficiency

The D3r and D5r printers, at 3.5- and 5.2-meters wide respectively, deliver outstanding smoothness in shadows, gradients and transitions with UltraDrop Technology, precise and sharp 3-point size text, and a true resolution of up to 1,200 dots per inch. An ultra-high-definition print mode offers near-photographic quality. The printers' LED curing ensures not only cost savings but also a more environmentally sound printing solution, consuming less energy and enabling the use of thinner, heat-sensitive substrates.

Printheads and jettable clear ink

The VUTEK D line is equipped with additional printheads and offers both white and jettable clear ink for matte and glossy effects, covering a wider amount of applications such as wall decorations and murals, window graphics, flooring, high-value prints with selective gloss effects, fleet graphics, truck-side curtains and more.

The printers are easily customizable to the purchaser's needs and strategies, with optional features including: White and clear ink; Inline x-cutters and y-slitters; Automatic backlit and block-out printing; Media spreaders and motorized winders; and more.

EFI VUTEK SuperFlex 3M inks are also available for manufacturing of popular and profitable vehicle wraps and fleet graphics.



EFI VUTEK D5r from the front.



Short descriptions for these options.



Hanan Yosefi, GM & Vice President, EFI Inkjet Israel.

Fiery proServer SE digital front end

There was also a very interesting presentation on the new options for the EFI Fiery stations, given by Chris Showalter, Director, Market Segment Management. Both printers include EFI's industry-leading Fiery proServer SE digital front end, allowing increased productivity as well as accurate colour matching every time. For added productivity, users can choose to add a software productivity pack and are able to remotely connect with the printers using a mobile application. •



The range of options for these printers.

Ciara and Corona did not bring ISE 2020 to its knees

Interesting Show and Digital Signage Platform

By Ton Rombout



The latest edition of the ISE trade fair in Amsterdam was quite busy, despite the Corona virus and storm Ciara.

According to the organization 1,318 companies attended the exhibition this week. Once again additional 'tent halls' had to be assembled at the RAI to provide appropriate spaces for all exhibitors. It is estimated that between 70,000 and 80,000 people visited the RAI in Amsterdam. Integrated Systems Europe recorded 6.7% more pre-registrations than last year.

Absence

Remarkably, this edition was mainly about those absent. Because of the Corona virus, about 50 Chinese exhibitors and another 20 companies decided not to come to Amsterdam. Storm Ciara was another obstacle for those arriving by plane. It is impossible to assess how many people - whether or not affected by cancelled flights - had to put a red line through the stock market. Amazingly the most prominent absentee amongst the tech giants, the South Korean LG, was by far the most talked about. Sparkling by one's absence thus acquired a new dimension and this time it wasn't a genius marketing trick. While we're on the subject, not many visitors to ISE were wearing face masks...

On the road to Barcelona

Many visitors were not impressed by the fact that

they were directed to the Amsterdam Arena, several kilometres away, to park. Once inside, it was still a bit of a slalom amongst the international audience. The large booth in Hall 12, which was originally reserved for LG, was packed with food stalls and there was hardly a free table between 12 noon and 1.30 pm.

Developments

In terms of content it was actually great to be in Amsterdam. The exhibition offered an abundance of developments in the field of digital signage, solutions for shops and hotels, virtual reality, systems for stadiums and much more. With regard to digital signage the major players mainly showed their developments with better, larger and smarter screens. Projectors also continue to develop and are increasingly moving in the direction of three-dimensional projection. For both, 4K is the standard.

With its theme of 'The Future of Digital Signage - Technology, Platforms and Solutions', the ISE Digital Signage Summit promised to be an unmissable event for end users, integrators and vendors alike.

If converting posters to screens was Digital Signage 1.0, and focusing on the importance of content was Digital Signage 2.0, then we are now in the era of Digital Signage 3.0. Digital Signage 3.0 is all about context, i.e. who is watching - when, where and why.

The ISE 2020 Digital Signage Summit, a joint venture between ISE and Invidis Consulting, focused specifically on the future role of digital signage content management systems (CMS) in a DXP (digital experience platform) environment. As digital signage solutions become even more connected with backend systems such as ERP and CRM, how should the industry manage OpenAPI? And as digital touch points increasingly move outdoors, what are the secrets of thermal management and sustainable power concepts?

The conclusion the ISE summit had drawn earlier - that the RAI complex has become too small for ISE - was therefore more than justified even in a relatively calm setting. It's a shame for Amsterdam, but next year will be Barcelona's chance. •

Exhibitor

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Handling both flexible and rigid material

Onlineshopz.nl puts trust in Durst P5 350 UV

By Ton Rombout



Maarten Sinnema and Bjorn Wissink, owners of Onlineshopz.



Calendar flags.



Cutting and finishing in house.

The Netherlands is a relatively small country, but driving from Amsterdam to Denekamp (as I did) you can be on the road for almost two hours. However, if you drive on you will be in the German border town of Nordhorn before you know it (less than 10 km away).

In Denekamp I met up with the young owners of Onlineshopz: Bjorn Wissink (33) and Maarten Sinnema (36), both born and raised there. They recently expanded their machine fleet with a 'hybrid' Durst P5 350 printing system in order to significantly increase the production capacity of their online shops for decorative canvas, banners, and many more products. However, they also had a second goal in mind: printing on rigid materials.

A first for the Benelux

Onlineshopz is the first printing company in the Benelux to acquire the new Durst P5 350 technology. The hi-tech production printer was installed at the beginning of March at the new Onlineshopz premises in Denekamp, together with other new cutting and finishing equipment.

In short, a complete production line aimed at speeding up the production of both flexible and rigid products.

What can we expect from Onlineshopz in this respect?

Bjorn explained: "The Durst P5 350 can print at a speed of up to 120 m² per hour. In addition to the higher speed it also delivers the highest possible quality - up to 1,200 dpi."

The hybrid option is also of great importance: "It gives us the opportunity to print both large format roll-to-roll for deco, and produce prints on sheet material for which there is an increasing demand. The Durst P5 350 UV delivers banners, photo wallpaper and rigid material such as forex and dibond in one go."

A smiling Maarten Sinnema added: "The latter is a completely new market for us - two young entrepreneurs from Denekamp - but we foresee immense opportunity for growth here. Opting for the Durst P5 350 was not a difficult decision for us, as the extra production capacity for our roll-to-roll UV department and the hybrid option to process boards of up to 3x3 m fit in perfectly with our plans for the future. In terms of price this printer was the best option on the market for us, when compared to several similar printers."

Onlineshopz.nl

Four years ago Onlineshopz.nl (then named Airlusion), which was founded in 2008, set a new course with its own printer and new premises in Denekamp. Since then the company has gone from strength to strength with powerful websites focused on online-driven assignments. Bjorn commented: "We intend to continue this growth. The construction of our second, much larger business premises in Denekamp has created space for the new Durst printer and further expansion of our machine fleet. This was necessary to enable us to quickly and effectively accommodate the substantial increase in order numbers."

Maarten provided a list of the company's current website portals: www.beachflagshopz.nl; www.vlaggenshopz.nl; www.skydancer-shopz.nl; www.textielframeshopz.nl; www.spandoekshopz.nl; and www.stickershopz.nl.



The new premises of Onlineshopz in Denekamp.

"The provision of individual portals for each product type is greatly appreciated by users in the Netherlands and Germany. So much so that we are now working with 34 male and female staff."

Doing everything yourself

Bjorn explained in more detail why their approach is valued so highly: "We mainly focus on doing everything ourselves. Over time we have taken on almost anything in-house. For example, we now complete the entire finishing process with a few large cutting machines that allow us to automatically cut jobs for the different product categories [TR: an extra G3 Zünd will be added to the existing one soon]. We also decided to handle confection in-house, which makes a considerable difference in terms of lead times. We also process the hardware for the masts in-house and tailor the 'sky dancers' tubes ourselves." Maarten added: "Until recently we used three Mimaki printers for direct sublimation printing, sublimated with a 'Monti' transfer calender. The Durst P5 350, however, is faster and prints directly onto textile, without transfer, delivering even better pressure. It is just one or two steps higher in the ranking and, more importantly, if you order before 10 am we can deliver the next day, because this machine can handle a much greater production volume."

Personal touch

Maarten also wanted to emphasize that Onlineshopz.nl attaches great importance to a personal approach: "If you know what you want and you are a regular customer, our websites make it easy to quickly complete an assignment. We pay particular attention to potential bottlenecks in our online ordering procedures and have minimised them in recent years. (Bjorn: for example, we dealt with spinnaker cloth in 4 or 5 sizes, something which nobody understood, but I am passionate about making everything as clear as possible '). We deal with both large and smaller customers, who appreciate a more personal touch and support. We also offer an installation service for deco cloth and/or photo wallpaper if



The Durst P5-350 UV for hybrid work: rigid as well as flexible.

the customer asks for it."

Bjorn: "We serve many types of customers, including end users, resellers and major companies with dedicated departments such as advertising and marketing in both Germany and the Benelux. They all have very specific and individual requirements."

German, Dutch and French

I started this article by mentioning that Onlineshopz is close to the German border. Bjorn (trained in small business retail management) and Maarten (trained as a physiotherapist!) met whilst working part-time at a well-known local pancake house Bollejan Denekamp. They soon realised they had the same goals and ideas, which eventually led to them establishing a company offering prints online.

In fact the company was originally set up in Germany, just across the Dutch border. Although they are fluent in German, they decided in 2015 that they would prefer to continue their operations at their birthplace, Denekamp, retaining a warehouse in Germany, because product transport and staff recruitment proved to be easier in Denekamp. Now they are taking the next step with a considerably larger building, many more staff and an extended range of equipment. Although the French speaking part of Belgium



Stickers.

and France are slightly further away, the company is now also developing a French language website aimed at French speaking customers.

"The concept of delivering ready made products, sometimes offering that little bit of extra service and even assembly, seems to work particularly well," Bjorn concluded. •

Van Raam bicycles produced with 3D elements

HP MJF 42000 3D printer helps to build bicycles

By Ton Rombout



HP MJF 42000 3D printer at Van Raam.



Van Raam special riksja bike Chat.



3D Printer in production at Van Raam.

The Dutch company Van Raam has been producing Dutch quality bicycles for almost a century, specifically focusing on special needs bicycles over the past 30 years. The company is based in Varsseveld, a town in the 'Achterhoek' region near Arnhem and the German border. The company employs approximately 160 employees, producing bicycles mainly for adults and children with a physical disability or for people who require greater stability and security.

A skilled workforce, continuous innovation, a modern product line and ongoing market analysis ensure that Van Raam continues to produce bicycles that suit the needs of specifically selected and targeted customers. Typically the company also collaborates with the Technical University in Delft, a partnership resulting in contemporary, well designed bicycles. Not surprisingly, this process also involves the use of HP 3D printing systems.

New mobility

As you would expect Van Raam's mission statement reads as follows: Van Raam offers sustainable and contemporary mobility to people with a disability. The company is aware that if people with a disability can be mobile and more independent in the long term, they will also be much happier. In fact, Van Raam strives to contribute to the integration of people with disabilities in society. The company's motto says it all: Let's all cycle! How are the bicycles produced? Each bicycle, from straight tube to final product, is produced in-house by Van Raam. Almost every stage in the production process is consequently monitored and modified if necessary. This is a must given the wide variety of personal applications and user preferences. Custom made services are also one of Van Raam's core activities.

Van Raam makes people mobile

Special bikes are being developed for both

adults and children focusing on comfort, durability and design. The company's slogan 'Van Raam makes people mobile' is put into practice every day. This family business is based on a combination of expertise, quality workmanship and keeping abreast of contemporary developments. Van Raam uses up to date equipment, but is not afraid to call upon 'old fashioned' craftsmanship. The company produces unique special needs bicycles, specialising in tricycles, scooter bikes, wheelchair bikes, tandem bikes, double rider bikes and low step through bikes (also known as comfort bikes).

Production and assembly

The production and assembly of the bicycles relies on the following modern techniques and machinery:

- 3D Laser machine and pipe processing;
- Computer controlled CNC turning and milling machines;

- Welding robots;
- 3D printers;
- A fully automated, modular construction Kardex lift system for order picking;
- Wheel making.

Adoption of 3D printing

Van Raam started 3D printing bike parts using in-house FDM 3D printers. They installed the three FDM 3D printers mainly for prototyping purposes, but also for specific final parts such as small bike covers. The company has recently installed an HP MJF 42000 3D printer to increase final parts production, having already experienced the benefits of the design freedom offered by 3D printing technologies. They opted for HP MJF technology to develop more robust final parts with enhanced mechanical properties. Since introducing the HP MJF technology the 3D printing of final parts has been scaled up and in each instance the engineering team is managing to create more designs for parts to be produced with 3D printing, thus delivering more robust and more durable parts.

High quality final parts

The HP MJF 42000 is delivering premium quality final parts that will be incorporated directly into products without requiring costly post-processing operations. Black dyeing post-processing is only applied to the HP MJF 3D printed parts to colour them in accordance with the product's design guidelines. The use of HP MJF 3D printing is enabling the company to considerably reduce production

lead times and eliminate typical manufacturing processes such as the need to produce moulds. This has obviously resulted in much shorter manufacturing lead times and lower costs.

Van Raam's main products are specialized bicycles, with low annual production runs. The company produces up to 500 bicycle units (of the same kind) per annum. Obviously 3D printing technologies are eminently suitable for their manufacturing requirements. 3D printing based production generates a competitive advantage compared to traditional manufacturing for these low production volumes.

Obvious conclusions

HP MJF technology introduces greater versatility into custom made bikes and helps to reduce production times. Van Raam bikes are manufactured to customer specifications. When they buy a Van Raam bike online, they can personalize a range of features, from framework to colours and/or accessories. Once a customer places an order the Van Raam factory starts to build a custom made bicycle. 3D print production offers the best production on demand solution, based on a digital part inventory rather than medium runs of standard parts produced and kept in stock. Production on demand also facilitates single or short production runs to customize parts and accessories in line with customer specifications and provides even more customization options for Van Raam products.



Chat riksja bike Van Raam with 3D printed parts.

Need a special bicycle?

The Chat rickshaw bike is meant to be used together by children and/or adults, who are no longer able to travel on the road network on their own or for recreational purposes. One cyclist accompanies one or two other people. Those who join the group as co-drivers are seated alongside one another in a specially designed cockpit, which combines design and ergonomics. The driver sits behind the cockpit, having an overview of both the occupants and the road.

The Chat rickshaw bike comes with electrical pedal support as standard, e.g. to cycle backwards. It can be extended with an optional canopy to protect passengers from sun and rain. The Chat gives people the opportunity to talk, i.e. have a chat whilst driving and to enjoy a comfortable ride facilitated by a combination of suspension, correct ergonomics and soft furnishings. Elderly people, for example, can explore the city together with young people, acting as a guide and relating tales from the past – an ideal opportunity to relieve their sense of isolation for a while.

The Chat rickshaw bicycle not only offers a solution for the elderly, it is also suitable for use on guided tours, by care institutions, families and holiday parks. •



Special riksja bike Chat

From small to very large with EFI Fiery

By Catherine Mandigon



From left to right: Maxence Winisdorffer, Production Manager, and Rafael Mari, Associate Director.



Printer detail with EFI media.



We aim to deliver the fastest and highest quality prints.

EFI Fiery enables Realisaprint.com – the French web-to-print printer – to give its partners access to the best in both small and large format, both now and going forward.

Realisaprint.com is the only French web-to-print enterprise exclusively dedicated to resellers. The online printer located near Nice currently handles more than 1,500 orders per day. To achieve this the company has opted for an in-house production model on its site and presently employs a dynamic team of 65 people.

From small to wide format

Realisaprint.com, which started with small format before integrating large format printers, offers an extremely varied range of printed products, including leaflets, business cards, envelopes, posters, etc.

"We aim to become a production centre for our customers, enabling them to achieve significant margins on account of our sharp prices and

ultra-competitive deadlines. When we started production six years ago, we didn't have a very sophisticated fleet of machines when compared to our competitors. We consequently needed to be able to automate processes and production," recalls Rafael Mari, Associate Director at Realisaprint.com. "Obviously production optimization also involves printing and finishing flow optimization, with the ultimate aim of relieving operators from time consuming jobs rather than being left alone without creating added value."

Eliminating errors

"That is why we opted for the Fiery RIP from the outset. The use of JDF technology also makes it possible to fully automate production, from the launch of the order to the final machine output. Previously the tasks that Fiery mainly enabled us to automate were the most repetitive ones, e.g. entering the number of pages, type of paper, grammage, etc. and then sending this data to the printing machines. Now you just launch a job and the new Fiery

takes care of everything," Maxence Winisdorffer, Production Manager at Realisaprint.com, explained. This means that operators can make considerable time savings and minimise input related errors. Another advantage of the Fiery for Realisaprint.com relates to the execution speed when ripping files of any size. Rafael Mari: "In this type of business, i.e. handling 1,500 orders a day, responsiveness and deadlines are key, which meant that reliability was high on the agenda. We aimed to reduce the number of blocked orders to 2%, but thanks to Fiery we got it down to less than 0.5%!"

Fiery XF for large format

Further proof of the level of satisfaction at Realisaprint.com is that the company has

integrated the Fiery XF, which is reserved for large format, to also manage the numerous printing and cutting machines.

"The large flexible and rigid formats our business took on in recent years currently represent approximately 50% of our turnover, but this segment is growing rapidly," Rafael Mari explained. "In 2019 Realisaprint.com realized + 59% of orders and + 54% of turnover."

No end customers, strictly for resellers

As mentioned above, the special nature of Realisaprint.com lies in the fact that it only sells to resellers, i.e. graphic arts professionals (8,000 active resellers) who resell to their own customers. They are the only ones in France to offer this service and aim to strengthen their position in this respect.

Maxence Winisdorffer: "In addition to offering fluidity and speed, the XF tool also allows us to consistently manage our entire fleet. And that's quite an achievement when it is as varied as ours! In fact, since the launch of the Fiery XF 7 we have managed large and small jobs from the Command WorkStation with a single user interface and a very user-friendly functionality that simplifies and makes the operator's job more straightforward. The production manager has an overview on the same screen of what is being processed in the two environments, both wide and small format printing."

Ready for future developments

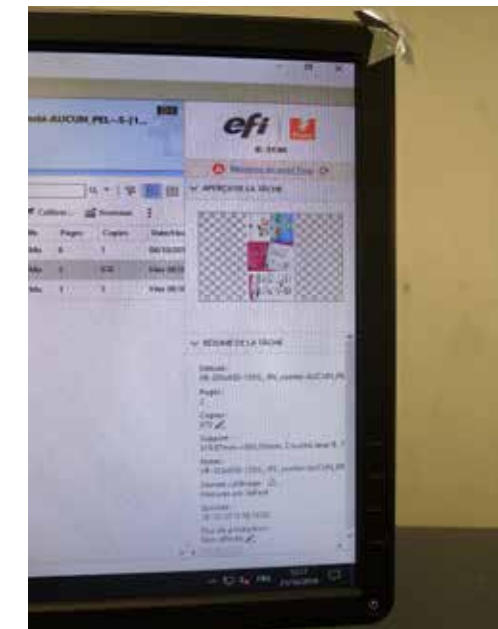
Over the years our teams have noted that technical support works very effectively. "Another reassuring aspect with regard to our daily throughput," Maxence Winisdorffer commented. ATC-Graphic, an EFI Fiery reseller, acted as the interface for the installation of the XF at Realisaprint.com. The software is specifically recognized in the graphic industry

for proofing applications, but it also appeals to other users in digital wide format print. Indeed, over time the production aspect of the RIP EFI has become more sophisticated and now positions itself as a versatile solution for colorimetry and colour management. The XF accepts both RGB and CMYK, allowing you to create a profile for each print medium and deliver reliable and reproducible results, in line with customer expectations.

"We started testing the Fiery XF in April 2019 to run pilot projects on the large format fleet and to control colorimetry. Our team already had a good level of knowledge but was also particularly interested in exploring this technology. Everything ran smoothly and without a hitch. A job well done! An essential aspect in terms of future developments at the company," Rafael Mari concluded. "To be continued..."



Maxence inspects the quality of the prints.



Fiery XF detail.



Nothing is impossible with this system.



Maxence operating the Fiery screen.



Fiery XF controls the entire system.

Interesting developments for Belgian and Dutch clients

Graphics company Pietermans now also a significant provider in sign and large format print

By Ton Rombout



Gert Lemmens (in charge of sign operations) and Jack Pietermans, Managing Director.

Drukkerij Pietermans, a typical example of a continually expanding business, is based in the Belgian municipality of Lanaken, close to the Dutch border and the city of Maastricht. Pietermans has been supplying graphics products/services to both Dutch and Belgian clients for many years.

As from January 2020 their product range has been expanded with sign and large format products and services. Jack Pietermans, the Managing Director, established a printing house at the age of 18. The technical training and Linotype typesetting experience he gained as a youngster provided a solid background to take the next step in January 1991 and since then his graphics company has continued to grow. Pietermans is also co-owner of another very special graphics business, Impreso, which is based in Maastricht (see box).

On the path to further growth

Having accrued thirty years of experience, he now feels confident to expand the business, together with Gert Lemmens (in charge of sign operations) and a dedicated workforce of ten people, with a view to supplying a wide range of sign and large format print products and services to existing and other clients in both Belgium and the Netherlands. Jack Pietermans commented: "Obviously there is considerable competition in the graphics sector here also, but that's exactly why we can't afford to stand still, we must think ahead. Although we have a sound background in full colour printing, we also foresee potential in sign and large format print. We felt that we needed



A large production room is available for large as well as small format printing.

to take this step last year, particularly because existing clients regularly asked whether we could also supply sign and large format print products. Hence our decision at the end of last year to opt for two leading suppliers: Agfa and Zünd, who supply equipment that works very well in unison and corresponding software products."

Large format printer

The new Anapurna H2500i LED drying print system used by Pietermans is a 2.5 m hybrid solution that will print with up to six colours on both rigid and flexible media. The white ink function comprises pre, post, support and even sandwich white. This printer delivers both a high processing speed and excellent print quality with an extensive range of products. It will print on both rigid materials, i.e. various types of plate material such as internal doors and dibond, and on flexible media from a roll, including mesh, canvas, banners and flags. Gert Lemmens also quoted several more examples: mirror decorations, fashion banners, door decorations, fine art on wood, personalised prints, banners, posters, exhibition textile, mock-ups, self-adhesive (labels) and interior decorations.

Zünd G3 cutting plotter

The G3 Digital Cutter, which Pietermans purchased from Zünd Benelux, interfaces seamlessly with the width of the large format printer. It can process materials up to 80 mm thick, 3.2 m wide and 3.2 m long (roll material even outside these dimensions). The modular design facilitates quick and flexible tool changes. In addition to the cutting, milling and V-cut (mitre cuts at five different angles) functions, kiss-cut (bonding self-adhesive films) and grooves are also possible. Besides contour and end cutting roll materials such as vinyl self-adhesive film, roll-up film, canvas or textile and PVC banners, the G3 Digital Cutter will also cut unprinted plates to size including wood, metal, corrugated cardboard, acrylic (Plexiglas), wooden or plastic boards, and much more. Even packaging, boards, exhibition systems and furniture can be manufactured.

Existing know-how

Working with the Anapurna H2500i LED printer and Zünd G3 cutting plotter, Pietermans is able to maintain its strengths in terms of flexibility, quality, efficiency and fast, reliable delivery times in this new area of sign making and large format printing.



The Zünd G3 is able to do all the finishing for sign and wide format print.



Gert and Jack with some cutting examples.

Despite the fact that digital prepress for Computer-to-Plate (CtP) and large format offset print is somewhat different from digital prepress for large format inkjet print, the preparation of images is more or less the same. Moreover, Pietermans was aware of this because they had been working with small format digital print systems alongside the offset press for many years.

The fact that the company already had extensive knowledge concerning press preparation for text, illustrations, photographs, etc. was a bonus. It was, therefore, an interesting albeit short learning curve. "This additional aspect to the operations only makes them more interesting and even more challenging," Jack Pietermans and Gert Lemmens affirmed.

Showroom highlights the company strengths At the time of my visit Jack Pietermans and Gert Lemmens were adding the final touches to their showroom, which will showcase the various products and materials that can be produced with these new machines.

"Obviously we can wait and see what our clients will expect in this area, but we think it would be good to use the showroom to highlight what can be done and to give people ideas," Jack Pietermans explained. "Moreover, during the training with the Zünd cutting plotter we have been surprised at times to discover new opportunities we were not previously aware of," Gert Lemmens added.



The Anapurna H2500i LED printer.

Short learning curve

Both also have a clear vision with respect to the learning process: "We have just completed the second day of training with a Zünd representative, who is instructing us how to use the Zünd G3 cutting plotter software with the various tools and materials, and we already feel quite confident. We are also enjoying working with more and new materials and devising different cutting methods," Gert Lemmens added. "We also found that the Asanti preparation software included with the Agfa printer already incorporates various options and functions to control the Zünd G3 cutting plotter."

Exceptional enterprise

Sustainability is key in our thinking, enterprise and printing - the motto adopted by Jack Pietermans and his company: "We work with environmentally friendly raw materials and organic inks. It is our way of contributing to a sustainable society. If you would like to know more about our green credentials or are looking for smarter and more environmentally friendly solutions, we would love to welcome you and explain our modus operandi." •

Impreso

As mentioned at the start of this article, Jack Pietermans also co-owns a second exceptional company based in the Netherlands: Impreso. Pietermans Printing has entered into a joint venture in close cooperation with Impreso in Maastricht, involving a special group of people consisting of employees with limited prospects of employment assigned by MTB, Maastrichtse Toeleverings Bedrijven. This unusual joint venture was initiated in 2014 and it was a hit from day one. Jack Pietermans: "Impreso can match any quality printers anywhere in terms of its printing presses and digital production printers as well as its prepress. And more importantly: a love of, and dedication to, our craft is standard in both our companies."

Case

SignPro Europe February 2020



Durst-Alpha-Series-5-w1920

Stefan Kappaun responsible for strategic segment

Durst restructures textile printing segment

By Ton Rombout

Durst has recently restructured its industrial textile printing segment. The new Segment Manager, Dr. Stefan Kappaun, is now responsible for the strategic direction in home textiles, clothing and accessories. The textile printing team will also be supplemented by Martin Oberparleitner, an experienced service technician who will now be the new Junior Product Manager Textile Printing. New sales and service structures are also being implemented in core markets.

Dr. Kappaun will act as a link to the large format segment, which takes over soft signage and fabrics in the portfolio. He succeeds Martin Winkler in his expanded role as Segment Manager Textile Printing, who will take on the role of Global Sales Manager Textile Printing going forward.

Expert in materials science

Dr. Kappaun is a member of the Durst Group's executive team and heads the ink

business for all segments as Executive Vice President Inks & Fluids. A technical chemist focused on polymer science and a trained business economist, he is an expert in materials science and the development and marketing of ink systems for digital inkjet printing.

This know-how is particularly significant in industrial textile printing because, in contrast to other industries, different materials, pre and post treatments and large scale process influences represent a daily challenge in digital textile production. Digital textile printing is also one of the largest growth markets for inkjet technologies. The sector is being targeted by advertising media and large format providers as well as traditional textile producers. They all have different textile experience, but are always looking for new applications and business opportunities.

Alpha Series for end-to-end textile production
The Durst Alpha Series offers industrial

printing systems with water based, reactive, pigment and disperse inks and pixel-to-output strategy end-to-end software solutions for efficient and cost transparent digital textile printing, aimed at meeting the increased demand in terms of digital textile printing.

Leading the pack are the 5th generation Alpha printing systems, supplied with Durst's new workflow software, which gives users easy access to key production functions such as colour management and RIP. Expansion modules, from pre-press through to a web shop, can be added to the software. The modules can be integrated with the printing system to create a production process "from pixel to output". The range is completed by analytics software, which monitors the main production parameters and facilitates preventive service concepts. The new Alpha Series 5 printing systems feature improvements in terms of material handling, efficiency increases and material diversity. The Alpha technology platform

offers a sustainable, flexible and scalable solution for every application, even enabling waterless one-step production with the new advanced digital pigment ink.

A brief overview of other features

Constant temperature control of the inks produces constant viscosity, exact drop sizes and controlled image build-up. Ink circulation in all the ink circuits ensures that the print heads are always ready.

Durst's Advanced Stroke Control Dasc is a stepless (overlapping) pass control system, which calculates drop placement in accordance with the applied material and design, whilst taking into account drying times. This allows streak-free images to be printed at up to 80% higher production speeds.

The symmetrical arrangement of the 8 printing inks ensures that the same colour sequences are printed in both printing directions, which prevents colour banding and increases the printing speed, compared to an asymmetrical print head arrangement.

The Alpha Series 5 has an intelligent feed system for elastic knitted fabrics, which automatically adapts to the different textiles and roll circumferences. The respective dancer rollers, spreader rollers, centre and batch winders can be selected and controlled via a touch screen to ensure the exact speed and tension is maintained on the printing bed.

The dual roll material guide on the Alpha Series 5 enables parallel printing with up to two rolls on dimensionally stable fabrics. The respective parameters for the fabric feed are stored in the media channel and can be accessed at any time. Print jobs can be optimally distributed between the two print queues via the software control system.

The new dryer unit has up to two motorized autonomous conveyor belts that provide a tension free material feed with up to 3 passages for knitted fabrics and up to 5 passages for dimensionally stable fabrics for inline polymerization. A second drying unit can be incorporated to increase the polymerization speed. The drying unit quickly reaches its operating temperature and is extremely energy efficient.

The digital pre-treatment feature on the Alpha Series 5 offers an innovative, flexible, sustainable and cost-effective way to prepare textile materials on demand for digital printing. The patented SwiftJet pre-treatment system is positioned upstream of the Alpha printing

system. Digital pre-treatment is particularly valuable in small runs and fast turnaround jobs.

Textile is a fragmented market

"The digital textile printing market is fragmented internally, with different speeds and developments worldwide," stated Dr. Kappaun. "Whilst new, non industry service providers often already have digital know-how but not so much textile experience, traditional manufacturers are masters of textile finishing. However, not all analogue processing steps can be transferred directly to digital textile printing." He continued: "Durst has a comprehensive ecosystem to serve the different requirements and to support customers through the digital transformation process. Although our printing systems are designed for industrial productivity, they also offer profitability from the very first meter. The prerequisite for this is mastery of the pre and post treatment steps and the digital workflow, in which Durst focuses on consulting and training services at the new Customer Experience Centre in the Durst headquarters in Brixen."

More ink data

Durst offers environmentally friendly, water based disperse, acid and reactive based ink systems, as well as a new advanced digital pigment, for its Alpha Series 5. This delivers impressive printing results with excellent light and wet rub fastness and can be used on any kind of fabric. By extending the colour space by 30%, compared to existing ink systems, target colours can be achieved with lower ink consumption and better haptics as a result.

Advanced digital pigment ink

was specifically developed by Durst can be used universally across the textile field. It offers outstanding colour reproduction combined with a soft look and feel. There is no need for pre and post processing steps in most standard applications, thus guaranteeing maximum cost efficiency in production.

Durst disperse HD ink

is the first choice for polyester applications. It is suitable for home textiles, apparel, fashion, flags, banners, outdoor signage and other POP applications. Durst disperse HD inks were designed to print on polyester and polyester blends with a polyester content of at least 50%.

Durst reactive HD ink

GOTS-5.0 certified Durst reactive inks, which are compliant with the Oeko-Tex 100 and CTW standards, were developed for traditional applications such as household textiles, curtains, bed and sofa covers, apparel and fashion. They are suitable for printing on cotton, cotton blends with a cotton content of at least 60%, polyamide and silk. •



Dr. Kappaun.

Making something good even better

Mutoh XpertJet

By Herman Hartman



The Mutoh XpertJet 1682SR equipped with a roll take-up for rolls weighing up to 40 kg.

Whereas other printer manufacturers sometimes develop a new housing for their printers for marketing purposes, Mutoh was happy to stick with the same housing for consecutive generations of its printers, bearing in mind the philosophy that innovation should also bring improvement. Although there was no reason to change the housing previously, this time there was. This was to accommodate a smarter, more user friendly OLED control panel, improved print path accessibility and a new location to accommodate all the electronics at the back of the printer. They used to be sited below the printer on previous versions. Spilled ink could sometimes lead to malfunctions as a result of improper or poor machine maintenance.

Epson heads

The basic print engine has the same design as the ValueJets. The two head version also has staggered heads, which can be equipped with 2 x CMYK or CMKLcLmLk, depending upon preference. One channel remains unused when equipped with 7 colours. The use of the 8th channel for an extra colour is



The new control panel guides the operator through the menus and only displays those buttons that are available for each specific function.

XpertJet is the name of the 4th generation of eco solvent printers for the sign and display market recently introduced by Mutoh. Under the newly designed housing we notice a number of existing elements together with improvements and further additions. Herman Hartman went to take a look at the new printers at the Mutoh Europe Showroom in Ostend, where he also received more detailed information on the idea behind these developments.

The Mutoh XpertJet has a 64 inch (160 cm) print width and is available with one (XpertJet 1641SR) or two print heads (XpertJet 1682SR). As before, they are equipped with Epson print heads with variable droplet sizes ranging from 3.5 to 21.8 picolitres. The two print head version has the option to be used with 2 x 4 or 7 colours depending on the user's preference. The two XpertJets are the successors of the ValueJet 1624X and 1638X.

New housing

Making something good even better, or 'Kaizen' (Japanese for 'improvement'), reflects Mutoh's business philosophy - a continuous process based on small improvement steps.



The RGB sensor at the right of the print carriage uses printed patches to adjust the timing in bidirectional printing, if required by the thickness of the material.

currently being investigated in order to expand the colour range. We will hear more on this at a later date.

Inks

The MS41 eco solvent ink for the ExpertJet was redesigned to achieve the highest score with respect to GreenGuard ink certification. The certificate has now been awarded, which in fact means that no measurable amounts of solvent are released from a properly dried print. The MS41 inks are supplied in 1 litre pouches that are inserted in a cassette on top of the printer. This arrangement minimises waste, leaving barely any ink residue in the empty pouches. Mutoh maintains that this delivers a 20% ink cost saving compared to that of a ValueJet equipped with eco solvent ink. In addition to the 1 litre ink pouches, XpertJet users who run the machine more economically can opt for 300ml ink pouches that fit into the same cassette. Those who aim to achieve even lower ink costs are able to equip the ExpertJet with the mild solvent ink that Mutoh has been supplying for some time.

Media path

The media path has changed considerably. Some changes are quite obvious, such as the new media input method which uses loose flanges to fix the roll. These flanges are clicked into movable holders from above, reducing the number of required operations. The pressure of the pinch-rollers in the drive can also be individually adjusted, and the pressure can be set to 4 positions across the entire width. The screw openings in the print path have gone. In terms of roll winding systems you can choose between the existing standard system for rolls up to 30 kg, or for the new advanced winding system for rolls of up to 40 kg. The latter has a more extensive facility to absorb fluctuations in roll tension, which benefits the winding accuracy.

RGB sensor

In order to achieve optimum results on media of various thicknesses Mutoh printers were equipped with a mechanical height adjustment feature. A new feature is the fine adjustment when firing individual ink droplets in bidirectional printing. The carriage housing the print heads is equipped with an RGB sensor with an own light source. The Drop-Master function measures a number of test patches resulting in fine adjustment in the software, which increases the accuracy with which ink droplets are deposited on the substrate. The built-in RGB sensor means that

[Read more -->>](#)



Some of the head maintenance tasks are carried out automatically by the printer. The wipers do need to occasionally be cleaned with cleaning fluid.



These loose flanges are now inserted into the core of the roll.

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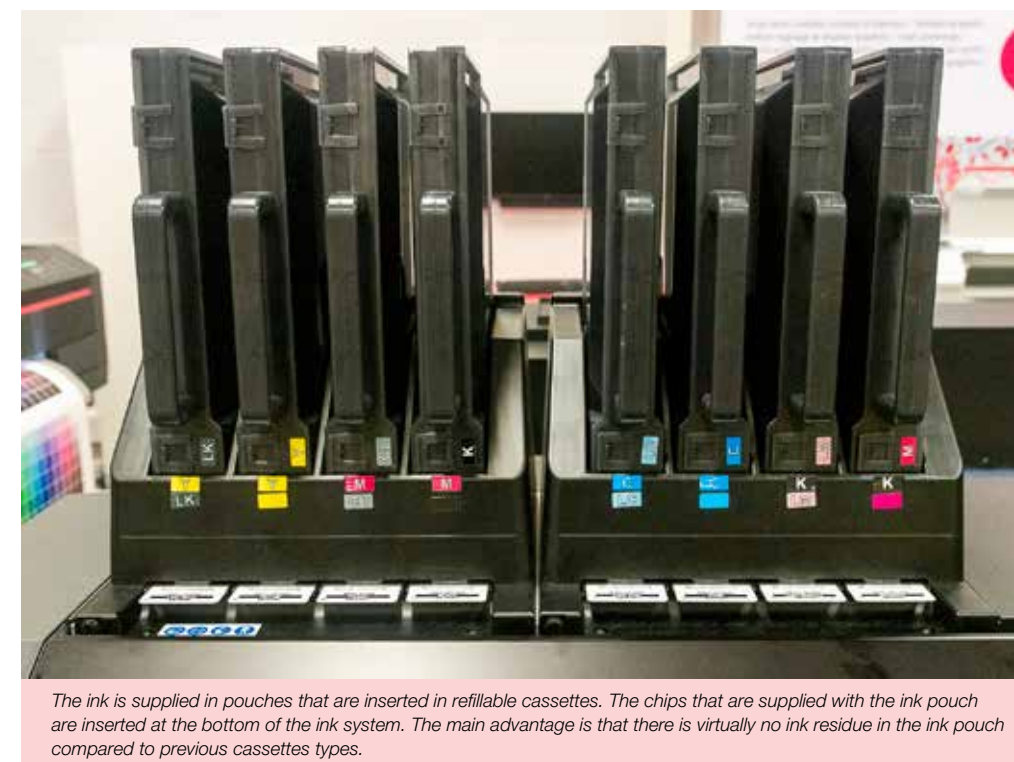


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The ink is supplied in pouches that are inserted in refillable cassettes. The chips that are supplied with the ink pouch are inserted at the bottom of the ink system. The main advantage is that there is virtually no ink residue in the ink pouch compared to previous cassettes types.

potentially more adjustment and control options will be added to the XpertJet series going forward, e.g. vertical alignment or nozzle control.

Operation

Some aspects of the operation of the printer have been modified. The most obvious change is the new control panel with an OLED touch screen. Only actually available buttons are displayed with each menu option, which helps the user when making adjustments. The panel uses a colour taskbar to show the printer status, making it possible to monitor it from some distance away. You can also use

the MSM, Mutoh Status Monitor, software that can be installed on a mobile, tablet or desktop computer. It provides an overview of the print status, heating element settings, remaining ink and relevant information concerning ink consumption, printing time and format for each job. Unfortunately the printer cannot be operated in its entirety in this way. LEDs above the print path make it possible to inspect the print for errors. Mutoh uses 6500K LEDs for this purpose. Because of the higher colour temperature focused on blue light, defects in yellow quickly become apparent. It doesn't facilitate full control in terms of printing the correct colours (as stated in the

manual).

Several minor maintenance improvements have also been incorporated (with the Kaizen principle in mind). Users can replace the wiper for the heads manually. Moreover, on the 1682SR the heads can be cleaned individually.

Speed

The print speeds that can be achieved with both XpertJets are comparable to the previous series. According to Mutoh preference in terms of the speed range with 4 or 7 colours is between 5 and 10 m²; with 2 x 4 colours it is between 10 and 15m² per hour. The engine will deliver higher speeds than those mentioned above. When the printers are used for outdoor advertising applications the speed can easily be doubled.

The test prints we produced during my visit clearly showed that there is a difference between the 7 and the 4 colour version. When printing with 7 colours plain shades in particular appear to be crisper. The Drop-Master function also helps to achieve optimum quality, making it easier to opt for a higher print speed.

The printers are supplied complete with a SAI FlexiPrint SE RIP, or Onyx RIPCenter Value-Plus Mutoh Edition. The 4 colour entry level XpertJet 1641SR-30, including a winder for rolls up to 30 kg, is available at € 13,995. For 2 x 4 or 7 colours the price starts at € 19,995. Those who would prefer to include the winder for 40kg rolls will have to pay an additional € 1,000.

Finally

Mutoh determines its own product development plan and chooses time and again to improve certain aspects of its printers. As a result previous generations of printers could be used long term with very few problems. We can have high expectations of the XpertJet as a daily workhorse for sign makers. The introduction of the XpertJet is giving us a glimpse of what we can expect from Mutoh going forward. Further models based on this print engine are set to be developed in due course. The in-built sensor is a harbinger of more software controlled functions that will automate tasks currently undertaken by operators. The positioning of the electronics at the back of the printer leads the way for other print engine configurations and the straightforward addition of specific electronics. This is where Mutoh appears to be well ahead with the XpertJet. •

News

SignPro Europe February 2020

Quo vadis - digital print shows?

Are we seeing too many sign and wide format printing trade shows?

By Sonja Angerer



Shows outside the 'printing world' such as Heimtextil are becoming increasingly important for the LFP community.

2020 will be nothing short of a 'hyper' trade show year for the German printing community, with Viscom, Wetec, Fespa and Drupa all set to take place in the first six months. It is becoming rather busy, time consuming and expensive for partners wishing to sell items such as sign products, wide format printers and cutting equipment to visitors spending many hours finding out what's new in the sector.

Add about a dozen other major print shows in Central Europe such as CIPrint Lyon, CIPrint Madrid, Print & Sign in the Netherlands, Reklama in Russia, viscom in Italy, etc. and it might seem appropriate to reconsider the future of trade exhibitions, especially print and sign making shows.



Expo 4.0 attracted more than 12,000 visitors, mainly from the DACH area, in 2020.

Recent developments

The first sign and printing industry show in 2020, Viscom Düsseldorf (7-9 January) ended on a very disappointing note. In their final report/press release the organizers, Reed Exhibitions, quoted a visitor number of 7,160, indicating that the footfall was back down to the level of 2017 after a peak of more than 9,600 in 2019. Co-hosted with the PSI (promotional gifts) and Promotex (textile printing and merchandise) shows for the first time in early January 2019, Viscom Düsseldorf is now part of the "Welt des Werbens und Verkaufens" (World of Advertising and Selling) show trio.

Trade shows go south

Viscom Düsseldorf remains a self-proclaimed "European trade show for visual communication", but has been focusing on the DACH markets for many years. Together with Viscom Italia (Milan, 22-24 October 2020) the show has survived the demise of Viscom Paris, which was unceremoniously cancelled at short notice a month before it should have opened its doors in September 2017. The organisers, Reed Exhibitions France, decided to join forces with the organizers of the Salon CIPrint shows in Lyon and Madrid. Both these shows cater mainly for the French and Iberian markets, with Lyon being a late winter and Madrid an autumn fixture.

However, this year's Salon C-print Madrid may

well be affected by the FESPA Global Print Expo (24-27 March 2020). After three consecutive years in Germany (Hamburg 2017, Berlin 2018 and Munich 2019) the itinerant trade show is heading for Madrid for the first time ever. Co-hosted with the European Sign Expo, which focuses on non-printed signage, and Sportswear Pro, a new on-demand and individualized sportswear event, the trade fair will be the most important one this year for many people in the European wide format printing and sign making industry. Usually staged in May, the FESPA Global Print Expo tends to get brought forward to March in Drupa years such as 2020.

Beware the newcomers

Approximately 3 weeks after Viscom Düsseldorf, another cluster of printing, promotion and sign-making shows are usually staged in Stuttgart, some 400 km south of Düsseldorf. The bi-annual "Expo 4.0" was established in 2012 around TV Tecstyle Visions, a pre-existing leading textile printing and digital sportswear production show. Adding Wetec (sign-making), POS Masters (POS advertising) and Digital Signage Tec it debuted with almost 14,000 visitors, mainly originating from the DACH region.

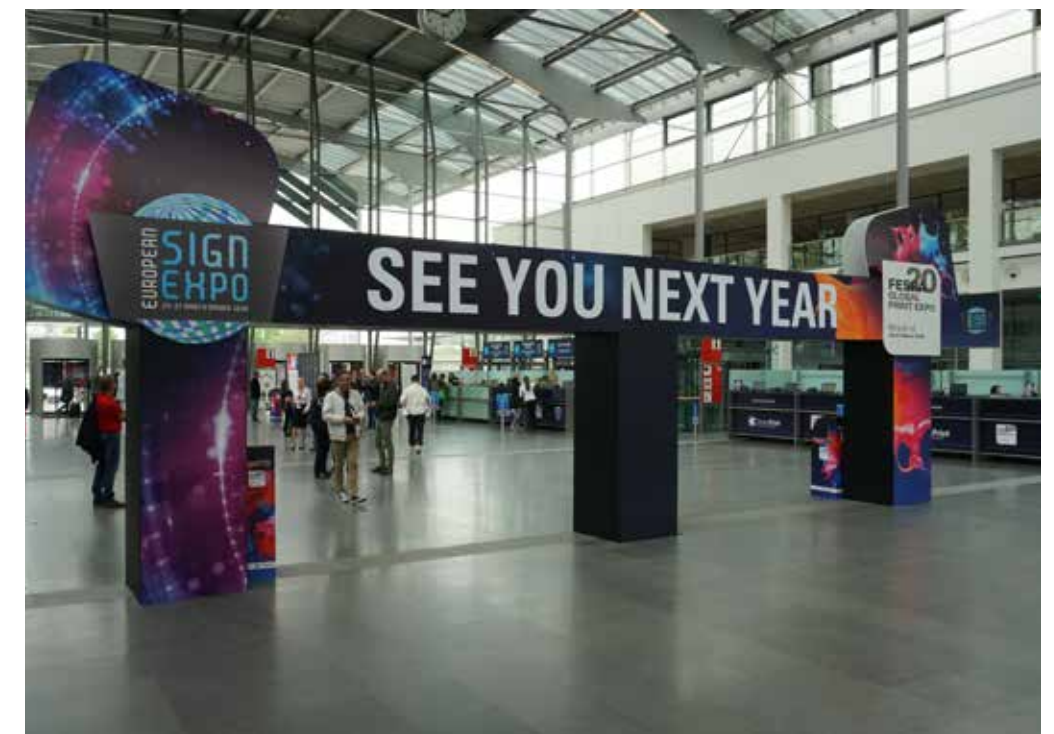
This year's Expo 4.0 was actually an 'Expo 3.0', as the event included a rather small 'GiveADays' with 56 exhibitors showcasing promotional gifts as well as Wetec and TV Tecstyle Visions, totalling 421 exhibitors and 12,518 visitors for all three events. This event is clearly targeted at the local community as the surrounding area is considered Germany's economic powerhouse, accommodating many international corporations as well as SMEs. Approximately 17% of visitors originated from abroad, mainly nearby countries such as Austria and Switzerland.

Drupa – the big question

How will the Drupa fair do this year? It seems to be the elephant in the room for the printing industry in 2020. The largest printing equipment exhibition in the world is considered a main indicator for the entire industry. Visitor footfall at the 2016 edition was on a level with 1972 at about 266,000, substantially lower than the 444,000 in the Drupa heydays of 1990. The decision taken in 2015 to change to a 3 year cycle after 2016 was revoked a year later when important industry members voiced their opposition to it. Following a Drupa Committee and Messe Düsseldorf decision in February 2017, Drupa 2020 was brought forward one week from their traditional end of June date to 16-26 June. The main argument for this decision related to concerns raised by both exhibitors and visitors, as in some European countries and German states the



Packaging shows gaining greater importance for the digital print community as packaging becomes more short run and personalized.



Packaging shows gaining greater importance for the digital print community as packaging becomes more short run and personalized.

summer holidays would have already started on the initially planned dates of 23 June to 3 July 2020. With more than 40 Drupa cube sessions and relevant keynote speakers Michael Gale and James Sommerville, Drupa is putting an even greater focus on education and added value for visitors this year.

So many shows, so little time

The earlier date means that there is barely a month between Drupa and Interpack (7-13

May 2020), a world leading trade show for the packaging industry. This will pose a significant logistical challenge as the show will be staged at the same Düsseldorf exhibition ground. One of the reasons for the change from the traditional 4 or 5 year interval between Drupa exhibitions was to prevent his kind of clash. As packaging becomes more relevant to the industry, major industry shows such as the

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Visitor footfall at Viscom Düsseldorf 2020 was less than stellar at a level previously seen in 2017.

annual Fachpack Nuremberg and biennial Labelexpo Brussels draw in manufacturers, service providers and other visitors from a digital printing background. Both these shows, however, will not return until 2021 because Fachpack always skips an Interpack Düsseldorf year. Other shows such as Empack 2020 Utrecht and Packaging Innovations Luxury Packaging London, targeted at the European packaging community, are also due to be staged in 2020.

It seems that Düsseldorf is this year's capital of the printing industry though. Euroshop, a world leading triennial retail trade fair, is set to return between 16 and 20 February. Although many Euroshop halls, packed with shopping trolleys and display dummies, are irrelevant to the printing industry, the shop fitting, POS displays and trade fair builders sections have become an exhibition and hunting ground for many PSPs and the occasional manufacturer.

As the digital printing community branches out into other industries - ceramics, home décor, glass, textile and printed electronics the most prominent amongst them - more shows have become relevant to some extent, including Domotex, Glasstec, Heimtextil, ITMA, K, Lopec and Techtextil to name but a few.

More sign shows in Europe and worldwide

Germany has a longstanding reputation for its global market leading trade shows and excellent exhibition venues. As markets become more fragmented, more local print and signage shows have been able to claim their place in the printing community's event calendar. Remadays, a combined print, signalling, promotional gifts and digital print

show staged annually in Warsaw since 2005, celebrated its 15th anniversary at the 2019 edition. With more than 21,000 visitors from 52 countries and 810 exhibitors, the show has long ceased to be a local Eastern European event and has gained an international reputation. There is of course a quite diverse and rapidly changing list of other print shows targeting more local print communities in Eastern Europe.

Many central European trade show organizers have branched out into other continents over the past few years, targeting expanding markets mainly in Southern Europe, Asia and South America. Fespa alone significantly expanded its selection of shows in recent years with Fespa Africa, Brazil, Eurasia and Mexico. It appears that many new print trade shows are quite short-lived, but because of their multitude they are still prone to draw foreign visitors away from word leading events.

What does the future hold for trade shows?

When the internet went mainstream many organizers feared that trade shows would be amongst the many industries disrupted by the new technology. Although this did not happen straightaway, now two decades into the new millennium, it is becoming clear that the internet has had a significant impact on trade shows. Not only is basic information about new products just a few clicks away, visitors can also save time and significant amounts of money using the internet. After all, air travel and hotel rooms at the time of major events have become ridiculously expensive over the past few years. Potential buyers are conse-

quently more likely to visit the local shows, showrooms or open house events of their preferred manufacturers or distributors. Some, e.g. the bi-annual Igepa Select, have even developed into major events, not unlike a small trade show.

These significant changes in visitor behaviour are having a considerable impact on the (digital) printing community, as demonstrated by the fact that the 140 year old IPEX Birmingham was retired "for good" in 2018. Old-timer Photokina Cologne, one of the earliest shows to embrace the digital imaging community, appears to be struggling having been pushed to a late spring date in 2020 for the first time. And it doesn't stop with the printing industry. Following a disappointing 2019 event at its Frankfurt home trade fair venue, the world leading automotive show is set to move permanently to Berlin, Hamburg or Munich, introducing a totally new concept (the decision had yet to be finalized at the time of going to print). The new trade show concept is believed to include more educational, event and video content. These changes could potentially cut deeply into digital print run lengths, not only in the Rhine-Main area, in turn forcing PSPs to push back on new investment. Obviously this will also have an impact on print shows. •

Exhibitions

SignPro Europe February 2020

In the air and on the ground: technical know-how and meticulous quality

Oxy in Aubagne, France

By Martin Kugler



Oxy main site in Aubagne.



An impressive park of large format inkjet printers.



Oxy is an approved supplier of Airbus Helicopters - photo airbus helicopters.

Oxy is a signage manufacturer based in the Provence town of Aubagne. With a turnover of more than 10 million euro and little more than 100 staff, the company has acquired an impressive number of high profile customers over its 40 year history and counts amongst its clients prestigious names such Airbus Helicopters, Airbus Industries, Alstom, Alcatel Lucent, Bombardier and Thales, as well as the French railway company SNCF and Paris underground RATP, to name but a few.

We met up with Nathalie Robin, President of Oxy, to find out more about the recipe for this success story in an extremely competitive environment. The company was founded by François Robin and first incorporated in 1978 as Oxy Gravure with a mainstay in screen printing. From the outset the company identified the industrial sector as its most promising market and took to specialising in markings and labelling for aeronautical and railway industries and their subcontractors.



Nathalie Robin, president Oxy, in screen print shop.

Tight specifications

To become an approved supplier for an aircraft manufacturer or a national railway operator is no easy task. Tight specifications and strict quality assurance requirements must be complied with aerospace applications that are both logistically and technically challenging for suppliers and subcontractors. Speedy turnaround is critical to bring aircraft back into service and prevent costly delays or flight cancellations. AOG (aircraft on ground) maintenance procedures work with extremely tight delivery lead times - normally same day - and markings need to be extremely durable and resistant to physical wear, kerosene spillage and extreme temperature variations ranging from -55°C to +155°C. To satisfy these demands Oxy gained ISO 9001 (quality assurance management) approval in 1997 followed by ISO 9100 (quality management system for the aerospace industry) in 2006. More recently Oxy secured a contract with Airbus Helicopters for the internal and external markings for the Kuwait police force's new H225S helicopters.

Internal growth and external acquisitions

Throughout its history Oxy steadily increased in size based equally on both internal growth and external acquisitions. The company's philosophy was to concentrate on its core business in the aeronautical and railway industries without unnecessarily diversifying into unrelated

market sectors.

Nathalie Robin joined the family business in 1994 after a successful career in the unrelated, but equally competitive, horse riding sector. She took over the management of the company in 1997 at a time when marking and sign making progressively transited to digital equipment. The availability of computer assisted plotters and digital printers opened the way for Oxy to diversify into other industry segments, whilst maintaining its competence as screen printing specialists. This was the beginning of the opening up of high quality/added value markets with large accounts in the corporate and institutional business such as museums, trade exhibitions and architectural decoration.

Integrating three businesses

Over the past decade Oxy acquired and successfully integrated three businesses in order to accelerate its growth. In 2008 Atelier du Sud, a specialist manufacturer of tactile membrane keyboards based in Toulouse, joined the group and production and staff were relocated to the main site in Aubagne. In 2014 Oxy took over JB Gazzotti, a local provider of trade show and exhibition signage with a 15 strong workforce, thus extending Oxy's reach of customers to include museums and corporate events. In the same year Oxy officially became 'Oxy Signalétique' to take into account the wider market coverage. More recently, in 2018, Oxy acquired Serimag, their nearby site and 20 staff, a move that doubled Oxy's production capacity. Within ten years Oxy went from 13 to 115 employees. In 2016 Oxy opened a commercial agency in Paris to be as close as possible to the head offices of their large national accounts and to provide support and follow-up for the submission of public tenders.



Volume production of screen printed safety labels.



Oxy produces tactile membranes.

Machinery fleet

Oxy operates an extensive machinery fleet. There is a dedicated workshop for screen printing on board, sheets and rolls with a wide range of finishes. However, most striking is the number of digital plotters and inkjet printers in the building just across the street from the head office. Indeed, Oxy runs 12 Zünd plotter cutters and some 15 large format inkjet printers able to handle both rigid flat substrates, such as aluminium or hard PVC, and roll material such as Polyester or PVC film. For digital cutters Zünd machines are Oxy's prime choice, as the systems are of a modular design that is flexible and can easily be adapted to suit specific requirements in terms of material, thicknesses and production volume.

Hexis preferred supplier

Oxy is a large consumer of self-adhesive media and Hexis is one of their preferred suppliers. Nathalie Robin is enthusiastic about their long standing cooperation: "We have the same deep roots in entrepreneurship and we appreciate their consistent product quality and service." Hexis supply plotter vinyl film, laminates and self-adhesive digital print media for marking, screen printing and inkjet printing applications. Nathalie Robin added: "Our working relationship evolved into a true partnership based on strong support and responsiveness." Oxy is still privately owned and its entire production is based in France. •

www.oxy-signalitique.fr
www.hexis-graphics.com



One of 12 Zünd cutting tables at Oxy.

Billboards are dead, long live brick walls

Some interesting examples in New York City

By Andi Edan



A billboard construction.



The Three billboards in the movie.

Conditions for outdoor advertising

In general, there are five standard conditions for outdoor advertising:

1. They need to be approved by local authorities;
2. The site must be kept clean and tidy;
3. The billboard site should meet safety requirements;
4. Permission for the billboard and its content must be granted by the site owner;
5. The billboard should not obscure or hinder interpretation of official road signage.

In addition, there is always the issue of public safety. This tends to refer to the content of the poster, i.e. whether or not an advertisement in a public place can be so distracting or confusing that it puts vehicles or pedestrians in jeopardy when travelling over land, water or in the air. Most planning authorities will have drawn up billboard/advertisement control policy statements explaining the factors that they deem relevant to their decision. One of the main reasons why so many abandoned billboards can be seen along roads, motorways and in cities can probably be attributed to both rental cost and/or advertising regulations.

Also for electronic billboards

The same applies, perhaps even more so, to electronic billboards that could be considered even more distracting due to changing messages and flashing lights. Although they have the advantage of being able to upload a number of different messages and ads and display them in rotation, they are basically a collection of linked LED screens that require regular maintenance, often high up and in hard to reach locations. This, in addition to the general restrictions, adds to the cost to advertisers.

These reasons, as well as other conditions, explain why many billboard sites have been abandoned. In fact it was the idea behind the popular film "Three Billboards in Ebbing Missouri", a film by Martin McDonagh. [02-Three]

If you haven't seen it, here's the story: In the town of Ebbing, Missouri, Mildred Hayes is grieving for her teenage daughter, Angela, who

was raped and murdered several months earlier. Angry about the lack of progress made by the investigation, Mildred rents three abandoned billboards near her home and posts the following messages: "Raped While Dying", "Still No Arrests?", and "How Come, Chief Willoughby?" The billboards upset the townspeople, including Chief Bill Willoughby and the racist, violent, alcoholic Officer Jason Dixon. A complex drama ensues...

Advertisers made their decisions

Not surprisingly, bearing in mind the increasingly strict regulations and abandoned/disintegrating billboard structures in many places, advertisers have started looking at other, easier solutions for large format outdoor advertising.

New York is one of those cities that are constantly being rebuilt and renewed. As older buildings are demolished, building sites appear to be surrounded by the bare walls of neighbouring buildings.

Until the new building is constructed, these walls provide tempting surfaces for graffiti artists and, more recently, opportunities for new advertising space and architectural decoration. Moreover, many walls are simply bare of decoration and, unlike billboards, practically unlimited in size or unrestricted by format.

Polymeric vinyl

Taking this a logical step forward, manufacturers have now developed a polymeric vinyl to be used outdoors on uneven wall surfaces such as bare brickwork. Walls, unlike billboards, are usually limited only by the size of the building itself, which means that almost any size image can be applied to practically any surface. Polymeric vinyl for brickwork and building facades is suitable for outdoor architectural applications. The uniqueness of these images is



Hand painted image.



Examples of advertisements applied to brick walls.



that they look almost as if they had been painted directly onto the surface.

An example of an actual hand painted image can be seen in London's Soho, advertising the musical Les Misérables [images: 03-Les Mis 1.jpg]. Clearly this requires both skill and effort and is not easy to remove.

Printed advertisements have a similar hand-painted look and feel which is, arguably, more

interesting and attractive than the same image on a billboard. Below are a couple of examples of advertisements applied to brick walls.

[images: 04a-Woolrich.jpg, 04b-Wall vinyl 1.jpg]

There are a number of impressive architectural examples covering complete building facades, which were chosen in locations where, as well as the surface itself, the adjacent wall reflects the same image.

[whole wall images: 05a-Einstein.jpg].

Adhesive could be permanent

The technical properties of outdoor wall wrap material are quite similar to the material used for vehicle covers, although the type of glue used has had to be adapted. Made of Polymeric PVC, usually white gloss, about 50-60 microns thick, it can be applied to flat/2D or curved/3D textured surfaces such as bricks and concrete. It is compatible with most standard solvent, eco-solvent, Latex and UV printers. Once applied, the adhesive is permanent and most will be guaranteed for outdoor applications for up to 5 years.

Manufacturers provide surface preparation guidelines and it is recommended to conduct a surface test before going into full production.

The examples mentioned above are from sites in and around Manhattan, New York. •



Example of a whole wall image.

All about automating your print and business workflow

Never heard of Industry 4.0?

By Ton Rombout



You can also change to a Wine & Food Bar.



Repairing the files of your customer.

This article is about the influence that Industry 4.0 will have on sign and wide format printing in preparation, printing, finishing and delivery, and the impact this will have on the companies currently involved in sign and wide format printing.

Looking at the definition of Industry 4.0, it is considered to be the subset of the fourth industrial revolution. Industry 4.0 factories have machines that are augmented with wireless connectivity and sensors, connected to a system that can visualise the entire production line and make decisions independently. Are these systems already available, can we buy them or do we have to build on our own systems?

Where we came from

Last year I talked about the situation in our sign and wide format printing industry describing it as an industry striving for integral automation. It started in the prepress area with the preparation of files that needed to be printed and then finished. People learnt a lot along the way, but there remains a lot to be desired in terms of structural automation. Automation is a 'lean and smart' process that analyses the different consecutive stages of the workflow, proceeding from one stage to the next without having to continually retrace your steps because of mistakes made along the way. In our industry, however, handling the entire printing process is still an issue because of its complexity. For instance, we have to deal with not just one media type as is the case in the offset printing sector, i.e. mostly paper, but with many different media and consequently many different inks. These elements are making the overall workflow even more complex. Handling all these different files is extremely difficult for both large and small companies. When making decisions regarding the purchase of a wide format printing system, people tend to consider only the printer and not how prepress 'communicates' with the interface that handles the files intended for the printer.



Bears on the road are not always bears.

Status quo

Even in 2020 lots of companies still struggle with files they have received from their customers. The reason being of course that you cannot manage your customers' business model; you can only try to show them the best way to deliver basic files for your system. Last year I attended a meeting of customers of a company that produces finishing software and equipment. Handling files submitted by customers was still a major issue for the delegates of print production companies. In fact the problem is that more automation is needed in the prepress department, i.e. receiving and checking files, even correcting or changing them into files that are compatible with the subsequent printing process.

The logical next step is that people buying a wide format printing system will hopefully also look not only at the front end that 'rules' the files to be printed, but also at the cutting and finishing part that comes after the printing process. Last year I faced this question with many companies in Europe that I visited to work out case studies. They were very much aware that cutting and finishing is closely linked to the printing system, and the way they can interface has to be an important argument for buyers. In fact they need an overview of the entire system. But an overall system is of course also about how your print production environment is linked into your business and administration environment.

How do vendors approach this?

Interfacing a company's production management with its administration is an exhaustive, but very useful task. Managing the administration and costing jobs is time consuming, but very profitable in the long run. It will give you a grip on your organisation and any potential mistakes.

Vendors of larger printing systems are increasingly aware that they have to sell not just a wide format printing device, but an entire system around it to manage the files. The



Bad pictures have to be automatically repaired.



If something went wrong, you have to pick up the pieces.

reason being that a system of this kind can deliver large numbers of prints that all have to be managed. Not just for one customer either, because jobs from different customers can be handled together and later separated in the cutting system in the next stage of production. Using this kind of system you will know exactly how much it costs to make your product, rather than merely looking at competitors and putting a price on the final product. This will enable you to compete knowing exactly how far you can go. Moreover, you could look at a vendor of business administration systems that are able to constantly make connections between the production and the business administration workflow.

These systems can interface production and administration and advise an optimum price for a particular customer.

Industry 4.0

But can you refer to all this preliminary automation as Industry 4.0 already? First let me explain the term 'industrial'. The term 'industrial printing' became popular about seven years ago. On the one hand it implied that the printer and printing process were situated in a factory - an industrial environment - and became a part of an entire

product manufacturing process, i.e. not a printing product but with printing as a part of it. In such cases the printer is an integral part of the factory's production system. But other opinions about industrial printing also abounded, perhaps more in favour of companies selling printers, or you could use a printer as a print service provider producing printed parts in your own printing company on behalf of a factory, where they could subsequently be integrated into the production process.

Trend towards full automation

In essence Industry 4.0 is a trend towards full automation and data exchange in manufacturing technologies and processes, which include the Internet of Things, the Industrial Internet of Things, cloud computing, cognitive computing and artificial intelligence. Impressive terms, but including smart manufacturing, smart factory, lights out (manufacturing) also referred to as dark factories and the Industrial Internet of Things or things for manufacturing, you could imagine that some people are working hard to convince us poor workers in the printing industry that they can help us to do our work better than before. Industry 4.0 fosters what has been called a 'smart factory'. Within modular structured smart factories, 'cyber-physical' systems monitor physical processes, create a virtual copy of the physical world and make decentralized decisions. Cyber-physical systems communicate and cooperate with each other and with humans over the Internet of Things, in real time both internally and across organizational services offered and used by participants of the value chain. In my own words, we are going to use

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And when the system goes down, take care for well-educated staff.

the digital world to communicate with all the elements of the production and administration systems we use, even with our whole ecosystems of companies delivering basic components to us and our customers buying our products.

Customization will be the future

Of course I learnt all this from the internet, from Wikipedia and from colleagues dealing with these terminologies, formulating something that I could understand.

The correlation between the speed of technological development and the resulting socio-economic and infrastructural transformations in our human lives could be considered a qualitative leap in the speed of development, which marks a transition to a new time era. The discussion as to how the shift to Industry 4.0, especially digitalization, will affect the labour market started only a few years ago and is still ongoing.

Industry 4.0 is based on four design principles that help companies identify and implement Industry 4.0 scenarios.

- **Interconnection:** The ability of machines, devices, sensors and people to connect and communicate with each other via the Internet of Things (IoT) or the Internet of People (IoP). This principle is highlighted above.
- **Information transparency:** the transparency afforded by Industry 4.0 technology provides operators with vast amounts of useful information needed to make appropriate decisions. Interconnectivity allows operators to collect immense amounts of data and information from all points in the manufacturing process, thus aiding functionality and identifying key areas that can benefit from innovation and improvement. We could also mention the production environment systems of some



With Industry 4.0, you'll have an overview from start to finish.



The author behind the window tries to sort out the real important things.

of the larger printer building companies in terms of questions concerning the workflow, perhaps Agfa (Asanti), EFI (Fiery FX) or Durst (Durst Workflow).

- **Technical assistance:** firstly, the ability of support systems to help humans make informed decisions and resolve urgent problems at short notice by comprehensively aggregating and visualizing information.
- **Decentralized decisions:** the ability of cyber physical systems to make decisions independently and perform their tasks with maximum autonomy. Only exceptions, interference or conflicting goals will lead to tasks being delegated to a higher, human level.

Industry 4.0 also has a higher purpose, not inherent in these systems, but very worthwhile nevertheless, because it envisages sustainable manufacturing on the basis of green manufacturing processes, supply chain management and products. All of us - vendors, printers, customers, (nearly) everyone in the world - are desperate for this to happen. •

Before Industry 4.0

Industry 1.0 refers to the first industrial revolution. It was characterised by a transition from manual production methods to machines through the use of steam and water power. The implementation of new technologies took a long time, i.e. between 1760 and 1820, or 1840 in Europe and the US.

Industry 2.0, the second industrial revolution better known as the technological revolution, occurred between 1870 and 1914. It was facilitated by the extensive rail networks and the telegraph which accelerated the transfer of people and ideas. It was also characterised by ever more present electricity, which facilitated factory electrification and modern production lines.

Industry 3.0 coincided with the third industrial revolution in the late 20th century, following the end of the two world wars, as a result of a slowdown in industrialization and technological advancement compared to previous periods. It is also referred to as the digital revolution.

Hexis goes green

By Martin Kugler



Oxidiser burns off waste VOC at Hexis.



Direct collection - photo Groupe ELISE.

enterprise is bound to produce a certain amount of waste from production, handling and use of its products. Sébastien Machu, commercial director at Hexis, adds: "We had to provide pragmatic solutions for the collection of waste to support our customers in their environmental commitments."

Hexis already has an established policy of integrating measures for sustainable development into the processes and operations at their factory. Over the years the company has made major investments in equipment and machinery to limit the impact of its activities on the environment. Amongst other steps it has installed two oxidisers to dispose of volatile organic compounds (VOC) that are a by-product of their solvent-based production. This installation almost wholly eliminates the VOCs used in the manufacturing processes and rejects only water steam, carbon dioxide and small residual quantities of VOCs. In addition, Hexis monitors its atmospheric emissions at periodical intervals in conformity with the regulatory requirements.

Compliant with environmental standards

The design of products and the choice of raw

Companies all over the world are realising that in order to stay productive and competitive in a rapidly changing business environment, they need to become socially and environmentally more responsible. The aim of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is to engage in practices to achieve societal and environmental goals and to organise and support their implementation within the scope of the impact a business has on its wider environment.

CSR goes beyond close compliance with laws and regulations. To a large extent the different measures are ethically founded and accomplished on a voluntary basis without necessarily being required by a mandatory legal frame-

work. It takes into account the fact besides the use of environment-friendly materials and energy savings, solutions for the disposal and possible recycling of industrial products at the end of their life cycle or useful durability need to be planned.

Hexis to announce cooperation with ELISE

At the 2020 CIPrint trade show Hexis, the French manufacturer of self-adhesive vinyl media, announced its new cooperation with ELISE, a nationwide network for the collection and treatment of waste materials. Patrice Salvan, marketing and communication manager at Hexis, explains: "Our initiative is a response to requests for advice from our customer base on how to recycle packaging and waste material." Indeed any industrial

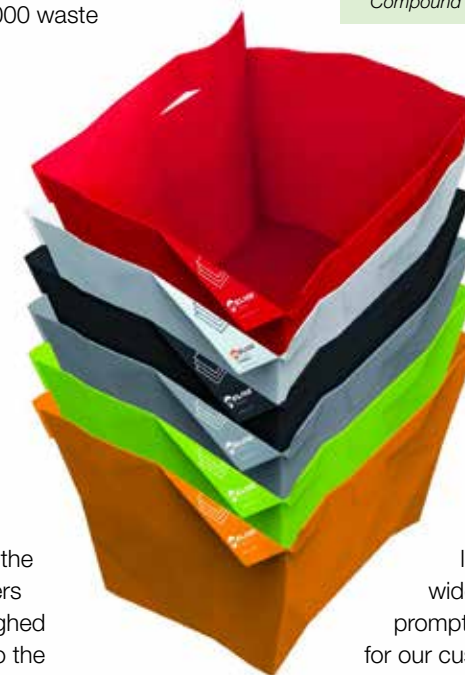
materials respects to the largest extent possible the goals of environmental protection and sustainable development. Hexis claim, for example, that the liner used in their self-adhesive media are in compliance with the environmental standards EN 13430 (packaging recoverable by material recycling), EN 13431 (packaging recoverable in the form of energy recovery), EN 13428 (prevention by source reduction), and EN 13695 (heavy metals below maximum permitted levels). As part of their ISO 9001 certification Hexis pays particular attention to the recording and follow-up of dangerous waste produced on a daily basis by the various production processes. The control, statistical analysis and efforts to reduce any waste are a daily priority.

ELISE as partner for collection and treatment

The scope of measures contained in a comprehensive CSR policy is enormous as it encompasses the complete supply chain, material handling and transport, production, energy consumption, waste management, recycling and training of staff. Hexis have chosen ELISE as a partner for the collection and treatment of waste material resulting from the use of Hexis products that are generated at their clients' workshops - signmakers, decorators and digital printers throughout the country. ELISE is the biggest company in France specialising in the recovery of waste from offices and industry and they are pioneers in the handling of composite waste containing paper, plastics, metal, glass and wood including contaminants. ELISE runs 41 branches throughout the country and is thus able to minimise transport and offer short recycling circuits. ELISE boasts over 13,000 clients and an installed park of over 600,000 waste containers.

Sorting, shredding and appropriate recycling

Their process is based on the installation of colour-coded waste recipients - baskets, cardboard boxes or plastic bins - and the preliminary sorting of the waste material by the user. The containers are collected, weighed and transported to the treatment site. Each client receives a comprehensive report on



Colour-coded bins designed by S+ARCK - photo Groupe ELISE.



Self-adhesive compound with multiple ingredients.



Compound waste shredded for recycling - photo Groupe ELISE.

the recovered quantity plus an environmental impact assessment. ELISE then proceeds with the sorting, shredding and appropriate recycling of each waste material.

Guillaume Leonardon, the manager in charge of quality, security, environment and energy at Hexis, confirms: "The choice of partnership with the company was a matter of course. After deploying the global collection solution at the level of our own sites, the nationwide presence of ELISE sites prompted us to roll out the same solution for our customers."

Long-term benefit

There is obviously a long-term benefit for any business in committing to environmental goals under a CSR scheme and Hexis argue that CSR measures in spite of the cost factor actually create a competitive advantage and improve the positive image of the company. Clément Mateu, CEO of Hexis, concludes: "We are aware of today's environmental challenges and implement solutions for the different stages of the life cycle of our products. Through this partnership we jointly organise the collection and recovery of waste from our finished products." •

www.hexis-graphics.com
www.elise.com.fr

Keynotes feature workflow and digital print visionaries

EFI Connect in Las Vegas

By Ton Rombout



The Chat between Marc Olin (left) and Al Zollar (right).



Jeff Jacobson delivers the opening keynote address, his first as the new EFI Chairman and CEO, at Connect 2020.



Jeff Jacobson and Guy Gecht.

Electronics for Imaging organizes a major conference in the US every year for users of EFI Fiery and VUTEk equipment, which focuses on future developments and is attended by EFI representatives and other future oriented trend watchers from outside the company. This year's event took place 21-24 January at the Wynn Las Vegas resort.

EFI Connect 2020, an important and informative element of the event's 20 year history - thanks in part to keynote sessions that deliver new insights and expertise in workflow management and automation, integrated digital print and industry growth marketing strategies - was particularly interesting because one of the keynote speakers was former IBM Senior Executive Alfred Zollar, who was only too happy to share his expertise in enterprise management systems.

Zollar's view

Alfred Zollar, who is a current member of the executive partner team at Siris Capital, LLC,

helped structure the mid 2019 private equity acquisition of EFI by a Siris affiliate. Prior to working with Siris, he built up a 34 year career in IBM's enterprise software businesses in information management, application development, networking, operating systems and security. He outlined future trends and strategies for success for print professionals in the next era of IT.

"The Connect audience is the industry's most engaged in terms of businesses commitment to improvement by leveraging data and ERP tools," Alfred Zollar explained. "I shared many important future trends with them, including developments that affect how printing companies can manage their businesses to maximize productivity, flexibility and security in increasingly complex computing environments."

New and former EFI leaders

Jeff Jacobson, the long standing print industry leader who became CEO and Executive Chairman of EFI in 2019, also shared his vision for the future of the industry in a Connect keynote speech. A special 'fireside chat' keynote session featured an interesting conversation between Jeff Jacobson and former EFI CEO Guy Gecht.

Jacobson's keynote session gave attendees a clear perspective on the future of print, based on major trends that are shaping the future of communication, marketing and commerce. This perspective was gleaned from his three decades in print - a tenure that includes roles as CEO of Kodak Polychrome Graphics, Presstek and more recently Xerox. His keynote insights are derived from extensive contacts established whilst working with customers since taking on the top executive role at EFI back in August.

The 'fireside chat' keynote later that day featured two EFI CEOs, as Jacobson interviewed the company's long standing leader, Guy Gecht. EFI Connect's typically unpredictable 'fireside chat' introduced a fresh perspective on industry challenges and opportunities from a former executive who spent almost 19 years in charge of EFI, from its early days as an RIP technology developer to its current status



as a provider of complete, integrated portfolios for digital industrial, display graphics and commercial print applications.

Guy Gecht commented: "I interviewed Jeff Jacobson in 2017 and now the tables have turned! Print service providers continue to face challenges and opportunities, and their ability to learn and adapt quickly is key to realizing profitable growth."

Dynamic conference

These sessions were part of an extensive, dynamic conference and technology offering. Every year print and packaging professionals from around the world attend Connect to obtain a technological, operational and management edge in the growing digital space. With approximately 200 sessions across a wide range of topics, EFI Connect was again an ideal venue for open dialogue and for exchanging ideas, with educational talks, hands-on training and networking with a large community of print professionals committed to driving growth. Participants from across the world were shown how to use EFI's portfolio of production and industrial inkjet, integrated MIS/ERP workflow and Fiery digital front ends (DFEs). Customers also benefited from having the opportunity to provide personal feedback to senior EFI executive and technical development staff.



Users of EFI equipment eager to hear everything during EFI Connect.

Solutions centre

A solutions centre exhibit at the conference featured the latest EFI workflow, Fiery DFE and inkjet display graphics offerings. Attendees were able to view advanced solutions from participating partners, including Aberdeen Fabrics; Color Concepts; Duplo; Enfocus; Konica Minolta Business Solutions U.S.A.; MBM Corporation; OneVision; The Print and Graphics Scholarship Foundation; Progress Software Corp.; Ricoh Americas Corp.; RISO; SpencerMetrics; Thomson Reuters; and Zünd. Connect 2020 also featured the worldwide debut of the new EFI VUTEk D3r mid volume, roll-to-roll super wide format printer [also see special feature in this issue of SignPro Europe].

Next development in integrated print workflow

The range of EFI products at this year's conference included advanced, productivity enhancing solutions to be introduced to the market for the world's leading print and packaging MIS/ERP technology portfolio. Connect attendees were shown the latest advancements in integrated print and packaging workflows, including EFI Productivity Suite offerings for automated business and production management. New features included:

- Advanced, end-to-end workflow support for short run label printing in the EFI Packaging Suite;
- Faster estimating in the EFI Midmarket Print Suite, along with improved inventory control for display graphics roll media;
- Real time mobile device estimating using EFI iQuote and RFQ spreadsheet import capabilities in the Enterprise Commercial Print Suite;
- New Business Intelligence capabilities and a simplified user interface for the EFI Corrugated Packaging Suite;
- An automated job creation application programming interface for short run jobs and connectivity to advanced EFI Process Shipper workflows with the EFI Publication Print Suite;
- Engagement based campaign targeting tools in EFI MarketDirect Cross Media, and the new MarketDirect PackCentral solution for packaging eCommerce and campaign management.

EFI Packaging Suite

The new workflow enhancements EFI is bringing to market help print and packaging companies operate more efficiently and make smarter decisions through the use of data. Georges Berbari, Chief Operating Officer at Montreal based Netpak, commented: "With these recent workflow enhancements we expect to greatly improve our overall order-to-cash process and push jobs through the plant more rapidly, a win-win situation both for us and for our customers."

Track and trace

EFI Connect's exhibit also featured new digital print management technology, including EFI IQ - a comprehensive, cloud based platform that tracks and monitors printer utilization as well as ink and substrate usage, giving users more capabilities to optimize their operations. IQ features include EFI ColorGuard - an award winning solution that standardizes the verification process to ensure consistent, accurate colour on printers using EFI Fiery digital front ends (DFEs). •



Frank Belluzi EFI, Mark Popp, Vice President of Manufacturing at Imagine - Pam Richards, Owner of Color Gamut Digital Imaging - Cody Hull, Product Development Manager for The UPS Store - Lynn Smith, CMO for The Sourcing Group.

News

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Creative in-store & outdoor communications with a twist

4-Brands sets the bar high in terms of communication

By Ton Rombout



Gamma is a very special customer for 4-Brands with many different products.



Special welcome sign products for Bosch Service Carservice Cabrioland

What's the best way of offering services, e.g. working in conjunction with and on behalf of clients, with more than just technical knowledge to fulfil their requirements? 4-Brands not only offers in-depth know-how and an understanding of the sign and wide format print business with brilliant and relevant materials, but also provides smart ideas and suggestions to raise the level of communication on behalf of brand owners.

They maintain that you, as a brand owner or advertising agency, could raise the bar in terms of communication with their targeted and personalised services, combining your knowledge of the product and market with their in-house visual communication expertise, i.e.

concept & creation, design and layout, desktop publishing, print production and mounting services.

Textile printing and cutting

Raymond de Wild, the owner of "4-Brands, creative in-store & outdoor communications", is a veteran of this business. He started his career as a painter (in advertising), then moved to advertising and lettering and set up his first company using Gerber equipment. This was a basis for further growth leading to the establishment of 4-Brands in 2011 in the rapidly growing city of Almere. It is now one of the largest 'satellite' towns of Amsterdam, with approximately 210,000 inhabitants.

Read more -->>

Case

SignPro Europe February 2020



The Gamma building on the rear side with signing.

4-Brands has become a specialist in textile printing, mainly using Durst equipment (one P10 and two Durst Rhotex production printers) as well as an HP Latex machine and several other printers. These are combined with cutting machines such as the Zünd and a range of other tools to finalize prints, cut them to the right size and put them in predominantly aluminium frames.

"At first we used to buy prints from other suppliers, but because we work with specialist clients with very specific wishes we decided to do everything ourselves, including confection work," Raymond de Wild explained. "We are quite happy to do this, because we are much more flexible and able to respond, produce and deliver very quickly, in close cooperation with our customers."

He continued: "In textiles we offer wall decorations, flags, banners and all the products required by major chain stores and supermarkets, including for instance kitchen, toilet, garden and other products for use in and around homes and gardens."

LED and Neon signage

Being a true 'entrepreneur', Raymond de Wild also decided to buy a Neon-LED production company a few years ago. It now trades under the name of API Sign & Displays (api-neon.com), with Wally Robijn acting as Chief Operating Manager. Wally also attended the meeting I had with Raymond in Almere and showed me many very attractive, amazing and interesting products made with neon or LED components.

Raymond de Wild felt that it was important to acquire this company, not only because of its exciting Neon and LED products, but also because it has quite a few major customers, including Bosch Car Service in the Benelux, which offers a special signing service for cars. Moreover, API Sign & Displays delivers much more than that. The company supplies double

or single sided light boxes for façade advertising, or even combinations of neon and LED. At the Euroshop show in Düsseldorf, 4-Brands joined forces with API Sign & Displays to showcase stunning designs based on a combination of neon and LED produced for Intratuin (a garden centre group). Whilst neon still offers amazing opportunities to attract attention because of the way it stands out in a dark environment, LED offers benefits in terms of better and more vandal proof lighting than neon. API has developed a combination of both, with the LED light at the centre of the technical light source, but looking just like neon.

Conclusion

It's not difficult to understand the seamless cooperation between 4-Brands and API Sign & Display, both companies owned by Raymond de Wild: "In practice they are a perfect combination offering clients optimum solutions for their brands. Hence the name 4-Brands." Raymond continued: "If you are a retailer, brand manufacturer, reseller or DIY chain you might want to collaborate with a leading full-service partner for in-store and outdoor applications, i.e. 4-Brands! Together we will promote your brand with maximum effect. Irrespective of whether you are looking for small print production services or applications for large stands and events: 4-Brands will develop them from the initial brainstorming exercise to the concept, from production to installation. We are the one-stop shop with the expertise and experience to handle your project from start to finish. We will ensure that the design seamlessly interfaces with your brand values and objectives. This is the way forward in order to reach, captivate and retain your target group." •

For more information visit: www.4-brands.nl



Wally Robijn, Chief Operating Manager of api-neon.com



Three Durst production printers for textile and more.



LED that has the look-and-feel of NEON. A good example is Pepsi MAX.



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- ¹ Glossiest white on transparent and colored media. Glossiest white based on internal HP testing in January, 2018 compared to the HP Scitex FB750/FB550 Printer using UV-curable ink technology. White ink measured for the level of gloss at 60 degrees on a rigid material (acrylic). Tested using Glossmeter BYK micro-TRI-gloss (20°, 60°, 85°), compatible with ISO 2813 and ASTM D523 relative to glossiness measure. White ink capability may be optional, requiring purchase of the HP White Ink Option Kit.
- ² Most vibrant colors based on internal HP testing, January 2018 compared to leading competitive printers under \$350,000 USD. Tested in High Quality print mode on rigid (white acrylic 12-pass, 6-color, 120%). Internal HP testing with HP GamutViewer, Alpha Shapes=50.000

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