

SIGN AFRICA

JOURNAL FOR THE VISUAL COMMUNICATION INDUSTRIES



JAN/FEB 2022 | ISSUE 116
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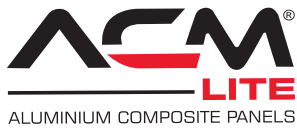


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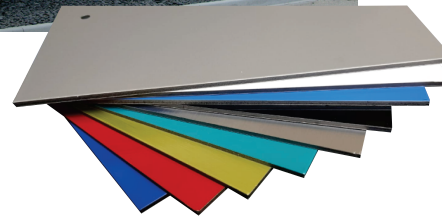
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APPLICATIONS



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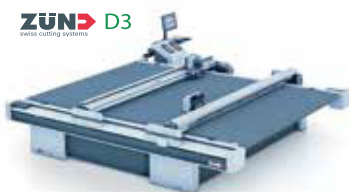
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EDITOR'S NOTE

BY MEGGAN MCCARTHY, EDITOR

We wish our valued readers and advertisers everything of the best for 2022. We kick off the year with our Bloemfontein expo on 10 February at Ilanga Estate and have events planned for Durban, Cape Town and are excited to return to Gallagher Convention Centre for our flagship expo in September.

Our front cover features STIXO Signage Supplies, based in Crown Mines, Johannesburg, which are excited to launch their impressive range of Aluminium Composite Panels 'ACM' and 'ACM-Lite' to the Southern African market and beyond. Through consistent research and development, and tireless efforts to always stock and supply the very best to the signage and construction industries, the company have once again stood true to their commitment and have delivered.

Other features:

The latest vinyls feature high-end technology and excellent quality with eye-catching finishes and effects. New premium colours give designers more freedom to showcase their talent. The colours also create dazzling graphics — ideal for drivers who want to ensure they stand out and who are keen to share their unique looks on social media.

Covid-19 has changed a lot within the printing industry and many new applications, even a new category — social distancing signage — has evolved. Predicted to reach a volume of US\$11.2 billion by 2025 (Markets and Markets), the wide format printing market is mature, but it has certainly not yet reached its heyday.

With the constant industry chatter revolving around resource management and increased productivity, there needs to be an understanding that employees are people, first and foremost. It is about building honest personal connections with them, according to Canon South Africa Managing Director, David Preston.

Speed is a critical element of customer service. Unfortunately, business owners and executives often overlook its importance as they plan their strategies to attract and retain customers and increase their sales. Too often they focus on catchy slogans and increased advertising instead of zeroing in on what really matters to their customers.

Almost every day another consulting group states that they can help printing companies become more environmentally accountable. Offerings range from some sort of sustainability scheme or service, to overpriced environmental consulting. There is a bandwagon cranking up and lots of people are in line waiting to board. It is all very entrepreneurial and innovative. And it is great that new businesses and services are springing up to support the graphics industry as it transitions to a more sustainable future.

The environment is facing a major and growing crisis. The late Archbishop Desmond Tutu said that we fought apartheid successfully, now we need to fight climate change with the same focus and dedication. He said that unfortunately those who have no involvement in creating the problem are most affected — that is the ordinary citizen — while those who have the capacity to arrest the situation, mainly governments and multinationals, dither — and that is the deep injustice. Now we have to fight what he termed as 'blue apartheid'.

Signing off

Meggan McCarthy

meggan@PracticalPublishing.co.za



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NEW CONTACT DETAILS

TEL: +27 11 568 1894

PUBLISHER & SALES: DYELAN COPELAND

E-MAIL: dyelan@PracticalPublishing.co.za
CELL: +27 83 300 3509

PUBLISHER: CHARNIA YAPP

E-MAIL: charnia@PracticalPublishing.co.za
CELL: +27 83 260 4584

EDITOR: MEGGAN MCCARTHY

E-MAIL: meggan@PracticalPublishing.co.za
CELL: +27 82 837 0703

ONLINE JOURNALIST: MATTHEW WOOD

E-MAIL: journo@PracticalPublishing.co.za

DESIGN & LAYOUT: TRISTAN BEYERS

E-MAIL: design@PracticalPublishing.co.za

PRINTER: Jetline +27 11 493 7200 / 719 0700

ACCOUNTS: DEBBIE SIMPSON

E-MAIL: accounts@PracticalPublishing.co.za

ADMINISTRATION & SUBSCRIPTIONS: DEBBIE SIMPSON

E-MAIL: accounts@PracticalPublishing.co.za

CONTRIBUTORS:

David Preston, Canon South Africa
Sabine Slaughter, Drupa
Peter Bourgeois, Drytac
John Tsocholi, Service Quality Institute
Jordie Drieman, Mimaki Europ
Laurel Brunner, Verdigris Project

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We represent our members on various statutory bodies, including the FP&M SETA, SACCI, regional Chambers of Commerce, Proudly SA and we are the official association for FESPA in Africa. Printing SA provides commercial, technical and legal advice, HR, IR & B-BBEE consulting services for our members. As the largest training provider for our sector, we offer an array of training interventions for those wanting to increase their knowledge, technical skills and expertise in the industry.

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DBN: +27 31 705 5531

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WEB: www.rolanddg.co.za

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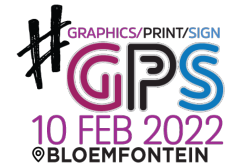
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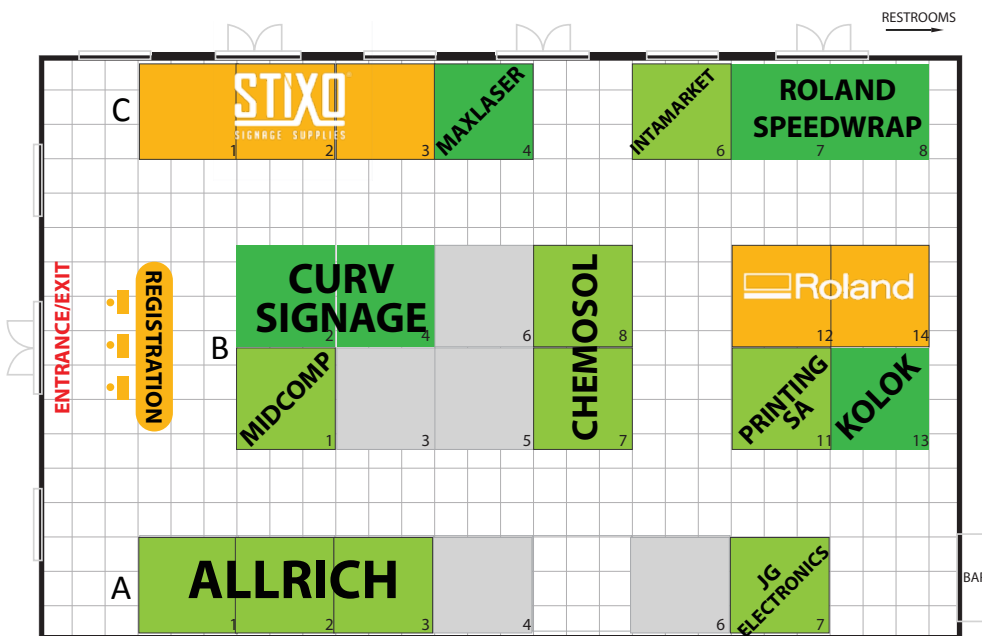
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3 Volans Street, Crown Mines, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2092



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10 FEB

2022

REGIONAL EXPO FLOOR PLAN

LAST UPDATED:
31 January 2022



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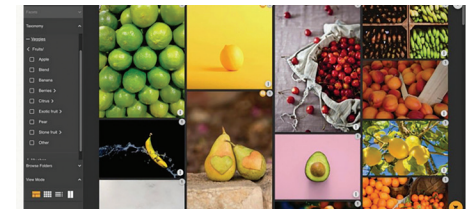
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The advanced project planning, production workflow and asset management system provides a wide range of data and reports so users get a complete overview of their production performance. Reports on job, department and organisational efficiencies will allow users to measure the productivity of their business and make improvements where required. With an interactive report builder and simple layout editor to embed them into a dashboard, users can spend less time building these reports. www.dalim.com



Azon EDGE SX

The printer is an ideal solution for small to medium sized businesses, as it can fit almost anywhere, with dimensions of 60 x 80 x 82cm. The product offers a printable area of 29,7 x 42cm. The newest addition uses CMYK and white. The Azon UV Turbojet inks are certified (EN 71/3), which means that they are Phthalate free, enabling users to print even on children's toys. The printer is ideal for materials such as wood, stone, plastic, glass, ceramic and metal. www.azonprinter.com



Drytac Films

Drytac Polar Premium Clear is a versatile 3.2 mil (80 micron) phthalate-free printable polymeric solvent self-adhesive PVC film with a high quality and clear adhesive for optimum performance on a wide variety of substrates. Drytac Weathershield UV overlaminates are 3.2 mil (80 micron) clear polymeric gloss or matte PVC laminating films that can be used across a whole host of applications including general signage, window graphics, exhibition and event graphics, and POS displays. www.midcomp.co.za



HOT NEW PRODUCTS

Heatware Portable Heat Press

The ultra-portable heat press features high energy efficiency, with users not needing to heat a large heat area just to do small transfers. The Heatware 300W Mini High Frequency Suspension is a handheld mini Ferris-wheel shaped heat press with leaf-shape heating area of 60mm (width) x 100mm (length). Small and portable, it is ideal for small logos, badges and other small graphic details in harder to reach areas like shirt sleeves or pockets.

www.am.co.za



Mutoh Xpertjet Pro Printers

XPJ-1341SR Pro (137cm) and XPJ-1641SR Pro (162cm) printers are targeted at high quality volume production of sign and display graphics for long-term outdoor applications and durable prints for indoor use. Both single head CMYK printers feature brand new head technology, a new weaving algorithm and Mutoh's genuine VerteLith RIP software to deliver a significant improvement in both print quality and print speed. The XpertJet Pro series printers also integrate automatic alignments to ensure uninterrupted production and consistent quality. www.mutoh.eu



Easy Cut Studio 5.016

This is the latest build of software fully supported by many industry standard vinyl cutters. This version also brings a range of innovative features, including new OS support, several new drivers, as well as performance optimisation and several minor bug fixes. An advanced vinyl cutter is not complete without suitable design and cutting software. Easy Cut Studio is developed with the user in mind. www.easycutstudio.com



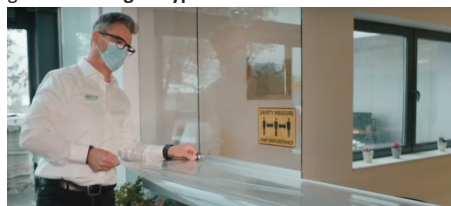
Direct To Film Printing Solutions

Hanrun paper® PRO-A330 is a Direct To Film (DTF) printer developed for customers who pursue high quality and do not need large-width machines. The machine works on both white and dark textiles, with a variety of fabric styles (cotton, poly blends, leathers, denim and more). Hanrun Paper® PRO-A600 DTF printer (4 printheads) is developed for customers who pursue high quality and mass production. The print size is 60cm (24 inches). It works on both white and dark textiles, with a variety of fabric styles (cotton, poly, blends, high-temperature resistance leathers, denim, and more). www.chemosol.co.za



Grafityp Antimicrobial Film

CleanSkin is an antimicrobial film that kills bacteria, so users have less chance of becoming ill. The film improves the hygiene of surfaces. With the antimicrobial film, users can cover different surfaces. This can come in handy in the hospitality sector, retail, healthcare sector, schools, public buildings and anywhere else protection is needed. With CleanSkin, users make every surface bacteria-free. The effective transparent PVC antimicrobial film keeps the workplace free of microbes and germs. www.grafityp.com



Vastex Lo-E Dryer

The dryer cures up to 45 garments/hour printed with digital white ink at three minutes dwell time. At 1.5 minutes dwell time, it cures up to 88 CMYK direct to garment (DTG) garments/hour, 88 garments/hour with pretreatment only, or 88 garments/hour screen-printed with water-based ink or discharge. The dryer cures DTG-printed inks and pretreatment, and water-based screen-printed inks and discharge, at high rates using 20% less energy than comparable dryers. www.rexxscreendigital.co.za



Intec Digital Die Cutter

The new FB9000PRO lands itself at the top of Intec Printing Solutions Limited's ColorCut product offering and becomes the new flagship model with its new features. By combining cutting, creasing, perforating and scoring in a single pass, this ensures that the FB9000PRO offers rapid, automated and unattended production for the creation of point of sale and packaging, paper, synthetic projects and kiss-cut sheet label production. www.intamarket-graphics.co.za



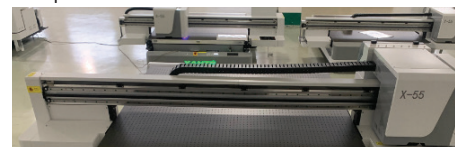
P.S. Glitter Adhesive

This is a calendered, pressure sensitive adhesive vinyl designed for hard goods. Glitter is a trendy choice for decoration and with this new material, users can add a glitzy option to their product offering and create custom hard goods that stand out. Available in over 15 colours, P.S. Glitter is a go-to option for dazzling decoration. A vinyl cutter can be used to create eye-catching looks that will pair perfectly with apparel sales. www.stahls.com



Xante' UV Flatbed Printer

The X-55 will quickly produce full-colour signage, decorative items, personalised awards or unique promotional items in minutes. Xante's UV High-Density inks for the X-55 and all of its UV printers are sold in economical 1/2 litre bottles. It takes Xante's proven UV print technology to the next level with a larger bed size (127 x 139.7cm/50 x 55"), and doubles the production speeds of its flatbed UV products. Based on up to 4 Epson i3200 4-channel printheads, the CMYKW X-55 prints in bold vibrant colour on virtually any rigid media, including wood, glass, stone, metal, acrylic and Coroplast. www.xante.com



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MAX INK: 6 COLOUR UV

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SIGN INDUSTRY NEWS

Epson South Africa Host Discussion On Gender Equality

Epson has been an advocate of equal opportunity employment for five decades. It abolished gender-based pay differences in Japan in 1983 and has been working to eliminate the gender gap and enable its employees to maintain a balance between work and personal life. Epson South Africa recently hosted its inaugural Women in Business panel discussion, where industry leading speakers were invited to discuss and explore the daily challenges women face in the business world.

Founder and editor of 'Tech Girl', Samantha Wright; entrepreneur, author, and speaker, Nicky Rowbotham; and Roxanne Pierrus, sales manager for business print at Epson South Africa, shared their secrets of successfully navigating working in the technology sector, balancing work and home life, especially in a hybrid working environment, and how they secured their seats at the boardroom table.

The speakers also discussed how more females are being recognised for the value they bring to the workplace, and emphasised how organisations like Epson are demonstrating their commitment to women in their relevant channels and elaborated on how more industries should follow this lead.

'I'm starting to see some progress in the workplace, where people realise that women are looking for something different,' said Rowbotham. 'More people are aware that females think nothing like men and can add value in vastly different ways. However, we are definitely not there yet, we have a lot of work to do.'

The event also addressed how society can play a more prominent role in empowering women to take a stand. 'It's necessary for society to change how we raise our children. We must encourage them despite their gender to go out, take risks and



Roxanne Pierrus, Nicky Rowbotham and Samantha Wright.

make their voices heard,' said Rowbotham.

The three trailblazers closed off with advice for women who want to break into male-dominated professions, with Wright leading with, 'I always say do it. I know it may not always be easy but just do it. For example, if you want to make YouTube videos about games, switch your camera on and go for it. It doesn't have to be perfect, it just has to get done.'

Although much still needs to be done to realise the United Nation's gender equality Sustainable

Development Goal, more organisations are levelling the playing field and working towards bridging the gender gap.

'It was an honour to be able to present at this Epson event. I have always wanted to contribute to Epson's ethos on gender equality. I hope that through this event, we can continue this really important conversation,' concluded Pierrus.

www.epson.co.za

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SIGN INDUSTRY NEWS CONTINUED

Intamarket Showcases Printers, Consumables And More At Open Day Event

Intamarket hosted an open house event, presenting an opportunity for the sales and technical team to meet with customers in the company's demonstration centre. Visitors could experience the capabilities of a new range of equipment through live demonstrations.

The overall visitor feedback was positive, with visitors stating that events such as these are long overdue, and that while virtual demonstrations are great, it is better to see how the equipment operates and truly experience the quality of the final product.

The most popular products included the Stratojet Piranha dye-sublimation and Hawk CleanInk printers, clam shell heat presses, Avery Dennison's new range of Paint Protection Films – including the Matt and Neo Black versions, Olfa tools, tapes and a demonstration by tapes specialist, Jacob Machaba.

www.intamarket-graphics.co.za



Midcomp HP Latex Solution Broadens Business's Service Offerings

Midcomp has installed an HP Latex 1500 at Frame Fun. The HP Latex 1500 machine prints up to 74sqm per hour, prints double-sided backlit applications and its prints are dry and scratch-resistant immediately after printing.

Running costs are reduced with cost-effective five litre HP ink cartridges. Additional features include unattended printing with robust roll-to-roll design as well as an optional roll-to-freefall, which enables the prints in a long run to be cut

and moved to finishing. Frame Fun are specialists in all types of framing, certificates, custom framing of originals, block mounting, stretch canvas, lamination, digital printing (canvas/photo paper) and more. The company has a history which spans over 30 years.

Frame Fun CEO Aron Mudau, said, 'The HP Latex 1500 is much faster than what we currently have on the floor, and the quality is just amazing.' He praised its features, which include its 3.2m width and the fact that operators can load two (1.6m) rolls, thereby printing different images at the same time. 'That is what I like about the machine. It is good value for money,' he added.

In terms of new markets, Mudau said it has allowed them to tap into billboards, something which was previously outsourced. 'Now we can print anything: wallpaper, wall banners...the opportunities are just huge. Instead of having to join the images, we can just print them straight away.'

Mudau added that his company has been dealing with Midcomp – where they get all their inks – for some time, that the two companies work in hand in hand and that the turnaround service was amazing.



The Frame Fun team with the HP Latex 1500.

www.midcomp.co.za and
www.framefun.co.za

Graficomp Installs HP Print And Cut System

Minuteman Press Bryanston's HP Latex 335 print and cut system, installed by Graficomp, has been praised for its versatility and high levels of productivity.

The system allows users to expand into wider applications with the 1.63m true print and cut solution, featuring print speeds of 13sqm/hr and a cut speed of up to 112cm/sec. Users can print and cut at the same time — versus print or cut with solvent — with this reliable, dual-device solution, and they can avoid solvent wait time.

Prints come out dry and ready to cut or laminate right away with no degas time — ready to deliver on the same day. Users can avoid lamination for short-term applications, with scratch resistance comparable to hard-solvent inks.

The HP Latex 335 allowed Minuteman Press Bryanston to keep up with trends such as Covid stickers and signage to meet their clients' demands. 'The printer is the Rolls Royce of its kind, especially when it comes to the smaller wide format machines. The machine allows us to print on various substrates without compromising on quality,' said owner Jacques du Preez.

According to du Preez, this is a huge benefit as Minuteman Press Bryanston only needs one machine to print all of its wide format jobs. The HP Latex is very easy to operate and the parameters on the machines are highly customisable, allowing the company to change settings exactly as it needs, depending on the specific print job and the output required.

He also said that the HP Latex is very fast and effective, allowing for a quicker turnaround time. One of its unique benefits is the fact that it can print unattended. 'This allows us to print through the night, without anyone manning the machine. This is almost done on a weekly basis for big print runs, effectively giving us an extra eight hours of production time. This is also where the offline cutting comes in very handy, as we can start cutting the next morning, and the printer is not still occupied. This also maximises our productivity. The HP Latex is a must have for any small print shop as it is an excellent all-round machine, capable of handling high volumes of printing, while maintaining top quality,' added du Preez.

In terms of new markets, du Preez said that the HP Latex has allowed his company to not only print standard jobs, but also allowed them to move into different market segments, which they would



Vandirai Verenga and Jacques du Preez with the HP Latex 335 system.

not have considered before, 'We have recently started to print wallpaper — something we would have declined in the past. The HP Latex is capable of printing high resolution wallpaper at any size, depending on the customers' needs,' said du Preez. 'We have also managed to print on non-printable substrates due to the HP Latex using an optimiser, allowing us to meet different demands from customers. The printer has given us the power to print anything, from vehicle wraps, T-shirts, signage, posters, canvases, plan printing, wall decals and more.'

The business is currently using the system to experiment with printing on wax paper and tissue paper, which according to du Preez is a popular application with take-away restaurants, particularly low-run volumes.

Du Preez added that the service they have received from Graficomp has been 'out of this world'.

'Their service and support have been excellent, and I would recommend them to anyone without hesitation. We have been dealing with Chris Paulet, and he has assisted us on numerous occasions with small issues with the printer. Even after hours, he is still willing to go the extra mile in order to solve problems if and when they come up. Paulet is also well informed in terms of the different substrates on the market and gives the best advice in this field. We currently source all our vinyl supplies from Graficomp and use them to service the printer as and when needed.'

www.grficomp.co.za and
www.bryanston.minutemanpress.co.za





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SIGN INDUSTRY NEWS CONTINUED

Romano Group Installs Latex Innovation With White Ink

Midcomp has reported the installation of an HP Latex 800W machine at Romano Group. With this solution, users can win high-value jobs with white ink and productive printing and sharpen their sustainability edge.

Additionally, users of the device can print white without complexity as the printer features automatic recirculation and printhead cleaning, which reduce manual purging. This allows the capability of delivering vivid colours at high speed — getting striking contrast using pure blacks and expecting sharp 4-point text.

According to CEO Alexi Romano, the HP Latex 800W is a robust, yet very easy to use roll-to-roll digital printer, and it produces high quality prints at high speed, on a variety of substrates. 'It is the perfect machine for our present digital printing requirements,' he said. 'For many years we have served the corporate identity signage market, for which the HP Latex 800W is perfect. We will also use it for wallpaper printing and other similar retail applications.'

Romano also praised Midcomp's service: 'Having dealt with founder Rob Makinson and his team for so many years, I have always found Midcomp to be a highly ethical company that delivers on its promises.'



Amjad Mentor, Annelize Marrison and Basil Hansby, Midcomp, with Keith Williams, Romano.

www.midcomp.co.za and www.romano.co.za

Intamarket Appointed As A Distribution Partner For Neschen Laminators In SA

Neschen's laminators, which feature exceptional precision and high production capacity, offer optimal finishing solutions for enhancing, protecting and embellishing large format applications that meet new-generation digital printing standards.

For Neschen Coating GmbH, a leading German

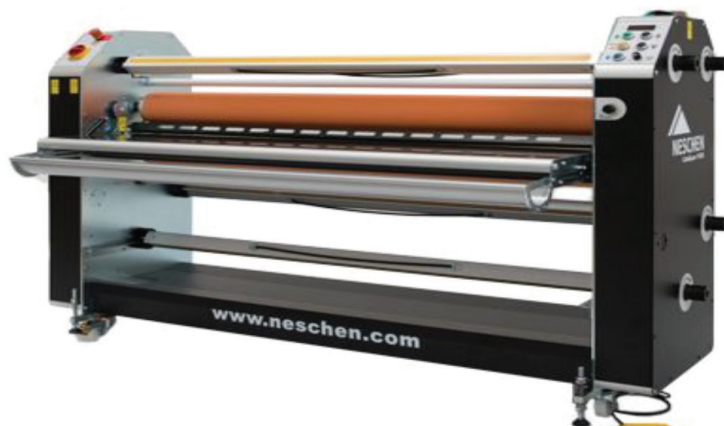
manufacturer of self-adhesive media, laminators, and industrial coating solutions, the new year begins with the start of promising cooperation.

With Intamarket, a Johannesburg-based, experienced supplier of high-quality equipment for the signage and graphics industry, Neschen has found a distribution partner who shares the

company's values and will henceforth represent Neschen laminators in the South African market.

With a history of more than 40 years, the distributor serves customers in neighbouring countries such as Namibia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe, and the South African market. 'We combine products from international, renowned manufacturers with excellent service that best meets the business needs of our demanding customers. Neschen's laminators are a welcome addition to our product portfolio,' said Intamarket Managing Director Gavin Turner.

Richard Bachora, Head of Sales Graphics at Neschen, is excited to kick off 2022 with the promising new partnership with Intamarket. 'The customer-oriented company philosophy lived by Gavin Turner, coupled with high-quality standards for the products offered, appeals to us very much and makes us look forward to the joint future with great expectation,' said Bachora.



www.intamarket-graphics.co.za

Stixo Announced As A Platinum Sponsor For Sign Africa Expos For 2022

Stixo Signage Supplies has been announced as a Platinum Sponsor for the Sign Africa Expos, taking place throughout 2022.

Stixo is an importer and national distributor of large format digital media, display systems, substrate rigid sheets, corporate gift blanks and signage accessories. The company caters for printing, signage and branding businesses, as well as re-sellers.

The company is solitary owned and managed, ensuring individualised services to each client and swift decision making. The managing team aims to further partner with international well-known companies, bringing world class brands into the South African market.

A major differentiator is that Stixo's range of products are mainly internationally sourced by their expert procurement, and research and development teams, who have a vast knowledge of import and export trade, and who also have substantial market awareness. As a result, Stixo can provide its clientele with very competitive, market-related pricing without compromising on quality.

www.stixo.co.za

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SIGNAGE SUPPLIES

Roland DG Is A Platinum Sponsor For Sign Africa 2022 Expos

Roland DG South Africa has been announced as a Platinum Sponsor for the Sign Africa Expos, taking place throughout 2022.

Roland DG is the leading supplier of solutions to the graphics arts, design and technology industries. The company's products are

manufactured using industry leading techniques and standards while minimising environmental impact. The Roland DG Care programme encompasses a complete range of premium services that creates peace of mind for the customer to allow their imagination to soar.

The Roland name is synonymous with superior digital printing, equipment performance, reliability, service and support. Built to build your business, Roland DG provides a wide range of machines and brands that offer customers the most versatile, advanced and reliable production.

The company eats, dreams and sleeps digital production solutions, be it for sign-writing, jewellery manufacturing, tool and die making, fashion and engraving. They are always dreaming up new and exciting ways for customers to become proficient and self-reliant with digital machinery.

www.rolanddg.co.za

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The Arch bridge stainless steel air-free platform effectively extends the heating duration of the medium in the tunnel.



Power shaker B602 (2 Heads)

Automated track advancement, based on the air suction platform. It's flexible, and is suitable for single cutting and roll baking.

- Most Advanced DTF Technology
- Continuous printing stability
- Better software compatibility
- Better productivity



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Zünd Cutter Increases PPE Production



Zünd has announced the installation of a 3XL-2500 cutter with optional extras. Trust is a key factor for The Solution House when investing in any new equipment and having purchased its first Zünd a few years ago, it was familiar with the level of service and product quality it would receive.

Last year, during the global pandemic, The Solution House put its sophisticated factory to good use by carefully developing a range of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the health sector and workplace shields to help businesses return to work in-line with social distancing guidelines.

As everyone began to return to normality, The Solution House were keen to ensure it remained well placed to deliver the needs of their clients in the new world of display. This meant new cutting capacity was required to deliver the increasing number of orders for social distancing signage required by retailers and large corporates. Director, Debbie Day, explained, 'To meet the demand of our growing order book, we had our existing Zünd machinery running very successfully 24/7. More recently, the pandemic landscape meant deadlines and lead-times became much shorter, so we needed more cutting capacity quickly.

Day said, 'We purchased our first Zünd back in 2018 – we believe they are the best in the business and trust the reliability they offer. Our Zünd Cutter has seen us through several vast periods of growth and looking ahead, it made sense for us to consider another Zünd Cutter.'

Having spoken to Zünd UK and specifying their

requirements, The Solution House opted for a Zünd Cutter 3XL-2500 with optional extras. Day said, 'Our investment in the Zünd equipment has future-proofed our business for its next period of growth. From the initial financing conversations through to purchase and the remote virtual support, we have remained impressed with the high level of service provided.'

Reflecting on their recent purchase, Kevin Supple, Director at The Solution House said, 'Having the new equipment in place enables us to realise some basic efficiencies. With an additional Zünd Cutter we can move faster without compromising on quality. Commercially, Zünd's efficiency can also create savings on our production costs, for example by dropping a shift of manpower. However, with the current high volume demands on production, having an additional Zünd means that we can keep those colleagues working, and simply produce more.

www.midcomp.co.za

Wide Format Printing Company Invests In LED Hybrid System From Agfa



The award-winning Jeti Tauro H2500 LED wide format engine offers incredible productivity with print speeds of 275sqm/h (2960 square feet per hour). American company SinaLite has increased its reseller capabilities by purchasing its second Jeti Tauro H2500 LED hybrid system from Agfa.

This robust hybrid production printer has an integrated roll-to-roll system and advanced automation for countless rigid and flexible media applications. With limitless possibilities for high-end sign and display products, the Jeti Tauro H2500

LED prints media up to 2.54m (100") wide in vivid six-colour plus white, or white and primer. The white ink function creates possibilities for printing on transparent material for backlit applications or printing white as a spot colour.

'We are achieving superior quality and operating faster turn times with the Jeti Tauro,' said Mike Meshkati, president of SinaLite. 'Our goal is to empower our clients by providing the print services, tools and knowledge they need to achieve success. The Jeti Tauro is delivering the wide format products they require to grow their business.'

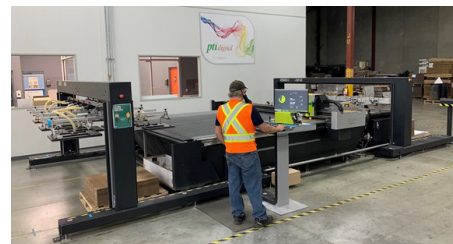
The Jeti Tauro wide format systems run Anuvia UV LED curable inks that produce a wide colour gamut and sharp, vibrant images that adhere to a broad range of flexible and rigid substrates.

Thanks to Agfa's 'thin ink layer' technology, ink consumption per square metre is low. This technology is based on the combination of pigments with exceptional colour strength, perfectly matched printer components that warrant low waste and maintenance, and smart algorithms in Agfa's Asanti workflow and colour management software.

'We did extensive testing and the speed really impressed us on the Jeti Tauro,' said Meshkati. 'It's a fast machine with low ink costs and it's a very solid device. We ran it and ran it. This system is durable and strong, so that we can operate 24/7 without issue.'

www.agfa.com

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

The VariAngle tool from Kongsberg Precision Cutting Systems ('Kongsberg PCS'), which enables cutting at any angle from 0 degrees and 60 degrees at high speeds, has been installed alongside a new C64 digital finishing table complete with the Kongsberg automated feeder and stacker at Packaging Technologies Inc's (PTI) Toronto facility. The acquisition is the latest for the business in an ongoing programme of investment.

PTI, the Ontario-based designer and manufacturer of corrugated containers and Point of Purchase displays, has become the first in North America to install the innovative VariAngle.

'We have an in-house design team that works with our customers to ensure we can deliver the impactful displays they want in order to achieve optimum standout,' said Victor Jorge, General Manager of PTI. 'With this investment in the VariAngle tool, we are removing historic constraints for our designers and giving them total freedom in the creativity of their 3D displays, maximising our customer satisfaction while also increasing our own efficiency and productivity.'

Effectively the shackles are off, and we are able to create more unique products and deliver stunning looking displays and packaging.'

As well as delivering unparalleled freedom in design, the Kongsberg VariAngle completely removes the need to stop production when changing or adjusting tools, drastically reducing setup time and increasing cutting speed. Fitting the tool makes Kongsberg C and XP tables completely self-sufficient and capable of delivering almost any creative design with automatic adjustment to any angle in half-degree increments up to 60 degrees.

'Previously, some of our designs might have needed three or even four different cutting tools throughout the production process,' added Jorge. 'But now with the VariAngle, we have a single tool which cuts straight lines and multiple angles at up to 100m/min and can even cut angled curves depending on the radius size.'

The VariAngle has been installed as part of complete digital finishing solution which includes the Kongsberg C24 cutting table. 'The C Series is renowned for delivering the highest levels of performance,' said Vince Tuccitto, Kongsberg PCS Territory Sales Manager for eastern Canada.

'With state-of-the-art, rock-solid engineering and aerospace technology, the C24 combines an aluminium composite tabletop, a rack and pinion drive system and dynamic table mapping to deliver the greatest cutting accuracy and consistency.'

www.kalideck.co.za

Metamark Media Used For COP26 Train Wrap Project



Metamark's MetaWrap MD-X, a 50 micron Cylinder Cast digital wrapping media, as well as Metamark MDP-R removable promotional grade digital vinyl were used in a railway project.

Commercial fleet and rail wraps are commissioned by their end-users generally against the expectation that the matter which the wrap promotes, branding for example, will be seen and remembered. Some studies suggest that around six thousand pairs of eyes an hour see a wrap when the fleet asset it covers is going about its business.

Impressive as that number is in confirming the value of branding and advertising wraps in marketers' and advertisers' mixes, it serves only to contrast the context of a train wrap of extraordinary significance produced by Milton Keynes based rail and fleet graphics specialist Charles Rayner Ltd. The wrap in question promoted the event and aims of the COP26 conference in Glasgow.

While it is newsworthy for promoting an event of great significance, the wrap is all the more notable because recyclable materials were involved in its manufacture and it was applied to a revolutionary, hydrogen powered train.

The wrapped train was a showcase for locomotion technology that will drive the decarbonation of the railways and it was in Scotland for COP26, along with the world's leaders, the world's press, and many thousands of others attending or observing. The wrap was seen by millions around the world, and locally, as all eyes turned toward Glasgow during the two weeks the conference was running.

The hydrogen powered train is the first, and so far only, example of what could become a new and very welcome means of travel that will benefit the planet. Answering to the name HydroFLEX, it's the work of rolling stock owner and asset manager Porterbrook, and it is propelled by a retro-fitted hydrogen-fuelled power plant helping legacy rolling stock rise to the call of new mission.

www.sytech.co.za

Business Increases Productivity With Fujifilm Flatbed Printer Installation



Canadian company Proprint immediately saw increases in productivity and efficiency for its retail clients with the installation of the Fujifilm Inca OnsetX3 HS flatbed printer.

The printer comes complete with a semi-automated robotic handling system. For Proprint, the decision to invest in the OnsetX3 HS was an easy one, when considering the significant effect it could have on the bottom line to keep work in-house that was previously sent out, including long run jobs that made more economical sense to run as large format litho.

'By watching how the industry was changing, it was a simple decision to put in the OnsetX3 flatbed to see what kind of volumes we could keep in-house,' said Richard Krakower, CEO of Proprint. 'Because of the on-time service that we now can provide to customers through the technology we have invested in, we have won about 10% more work from new and existing clients.'

With the installation of the OnsetX3, Proprint immediately saw increases in productivity and efficiency for their retail clients. For example, with the automated robotic handling system on the OnsetX3 HS paired with a fully-automated Kongsberg digital cutting system, Proprint has been able to cut run time per sheet by 67%, and pass on that time savings to its customers.

'We've made this investment in the OnsetX3 HS flatbed printer to continue to grow our capacity potential and uphold our ability to exceed our clients' needs,' said Krakower. 'Our new ultra-productive OnsetX3 HS printer and Kongsberg C Series digital cutter are the next step of evolution for Proprint as a complete print service provider.'

www.fujifilmgraphicsystems.co.za

Canon Large Format Printers Licenced As Pantone Calibrated For Pastels And Neons

A Pantone calibrated licence has been granted to



four new Canon GP series large format printers. Canon's new series of imagePROGRAF printers (GP-4000, 2000, 300 and 200), featuring the world's first fluorescent ink*, is also now the world's first licenced as Pantone Calibrated for Pantone Pastels and Neons.

Canon and Pantone technicians worked directly for a system of colour recipes to ensure that the range of Pantone Pastels and Neons Colours could be simulated and reproduced with the new GP printers.

When Pantone determined that these colours could be simulated consistently, it was pleased to grant these four printers its Pantone Calibrated designation. In addition, Canon's GP-4000 and GP-2000 printers were found by Pantone to achieve 99% coverage of Pantone Formula Guide Solid Coated Colours and received a Pantone Calibrated designation for those colours as well.

*Among major manufacturers of aqueous pigment large format printers, excluding sublimation transfer system.

www.pantone.com

Drytac Film Used For Large-Scale Wrap



Brisbane-based Rapid Displays used Drytac Polar Premium and Drytac Weathershield to complete an impactful, large-scale wrap of a lorry trailer for long-term customer Big Dog Pet Foods.

Big Dog Pet Foods contacted the company to wrap the 4m long refrigerated truck, which travels around the Australian state of Queensland delivering quality raw pet food products.

Being subject to constant travel, as well as the extreme-high temperatures that are common in Queensland, meant Rapid Displays required a film that not only printed well, but would hold up against these intense challenges.

Having worked with Drytac on several other projects over the past year, Rapid Displays opted

for Drytac Polar Premium Air White polymeric, paired with Drytac Weathershield Gloss polymeric PVC overlamine film for additional protection, both of which were supplied by Shann Group Graphics, were printed on a Roland TrueVis VG-640 printer/cutter before being applied to the lorry trailer, delivering a completely new look and helping to promote Big Dog Pet Foods while the lorry is out on the road.

'We needed a film that printed well and didn't have a strong immediate tack,' Rapid Displays owner Tim Bateman said. 'We were recommended this product and found that it worked perfectly. The print quality of Polar Premium Air is second to none. For sharp, striking truck-side graphics, Polar Premium simply could not be overlooked in terms of white point, gloss level, and longevity.'

'The quality of Drytac's Polar Premium Air's egress and clean removing adhesive made the installation much easier compared to other competing brands, while Drytac Weathershield Gloss is a dedicated matched component and protective UV overlamine for 7-year protection. Both films combined really created the 'wow' factor on this project.'

www.midcomp.co.za

Grafityp PVC-Free Films Used In Stadium Project

GRAFITYP

Grafityp's PVC free film was applied for the Dugouts of the Belgian Football Association in the Heysel Stadium. The GEF films are breathable, therefore, they are perfect for adhering to polycarbonate sheets.

Products used for this application

GEF UV

The non-PVC print films are the ecological alternative to PVC-films. This is a more durable solution. Non-PVC print films are also perfect for applications on polycarbonate and polystyrene.

GEF UV is a white matt polyolefine print film. It is PVC-free. Features: thickness: 100µm; water-based semi-permanent acrylic adhesive and it is specially developed for use on UV printers.

LAM121 UV

The PVC-free laminates are perfect together with the non-PVC print films. Together they make a sustainable solution. LAM 121 UV is a transparent matt polyolefine laminate. It is PVC-free.

Features: thickness: 80µm; transparent water based permanent acrylic adhesive; ideal for protecting UV-curable inks and it is designed for indoor and long-term outdoor use (3.5 to 5 years).

www.grafityp.com

EFI Installs UV LED Inkjet Printers



The EFI™ VUTEK® h Series represents a new generation of superwide format hybrid inkjet printers. With every job, they provide businesses with unmatched levels of reliability, serviceability, ease of use, functionality, quality, productivity and expandability. Direct Edge Media, a comprehensive wide format and commercial print service company, is expanding its fleet of printers with this printer, as well as two new EFI VUTEK® 5r+ roll-to-roll printers.

Newly installed, highly advanced VUTEK 5r+ UV LED inkjet devices can print superior-quality images quickly, while giving users the highest range of options for faster throughput and automated productivity. Direct Edge's new roll-to-roll solutions feature a reengineered printing algorithm that delivers superior quality with a lower total cost of ownership. Productivity-enhancing options for Direct Edge included with its 5r+ devices include auto blackout printing and bi-directional cutters and slitters for inline finishing.

These equipment additions create an opportunity for the high-volume display graphics facility in Denver to add more speed while reducing costs. 'In the current market situation, costs are going up and our customers are seeing fewer sales,' said Direct Edge Chief Operating Officer Jeff Shumaker. 'Therefore, we need to be as competitive as possible while still turning a profit. EFI helps us to do that.'

In that environment, selecting the new VUTEK printers is an easy choice. 'At Direct Edge, we've come to count on EFI's solutions. Their print-output quality always is top-notch, and they've shown a consistent ability to stand behind their products and support us in the field.'

The printers offer resolutions up to 1200 dots per inch (dpi), with EFI's 7-picolitre UltraDrop™ Technology delivering multi-drop addressability for high-definition image quality, outstanding smoothness in shadows, gradients and transitions, and superb text quality with text in both standard and higher quality modes. Media-handling accessories for Direct Edge's VUTEK 5r+ model printers facilitate easier media loading to help the company complete more jobs per shift. Shumaker was eager to install the VUTEK h5, EFI's newest-generation high production hybrid UV LED printer.

The printer also features resolutions up to 1200 dpi with 5-picolitre UltraDrop Technology. The VUTEK h5 model prints with up to eight colours, but the extended colour gamut possible with the printer's four-colour process inkset gives Direct Edge the ability to produce premium-quality work at fast speeds of up to 109 boards per hour using a CMYK x 2 ink configuration.

www.gsw.co.za



STIXO LAUNCHES NEW PRODUCT RANGES FOR THE SIGNAGE INDUSTRY

BY STIXO SIGNAGE SUPPLIES

Within the construction and signage industries, the popularity of Aluminium Composite Panels has increased over the past few years. Its uses have grown under the cover of energy efficiency, affordable pricing and construction possibilities. These materials are designed for ventilated façades, as well as their renovation or rehabilitation.

STIXO Signage Supplies, based in Crown Mines, Johannesburg, are excited to launch their impressive range of Aluminium Composite Panels 'ACM' and 'ACM-Lite' to the Southern African market and beyond.

Through consistent research and development, and tireless efforts to always stock and supply the very best to the signage and construction industries, the company have once again stood true to their commitment and have delivered.

'We have always kept our ears close to the ground when it came to satisfying the needs of our valuable customers,' said Asif Sidik, Managing Director, STIXO Signage Supplies. 'And due to the ever increasing interest and requests made by our customers for the acquisition of top quality Aluminium Composite Panels and Foam Board, we decided that the time was right to make it readily available and affordable.'





The aluminium composite panel has the ability to transform, making it a versatile material that can be used for the construction of risky and creative designs. It is ideal for the construction of areas of the façade that would be impossible with other materials. There are also endless possibilities of what can be achieved with STIXO's ACM Lite range, which suits the needs of the signage industry.

Further great news to the advertising, building, manufacturing and furniture industries is the simultaneous launch of the STX Foam Board range. STIXO Signage Supplies endeavours to always live up to its name as a one stop signage supplies outlet, and this has been further achieved with their complete range of Foam Board, ranging from 2mm to 20mm thickness and various sheet sizes to suit all customers' needs.

The ACM, ACM Lite and STX Foam Board ranges are names that customers can start getting very used to when they need to rely on a quality product and one which will be readily available in an array of finishes, sizes and different coloured sheets.



ACM[®] | **stx**[®]
ALUMINIUM COMPOSITE PANELS | PVC FOAM BOARD

STIXO Signage Supplies is waiting to introduce their complete range and prices to customers, along with the specifications. They aim to satisfy all needs and requirements. 📞

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FULL-COLOUR PROFESSIONAL 3D PRINTING

CREATES OPPORTUNITIES FOR BUSINESSES

BY JORDI DRIEMAN, MIMAKI EUROPE

With so many entrepreneurs, model-makers and creatives happily working with 3D printers that either offer limited or no colour at all, why change this process?

The productivity and creative benefits of adding 3D printing to almost any model-making business are clear, but the cost and complexity of the process can often be a barrier.

When new innovations are made more accessible, some find it hard to understand why they need to change the way they are working. The fact is that full-colour professional 3D printing can enable a wealth of new ground-breaking revenue opportunities or simply add significant value to an existing business that currently 3D prints in one colour.

With the availability of a cost-effective, complete 3D printing solution, businesses and entrepreneurs should not be asking 'why' but 'when' can I incorporate incredible, accurate colour and shading in my 3D models. These are the reasons.

Colour can give you a competitive edge

For those producing intricate, detailed scale models, figurines, collectables or product prototypes, colour range and accuracy provides a clear differentiator for your business. Whether producing figures from the latest video game, a prototype for new perfume packaging, or scale models of a client's yacht, finishing the model with hand painted colour and detail is time-consuming and expensive. Adding high-quality, full-colour 3D printing streamlines the process and still delivers a high-value model.

Colour can unleash creativity

Creatives, more often than not, use colour in their artwork and designs. To be able to 3D print their concepts in the colours they intended not only provides



a quick and effective way of conveying a prototype concept to a client, for example, but allows designers and artists truly unlimited creativity. Printing on-brand colour prototypes also preserves brand integrity, even from the concept stage.

Colour can be critical

There are 3D applications where colour is crucial to ensuring a true representation of what is being printed.

Medical professionals, researchers or educational organisations using 3D printing to deliver anatomical models or even prosthetics that truly match skin tones, require exceptional colour fidelity.

The launch of Mimaki's complete and affordable 3D printing solution includes the Mimaki 3Duj-2207m 3D Print prep Pro software and the 3DCS-322 post-processing unit. The end-to-end 3D printing process is now easier to implement and operate, making the dream of adding full colour 3D printing a reality. 🔗

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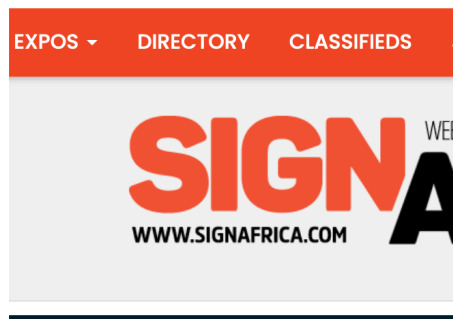
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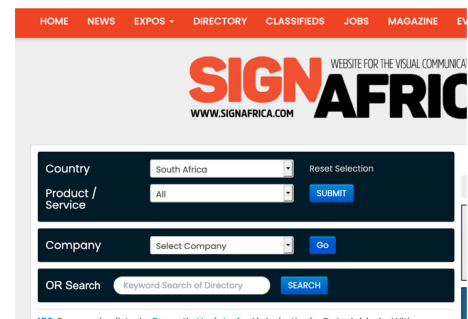
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THE DIGITAL WIDE FORMAT PRINTING MARKET CONTINUES TO EVOLVE

BY SABINE SLAUGHTER, DRUPA

Covid-19 has changed a lot within the printing industry and many new applications, even a new category – social distancing signage – have evolved. Predicted to reach a volume of US\$11.2 billion by 2025 (Markets and Markets), the wide format printing market is mature, but it has certainly not yet reached its heyday.

The wide and super wide format market has undergone its digital transition while certain analogue printing technologies, such as screen printing, continue to complement the overall mix offered by large format print service providers (PSPs) to their clients. In this regard, there's clearly still so much to be explored, compared, reviewed, etc.

Hand-painted signage always was a rare sight and is even more so nowadays – if you can find it at all. Developments in digital technologies – starting with the first digital wide format printer introduced in 1999 and presented at drupa 2000 – have since accelerated and come a long way. Even so, for PSPs today there are more and more new feats to be accomplished as client-demand increases for more surprising, more individual means of communication, for faster turnaround and for even more applications to be created. You could say in this sense that inkjet has no limit.

While long print runs are still more viable overall on analogue machinery, they are not being ordered as often as in former times. The digital transition means that more and more applications will become digital and this itself leads to highly specialised wide and super wide printers, many of which will be shown at drupa 2024. Such printers can deal with traditional applications, but more interestingly they enable innovative PSPs to showcase their ability to cater for new and unexpected market-niche jobs.

And most of all, to be able to viably produce short runs, personalised and customised projects, even one-offs, that help brand owners to do things not

previously possible so that their branding efforts reach their full potential.

Another big growth-factor in this sector is of course the environmental agenda, a global topic that extends far beyond drupa. As the world tries to reduce its negative climate impact, so printer manufacturers, PSPs and moreover the client ordering print (be it in a small or large corporation) are all considering how they can contribute to the environmental imperative.

The global pandemic has accelerated these client-driven requirements. Inks and consumables for wide and super wide printing, as well as the printers themselves, will be judged by visitors to drupa 2024 as to how well they fit into this context and into their own print shops. Many brands are willing to pay the extra dollar in order to obtain a more sustainable product, a trend that will continue into the future and which is likely to be reinforced by new regulations.

Wide and super wide format printers have been mainly developed to cater to the signage, advertising, marketing and communications industries. However, they can also make an entrance or even a slight dent in other markets thanks to their versatility which enables certain (mainly short run) jobs within the commercial, packaging and label industries, as well as proofing jobs later to be carried out on analogue machinery. Some can even make forays into areas formerly covered by lithographic equipment such as solar, printed electronics, RFID and all kinds of conductive products.

For the digital printing community and those considering entering the large

format market, it is important to understand this is a market based on a myriad of unique applications requiring specialised know-how. The list is long and varied – be it vehicle wraps, posters, art, interior or exterior signage, POP and POS, décor printing, directional way-finding, home furnishings, wallpapers, murals, any kind of displays, event and floor graphics, one-off signage from a large order that must be customised to fit the exact location where it will be installed (eg. bus stops with specific directions, info or offers) – and many others. Digital printing enables cost-effective, fast turnaround of orders while at the same time offering environmentally friendly solutions with no or next-to-no waste. In addition, it is starting to make inroads into the industrial printing sector. And there is no sign yet that it is slowing down.

Social distancing signage as a new category within the wide format sector developed rapidly during the pandemic. In many cases it meant and still means that certain jobs had and have to be produced immediately at very short lead times, quite often with regional or individual customisation.

Those kind of jobs will continue to be in demand for some time to come as the world battles the SARS-COV-2 virus. Even the individual home consumer is not excluded or overlooked when it comes to digital printing applications. PSPs already offer web-based order portals – so called online print services – not only for companies, advertising agencies etc, but also for the end consumer who can order individual one-off prints – be it as a mural, poster, wallpaper or even a floor graphic.

The driving force behind such new applications is not really the printer manufacturer, rather it is the marketing and communications community as well as the PSPs that actually drive application innovation (it is true, however, that manufacturers can influence PSPs in a certain direction).

In the end, the result is often quite astonishing as to what can be done with a wide or super wide format printer. And as the manufacturers are listening – to their clients, to advertising and marketing experts – so in turn comes the next wave in applications. Even within the specific area of embellishment, traditionally referred to as the finishing sector, such printers are stretching their own boundaries. Whether you want matt or gloss, haptic surface, spot colouring or digital embossing, cutting, cross-cutting, all just to name a few. Now it is no issue as many PSPs have embraced these abilities.

Within the digital wide format printing market and distinct from the printer's very own abilities, inks and consumables are playing another decisive role. Should it be UV or UV LED, aqueous, Latex, solvent or even pigment inks?

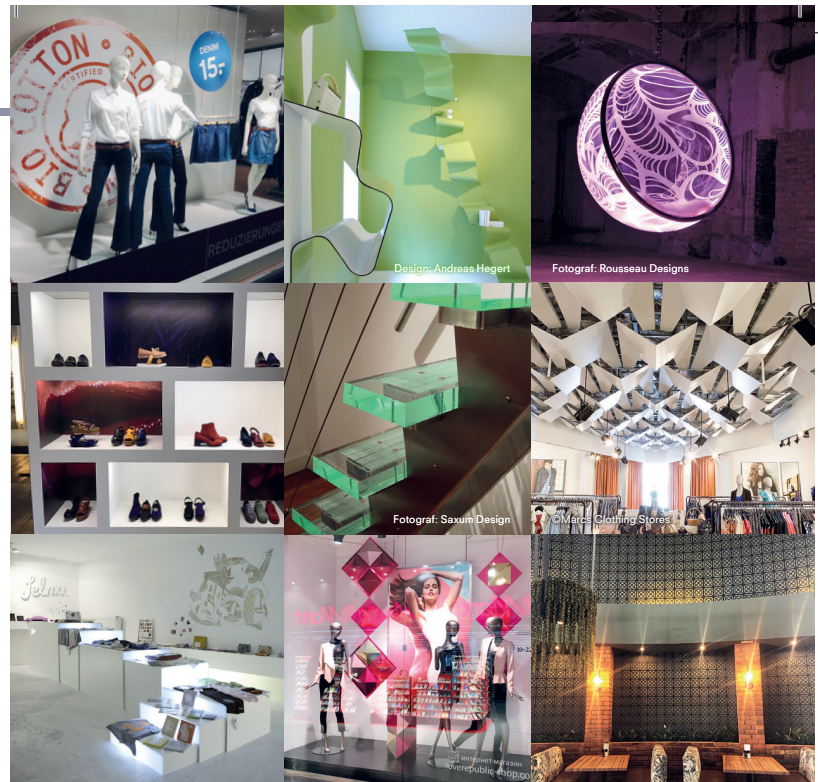
Here the application context and the client's usage scenario decide what is suitable for what application. Substrate developments have moved on significantly, opening the door to new applications as well. Not every substrate is suitable for a certain ink-type or a certain type of printers. Manufacturers and vendors can help potential clients to find the right combination for their intended application mix.

Wide format printing does not only encompass roll-to-roll or roll-to-sheet applications, but also the market for rigid substrates. Be it for printing on glass, plastics, PVC, PET, cardboard, foam, forex or any other kind of board or film, there are so many stunning effects that can be produced. As always, the rule applies – the desired application determines the kind of printer that a PSP should consider and purchase.

The biggest advantage of a wide or super wide digital printer however lies in its application versatility – whether in terms of customisation, personalisation, individualisation (when still viable and cost effective) and its efficiency, all together delivering a final customer impact that conventional technologies cannot achieve.

The boundaries of what digital wide and super wide format printing can do will be pushed further at drupa 2024 and PSPs will then be able to explore those applications even more deeply than they did before. The market is ripe for innovation, new applications and new machinery with associated technology enhancements including speed, colours, ink types as well as substrates. 📍

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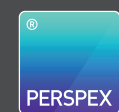
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A PEOPLE-CENTRIC MINDSET

NEEDS TO BE ENTRENCHED IN AN ORGANISATION'S VALUES CHARTER

BY DAVID PRESTON, CANON SOUTH AFRICA

In August 2021, a record 4.3 million workers quit their jobs in the U.S. It's a harrowing statistic that speaks to the phenomena known as the 'Great Resignation', which has seen employees from around the globe leave their jobs in droves during the pandemic.

As companies come to grips with this movement that is shaking businesses to the core, a mindset shift needs to take place where leaders go back to basics. With the constant industry chatter revolving around resource management and increased productivity, there needs to be an understanding that employees are people, first and foremost. It is about building honest personal connections with them, according to Canon South Africa Managing Director, David Preston.

'When I joined the company last year, I asked all of the managers to put forward the names of individuals they believed had the potential to take on more responsibility,' Preston said. 'Taking these people, I formed three separate groups, with six individuals in each cluster. Then, every month, I'd spend an hour and a half to two hours with each group and discuss several topics raised by the group or by me.'

There were three rules for these sessions, however. One, the group could discuss any topic in the room, and it stayed there. Two, they didn't discuss anything with other people outside of the group. And finally, they wouldn't discuss any challenges they had with colleagues or line managers in the business since those were issues that should be raised with the human resources department.

Within six months, the sessions provided invaluable insight for Preston. He was able to understand the challenges that the organisation faced. However, it also afforded him the opportunity to discover how the group members thought and their decision-making processes. Several of these individuals were identified as being undervalued and underutilised in the organisation, so Canon South Africa recognised the importance to upskill and promote them.

Preston believes that investing time in building personal relationships is key to understanding people better. If a leader listens, the people will speak. It's a simple concept, but it's often overlooked in discussions about people development and employee engagement.

'People development is about recognising where the opportunity lies in individuals but also understanding where they want to go in their careers,'

Preston explained. 'Conversation is a vital step in the process. You need to open an ongoing dialogue where people will feel comfortable sharing what they want to do and if they even want to be developed, because some individuals are comfortable exactly where they are. Once you understand what they want, you'll be able to have a bigger discussion about which skills they currently have and what upskilling they require to reach the next step.'

At the same time, a good leader should know that upskilling people could result in them leaving an organisation, especially if there isn't a role for them that matches what they want to do. Unfortunately, that's something that can't be controlled or changed, but if a business shows it is invested in its people for the long run, it does inspire them to stay where they feel appreciated and valued.

Preston maintains that a people-centric mindset needs to be entrenched in an organisation's values charter and flow throughout all areas of the business. 'This has to be at the heart of your operations as it'll determine how people relate within the business and with their customers as well,' he says. 'It's the responsibility of leaders to uphold these values and channel the message to the management team.'

Therefore, it's essential to train managers in terms of the organisation's expectations of them, Preston stated. It needs to be made clear what it means and what is required to become a good people manager. 'Too often, organisations make the mistake of promoting people to positions of leadership but fail to state what the organisation and their people will expect of them,' he said. 'They need to be empowered, too.'

With the 'Great Resignation' and a disconnected workforce taking up all the business headlines, it's more critical than ever to create powerful human connections at work. With people being social beings by nature, they tend to go or stay where they feel the most valued. And if time is the greatest commodity that everyone has, it's only fair that businesses invest it back into the people who add purpose to the organisations. 🔄

www.canon.co.za



TAKING THE APPLICATION SELLING APPROACH

WITH SIGNAGE MEDIA

BY PETER BOURGEOIS, DRYTAC

A key focus concerning signage media is what customers can achieve by working with these materials.

Traditionally, the main focus for print service providers has been to promote their services and products to customers to win new and repeat business. However, in what is now an incredibly busy market where many companies are offering similar services, it may be time to alter this approach to help your business stand out from the crowd.

A recent study from Forrester Research found companies that sell services or products with a vision of what customers can actually achieve have a 74% chance of winning a deal. To put it simply, rather than solely focusing on showcasing your products' technical specifications, you should instead consider highlighting what you can actually do with them and showcase all the weird and wonderful applications they can be used for.

This is certainly true of the sign and graphics industry, where this alternate way of working translates to application selling. Rather than pitching the type or brand of media, you should instead help your customers see what can be created using your products. Doing this allows the customer to see the opportunities they can access and provides them with food for thought when it comes to developing innovative graphics.

This type of application selling also speaks to the customer's wallet and helps them visualise sellable products. Even if the time is not right, they will remember you when these opportunities do come up.

We focus on what our customers can achieve by working with our materials. Rather than looking at a piece of sticky print media, customers are instead

seeing the many types of applications the products can create, thus making it a much more sellable product. These specific jobs and applications allow printers to pitch real world products and visualise solutions.

Here is an example of the two approaches to selling this type of media. If we were to go along with the technical approach, we could explain to customers that a specific product of ours is easy to apply, repositionable, removable and can be printed with most wide format ink sets.

However, if we were to focus on the application instead, we can tell customers that by using these products, they will be able to create stunning, two-sided POP applications for windows that can be easily installed without bubbles or peeling, has no light bleed through and can be repositioned and removed without leaving residue.

Taking the application selling approach, we can instead explain how the film can be used to create vibrant murals with depth and texture and can be installed with ease and removed without leaving any residue or causing damage to the wall surface, even after several years of use.

So, next time you are talking to a printer about the materials you have, focus on the applications and help them to visualise the products they can create and sell. You will almost certainly find that they will come back to you time and time again because you are giving them solutions and ideas. 🎯

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VEHICLE WRAPPING

VINYL TECHNOLOGY TRENDS

BY MEGGAN MCCARTHY, SIGN AFRICA

The latest vinyls feature high-end technology and excellent quality with eye-catching finishes and effects. New premium colours give designers more freedom to showcase their talent. The colours also create dazzling graphics — ideal for drivers who want to ensure they stand out and who are keen to share their unique looks on social media.

'We really enjoy the latest technology that manufacturers are adding to their products. It helps us deliver quality wraps and paint protection film in a much shorter amount of time. The air release technology ensures a smooth application in a fraction of the time it used to take,' said Mathew Wilkinson, Director, Mint Wrapworks. 'The conformability and advancements in adhesive gives us the comfort of trusting these new products with minimal joints and inserts, giving the finished job a quality look and feel.'

High conformability

Many vinyls feature high conformability, enabling installers to wrap complex, curved body panels without first removing the protective film layer. They also feature lower friction, enabling installers to more easily slide squeegees and wrap gloves over the surface.

Adhesive

Monarch Media Designs uses a vinyl with air-release channels. They stated that: 'These channels are really important for any wrap application, even though the client may never know the difference. Air release channels are tiny channels on the back of the vinyl, in the adhesive. They allow air to flow through when the vinyl is applied, which eliminates any type of bubbling.'



One particular vinyl features a micro-structured material adhesive, which delivers excellent repositionability and faster, bubble-free installation results.

Today's adhesives not only offer excellent conformability around curves and recesses — making application simple and fast — they ensure vinyls are easily removable, even after long-term use, without leaving residue or scratches.

Ease of removability is important, especially for a commercial fleet that needs the branding changed at a moment's notice, or individuals who want to frequently change the look of their cars. It is also important to maintain the resale value of vehicles.

Paint protection films

Some films feature a protective layer that helps to reduce surface impressions in a finished goods roll. It remains on during installation, then is removed easily and cleanly afterwards. Scratches impressed into the protective film layer will not transfer to the wrap film itself. Featuring unique, conformable film layers, it provides a better fit around curves and in channels for sleek appearance and easier installation.

Specific protective films feature a special top-coating technology that keeps cars looking newer for longer by protecting them from rock chips, insects, stones and harsh weather. The protective layer also ensures that the film is highly resistant to chemicals. The migration of dirt into the film is effectively prevented by the surface coating, which prevents yellowing. These products are ideal where more rugged protection is required.


Special finishes and textures

Vinyls are available in gloss, gloss metallic, matt, matt metallic finishes, leather and other striking looks to add depth and texture.

Application range

Vinyls are suitable for vehicle wrapping and for interior design, as well as sign making on cars, boats, trucks and aeroplanes, outdoor signage and for striping in the automotive industry. They can be used for indoor and outdoor applications.

Printing compatibility

While some vinyls can be printed with UV, solvent, eco-solvent and latex inks, others are certified for specific printers — always check with your supplier if the vinyl will be suitable for your printers and inks. 



Sources: 3M, Avery Dennison, Grafityp. Orafol, HEXIS and Mactac Graphics.



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SPEED IS A CRITICAL ELEMENT OF CUSTOMER SERVICE



BY JOHN TSCHOHL, THE SERVICE QUALITY INSTITUTE

Speed matters, and there are several reasons for that. We live in an age of technology, which has in many cases greatly reduced the time it takes us to accomplish a task. That brings with it the need for others — particularly companies we do business with — to dramatically reduce the time it takes them to accomplish the tasks that we require of them.

Speed is a critical element of customer service. Unfortunately, business owners and executives often overlook its importance as they plan their strategies to attract and retain customers and increase their sales. Too often they focus on catchy slogans and increased advertising instead of zeroing in on what really matters to their customers.

I see three internal roadblocks to using speed as a competitive edge. The first is the mindset of employees who procrastinate, whether they are serving internal or external customers. The second is that employees lack the empowerment necessary to respond to customer requests and complaints. In fact, even if they are empowered to make decisions, they often will not do so because they don't want to run the risk of being reprimanded or fired. So, what do they do? They seek approval from their bosses for whatever steps they want to take. In the process, they delay action — and dismiss speed.

Policies and procedures also get in the way of providing speedy service. Most policies and procedures are nothing more than 'speed bumps'. When employees are restricted in their attempts to quickly and efficiently deal with customers, those customers often will spend their money somewhere else.

Let me give you an example of speedy, empowered and excellent service. A friend had purchased a bathroom vanity top from a store, but never used it. Two years later, while shopping at that store, she noticed the store was still carrying that vanity top. She stopped at customer service, told the employee she had a vanity still in its original box, and she still had the receipt. She asked if she could return it and, without hesitation, the employee said she could. There was no need to bring the request to the manager or to check company policy. The

employee handled the situation — and that store has a customer for life.

Your company's operational hours also impact speed. If my drain is clogged or my car needs service, do I want to wait a week to have the problem solved? No, I want it done today. Too often, companies don't set their hours with the customer in mind. I recently spoke in Moscow, Russia, a city that appreciates its citizens' need for speedy service. In order to provide it, Moscow's multi-functional centres are open from 8am to 8pm, seven days a week.

Speed has high value in the eyes of your customers. If you want to capitalise on that need, you must remove the obstacles that get in the way of serving with speed. You must stress speed to your employees and empower them to solve problems and make decisions that will drive your business. I do caution you, however, not to sacrifice quality in favour of speed; the two must go hand in hand in serving customers.

Put another way, if you want to attract and retain customers, speed will help you do so. The more quickly you serve them, the more quickly your sales will soar.

John Tschohl is a professional speaker, trainer, and consultant. He is the President and founder of Service Quality Institute with operations in over 40 countries. He is considered to be one of the foremost authorities on service strategy, success, empowerment and customer service. 📍

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DIRECT TO FILM TECHNOLOGY BENEFITS

BY MEGGAN MCCARTHY, SIGN AFRICA

Direct to film technology is increasing in popularity for textile printing. According to DTG Pro, the process works by using printing transfers that are heat pressed to a variety of fabrics, quickly creating custom T-shirts and apparel.

Direct to film modified printers that are used for the process typically come with multiple coloured ink tanks. 'These tanks allow printers the convenience to operate using CMYK settings. The direct to film printer ink is designed for use with this process,' stated ColDesi.



The basic direct to film process, according to Every Tees and Splashjet Inkjet Ink:

Step 1: Print on film

Create a mirror image of the print design using a white base colour. The mirror image will be printed on a PET film, which will later be used to press the image onto the garment.

Step 2: Powdering

Hot-melt powder is applied on the film that has the printed image on it. This process is done by an automatic powder shaker that is used to apply the powder evenly and also to remove the excess powder.

Step 3: Melting the powder

After the transferred powder is applied, it is then placed in a curing oven and heated. The powder is heated until it begins to melt. The melted transfer powder acts as a strong adhesive to attach the image to the garment.

Step 4: Pre-pressing

This involves pre-pressing of the fabric prior to the transfer of the image by the film. The fabric is kept in the heat press and pressurised under heat for about 2 to 5 seconds.

Step 5: Transfer

The image and melted transfer powder are placed on the target garment and pressed uniformly using a heat press.

Step 6: Cold peel

The image print is peeled away from the transfer paper. To maintain the highest level of adhesiveness, the transfer paper must be removed when the image and garment cool to a certain temperature.

Splashjet recommends an optional post-pressing step whereby 'the final fabric with the transferred design is pressed in the heat press for around 10 to 15 seconds'.

Benefits

Variety of fabrics

One of the benefits that make direct to film popular is that it can be used for a wider variety of fabrics compared to direct to garment (DTG) printing. 'It can be used on cotton, nylon, leather, polyester, and 50/50 blends. This is unlike DTG technology, which only works on cotton fabrics. Direct to film printers work on both white and dark garments and can get the job done without requiring you to press on costly A+B paper,' state DTG Pro.

Affordability

Direct to film requires no pretreatment, which can streamline your operations and increase profit margins. 'Overall, the direct to film printing process is quicker and requires less labour than DTG printing,' state Allprintheads.

One should still invest in quality equipment to get quality results. Along with a direct to film printer, DTG Pro states that users will need: direct to film powder; direct to film sheets; compatible software; hot-melt adhesive powder; direct to film ink; a heat press; automatic powder shaker and a curing oven. There are also optional and reusable antislip pads available to keep transfer films flat and steady.

Less wastage

In general, the direct to film process is faster and more error-proof. STS Inks states that the process does not require 'cutting or weeding, creates crisp

and defined edges and images, does not require advanced technical printing knowledge and produces less waste'.

'Direct to film technology is far more reliable due to its enhanced performance and consistency of design. Plus, you will never have to worry about distorted images and unwanted white lines,' states ColDesi.

These are the pros and cons of direct to film technology, according to Splashjet:

Pros

- The fabrics exhibit good wash characteristics.
- The fabric has a very slight hand-feel touch.
- The process is faster and less tedious than DTG printing.

Cons

- The feel of the printed areas is slightly affected when compared to fabrics designed with sublimation printing.
- The colour vibrancy is slightly low compared to sublimation printing. 📌



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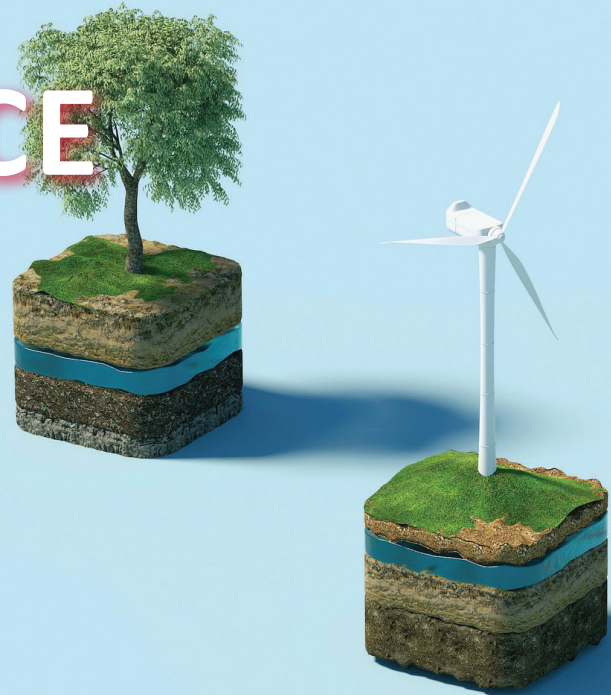
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PRINT SERVICE PROVIDERS

ARE BUILDING THEIR SUSTAINABILITY CREDENTIALS



BY LAUREL BRUNNER, VERDIGRIS PROJECT

Companies wanting to learn about the environment and print's impact on it have ample choice to meet their carbon footprinting needs.

Almost every day another consulting group states that they can help printing companies become more environmentally accountable. Offerings range from some sort of sustainability scheme or service, to overpriced environmental consulting. There is a bandwagon cranking up and lots of people are in line waiting to board.

It is all very entrepreneurial and innovative. And it is great that new businesses and services are springing up to support the graphics industry as it transitions to a more sustainable future.

Print Service Providers (PSPs) are building their sustainability credentials because it is what print buyers expect. If a printing company has credentials, such as certification to ISO 14001 (Environmental management systems), they increase their chances of getting the work. If they have got an environmental policy of some description, that is brownie points too. But the PSPs who haven't a clue how to have the sustainability conversation, provide an excellent opportunity for organisations offering environmental and sustainability advice to do a little business.

Caveat emptor, because it isn't always necessary for PSPs to bring in outside advisors because sustainability is about common sense. The basics all printers, especially digital printers, should keep in mind when it comes to their sustainability messaging are just that: basic. Print has a one time carbon footprint during production, unlike electronic media which needs energy to view.

Print also has the quality and experiential edge, in that is unmatched on screen and it can be touched and felt. It makes a great companion to digital campaigns, acting as a catalyst for online actions, for instance through QR codes. Print is also based on a sustainable resource: paper can be recycled up to seven times. Recycling and reprocessing plants are established and functioning and the resource, trees, is renewable. The rare earth metals and plastics based on petrochemicals and used in electronic devices, are not.

Consultants can help printing companies with carbon footprinting their businesses and the print they produce. Carbon calculators for print abound but they mostly come with strings attached: certifications that cost, sharing the data and signing up for a membership. Creating communities is what the online and live business worlds are all about. However, the data sharing dimension is about data not community and developing priority data sets is another new business the sustainability industry is developing.

Aggregate data can only be trusted if it is based on a common model. Fortunately, there is a calculator for measuring a print run's carbon footprint: ISO 16759 lays out the requirements for quantifying and communicating the carbon footprint of print media products. PSPs who want to create accurate and trustworthy carbon footprinting data should start with this document. Or if working with an external organisation, check that their calculator is based on the standard. Within the graphics industry only Ricoh and Heidelberg have developed certified calculators based on ISO 16759.

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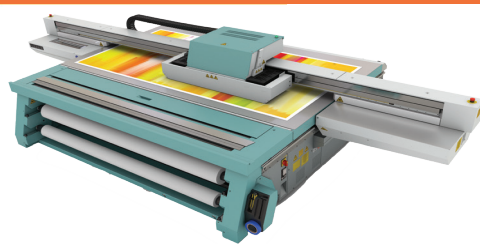
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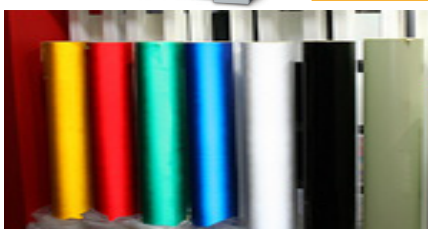
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An Overview Of Climate Change And The Impact Of Carbon Calculators For Printers

Dr. Abdool Majid Mohamed, Printing SA CEO, writes that the environment is facing a major and growing crisis, and emphasises on the remedial measures that must take place.

The late Archbishop Desmond Tutu said that we fought apartheid successfully, now we need to fight climate change with the same focus and dedication. He said that unfortunately those who have no involvement in creating the problem are most affected – that is the ordinary citizen – while those who have the capacity to arrest the situation, mainly governments and multinationals, dither – and that is the deep injustice. Now we have to fight what he termed as ‘blue apartheid’.

While government can be complimented for institutionalising Operation Phakisa to grow the ocean economy, boost economic growth and create jobs, the project falls short of a focus on the sustainability of our oceans. Instead, government has prioritised, and some say subsidised, the establishment of potentially devastating and destructive offshore oil and gas industry exploration.

It is sad that while the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) is being proactive in waste management and ensuring air quality with minimised emissions, and that the Department of Tourism is trying to grow international and local tourism in pristine areas like the Wild Coast, another Department, that of Minerals and Energy, has been given the green light for offshore exploration. This dichotomy is bound to have serious long term negative impacts on the fragile economy of the Eastern Cape.

Scientists have predicted that if nothing is done within the next eight years (ie. the next 3000 days), global warming will increase by 1.5°C, and this will unleash a climate catastrophe that could signal the end of life of earth. We only have a short window period to halve carbon emissions – this is how desperate the situation has become.

We are already at 1.2°C of heating, and can see the effects on the planet. In 2021, torrential flooding in



China and Western Europe killed hundreds, raging wildfires have destroyed entire towns (and these were visible from outer space), deforestation has altered the landscape in the Amazon permanently and drought and famine will turn millions into climate refugees.

The sea level rise caused by global climate change is an existential threat to all coastal regions, in particular the low lying island destinations in the world. At the current rate of global warming, almost 80% of the Maldives could become uninhabitable by 2050.

COP26

The global climate summit that wrapped up in Glasgow is known as COP26, with CoP standing for Conference of the Parties, and 26 being the 26th annual event. In diplomatic parlance, ‘the parties’ refers to the 197 nations that agreed to a new

environmental pact, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, at a meeting in 1992.

The overall aim was for net zero emissions by 2050, and to not surpass 1.5°C of temperature. Some of the positive and noteworthy achievements of CoP 26 were:

- Deals were struck concerning methane gas, with 105 countries pledging to significantly cut emissions of the powerful greenhouse gas.
- Green finance, with more than 450 banks controlling \$130 trillion agreeing to support clean technology and move money away from industries that burn fossil fuels.
- An interesting deal was the ‘Glasgow Leaders’ Declaration on Forest and Land Use’. This

historic declaration was signed by over 130 countries, among them China, the USA and, crucially, Brazil, and aims to halt and reverse global deforestation over the next decade. The deal includes £5.3bn of new private finance, and £8.75bn of public funding for restoring degraded land, supporting indigenous communities, protecting forests and mitigating wildfire damage.

It is estimated that deforestation accounts for almost a quarter of all greenhouse gas emissions, with forests largely cleared for agricultural purposes such as growing crops for palm oil, soy, and feeding cattle. Brazil, Russia, Indonesia and Democratic Republic of the Congo collectively account for 85 percent of the world's forests.

Tropical deforestation accounts for being the third largest emitter of carbon dioxide on Earth. On the flip side, if forests are left to grow, they remove over 7.6 billion tons of carbon from the atmosphere every year, which is roughly 20% of global emissions – so forests play an integral part of the regeneration efforts.

On the down side, the final Glasgow Pact signed resulted in the watering down of the phrase 'phasing out' to 'phasing down' of coal and fossil fuel usage. Coal alone is responsible for 40% of annual CO2 emissions.

The agreement – although not legally binding – will set the global agenda on climate change for the next decade. The agreement pledged to significantly increase money to help poor countries cope with the effects of climate change and make the switch to clean energy.

While progress was undoubtedly made in some areas, many people felt it was just not enough. But it has provided a platform to build upon when countries return to the negotiating table next year to sharpen their resolutions and increase their vows to cut emissions. Until then, we should celebrate the successes and continue to shout about the inherent sustainability of the print and paper industry (acknowledgement: Two Sides).

Carbon emissions calculators

Measuring carbon emissions and carbon quotas is

becoming more mainstream. There are two carbon calculators that have been developed and are in use, particularly in Europe. The calculation covers all six greenhouse gases (GHG) defined in the Kyoto protocol, expressed as carbon equivalents. These gases are carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, sulphur hexafluoride and two groups of gases (hydrofluorocarbons and perfluorocarbons).

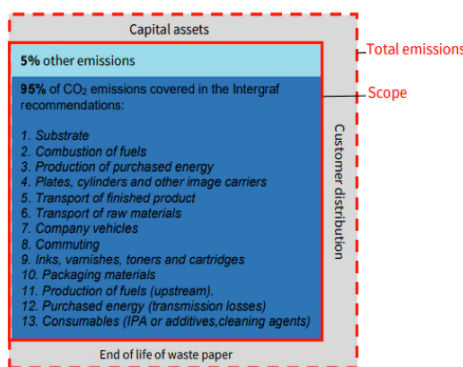
The majority of the printing sector however consists of small or micro enterprises, in need of a simple model which is easily applicable to their activities.

When following the EU recommendations, a printer will be able to identify around 95% of its total CO2 emissions within the defined scope. The current analyses were based on sheet fed and heatset offset as well as publication gravure printing.

The European Commission's package of proposals to fight climate change includes:

- Reductions in greenhouse gases of at least 20% by 2020 (compared with 1990 levels).
- Raise in renewable energy's share to 20%.
- Cut overall energy consumption by 20% (compared with projected trends).

Direct emissions from combustion cover exclusively fossil fuel. The Intergraf recommendation for calculating carbon emissions from printing activities is described in the table below. All the parameters in the table are defined as either 'Site relevant' or 'Product relevant' to point out where the customer may influence the carbon footprint of the printed material.



How The Printing Sector Can Help Protect The Environment

Two carbon calculators already launched are:

1. ClimateCalc

ClimateCalc (<https://bit.ly/3rvRECU>) takes a lifecycle perspective to provide exact information on the climate impact of individual graphic products produced in Europe. It takes into account data about the raw materials used to create the product, as well as about the graphic company producing it. The system is available in several languages and used in 17 countries.

2. Climate Initiative

The Klimainitiative der Druck und Medienverbände (Climate Initiative of the Printing and Media Associations) gives German companies the opportunity to offer customers climate neutral products – including offsetting unavoidable emissions. It can make calculations for sheetfed offset printing, web offset printing, gravure printing, digital printing, packaging printing, and envelope printing. Read more: <https://bit.ly/3KyUAHF>

The European Green Deal

Under the European Green Deal, the European Commission has announced a sustainable product policy legislative initiative. It is designed to make products fit for a climate neutral, resource efficient and circular economy; to reduce waste; and to ensure that the performance of frontrunners in sustainability progressively becomes the norm.

Reducing carbon and environmental footprints is among the sustainable principles that the commission will promote in its new initiative.

In addition, the commission is due to propose measures on substantiating green claims. The aim of these measures will be to combat greenwashing, as well as to empower consumers, companies and other market actors to make sense of the various environmental labels that are active in the EU. Source: Intergraf.

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DIGITAL PRINT OPERATOR 3 JAN

Digital operator with knowledge of various printers like Mimaki, HP, swissQprint and Roland machines. Dedicated to what I do. mutavhatsindis28@gmail.com Gauteng

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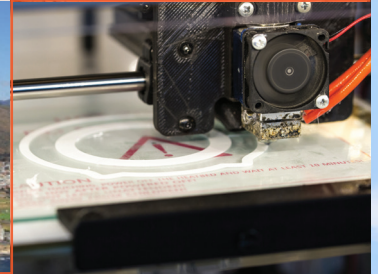
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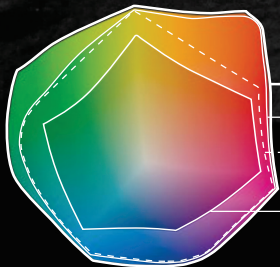
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