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ALTRON BYTES DOCUMENT SOLUTIONS EXPANDS PORTFOLIO WITH MUTOH'S WIDE FORMAT PRINTERS



Altron Bytes Document Solutions (BDS) will distribute Mutoh's leading wide format digital printers in sub-Saharan Africa. This follows a partnership between Altron BDS and Mutoh distributor Mips Technologies. The companies' combined expertise will expand the Mutoh brand even further in the region.

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A TEMPTING 2020 FOR 3D PRINTING



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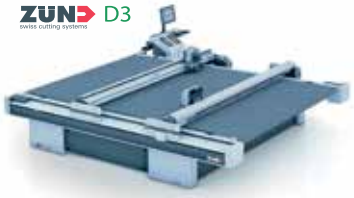


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EDITOR'S NOTE

BY MEGGAN MCCARTHY, EDITOR

Our front cover focuses on Altron Bytes Document Solutions (BDS), who will distribute Mutoh's leading wide format digital printers in sub-Saharan Africa. This follows a partnership between Altron BDS and Mutoh distributor Mips Technologies. The companies' combined expertise will expand the Mutoh brand even further in the region.

It is crucial that events around the globe are cancelled or postponed to slow down the spread of COVID-19. Sign Africa joins the following events that have taken these steps, including FESPA Madrid, DPES, Sign China, Dscoop, Sign and Digital UK and ISA Sign Expo, drupa and Visual Impact Expo to name a few. Despite the economic costs involved in this decision, the health and safety of staff, exhibitors and visitors is critical.

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- Cape Town Expo - postponed to 15-16 July 2020 (Hall 2).
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- The Johannesburg expo, scheduled for 9-11 September 2020 at the Gallagher Convention Centre, will remain unchanged at this stage.

Other features in this issue:

When selecting the medium, it is vital to plan ahead. Whether long-term wall design in hotels and other interiors or short-term promotion at the point of sale – there are suitable wall coverings for any purpose. High-tack wallpapers offer powerful adhesive formulas, ideal for semi-permanent or permanent installations. Read more in: The Transformative Effects Of Printable Wall Coverings.

For decades, screen printing has been the first-choice method for creating printed apparel, but it can also be used effectively on wood, paper, glass and ceramics. In heat transfer printing, an image is created on a wax-based heat ribbon, which is pressed against the substrate and heated, so that the ink melts and is transferred to the surface underneath. Which process is more efficient?

A common cause of wall graphics installation failure is lack of a proper site survey. This should include peel testing the products that will potentially be used, checking the paint in situ, finding out if there are any air conditioning units or heaters in the vicinity and what the local ambient atmosphere is, and, if possible, discovering what is under the paint and how long ago the paint was actually applied. There's lots of detective work to do.

Whether used to refer to ink printed onto food directly – 'edible inks' – or, alternatively, food packaging, 'food compliant ink' needs to be safe, while also providing excellent performance and visual appeal. According to Sensient Imaging Technologies, there are five things you should know about food-safe inks and what they have to offer the food industry.

All laser devices cut or engrave by using extreme focused heat on the material. This heat is generated in such a short period of time and at such high temperatures, that the material will evaporate in microseconds. Knives have the intrinsic advantage that they will cut just about anything. What's more, they will do this without generating fumes. Learn about the key differences of each technology.

Signing off
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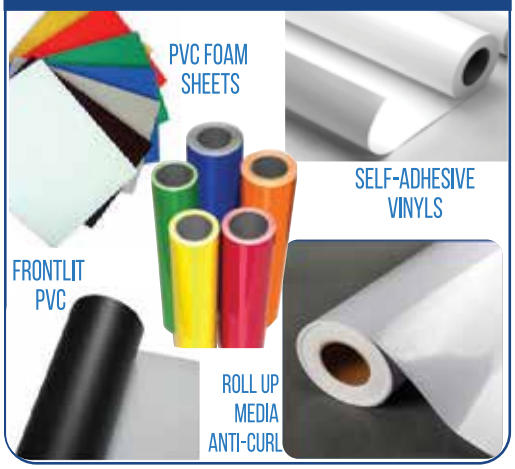
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Complete with ONYX Hub 2.0 is a redesigned intuitive user interface that automatically optimises for use on any device. The new responsive framework provides real-time access to print production data from any network desktop, tablet or mobile device to enable time-sensitive business decisions based on actual data. It offers a unique approach to bringing real production data into a print shop to make better business decisions. **www.graficomp.co.za**

Mimaki Tx300P-1800 MkII

The hybrid digital textile printer adds sublimation transfer printing to its capabilities, opening up a host of possible new materials and applications. Uniquely designed with versatility at its core, the new printer enables both direct-to-textile and transfer printing, with interchangeable platens and three different ink combinations – providing unrivalled flexibility within a single system and opening new doors for print service providers. **www.gsw.co.za**



Epson SureColor SC-F6300

The dye sublimation printer has been developed for textile producers, promotional goods businesses and photographic studios. It boasts a low total cost of ownership thanks to improved user productivity and reduced downtime. Easy user access and printhead maintenance minimise the need to call an engineer. This reduction in downtime and easy maintenance access keeps businesses running more efficiently. **www.chemosol.co.za**



Stratasys 3D Printer

The J826 makes it possible for enterprise groups to save weeks on design cycles with exceptional print quality to create highly realistic prototypes that help achieve the exact intent of the designer, bringing them to life much faster and increasing quality with more design iterations. It is particularly suited for enterprises with mid-volume modelling requirements in industries such as consumer goods and electronics, automotive and educational institutions. **www.stratasys.com**



Fisher Textiles Black Liner Fabrics

GF1707 Soft Knit Black is 100% Polyester and is 320cm (126 inches) wide. It has a tight structure and high opacity with excellent durability. Recommended for double sided banner liner or exhibit graphics, the no-bleed yarns used to manufacture this fabric ensure that it can be washed without fading or bleeding. GF4608 Power Stretch Black is 90% Polyester, 10% Spandex, 320cm (126 inches) wide and is flame retardant. **www.fishertextiles.com**



Agfa Roll-To-Roll Printer

The Oberon RTR3300 – a dedicated 3.3m high-end roll-to-roll machine – comes in a four colour plus white, and a six colour version, depending on user needs and preferences. In 'express mode', the printer hits an impressive 150sqm/h, while still delivering Agfa's well-known exceptional image quality. In 'production mode', the Oberon reaches a consistent 85sqm per hour. The dual-roll option is capable of handling two rolls each up to 1.6m wide, doubling the total output. **www.agfa.com**



Top Value Home Décor Collection

After months of research and testing, Top Value Fabrics (TVF) has chosen base fabrics that deliver pattern clarity, depth and a handcrafted appeal that also feels good to the touch. This collection of fabrics offers high quality results in dye sublimation, UV printing and more. The products range from silky chiffon to vegan leather. The line has been designed to be digitally printed using dye sublimation. **www.topvaluefabrics.com**



LG Wall Panels

The 55SVH7F and 55SVH7PF-H even bezel video wall panels offer 700 nits of brightness and can be installed in a horizontal or vertical orientation for a variety of video wall needs. The 0.44mm even bezel video wall panels create a virtually seamless image, with vivid uniform colour throughout the assembled large screen. Both models also feature a new embedded Smart Calibration tool that reduces both installation and maintenance time, and ensures consistent performance. **www.lgamazingdisplay.com**



Drytac Window Graphic Media

The light-blocking properties of SpotOn White M50 make this matte media ideal for window applications in retail, medical or office environments, as well as for wall graphics, trade show displays, indoor signage or retail promotions where show-through would otherwise affect the design. In particular, this 100µ (4 mil) monomeric PVC film is perfect for short-term applications thanks to Drytac's innovative adhesive technology: a unique dot pattern adhesive that is virtually undetectable. **www.midcomp.co.za**



HOT NEW PRODUCTS

DD 4420 Nirvana Purity Fabric

This is a treated version of Fisher's award-winning GF4020. The soft signage fabric has a pigment coated white-back for complete opacity. This premium product gives a two-in-one solution for printable fabric with a built-in liner and a finished back, providing cost savings in material and labour. Nirvana Purity has a wide range of uses for indoor and outdoor retail advertising and trade show exhibit environments. It enables a tight and smooth fit in framing systems. **www.fishertextiles.com**



Oralite Reflective Tapes

Oralite reflective tapes for the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) market feature six new reflective garment tapes, all enhancing visibility and safety of the wearer, whilst improving user comfort. The perforated tapes combine a unique appearance with protection, breathability and comfort. The segmented tapes feature superior and durable performance in all weather conditions, and are prismatic, flame retardant and feature the highest level of reflectivity. **www.orafol.com/en**



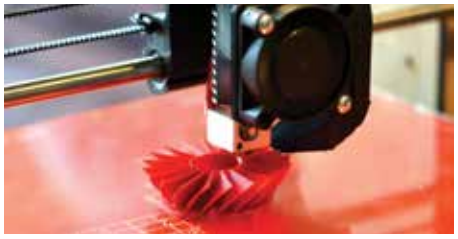
Elpical Image Enhancing Software

Claro V12 is packed with advanced new features and embraces artificial intelligence to deliver an application that redefines image enhancement. Claro delivers a number of powerful new functions and enhanced existing controls and includes direct integration with Google's Vision AI engine to provide image understanding and specific toning capabilities. It integrates with Remove.bg's background removal tool to create accurate cutouts and clipping paths in seconds, all inside the Claro workflow. **www.digitalview.co.za**



CorelCAD 2020

Targeted at technical designers in manufacturing and other industries, users of CorelCAD 2020 (available on Windows and macOS) will benefit from enhanced 2D drafting functionality, advanced 3D modelling tools, and .STL support for an easy transition from content creation to 3D printing and output connections. With superior drafting and design tools, an intuitive user interface and timesaving features, designers can deliver impressive, visually-rich CAD designs. **www.corel.com**



Hexis Expanded PVC-Free Range

Hexis' new first-rate solutions meet the strictest requirements of sustainable development and calls for tenders/projects that require the use of environmentally friendly products. The company has expanded its 100% PVC-free offering with the new ECOLOGICALCUT and ECOLOGICALPRINT ranges. They include sign vinyls, digital printing and laminates. **www.kolokgs.co.za**



Rotary Heat Press SOT-1220

The entry level SOT series is used for sublimation heat transfer. It can handle small production of roll-to-roll or cut piece heat transfer. Moreover, the machine occupies a small workspace and requires only one operator. It reduces expenses in terms of power and labour. The heating drum size is 200mm (7.9"). **www.chemosol.co.za**



GMG Proofing Software

The new version 5.12 automatically updates all proof standards as well as its special colour libraries, enabling GMG users to stay ahead of the game when it comes to proofing speed. Automation continues to be a strong focus along with continued improvements on process stability. One example of this is the new automated update function that ensures proof standards and special colour databases are always up to date. **www.gmgcolor.com**



Gardiner PVC-Free Media

WP300 PP is a 100% PVC-free media that has been designed with wall applications in mind but also provides the perfect solution for external signage and industrial label applications. The unique combination of the sustainable polypropylene (PP) and the high-grab grey block out adhesive makes this an exciting addition to the GGS EU range. It is made from recyclable PP, and the manufacturing process of PP creates considerably less greenhouse gas than PVC. **www.ggseurope.com**



Heytex Textile Blockout

Whitenight B1 is the new PVC-free textile blockout, featuring a white back and up to 505cm production width. The blockout saves project planners and stand builders up to 50% in material and installation costs compared to using a blockout with a black back. It is heat-resistant, pre-shrunk and therefore ideal for dye sublimation printing. For a special effect, it can also be printed on both sides with UV and is crease-resistant. It also has a DIN 4102 B1 fire protection classification. **www.heytex.com**



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SIGN INDUSTRY NEWS

Sign Africa COVID-19 Response

SIGN AFRICA 2020
THE SIGN, DISPLAY AND DIGITAL GRAPHICS EXPO

It is crucial that events around the globe are cancelled or postponed to slow down the spread of COVID-19. Sign Africa joins the following events that have taken these steps, including FESPA Madrid, DPES, Sign China, Dscoop, Sign and Digital UK and ISA Sign Expo, drupa and Visual Impact Expo to name a few. Despite the economic costs involved in this decision, the health and safety of staff, exhibitors and visitors is critical.

Following the President's speech, we will be postponing our affected events that exceed 100 people for the next 90 days, unless otherwise advised.

Our following expos are therefore postponed:

- Eastgate Pop-Up Expo – postponed to 31 July – 2 August 2020.
- Cape Town Expo – postponed to 15-16 July 2020 (Hall 2).
- East London – postponed and new dates to be announced once confirmed with venue.

The Johannesburg expo, scheduled for 9-11 September 2020 at the Gallagher Convention Centre, will remain unchanged. We would like to reassure you that in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, we are taking all the necessary steps to ensure that we remain fully operational, without compromising the health of our staff, their families and the community at large.

We have an extensive media offering ensuring maximum exposure to the marketplace for our customers during this period. With our online reach, we can communicate instantly to the marketplace and keep our readers informed of the news and offers from suppliers.

We too will be offering online product showcases with live audiences so one can demonstrate your products and speak directly to the thousands of industry professionals that follow Sign Africa.

We look forward to engaging with you on all these media options and look forward to working on campaigns to continue great product exposure.

www.signafricaexpo.com

Exion Corporation Reports Expanded Operational Growth



LED lighting and channel letter material supplier Exion Corporation has announced growth in various operations around southern Africa. This includes the company's new facility with an additional warehouse in Lanseria, Gauteng.

'We're excited to begin the next chapter of our company's 20 year legacy in a beautiful, modern space that's a best-in-class work environment,' said managing director Jay Kim. 'Our new facility provides double the size capacity to accommodate a rapidly growing team as well as a significantly expanded warehouse space to better service customers. We also expect to realise substantial gains in operational efficiencies with product shipping and inventory management.'

The company's branch in Harare, Zimbabwe, has also expanded their offices as they are receiving inquiries and leads even from neighbouring Zambia. Further, the company recently had the privilege of appointing Multimedia Signage, Pinetown, Durban as its handling agent as well. As the company rapidly expands, it now sees the need to open a Cape Town branch before or after the Sign Africa Cape Town Expo in May.

www.exion.co.za



SIGN INDUSTRY NEWS CONTINUED

DNA Services Training And Consulting Announces Installer Certification Programme

New and informative training manuals are now available, directly from DNA Services Training & Consulting.

DNA Services Training & Consulting's training workshops have received positive feedback, with many parties expressing interest. However, one drawback is the financial challenges that many companies are facing at the moment, in that they cannot afford the basic daily cost per team (five members).

As such, the manuals, which have been introduced as an entry level option, are available to purchase with a 'Level 1 – Bronze' certification on the DNA Services Training & Consulting's certification ladder. In order to receive a 'Level 1' certification, a written or oral test is compulsory with a required minimum pass mark of 85%.

Should parties then be interested to progress to 'Level 2 – Silver', they will need to receive the beginner practical on-site training in order to obtain Installer Certification as a 'Level 2 – Silver' member. A practical exam that covers basic beginner installation methods (relating to a specific module), is also compulsory. The individual's hands-on practical skill will be assessed and marked accordingly.

'Level 3' Gold member – advanced practical training for each module. A high level of competency and skill is required in order to achieve this level of certification. It includes an intense practical exam that covers advanced installation methods.
'Level 4' Platinum member includes product specific training – details to follow.

- Module and Manual A – calendered vinyls and beginner installation techniques.
- Module and Manual B – wallpapers and installation techniques.
- Module and Manual C – window, decorative and architectural films and installation techniques.
- Module and Manual D – vehicle wrapping, films and installation techniques.

The manuals include:

- An introduction and guideline to signage, decorative, architectural and vehicle wrapping films and substrates.
- A focus on practical issues and recommended/preferred installation methodologies.
- Informative technical guides for sales reps, HOD's and related industry business owners.
- Trainees who attend the practical on-site training, all receive a high quality printed and bound copy.
- Current and relevant information guide for all new installers entering the exciting and challenging installation/wrap arena.

www.dnaservices.co.za/training

Sean Greer Takes Over New Product Management Role For Midcomp

Sean Greer has accepted a new position as Zünd Product Manager for Midcomp. Greer has served many roles during his 15 years at Midcomp, starting out in engineering, then progressing to high-end sales and finally the role of Group Marketing Director.



Sean Greer, Zünd Product Manager for Midcomp, outside Zünd's offices in Switzerland.

'I always need a challenge and this new role as Zünd Product Manager allows me to do four core things that I am passionate about: learning, meeting great people, developing new markets in other industries, and high-end sales,' said Greer.

'As I am no longer office-based and will be travelling all over the country, and perhaps sub-Saharan Africa, I am now relocating to beautiful Somerset West in the Western Cape, which will be my new base, flanked by mountains and sea. I believe that this move will be greatly beneficial for my family from a quality of life aspect.'

Greer looks forward to this new phase of his career and thanks Midcomp's management team for their support in this regard. According to Greer, there is a highly capable team in place who are in the process of taking over his existing marketing and Innovation Hub roles at Midcomp.

www.midcomp.co.za

LBY Africa Opens Eastern Cape Branch



Situated in Jeffreys Bay, the new branch, opened in January, serves regions such as Port Elizabeth, East London and George.

Director Nadine Willemse explained that the motivation behind the opening of the branch was due to the continued growth of the LBY brand across southern Africa, 'One of LBY's core values across its global network is to build strong client relationships. We now have a strong presence in the Eastern Cape, as well as local stock holdings to meet our customers' needs.'

LBY LED is a manufacturer specialised in developing and manufacturing LED products for the international signage and architectural lighting markets. LBY Africa is the distribution centre for LBY LED products across southern Africa.

www.lbyafrica.com

Vista System Announces Competition Winner From Africa



Supreme Heat and Colors from Nigeria, who submitted beautiful photos of the Oshodi Airport Interchange project, has won Vista System's annual signage competition. The company won an Apple Watch Series 5, and will receive positive advertising and exposure. The competition attracted dozens of ambassador and signage companies from around the world, who provided images and stories about their projects.

The Oshodi Airport Interchange project, the extensive public transportation station in Lagos, Nigeria, included a wide range of signage solutions. The contractor's requirement was for a cohesive wayfinding system that will be integrated in several public buildings providing urban and national public transportation services. The station serves thousands of people on a daily basis.

Supreme Heat and Colors designed and printed the graphics and installed Vista wayfinding signage solutions throughout the terminal. Waiting halls, shopping centres, service areas, VIP lounges, ticket booths, elevators, car parks and accessible areas were all properly signposted to allow maximum walkability and orientation.

During the construction of the terminal, the company had to deal with several challenges. The space required various signage solutions such as wall frames, suspended signs, pylons, etc. Eventually, the system of choice was the classic and curved Vista System, providing a multitude of solutions, with the elegant design incorporated into the décor. Durability and function played a key role in choosing that system for the high traffic project. Instead of looking around for partial solutions, Vista provided 360° coverage for all needs.

In second place, Vista selected Infinity Sign Company for the Hackensack Meridian Health project. The medical centre serves thousands of visitors and spans various locations and buildings. The client recently went through a rebranding process and wanted to refresh all wayfinding signs. The new concept offered by Infinity Sign Company was enthusiastically accepted and the new design has been gradually implemented since 2018.

Infinity Sign's choice of Vista Nova Family was not random. This clever, fresh and sleek curved system; the elegant lip frame; and the fast insert mechanism typical of Vista Frames; made it the perfect go-to solution.

Additionally, being a modular sign system, it allows rapid installation and maintenance as well as the necessary high versatility of inserts, including ADA graphic designs and Braille application on the protective lenses.

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SIGN INDUSTRY NEWS CONTINUED

Drytac Adhesive Solutions Outlined At Seminar Hosted By Midcomp



Steve Broad, Drytac and Rakesh Rosen, Midcomp Consumables.

Midcomp hosted a Drytac seminar at its Innovation Hub in Randburg on 25 February. Drytac European and Asia sales director Steve Broad spearheaded the event, where he discussed Drytac's history and global footprint.

Drytac's adhesive products are especially known for window, floor and wall graphic applications, and are continuously improved to cater for as many different scenarios as possible. Broad outlined the various advantages of Drytac's products, namely the anti-bacterial, bio-degradable, durable and UV-resistant properties, as well as factors such as slip-resistance and fire retardancy. Drytac's products are particularly popular in retail and restaurant spaces.

Brochures with dozens of A4 samples – spanning the likes of SpotOn, Polar and ReTac products, as well as their variations – were distributed so attendees could get a better understanding of each product's textured feel – showcasing their suitability for different scenarios and surfaces. 'If you look at our catalogue, you could get lost in all our products, so the easiest way to give an understanding of them is to discuss them in terms of their applications,' said Broad. During his presentation, Broad demonstrated the capabilities of Drytac's products by applying them to a glass application wall.

Midcomp Consumables director Rakesh Rosen welcomed customers both regular and new, and mentioned that it is Midcomp's 29th year in existence, and that the company is greatly anticipating turning the 'big 3-0' next year. He thanked both the company as well as customers for making this milestone a reality.

According to Rosen, Drytac SpotOn Bubble Free, especially the matte variety, is particularly popular in South Africa, because the hassle-free nature of the product allows print operators to focus on growing their business. 'It is one of our best sellers,' he said.

www.midcomp.co.za



Midcomp Is First HP Reseller In The World To Implement Pay Per Use Programme For Large Format Outdoor Printers

'Pay Per Use' (PPU) is a comprehensive and customised programme, created by Midcomp, which supports the HP Latex 300 and 500 series printers, and ensures that users pay a fixed 'per square metre' charge for the square metres they print. Midcomp have chosen to limit the programme to this printer series, but will ultimately expand to other printers.

Midcomp's primary motivation behind the research into and eventual introduction of the PPU programme, is that nobody likes unexpected, and inevitably unbudgeted, surprises – jobs costed incorrectly, bad assumptions on ink usage for a job and breakdowns. 'These are real life scenarios played out every day inside a print shop and PPU eliminates all of this guesswork and pain,' said Midcomp Group CEO Rob Makinson.

In the unlikely event of a printer breaking down, Midcomp offers a Disaster Recovery service that ensures the customer's prints will get done. For customers with appropriate consumption, Midcomp will consign consumable stock on the customer's premises. Through the PPU programme, the customer has the additional benefit of taking jobs to Midcomp's Innovation Hub should they be running over capacity.

Makinson expanded on the programme: 'When a customer buys or rents a printer and chooses to be part of PPU, they sign a contract with Midcomp whereby we charge a fixed rate per square metre for everything that they print.'

Except for the media, or substrate, the fixed rate will cover all the consumables needed by the machine:

- Ink, print heads and cleaning cartridges.
- Spare parts.
- Labour.
- Travel.
- Service repair kit.

'We know what square metres the customer is printing because we are very fortunate that HP, in all of their digital printers going back to the DesignJets from the early 2000s, have embedded web servers in the printer,' said Makinson.

When connected to the internet, production data is uploaded onto an HP server. The data – which gets placed on a cloud – is transparent to the customer as well, as they have access to that server. The data can then be summarised on a spreadsheet, and



Rob Makinson, Midcomp, with the HP Latex 335 and 570 models.

used to determine a particular customer's pay per use. Rates will change from customer to customer because of factors like geographic location (travel costs – Polokwane versus Benoni), and the kind of work customers do.

Midcomp has done extensive testing in its Innovation Hub with different jobs and media to verify that the data is 100% accurate. 'We can't possibly fabricate the numbers, it is 100% accurate and transparent,' added Makinson.

'While it is easy to assess existing customers, new customers are more complex, so we sit down with a new customer, assess their various jobs and determine their PPU. However, after an initial period we can pull the production data off their machines, get a better understanding of what the actual figures are, and adjust the PPU accordingly – up or down,' he added.

This kind of transparency that HP can offer is another factor that motivated Midcomp to roll out the PPU programme. 'We found that when asked, the majority of customers did not know exactly how much their printers actually cost them per square metre, they usually could only guess. Interestingly, we had feedback at Sign Africa and FESPA Africa two years ago from three customers (independent of each other), all asking if there was a way to tell if there had been jobs printed outside normal working hours to highlight print activity that might not have been properly sanctioned or authorised. So the production data provided to the customer every month can be used analytically to help the customer streamline their operation.'

With PPU, only one invoice per month gets generated versus the normal situation of multiple invoices for supplies and service. This simplifies the accounting processes tremendously for both Midcomp and the customer.

Currently, the production data is downloaded through a mobile phone app developed by HP some years ago, called HP Latex Mobile. In parallel, HP have a cloud based Operating System called HP Print OS. Initially introduced for HP Indigo and HP digital web presses, Print OS gives HP, the reseller and the customer visibility of all activity and status of all the printers in a country, region or individual account. So customers can access real-time production and status across their print shop, the reseller can see the activity and status of all printers under their management and HP can see a global picture of the entire install base. Primarily, this is used for service related issues and the visibility is such that potential service issues can be pre-empted and resolved before they cause downtime.

'We have worked closely with HP to extend the functionality of Print OS to include live and historic print production data. This will simplify our process and allow us to extend the programme to additional printer series,' added Makinson.

www.midcomp.co.za



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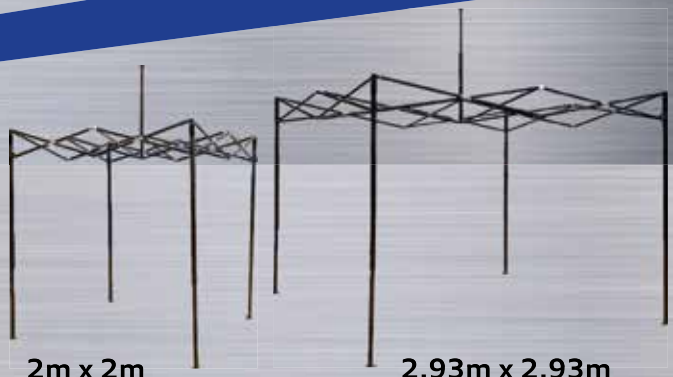
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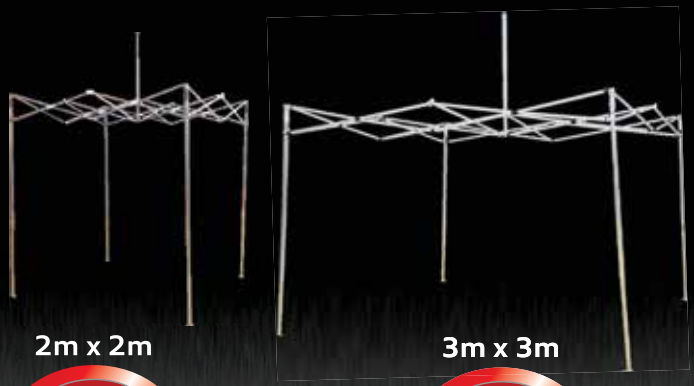
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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Canon Named Official Printing And Imaging Provider For Expo 2020 Dubai

Canon will provide managed printing services, professional print displays such as galleries, souvenir printing, and accreditation and onsite registration printing, following the announcement that it was named Expo 2020 Dubai's Official Printing and Imaging Provider.

Leveraging expertise cultivated over more than 80 years, Canon will provide behind-the-scenes support through its world-class Canon Professional Services (CPS) booths, including offering equipment loans, technical knowledge and maintenance for media professionals onsite.

Najeeb Mohammed Al-Ali, Executive Director, Expo 2020 Dubai Bureau, said, 'We are glad to be able to offer high resolution and easily accessible imagery and printing services to support all those involved in Expo 2020 Dubai. Canon now joins our team of cutting-edge companies pushing the boundaries of innovation and helping us deliver an exceptional World Expo.'

Yuichi Ishizuka, President and CEO of Canon Europe Middle East and Africa (EMEA), said, 'We are proud to be named the Official Printing and Imaging Provider for Expo 2020 Dubai. This is the first time that Expo 2020 has had one provider for both imaging and printing.

It's a special opportunity for us to contribute to the delivery of Expo 2020 and will allow us to showcase our entire input to output portfolio to help people reimagine and push the boundaries of what is possible through imaging.'

https://global.canon/en/index.html

Neschen Media Incorporated Into Project Showing Digital Printing Techniques



Before and after: the room has been transformed without any reconstruction.

The Stanley D project at the Messe Düsseldorf fairgrounds presents works by artist Christoph Zierhut in combination with graphic implementations by designer Susanne Widera.

The entire location was redesigned in a very short amount of time and without any structural changes. The room showcases innovations of digital printing techniques that can directly be transferred to hotel or restaurant interior projects. Photo motifs from the series 'Urban Cluster Düsseldorf' by Christoph Zierhut transform the walls and gives the room a touch of utopia.

In combination with the printed furniture and window surfaces, a visual language is created that is reminiscent of spaceships and outer space. The restaurant becomes a place for fantastic journeys during the hustle and bustle of the trade exhibition.

Digital printing applications transform restaurant fixtures and furniture or pose as decorative golden eye-catchers. Large format designs with photographs by the artist couple Bays & Zierhut transform the restaurant walls. Incorporated is a large variety of established and newly developed materials, produced with the latest printing and finishing technology.

Numerous products of the Neschen and Filmolux (among other partners) portfolio are incorporated. Under the umbrella of Neschen Coating, Filmolux is an independent distributor that sells the Neschen product portfolio and selected retail products in Germany, Benelux, Italy, Austria, France, Sweden and Switzerland. Self-adhesive media, including the product staple easy dot, a solution for fast and bubble-free applications, act as eye-catchers that transform restaurant fixtures, wall designs or decorative room dividers. Easy dot media is especially easy to apply, even for first-time users.

Eye-catching floor graphics created with UV dot print'n'walk demonstrate that the floor is just as much part of a well-rounded interior design concept as the remainder of the room. The film does not require any additional lamination and provides an R9 slip resistance immediately after printing, making it a cost-effective solution. The window front of the restaurant is also integrated into the fantastical room design, using solvoprint window-grip ultra-clear. The extremely clear polyester film has a special adhesive layer that does not show any loss of adhesion even after long periods of use. Since unprinted areas are practically crystal clear, there is no need to plot intricate patterns.

www.neschen.de/en

swissQprint Karibu Paves The Way For Future Growth

The swissQprint flatbed printer commissioned in



INTERNATIONAL NEWS



Grady and Todd Davis, Super Sign Mart with three swissQprint technicians.

August 2019 marked a turning point for Super Sign Mart of Louisiana. That machine was joined in December 2019 by Karibu, the swissQprint roll to roll printer – and the first such machine in North America.

'We have long been on the lookout for a reliable, user-friendly and economical solution,' said Super Sign Mart CEO Todd Davis. 'And since August 2019, we have one.' Over a twelve-year period, Super Sign Mart in Louisiana has operated more than ten different large format printers. 'But we were never really satisfied,' Davis explained. That changed with the installation of the Impala 3 flatbed printer, which, according to Davis, brought a rapid and noticeable improvement of the business results. 'Nothing can compare with the reliability of the printer and the ease of working with swissQprint,' he added. Under these circumstances, it was an easy decision for him to invest in a new swissQprint roll to roll printer.

The Karibu began operating at Super Sign Mart in December 2019. It was the first Karibu that swissQprint delivered to North America following the model's October 2019 launch at Printing United in Dallas. Davis summarised the benefits, 'Finally, we have reliable colour consistency, no more unscheduled service calls and significantly lower operating costs, especially since we no longer have to constantly invest in new print heads.'

Super Sign Mart operates as a digital printer in the B2B market and supplies various graphic service providers. Davis noted how print runs are going down in size, jobs are growing in diversity and customers are demanding ever shorter delivery times. Especially considering the swissQprint large format printers' reliability, Super Sign Mart can confidently face up to these new requirements. For Davis, a prime example of increased efficiency is the Mesh Kit integrated into the Karibu print bed. 'Changeover from a banner job to a mesh job is done quickly, with no conversion needed,' said Davis. 'It's a clean and efficient solution.'

www.sign-tronic.co.za

EFI Reports Successful 2D CAD Implementation

Macron is enjoying the benefits of EFI Optitex 2D CAD and fully digital design, noting significant enhancements in the company's design and production workflow, increased speed and ease of use, and time and resource savings.

Macron also reports improved communication with designers, improved data sharing with global production partners, and seamless integration with various design software and other CAD/production solutions used by third-party vendors.

With headquarters in Bologna, Italy and sales throughout Europe and around the globe, Macron has four dedicated business units: Teamwear, Merchandising, Run and Train, and Athleisure, and over 150 monobrand retail locations, all backed by the company's unique concept of product customisation.

After a short training period, Macron's CAD team implemented EFI Optitex into its design and production process, enabling the company to expand its pattern design capabilities while also adding a new design facility in Tianjin, China.

'Since implementing EFI Optitex 2D CAD, we have improved our operational efficiency across the board,' said Paolo Guizzardi, Macron's COO. 'We look forward to a long-term relationship with EFI Optitex, with plans to further explore the company's innovative solutions to meet athletes' needs and accelerate our development process worldwide.'

EFI Optitex General Manager Amir Lehr commented, 'We are proud to support Macron with strong digital solutions to deliver high-quality products and guarantee their continued growth. At EFI Optitex, enabling our customers to gain a competitive edge via digital transformation is key. The team at Macron has proven that this can be done.'

www.efi.com

Durst Production Printer To Increase Outdoor Graphics Printing Capabilities



UK-based company Aurora Graphics has purchased a Durst Rho LED 512R 6-colour with white production printer and has taken on another nearby production unit as part of progressive expansion where turnover is expected to grow by another 20 per cent this year alone.

The introduction of 5metre wide production printer will help Aurora Graphics to bolt on extra services for clients in a variety of markets in which the company already operates. Advanced software provided through Durst Professional Services will also introduce new mechanisms for ink usage control, provide unattended printing capabilities and improve workflows.

Mike Stearn, Managing Director of Aurora Graphics said, 'It's never an easy decision with an investment of this scale, so we had to see what was available on the market. The reason we selected Durst included the build quality, productivity, versatility and the fact it's the best offering on the market. The Rho 512R LED will complement our existing equipment and help us to continue to provide a first-class level of service to our clients and give a wider choice of products we can service to them.' Aurora Graphics covers a broad gamut of sectors including exhibition, POS, outdoor graphics, backlits, as well as working with some trade and print management companies.

'I envisage the introduction of the Rho 512R leading to significant more work in the exhibition arena and

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outdoor graphics, plus will give us the capabilities for longer runs for quality, higher-end contracts, as well as more backlits,' said Stearn. 'And, of course, we'll be able to turn round jobs far more quickly now, thanks to the fantastic productivity, as well as offer more services to clients.'

Peter Bray, Managing Director of Durst UK and Ireland said, 'Aurora Graphics is a perfect example of how forward-thinking companies are increasingly turning to Durst for technology and software that makes a tangible difference to their business. We are delighted that this, in turn, helps them provide a wider range of products and services for their own customers. It's a win-win situation.'

www.durst-group.com

Epson Large Format Printers Awarded For Innovation



Surecolor SC-P7500 and Surecolor SC-P9500 (model names in South Africa are designated as SureColor SC-P9000V and SC-P9000 respectively), provide the functional operability of high-quality professional tools, such as internal lighting to immediately check printed material and a neutral colour that does not interfere when making colour adjustments.
The large format printers have been named iF Design Award 2020 winners by Hanover-based iF International Forum Design GmbH. Created in 1953, the iF Design Award is recognised around the world as one of the most prestigious awards for innovative industrial product design excellence.

Products are evaluated based on a wide range of criteria, including practicability, workmanship, consideration of environmental standards, degree of elaboration and innovation, functionality, usability, safety, aesthetics and universal design. This year's winners were selected from 7298 entries from 56 countries and regions by a 78 member jury comprised of experts from around the world.

www.epson.co.za

EFI Inkjet Printer Awarded For Inspiring Creativity



EFI's Cretaprint Hybrid digital inkjet printer ecosystem has been awarded a 2020 Alfa de Oro award from the Sociedad Española de Cerámica y Vidrio. The highly competitive award recognises ceramics and glass manufacturing equipment that stimulates technological and artistic creativity.

The award-winning Cretaprint Hybrid digital inkjet printer ecosystem gives tile manufacturers a long-term business advantage for current and future productivity, with the unique ability to work with eco-solvent inks now, and then move to aqueous inks using the same EFI Cretaprint printer.

The award-winning Cretaprint Hybrid includes the unique ability to work with eco-solvent inks now, and then move to aqueous inks using the same EFI Cretaprint printer. This remarkable solution, which is making its European debut at Cevisama, facilitates the important future move to greener EFI Cretacolor aqueous inks, as well as the adoption of highly accurate and efficient digital glazing.

'We are addressing our customers' key concerns for immediately adding eco-friendly processes – something that will eventually become standard for an industry looking to reduce its environmental footprint,' said José Luis Ramón Moreno, vice president and general manager, EFI Industrial Printing. 'We have already had several successful EFI Cretaprint Hybrid implementations, and our users are able to achieve the same level of print quality and reliability that they have had previously, with improved sustainability.'

The groundbreaking EFI offering at Cevisama includes the world's only hybrid eco-solvent/aqueous inkjet ceramic tile printer technology, available in widths from 700mm to 1400mm. EFI Cretaprint Hybrid printers include 5th-generation printer software for 'Smart Printer' capabilities, with enhanced connectivity and an intuitive user experience. Once Hybrid Cretaprint users switch to EFI Cretacolor aqueous inkjet inks, they can gain tremendous sustainability advantages, eliminating more than 90% of the volatile organic compound emissions – and 73% of the average carbon emissions – that occur with eco-solvent ceramic inkjet inks. The aqueous inks also offer a short drying time, with higher print quality and image definition compared with eco-solvent inks.

www.efi.com

Murals Fitted At Las Vegas Restaurant Using Drytac Media



Grand format print and installation company Screaming Images recently printed and fitted wall murals at a soon-to-open restaurant at The Mirage hotel and casino complex in Las Vegas, using Drytac ReTac Textures.

The restaurant is decorated in vibrant wall murals with a Mexican-inspired fiery skeleton design. To achieve the depth and visual appeal required for the Diablo's wall coverings, Screaming Images chose Drytac ReTac Textures in Canvas, a matte white phthalate-free polymeric PVC film with an embossed textured finish. James Swanson, Principal and Owner, Screaming Images, says Diablo's was a 'super cool' project to work on. 'We chose ReTac Textures because of its compatibility with a long-term display in a high-end restaurant,' he commented. 'We love the Drytac ReTac Textures product and Drytac's service.'

www.midcomp.co.za

Zünd Installs Digital Cutter

ZÜND
swiss cutting systems

UK based Specialised Canvas Group have been a loyal customer of Zünd for many years, and until now they were using their Zünd PN Series, installed just over thirteen years ago. The company recently

installed their second Zünd digital cutter, in a move to double production capacity and support the growing demand for their extensive range of products and services. The business have been a loyal customer of Zünd for many years, and until now they were using their Zünd PN Series, installed just over thirteen years ago. Managing Director Paul Noble said, 'The business needed to increase productivity to keep up with the increasing demands from our customers and ensure we continue to provide them with an excellent level of service.'

Noble continued, 'Zünd digital cutters are well known in our industry – the build quality, precision and productivity of these state-of-the-art cutters offer is outstanding. Furthermore, our existing relationship with Zünd through our existing PN Series machine meant we knew the level of service we would get, and that they're a company that would go above and beyond for their customers. Having visited the Zünd demonstration facility in St Albans, we were sold on the modularity and productivity the current generation of Zünd cutters offered. It's giving us capacity beyond our necessity and ensures there is further room for growth, which is a very desirable position to be in.'

In addition, Specialised Canvas Group are also using their increased cutting capacity to offer a material cutting service, designed to help businesses of all different shapes and sizes meet their cutting needs by providing them with a fast, convenient and reliable service. Noble concluded, 'The cutting service is certainly proving popular and the G3 Zünd Cutter's ability to cut a wide range of materials up to 3.2m wide is a major reason for this.' The Zünd G3 3XL -3200 Digital Cutter is already up to speed, running 3 shift productions.

'Specialised Canvas are the first customer in the UK to have an Over Cutter Camera OCC. The OCC is an intelligent optical system for fully automated digital capture of register marks. The camera is mounted above the centre of the cutter and captures all register marks within the working area of the cutting system in a single image in a matter of seconds. This reduces manual intervention in the production workflow to a minimum and increases productivity,' said Dean Ashworth, Sales and Marketing Manager Zund UK.

www.midcomp.co.za

EcoVadis Awards Ricoh Highest Rating For Sustainability

Ricoh has earned the top EcoVadis sustainability award six years running, continuing its gold-winning streak since its inauguration to the position in 2014.

Ricoh this year had to compete against companies from 155 countries, across 198 business sectors, including assessments on corporate policies, initiatives and achievements in environment, labour and human rights, ethics, and sustainable procurement.

'We ranked in the top 5% worldwide,' said Jacques van Wyk, CEO of Ricoh SA. 'We've long held the position that sustainable supply chains are paramount to doing business as we experience the effects of climate change.' Sustainable performance is also a factor for many businesses in supplier selection, which is why it is more common for customers to request Ricoh's EcoVadis assessment results as part of the selection process.

www.ricoh.co.za

NUtec's Digital Inks Impress Visitors At Mexican Event



Grupo ZUR's display at the recent Expo Impresión print and signage show in Mexico City showcased their preferred brands and business partners, including: NUtec Digital Ink, HandTop and ARclad printers, Caldera RIP software and Intrat Machine Technical Services.

NUtec Digital Ink and Mexico-based exclusive distributor, Grupo ZUR, participated at the three-day event, which reported over 14,000 visitors. Visitors were impressed with the performance of NUtec's extensive range of world class digital inks for super wide format solvent, eco-solvent, UV-curable and water-based dye sublimation printing.

Grupo ZUR used an array of regular print and signage substrates in their daily demonstrations but also had visitors excited about new applications while printing on media made from Fluted Polypropylene and Metallised Polypropylene.

Owner and managing director of ZUR, Gabriel Puerta, noted, 'The Expo Impresión show gave us the ideal opportunity to present our complete offering to the print services industry in Mexico. Together with our preferred business partners, we are proudly able to offer our customers a complete turnkey solution: printers, ink, media and support services all under one roof.'

www.nutecdigital.com

Kornit DTG System To Enhance Business Capacity



The installation of a Kornit Atlas digital direct-to-garment (DTG) system is expected to increase the Netherlands-based Simian's capacity to accommodate ongoing growth.

Having established itself as a total print solutions provider for signage, banners, posters, flags and other digitally printed textiles, Simian first entered the decorated apparel market by implementing two entry-level, single-pallet DTG systems. Offering lower total cost of ownership than other DTG systems, Atlas meets the retail quality, wash and light fastness, and sustainability standards of the world's largest apparel brands. Simian will use the system for non-toxic decoration of baby apparel and accessories, in addition to T-shirts, polos, sweaters, vests and tote bags.

'A two-time Bronze FD Gazelle winner, Simian prints every item it sells without outsourcing, and as the only printing company in Belgium and the Netherlands serving customers in the evenings and on Sundays, we set the standard for on-demand production,' said Wouter Haan, Founder and Owner of Simian. 'We're also the only online printing company in this region innovating within its own production facility, and we've continued to expand that facility to handle new and exciting technologies so we can continue to lead. Based on our experiences with digital thus far, we see great opportunities for textile print production, so investing in Kornit is investing in our future.'

Haan noted that Simian's facility can accommodate additional DTG systems as necessary, 'Simian prides itself on being the premier online print provider to the Benelux region, and their focus on round-the-clock on-demand fulfillment makes them a natural partner for Kornit, which offers a scalability no other DTG supplier can match,' said Omer Kulka, Kornit's EVP of Marketing and Product Strategy. 'We are proud to welcome Simian to the Kornit customer family, and look forward to supporting their growth in the years to come.'

www.rexxscreendigital.co.za

Epson Identified As A Leader For Supplier Engagement On Climate Change

Epson has been recognised for its actions and strategies to reduce emissions and manage climate risks in its supply chain in the past reporting year.

Over 4800 companies in total were assessed by global environmental impact non-profit CDP and

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

given a Supplier Engagement Rating, based on answers to selected questions about governance, targets, scope 3 emissions, and value chain engagement of their response to the CDP 2019 climate change questionnaire and their overall CDP climate change score.Epson recognises climate change/global warming as the most serious issue facing the planet.

In response, the company is striving to achieve its Environmental Vision 2050, and will leverage its efficient, compact and precision technologies as it takes aggressive measures to reduce the environmental impact of its products and business operations, and throughout its value chain.

https://global.epson.com/

Canon Receives Avery Dennison Warranty Certification



Canon has worked closely with Avery Dennison since the introduction of the Colorado 1650 roll-to-roll large format printer model, which features a flexible, yet very robust ink set. All output from the Colorado 1650 using UVgel 460 ink is now certified by the ICS Warranty Program, which guarantees quality and durability of its large format applications.

When combining UVgel 460 inks and Avery Dennison media and laminates, customers have the confidence that their printed applications will last up to eight years outdoors and up to 11 years indoors. The certification assures that vinyl applications printed on the Colorado 1650 meet defined high standards of quality and durability.

'With UVgel technology, we have developed a disruptive concept that is combining the advantages of the traditional ink technologies such as eco-solvent, Latex and UV, into one unique ink set,' said Dirk Brouns, Vice President Large Format Graphics at Canon Production Printing.

'We are proud to receive the ICS Warranty from a respected brand like Avery Dennison, and we see our rapidly increasing installed base and the adaptation of UVgel as proof that it has become the industry benchmark for uncompromised quality and versatile output at high production speeds.'

Paul Roba, Avery Dennison's OEM Relationship Manager commented: 'With the Colorado 1650 printer and the UVgel 460 ink, we are excited to add a unique high-quality print production platform to our extensive ICS Warranty Program. We continue to provide thoroughly tested solutions to our print service providers, increasing confidence in graphic performance and identifying throughput improvement processes.'

www.canon.co.za

EFI Inkjet Printer Boosts Productivity



A newly installed EFI VUTEk 32h hybrid flatbed/roll-to-roll LED inkjet printer from EFI is UK based Eco Signs' third EFI printer purchased within the last two years, including, most recently, an EFI VUTEk LX3 Pro hybrid LED printer.

The company has increased its capacity – delivering a greater number of jobs produced on a broader range of substrates – using the 3.2m (126 inch) wide device. 'Over the last two years, we have been stepping up our production facility due to ever demanding and increasingly tighter deadlines, which consequently puts pressure on the business,' said Phil Thompson, president at Eco Signs. 'The EFI VUTEk 32h will have a major impact with doubling our output in 2020 and gives us an edge with LED and UltraDrop Technology for ultra-impressive, superb quality. That is a key priority for our business.'

Eco Signs is a UK specialist in commercial signage, focusing on designing, manufacturing and supplying a full suite of solutions to a wide range of businesses nationwide. 'With the new VUTEk 32h, the company will be able to drive down costs while accelerating sales and boosting productivity,' said Thompson. Previous VUTEk LED printer purchases allowed Eco Signs to achieve greener printing thanks to EFI's energy-efficient 'cool cure' LED technology, which, according to research from FOGRA, can reduce energy usage by up to 82% compared with other superwide-format drying or curing methods. Plus, Eco Signs' customers like the high-quality imaging possible on VUTEk LED printers, with 7-picolitre-drop imaging, highly opaque white ink and multilayer printing.

'The way in which the EFI VUTEk LX3 Pro has changed our business has impacted us much more than we anticipated,' Thompson said of his previous VUTEk purchase. 'We have been impressed with the UltraDrop and LED technology, which has helped drive down operating costs and waste and allowed us to have a better environmental footprint being 'Eco'.'

www.efi.com

Drytac Europe Achieves ISO Certification Standards



The International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) has recognised Drytac Europe with certifications for both ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 14001:2015. The first, ISO 9001:2015, sets out the criteria for a quality management system based on principles including a strong focus on customers and a dedication to constant improvement, ensuring Drytac provides the best quality products and service.

The second, ISO 14001:2015, sets out a framework for an effective environmental management system. This certificate assures Drytac's customers that the manufacturer is committed to measuring and improving its environmental impact across its European operations.Douglas Jackson, Operations Director for Drytac, commented, 'We're delighted to announce Drytac Europe is certified for these two important ISO standards. They give our valued customers even more assurance that Drytac's products and services are the highest quality and that we are making continual improvements to our ecological impact as well.'

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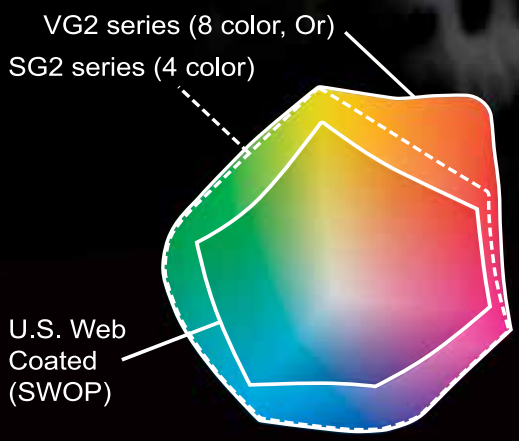


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ALTRON BYTES DOCUMENT SOLUTIONS EXPANDS PORTFOLIO WITH MUTOH'S WIDE FORMAT PRINTERS



Altron Bytes Document Solutions (BDS) will distribute Mutoh's leading wide format digital printers in sub-Saharan Africa. This follows a partnership between Altron BDS and Mutoh distributor Mips Technologies. The companies' combined expertise will expand the Mutoh brand even further in the region.

Craig Carstens, owner, Mips Technologies, said, 'The quality and reliability of the Mutoh brand, coupled with the experience of Altron BDS, has made it an obvious choice to complement our existing market leading portfolio. We believe it will give us the competitive advantage as we continue our success within the South African Graphic Communications marketplace.'

James Kelly, Divisional Director Xerox Production Systems Group at Altron BDS, said, 'Mutoh's innovative products can create new applications and opportunities and help clients win new business. Mutoh's solutions allow users to explore the unlimited possibilities of digital wide format printing and sign cutting, including: long-term outdoor posters and banners, stickers and labels, display graphics, billboards, vehicle graphics, soft signage, shirts, curtains, banners, posters and more.'

The latest products in Mutoh's range include:

Direct To Object Printers

The XPJ-461UF and XPJ-661UF respond to the increasing demand for added value personalised prints and bespoke small-lot production of commercial and industrial print applications.

The two new compact 6 colour UV LED direct to object (DTO) flatbed production printers are an addition to Mutoh's existing DTO printer models, the popular ValueJet 426UF and 626UF. Developed and manufactured in Japan, the new XpertJet desktop flatbed printers feature various product enhancements such as a new multi-language intuitive OLED display, an extended print area and new cosmetics and a pioneering innovation – Mutoh's Local Dimming Control technology.

Typical applications encompass prints on phone covers, personalised gifts, photo products, promotional items such as pens, lighters and USB sticks, souvenirs, awards, small signs, small series production or prototyping of packaging samples, decorative tiles, etc.

Both printers can be set up in either CMYK or in CMYK + White + Varnish configuration and are suited for direct printing onto a wide variety of materials











including three dimensional objects up to 15cm thick. Printing on dark coloured or clear substrates is also possible thanks to the use of white inks. Special added value finishing like spotvarnish or even stunning special effects such as special structures or embossing are possible thanks to dedicated varnish inks.

The new XpertJet tabletop printers will fit into any regular office, home based business or small retail environment thanks to their compact size. Mutoh genuine UV inks are moreover VOC free inks not containing any hazardous air pollutants (non-HAP), meaning no forced ventilation system is required.

The printers are equipped with a newly developed segmented 5.08cm (2”) wide UV lamp. The UV lamp has 6 different sections. Each lamp section can be individually controlled, enabling production of multiple varnish effects in the same print table movement. Gloss, satin and matte varnish effects can be produced in one table movement for prints combining Varnish + CMYK or Varnish + White. The result is an important productivity boost as well as a minimised risk for dust contamination into glossy printed areas.

XpertJet Wide Format Sign And Display Printers

The XpertJet 1641SR is a single head 4 colour model, one of two new 162cm (64 inch) models released by Mutoh. The other, the XpertJet 1682SR, is a dual staggered head model for 2 x 4 colour setup or 7 colour setup.

The XpertJet printers have been developed for high quality cost-effective volume production of sign and display graphics, for long term outdoor applications as well as durable prints for indoor use. Applications encompass posters, backlit signs, wall coverings, point-of-sale displays, fine art reproduction prints, vehicle graphics, windows graphics, self-adhesive stickers, etc.

‘Mutoh has been a pioneer in sign and display printers ever since 2004. XpertJet is already our fifth generation of sign and display printers. The XpertJets are the successors of our multi-awarded ValueJet 1624X and ValueJet 1638X printers’, said Kenji Yasuhara, Mutoh Europe’s managing director.

‘The XPJ-1641SR and XPJ-1682SR offer an excellent balance between the capacity for speed production print work and top quality print work. The new additional Lc, Lm and Lk colours of our MS-41 series ink set will also bring extra quality to businesses focusing on the highest quality prints with smooth skin tones and gradients for short viewing distances.’

‘In line with our company-wide commitment to create continuous improvement and innovation, the robustly built XpertJet printers feature proven and industry leading Mutoh technology. They are also packed with multiple product enhancements to provide sign professionals unrivalled print quality, the highest degree of user comfort and reliability for many years to come,' Yasuhara concluded.

The printers are ideal for start-ups or established print shops needing extra versatility and flexibility as well as for businesses focusing on the combination of speed production and top quality print work.

Altron Bytes Document Solutions (BDS) is Africa's leading document management technology and services company and the largest Xerox distributor in the world. It is the authorised Xerox distributor in 26 sub-Saharan countries offering the complete range of Xerox document equipment, software solutions and services. BDS forms part of JSE-listed Allied Electronics Corporation (Altron).

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SUCCESSFULLY APPLYING WALL GRAPHICS

REQUIRES A PROPER SITE SURVEY



BY DAVE NEWBERY, DRYTAC EUROPE

Wall graphics can all too often go wrong and sometimes very badly. This is due to the minefield that is different types of paint (particularly interior paints) and their compatibility with wall graphics products. Factors such as the incorrect face film and incorrect adhesive (including the wrong coat weight of adhesive) can have a disastrous effect.

A common cause of failure is lack of a proper site survey. This should include peel testing the products that will potentially be used, checking the paint in situ, finding out if there are any air conditioning units or heaters in the vicinity and what the local ambient atmosphere is, and, if possible, discovering what is under the paint and how long ago the paint was actually applied. There's lots of detective work to do.

Printers and sign makers can easily fall into the trap of thinking any wall graphics media will work with any wall – only to then get a call the next day from their client complaining that their wall graphics have overnight become floor graphics. Explaining to the customer that they would like to visit the site to check the walls and do some testing in advance of producing the graphics can eliminate a world of pain and embarrassment. The end user won't always grant this request but most will understand that a day's disruption is better than several extra days on site to correct any faults later. A survey will make everyone's life far simpler in the long run.

Washable or wipeable paints that have become very popular over the past few years never make for an easy install when it comes to adhesive. Put simply, if a paint wants to chemically repel dirt, ink and fingerprints, it will want to do the same to adhesive. If not prepped correctly, the highest strength adhesives can still fail when applied to these types of paints. Even if the bond is a 'pass' but the face film isn't stable enough, a 'pass' can quickly become a 'fail' as the film is effectively pulling on the adhesive. And it is often the case where wall graphics need to be fitted when the wall was only painted a matter of days (sometimes hours) ago.

Paint needs to have been applied a bare minimum of 72 hours in advance (ideally a lot longer) to give any adhesive a fighting chance of working. And if the printer has input into the type of paint to be used, a basic emulsion paint is a far better choice as this has no washable properties to it. However, if a washable or wipeable paint has been used, there are some fixes. Ideally, this type of paint needs sanding to remove the 'washable' surface. Sanding generates a whole new problem of dust – and lots of it – but this is the preferred work-around for this type of paint. If this is not possible, a good quality sealer or primer to lock in the washable properties of the paint is a viable alternative. All finishes also need to be clean; a seemingly obvious fact that can be overlooked.

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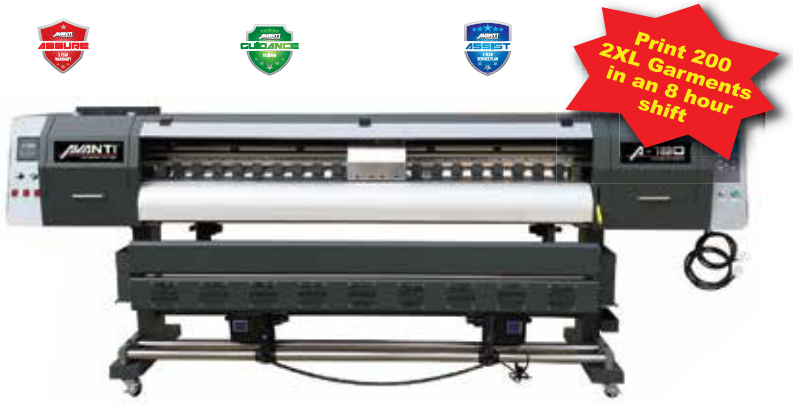
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THE TRANSFORMATIVE EFFECTS

OF PRINTABLE WALL COVERINGS

BY NESCHEN



Whether in private homes or large scale commercial projects, a personalised interior design has never been in such high demand as it is today. For interior designers, shopfitters and booth builders, printable wall coverings offer a cost-efficient way of giving interiors that eye-catching finish.

Sensational promotion or long-lasting wall design

When selecting the medium, it is vital to plan ahead. Whether long-term wall design in hotels and other interiors or short-term promotion at the point of sale – there are suitable wall coverings for any purpose.

High-tack wallpapers offer powerful adhesive formulas, ideal for semi-permanent or permanent installations. For short to medium-term campaigns, for example at the point of sale, there are products that can be quickly removed without leaving any residue.

The look of real wallpaper paired with the creative freedom of graphics films

Whether opting for geometric designs, advertising messages or landscape photography, almost any design can be applied to printable wallpaper. This presents an enormous potential for interior designers.

Depending on the product, the wallpapers feature textures just like regular wallpapers do, ranging from woodchip to linen. In the shop fitting industry, digitally printable wall coverings not only score with their versatility: many wall coverings are ideal for public areas because they are washable, abrasion-resistant and durable. This makes them ideal for high-traffic areas such as shopping malls.

How Printable Wall Coverings Transform Interiors

Digitally printable wall coverings are a perfect medium for these types of applications: the wall designs fully transform the look and feel of hotel rooms, restaurants and retail areas while being cost-efficient. Since interior designers and shop fitters are free in selecting any design, printable wall coverings are more and more appreciated as a sophisticated design element for interiors.



A homage to Portugal's best coffee, Neschen's wallpaper at the Hotel Pestana Porto – A Brasileira.

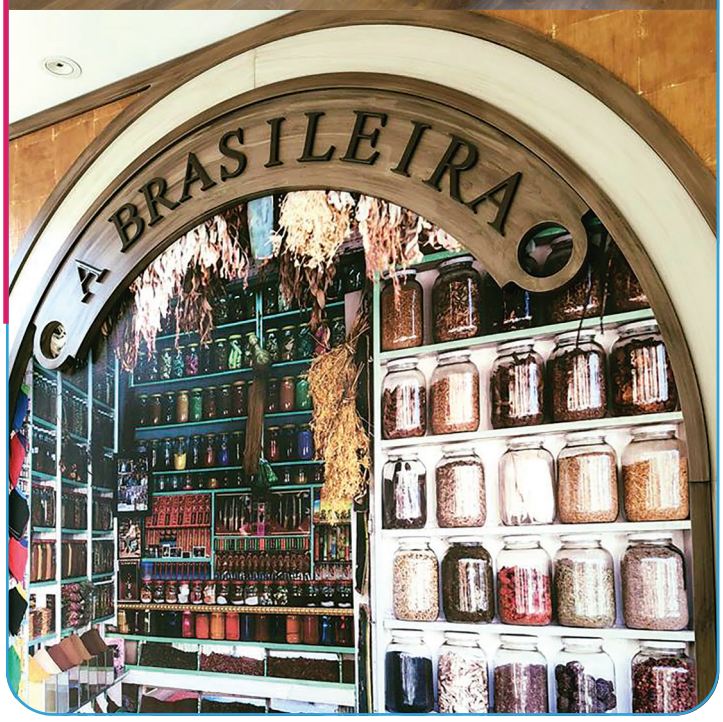


The interior banquet hall of the uspcale Altay Hotel in Barnaul, Russia.

Art Deco With A Twist

In a 200-year old historic building in Gödöllö a, small town near Budapest, Hungary, the interior of the movie theatre received a whole new look thanks to printable wall coverings. The designer's plan was to combine an art deco style with a modern twist, while featuring historic pictures of Hollywood history and the story of Gödöllo. Life Print Kft. decided to use Neschen UVprint wallpaper 170 in combination with HP latex printing technology.





Eco friendliness – An Increasingly Important Factor

Just as in many other sectors, the interior design market is moving more and more towards green products. Regarding printable wallpapers, this means focussing increasingly on PVC-free solutions.

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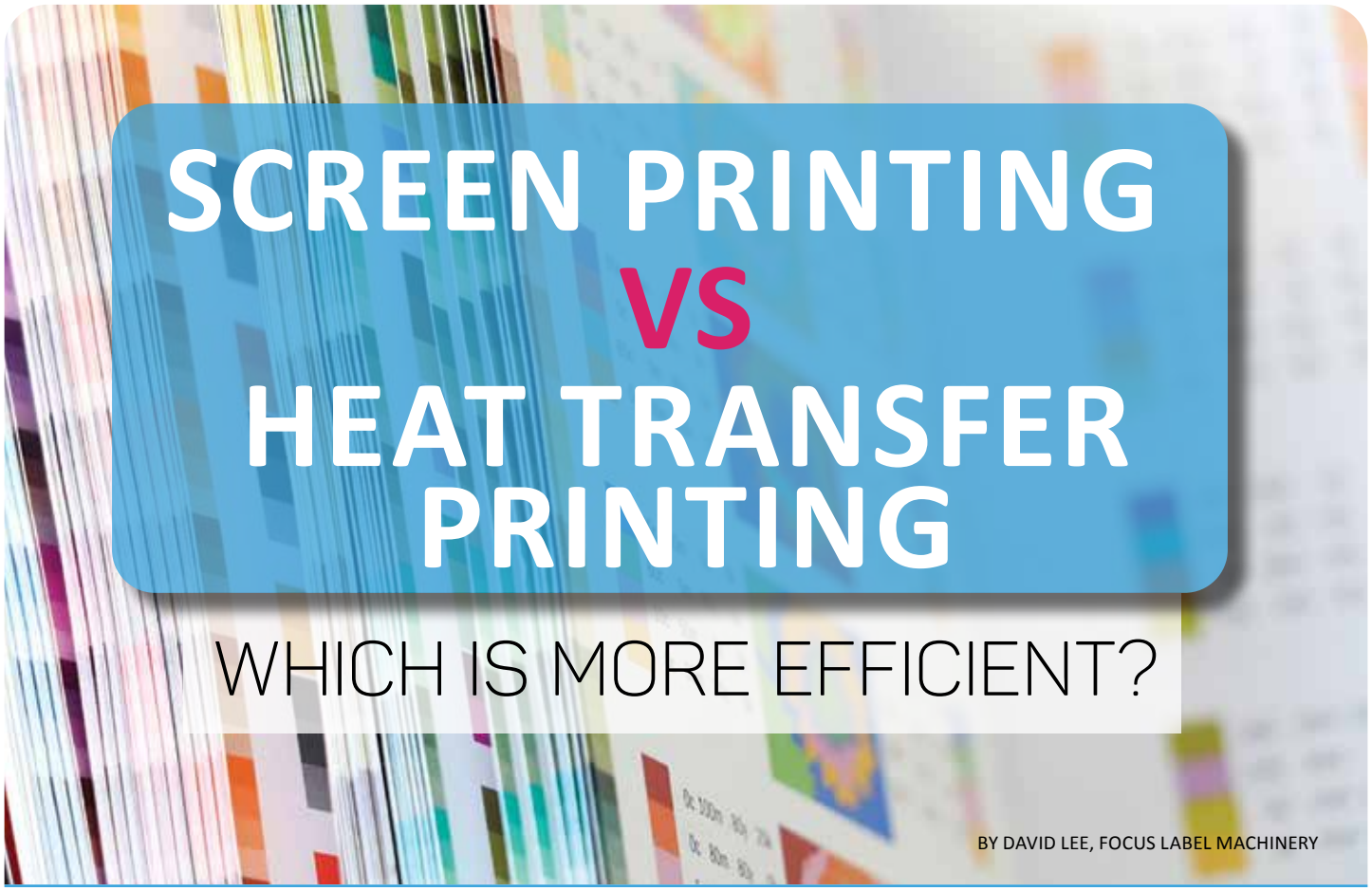


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SCREEN PRINTING VS HEAT TRANSFER PRINTING

WHICH IS MORE EFFICIENT?

BY DAVID LEE, FOCUS LABEL MACHINERY

There are advantages to both screen printing and heat transfer printing. To select the most appropriate technique, it's important to have a thorough understanding of both.

What Is Screen Printing?

For decades, screen printing has been the first-choice method for creating printed apparel, but it can also be used effectively on wood, paper, glass and ceramics. During the printing process, a stencil is formed on a fine mesh screen and ink is applied onto the substrate by pushing it through – creating an imprint of the image underneath. Different screens are required for different colours, which are gradually merged until the final design is created. The final product is dried using special equipment to cure the ink and ensure a smooth, colour-fast finish.

Advantages Of Screen Printing Over Heat Transfer:

- If you're planning to print in excess of 100 garments, screen printing is more cost-effective. In fact, it's one of the most economical printing solutions available, so if suppressing your manufacturing costs is a priority to boost profitability, screen printing is a viable choice.
- The colours printed using the silk screen technique are extremely vivid, particularly if garments or accessories are designed for outdoor use, or if the substrate is dark. Colours also exhibit excellent durability, with little fading over time.
- Screen printed garments are light and soft to touch, whereas heat transfers can have a plasticky feel that may be off-putting to some consumers.
- With screen printing, it is possible to incorporate additional effects with the print, such as glitter or puff ink, for a more eye-catching appearance.

What Is Heat Transfer Printing?

In heat transfer printing, an image is created on a wax-based heat ribbon, which is pressed against the substrate and heated, so that the ink melts and is transferred to the surface underneath. The image may be inked onto the ribbon before application, or four different ribbons (yellow, cyan, magenta and black) can layer colours onto the substrate.

Images printed using the heat transfer method are long-lasting, heat and water-resistant, and adhesive. The process can be used on hard materials such as acrylic and ceramics as well as fabrics.

Advantages Of Heat Transfer Printing

- Heat transfer is ideal for small batches, when it is more cost-effective due to the process being low on labour and relatively quick to complete. For very small print runs, including for customised garments that may only need to be printed once according to a customer's preference, heat transfer is the most efficient and economical option.
- Printing images on unusually shaped objects, such as bags, is often easier with heat transfer techniques, and special pallets are available to position and hold an item in place if printing is likely to be awkward. Printing these items using the screen method is logistically challenging.

Understanding Your Target Audience

Understanding your market and the needs of your customers is the key to knowing which printing technique will be most efficient and cost-effective, as well as likely to boost your business' profitability.

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KEY DIFFERENCES

BETWEEN LASER CUTTING AND KNIFE CUTTING



BY RANDI KERKAERT, SUMMA

Both laser and knife cutting should be regarded as complementary actions. If we break this thought down, we can state certain materials can only be cut by knives, and others by laser technology. Although both lasers and knives can cut a multitude of material types, in certain cases, due to quality or health issues, one technology works better than the other.

Why Laser?

All laser devices cut or engrave by using extreme focused heat on the material. This heat is generated in such a short period of time and at such high temperatures, that the material will evaporate in microseconds. Because this all happens so rapidly, the material – which is laser cut – will not catch fire. Although sometimes you might see flames during laser cutting, it is not the material that catches fire, but fumes generated by the material itself.

These fumes should then be extracted as fast as possible by means of vacuum pumps and assisting air, pushing the fumes towards the extraction. Thanks to the use of heat, the edges of certain materials (fabrics) will be sealed together, providing a nice and smooth finish and easier handling. This is especially the case with synthetic textiles.

Moreover, since laser beams don't have any mass, they will not push or displace the material while cutting, which enables users to cut even intricate details most accurately. With laser beams, this entire process happens a lot faster than with knives. With knife cutting machines, the cutting head will move at a certain speed, but you need to add time for lowering and rotating the knife into the correct position. With laser cutting machines, you only need to switch the machine on and you are good to go.

Why Not Laser?

First of all because of the fumes. Although most of the fumes are harmless to both the environment and yourself, some of them can be toxic and harmful.

Laser cutting PVC, for instance, is something you'd better not do. When laser cutting PVC, toxic fumes called chlorine gas will be generated. This gas, combined with moisture in the air, will bond to hydrochloric acid, which is extremely harmful to the extraction system of your laser cutter.

Another consideration is that laser cutting can have an adverse influence on quality. When laser cutting certain materials, it will look as though they are melted because the material reacts too fast to the laser's heat. On the other hand, certain material types become rock hard due to the heat of the laser. At first glance, you might think laser cutting leather or cotton is child's play. However, laser cutting these specific materials will generate an unpleasant smell and the edges will look burnt or discoloured.

Why Knives?

Knives have the intrinsic advantage that they will cut just about anything. What's more, they will do this without generating fumes. So, when using knife cutting machines, it is safe to cut PVC. Knives will also not harden any edges the way laser beams do. Knives do generate friction, but this will not influence the edge quality. The shape of the knife can also provide certain effects or angled cuts. With laser cutters, this is quite difficult to do, as the laser source is bulky. We could use mirrors to solve this problem with laser cutters, but this would be a complex undertaking. Using knives here is simply a lot more efficient.

Why Not Knives?

Knives have mass, which will lead to pushing the material while cutting. This will result in the material being moved or deformed. When cutting typical material types, such as textile, knives will not be able to seal the fibres the way laser cutters do. Moreover, it will be difficult to laser cut small details due to the size of the knife. Also, when using knives, they will be subject to wear, so they will need to be replaced occasionally, whereas laser cutters will keep on cutting until the internal gas is depleted, which will take a whole lot longer than knives will last.

Why Not Both On One Machine?

This would simply not be the best option, if only for the main difference

between both cutters: the vacuum system. The vacuum system on a knife based system is designed to hold the material down with pressure. On a laser cutter, the vacuum system is designed to generate airflow, moving air from one place to another and thus removing all fumes from the cutting area. These, obviously, are two totally different designs.

If you use a knife vacuum system on the laser cutter, this would mean the fumes aren't extracted properly. If you use a laser vacuum system on the knife cutter, this would result in the material not being held down properly. Some people would debate using a top extraction vacuum system. However, experience has taught us that it is far more efficient to extract fumes from underneath the material, thus avoiding discolouration of the material.

Another reason not to combine laser/knife systems in one do-it-all cutter is the difference in the conveyor belt. Knife based systems typically use felt conveyors as a protective layer between the cutting surface and the knives. If you use a laser on this type of conveyor, the laser would basically cut through the felt entirely, thus destroying the conveyor within seconds.

A laser cutter is best used with metal conveyors. However, using knives on a metal conveyor would result in your knife being destroyed in an instant and damaging the conveyor belt in the same job. Now, I have seen people using a metallised layer around the original conveyor. Although this would work initially, it will not work for a long time. These types of layers get dirty quickly and the dirt would pile up onto the material that is being cut.

Although some might dream of a do-it-all machine, able to use several cutting technologies, practice teaches us that it is fairly impossible to develop such machines because both technologies – laser cutting and knife cutting – simply differ too much from each other.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF VERSATILITY FOR PRINT SERVICE PROVIDERS



BY GERBER TECHNOLOGY

The shift toward soft signage is only one aspect of the expanding printed materials market. The growing accessibility of versatile automation tools enable even the most traditional signage shops to enter other growing markets, including apparel, home furnishings and packaging.

The Printing Industry Is Expanding Into New Markets

As recently as four years ago, apparel was only a small fraction of the overall market, and it has grown exponentially ever since. That growth is driven by the modern consumer's see-now-buy-now mentality where they want things more quickly and where almost everyone has the ability to pull up the internet on their phone and order what they see before they forget about it. The recent growth spurt is also driven by the world of fast fashion where people are doing shorter runs of production and designing more clothing lines more frequently.

The various bases for this trend, as well as evidence of the trend itself, strongly indicates that digital printing is going to continue to grow and also means that digitally printed apparel is going to be found more acceptable by a broader range of consumers as production speed and customisability become more important. Considering the world of mass customisation and on-demand manufacturing, it is not just the large apparel providers and contract manufacturers across the world that feel the increased demand in the cutting and sewing of garments. It is the shops that enable smaller runs and localised production that consumers are going to turn to, to get their products faster, and even a slight increase in demand for quickly delivered customisable products is being felt strongly by smaller producers.

The Growing Demand For Quality Printed Material

The custom apparel market is growing in demand among many industries and organisations, including among nonprofits and smaller grassroots-type groups where custom T-shirts, hats, lanyards and bumper stickers are standard fare. With the growth of various exercise markets, the demand for high quality sports apparel has grown in response, particularly around sports and sporting events that tend to attract wealthier consumers. The ability for smaller vendors, for example, to purchase small batch branded sports team apparel, such as a Small Biz, LLC logo branded L.A. Dodgers T-shirt, has given such vendors an additional way to impress their clients or prospective business partners during networking or business wooing events. Likewise, the demand for custom packaging has grown in response to the lower cost and ease of producing relatively small scale batches of branded labels, displays, containers and other types of custom package materials.

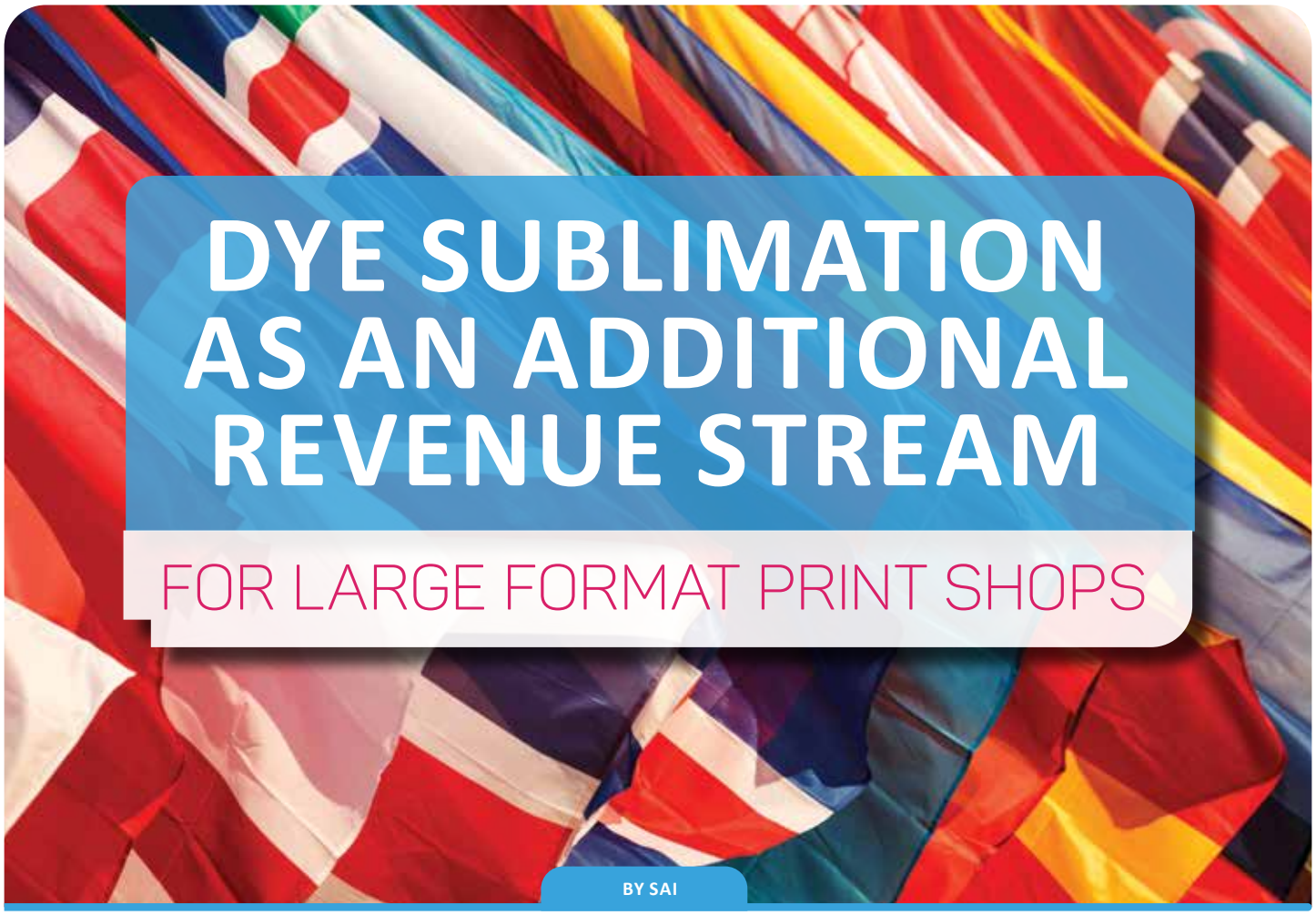
Another area of growing demand is in complimentary merchandise (or 'swag'). Everybody loves swag, and businesses love to give it. Not only is swag a great way to get a company's brand in front of fresh eyes, it gives companies the opportunity to form a relationship with prospective consumers even before they tried a company's products or services. When a business hands out sticker-branded or shoddily crafted branded complimentary merchandise, the merchandise is far more likely to end up in the trashcan than a high quality piece of swag. Even if a swag receiver is not a fan of the brand, they might very well wear a comfortable T-shirt with quality brand printing that does not appear 'cheap' or carelessly made.

Likewise, the same user might be inclined to use a durable tote bag with nice looking printed branding even if they have never even heard of the company or product previously. Without even realising it, a user who incorporates a branded piece of swag into their daily routine forms a sort of relationship with the brand and will more readily consider that brand for their own future needs or will more readily recommend that brand to others. The availability of affordable, customisable soft-printed swag to small and medium size businesses has created opportunity for a much more even playing field in local marketplaces.

Avoiding Bulking Up Capability At The Expense Of Slowing Down Production

As soft material printers become less expensive and easier to procure and to use in everyday business, the need for more practical cutting and finishing tools grows in proportion. The need for more functionality, however, does not necessitate crowding the shop with additional machinery or slowing down production with additional processes. A versatile tool can replace traditional print/sign shop finishing, which may very well be outdated and impractical to maintain as it is, in addition to adding invaluable new functionalities, such as soft signage production and bringing outsourced finishing processes back in-house.

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DYE SUBLIMATION AS AN ADDITIONAL REVENUE STREAM

FOR LARGE FORMAT PRINT SHOPS

BY SAI

Dye sublimation printing, traditionally the preserve of specialist printers producing textiles, T-shirts and novelty items, is a process that uses inks that are vapourised during transfer to the final substrate. The resultant images are colour-rich, vibrant and long-lasting. Dye sublimation printing can be done direct to the final polymer coated substrate, or more commonly via a transfer paper that is then applied to the substrate and transferred by heat using moderate pressure.

You've all heard that selling more to existing customers is more cost-effective than trying to find new ones. If you're a large format print provider, this hopefully resonates with you. Dye sublimation is one way of adding a new range of products while using concepts, technologies and even software you are possibly already familiar with. Today, there is a convergence of factors that might make it worthwhile to consider dye sublimation printing as an additional revenue stream.

The first factor is the digital technology that simplifies dye sublimation printing, giving absolute control over the placement of ink either to transfer papers or direct to fabric substrate. Secondly, the proliferation of large format inkjet printing has created competitive conditions that require business owners to explore additional applications or services to help support profitable growth.

Thirdly, the demand for photo and other image-based products is driving an expansion of Main Street and online printers offering dye sublimation printing. Finally, there are image creation and workflow management and RIP software packages (that you may already be using) that, with an additional optional module, can drive both conventional (solvent, water-based or HP Latex) printers and dye sublimation printers.

The easy availability of small (desktop) sublimation printers as well as those up to large format sizes, means that the process is more widely used in the consumer retail market. Dye sublimation printing may be used on textiles, ceramics, glass, aluminium, brass, stainless steel, plastics and hardboard, which has led to the availability of dozens of different products that can be printed as one-offs, and in small or large quantities. Images printed on suitable substrates can also be used outdoors.

However, it is the field of textile printing in which dye sublimation is possibly best known. When printing on polyester (and blends with a minimum of 60 percent polyester) the colours and details are bright, crisp and sharp. Woven or knit fabric, including twill, poplin, taffeta, chiffon and micro-stretch materials may be printed, and because dye sublimation inks bond with the fibres, they will not crack or wash out. They can be washed, rolled, folded and used outside, making them ideal for T-shirts, swimwear and sportswear, as well as banners and flags.

With dedicated, standalone software packages that handle the entire design-to-print dye sublimation workflow, large format printers have an easier route into this exciting and dynamic technology that can be tailored to meet your own skills and market. In other words, it's do and dye.

SAI
https://www.thinksai.com

SIGN AFRICA BLOEMFONTEIN EXPO HAILED A SUCCESS

BY MATTHEW WOOD









The successful Sign Africa Bloemfontein expo, held on 12 February at Ilanga Estate, attracted 422 visitors from around the Free State, Lesotho and the Northern Cape, including Kimberley, Ladybrand, Welkom, Bethlehem, Maseru, Harrismith and Virginia, to name a few. The event was sponsored by Platinum sponsor Roland.

Visitors were inspired by the latest technologies and trends in wide format digital printing, T-shirt printing, finishing, point of sale displays, signage, banners, flags, vehicle graphics, LED's, laser engraving and more.

Exhibitors had positive feedback about the event:

'There were a lot of people and the show was a success for us. Visitors showed great interest in our products. It was good to see all our customers too,' said Jury Nel, JG Electronics.

'It was much better than expected, we had a good rush of visitors from when the doors opened. We made many good leads that will become regular customers. Visitors were happy to see us there,' said Assif Sidik, Stixo Signage Supplies.

'We encountered good quality leads – it was a very interesting day,' said Manny Da Silva, Konica Minolta South Africa.

'We had a decent response and achieved what we wanted. We've set up meetings with good prospects, and were happy with the show,' – Allrich Trading.

'The day was busy with a constant flow of visitors. It was good to showcase a wide range of products to this market,' – Roland/House For Signwriting.

'We had a good show. It was good to showcase Verimedia with our Mimaki brand for the Free State region. We were happy with the expo,' – Verimedia/ Graphix Supply World.

Judges visited each stand at the expo and judged the stands according to criteria based on design, staff friendliness and professionalism. The results are as follows:

Sign Africa Best Medium Stand:
Winner: Roland/House For Signwriting.
Runner-up: Graphix Supply World/Mimaki/Verimedia.

Sign Africa Best Small Stand:
Winner: Power Africa.
Runner-up: Vic Bay.









Speed Wrap Winner Crowned At Sign Africa Bloemfontein Expo

Enoch Africa from SignRite was announced as the winner of the Bloemfontein Roland Speed Wrap Challenge. He won R3500. Gerrie Venter from SignRite was placed second, winning R1750, and Werner Jansen from Hegmo Hla Nu came third, winning R1000.

Contestants had to race against the clock to wrap a vehicle door to the best standards. This event was sponsored by platinum sponsor Roland, vinyl sponsors Grafiwrap (distributed by Maizey Plastics), and expo sponsor Sign Africa.



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EDIBLE INKS

PROVIDE MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES

BY SENSIENT IMAGING TECHNOLOGIES



Digital inkjet technology will continue to grow and develop for food applications – and we'll increasingly see its use reaching beyond corporate and promotional events, to everyday use for both large and small brands. There are multiple opportunities out there for manufacturers.

Whether used to refer to ink printed onto food directly – 'edible inks' – or, alternatively, food packaging, 'food compliant ink' needs to be safe, while also providing excellent performance and visual appeal.

Five things you should know about food-safe inks and what they have to offer the food industry:

1. It All Started With Eggs

Edible inks started with ensuring both transparency and traceability in the form of date-coding on eggshells. Although it was just a simple line of text, and the ink itself wasn't consumed, it was the beginning of using food-safe inks to add information and patterns to food products.

The technology has come leaps and bounds since then, alongside the demand for increased customisation and personalisation. Brands are increasingly using food-safe ink to differentiate their products from competitors and appeal to consumers. For both micro-brands who are competing for shelf space, and for more established brands looking to try something new, this is a great way to add value and customer pull without a significant initial investment – especially as the production line does not need to change significantly to accommodate the ink.

2. Creating Edible Inks Is Incredibly Complex

Although easy to implement, digital inks are by no means simple to create. They're a complex, low viscosity liquid that must be able to travel at the right speed to form complicated images on specific substrates – from porous cakes to the more impermeable chocolate – via a non-contact process. There are lots of components in a typical ink to ensure high quality and excellent performance – and when the ink needs to be safe for consumption, the complexity increases even further.

When developing a food-safe ink, everything from ink wetting and adhesion to viscosity and surface tension needs to be considered – nothing can be left to chance. For example, did you know that printheads favour a slightly alkaline pH, as acidic inks tend to degrade a printhead faster from the inside? Or that the ideal particle size is incredibly specific, and needs to be exponentially smaller than the printhead nozzle? When you also consider the technology needed to make it edible, while avoiding the risk of impurities or adulteration after processing, the complexity of the entire process becomes clear.

3. Safety Comes First

Before an ink can be deemed safe for consumption, there are several critical tests that need to be carried out. There needs to be testing for unauthorised solvents, adulteration, pesticides, heavy metals and microbiological characteristics before ink is allowed to be used for commercial purposes. The printhead and packaging need to be considered as well, as there is an underlying risk of chemical migration.

4. Natural Is The Future

Today's consumer wants more natural, plant-based options and less artificial additives and chemicals in their food – and sustainable and traceable ingredients have also become more important when choosing products. It's not surprising therefore that consumers also want natural colours in their food and beverages.

Naturally-derived edible inks are readily available to meet this increased demand. However, it's worth considering that some compromises may have to be made on the shade and concentration, the consistency of different batches of the ink – and, of course, how storage and shelf life will be affected.

5. The Possibilities Are Endless

From baked goods to confectionery, it seems that the only limit is imagination, as brands seek to make their products stand out from the crowd, highlight seasonal promotions and display co-branded creatives. Currently, manufacturers are harnessing the power of edible ink to print on wafers and iced cookies, create scorch marks on pet treats and sandwich rolls, and embed personalised messages into cocktails and coffee foam. Food printing not only adds design elements, however, but can also simulate texture or effect, for example, by printing a lemon meringue image on a lemon-flavoured cookie so that the visual appearance matches the flavour.

Although this technology is still developing and improving, food and beverage brands are already using this latest technology to push boundaries and create end products that offer a completely new experience for the end consumer.

SENSIENT IMAGING TECHNOLOGIES www.sensientinkjet.com

FIVE GREAT TRUTHS ABOUT QUALITY SERVICE



BY JOHN TSCHOHL, SERVICE QUALITY INSTITUTE

Why is loyalty so important? According to global management consulting firm, Bain and Co., repeat customers spend 67% more than new customers. This is due to both larger transactions and more frequent shopping. Even a 5% increase in retention can lead to a rise in profits of as much as 25-100%. You need to ensure that you continuously offer value to your customers to keep them coming back for more.

Over the years I have had some real 'wow' experiences with businesses, where people and employees have treated me like a VIP every single time I have come in contact with them. Sad to say, the opposite is also true. There are numerous bad ones that make me wonder why some companies are still in business. Why anyone would ever consider going back to make another purchase. No courtesy, no warmth, no one cares, no speed, no follow-up and no respect.

Here's some inspiration from Amazon's Jeff Bezos: 'We see our customers as invited guests to a party, and we are the hosts. It's our job every day to make every important aspect of the customer experience a little bit better.'

Five Great Truths About Quality Service:

1. Treat customers like lifelong partners. Do it by listening to customers' expressions of needs and wants. Then help them obtain the service or product that serves those needs and wants best whether they're in your inventory or not. This is the proper procedure when you expect customers to return again and again over a long period.

2. Do not disappoint or anger customers. 'Dealing with people is probably the biggest problem you face, especially if you are in business. Yes, and that is also true if you are a housewife/husband, architect or engineer.' – Dale Carnegie

3. See the business through a customer's eyes. Call it 'empathy.' T.G.I. Friday restaurants familiarises employees with customer perceptions with reports from mystery shoppers who routinely check out store image, merchandise and service from the customer's point of view. Empathy is an important ingredient in the service business. How one handles a service problem is as important to customers as the solution of the problem itself. 'Make your product easier to buy than your competition, or you will find your customers buying from them, not you.' – Mark Cuban

4. Deliver more service than you promise or than customers expect. This is a wonderful way to build customer loyalty upon their feeling that they got a 'good deal.' Practice the 'and then some' principle. Your products do all you say they will…and then some. Service is prompt, reliable and courteous…and then some. If a customer needs help once a sale is complete, help the customer…and then some.

5. Delivering more service than customers expect is a subtle competitive tactic that competitors usually do not notice. In the process of building volume, you can confuse your competitors. They will not understand how you are doing it.

6. Try to get better. Imagine a mental fluorescent sign that flashes the questions: 'How are we doing?' (Fine, but we can improve.) And: 'How can we get better?' (Apply the answers as if they were an action agenda.) 'People respond in accordance to how you treat them.' – Nelson Mandela.

The newsletter Quality Assurance Report states that only when a company knows exactly what kind of service its customers expect, delivers on those expectations 100 percent of the time, at a price that customers are willing to pay, while still getting an acceptable return, can the company claim to excel in customer service.

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.

www.johntschohl.com

A TEMPTING 2020 FOR 3D PRINTING



BY MARÍA JOSÉ GARCÍA, DPI INSIGHTS/FLAAR-REPORTS

It seems like only yesterday that we were all talking about this new and revolutionary printing method, which could print any 3D model made in 3D software. Everybody was amazed with the idea of creating any piece straight out of your imagination in a tangible way, exactly like you wanted it.

3D printing has existed since 1980, but the real explosion for this technology was about 10 years ago, and it has continued to evolve. It's amazing how 3D printing has been developing and has continued to expand, but even though it was really innovative from the beginning, 3D printing also had its disadvantages and it wasn't necessarily something everybody needed in their businesses. Finishes were not as clean as other prototyping options, the printing speed was not that convenient and other aspects made the whole 3D world a little doubtful and unstable to the market's eyes.

Gradually, 3D has made its way through a wide range of industries that go from making medical casts, to creating amazing looking food, or even glass pieces. All of these discoveries for different kinds of applications have forced the 3D business to step up and provide a better service in general, tons of new options on brands and new materials (keeping the common ABS and PLA plastics), new software, finishes, etc.

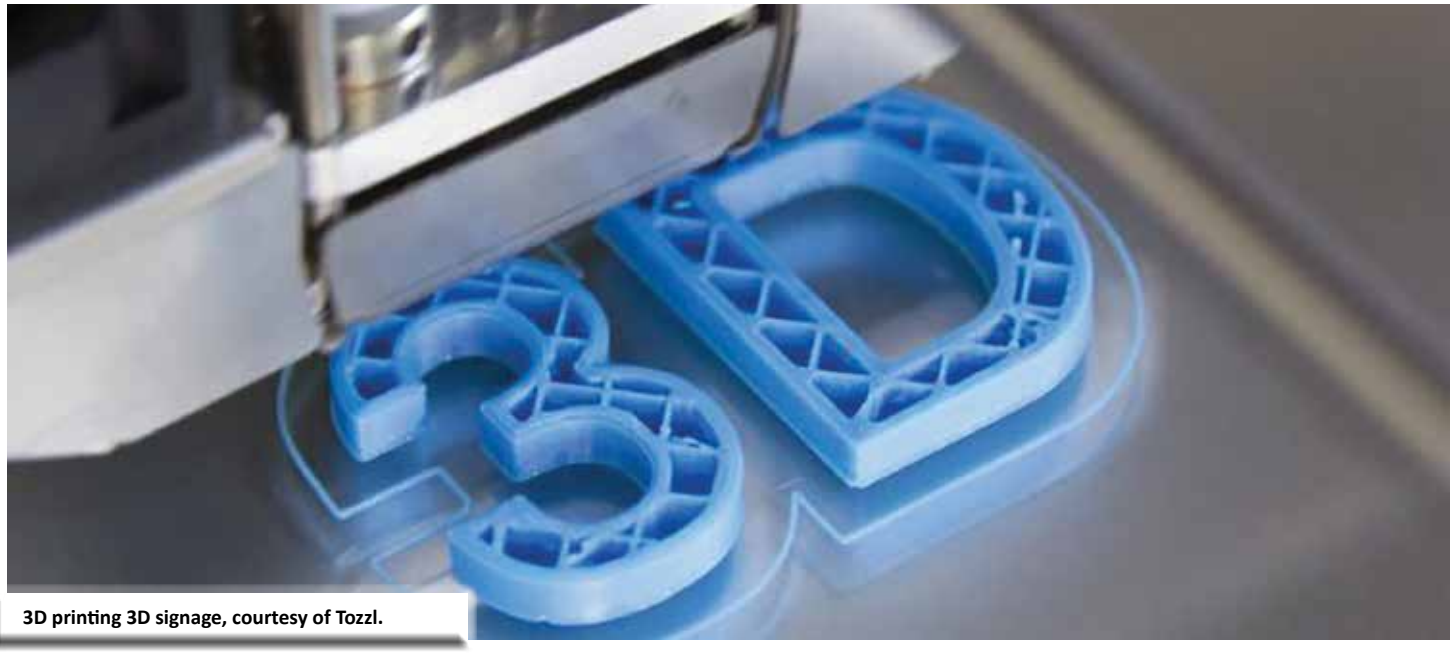
Having that said, it is obvious that the future waits for a notable increase in the additive manufacturing industry. It's exciting to discover what's next for 3D printing and what 2020 is bringing to it. Manufacturers are working on new developments that will expand the performance of machines and the different dimensions of them.

Faster Printing Methods

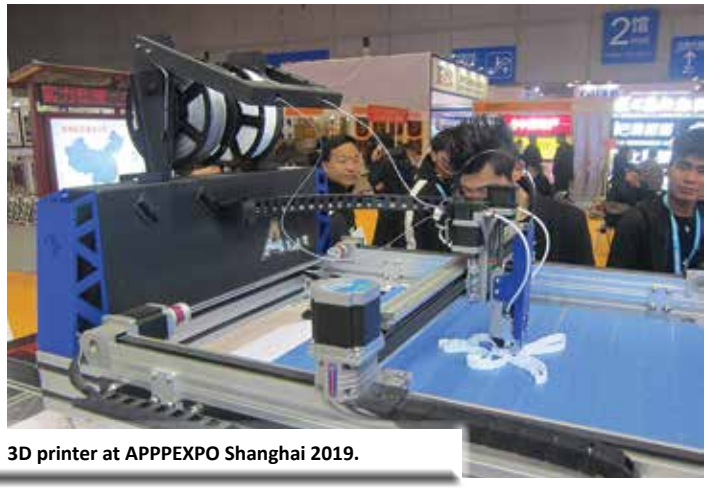
In order to achieve a greater production volume, printing speed should be improved since today's machines aren't as fast and the relation of speed-size of the piece is considered really slow. Impossible Objects, a brand founded by Bob Swartz, has been working on getting a faster speed for the printers by trying some properties of 2D printing. Last year, they launched a machine that is supposed to be ten times faster than traditional 3D printers on the market. We can expect other big brands to try and match this in 2020.

Cabins Will No Longer Have A Size Limitation

Many brands create 3D printers with a cabin that controls the temperature and humidity, and also keeps away different particles. This creates a limitation when talking about the size of the objects a 3D printer can produce. MELD Manufacturing has developed some machines that do not require these types of chambers, leaving a wider space for printing. This will not only speed up mass



3D printing 3D signage, courtesy of Tozzl.



3D printer at APPPEXPO Shanghai 2019.

production, but will also allow printers to get complete pieces without having to combine a lot of them and removes the process of joining them all.

Wider Variety Of Materials

There are a lot of new applications on the 3D market, but the range of materials is increasing every year. Markforged has created machines that can print different types of metals, nylon, superalloys, and chopped carbon fibre. Impossible Objects has also partnered with BASF to accelerate the process of developing new materials for 3D printing. This creates opportunities for many more industries to implement 3D printing in their businesses.

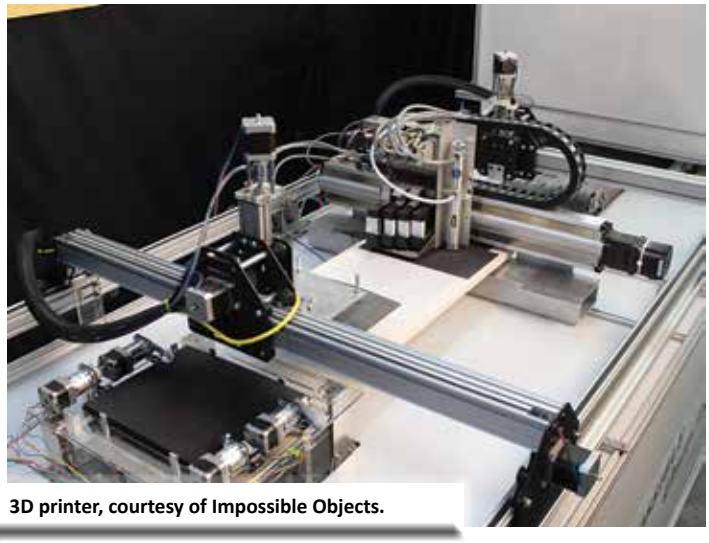
Software Upgrades

Software plays a big role when it comes to 3D printing. Not only does it allow you to modify some components of the design of the piece but to make changes to the temperature, finishes and add extra material for support when printing. It is very clear that some software can provide a super clean finish of the pieces, when other ones don't.

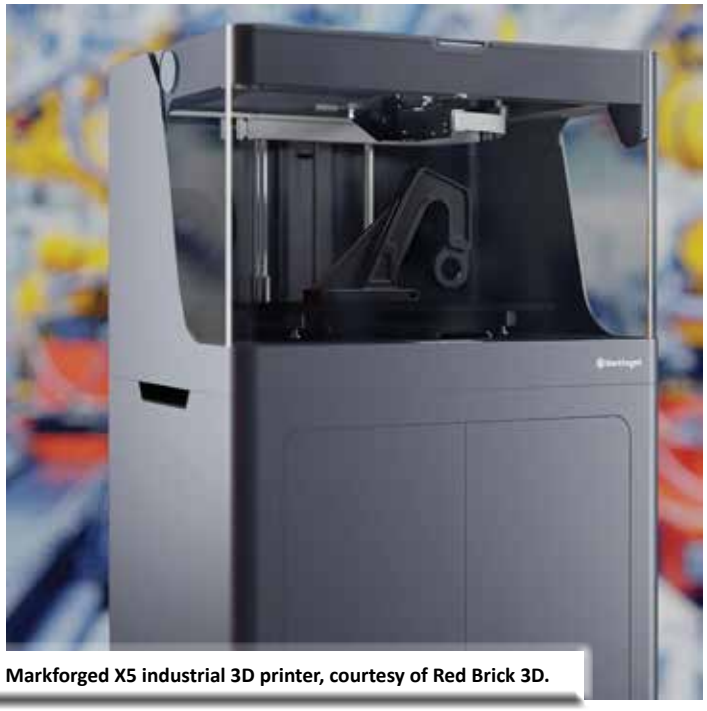
Essentium is already checking materials and big mass production protocols through software. Markforged developed kind of a cloud-based process in which a designed piece can be produced anywhere else in the world. This also creates a huge facility for industrial production. It is expected that new software solutions will include greater security, remote collaboration and manufacturing precision.

3D Printing Will Grow In Partnerships And Collaborations

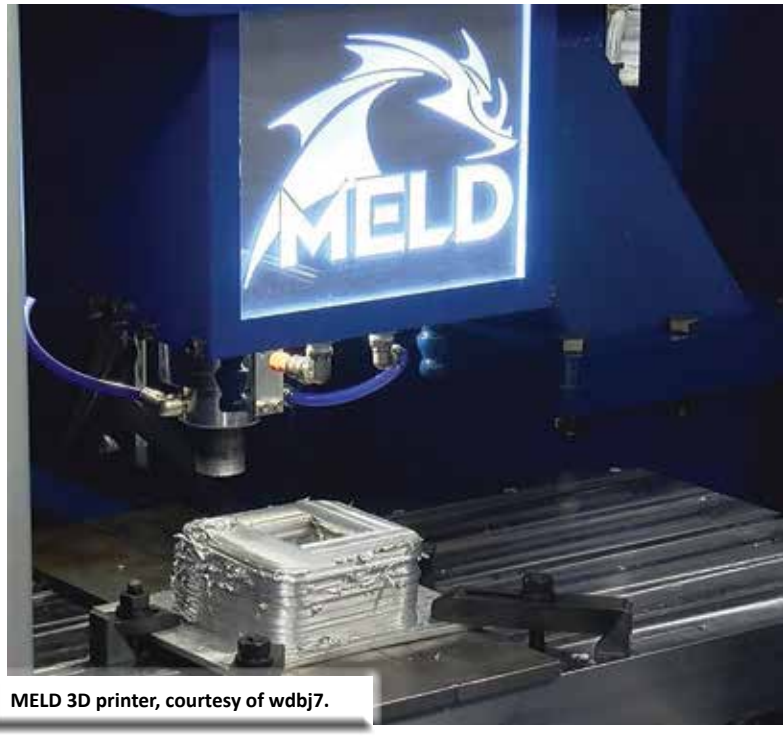
3D is growing constantly and developing its full potential. This will lead to new



3D printer, courtesy of Impossible Objects.



Markforged X5 industrial 3D printer, courtesy of Red Brick 3D.



MELD 3D printer, courtesy of wdbj7.

companies, startups, and companies with different backgrounds and expertise to join the 3D world. As mentioned before, Impossible Objects and BASF will collaborate to develop new materials for additive manufacturing. 3D printers represent a challenge for industrial designers and engineers to create and re-design new machines with tons of new features.

The future looks tempting for 3D printing and it's one of the most transformational and innovative technologies of the fourth industrial revolution. So we are definitely going to see greater things in the future for additive manufacturing in the 2020's.

FLAAR REPORTS
https://flaar-reports.org

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NEWS

The Imprint Act – What Printers Need To Know

Increasingly, Printing SA members' customers protest against the use of imprints, claiming them to be 'free advertising'. Printing SA contacted the State Attorney for his interpretation of the Imprint Act 43/1993 and received some interesting advice.

A brief reminder – the Imprint Act requires that any printer of printed matter affixes a legible notice containing the words 'Printed by . . . ', followed by his/her full and correct name and the full and correct address at which he/she conducts his/her business of printing or an abbreviation of his/her name as registered with Printing SA. The printer is also obliged to inform the Federation in writing of any changes to particulars furnished in a previous application.'

The State Attorney asserts: 'The requirements of Section 2 of the Act are peremptory and will lead to the criminal prosecution of the printer who does not comply. If someone induces someone else to commit an offence (such as the omission of a printer's particulars from printed matter in contravention of Section 2 of the Act) such other person may also be prosecuted. Incitement to commit an offence is in itself also an offence.'

He proposes that printers refer to Section 2 of the Act in the display of their particulars to educate customers. This legal requirement was not requested by Printing SA; the responsibility of administering the Act was given to Printing SA by the Department of Home Affairs in 1993. The registration fee is minimal. Printing SA understands that many advertising agencies and brokers do not want their customers to be able to identify the printers, but it cannot promote or condone non-compliance. Imprints can, however, be structured in such a way that the printer can only be identified by requesting an extract from the register held by Printing SA, at a nominal charge as prescribed in the Regulations to the Act.



Printing SA representatives discussed training and consulting services with visitors at the Sign Africa Durban expo, held from 11-12 March.

Printing SA Initiates Foundational Learning Programme

Printing SA has embarked on a new skills pool strategy to provide the industry with talented individuals who are eager to take up career opportunities in the printing, packaging and signage industry. These individuals will have graduated from the new Foundational Learning Programme (FLP).

Printing SA is running this programme again this year thanks to the discretionary grant funding received from the FP&M SETA.

The individuals chosen will get: a six month fully paid course; weekly transport stipend; six month paid internship – should they be successful in completing the course, and they will gain experience in the printing, packaging and signage industry.

Applicants who are eligible to apply: school leavers; unemployed individuals and those wanting to gain experience in the industry. The course start date was Monday, 2 March, 2020.

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Printing SA KZN Chamber Hosts First Business Networking Event For 2020

Printing SA's KwaZulu-Natal Chamber held its first business networking event for the year at the Westville Country Club on 20 February. Delegates found the workshops very informative.

The first talk was given by Gerard Busse, Marketing Manager for Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) South Africa. He provided a brief background on the FSC, an overview of the importance of sustainable forestry to the natural, economic and social environments and its support of the 2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

He explained the 10 Principles of Forestry Management contained in the FSC Forestry Management Standard and explained how FSC's chain-of-custody (CoC) system operates. FSC Chain-of-Custody certfication connects consumers to healthy forests by tracking products from forest to shelf. It ensures that FSC materials and products have been checked at every stage of processing, reassuring customers purchasing products sold with FSC claims that they are genuinely FSC-certified.

Any company involved in the transformation or processing of a forest-based product or wishing to apply the FSC label to their products and/or sell them with an FSC claim, must be FSC-certified.

Paper and other print substrates made from trees are both renewable and recyclable, but only when they are responsibly sourced and sensitively processed. FSC-certified printers offer their clients the ability to demonstrate their commitment to responsible sourcing through the use of FSC-certified papers and the application of the FSC labels.

The different types of on-product-labelling were discussed and how one checks that a supplier and/or product is FSC certified on the FSC public database (https://info.fsc.org). He also discussed the growing awareness of Sustainability Standards amongst business and the general public.

The next speaker was Wiseman Nyeni, Regional Manager for the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in KwaZulu-Natal. He explained the role of the DTI in assisting established and new businesses accessing funding. The Black Industrialists Scheme (BIS) is one such scheme that is a grant programme to unlock the potential that exists with black industrialists through deliberate, targeted and well defined financial and non-financial interventions. For the purposes of BIS, Black people are referred to as African, Coloured, Indian and Chinese people. They also need to be citizens of South Africa.

To qualify, industrialists must have more than 50% ownership, have either ownership or management control, take a personal risk in the business and make a long-term commitment to the business and lastly be a medium to long term investor. There are a number of industry sectors that qualify, including Pulp, Paper and Furniture, which of course was of particular interest to the audience.

In addition to the requirement already mentioned, applicants need to be a registered legal entity in terms of the Companies Act 2008 (as amended), be a taxpayer in good standing, have a valid B-BBEE certificate, be directly involved in the day-to-day running of the operation and have expertise in the sector that the business is involved in. The project may entail starting a new operation, upgrading an existing business or acquiring an existing business and requires a minimum investment of R30,000,000. Most importantly, the project should result in securing or increasing direct employment.

The BIS scheme offers a cost sharing grant ranging from 30% to 50% to approved entities to a maximum of R50,000,000. This means the applicant would have had to secure the remaining funding from another source such as his/her bank, the National Empowerment Fund or Industrial Development Corporation.

There are other more detailed requirements. Interested parties should request the 'Programme Guideline: Black Industrialist Scheme' from their local DTI office. The message from the speaker was that DTI wants to work with applicants so that their applications, motivations and supporting documents are technically sound before being submitted.



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MIMAKI JFX 1631 PLUS DIGITAL PRINTER — 21 FEB

R500,000. Large Mimaki JFX1631 plus digital printer. Machine is in 100% working order. Printing LF200 flexible CMYK + white UV inks.
Darren (+27 21) 511 0041
Cape Town

LARGE LASER — 21 FEB

R100,000. SA Argus 1325 Laser for sale. 150 Watt laser for cutting Perspex and Plexiglas.
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ROLAND INKS — 20 FEB

R1180 each. Brand new Roland inks for sale, still sealed and in original packaging. Cyan x 3, Magenta x 2, Black X3 and 1 Yellow. Courier can be arranged. Please WHATSAPP me.
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Harrismith

SCREEN PRINTER — 18 FEB

R32,000. Fixed arm graphic table with vacuum bed, 1000 x 700cm, still in excellent condition. Plus 2 x screens.
Morne +27 (0) 82 570 4120
Centurion

CNC ROUTER — 14 FEB

2m x 3m. R150,000. Six months old. CNC router (supplied by CNC Professional), full vacuum bed, dust extraction system, as well as mist cooling for aluminium cutting. Machine is in perfect condition, only operated by the owner. 3 phase vacuum, spindle, and extractor.
Justin Massyn +27 (0) 82 068 5346
West Rand

ROLAND EGX 400 CNC ENGRAVER — 14 FEB

R90,000. Like new, never run a production job. Complete and ready to operate. Working area: 40.6cm (16'') x 30.4cm (12'') x 4.4cm (1.67''). Engrave a wide variety of materials, including: plastic, acrylic, aluminium, brass, urethane foam and even wood.
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Johannesburg

MYCUT1200 — 13 FEB

R17,000. Brand new – used once as test run.
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Dye sublimation equipment and inks, industrial heat presses, Mimaki vinyl cutters, 3D printers, large format printers DTG inks, UV Curing inks, cutting table, sewing machine, plasma cutter, welder, Apple Mac, heat gun, metal shelving and much more.
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Kya Sand

CNC ROUTER — 13 FEB

2500 x 1200 bed size. Makita spindle. R30,000. Complete system: CNC router, flatbed, spindle and laptop. Aspire Software.
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SPRAY BOOTH — 13 FEB

R165,000. 7 x 4m spray booth. Suitable for spraying cars, two years old, good condition.
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Olifantsfontein

ROLAND SOLJET PRO III XJ-740 — 13 FEB

R105,000. Roland Soljet Pro III XJ-740 with take-up roller, 1,8m wide, print only. Good condition. Recently serviced. Remainder of ink cartridges included. Reason for selling: upgraded to print and cut.
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ROLAND SP 540V — 9 FEB

R59,000. Used every day for work. Brand new (M+Y) printhead replaced only 1 month ago. (C+B) printhead replaced 3 years ago. Excellent printing condition.
Rowan (+27 31) 303 2127
Durban

GUILLOTINE MACHINE — 7 FEB

R95,000. Used to cut paper and Chromadek. Demo available before purchase.
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Midrand

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Johannesburg

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JOBS OFFERED

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bhavikabudhia@rocketmail.com
Pretoria

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shannon@spotsigns.co.za
Gauteng

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phillipb@graffiti.co.za
Gauteng

VISUAL INSTALLER 18 FEB

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admin@writingonthewall.co.za
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JUNIOR ESTIMATOR 18 FEB

Branding Company seeks motivated and highly organised technical estimator. The ideal candidate would have 5 years' experience in estimating and have a technical aptitude. The candidate would be required to constantly strive to improve the company's profitability, quality and lead times.
andile@bbs.co.za
KwaZulu-Natal

PRODUCTION MANAGER 14 FEB

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lisa@signs4sa.co.za
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