

QUARMBY COLOUR

takes the UK's first EFI VUTEk h3



Tech trends from the shows

What do the latest launches tell us about development direction?

Innovators

How design company Mineheart is building its digital print product offering

Talking Point

...with Solopress MD Simon Cooper on W2P opportunities

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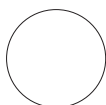
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4.0m	£100.00	£235.00	£335.00
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6.0m	£150.00	£395.00	£545.00



CURVED BACKWALL.

	Hardware	Graphic	Total
2.4m	£58.00	£180.00	£238.00
3.0m	£63.00	£200.00	£263.00
4.0m	£80.00	£250.00	£330.00
5.0m	£90.00	£380.00	£470.00
6.0m	£100.00	£400.00	£500.00



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1500mm	£68.00	£120.00	£188.00



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See the bigger picture

ON TREND?

Application, application, application - that's what Fespa Global 2019 was all about really. And it makes sense. How long have we now been talking about the possibilities abounding when it comes to large-format digital print? Continuing technological development opens ever more potential revenue streams - doesn't it? The thing is, it's not all about technological advances. Making a move into new/niche markets - or not - is also about entrepreneurship, supply chain management...basic business acumen. If not every print company jumps at the opportunities they are being told are being afforded them, does that make them myopic?

Alongside this issue, Image Reports has published its annual Widthwise Report based on information supplied by 247 UK/Ireland-based large-format PSPs. It's fab news - optimism levels are high, growth forecasts are great. But not everyone is running headlong into digitally printed apparel or décor textile markets where so much noise is being made about opportunity knocking. Nor is there a groundswell of large-format PSPs going the way of W2P to meet personalisation/customisation trends. Read the report (which can be downloaded for free at: <https://www.imagereportsmag.co.uk/widthwise2019>) for the full analysis of the data, but we've picked some key areas of topical discussion for this issue of the main magazine too.

On the textile front, for instance, we've asked Keypoint Intelligence (InfoTrends) for its take on whether UK PSPs are missing a trick by not all targetting fast fashion and homewares (p48). We talk to Solopress MD Simon Cooper about W2P given the technology's continuing lack of uptake in this sector (p38), look into the legals when it comes to the burgeoning wallcovering printing market (p34), and investigate how design company Mineheart is using partnerships with digital PSPs to sell niche products like bespoke fur rugs, wooden furniture, soft furnishings etc. (p37). Oh, and we have all the technical trends and developments info from the trade shows too (p14), because yes, we know that will forever remain a key consideration.

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Karibu unveiled

swissQprint has launched Karibu, its first roll-to-roll printer. The 3.4m wide UV inkjet machine, which made its public debut at Fespa Global, will be available from this September.

Karibu features a light box next to the printing area, for immediate and continuous quality control of backlit prints. It also has a Mesh Kit integrated with the print bed for the clean printing of permeable substrates, as well as full bleed printing. A mouse click by the operator sends the Karibu print beam - which is movable in the X direction - from its standard position to the mesh position. There is a dual roll option (2 x 1.6m) for the machine - the roll holders are split into two sections with each half of the shaft driven individually for optimum web tension on both rolls.

Karibu has 136 keys ranged across the print bed width, each one opening/closing a vacuum channel, thus eliminating air leakage even in the gap between dual rolls. A tap on the switches opens or closes the entire vacuum area width within four seconds - a solution for which swissQprint has filed a patent application.

swissQprint has developed an inkset specifically for the new Karibu, which is NVC-free and Greenguard Gold certified.

European market sees new X5 direct-to-shape printer



Inkcups has released its direct-to-shape UV inkjet flatbed digital printer, the X5, to the European market following its earlier release in the US.

The machine features up to four Ricoh Gen 5 print heads for full-colour printing on flat and slightly curved hard goods up to 150mm high. The manufacturer said it can decorate a bed size of 1100 x 610mm in approximately two minutes. Maximum image resolution is 1200dpi.

The X5 prints CMYK plus two opaque UV LED-curable white inks, with an optional varnish for additional visual impact.

EFI acquisition on the cards

EFI has entered into a definitive agreement to be acquired by an affiliate of private equity company Siris Capital Group in an all-cash transaction valued at approximately \$1.7bn.

EFI's board of directors has unanimously recommended the agreement to shareholders, though at the time of going to press it had an option to look at alternative acquisition proposals from third parties during a 'go-shop' period. Subject to that go-shop period, the proposed transaction is expected to close by the third quarter of 2019.

"We believe this transaction delivers superior and immediate value to our shareholders while providing us with a partner that can add strategic and operational expertise to our business," said Bill Muir, EFI CEO. "We are excited to partner with Siris' highly experienced team on this next phase of growth for EFI."

Siris invests in technology companies that

are facing technology transitions. Its co-founder and managing partner, Frank Baker, said: "EFI is at the forefront of the digital transition in the imaging and print industry, underpinned by a strong software heritage and culture of innovation. We believe that, by partnering with Siris, EFI will be well positioned to capture this transformational opportunity associated with increased digital inkjet penetration, industrial automation and software enablement. We are eager to partner with management to help the company achieve its strategic objectives."

Meanwhile, EFI used Fespa Global for the European premiere its Fiery ProServer Premium with GPU hardware acceleration combined with Fiery DFE software, together said to deliver up to twice the speed of EFI's superwide-format printers. Other introductions were also made.

SAi to work with Oxford University on AI sign design

SAi is to work with Oxford University on a three-year project exploring the development of an artificial intelligence (AI) assisted signage software solution.

During the initial stage, researchers from the university's department of engineering science will use aggregate data to determine the common trends and behaviour of sign designers. If clear patterns emerge, a software that aids large-format print providers and sign and display companies when designing signage, could be brought to market.

The project follows an increased demand from large-format PSPs and signmakers to reduce the time spent at the design stage. The envisaged AI based software could serve to inspire designers with suggestions, including best practice fonts, images and layouts.

"We are very excited about the potential of this AI research as it represents another move to bring new technologies to the sign industry. After all, pushing the frontiers of innovation to develop tools that will make the lives of our customers easier, is what SAI is all about," said Gudrun Bonte, VP product management at SAI.

Meanwhile, SAI has unveiled its souped-up Flexi 19 signmaking software, central to which is a 64-bit Rip engine to help deliver a 30% increase in speed. Created as an all-in-one solution for design, print, print-and-cut and direct-to-vinyl production workflow, the package comprises a variety of tools, some of which be available free-of-charge to SAI subscription-based customers.

Onyx 19 introduces Spark Engine speed enhancer

Onyx Graphics unveiled Onyx 19 at Fespa Global following a sneak preview ISA Las Vegas in the US. The upgrade introduces the Spark Engine performance platform and DeviceLink+ colour management features.

The Spark Engine uses compression algorithms, a threading pipeline and new rendering technology for Rip speed increases up to 200%, printer performance increases up to 400% and step and repeat performance up to 600% according to Onyx.

"Onyx 19 is the culmination of 30 years of innovation in the wide-format print industry," said Kevin Murphy, president and CEO of Onyx Graphics. "With unrivalled speed and performance from the new Spark Engine, coupled with next generation colour management using DeviceLink+, print service providers can reach new heights using Onyx 19."

Epson delivers on new printer promise

Epson has delivered on its spring promise to unveil two new large-format printers at Fespa Global - the 64in SureColor SC-S60600L and SCS80600L.

"At the heart of these new printers is the introduction of 1.5 litre ink pouches of UltraChrome GS3 eco-solvent inks which have key environmental certifications, including GreenGuard Gold and AgBB," said Chris Davies, product manager, production LFP.

The SC-S60600L and SC-S80600L use Epson PrecisionCore TFP printheads and will be supplied with Epson Edge Rip software and the LFP Accounting Tool.

Epson has also announced that it will reinforce external sales of inkjet printheads by adding the PrecisionCore product to its product line-up as it seeks to expand the horizons of digital printing.

Biggs retires as Westcoast acquires Colourgen

The Westcoast Group has bought Colourgen. The wide-format print distributor will continue to trade operate as an autonomous business from its offices in Maidenhead and will carry on offering the same portfolio of products and services with the same staff. Jeff Biggs (right), who founded Colourgen in 1987, is retiring. Managing director Mark Lambert will continue in a management role at Colourgen alongside members of the Westcoast management team.

Lambert said: "It is our belief that Colourgen and its customers will grow and prosper under this new structure, and that we will achieve even greater results moving forward."

Westcoast company ArtSystems - acquired in 2016 - will assist in Colourgen's integration, helping to broaden the portfolio of products and revenues available through Colourgen's channels, a move expected to create new investment and growth opportunities.

Steve Hawker, MD of ArtSystems said: "Looking ahead, we believe this acquisition will produce a more attractive proposition to existing and potential suppliers, so that above all, Colourgen's customers will benefit. Whilst the company is retaining its key specialist attributes, the backing and reach of the Westcoast Group



will ensure that their offering reaches a much wider audience."

Established in 1984, the Westcoast Group remains privately held with its distributor arm, Westcoast Limited, distributing IT brands such as HP, HPE, Microsoft, Lenovo, Apple and others to a broad range of resellers, retailers and office product dealers in the UK and beyond.

Fespa launches Sportswear Pro show

Fespa is launching a new exhibition dedicated to sportswear manufacturing. The first 'Sportswear Pro' show will run alongside next year's Fespa Global event at IFEMA in Madrid (24-27 March).

With a focus on the latest technologies in on-demand and customised sportswear production, Sportswear Pro will bring together suppliers in design (CAD/CAM and 3D body scanning), production (CMT - cut, make and trim, bonding and knitting) and decoration (printing, engraving, embroidery and laser appliqué systems), as well as developers of accessories, smart textiles and printed electronics.

A dedicated conference programme reflecting the business priorities of sportswear manufacturers and designers - such as sustainability and automation - will run in tandem with the Sportswear Pro exhibition.

Michael Ryan, event manager for Sportswear Pro, explained: "Our core Fespa community is heavily engaged in the production of sports apparel, with 80% of textile printers active in this dynamic segment, according to our 2018 Fespa Print Census. Despite a 7% growth in 2018, sportswear producers are not currently served by an event focused on how to optimise their processes and meet the global trends of customisation and speed to market. We believe that Fespa, having established a commanding position as a leading European exhibition for textile and garment printing including direct-to-garment, can deliver an event."

HP shows off new Stitch S series textile printers

New from HP comes the Stitch S series digital textile printers, incorporating the 64in Stitch S300 and S500, and the 126in S1000. A range of dye-sub papers has also been introduced to accompany the launch.

"The digitally printed textiles market is experiencing double-digit annual growth, forecast to reach \$5.5bn by 2023 according to Smithers Pira. We look forward to more digital print transformations being realised with the arrival of the new HP Stitch S series," said Santi Morera, head of graphics solutions business at HP.

The Stitch S series printers use thermal inkjet technology and have a built-in spectrophotometer. They have direct to textile and dye-sublimation paper transfer capability, have user interchangeable printheads, a patented media drying system, integrated built-in colour control and automatic smart nozzle compensation system.

The Stitch S1000 has a top production speed up to 220m²/h and backlit speed up to 130m²/h. The Stitch S300 has been designed specifically for new to dye-sublimation users, and has user-replaceable printheads, while the HP Stitch S500, which has a symmetrical 2xCMYK printhead configuration and optical media advance sensor, is designed for high production sites.

RA Smart (CAD & Machinery) will be the exclusive UK and Ireland specialist reseller for the Stitch range.

Mimaki launches JFX200-2513 EX

Mimaki used Fespa Global as the European launchpad for its JFX200-2513 EX UV flatbed printer, successor of the JFX200-2513 launched six years ago. The new machine, which has a 2,500mm x 1,300mm print size, is said to be 280% faster in new draft mode when printing in four colours plus white, and 100% faster for all other print modes than previous JFX models.

The entry-level printer also uses Mimaki's 2.5D Texture Maker to enable PSPs to offer textured effect large-format print without lengthy file preparation. The layering technology has been designed for ease of use and eradicates the process of creating multiple Photoshop files featuring stacked stepped layers for smooth expression as Mimaki's Rip software RaterLink6Plus completes the process by adding a greyscale image of the original coloured file in the Rip.

The JFX200-2513 EX has a vacuum-controlling foot switch for when the user is not hands free and needs the media to be held stable on the print bed. An ethernet connection is now also provided, improving the functionality for IoT connections. Another interface has been added to connect external safety devices such as a safety curtain. Additionally, the system includes Mimaki Core Technologies, Nozzle Check Unit (NCU) and Nozzle Recovery System (NRS) for uninterrupted printing.

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- Elitron introduces the Agila cutting plotter



QUARMBY COLOUR LEAPS IN TECHNOLOGY WITH THE EFI VUTEK H3

QUARMBY COLOUR IN LEEDS HAS BEEN REVEALED AS THE FIRST UK INSTALLATION FOR THE EFI™ VUTEK® H3 SUPERWIDE FORMAT HYBRID LED INKJET PRINTER. HOWEVER, IT WON'T REMAIN AN H3 MODEL FOR LONG, AS QUARMBY HAS ALREADY OPTED FOR THE FIELD UPGRADE TO THE HIGHER-THROUGHPUT VUTEK H5 MODEL.

OVER THE YEARS, EACH NEW VUTEK PRINTER THAT EFI BROUGHT TO THE MARKET HAS IMPROVED AND PROVED TO BE A SUCCESSFUL CHOICE FOR OUR BUSINESS

Director Damian Quarmby says the VUTEK h3 replaces an earlier VUTEK printer – one, in fact, of a long line that has served the company well. “The time had come to replace one of our longest serving VUTEK GS printers, which had given eight years of service. We needed more productivity in a similar footprint area to cater to our new customers and workload. We also wanted to upgrade our print quality to match, and even exceed, image quality coming off the latest VUTEK GS LED hybrid printers.”

The EFI VUTEK h series, announced at the FESPA Global Print Expo in Berlin back in 2018, is a 3.2-metre hybrid printing platform built from the ground up. The end result is a high-end production device for premium-quality graphics that is the culmination of EFI's decades of experience as a leading manufacturer and developer of UV and LED superwide-format inkjet printers and inks.

The new hybrid printer is doing the same type of work at Quarmby Colour as the outgoing hybrid. Damian says, “The h3, soon-to-be an h5, is catering for both roll and rigid work; pretty much the same as on the VUTEK GS3250LX. We can chop and change in seconds from one media type to another. This has always worked well for our production and we've seen the benefits running hybrid printers time after time.”

The VUTEK h3 is fitted with high-velocity 7-picolitre UltraDrop™ Technology greyscale printhead technology for precise drop placement and delivers a maximum resolution of 1,200 dpi. EFI's LED curing technology helps Quarmby keep power consumption to a minimum, and allows them to increase uptime, reduce waste, print on thinner or heat-sensitive materials, and offer a greener printing solution to their customers. The VUTEK h3 models prints up to 74 - 1.2x2.4m boards per hour. It is field upgradable to the h5 model for higher throughput up to 109 boards per hour – a 45% boost in productivity.

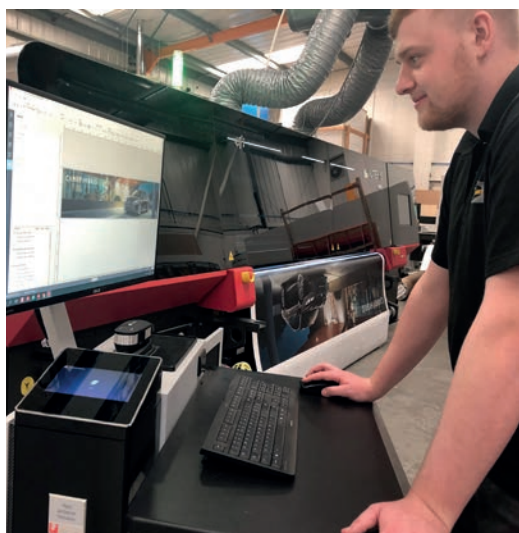
Damian is seeing a significant difference between the old and new printers, though. “There's been quite a leap in technology with the new h3. The print quality is amazing, especially for fine detail, and it's seriously fast! It's our first printer to produce text that's too small to read by eye and you literally need to use a glass to view. It's great for small decals, barcode and machine labels, but the true appreciation is in printing gradients. We are printing ever-increasing amounts of architectural optical clear film for glass manifestations. The exceptional quality of the new h3 is allowing us to print seamless gradient fades, especially using white ink.”

As print quality is paramount at Quarmby, they use the VUTEK h3 printer's eight-colours plus opaque white ink and up to nine-layer printing capabilities to produce

high-value applications, such as window graphics intended for viewing from both sides. “The multi-layer is superb as we can now print true double-sided block-out window graphics, and we are doing some pretty cool stuff with rear projection fabrics, incorporating illuminated customer logos along with true block-out screen ratio framing. The skip-white functionality is also new with this platform and we’ve noted time savings on some of our existing rolling contract work.”

Quarmby Colour employs 13 people, including three directors, and anticipates revenues of £2 million this year with the aid of its new investment. It has been using VUTEK printers since Quarmby Colour’s start in 1994 as a family-run colour photolab. Quarmby says, “When we transitioned to direct-to-substrate printing in 2005, the VUTEK PV200/600 was the first printer getting nearest to photographic quality and richness in colour, which we wanted to offer our customers.”

It was the start of a long relationship with the brand, he continues. Over the years, each new VUTEK printer that EFI brought to the market has improved and proved to be a successful choice for our business. The reliability of all the printer models over the years has been superb and the few times we’ve required service support we’ve never been let down. That’s why after 14 years as happy customers, we continue to go back!”



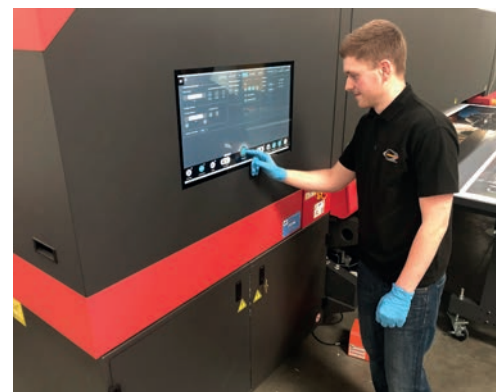
ABOUT EFI VUTEK H3

The EFI VUTEK h3 is the future of digital printing. EFI has reimaged, reinvented, reengineered, and refined the high-volume, superwide-format hybrid inkjet platform from the ground up. The result is huge revolutionary leaps that take businesses higher in terms of productivity, print quality, reliability, capability, and profits. All with the ease of use and LED environmentally-friendly benefits customers expect from an industrial-built VUTEK printer from EFI.

AT A GLANCE

- Next-generation, 3.2-meter hybrid roll/flatbed LED inkjet printer platform
- Print resolution up to 1200 dpi
- Four-(optional) or eight-colour modes plus white, and up to nine-layer print capability in a single pass
- Productivity up to 74 boards per hour on the h3 and 109 boards per hour on the h5
- UltraDrop™ Technology 7pL grayscale printheads
 - Native 7 pL printheads with true multi-drop addressability
 - High apparent resolution and high-definition print quality
 - Outstanding smoothness in shadows, gradients, and transitions
 - Superb text quality with three-point text in both standard and high quality with fewer satellites and more clarity in all print modes
- Powerful EFI LED technology
 - Extends range of supported substrates, including lower cost and added-value specialty media
 - Increases uptime and productivity with instant on/off and less maintenance
 - Drives down operating costs with up to 82% less energy consumption according to a Fogra study* and fewer consumable parts
 - Reduces waste with consistent color output and simple operation
 - Satisfies customer requests for a greener print solution with low VOCs, lower power consumption, and less waste and consumables
- Automated media handling options to meet any production need, including new 3/4 automated media loading and stacker systems and super duty winders
- EFI Fiery® proServer Premium digital front end with Fiery Command WorkStation®, FAST RIP and enhanced color management and screening features
- Cloud and diagnostics services, including EFI GO mobile management application

*EFI’s VUTEK LED printers show energy reductions of up to 82% when compared with devices with conventional mercury arc lamps. Calculations from Fogra’s Energy Efficiency Project, or “Energy Efficiency of Large and Small Format Printing Systems.”



“WE ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT FUELLING CUSTOMER SUCCESS WITH PRODUCTS THAT INCREASE COMPETITIVENESS AND BOOST PRODUCTIVITY”

ABOUT QUARMBY

Quarmby Colour is a family run business spanning two generations the display, exhibition and imaging industry. The dedicated team offers a wealth of skills, well-equipped to provide a professional yet personal service in the UK, or on an international scale.

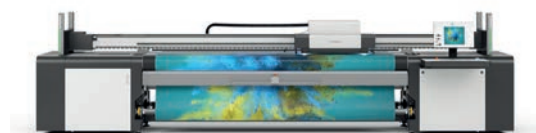
ABOUT EFI

EFI has the vision to inspire the world with spectacular imagery on any material. Based in Silicon Valley, EFI is a global printing technology company, leading the worldwide transformation from analogue to digital imaging. We are passionate about fuelling customer success with products that increase competitiveness and boost productivity. To do that, we develop breakthrough technologies for the manufacturing of signage, packaging, textiles, ceramic tiles, and personalised documents, with a wide range of printers, inks, digital front ends, and a comprehensive business and production workflow suite that transforms and streamlines the entire production process.

WIDENING THE SCOPE

SIMON CREAMY TAKES A POST TRADE SHOW LOOK AT THE NEWEST PRODUCT LAUNCHES FOR THE DIGITAL INKJET PRINT MARKET.

The first six months of 2019 has seen wide-format equipment suppliers unleash a vast array of new kit at leading print trade shows like Sign and Digital UK and Fespa Global. The rationale behind launching these products differs from company to company. For some the new machines plug a hole in a portfolio, for others these products have been launched to capitalise on an emerging trend in the market.



swissQPrint Karibu

While the development rationale may differ, there are a number of commonalities between all of the different bits of NPJ that has been released so far this year. Ease of use, quality, efficiency and reliability are just some of the recurring factors cited by manufacturers.

These drivers were clearly at the forefront of swissQPrint's thinking when it unveiled its first ever roll-to-roll printer - the Karibu - at Fespa Global this past May. According to the manufacturer, the UV inkjet printer, which has a maximum print width of 3.4m, offers users high efficiency, reliability and versatility. Well, that sounds familiar...

Petra Fetting, who heads up marketing services and communication at swissQPrint, says Karibu was launched in response to customer demand for a "dedicated swissQPrint roll-to-roll printer complementing flatbed printers". As well as being an extension to the company's existing portfolio, Fetting adds that the Karibu capitalises on the "soft signage as a growing market" trend.



Gandy Kre8tor

Like swissQPrint, Gandy Digital used Fespa Global as the launchpad for some exciting new hardware: the Gladi8tor flatbed printer and 3.2m Kre8tor hybrid.

The Gladi8tor, which features NanoDot technology, was introduced after the company identified a gap in the market between very high-end products and mid-range products.

"The market is always heading towards better quality and faster speed - sometimes focusing on one or the other," says Hary Gandy, CEO Gandy Digital. "The Kre8tor and Gladi8tor bring the next level of quality with three picoliter drop size and the ability to give smooth colours. We can finally match the quality of offset printing."

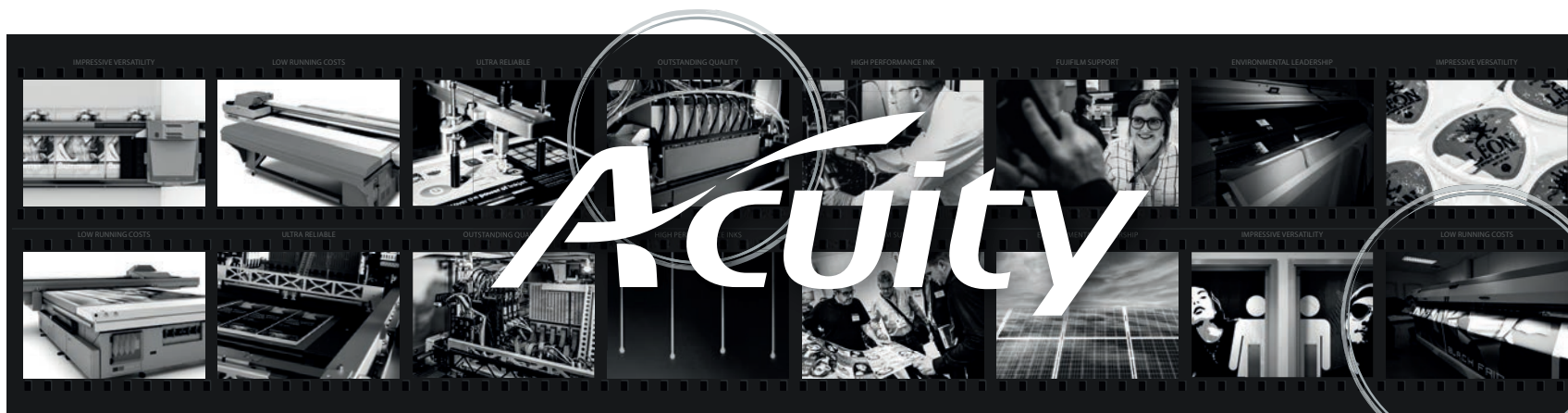
He adds that the NanoDot technology used by the company offers "unbelievable smooth colour and sharpness combined with increased speeds of over 100 boards an hour or 60 boards for best quality".

Ease of use and productivity gains underpin the Fespa Global launch of Ricoh's latest machine - the direct-to-garment Ri 1000 printer.

"The Ri 1000's comprehensive functionality, production flexibility and versatility make it the ideal option for personalised garment printing and print on demand services," says Graham Kennedy, head of commercial ink jet business, commercial and industrial printing group, Ricoh Europe. "It delivers the perfect combination of smart technology, fast print speeds and high output quality to enable creative print providers to capture genuine business growth opportunities."

Mimaki has also been busy on the innovation front this year unveiling the 3DFF-222 3D printer - a product co-branded with Sindoh - at Sign and Digital UK, alongside its new metallic LED UV ink, which was shown for the first time on a Mimaki UJF-7151plus at the Birmingham show in the spring.

At Fespa Global the company went one step further launching what it claimed was the "world's first flatbed inkjet printer to offer 'one-touch' 2.5D texture capabilities".





Mimaki JFX200-2513 EX

Mimaki says the JFX200-2513 EX large-format flatbed UV inkjet printer offers a substantial productivity boost over previous JFX models - the company says the machine is 280% faster in draft mode when printing in four colours plus white and 100% quicker in all other print modes.



Océ Colorado 1650

Like Mimaki, Canon unveiled new kit at both the Sign and Digital UK and Fespa Global shows. At the UK event it showed its new Océ Arizona 1300 flatbed printer series for mid-volume sign and display graphics producers, then in Germany it unveiled the 64in Océ Colorado 1650 printer.

"The Océ Colorado 1650 is the latest member of the Colorado Series and builds upon the success Océ Colorado 1640 introduced in 2017," says Duncan Smith, director, industrial and production solutions at Canon UK. "The Colorado 1650 is a 64in true production printer, which offers low cost of ownership, while delivering high output quality, breakthrough productivity and media versatility for a wide variety of print applications."

He adds that the printer was launched to "help our clients deliver optimal performance to attract new customers and meet demand, but is also designed for maximum flexibility. It allows users to choose between matt and gloss print modes for each individual print to achieve aesthetic finishes, also new is the enablement of producing double-sided applications. This wide application range has been designed to give our customers more

HP'S EXPANSION
INTO THE TEXTILES
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COMMITMENT
TO MAKING
DIGITAL PRINTING
ACCESSIBLE
TO ALL. THE
S1000 UNLOCKS
THE POWER OF
COLOUR FOR
PRODUCTION
ENVIRONMENTS
THROUGH SMART
TECHNOLOGY

choice and versatility, while maximising quality".

Agfa used Fespa Global to showcase its hybrid workhorse, the Jeti Tauro H3300 LED, which it claims can produce detailed UV-cured prints up to 3.3m wide at speeds of up to 453m²/hr. The company says the H3300 LED embodies: "Extreme productivity. Extreme quality," which is Agfa's theme for its digital printing solutions range.



HP Stich S1000

As for HP, its new Stitch S1000 3.2m dye-sub printer made its worldwide debut at Fespa Global, alongside the 1.62m (64in) Stitch S300 and S500 printers.

"HP's expansion into the textiles industry solidifies our commitment to making digital printing accessible to all," says Santi Morera, head of graphics solutions business at HP. "The new super wide HP Stitch S1000 removes major complexities from dye-sub printing, with industry leading technology and high-quality prints at unrivalled speed. The S1000 truly unlocks the power of colour for production environments through smart technology."

For the first time ever at a European exhibition, EFI showed off its Vutek h5 LED superwide-format hybrid roll-to-roll/flatbed inkjet printer and the EFI Vutek 3r+ LED roll-to-roll printer, as well as the EFI Vutek FabriVu 340i dye-sub printer, was developed to capitalise on the market shift towards versatile, folded soft signage.

According to Ken Hanulec, VP marketing EFI Inkjet Solutions, there are several things PSPs are currently looking for in a printer. "Ink consumption, energy costs, speed, quality, and application variety. EFI printers are just that." Hanulec adds: "With the LED technology, businesses save on energy costs. With a digital front-end running the engine such as the EFI Fiery proServer and Fiery XF software, ink consumption is adjusted, the production is optimised and image quality is enhanced."

EFI also used Fespa Global to release the latest version of its Fiery superwide-format printing software, featuring a new colour rendering intent innovation called Fiery Intensify.

Roland has also been busy on the innovation front in




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2019 to date. As well as launching the BT-12 direct-to-garment machine at Sign and Digital UK - which has a small footprint and according to the manufacturer is easy to use - it went one step further at Fespa Global, unveiling the TrueVis VG to great fanfare.

The “next generation” in eco-solvent printer/cutters was developed based on feedback from existing Roland users, says Rob Goleniowski, head of sales, UK and , Roland DG (UK).

“There are over 40 improvements on the previous TrueVis model: some small tweaks that add up to a more efficient, higher quality machine; others - like orange ink and six-hour outgassing - that could be real game-changers for our customers’ businesses.”

Roland also showed the VersaUV LEF2-200, the latest evolution of the VersaUV LEF flatbed UV printer family.

“This has been developed in response to the big trend for customisation in a number of sectors, including gifts, clothing and accessories, stationery and interiors,” says Goleniowski.

In addition, Roland unveiled the DGShape LD-80 laser decorator, which adds text, images and graphics to small products, in holographic, metallic or gloss finishes and the new VersaExpress RF-640 eight-colour, which offers orange ink alongside red, green, light black and CMYK to give users “the widest colour gamut available for durable outdoor graphics”.



Barbieri's Spectro LFP qb

Ensuring vibrant colours are achieved time after time was the focus of Barbieri, which launched the Spectro LFP qb Textile Edition - a colour measuring device for digital textile printing. Wolfgang Passler, vice president international sales and marketing at Barbieri, says the company developed the new product because “digital textile printing is growing fast and customers [are] look[ing] for a valid solution for colour measurement.”

He adds that existing measuring devices are not suited for digital textile printing because “accuracy and repeatability [are] not good enough and [there is] no possibility to measure automatically a whole chart”. Passler claims the Spectro LFP qb Textile Edition meets these challenges.

Also rising to challenges laid down by the market is the Acuity Ultra from Fujifilm, which the company actually launched last year but made the centerpiece of its stand at Fespa Global. According to Nils Gottfried, wide-format inkjet systems product manager, Fujifilm Graphic Systems EMEA, the machine - available in 5m and 3.2m versions - was a big hit with visitors who were blown away by its sheer speed. “We can run the machine in the fast print mode of 400m²/hr, which is really fast, and we can still print really good quality,” he enthuses.

“People are really challenging us. They are coming

DIGITAL TEXTILE
PRINTING IS
GROWING FAST
AND CUSTOMERS
ARE LOOKING
FOR A VALID
SOLUTION
FOR COLOUR
MEASUREMENT

to us with all kinds of different applications and asking ‘can you produce this or that on your machine?’” adds Gottfried.

What was perhaps most striking about the new products on display at Sign and Digital UK and Fespa Global in particular was the sheer breadth of innovation, much of which has been developed to capitalise on rapidly growing digital print markets - and potential new customer-bases for the software, kit and consumables suppliers.



Esko Kongsberg C Edge

For the first time Kornit Digital showed its high-volume garment decoration printer, the Avalanche Poly Pro, which has an annual production capacity of 350,000 impressions. Blackman and White gave its new Genesis-Z multi-function cutting system - which MD Alex White claims marks a “step-change in the cutting machine market” - its first outing. Summa debuted the 3.2m L3214 cutting system, which it claims is capable of cutting at speeds of up to 1.5m/sec, and Esko launched a new motorised roll feeder to boost productivity on its Kongsberg C64 flatbed cutter.

Esko also extended its digital cutting table range with the new Kongsberg C Edge, which features a “completely upgradable table design that avoids costly reinvestment for customers as business grows”.

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Meanwhile on the software front Adobe showed its Textile Designer plugin for Photoshop for the first time and Onyx Graphics released the latest version of its Onyx 19 wide-format workflow and Rip.

While the majority of the coverage surrounding these print trade shows understandably focused on the raft of new product launches, on their stands many of the leading manufacturers placed equal emphasis on the different applications that can be achieved on their machines. Over the coming months it's likely that the emphasis will slowly shift from the flurry of new product launches in the first half of the year towards bedding in these devices and showcasing the wide range of different and exciting applications they are capable of producing.

Does print pay?



Richard Courtney

MD, Gardners

Q1

As a PSP, how involved are you in integrating things like NFC, Bluetooth Beacons, QR codes etc. with the large-format print applications you deliver, and how major - or minor - an issue is it for you?

Over the years we have seen a number of technologies become well integrated across the industry from QR codes on bus stops linking the customer to bus timetables, to Bluetooth beacons used for promotional purposes (offers etc.) in duty free shops at major airports. However, the longevity and success of these have always been down to the ease of use and the overall 'experience'. We can print pretty much anything for our clients, but it is the thought and planning that goes behind integrating technology that is crucial to success, as well as the learning and measurement along the way.

We all walk around with mini computers in our hands these days so accessibility has certainly improved. QR codes, for example, had a surge of popularity - particularly with early adopters and those within the marketing and advertising industries - but not all phones had great functionality and the fact that you had to download an app made the customer journey a lot harder to tap into. As such, we've seen less and less use being made of QR codes.

Advances in digital has meant that campaigns have moved on to focus on VR and AR technologies where brands are tapping into social media platforms for example, and audiences that are tech-savvy. We're seeing more Snapchat campaigns with personalisation for movie launches, behind the scenes exclusives and competitions as well as AR in places like museums, helping to bring exhibitions to life in more creative ways than ever before.

Q2

What are the headaches and sweet points for you in integrating these technologies?

The headaches come from a lack of planning really. The possibilities that analogue (print) can bring in a technology-led world are vast and it's so important to have clarity in terms of what people want to achieve to realise true return on investment. Commerciality is something that slips peoples' minds when everyone gets excited about a big idea and that's something that we pride ourselves on - being able to advise those we work with, helping them to not only bring their creativity to life but to get the right results. We don't advocate technology for technology's sake.

Q3

To what extent do you think Apple iPhone development is impacting the integration of NFC with printed posters etc?

All smart phones are pretty powerful and the advances that they bring means that integrating technology faces fewer barriers than ever before. These days you don't have the problem that people don't know how to use technology or their smart phones effectively - instead it's more about relevance. Making the experience relevant alongside the right technology is what is key and I think that people will continue to innovate, linking print with on and offline experiences.

Q4

Where do you see the biggest technological change taking place when it comes to promotional print metrics monitoring overall, and how/when/where do you see that impacting its integration with the large-format print you deliver?

AR and VR have been major talking points in the industry for a while and it's certainly become (a little more) cost effective to implement. As more people begin to understand the technology and the possibilities it brings, it's becoming more of a priority for organisations to build strong campaigns around it through print-focused activity, whether that's for commercial purposes or for public awareness campaigns. I believe that wide-format printers have an opportunity to evolve with this technology and integrate it into their service offering, if they are open to it.

People want to know if their promotional print spend is delivering. So is digital technology – and its integration with print – fulfilling that requirement? We asked PSPs for their comment...



James Lavin

MD, Leach

Here at Leach, we never really get involved in NFC or Bluetooth Beacons - and we don't receive requests to print or integrate such technology - so I'd say it was insignificant for us.

There are graphics we produce with QR codes, but the artwork for these comes directly from the end client, so once again it's not something we're heavily involved with - or that has much impact on our business.

As mentioned above, those particular technologies aren't wholly relevant to Leach. However, what we are actively looking to integrate is data tracking - both within lightboxes and large-format print. This will enable retailers and customers to get the maximum value out of their store or internal space, meaning the graphic is dual-purpose. For example, the data analysis from this technology will allow our clients to track the demographics of those who pass and engage with the POS or marketing material - enabling a deeper understanding of visitors and taking a greater step towards ROI.

I wouldn't be in a place to comment here, as it's not something we're actively involved in day-to-day.

As mentioned above, the integration of data tracking tools - for a deeper analysis of visitor demographics and the success level of a print or advertising campaign. In addition, we're also seeing an increase in lift-and-learn technology - enabling customers to interact with products and merchandise - so that the print becomes a more tactile display system, rather than a standalone 2D graphic.

We've been asked to create dynamic lighting effects within retail merchandising systems, thus producing a moving visual - a hybrid between a video wall and large-format print.

Regarding any form of technology, we always place it - along with innovation - at the forefront of our business, and view it as evolution within the print industry, rather than having any negative impact.



Mark Barlett

MD, Signbox

As a PSP wishing to integrate IOT, we have had a mixed experience working with third party monitoring metrics software as the companies that have developed them have come and gone. The only way to provide a secure closed environment for data metrics is to develop an app - which takes time, money and good developers. Any projects that include IOT, the client or agency will provide the back-end tech, so it has not been an issue to date.

A good understanding of the pitfalls (and there are many) of each technology is required to confidently offer a solution that gives the client the right ROI.

Apple disclosed on 12 September 2018 that its new iPhone models Xs, Xs Max and Xr running on iOS 12 now allow reading of NFC tags without having to manually open the target app first. This latest update to Core NFC in iOS 12 - including the so-called background tag reading feature - enhances the user experience of NFC-enabled, real-world objects by speeding up interaction times, by improving handling methods and by enabling new use cases on the newest iPhones. We understand there will be a further opening up of NFC capability for Apple iPhone in the autumn.

We believe that now is a good time to invest in NFC and the IoT. Lots has been written elsewhere how both iBeacons and QR codes have been proved ineffective for UK retailers - but the NFC market is expected to be worth more than \$45bn by 2024.

NFC chips are quick, easy and cost-effective to install, and there are no battery life issues as they are powered by the NFC reader - such as a smartphone, which users just have to tap on a touchpoint without any app. The technology enables companies to collect anonymised data, to find out more about their clientele and about their marketing efforts, and as such I believe we'll see a huge growth in its use.

Mimaki has collaborated with Robominds as part of its newly announced IoT strategy



HANDLING: THE SITUATION

WHAT ARE MANUFACTURERS DOING ABOUT ROBOTICISED MACHINE HANDLING, AND WILL PSPS GET A GOOD ROI FROM THEIR INVESTMENT IN MORE AUTOMATION?

The International Federation of Robotics (IFR) has indicated that robot sales have doubled over the past five years in industry generally, and the outlook to 2021 shows a 14% increase per year in investment, so what are printer/finishing kit manufacturers doing about it? And what kind of ROI should PSPs expect from their investment in more automated handling? Those are the two questions put to hardware manufacturers in the large-format space just ahead of Fespa Global in May. The following is what came back - you'll see, well, let them each put forward their views in their own words. Let's just say that some companies are being a lot more transparent - and pro-active - than others.

AGFA

BOBBY GRAUF, SALES MANAGER INKJET UK AND IRELAND

The modular design of our presses allows PSPs to retrofit every single automation component at a later stage to adapt their installation to changing demands. The key is finding the right balance between automated operation and flexibility. For each step we automate, we try to ensure that we retain a manual bypass for last-minute - mostly short-run - work to be inserted into the production schedule. For instance, we have automation options on both our Jeti Tauro H2500 LED and Jeti Tauro H3300

LED, and on both presses the operator has the ability to bypass automation with a single click to load and unload sheets manually.

Another aspect considered is extending uninterrupted printing in roll-to-roll mode. For that we introduced our Master Roll-to-Roll (MRTR) option on both the Jeti Tauro H2500 LED and Jeti Tauro H3300 LED. MRTR can run in single or dual-roll mode, to a maximum weight of 700kg per roll with a rewind accuracy of less than 1mm over the full length of a roll.

In terms of ROI we see the biggest benefits in predictable production capacity. But the peripheral systems around the automation must be in place to support it. Thanks to their native integration with the Asanti workflow, all of Agfa's wide-format presses make press operation and job/media changes simple and fast, whilst maintaining maximum up-time.

DURST

PETER BRAY, MANAGING DIRECTOR, UK AND IRELAND

Innovation is at the heart of all we do at Durst, but currently we don't see the need for robotics. Whereas we have seen other manufacturers use a static bed technology and have a need for robotics for automation, this is not the case for Durst. Our hybrid print devices - P5, P10, 1312 or 1330 as examples - operate with moving belt technology over a flatbed, which allows automation from start to finish. We have feeder and delivery options that allow full automation, allowing our customers to run materials from stack to stack. With our roll-to-roll machines there is the option to run unattended printing, which our customers class as the most cost-effective working shift in their production schedules.

When it comes to ROI, labour and time are the main savings with automation. Cost justification comes down to requirements - considerations of different materials and the type of application are a major factor with an investment for an automation unit. Durst offers single, three-quarter and full automation options, enabling us to tailor solutions. Also, with our automated options, we are able to upgrade in the field.

EPSON

PHIL MCMULLIN, UK SALES MANAGER, PRO GRAPHICS

Our LFP kit for photo, signage and textile is predominately aimed at the small to medium sized PSP so, as yet, we have not added any robotics to the printers because this would make them too expensive for the productivity gains.

However, as we spend \$1.5m per day on R&D - including robotics, we will see smaller and more cost effective units coming from the Epson stable. We will also move into bigger production kit where robotic loading/finishing becomes more relevant. In terms of manufacturing we are already using robots in printhead and ink production to ensure the highest quality and consistency.

The second question we cannot yet answer.

ESKO

CHRIS LOGAN, DIRECTOR OF PRODUCT MANAGEMENT FOR DIGITAL FINISHING

Driving automation from design to finish is at the heart of Esko strategy. We observe a range of low value-

added or heavy activities turning to robotic options. For example, in material handling throughout the print workflow, stacking or placing of products pre or post printing, as well as internal movement of product through to packing, palletising and shipping. The data capture coming back from these automation solutions also brings huge value in understanding the business, workflow and bottlenecks.

Our current view is that the penetration of robotics is fairly limited in general today in the print market. However, as labour issues impact - on US and European converters in particular - we are likely to see an acceleration of their adoption.

The International Federation of Robotics (IFR) has indicated that robot sales have doubled over the past five years in industry generally, and the outlook to 2021 shows a 14% increase per year in investment, so it's certainly an interesting area for businesses.

Global R&D spend in the robotics industry is predicted to grow at more than 17% CAGR per annum over the next four years, according to Technavio, and a spending boom is predicted. However, the incidence of robotics still remains in the automotive, metals, electronics, medical and pharmaceutical sectors, rather than seeing wholesale growth in the print sector today.

For Esko, our success with the Kongsberg digital cutting table range and the latest launch of the Motorized Roll Feeder for soft signage applications, are indicative of the need for printers to automate and simplify heavy and/or repetitive tasks with accuracy and efficiency.

With respect to the kind of ROI PSPs should expect from their investment in automated handling, the scenario is interesting. Instead of selling robots at an upfront cost, it is likely that manufacturers will take advantage of the option to pay for a service that covers costs such as maintenance and management at an on-going rate. This switching of commercial model is likely to see increasing interest from the print sector going forward.

FUJIFILM

NILS GOTTFRIED, PRODUCT MANAGER, WIDE FORMAT INKJET SYSTEMS, EMEA

Automation has been around for decades in the print industry, but isn't commonly used in conjunction with inkjet because it is typically used to produce short runs of small and medium-size jobs in a variety of format sizes on different substrates for various applications. For these types of print jobs manual printing is generally the quicker, more appropriate option. Robotics and automated material handling systems have, however, been a part of Fujifilm's product offering for some time, as our portfolio features some very high productivity machines - such as the Inca Digital Onset X range. Our automated systems are typically used by those who need to produce larger volumes of print very fast, or those printing to heavier or more difficult-to-handle materials. Robotic systems tend to be used far more frequently in Europe and America than in the rest of the world.

The ROI on any handling system is heavily dependent on the degree of utilisation. Since robotic or automated

INSTEAD OF SELLING ROBOTS AT AN UPFRONT COST, IT IS LIKELY THAT MANUFACTURERS WILL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OPTION TO PAY FOR A SERVICE THAT COVERS COSTS SUCH AS MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT AT AN ON-GOING RATE

ESKO

handling systems are, in most cases, bespoke solutions, they can also contribute to the depreciation of a machine. The choice to include robots or automated handling systems is often dependent on the cost of labour within the relevant region. If labour is cheap, customers tend to work manually. If not, they are more likely to opt for automated processes. The return on investment that can be reasonably expected from any automation investment is reliant on all of these factors.

INKTEC

JOEY KIM, MD, EUROPE

While this is not an area that we are involved with currently, we believe there is currently some research going on along these lines in our headquarters in South Korea. However, there's nothing we can say now.

MIMAKI

UWE NIKLAS, GENERAL MANAGER MARKETING AND SALES, MIMAKI DEUTSCHLAND

Process automation and Internet of Things (IoT) are widely recognised as powerful tools manufacturers could be leveraging to boost efficiency in production and increase in revenue. Building on in-house R&D developments of advanced workflow automation solutions and on trusting collaborations with automation experts, the company has created a model of integrated process in UV LED printing - expected to be one of the highlights on Mimaki's stand at Fespa Global.

Mimaki has developed advanced printing systems able to communicate with robots, as well as with a wide range of hardware, including belt conveyors, inspection devices, cutting machines. The final goal is to make it possible for PSPs to incorporate inkjet printers in fully-connected industry 4.0 production lines, leading the way to unattended on-demand production and mass customisation. This is how Mimaki sees the future of digital printing."

In the 'industrial product' area on Mimaki's stand at Fespa Global, a production line emphasised the strengths of automation in UV LED inkjet printing processes. Developed by Mimaki with the collaboration of German company Robominds, the production line featured a Mimaki UJF-7151plus, compact LED UV flatbed printer and a robotic arm made by Danish firm Universal Robots and distributed in Germany by Robominds. The robotic arm loads substrates on the printer and unloads them from the

printer once the printing process is completed.

The communication and information exchange between the Mimaki's printer and the robotic arm are enabled by an IoT-based interface, implemented for the UJF series by Mimaki. At the heart of the IoT automation demonstration is the Mimaki Job Controller proprietary software, designed to automatically connect a printer and a robot in a production line.

The robotic arm from Robominds is of a modular design which makes it suitable for all kinds of printed products. Enabling four different movements, it is equipped with suction parts which enable it to handle different substrates.

MUTOH

NICK DECOCK, MARKETING MANAGER, EUROPE

Obviously inside of our wide-format printers we are building automation features for improving quality, keeping print quality at a constant level and accommodating more media types.

We also have automated and motorised winding and unwinding systems in our roll-to-roll devices. We have automated print-and-cut workflow features in our printers, but we currently have no 'robotic' features in our printers. The main reason is that the performance of the printers in function of the target public and the target volume would not justify robotics integration of for ROI reasons.



SwissQprint says there's been little robotics development in-house since it introduced 'Rob'

SWISSQPRINT

PETRA FETTING, MARKETING SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION

We have been concentrating our forces on improving our printers and developing our first roll-to-roll printer, Karibu, so in terms of robotics not a lot has changed since

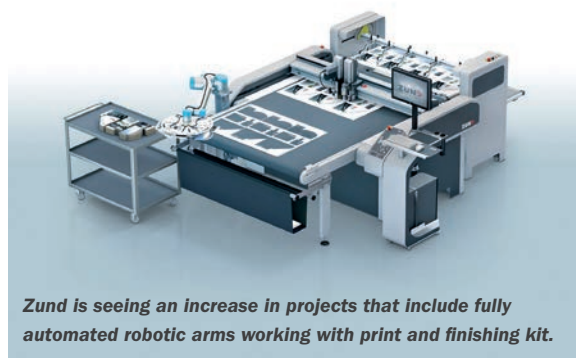
THE FINAL GOAL IS TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR PSPS TO INCORPORATE INKJET PRINTERS IN FULLY-CONNECTED INDUSTRY 4.0 PRODUCTION LINES

MIMAKI

the interview Image Reports conducted with our CEO Reto Eicher back in 2017.

Yes, we are convinced that robotics is suitable for the graphics market - provided that a print provider has a sufficient amount of repetitive work. Whenever we demonstrate 'Rob' - our robotic arm - people are amazed by the flexible utilisation and the perfect integration into the printer's control system and the workflow. Nevertheless, it seems that users are not quite ready to introduce automation in their own print shops yet.

To us, Rob is a starting point. By presenting this robot we have sent a signal. We will be ready when automation really catches. In fact, we have had first industrial projects involving heavy-duty robots that we integrated. For instance in the glass and metal industry where panels would be too heavy to be handled by staff.



Zund is seeing an increase in projects that include fully automated robotic arms working with print and finishing kit.

ZUND

DEAN ASHWORTH, SALES AND MARKETING MANAGER, UK

Robotics has been a buzzword for some time but now we are really starting to see more manufacturers incorporating robotics into turnkey solutions. Automation is becoming more important so we are seeing an increase in projects that include fully automated robotic arms working in unison with print and finishing equipment.

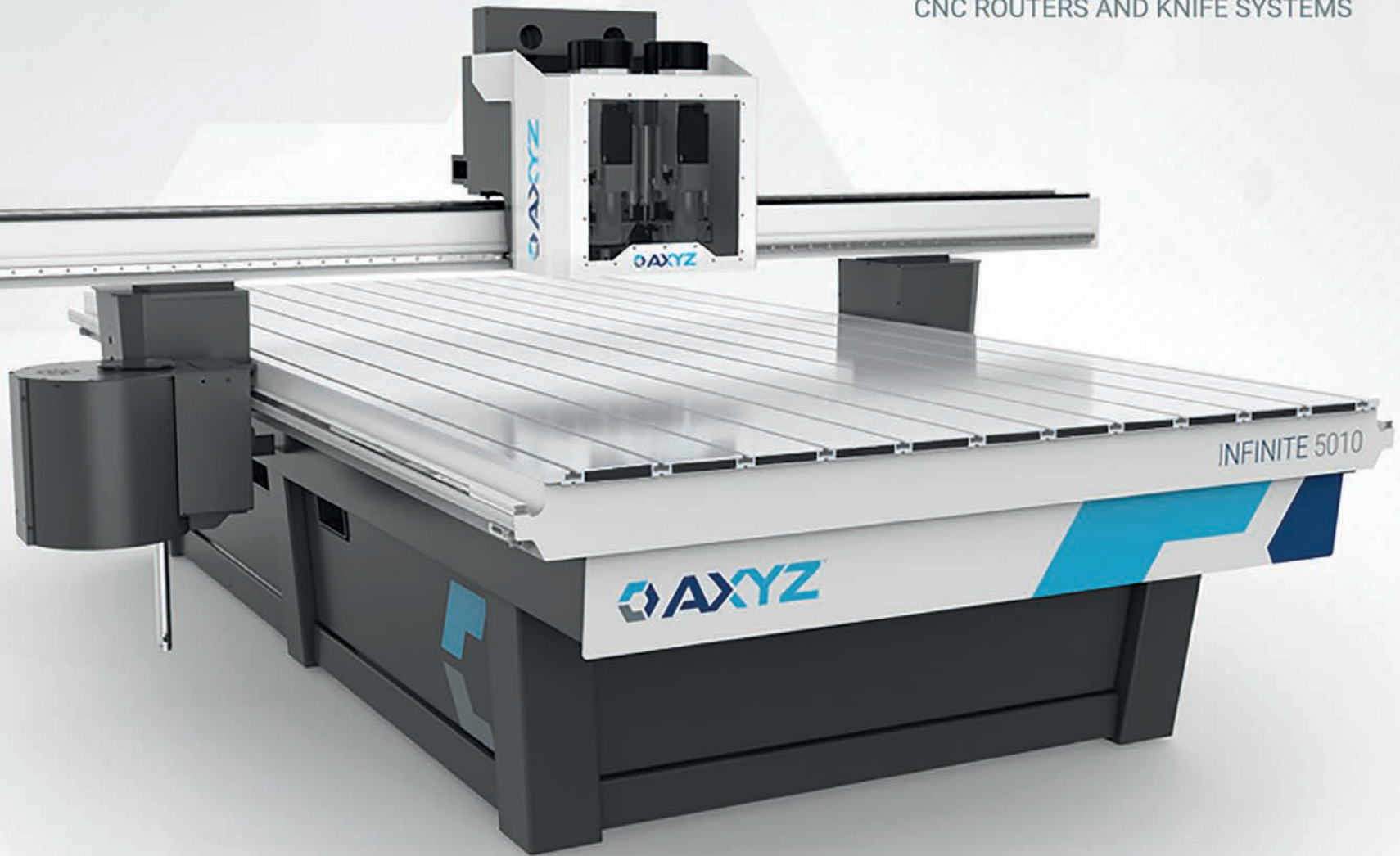
It's very hard to put a figure on ROI as end-users of this technology will see benefits that include freeing their operators for other tasks in the business, a reduction in errors and downtime on long-run jobs, and the ability to run the machine(s) with a skeleton staff, so production can continue overnight for example.

FINISHING

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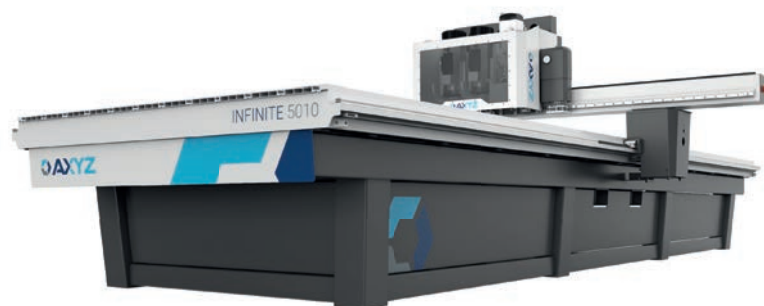
AXYZ INFINITE: SETTING A NEW BENCHMARK FOR CNC ROUTING

Building on the legacy of previous AXYZ machines in terms of outstanding build quality, reliability and increased productivity, the new multi-purpose AXYZ Infinite combined routing and knife-cutting system aims to set a new benchmark for CNC machining performance. Sporting the new distinctive corporate ID and dual-colour branding combination, the Infinite reflects the 30 years of experience in routing and cutting technology and the contribution made to its advancement on a global scale by AXYZ Automation Group and the previously named AXYZ International and AXYZ Automation.

Key design features of the AXYZ Infinite include the now familiar heavy-duty solid steel frame construction to accommodate the most vigorous machine operation likely to be required and a new carriage design that provides much easier access for servicing and machine tool upgrades. The compact footprint of the machine also allows installation in work places where space is at a premium.

Infinite can be configured with a choice of single, dual or triple routing/cutting heads to enable multiple tasking. It incorporates an expandable processing bed size of up to 3251mm (width) by an impressive 15.24m (length) to accommodate the largest sheets of material. An important new design feature is a redesigned and more efficient dust extraction system to eliminate problems associated with clogging of the machine, thereby minimising expensive machine downtime and increasing productivity levels. This is supplemented with a new misting system to enable more efficient cooling and lubrication of the machine.

If required, AXYZ Infinite can be supplied with a host of optional machining enhancements. These include



an expanded (up to 33 stations) ATC (Automatic Tool Change) system for work requiring multiple tools, the AXYZ Zone Management facility to ensure optimum material hold-down efficiency and the latest AXYZ A2MC machine controller with integrated AVS (AXYZ Vision System) facility for precise routing/cutting accuracy.

There is also the latest AXYZ helical rack and pinion drive system incorporating a multiple gear teeth configuration to spread the machine workload more evenly. This enables much faster throughput, reduced machine wear and material wastage and ultimately a longer than normal machine life.

As part of the purchasing package, owners of Infinite have the option of the latest VCarve Pro and Aspire design and production software programs, both of which provide all of the necessary tools for 2D and more complex 3D applications. This enables access to new markets to enhance business growth and increase profitability.

For further information, visit www.axyz.co.uk/infinite or telephone 01952 291600.

AXYZ TRIDENT: AN ADVANCED HYBRID PRINT FINISHING SOLUTION

Prior to the launch of the AXYZ Infinite machine, AXYZ Automation Group introduced the hybrid AXYZ Trident print finishing system. Combining CNC routing and knife-cutting functions within a single powerful production workhorse, Trident incorporates a three-pronged processing head featuring a routing spindle and oscillating and tangential knife-cutting units.

Trident claims to comprehensively resolve problems frequently encountered by digital print specialists and print service providers when handling an ever increasing range of different kinds of flexible and rigid substrates, many of which invariably require a wider, longer and deeper processing capability. Typically, these include materials as diverse as aluminium and aluminium composites (ACM) and other non-ferrous metals, acrylic, various plastics and laminates, vinyl, foamed and corrugated board, cardboard and paper.



Sharing the same standard and optional machine enhancements as the AXYZ Infinite machine, Trident provides a processing area of 1524 x 1219 up to 2159 x 3048mm, with larger processing beds available as required.

For further information, visit www.axyz.co.uk/en/trident-series or telephone 01952 291600.

ABOUT ZÜND SYSTEMTECHNIK AG

Zünd are a family-owned business engaged worldwide in the development, manufacturing and distribution of high quality, multifunctional digital cutters. Our customers are manufacturers and service providers in the graphics, packaging, textile and leather industries, as well as in technical textiles and composites.

Our success stems from our leadership in innovation, superior technology, modular design and a concerted focus on customer needs. Our products and services are guaranteed to deliver the productivity and reliability essential

to our customers' success in their varied fields.

Our headquarters in Altstätten, Switzerland, is home to Zünd's R&D, marketing and production. Besides our own sales and service organizations in Hong Kong (China), Bangkok (Thailand), Franklin, WI (USA), Bangalore (India), Eersel (Netherlands), Bergamo (Italy), St. Albans (UK), Lindau (Germany) we work with a worldwide network of long-standing independent distribution partners. Zünd and Zünd partners alike excel in providing local presence as well as expert, comprehensive service and support.

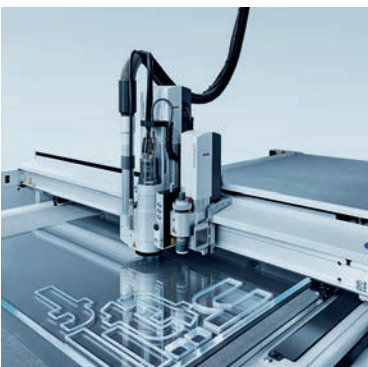
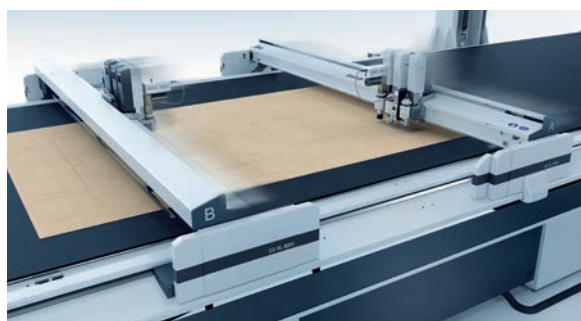
ABOUT ZÜND UK LTD

Established in 1993, Zünd UK has supplied and maintained Zünd cutting systems to many different industries and for many different applications across the UK and Ireland. In 2017, Zünd UK was acquired by Zünd Systemtechnik AG, converting it from an official service and distribution partner into a subsidiary of Zünd Systemtechnik AG. As part of the global group, Zünd UK will continue to offer its customers the best possible service. Situated just to the north of London and close to the M1 and M25 motorway networks, is Zünd UK's sales, service and demonstration centre in St. Albans, Hertfordshire. Here, Zünd's state-of-the-art UK showroom is equipped with the latest generation of flatbed cutting machines and software solutions in order to provide visitors with the most comprehensive and informative demonstrations. Also housed here is the home for the Zünd UK spares and consumables stock holding. This helps to ensure that consumables and replacement parts are delivered and installed at customer sites at lightning speeds – all backed up and supported by our extensive UK network of field service engineers.

OUR PRODUCTS

Zünd's modular tool and material-handling systems make it easy to tailor your Zünd cutting system to specific needs. Define your production requirements and we have the building blocks to make up the perfect configuration for you. Furthermore, due to the modular construction of the Zünd range, additions and upgrades are possible at any time in the future as your business evolves.

Innovative technology and superior manufacturing are guaranteed to result in long-term reliability and low maintenance costs. Because of their modular design, Zünd cutting systems can adapt to ever-changing needs and as a result, retain their value exceptionally well.



OUR INNOVATIONS

Whether digitally printed POP displays made of cardboard, fabric banners, or acrylic signage – Zünd digital cutting technology can handle these materials and many more, along with a multitude of processing methods. As business requirements change, productivity and flexibility become critical to keeping up with demand. That's why Zünd's R&D department are continually innovating to keep us at the forefront of cutting technology and remain as the market leader.

An example is the RM-L routing system, launched in 2017. This tool's 3.6 kW power and unrivalled performance allow Zünd cutter customers the ability to route the widest possible choices of heavy-duty materials. Along with the automatic router-bit changer (ARC), the user can turn router-bit handling into a completely automated process.

Additional workflow options are provided by our own Zünd Cut Center (ZCC) software with a high-speed registration system via the Over Cutter Camera (OCC), launched in 2018. In seconds, the OCC automatically captures the position of the job to be cut and calculates any distortions that may have occurred, then cutting begins almost immediately.

Furthermore, to provide a hands-on experience of what maximum productivity looks like in real life, a Zünd D3 dual-beam cutting system will be on display as well. The D3 was launched in 2016 and the two beams can each accommodate up to three different tools, and depending on the job, deliver up to twice the productivity of a single-beam system by having both beams work on the same job.

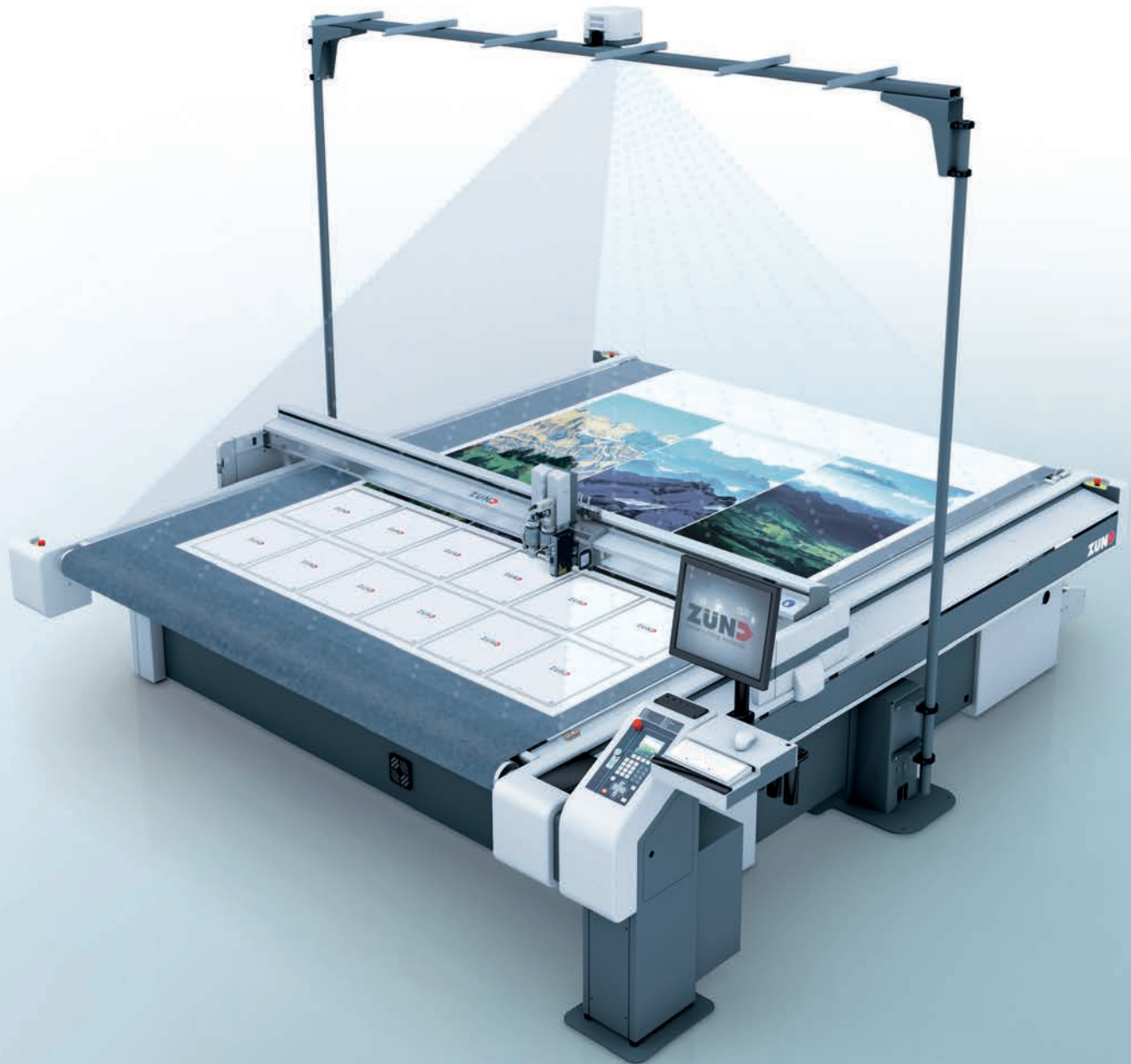
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KALA FINISHING PRODUCTS MADE IN EUROPE, MADE TO LAST

BY: MELANIE ENSER, COLOURGEN LTD

There was a time where it was speculated that laminators would become a thing of the past with solvent and LED UV print technology providing the finish and durability required.

Well, as we know, high quality finishing lives on and as in other areas of print production, advances in manufacturing technology and efficiencies means these slow, unreliable beasts have become slick performers and truly have their place ... and a rather good one at that.

Kala is one of the leading brands in the world of finishing. A French company with all their products designed and manufactured in France, an asset which immediately gives them the edge in terms of timely delivery, compliancy and communication. Not only that, but Kala have listened keenly to user requirements and are now the proud owner of a stable of products that meet the demands of production houses.

Kala focussed their product development on products that delivered consistent quality, reliability, speed and ease of use – while being aware of budget constraints in an industry which has felt the brunt of economic recession and the decline of the retail market.

In the UK, Kala's best-selling model is the Arkane 1650. According to Colourgen's Business Development Manager, Phil Donoghue because 'It's such a great all-rounder and really suits the UK market'. It will happily deal with output printed using water-based, LED UV, solvent and latex inks. Like other laminators in the Kala range it benefits from a couple of truly unique engineering innovations – a patented roller elevation system which constantly monitors the height for even pressure on the substrate. This means that productivity is increased and of course, there is significantly less waste – something we are all mindful of.

The Arkane is a high-volume machine with heated top roller up to 140°C. It differs from the Kala Mistral range only in that the temperature of the top roller goes up to 140°C. The Arkane 1650 (65") offers single-sided lamination, simultaneous lamination and adhesive mounting, encapsulation and board mounting up to 50mm (2") thick.

It also has an auto media alignment system so the machine can be left unattended for long roll to roll jobs – a huge boost to productivity.

It has a small footprint, has roll-to-roll as standard and a nice centrally located touchscreen control centre – all little features that add up to a lot if you are laminating in-house in a production environment. But all these mean the user is truly in control and getting great, consistent quality time after time.

The Kala Arkane costs SRP £8950 and is available through distributor, Colourgen Ltd.

Another product in the Kala range is the relatively new AppliKator, which again is well suited to the UK market.

The Kala AppliKator sets new standards for



KALA IS
ONE OF THE
LEADING
BRANDS IN
THE WORLD
OF FINISHING

flatbed mounting and laminating - its modular design allows the user to extend the table as business and applications grow.

The AppliKator has a useable width of 67" (1.70m) and basic length of 81" (2.07m). But the length can be extended in sections of 2.35m without limit just choose between 4, 6, 8 or more metres when ordering and extend it over time as your business grows.

The Kala AppliKator costs SRP £8500 and is available through distributor, Colourgen Ltd.

For further information on the Kala range, contact Colourgen on:

www.colourgen.com

sales@colourgen.com

01628 588733



Don't compromise with your finishing...

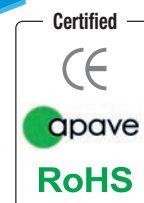
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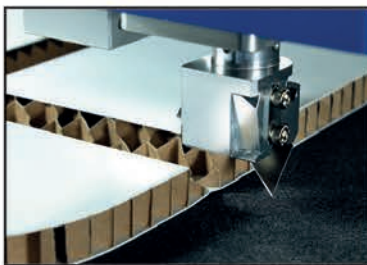
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- **Reciprocating and static heavy duty knives** for **FOREX®, foamcore, magnetic foil, corrugated, carton board** and more.
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AG/CAD

John Selby, CEO, Papergraphics



LEGAL AND GENERAL

DO YOU KNOW YOUR LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES ON THINGS LIKE FIRE RATINGS FOR PRINTED WALLCOVERING? SUPPLIERS LIKE PAPERGRAPHICS ARE HELPING CLARIFY THE ISSUE.

Earlier this year Papergraphics became a certified RIBA CPD provider, and more recently an approved CPD provider to BIID (British Institute of Interior Design) too - moves it considers key to helping close the loop on misinformation when it comes to using the right wallcovering for the right job - not just from an aesthetic point of view, but a legal one. The £30m turnover company - supplier of the well-known Digimura and Muramur wallcoverings - hopes it can help do the same for PSPs, many of which CEO John Selby believes are failing to understand and deliver what's required of them. In his words: "Many printed vinyl wallcoverings in UK public spaces are probably illegal."

We're all being told that the demand for unique and bespoke interior decor has never been greater - for wallcoverings specially - and that large-format PSPs can reap the benefits. With this opportunity, though, comes responsibility, and Selby for one is concerned by what he sees as a gap in knowledge and/or understanding by PSPs, for where their responsibilities start and finish in terms of regulations relating to wallcoverings.

"Conscientious PSPs will be comfortable with the importance of using quality products that have been specifically designed for specific applications, and for Papergraphics this is a fundamental part of our approach to how we develop our product-range and service offering. But that's not where our efforts end - we're becoming

MANY PRINTED VINYL
WALLCOVERINGS IN UK
PUBLIC SPACES ARE
PROBABLY ILLEGAL

increasingly concerned about the lack of awareness and understanding within the large-format industry about what is required to fulfil the basic but essential specification requirements when it comes to producing digitally printed interior décor - specifically wallcoverings."

Selby expands: "One of the main topics that seems to come up when we talk about interiors to customers, and other suppliers too, is fire safety; it's an important issue and we have customers who totally get it and embrace it, while others just aren't aware of their responsibilities within the supply chain. Sadly, some are aware but just bury their heads in the sand, or are completely confused because different suppliers are citing different regulatory requirements. It's really quite concerning. However, fire is not the only issue to be considered and with a lack of understanding, what many don't realise is that the whole supply chain - from the designers or specifiers, the media suppliers through to the printer - are all responsible for ensuring every product installed for wallcovering use is compliant with building regulations.

That said, Papergraphics is happy to try and simplify - and clarify - the situation in relation to relevant regulations:

TECHNICAL REGULATIONS EXPLAINED

Essentially, all products supplied for hanging onto internal walls, partitions or ceilings, by means of an adhesive, whose primary purpose is decorative, are deemed a permanent fixture, and as such they are classed as construction products.

All construction products are regulated. The British standard for decorative wallcoverings is the BS EN 15102:2007+A1:2011, and they must all carry a CE Declaration of Performance relating to the product's reaction to fire (RtF); release of formaldehyde, vinyl chloride monomer, and the migration of heavy metals.

The correct fire classification for this application is the EN 13501-1 (Euroclass) standard, when printed and installed.

To achieve EN 13501 there are two tests (EN 13823 and EN 11925) that the wallcovering must undergo, assessing the product's performance in relation to smoke release, flame spread and flaming droplets produced. The testing process incorporates the wallcovering product itself (which can be tested either printed, or unprinted), and the substrate (wall surface) that the wallcovering is adhered to. It is important, therefore, to check what substrates the fire certificate covers.

In the UK, wallcoverings for reception areas, lift lobbies, stairwells, open-plan offices and restaurants within non-domestic buildings, including hospitals, and anywhere designated as a fire escape route or public areas must achieve a minimum performance standard of European Class C-s3, d2 -(when bonded on an A2-s3, d2 substrate).

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(Note 5, Table 10: Classification of linings, within the UK Building Regulations).

What has been causing confusion is the difference between the British national and typical other national standards, such as the German DIN.

In terms of the British National fire certifications, people are still commonly looking for a Class 0 fire rating, under BS 476. However, while this is still a relevant classification for other product types, this national class has not applied to wallcoverings since July 2013.

Similarly, the German DIN 4102 regulations are a national standard and, due to the prominence of some German-manufactured products, have become recognised as a relevant fire certification to look for. However, these are not completely equivalent to EN 13501 and do not apply to wallcoverings.

THE DEVIL'S IN THE DETAIL

While many products do have fire certifications, and even CE marks, this may not always mean that they are certified for the application in question, or are totally fit for purpose - even within the correct standards, there are variations that manufacturers or suppliers can put product through the testing with. The key things to look out for when examining the specifications and fire certifications for a wallcovering product are:

- The correct name of the product and description of its intended use i.e. whether it is for wallcovering etc.
- The field of application - for instance, the surface (substrate) the certificate covers.
- And finally, whether the test was carried out on a printed product. Some products on the market are tested unprinted meaning that the fire rating is invalid once the product is printed.

EUROPEAN STANDARDS - WHAT ABOUT BREXIT?

European standards are already part of British law as detailed within the UK Building Regulations. PSPs can have peace of mind that these regulations will not be altered due to Brexit. Plus, with inter-country trading still set to continue after the UK has Brexited, many products printed and produced in the UK will continue to end up in foreign installations, and still need to comply fully with the appropriate regulations.

THE LOW-DOWN

Digitally printed wallcoverings are a creative and practical solution for many interiors applications. We know the arguments - they can add texture to a poor wall surface or provide a luxurious and tactile finish, they are easily removable without damaging the wall etc. - and there are now wallcovering products suitable for all the different interiors, including domestic and commercial, and for high, medium or low traffic areas. As such, interior designers and architects are becoming increasingly interested in digital printing and the creative possibilities it offers when designing an interior space. For PSPs, understanding the legislation means they can have meaningful conversations with this expanding customer-base about the appropriate products for different applications - not only offering advice on the design and creative aspects, but also advising on the complicated and, as outlined here, often misunderstood specification requirements.

"It is a constant learning journey to keep up to date with the standards but it's necessary, and as a conscientious supplier we will help," stresses Selby, pointing out that it ensures that all of the products within its decor ranges meet the correct fire safety regulations and standards for the relevant application use, and that all of the products it offers conform to EN 15102:2007+A1:2011 and have a relevant CE Declaration of Performance, even when printed. But it goes further than that.

"We work with independent test houses to ensure our products meet the stringent standards giving PSPs peace of mind that what they are selling to their customers meets their requirements and the regulations," adds Selby. "We have a purpose-built application and training facility to educate, train and support PSPs.

"In essence, we want to partner with our customers to ensure best practice and guarantee that the right product is used for the right job. We offer regular FOC knowledge-share events so we can share insights, highlight where we see business opportunities, and understand our customers' experiences and how else we can provide support as a supplier. PSPs can also learn from each other to see how other companies have had success and take on new ideas and knowledge to help their own businesses. Of course, we're also educating people about the interior sector and appropriate regulations, helping them to operate in this sector with confidence."

The RIBA accreditation has been a real milestone. "We're really proud to have become a certified RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architect) CPD (continuing professional development - hours that architects must undertake every year to maintain their professional status) provider," says Selby. "It's a stringent process where our module on the building regulations relating to wallcoverings and fire certification are approved in order to take our education message about the correct specification certifications to look for, to the architect, designers and specifiers. We want to close the loop on misinformation. Our RIBA CPD accreditation is one of the first steps we have taken to promote this, as well as making our product information freely available to architects and designers.

"There are huge opportunities for PSPs to expand their business into the interiors market, but we have a responsibility as an industry to operate in a transparent and conscientious manner, especially when it comes to fire safety. By simplifying, and de-mystifying what to look for, PSPs can be confident in their output, without the worry of liability coming back to bite later down the line."

**Wallcoverings working well at
the Chefs Market.**
Courtesy of Digital Space & Paul Quinn



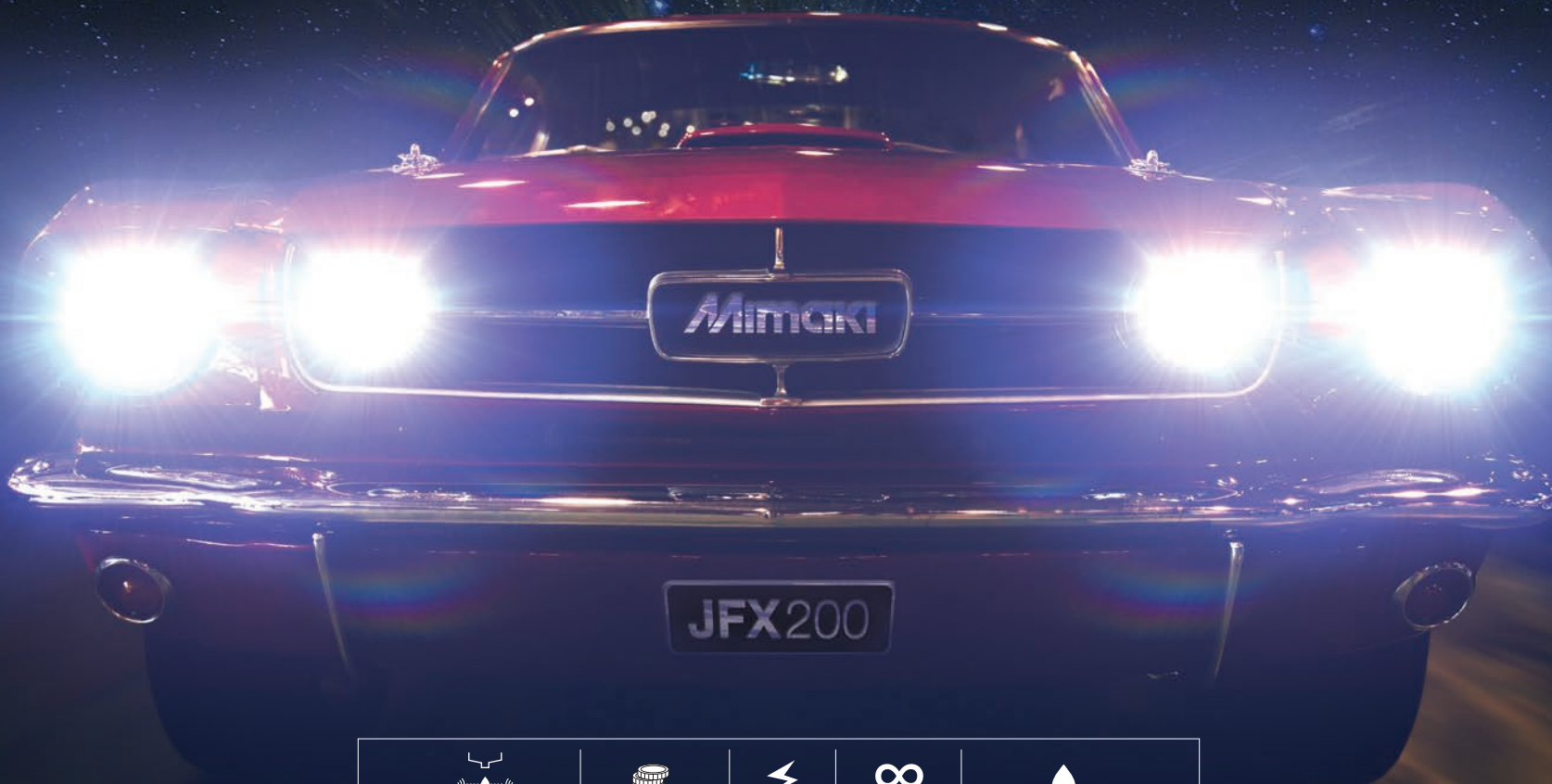
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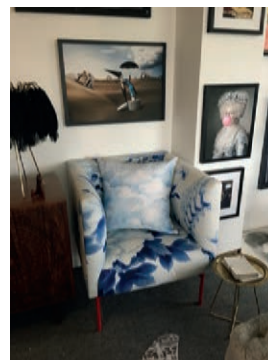
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DESIGNED TO BE DIFFERENT

Imagine making 50% margins on your inkjet printed products! Well, there's a design company in Sawtry, Cambridgeshire, that thinks it can do just that. Best known for its high-end wallpaper ranges, Mineheart also designs and sells quirky wall art, furniture, rugs, cushions and other interior accessories - 85% of which are short-run/bespoke digitally printed by the ten PSPs it has sourced across Europe. Expansion is on the cards, and why wouldn't it be when, as commercial director John Mabhegede points out: "Our new chairs are about £1,500 each. We aim to make a 50% margin on those when sold directly".

The company - founded by designers Brendan Young and Vanessa Battaglia - currently handles about 25% of its sales direct, the rest going through around 320 third-parties across the globe. But, a new customer website has been launched "to increase our direct sales and keep the money sweet," says Mabhegede. The £750,000 turnover business is also expanding its UK stockholding capability as it ramps up its novel product offering to take advantage of digital print capability and market demand for its high-end pieces.

"Our high-end positioning as wallpaper providers was almost accidental because Brendan and Vanessa just designed what they liked, it got into a magazine and they built a business on that. But since then we've developed a deliberate strategy to become a 'creative brand' - so we have the cache of offering niche designs, but we're starting to sell to a wider audience," says Mabhegede.

Wallpapers remain Mineheart's core offering, currently representing around 40% of the company's turnover (20% being wall art, 20% lighting and the rest other "interior accessories") and as such are a key focus. This year the company will add 150 new wallpaper designs to the 100 that already exist, "because now we're ready to push the brand forward. We weren't ready on the production front before," Mabhegede explains, also pointing out that "having done a strategic evaluation in 2016 to decide on our core competencies and where to make the most money, we realised that our wallpaper sales had been

WE MIGHT
INVEST IN A
SMALL PSP
SO WE HAVE
A VESTED
INTEREST

going down since 2014. We decided we needed to start producing wallpapers with a standard 10m drop."

That decision meant a search for a new print partner as the old one could not deliver on that requirement. The company now has two wallpaper printers "so there's plenty of scope to increase capacity as we require," says Mabhegede, who expects wallpapers to make up half of turnover again within the next two years.

So what of the other product niches Mineheart has earmarked? Given the possible margins on the chairs it sells, surely this is an area of development? It is, but Mabhegede explains that as both the furniture makers and PSP are based abroad, it's a more difficult supply chain so is likely to remain a small part of the business. Rugs however are an easier shout. The company offers two types - tufted and rubber backed - both with stunning imagery, and both ranges are being expanded. "The rubber-back range hasn't had any new designs for three or more years but more will be added in 2019. And by the end of the year we'll be offering over 60 tufted rugs too," says Mabhegede.

A 2.5 x 2.5m tufted rug retails at about £1,000, and while Mabhegede says the margin is "sweet" he admits that, "I could make more by doing the printing in-house - but that comes at its own cost. It is something I've looked into but it's too much hassle. We're about design and sales, not manufacturing. But - dependent on how the numbers stack up down the line - we might invest in a small PSP so we have a vested interest yet still have someone else dealing with any print related problems."

For now Mabhegede is careful to refer to the PSPs used by Mineheart as 'partners' "because they are not just suppliers - we talk about what is possible. But, one thing I would say about digital printers in general, is that they are not very proactive. It would be useful if those in the print sector were more forthcoming about things like new materials and inks, especially in terms of the ecological issues."



Simon Cooper ...

With a turnover of 200m Euro and over 1m customers, Onlineprinters is one of Europe's biggest Web-to-print providers. CEO Dr Michael Fries has said that "print companies that embrace industry transformation" will do well, and that he expects online print shops in Western Europe to continue a two-digit growth in turnover over the coming years. So should you be looking to W2P? Given the group's bold expectations for continued growth, I met with Simon Cooper, MD of UK-based subsidiary Solopress, to talk strategy - and find out where wide-format fits in.

By Lesley Simpson

Solopress has been operating for 20 years and has seen massive growth in that time, now with a turnover of £30m and with double digit growth forecast for the future, and yet W2P is still a low priority for many large-format print providers in the UK. As the still relatively new MD of Solopress, what's your take on that?

It would be wrong to think that the success of Onlineprinters/Solopress was to do with having a strategy around selling print online. The reality is that the strategy is all about making the business more relevant to customers, eradicating unnecessary costs - so that customers are not paying for your administrative inefficiencies and costs in terms of processing their orders.

Yes, there are times when you can add value offering consultancy etc., but a lot of the touch points between the printer and customer are unnecessary touch points. To my thinking, what all businesses should be doing is asking themselves, 'how can we make ourselves more convenient to customers, service their needs more efficiently and eradicate unnecessary costs?'. So, should more PSPs be considering Web-to-print as an option? I'm not sure that would logically always be the right next step. They need to look at their business as a whole and at how well it meets their customers' needs. It may make sense for some to sell product online, but that wouldn't for me be the starting point.

Also, personally I think it's important to clarify what we mean by W2P. If people believe the success of Solopress or other so called 'online' printers is due to the fact that we sell products through a website then the true essence of the point of differentiation is being missed. Solopress has been successful because it identified the highest volume print products that customers were procuring and then sought to strip out unnecessary admin and processing costs to enable competitive prices. From there it correctly identified that speed was critical to customers and so now ensures that it offers a service on here quarters of products to enable them to be produced on the same day they're

ordered and delivered to customers the very next day. It's the combination of a highly convenient ordering process with all unnecessary costs removed and a product arriving the next day to a very high quality makes the offering extremely appealing.

Beyond that, if the question is whether PSPs should prioritise the acquisition of customers through ecommerce marketing techniques and they have identified that this is a low priority, I would be inclined to agree. Even for established business like ours with highly experienced and capable digital marketing experts on board, the cost of customer acquisition continues to go up and could be considered prohibitively high if you were just starting up now.

Cost, time and hassle are the three most common reasons given me by PSPs eschewing W2P. To your mind, are they missing a trick?

In the old days Solopress was a conventional offline printer, and even now it doesn't only process orders online. Something like 80% comes through purely online, though more than that has some kind of online input only with some kind of intervention. I come back to my point about making your business as convenient as possible for the customer, and sometimes it's more convenient for them to have you place the order for them! Even if your focus is online ordering, forcing your customer in that direction and giving them no other option may well mean they just go somewhere else.

It is indeed costly, time consuming and a hassle to set up a W2P system, but the only question really has to be about return on investment. I think there's enough evidence to prove that W2P can pay off in the long run, but at the same time it is a challenging space with very established players dominating.

For a business that has no presence in W2P at all, they must be very cautious about how they proceed. The key consideration should be, 'which customers' needs are not being met and how do I think I could better cater for those needs than the current businesses are doing?'



...MD, Solopress

There's a famous saying - I'm not sure who should be credited for it - which is, "get big, get niche or get out". UK print is still worth circa £13bn per annum - within that there are some fairly sizeable niches and I would suggest new entrants should be focussed on those opportunities.

Quite a few of the large-format PSPs that have developed an online print model run it under different branding - especially those set-up for more creative/personalised applications. Is that something you have considered?

I can understand the rationale around doing this, as and when you launch new products you have to assess whether they sit in a natural place alongside your current offering and whether your current target demographic has a requirement for those products. For us, we are very focussed on continuing to support the needs of our current target demographic, which already contains an element of what we describe as 'personal' customers and so perhaps that affords us some flexibility in terms of the diversity of products we can offer.

Online printers itself handles a lot of trade print, but you also outsource work. How do you see that situation developing in the future?

Outsourcing can be beneficial where we are exploring new product opportunities but don't foresee substantial enough volume to justify our own investment in equipment. A classic example would be for fabric printing - currently we source these products from our German manufacturing facility, however, we are considering sourcing that production locally and perhaps then in the fullness of time insourcing the production.

How significant a proportion of the Solopress turnover is wide-format at this point in time?

Currently wide-format represents about 13% of our total turnover at Solopress but this area is particularly exciting as it's currently growing at 33% year-on-year. That jumped to 38% in March. Off the back of

that growth we've decided to invest in large-format production and have recently done a deal with Agfa to purchase two Anapurna H2500i LED hybrid inkjet devices. In addition we are buying a Kongsberg C44 flatbed cutter, which will all get installed in a new purpose built 510m² facility which will also house our two HP Pagewidth XL8000's, our two 3.2m Jetrix RX3200 devices and a Futoba XLD320.

What we are seeing now is a large-format print demand from our existing customers and from customers who previously would not have dealt with Solopress because we are better known for small-format and that just wouldn't have been a requirement for them. The bigger product offering we'll be able to provide will make just make us a more attractive procurement option.

What shape should we expect Onlineprinters/Solopress to take by the end of 2020, and to what extent do you expect other print operations to have tried and imitate your online strategies for growth?

Recently I was in Germany attending a strategy meeting with my colleagues from Onlineprinters and also from Laser Tryk in Denmark. We discussed the work that we could do collaboratively in terms of improving our software technology, leveraging our scale from a procurement perspective and also sharing manufacturing capabilities.

I believe that by 2020 there will be far more components of our technology which are shared throughout the group and we will be benefitting from the full scale of our collective size. Locally, we will continue to work hard on serving our customers' needs.

This year we have a big focus on improving our service offering having recently added a later cut off time to our website, which is now 5pm for same day dispatch on selected products. Additionally we're in the process of developing an offering targeted at our professional customers who have larger annual spends, to make sure that we tailor our service around their needs. One thing is certain, we won't stand still for any great length of time!

WE'VE DECIDED
TO INVEST IN
LARGE-FORMAT
PRODUCTION
- AND A NEW
PURPOSE BUILT
FACILITY

Until morale improves,

Employee engagement and morale are frequently dismissed as functions of HR and dealt with via team building days or by putting a ping pong table onsite. But is that the best way of getting the best from your people?

Apparently not. Here are some pointers to achieving more beneficial results.

STRUGGLING WITH EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND MOTIVATION? ADAM MERCER AND JASON ADAMS OF MINMAX CONSULTING ARE EXPERTS IN THE TEAM AND LEADERSHIP SPHERES AND HERE SHARE THEIR TIPS ON HOW YOU CAN CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT TO FOSTER HIGHER MORALE, STRONGER ENGAGEMENT, AND BETTER TEAM PERFORMANCE.

1.

LOOK FOR FLAGGING MORALE

Take the time to walk around and observe your teams and people interacting, both in formal and informal environments. Look for:

- A lack of enthusiasm and engagement
- Fewer inputs and ideas from teams and individuals
- A reluctance to commit or 'own' work
- Slowing output and missed deadlines
- More emotional interactions or outbursts
- An increase in complaints or fault finding
- An increase in sick days or other absenteeism

The key here is to pay close attention to individual and collective behaviour and how it's changed - or is changing. This does mean you need to also understand what your typical 'healthy' culture has been in the past!

You might be familiar with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs - a motivational theory in psychology comprising a five-tier model of human needs: physiological, safety, belonging, esteem, and self actualization. We've used these needs to structure the tips that follow, though we'll assume that your employees' physiological needs (food, water, clothing, shelter, and warmth) are met because if not, you have bigger problems!

2.

ALIGN EXPECTATIONS

Knowing what's expected is critical in creating a stable space to work from. Somewhat surprisingly this is something that we frequently find is not aligned between employees and managers. Expectations need to be clear on: what work is to be done; how different work streams should be prioritised; what the definition of 'done' looks like; how work will be quantitatively measured; what level of autonomy the employee (really) has. If you're not sure if you're aligned, try doing a blind exercise where both the manager and employee independently write down what they think the expectations are and then compare.

3.

EVALUATE PERFORMANCE SYSTEMS

As Eli Goldratt once said: "Tell me how you measure me, and I will tell you how I will behave." The way you measure success and manage performance plays a large role in setting the environment your employees operate within. Ask yourself: what behaviours are encouraged by the way we measure performance - do we encourage collaboration where everyone can be successful, or do we encourage individual heroics and climbing over one another? If you can picture the environment you're looking to create, check that the way you manage performance fosters that environment.

“RECOGNITION ISN'T ABOUT THROWING COMPANY-WIDE CELEBRATIONS WITH CERTIFICATES”

4.

ADDRESS DETRACTORS

There's a recurrent complaint from employees that managers are too slow to deal with heavily negative team-members. The effect of even one toxic employee goes far beyond just their own performance as they impact everyone around them. Our advice: deal with it, address it, it doesn't work itself out. Don't begin by focusing on and blaming the employee - performing employees don't suddenly have a change of heart and becoming non-performing. Instead look first to yourself and see what - if anything - has changed in their environment to create this behaviour.

“TELL ME HOW YOU MEASURE ME, AND I WILL TELL YOU HOW I WILL BEHAVE”

the beatings will continue

5.

FOSTER GENUINE RELATIONSHIPS

Healthy peer level bonds in the workplace can't be forced. Employees don't have to be best friends, but they do have to feel confident in each other's capabilities, work ethic, and level of dependability. Activities like sending employees on rope climbing courses together, or having them paddle a canoe, are often a waste of both time and money when intended for team building. It's almost impossible for the team to translate the lessons and the feeling of camaraderie they feel at these events, back into the (very different and individual focused) office environment. Team activities need to be deliberate and aligned with the stage the team is at. Begin with activities that develop shared understanding of direction and purpose. Over time, move to activities that develop trust, individual understanding, and human connections. Then you can get to those celebratory activities that help kindle the team spirit. But, you need a team spirit first.

6.

KEEP TEAMS TOGETHER

It takes time for a team to bond, to understand each other's strengths and challenges and understand each other as individuals. There's a growing trend of companies flipping the way work is assigned and instead of building the team around the work, building the work around the team. For example: when a new project comes on the horizon, rather than creating a project team with a mix of individuals from across the organisation, you give the project to an existing team - even if some part of the skillset is missing from that existing team. That skillset can be grown (great!). Keeping teams together in this way allows them to grow together and nurtures that feeling of belonging that leads to highly engaged and high performing teams.

7.

CULTIVATE TEAM CULTURE

Creating a real sense of 'we' within a team can start easily with the team space. Allow teams to make the physical space around them their own. Encourage the team to name themselves. Allow them to decorate their area to whatever level you're comfortable with. Over time the team will create their own almost tribal ceremonies - encourage these!

8.

MAP THE VALUE

Knowing your work matters is a sure fire way to feeling valued. This needs to happen at several levels. First, the employee needs to understand their own (individual) impact to their team, what specific value they (and only they) bring to that team's table. Second, they need to understand the impact their team has on the wider company, how their collective work fits into the larger organisational picture. Third, they need to understand how the organisation fits into the wider world. Take time especially on that first one. In large organisations it's hard for employees to see the results of their work in any meaningful timeframe. Work with them to make this visible and then map out how it fits together for everyone.

9.

MASTER RECOGNITION

Recognition isn't about throwing company-wide celebrations with certificates and trophies, just like feedback isn't about telling people they did something wrong. The concepts of feedback and recognition are about paying attention to your colleagues, team-mates, and those in your charge if you are a leader. Make an effort to genuinely recognise at least one person every day for something they did well through targeted, highly specific feedback.

10.

CREATE FEEDBACK CULTURE

Look for opportunities to both give and ask for feedback in the interest of growth and improvement. Your mindset around feedback is key. When receiving, it should be one of humility and gratefulness. When giving, it should be a gift given in the interest of helping another person improve. When giving feedback, be specific, and own the feedback as your own, not as what you think other people thought. When receiving, don't challenge it immediately, say thank you, then go away and think about it. Even if you feel it might not be valid, it is giving you valuable information about someone else's perception and perspective.

11.

DEFINE THE SANDBOX

Everyone needs some level of control over their environment and their work, and 'empowerment' is a commonly used word. However it's easy to 'empower' poorly and damage morale in the process. Empowerment should not be about dumping responsibility but about the growth of the employee - if the employee could already do it perfectly, you're not growing them. Consider - can you allow some experimentation, which may mean they solve it in an entirely different way to you (and even teach you something), or possibly even mean failure? If you can, great, you can now help the employee develop and demonstrate mastery on their own terms.

12.

SHARE THE VISION

Teams and companies exist to achieve something that a single person couldn't. The more autonomous and independent employees are, the more important it is that they share a vision. If you have a hundred small boats all with their own captains then the closer they understand where they're going and why, the tighter the formation is and the smoother the sailing. Don't mistake a shared vision for grandiose posters around the office with catchy phrases. Whilst these can be motivational, it can be hard for employees to translate how that vision should be helping steer their day-to-day actions. Work with the teams to make that translation understood. Having a strong, shared vision gives confidence to decision making and autonomy.



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ARE YOU PART OF THE EXTINCTION REBELLION?

THE NEWLY PUBLISHED IMAGE REPORTS 2019 WIDTHWISE SURVEY DOES SUGGEST THAT PRINTERS ARE REFLECTING ON ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS. ARE YOU ONE OF THEM - AND IS YOUR VIEW IMPACTING YOUR BUSINESS AS WELL AS THE WORLD AROUND YOU?

One million species on this planet are threatened with extinction - and we are entirely to blame. That is the damning conclusion of a new report published by the United Nations and compiled by the august-sounding Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

Although the bombshell generated headlines across the world, Donald Trump probably still believes that climate change is “fake news” - strangely, he has never explained why anyone would want to make this stuff up, let alone who is doing so. (One of his advisers, Thomas Pyle, president of the American Energy Alliance, has a slightly more enlightened view: he agrees that yes, the climate is probably changing but we're not sure why and we don't really know what it means.)

At the other extreme are the activists of Extinction Rebellion whose protests across Britain garnered a surprising degree of public sympathy of the “Well, somebody has to stand up and be counted” variety. And then there are those people who prefer not to think about climate change at all, rather like the characters in Crowded House's signature song Don't Dream It's Over: “And the paper today talks of war and of waste, so we turn right over to the TV page”.

To be fair, that kind of indifference isn't confined to members of the general public. The environmental findings of the newly published 2019 Image Reports Widthwise survey confirm that, as in previous years, a minority of PSPs and print buyers continue just to ignore the whole thing.

Almost one in three wide-format print companies surveyed said they saw no need to provide environmentally friendly print options, with 56.3% saying that only a few clients ever ask about the issue and 38.1% reporting that they are never asked.

Customer concern is going to vary according to the size of their business, whether they are consumer-facing and/or publicly quoted, but it does seem that, if anything, buyers are lagging behind printers (63.6% of whom have environmental accreditation, a big increase compared to

63.6% OF
WIDTHWISE
RESPONDENTS
HAVE
ENVIRONMENTAL
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COMPARED TO
PREVIOUS
YEARS

previous years). You only have to remember the unedifying scramble by global fast-moving consumer goods companies to use less plastic last year, in the light of David Attenborough's vocal campaigning through his TV series ‘The Blue Planet II’ to understand how risky this approach is.

There are two compelling reasons why buyers and printers should be doing more. First, taking a broad, long-term view, by doing more companies could - according to 97% of the world's climate scientists polled by Gallup - save the planet. Second, taking a much narrower perspective, it's about risk management for - and protecting the reputation of - your business. Which customer or print service provider wants to be confronted with the moral authority of Attenborough?

That might sound unlikely but there are many other less dramatic ways, buyers and printers can unexpectedly and suddenly find their environmental practices in the spotlight. In the courtroom of world opinion, with trust in business almost as low as our faith in politicians, where outrage can be fanned by emotive posts on social media, judgements on such matters are rendered instantly - often before companies have time to defend themselves or clarify misleading claims about their operations. (A recent MIT study confirmed this: after tracking 126,000 stories spread on Twitter over 11 years, they concluded that ‘fake’ news travelled six times faster across the internet than true stories.)

The 2019 Widthwise survey does suggest that printers are reflecting on environmental matters: 32.4% plan to measure and reduce their carbon footprint, while others are looking to reduce or recycle waste, cut their energy consumption and look to increase their use of recyclable materials. Perhaps most encouragingly, just over one in seven print service providers say they consider the environmental impact of their purchasing decisions.

So now might well be a good time to take a long, hard look at your print operation and ask yourself: what would Extinction Rebellion activists think if we invited them in to see the way we work? The answer might be uncomfortable but it's got to be more constructive than speculating about Brexit. And forewarned is forearmed.



a. Printeriors in pictures

The Printeriors feature at Fespa Global, right at the entrance to the show, highlighted some natty digital inkjet print possibilities - here's a selection, which includes leather-effect, metallic and neon strewn wallcoverings, bespoke furniture and soft furnishings.

b. Facing the future

Polish company Prograf used its Mimaki UCJV 300-160 to produce this stunning, selectively backlit fabric panel, which comes with a remote light control so that the amount of light of the face can be altered.

c. Coming up roses

PressOn supplied the graphics for all walls, floors, lifts and stairs for a 218m² pop-up shop in London set up to raise funds for the NSPCC. The PSP branded two floors of retail space in Marylebone with a flower-garden concept designed by Harrods for the Fashion Re-Told feature.

d. Floored!

One dad gave his daughter a big surprise on her wedding day when he arranged for a bespoke dance floor graphic with a custom checkered design with the couple's new monogram - all printed via an EFI Vutek onto Drytac SpotOn Floor 200.





DIGGING BELOW THE SURFACE WITH **INDUSTRY MOLE**

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I rarely look at social media. And when I say rarely I mean it - not like my neighbour who says he rarely watches television - "just the news and wildlife documentaries" - but is strangely familiar with every twist in Game Of Thrones. (Full disclosure: I am one of the social pariahs who have never watched a single episode.) But the other day my sales director sent me a copy of a tweet from @AdWeak that made me laugh: "BREAKING: Client Informs Agency She Really Appreciates All The Hard Work That Went Into The Ideas She Is About To Kill."

Their rich vein of tweets on the absurdities of agencies, clients and media, persuaded me to start following @AdWeak (although who knows how long that will last?). One post reminded me of an old school sales director - let's call him Ray - we had back in the day: "Account Director Assures Client Prospective Client Agency Shares Same Passion For Whatever They're Passionate About." To be fair, Ray's insistence on making a connection usually worked but football was his downfall - he was about as convincing as David Cameron who ultimately seemed to support any

football team in claret and blue that wasn't Burnley.

Still Ray did have to put up with the kind of customers who praised ideas even as they slaughtered them, suggested a few minor revisions to an order (usually code for moving the goalposts so far that our initial proposal was rendered irrelevant) and were instant experts on everything from substrates to emerging technologies to turnaround times.

You don't get so many of these today. What you do get - as our present sales director complains - is a load of jargon. The other day he came back from a meeting with a client who had been talking about the key new trend of "human-centred marketing" which left us both wondering who they had been marketing to before.

I shouldn't whine about clients, but it's better than shouting at them. AdWeak also gave me my favourite fake statistic: "Report Finds 90% Of Creative Directors Lean Against Wall, Fold Arms For PR Photos". I say it's a fake statistic because, in my experience, the proportion is probably higher.

STREET

INKJET SUMMER SCHOOL	PUBIC SECTOR SOLUTIONS EXPO	THE PRINT SHOW	SIGN AND DIGITAL 2020
When? 10 - 14 June, 2019	When? 25 - 26 June, 2019	When? 17 - 19 September, 2019	When? 28 - 30 April, 2020
Where? Moller Centre, Cambridge	Where? Excel, London	Where? NEC, Birmingham	Where? NEC, Birmingham
Cost? Starting at 895 Euro per person per course.	Cost? Free visitor passes for those working for a public sector organisation, or an organisation currently running/delivering live contracts on behalf of the public sector - otherwise £599.	Cost? TBA	Cost? Free for trade visitors.
Who will be there? Organised by IMI Europe, experts within their fields will deliver 1.5-day technical courses on fluid dynamics and acoustics, inkjet ink characterisation, inkjet colour management, jetting functional fluids, and inkjet drying and curing.	Who will be there? GovNet organises this event, designed to give visitors a chance rub shoulders with specifiers, advisors and procurers of public sector solutions.m	Who will be there? A mixture of suppliers from across the whole print spectrum	Who will be there? Too early to talk about the exhibitor line-up, but you can expect to get a fair smattering of those in the large-format space.
Should you go? Yes if you're of a technical bent and want to know more about any of the topics above.	Should you go? Not a cheap option (unless you qualify for a freebie) but perhaps worth it if you're serious about getting in front of public service sector decision makers.	Should you go? Put it on your planner and decide nearer the time when the exhibitor list is closer to finalisation	Should you go? Given this is the UK show most orientated towards this sector I's worth a look-see.
Rating 8/10	Rating 5/10	Rating 6/10	Rating 7/10

OVER TO YOU...

PIERRE PHIEFFER, MD, XTREME SIGNS AND GRAPHICS

[HTTPS://XTREMESIGNS.IE](https://xtremesigns.ie)

What's having the greatest impact on your business at the moment?

The installation of new equipment over the past year has doubled our capacity and new technologies are contributing to even higher quality and turnaround.

Where do you see the greatest wide-format opportunities?

We are moving into soft signage and printing direct-to-fabric is becoming big part of our business.

What would make your day-to-day operations easier?

Finding more skilled staff.

Your favourite bit of kit is..?

Has to be my two Jetrix LXRI320 and my two Lamidesks. Looking at investing in a cutting table shortly.

What's the best bit of business advice you've been given?

Never quit - if it was easy everyone would be doing it.

What are you most proud of achieving?

Owning the first Jetrix 3.2m roll-to-roll off the production line after a trip to Korea to check it out.

What lesson does the wide-format sector need to learn?

The wide-format is still evolving very fast and it is very important to keep on top of the changing trends. The impact on the planet is becoming more important and all effort should be made to lessen the effects large-format is having on the environment. We try and steer our customers with this in mind.



VITAL STATISTICS

GIVEN THAT THE 2019 IMAGE REPORTS WIDTHWISE REPORT IS BEING PUBLISHED ALONGSIDE THIS ISSUE WE COULD NOT LET THE OPPORTUNITY PASS TO FLAG UP SOME OF THE KEY STATS FROM THE 247 PARTICIPATING LARGE-FORMAT UK/IRELAND-BASED PSPS.

YOU CAN READ THE FULL REPORT - WHICH PROVIDES ALL THE POLL DATA TOGETHER WITH ANALYSIS AND EDITORIAL COMMENT - AT: [HTTPS://WWW.IMAGEREPORTSMAG.CO.UK/WIDTHWISE2019](https://www.imagereportsmag.co.uk/widthwise2019)

94.74%

have yet to invest in Industry 4.0

86.64%

expect their LF turnover to grow in 2019

63%

expect large-format print to increase its share of their total business turnover in the next two years

51.82%

do not expect to buy a new WF printer in 2019/20

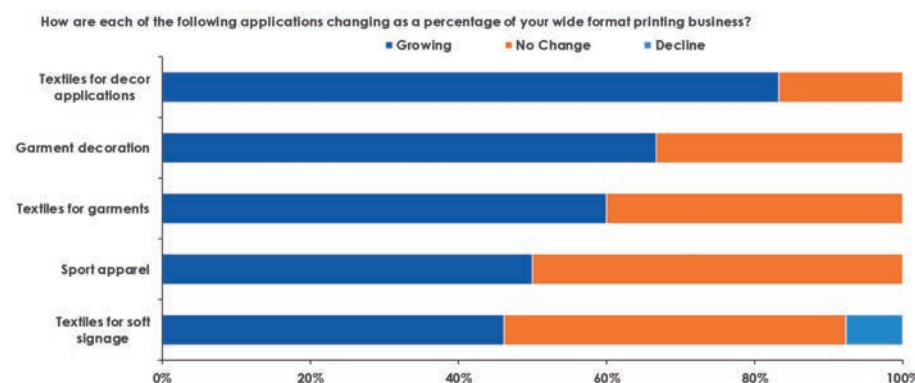
46.15%

say it's more important to offer 'green' options than it was two years ago

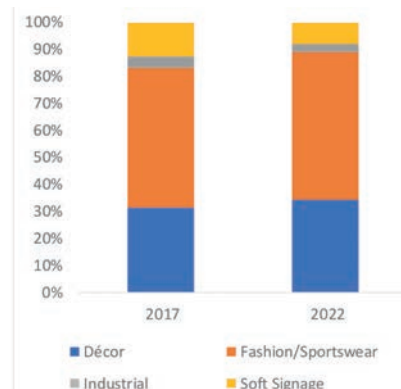
Fashion faux pas?

CATHERINE CRESSWELL AND RON GILBOA OF KEYPOINT INTELLIGENCE CONSIDER WHETHER THOSE UK PSPS NOT RUSHING HEADLONG INTO APPAREL PRINTING ARE MISSING OUT.

As a wide-format PSP in the sign and graphics sector, is there a real opportunity to produce digitally printed apparel and/or decor textiles? Globally collected data from the 2018 Fespa Print Census conducted by InfoTrends (part of Keypoint Intelligence) indicates that sign shops are (see chart below). Furthermore, when asked what features they would like of future printing devices, 39% said textile printing capability, and when asked about specific technologies, 13% expect to purchase dye-sub equipment in the next two years, and 7% said equipment with other textile inks.



But does this mean they are all moving into sports apparel or home decor applications? The 2019 Image Reports Widthwise survey indicates that in the UK most companies are not - so are they missing a trick?



In print volume terms the applications beyond soft signage are growing at more than double the rate of those in textile-based signage. The EMEA market as a whole is expected to grow by 15% per annum to 2022 - soft signage at 4%. Signage is also more vulnerable to replacement by electronic display in the longer term, whilst stats show that Europeans are still increasing the number of items of clothing they have and will not be replacing them with electronic versions! Increasingly their desire is for customised, even personalised versions, and often purchasing is online which points to a growing mass customisation trend fulfilled with digital print solutions.

Home decor such as soft furnishings, bed linen,

upholstery and window furnishings are also on the up, not least because in the online space users are experimenting with new shopping tools to help link them with the products they are most interested in (source: InfoTrends' Digital Textile Printing Forecast).

The recent Fespa UK textile conference saw an interesting mix of independent, even start-up designers, and wide-format printing companies. The designers were looking for printing companies that could produce samples or show them fabric choices - the printers wondered if they would be paid for the swatches if engaged by a designer? These are interesting questions that need to be worked out to enable the digital textile printing revolution to really take off in this part of the market.

The supply chain when it comes to fabric printing is challenging too. On the one hand brand requirement for standard production and colour matching are very demanding. On the other, not all fabrics are made the same and require different inks to meet the standards for permanency such as washability and crock among others. In many cases a PSP may need to invest in multiple machines to meet client requirements for printing onto varying types of fabrics (see table below).

If you are a PSP asking 'is apparel/decor printing for me?' consider:

- Is there a fully articulated business plan that details the addressable clientele for apparel or décor, together with a keen understanding of the process steps and transaction financial structure?
- Does the operation have the skillset and tools for producing, and selling, output in a range of fabric types?

Some sign shops have taken the plunge - Probo in the Netherlands is a case in point. It invested in a Durst pigment printing machine and set up a new subsidiary called motiflow.com, an online portal for designers to store their designs and sell online - with orders fulfilled by Probo.

Keypoint Intelligence believes that the demand for local on-demand production will continue to grow and that printing technology and fabrics will become readily available. For sign shops and wide-format PSPs with the right technology, skillset and entrepreneurship, apparel and decor print offers opportunity. However, the complexities of the supply chain, accompanied by pressure on margin by large brands, compounded by the need to provide ancillary services such as cutting and sewing, may prove insurmountable to some would-be players.

Ink Type	Primary Materials	Characteristics	Pre-treatment	Post-treatment
Reactive	Cotton, viscose, acetate, other natural fibres	Light fastness, vibrant colors, water fastness	Yes	Steaming & Washing
Acid	Silk, nylon, wool	Strongest light fastness & vibrancy color, water fastness	Yes	Steaming & Washing
Direct Disperse	Polyester, (synthetics)	Light fastness, vibrant colors, water fastness	Yes	Steaming & Washing
Sublimation Direct to fabric/ Paper transfer	Polyester, polyblend	Good light fastness; not as vibrant as steam fixation	Yes- Direct No-Paper Transfer	Heat Calendar
Pigment	Wide variety of materials	Good light fastness; water fastness depends on color vibrancy and pretreat/post treat	Optional	Optional Wash/ Heat



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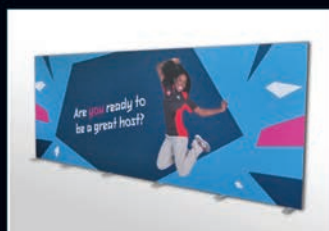
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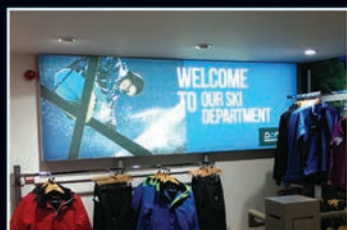


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