



■ Offset printing still in vogue

Offset printing is increasingly becoming the method of choice for label printers. Although once used to satisfy only the very highest of quality requirements, there are now a multitude of practical advantages to this tried-and-tested technology. Offset printing is in widespread use, it is standardised and it utilises low-cost formes. Today, the challenge lies in combining offset printing with other printing processes. So how can label printers use combination printing to produce high-end labels that will both catch the consumer's eye and boost profits in their own printshop? The solution to this puzzling problem – as proven by persistently strong demand from printshops – is the Gallus RCS with offset combination printing. This machine system is in widespread use throughout the world and makes a key contribution to the success of label printers on a daily basis.

Flexographic printing – a process characterised by simplicity and outstanding process reliability – continues to dominate the label printing sector. Sleeve systems, chambered doctor blades and front loading are all indispensable technologies that cut makeready times and paper waste to a minimum and thus increase productivity. Gallus uses these technologies in all of its presses.

Flexibility in printing processes and materials

Flexibility also plays a key role in label printing. For example, operators using a Gallus RCS can swap between printing processes and alter the sequence of these processes in next to no time. The same goes for substrates, which can differ enormously in terms of material, thickness and their behaviour in the press. Thanks to intelligent software control, users can change between them quickly and easily.

In the past, offset presses were not known for their flexibility. However, this has changed completely over the past few years and – as a result – offset printing has achieved a true breakthrough as a label printing technology.



Fig. 1: The flexibility of a press is a key factor for its cost-effectiveness in label printing. The printing units of the Gallus RCS can accommodate any major printing process. The changeover process – shown here on an offset printing unit – takes only a few minutes.

New century, new opportunities

Cutting-edge offset presses such as the Gallus RCS open up a whole new world of previously unimaginable possibilities for label printers:

- Optimised in cooperation with Heidelberger Druckmaschinen AG, the design of the offset printing unit and the use of offset repeat cassettes ensure the ultimate in print quality
- The printing units in the Gallus RCS can accommodate any of the major printing processes in use today, which creates almost unlimited application flexibility. It takes just minutes to change between printing processes.
- Front loading and sleeve systems are used throughout and provide the basis for ultra-fast job and process changeovers.
- The high level of automation and the all-encompassing servo direct drive concept support the operator whatever the task at hand – for maximum productivity.
- Innovative software control utilises comprehensive presettings to cut waste significantly. The job data memory delivers major additional savings for repeat jobs.
- Extensive services including a 24/7 hotline via remote support ensure maximum availability and minimum total cost of ownership.

The importance of the surrounding environment

The environment within which a press operates is just as important for the success of label printers as the press itself. Lean manufacturing and just-in-time production methods are key factors. Of course, it goes without saying that quality and volume requirements have to be met, but getting the product to where it is needed on time is also crucial. From the receipt of an order right through to its delivery, every individual process has to be carefully coordinated. Today's label printers are solution providers and need to organise their production systems accordingly. Superfluous processes that waste time and resources must be avoided and workflows and responsibilities need to be clearly managed.

Offset printing, with its wide-ranging standardisation, is ideal for precisely this type of state-of-the-art production environment but is also very demanding. In the following editions of Gallus In Touch, we will give you a unique and detailed insight into how our engineers are shaping the very design of the Gallus RCS to meet today's exacting practical requirements, how our process engineers are working on the ongoing development and optimisation of the Gallus RCS and how the Gallus RCS helps boost the success of our customers on a daily basis. You can look forward to a range of informative and inspiring articles from the world of offset combination printing at Gallus and Gallus customers across the globe.

David Baumann
Product Manager
david.baumann@gallus-group.com