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Thema / Subject

**Scan-Figus invests to grow its label and ticket business**

Gallus Ferd. Rüesch AG  
Harzbüchelstrasse 34  
9016 St. Gallen  
Switzerland  
www.gallus-group.com

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Verteiler / Copy To

Trade press

niklaus.amacker@gallus-  
group.com  
T +41 71 242 86 86  
F +41 71 242 89 89

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### **Scan-Figus invests to grow its label and ticket business**

*One of the leading label printers in Sweden, Scan-Figus, based in Gothenburg, has completed an extraordinary programme of investment that has seen a move to a new purpose-built 5000 square metre factory unit and the installation of a whole raft of new technology including nine Gallus presses hooked up to a sophisticated Matho waste extraction scheme, and pre press technology for EskoArtwork. Nick Coombes reports.*

The company, now in its second generation of family management, with P. Magnus Olsson taking over from his late father Sture who founded the company in 1967. It wasn't long before Scan-Figus established contact with Gallus, another family business with whom it has remained on the closest terms for 40 years, beginning with the acquisition of Gallus R160B letterpress machines, and culminating in the most recent Gallus EM 410, which is one of four that works alongside five Gallus EM 280 presses. Flexo capability is from three to seven colours, and all the Gallus lines are fitted with ABG Vectra turret rewinders.

“We use the Gallus EM 280 presses for special products, while the Gallus EM 410 lines tend to concentrate on labels,” explained Olsson, who claims to have spent in excess of SEK 50 million on Gallus equipment alone, and now has a production facility in which no press is older than seven years. “Our business is 50:50 tags and self adhesive labels, and all of our presses have water base/UV combination capability,” he added. With no print training school in Sweden, companies have to be self sufficient for new staff. Olsson praises Gallus highly for the support and tuition it offers both onsite, and at its demonstration and teaching facility in St Gallen, Switzerland. It is no surprise, therefore, that it has been chosen by the Swedish Label Association as the location for its new Diploma course for the practical training of flexo printers.

Olsson, who studied and practised Law prior to joining the business in 1987, was instrumental in the recent factory move. The company's previous site was the target of a compulsory purchase order, which enabled Scan-Figus to negotiate successfully for its new facility. It offers 2000 square metres of

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production space, 2000 square metres of warehousing, and 1000 square metres for administration. The building is laid out to facilitate workflow, and Olsson is quick to comment on how much better the teamwork is at the new plant. “Working in a modern plant with the most modern flexo machine-park in northern Europe has really caught the imagination of the staff, and boosted performance,” he said.

The company has prided itself on its ability to handle special materials since the 1970s. Many consider that tag printing is simple. Olsson refutes this, and points to the tonnage of ‘queue tickets’ he exports around the world as evidence that it requires special skills.

For runs up to 10,000 running meters he uses the Gallus EM 280 presses, above that the Gallus EM 410 lines take over. Label markets currently served are predominantly industrial, but the food sector holds an attraction. “I need to be sure the margins are as attractive as the volumes suggest before pitching for the business – we are specialists and want to stay that way,” he said, acknowledging that the trend towards more colours in food packaging would be attractive for his multi-colour presses and would lift turnover beyond its current SEK 75M (€8M) level.

To improve quality, the company has invested heavily in EskoArtwork technology over the past three years. The aim has been to overcome the perceived flexo drawbacks of tonal range and vignettes when compared with offset, and has resulted in a CDI Spark 2530 digital imager being installed. Capable of imaging plates up to 635 x 762 mm, it is designed for the label and tag market where plate volumes are typically small. Fitted with a 1.5 square metre laser, high-resolution optics to 4000 dpi, and Esko’s Rip imaging engine, it produces unique HD-screens that combine to offer HD Flexo quality.

The key element to Esko’s solution is its software and flexibility that allow upgrades as technology allows and demand requires. Olsson is looking to automate the whole workflow to reduce error and improve quality. This means high connectability to cater for the shorter run lengths.

Inline with the potential development into food packaging is the sophisticated Matho waste extraction system fitted to each of the Gallus lines. In addition to the matrix and edge trim, the system extracts the confetti to provide a cleaner environment and allow smoother press operation. Known as the Cutoffpress CP-6000, the Matho system, which is manufactured in Germany, was tailor made for Scan-Figus, and was actually integrated with existing equipment. It has an air return facility with filter,

and handles approximately 90% of all Scan-Figus waste, including difficult substrates. Usefully, the system is modular and can be adapted to accommodate additional presses in the factory.

Olsson commented: “The new factory allowed us to look afresh at waste extraction and we quickly established a close rapport with the Matho management. We were impressed with the company’s long track record with Gallus presses, which we had witnessed in action first hand at the press production plant in Langgöns-Oberkleen in Germany.” Once again, flexibility was a major factor, with Matho able to supply and install a bespoke system, and offer the benefit of subsequent upgrades to suit changing production requirements.

The system features a single central pipe for extraction, which offers greater efficiency and requires less power, and the system ties up fewer staff in waste collection. The presses run smoother and more continuously, while the waste itself is recycled and converted into energy. Usefully, according to Olsson, the system is proving to be an important sales tool when customers visit the plant.

Looking ahead, when questioned on the rising popularity of digital printing in his market sector, Olsson has very clear views. “We have investigated the options available but none is of significant interest to our existing customer base and the work in which we specialise. With a market that is limited by the size of its population, we need to focus our investments very carefully. Digital on a ‘me too’ basis is not the best use of investment capital as far as we are concerned at present.”

What is evident is that size is not the ‘be all and end all’ of success in the labels and tag market. Scan-Figus is an example of how careful choice of manufacturing suppliers and the establishment of close long-term working relationships, can bring dividends to a niche operation.

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*Photo captions:*

*Scan-Figus 7782.jpg* – Scan-Figus has nine modern Gallus presses in its new 5000 sq/m plant: four Gallus EM 410 and five Gallus EM 280 lines

*Scan-Figus 7784.jpg* – Each Gallus press is fitted with its own Matho extraction unit

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*Scan-Figus 7789.jpg* – Magnus Olson now runs the company that his father founded in 1967

*Scan-Figus 7796.jpg* – (Left to right) Claus Nielsen (Agent for Matho), Claus Jarning (Gallus Scandinavia), Magnus Olson (Scan-Figus), Matthias Thor (Matho), and Karsten Nygård (Esko)

*Scan-Figus 7802.jpg* – The Matho Cutoffpress CP-6000 extraction unit was purpose built for Scan-Figus and integrated with existing equipment

### **The Gallus Group**

The Gallus Group is a world market leader in the development, production and marketing of narrow-web reel-fed presses for label printers. The Group's folding carton business develops and markets narrow and wide-web reel-fed presses and die-cutters for the cost-effective inline production of folding cartons and cardboard products. Besides its portfolio of presses, the Group also provides consumables and a global, decentralised service and spare parts network. Gallus and Heidelberger Druckmaschinen AG, the global market leader in solutions for the print and media industry, have been working in partnership since 1999. The Gallus Group has a workforce of 565. This includes 260 employees in Switzerland, where the Group has its headquarters in St. Gallen.

For more information, please contact:

Scan-Figus AB  
T +46 31 97 95 05  
[www.scan-figus.se](http://www.scan-figus.se)

Gallus Scandinavia A/S  
T +45 43 46 63 40  
[www.gallus-group.com](http://www.gallus-group.com)

Matho  
T +49 7961 9316 11  
[www.matho.com](http://www.matho.com)

Esko-Graphics Denmark A/S  
T +45 87 43 44 59  
[www.essko.com](http://www.essko.com)