



## The benefits of digital workflow solutions – a review

More than 100 label printers from all over the world gathered together in early April at the Gallus headquarters in St Gallen to watch live demonstrations and share ideas with leading figures in the industry. The event focussed on how the latest digital technology can offer significant advantages to the workflow in today's highly competitive and global print market.

### It all starts with people – and the management of people

The day began with an engaging keynote speech by Dr. Reinhold Rapp, Strategy & Learning Consultant. In his presentation, Dr. Rapp explained that success in business depends largely on customer focus and highlighted his theories with examples from industry. He pointed out that a close supplier/customer working relationship results in mutual satisfaction, loyalty and rich rewards, and he identified leadership as the key challenge facing commerce today. His formula for success involves creating a customer strategy with measurable economic and management aspects that combines leadership (behaviour) with culture (attitude) in order to strengthen the customer-supplier relationship. If this strategy is customised and optimised for individual customers, it will deliver a relationship that benefits both parties.



Dr. Reinhold Rapp

### Managing people and processes – the Gallus strategy

With the theory of customer focus clearly defined, Klaus Bachstein, Gallus CEO, moved onto practical application by outlining the company's strategy for success.



Klaus Bachstein, CEO of the Gallus group

In terms of the challenges it must face, the label market is no different from other areas of print, nor in many cases other industries. The market is becoming ever more global, consolidation is continuing to reduce the number of customers available while increasing their individual size (and ability to apply pressure), run lengths are becoming ever shorter, competitors are growing in number and in their aggression, and costs are rising. The net result is a major squeeze on profit margins. On the one hand, highly automated printing presses enable printers to improve productivity while lowering production costs. On the other hand, greater process flexibility means that higher-quality finishes can be applied to individual labels, thereby enabling label printers to stand out from the competition.



#### **Key factors for profitable business growth**

To quantify these effects, Gallus approached a number of its current Gallus RCS customers, asking which factors really had the biggest impact on their profit margins. The results were enlightening, with the greatest impact coming from customer pressure to reduce prices, which makes the ability to process jobs quickly and efficiently crucial. Similar to a fast pit stop in a Formula 1 Grand Prix, the importance of minimising downtime and stoppages is crucial in today's market where every wasted minute costs money. By choosing a highly automated and flexible press, the label printer immediately boosts productivity. Furthermore, by integrating digital technology into the whole workflow process, he can both cut fault levels and more accurately determine the source of errors. If all stages in production are synchronised to the best effect, the label printer has full control over his machines and processes, which brings major benefits in terms of productivity and profitability.

### **A solution, or perhaps the solution, to the challenge?**

Gallus Marketing Manager, Paul Mattle, outlined the development of the company's flagship press series, the Gallus RCS 330/430. Development of the Gallus RCS series is based on a modular concept using cylinder sleeves for fast and easy handling and servo drives for accuracy and fine control. The key is to optimise the utilisation of both hardware and software. Dynamic print pressure control is a good example.



Paul Mattle, Marketing Manager of the Gallus group

### **Total Cost of Ownership**

TCO takes into account all the costs associated with an investment. In other words, it incorporates not just procurement costs but also the costs related to the subsequent usage of an investment.

Mattle described how shorter run lengths result in a greater number of repeat jobs and the need to reduce set up times. Research among existing Gallus users showed that 96 percent believed they had been able to improve their productivity by using a Gallus RCS instead of conventional technology. Of those, half calculated their cost savings for average run lengths of between 20,000 and 200,000 labels at always over 10 percent and often in excess of 30 percent.

### **RAKO – a report from the industry**

Proof of the Gallus theory came from the German label converting group, RAKO. Sebastian Koch, Assistant to the Management Team at RAKO, gave participants an insight into his company's first-hand experience with Gallus RCS technology. RAKO has 16 production sites across Germany and 1 in France, employs 900 staff, uses 80 printing presses, and in 2007 enjoyed a turnover in excess of Euro 160 million. Mr. Koch explained how his company had carried out detailed comparative testing to evaluate the efficiency of the various press technologies available in the market today. He declared the Gallus RCS 330 number one in terms of set-up and changeover times, the fast exchange of tooling, accurate control and presetting options.

Overall, he claimed RAKO had achieved time savings ranging from 20 percent to an impressive 60 percent with the Gallus RCS compared to average values from the other presses, which include several servo-driven presses. The company also significantly reduced substrate wastage.



“RAKO estimates that the Gallus RCS 330 is able to handle 50 percent more jobs in a given period than any other press within the group.”

### **Travelling along the digital workflow**

#### First stop: Prepress presented by EskoArtwork

Of course, having a highly capable press, whatever its name, is only part of the equation, as Jan Buchweitz of EskoArtwork explained, “The only way to survive in today’s market is to offer added value for less cost without loss of quality” and all this needs to happen faster to reduce time to market. Fortunately, EskoArtwork are able to supply the prepress technology to assist, with a series of desktop tools that, if integrated properly into the workflow, help companies to avoid losing time, money and, most importantly of all, customers!



Jan Buchweitz, EskoArtwork



Workflow-Software by EskoArtwork



Digital imaging unit from EskoArtwork

Second Stop: Introduction of new Rotascreen innovation Screeny digital  
Screeny digital is the new generation of screen printing plates. They were launched during the Gallus Industrial Manufacturing Event – a real première!

Screeny digital screen printing plates are coated with an ablation layer (LAMS layer), which is laminated onto the photopolymer. After digital imaging in a standard CTP device – e.g. the CDI from EskoArtworks – the screen is exposed, washed out and assembled in the conventional manner. The other printing processes and properties remain the same. The aim is to integrate Screeny digital into an existing digital flexographic workflow, thereby avoiding major investment in additional equipment. The CDI is often used for the digital imaging of Screeny digital – Screeny digital can be integrated with CtP with no extra costs, no new sources of errors and no uncertainties about changeover.

A digital version of all the relevant Screeny types, including Screeny S-Line, will be available from mid-2008 onwards.

Third stop: Plate production by DuPont

The afternoon session revolved around practical applications of the technologies available. Dr. Metzger from DuPont outlined the advantages of the Cyrel\* FAST system and the variety of Cyrel\* digital FAST plates available. All Cyrel\* FAST plates can be processed without solvents, offer very short access times, are quick and easy to handle and perform well across a wide range of substrates.



Cyrel FAST by DuPont



#### Fourth stop: End-to-end digital workflow by Gallus

Gallus used MIS (Management Information System) pilot software to demonstrate what the digital workflow of the future could look like. The workflow consisted of an entirely web-based software package that allows data to be exchanged not just between prepress and postpress machinery, but also with the press itself. Besides graphical data, which can be provided in PDF format for any process step, it also makes metadata, i.e. descriptive data, accessible for the various process steps. The use of the JDF/JMF standard will also mean that presetting data from production planning can be sent to the press, or that current production data can be called up from the press.

Only a fully comprehensive workflow solution with central data storage encompassing prepress, press and postpress will be able to reduce complexity in the production chain, improve planning procedures, significantly cut error potential and therefore dramatically boost efficiency.

#### Fifth stop: Total inspection by Erhardt + Leimer

Even when all the latest prepress and press technology is utilised, mistakes still occur and in today's market these can be costly if they are not detected. The case for 100% inspection was made by Erhardt + Leimer, a long established German manufacturer with offices around the world. The company listed price, productivity, costs and competition as the main reasons for 100% inspection.

#### Sixth stop: The Gallus RCS 330 live on stage

The day's events concluded with a live print demonstration on the Gallus RCS

330. Outstanding printing quality, unrivalled flexibility and high levels of automation are all key characteristics of the Gallus RCS 330 that help ensure the success of the label printer. The live demonstration enabled participants to see for themselves how easily and reliably the Gallus RCS 330 handles all process sequences. Screen, flexographic and offset printing units were swapped in next to no time without using tools of any kind and without causing any web separation. What's more, the Gallus RCS 330 also integrates perfectly into a production environment with a digital workflow. The machine can be preset with all relevant parameters and delivers the ideal conditions for ultra-fast job changes thanks to its consistent front loading and sleeve technology. Two jobs were printed on the press, firstly a clear-on-clear self-adhesive label then a PE label. The press was switched over in less than 15 minutes.



David Baumann, Product manager Gallus RCS 330



Live demonstration of the Gallus RCS 330

### **Conclusion**

If the theory is simple, then the practice of integrating the technology for a digital workflow is perhaps a little more complex. Gallus is a reliable partner who can guide label printers through the finer details. Gallus will also analyse existing production facilities and recommend the best road to implementation in each individual case – it's all part of the service.

Want to talk about digital workflow solutions? Talk to Gallus!

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