



■ Van den Bosch & Fikkert unlocks new markets with the unique Gallus EM 510 S

It's all happening at Van den Bosch & Fikkert in the Dutch town of Almelo. This dynamic family company – an established name in offset printing for many years – recently added flexographic printing to its portfolio. Van den Bosch & Fikkert is introducing this new printing method to meet the challenges of new markets and new applications. The company has already selected the necessary equipment, installing a Gallus EM 510 S in March this year. One look at the enthusiastic report of Jan Willem Kamerling, joint director of the company, is enough to know that the term “unique” is definitely not an exaggeration in this case!

In 1932, Kamerling's grandfather joined forces with a partner to found the Van den Bosch & Den Ouden printers. Following Den Ouden's death, control of the entire company passed to Van den Bosch. In 1995, his grandsons Jan Willem and Gerrit Jan took over the running of the family business, which had kept on growing over the years. The current company name dates from the acquisition of the Fikkert printers in 1997 and has been associated with quality, growth and innovation throughout the printing industry ever since.

As Jan Willem Kamerling pointed out with justified pride, "Our turnover has quadrupled since 1995. This growth has been achieved by combining our standard activities with a range of special offset services. We have steadily increased our hourly production capacity, but sooner or later a limit is reached and you have to look for alternative solutions and possibilities."



Pioneering role

But let's not get ahead of ourselves. Kamerling cast his mind back to 2001 when the company was involved in developing a new offset press as a field tester for Heidelberg. "The press concept is still the same, but whereas the printing and die-cutting capacity was originally 30%, it quickly shot up to 125%," he reported.

This situation was untenable over the long term and made the purchase of a new

press a matter of some urgency. The brothers decided to make a virtue out of necessity and opted for a flexographic press. "But not simply any old press," Kamerling was quick to add. Van den Bosch & Fikkert was keen to offer its customers both offset and flexographic printing services without making any compromises in terms of quality or flexibility. "We need to accommodate all our customers' special needs as effectively as possible. Naturally, this means that our presses and infrastructure have to provide the necessary versatility and, when purchasing a new flexographic press, our requirements therefore needed to be satisfied in every respect," he explained.



Customized work

"Things didn't always run smoothly at the start," revealed Kamerling. When Van den Bosch & Fikkert was looking to move into flexographic printing, the company was keen not to be caught in the competition's wake. It therefore adopted the strategy of using a press with special features that would give it a vital edge in flexographic printing. The importance of the press being extremely versatile and adaptable was therefore stressed during discussions with Gallus.

"We probably demonstrated our typically Dutch traits at the time," said Jan Willem with a degree of satisfaction, looking across to his brother Gerrit Jan, who was following the conversation from a distance, for confirmation. "At the time, we didn't care whether this or that would be feasible. We simply saw the opportunities that the Gallus EM 410/510 S opened up for us. If you're looking to unlock completely new markets, it's best to leave your options open," he added. When asked which new markets he was referring to, Kamerling was deliberately vague. "It's too soon to reveal the details and we'd prefer not to show our hand for the time being," he said.

After our chat, there was an opportunity to take a look at the machine Gallus built for Van den Bosch & Fikkert, and the modular flexographic press does indeed offer an impressive spectacle. One great advantage of flexographic technology is its extensive modularity, which Kamerling compared to a Meccano-like construction kit.

Kamerling was also full of praise for the openness and commitment of Gallus staff at the planning and development phase. "We worked together to see what each of us could contribute to the project and you have evidence of a sizeable contribution before you. There are virtually no limitations in terms of the type and thickness of printing material. Whether printing on foil, paper or polypropylene, the quality of the end result is always perfect, with sharp images and fantastic colour reproduction," he enthused.

In this connection, it is also definitely worth mentioning the extra equipment that

Gallus incorporated in the press, above all the web-turning system that enables both sides of the sheet to be printed in a single pass.



Feeling for quality

Tests have been carried out on an ongoing basis ever since the press was installed in March 2008, but these are now mainly job-related tests for specific customers. "Actual production will only start once we are totally convinced that everything is working perfectly," insisted Kamerling. "We expect this to be around the end of November," he added.

The tests are being performed under the expert eye of the press operator, who received special training for working on the flexographic press. After all these months, the Gallus EM 510 S has become a bit like his baby. After all, his involvement dates back to the time the press was installed by Tetterode and includes a subsequent training period with a Gallus trainer. Together with his trainee, a DTP expert and a salesman, the press operator is part of Van den Bosch & Fikkert's flexographic printing team.

"We are very proud of the fact that with the experience and results we've already obtained and will continue to obtain we are currently playing something of a pioneering role in research and development for the flexographic printing industry," commented Kamerling. "We have exactly the right people who, with all their expertise and experience, are ideally equipped for getting to grips with, operating and getting the best out of what is no doubt the largest and most versatile flexographic press in the Netherlands. This being the case, we are full of optimism for the future," he concluded.

Gerda Gerschwiler
Manager Market Communications
gerda.gerschwiler@gallus-group.com