The financial crisis, whose fallout is still being felt in many sectors and regions, has shifted the global economic balance still further towards the Far East and Latin America. In many emerging markets, first and foremost China, growth has continued apace, with barely a pause even at the height of the international turmoil. Export-intensive sectors like the German automotive and engineering industries are among those that have profited over the years, enabling them to cushion the impact of a widespread slump in mature markets. Higher growth means greater prosperity, which in turn drives up consumption by a larger proportion of the population. This automatically fuels a demand for more print. China has now superseded Germany as the world export champion, and has finally become established as the world’s biggest market for sheetfed presses.

In the thriving growth centres of the Far East and South America, preferences have long since moved on from the basic secondhand, mass-produced small- or medium-format presses that initially sold well. Leading printers are increasingly following technological trends in industrialised countries. Extensively automated multi-unit B1 (41in) perfector presses with dedicated plate-cylinder drives and inline colour control now feature regularly in our Rapida reference lists for the Far East, as do large- and even superlarge-format presses with an array of sophisticated equipment for printing commercials, books and packaging.

In 2010 China moved up to the top of the international large-format league table with the installation of more than thirty big Rapidas. There is also a perceptible shift towards bigger formats in Malaysia, Indonesia and India, as printers recognise the benefits of fitting more pages onto a single sheet.

Business is booming in emerging markets

Parade of giants in the Far East

This imposing Rapida 185 six-colour coater press – the first VLF press in Southeast Asia – has been in action for some months now at Linocraft Printers in Johor Bahru, Malaysia, printing packaging for vacuum cleaners and other consumer goods in an outstanding quality and in a single pass: presses for smaller formats would require multiples passes

Photo: Linocraft Printers

Klaus Schmidt
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Editorial

The 2010 business year saw us defend our corner in volatile markets

Driving growth and squaring up to the digital challenge

While press manufacturers have benefited from the unexpectedly swift recovery that followed the global economic crisis, the gains have been smaller than in other branches of the capital-goods industry. At around €4.5 billion, worldwide sales of new printing equipment (excluding digital) were barely half their pre-crisis level. However, provided the political developments in North Africa and the ongoing debt crisis in Europe do not give rise to further international economic turbulence, we expect the modest upturn in the sector over the past twelve months to continue in 2011.

Regional differences in market dynamics have become more pronounced. China and other emerging economies in the Far East and Latin America are forging ahead. In 2010 there was also a palpable increase in the volume of orders from Germany, central and eastern Europe and high-potential markets such as Turkey. However, southern Europe, the UK and the USA are still struggling to recover from their worst economic slump in decades. There are also substantial differences among the individual print sectors. While demand for packaging printing and non-media print applications is picking up strongly, investment is more subdued among printers who compete directly with internet-based enterprises and electronic reading devices.

The KBA Group performed well in volatile markets, with growth rates that were well above the industry average. The Group order intake rose by 45.4 per cent, sales by 12.3 per cent and the backlog of orders by 31.6 per cent. Pre-tax earnings soared from €2.7m the previous year to €15.3m.

This improved performance was largely driven by sales of sheetfed offset presses and niche products. Despite our strong market standing and a succession of new contracts, which are described later on in this edition of KBA Report, our web press activities contributed less to earnings in 2010 than in previous years, largely due to weak global demand and the fact that the order backlog from better years had largely been processed. So there is still a need for consolidation in this sector.

KBA has weathered the economic crisis, media transitions and the severe consequences these have had for our business activities, without having to draw on external financing or capital aids. We have survived industry and corporate upheavals through our own resources. This, together with a low level of debt and a Group capital-to-assets ratio of 39 per cent, are what distinguish us in a very positive sense from many other enterprises in the sector. The restructuring and cost-cutting initiatives we launched shortly after the crisis broke, and my predecessors’ early diversification into less volatile markets, have played a major role.

Since demand for conventional offset presses has perceptibly diminished, at the beginning of March this year we made a vital move to expand our already broad range of products and services for the print media industry by adding a new business line, digital printing systems. Here, however, we differ from our competitors in that, instead of entering a sales and service alliance with an established manufacturer of digital systems which are already on the market, we have agreed to develop and manufacture our own digital printing presses here in Germany, based on proven technology, and to handle worldwide distribution. We have found the perfect partner in RR Donnelley, the world’s biggest print group. The initial outcome of this collaborative venture will be unveiled at Drupa next year. You can read more about it on the following page.

Notwithstanding the present political and economic uncertainties, and major regional differences in market dynamics, we are confident of maintaining our upward growth trajectory in the current year. I wish you the best of luck in your business activities and every success in meeting the challenges we all face.

Yours,

Helge Hansen, president and CEO, Koenig & Bauer
KBA expands into digital print technology

KBA is aiming to expand its broad portfolio of offset and other conventional press products to embrace high-potential digital print technology. The move follows the inking of a development and cooperation agreement on 1 March with the world’s biggest print group, RR Donnelley & Sons Company (RRD) based in Chicago.

Founded more than 146 years ago, RR Donnelley works collaboratively with more than 60,000 customers worldwide to develop custom communications solutions that reduce costs, enhance ROI and ensure compliance. Drawing on a range of proprietary and commercially available digital and conventional technologies across four continents, the company employs a suite of leading internet-based capabilities and other resources to provide pre-media, printing, logistics and business process outsourcing products and services to clients in virtually every private and public sector.

Under the terms of the agreement KBA will develop, manufacture and sell a new generation of digital printing systems incorporating the Apollo and other digital imaging technologies which RR Donnelley has developed and successfully deployed at its own print operations over the past ten years.

Integration of RRD inkjet technology into new KBA platform
The new digital print platform that KBA is planning to develop will be manufactured in Germany, drawing on the group’s intimate knowledge of the specific demands relating to digital applications in the commercial, book printing, publishing, packaging, security printing and newspaper sectors. KBA is aiming to unveil the first digital press at the next Drupa trade fair in May next year.

Cooperation by two innovators will benefit users
“RR Donnelley and KBA have long been leaders and innovators in our respective industries,” says Thomas J Quinlan III, RR Donnelley’s president and CEO. “We look forward to having the combined R&D resources of nearly 1,000 engineers and imaging scientists bring forward the next generation of digital imaging technologies. This relationship will benefit the customers we serve today and enable RR Donnelley innovations to be introduced to customers in segments that we do not yet address.”

More than just a sales and service agreement
KBA president and CEO Helge Hansen says: “Seeking to expand the industry’s broadest product range, KBA has spent the last eighteen months assessing both current and future digital printing technologies from around the world. From our analysis it was clear that RR Donnelley was uniquely positioned to partner us from a digital print technology, experience and scale perspective. It already operates proven systems that were developed to cope with the tough conditions of day-to-day production. This is more than just a sales and service agreement for existing technology, and goes well beyond the scope of those that other industry players have recently announced. Alongside our core business of manufacturing offset printing presses we look forward to working closely with RRD and its existing suppliers to jointly reinvigorate this industry with new digital imaging platforms.”

Further information on the development alliance with RRD, the next-generation digital print platform we are planning to create and the sectors it will address will be announced in due course prior to its Drupa launch.

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DriveTronic SPC fast becoming a routine feature of Rapida 106

Mounting demand for dedicated plate-cylinder drives

In March this year the 100th Rapida 106 B1 (41in) press incorporating DriveTronic SPC dedicated plate-cylinder drives for simultaneous plate changes left the production line and was delivered to Belgian playing-card printer Cartamundi. The total number of installations ordered or shipped with such drives has now passed the 120 mark, and counting. With the world makeready champion they are fast becoming the norm, as the higher initial cost is well justified by the efficiency gains they deliver.

We introduced this innovative drive system on web offset presses back in the mid-1990s, and launched a sheetfed version in September 2007 following exhaustive shopfloor testing at multiple customer locations. At Drupa 2008 we demonstrated its capabilities to a broader trade public on our new Rapida 106. Since then the superfast plate and (with our optional Flying JobChange module) job changes possible with dedicated drives have enabled the 106 to claim and repeatedly defend the title of makeready world champion in medium format.

Makeready world champion as a business strategy

Our record – fifteen print jobs of 500 sheets apiece completed in less than one hour, both at Drupa 2008 and during countless print demos at our Radebeul customer centre – is no marketing gag but a proven and repeatable capability, with the appropriate production parameters. Many users are now exploiting the Rapida 106’s makeready benefits to specialise in multiple short-run jobs demanding fast turnaround.

Various configurations of Rapida 106 presses with DriveTronic SPC have become an established feature of printing plants the world over. Since the plates are changed during washing sequences and other makeready processes, the actual plate-changing time is effectively zero (cf. diagram). A lot of printers with four-colour perfectors use the Flying JobChange module for short runs of mono books or instruction manuals, while owners of longer presses have discovered the advantages it offers for imprinting different language versions.

100th 106 with DriveTronic SPC destined for Cartamundi

More than half the Rapidas incor-
porating dedicated drives are eight- or ten-colour perfectors – or even longer – with inline coaters. This is true of the Rapida 106 that is currently being installed at Cartamundi: the press has a total length of more than 28 metres (92ft) and comprises fourteen printing, coating and drying units plus a triple delivery extension.

In addition to commercial and book production DriveTronic SPC drives are increasingly being used in the packaging sector, where print runs are also steadily shrinking. Packaging-primed installations in Germany include Ellerhold in Witten, STI in Lauterbach, Mensing Druck und Verpackung in Norderstedt and Mugler-Druck in Hohenstein-Ernstthal.

Dedicated drives in operation the world over
There are Rapidas with DriveTronic SPC in twenty countries inside and outside Europe, including Kuwait, Indonesia, the USA, Kazakhstan and China. And the number is steadily rising as word has spread of the benefits they deliver. Some forty per cent of new Rapida 106 contracts specify these drives.

DriveTronic series: market-driven innovation
DriveTronic SPC is just one of many modules in the DriveTronic series. Demand for some of the other components is even stronger. For example, three-quarters of all Rapida 106 press lines have DriveTronic SIS no-sidelay infeed – a unique feature that is ideal for these high-output 18,000sph press lines because it allows more time for sheet alignment.

Another feature that is unique to KBA and standard on all medium- to superlarge-format Rapidas is our DriveTronic feeder. It is the only feeder on the market with no main shaft connection to the press: electronically controlled dedicated drives assume all movement functions. The main shafts that were previously a standard feature on all KBA and other presses are now a thing of the past, together with the associated abrasion-prone gears and subassemblies. With a DriveTronic feeder it is possible to convey sheets back onto the pile in the event of a stoppage. This is not possible with a conventional feeder. And, of course, dedicated drives enable the feeder to be preset for the next job entirely from the console. This is a major contribution towards cutting makeready times.

In other words: KBA is way ahead of the field when it comes to dedicated drives. With DriveTronic there are no hidden auxiliary drives and clutches – unlike with other makes of press where they are needed for plate changing or other makeready tasks. DriveTronic drives reliably fulfil their functions during production runs also. This applies not only to sheetfed but to web offset as well, where we are the only press manufacturer offering gearless printing units with AC drives for each individual cylinder. On our compact Cortina and Commander CT presses they have long since proven their performance and capabilities. Dedicated drives offer both the print entrepreneur and the press operator substantial additional gains in terms of time, cost, flexibility and ease of use. And that, after all, is the purpose of market-driven innovation.
DriveTronic SIS no-sidelay infeed

Although it is no longer brand new, our DriveTronic SIS (Sensoric Infeed System) is still unique on the market. Totally makeready-free, it knows no setting or sidelay errors, nor does it mark sensitive substrates. Its mode of operation is ingeniously simple: a sensor determines the lateral position of the sheet on the feeder board, and as the sheet approaches the transfer point to the first printing unit the gripper on the transfer drum aligns the sheet with the side position specified at the console. The sidelay pull is ±5mm (0.2in). Sheet transport to the infeed line is supported by vacuum-controlled thrust elements, which ensure that the sheets are guided gently to the front lays. This investment in disruption-free production is well worthwhile.

DriveTronic SPC dedicated drives

With DriveTronic SPC (Simultaneous Plate Change), each plate cylinder has a dedicated drive, with no clutches or auxiliary drives. The absence of a mechanical connection between the plate cylinder and the Rapida’s gear train means that almost all makeready processes can run simultaneously. This saves time – something that printers do not have. Because sequences run simultaneously, the time required for plate changes no longer features in the calculation: to all intents and purposes it is zero seconds, irrespective of the number of printing units. In tandem with our CleanTronic Synchro high-speed washing system DriveTronic SPC enables the benefits of dedicated drive technology to be exploited to the full. Run simultaneously. The diagram below illustrates a typical makeready process and reveals the potential savings that can be made in conjunction with DriveTronic SPC dedicated drives. The two-minute time gain for each job change translates into a saving of 33 hours after 1,000 job changes.

Preregistration and more with DriveTronic Plate-Ident

KBA DriveTronic Plate-Ident – another feature unique to the makeready world champion – is an automation component with multiple functions.

1st function: register-pin plate recognition

Very often, if the plate does not sit on the register pins properly due to punching errors or flaws in the rubber coating, it can disrupt the entire plate-changing sequence. The Rapida 106 is the only litho press on the market with optical register-pin plate recognition. Two cameras at each plate shaft recognise the position of the plate relative to the register pin via register marks. This system will stop the plate-changing sequence if the tolerance limit is exceeded, but allows more play than existing systems.

2nd function: pre-registration

DriveTronic Plate-Ident is an optical system that measures plate position via the register marks, so the values measured can be used for pre-registration. The register shift is completed even before the first proof is pulled, and for many jobs no further adjustments are necessary, saving time and waste.

3rd function: plausibility check

A mix-up in plate allocation easily happens, and with the Rapida 106 running at such high speeds, it cannot be totally eliminated. DriveTronic Plate-Ident checks the stored job data against the data in the console by scanning a data matrix code exposed with the plate. The system instantly recognises whether the plate is in the correct position within the printing unit, and...
whether it is in the right language. This, too, helps to avoid needless delays and waste.

Time gain from automated coating-forme changes

The very concept of automation is that it should be all-encompassing. And in makeready, a system is only as fast as the slowest sequence. On many litho presses the coater is the bottleneck. Very often four or five minutes must be allowed for changes of coating formes, and this all adds to the total makeready time. We have therefore progressively automated and optimised the changing sequence for coating formes, and our system now represents the benchmark in sheetfed offset. Semi-automatic changes of coating formes on the Rapida 106 currently take just under two minutes. This represents a time saving of 33.3 per cent compared to other presses.

Higher speeds with AirTronic delivery

Our AirTronic delivery is a new development supporting high-speed production on diverse substrates. New, aerodynamic gripper bars optimise the air flow, preventing air turbulence and reducing the amount of powder required. The distribution and shape of the nozzles on the sheet-guidance system were optimised in accordance with the latest data on flow measurement, and ensure that the sheets float at a uniform height. The dynamic sheet brake slows even the most lightweight of sheets efficiently to create a perfect pile at the delivery. Automatic suctioning positioning eliminates the need for manual intervention. A new venturi system generates a uniform flow of air that gently deposits the sheets on the delivery pile. By dramatically reducing the volume of air required we have also reduced the volume of air trapped in the pile. Basically, all digitally controlled functions can be preset and stored. The operator can preset the air feed for the AirTronic delivery in a minimum of time by accessing a substrate database.

Fast run-up to stable quality with QualiTronic colour control

In order to exploit the full potential of the Rapida 106 we recommend our QualiTronic colour-control system, which measures solid densities on each sheet at maximum production speed – and on both sides of the sheet (before and after the sheet-turning unit) in perfector presses. The values measured on ten consecutive sheets are taken as a reference for automatic ink-key control. As an option the system can also be equipped with System Brunner’s Instrument Flight grey-balance control software. With

QualiTronic colour control, time-consuming manual comparisons take a back seat, and start-up waste drops accordingly.

ErgoTronic console

The press operator at the Ergo-Tronic console has every function in his field of vision. The individual user-oriented menus support easy, intuitive navigation. The automatic job-changing program handles and co-ordinates the entire makeready process – at the touch of a button. And the remote maintenance capability gives the operator the feeling that his press is standing directly in our Radebeul factory and receiving the best of care.

The Rapida 106 is available in a wide range of configurations up to a maximum of 16 printing, coating and drying units, and with a choice of automation levels. We would be happy to demonstrate its enormous output personally, at our customer centre in Radebeul.
“Over the past year we have invested close to $10 million in our facility,” says president and chief operating officer Mark Caines. “We needed a new press that would provide the automation, fast makeready, colour fidelity and ability to easily integrate with our robust pre-press department as well as our unique FM6 expanded colour printing technology. Our plan is to run this press to capacity where it will be operating 24/7 along with our existing 56-inch press. We’ll be much more efficient in makeready and turnaround times because our new KBA press is running 45 per cent faster than the press it is replacing.”

Exploiting the dual benefits of offset and digital
Alongside the Rapida 142 the investment package includes a new digital press, die-cutting machine and pre-press software platform. Caines’ vision was to have the KBA press produce its leading high-end conventional paperboard packaging while the digital press produced shorter runs of under 5,000 cartons, product samples, and promotional and test marketing kits.

“We experienced 20 per cent sales growth last year and we added 40 new employees,” says Caines. “We realised that a new offset press was essential to keep up with capacity demands. Our reputation has been built on investing in new technology to differentiate us from our competitors.”

Boehmer’s customer base of leading food, beverage and consumer goods manufacturers relies on colour-critical graphics as a key component of their advertising medium to reach their customers. The trend has been towards a higher frequency of graphic changes on the package that result in a reduction in run lengths, and the new equipment purchases effectively address this trend.

“Colour and graphics are very important to our customers,” says Caines. “That’s why in 2006 we invested in new FM6 technology. With this process we’re able to put ten or fifteen different boxes on one sheet and hit the colour gamut for each customer. FM6 has become so popular that 80 to 85 per cent of our customers ask for it. In order to run it properly we needed a press like the KBA that has colour density control technology.”

In addition to Densitronic Pro Boehmer’s new Rapida is equipped with a full array of automation, including plate changers which change all the plates on the press simultaneously.

Opting for the market leader
Caines and his management team looked at other offset presses before choosing to purchase the Rapida 142. “KBA is the leader in presses for the packaging market. Reliability and leadership were important when we made our choice. Our focus is to deliver value-added services to our clientele. They are under pressure to control their own costs and we help them by being more efficient ourselves. Our new KBA Rapida press with its automation and efficiency will be a key component for us to maintain our growth rate and momentum.”

Eric Frank
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Rapida 106 for Offset Druk in Rzeszow

Double coating and much more

In April this year Polish printing company Offset Druk in Rzeszow takes delivery of a six-colour Rapida 106 with two coaters and extensive automation. It is the first press of its type with this particular configuration, which combines high-quality inline finishing capabilities with enhanced flexibility. Proprietor Adam Motyka signed the contract with eager anticipation and can hardly wait to get cracking on the ambitious plans he has in mind.

The new Rapida, which joins two B2 (29in) non-KBA presses, substantially expands the company’s production capacity.

Focus on finishing and packaging

More important for Adam Motyka is that it enables him to offer more creative finishing options than are customary in Poland, and expand into packaging printing. Up until now Offset Druk, which celebrated its 20th anniversary last year, has focused solely on commercial work. In his resolve to expand his business Mr Motyka is certainly putting his money where his mouth is: the high-performance Rapida boasts an array of technical features which are still by no means routine in the Polish market. He explains: “In terms of technology, this is the most advanced press of its class on the market, and incorporates innovations which, in this form, are only available from KBA. Our objective in opting for such cutting-edge technology is to exploit its innovative potential and address an emerging demand among Polish printers for quality excellence in packaging.”

The 18,000sph Rapida 106, which is being installed in Offset Druk’s new production hall, incorporates board-handling capabilities that enable it to print substrates from 0.06 to 1.2mm thick (2 - 48pt). To accommodate this the press is erected on a 450mm (17.7in) plinth. An array of high-tech features ensures a level of productivity that is unparalleled in this format class, as was compellingly demonstrated at Ipex in Birmingham last year. They include DriveTronic SIS sidelay-free infeed; DriveTronic SPC dedicated drives for simultaneous plate changing; register-true plate mounting with Plate-Ident; automatic washing systems for the inking units, plate cylinders and blankets; automatic coating feed and cleaning systems for the coaters; ErgoTronic ACR automatic register control; automatic suction-ring positioning; automatic nonstop pile changing at the delivery; DensiTronic Professional inline density control; and QualiTronic Professional inline sheet inspection.

Affordable quality excellence

“The ability to create metallic and pearlescent effects with the coaters, together with the option of printing an opaque white in the first unit, guarantees a superior finishing quality in just one pass through the press,” says a delighted Motyka. “Not only will the Rapida 106’s ultra-fast makereadies and high production speed enable us to cut production costs for products requiring sophisticated finishing, but its inline colour measurement and control system also makes it much easier for us to satisfy our customers’ demands for quality excellence.”

Mirosława Becker, sales manager of KBA’s Polish sales and service subsidiary KBA CEE, says: “Offset Druk is the proud owner of the first B1 press with this configuration in the country. We are delighted that Adam Motyka and his team came down in favour of a KBA press even though the offer we submitted was not the cheapest they received. However, it undoubtedly represented the most advanced technology and highest level of automation.”

Motyka is equally convinced that the Rapida 106 was the right choice to make: “Alongside the superb technology, two major factors influencing our choice of press were the competent advice provided by KBA CEE and the smooth cooperation between the Polish and German management teams. The close proximity and fast response of KBA CEE’s service department were also a persuasive argument. We are confident that the new press will furnish huge potential for growth both in our commercial business and in the packaging and labels sector.”

Paweł Krasowski
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KBA PressConsum products enhance quality, performance and reliability

We now offer a range of premium-quality inks, fount solutions and other consumables for litho presses under the brand name PressConsum. While this service is initially confined to Germany, Austria and Belgium, as we gain experience and establish the logistical systems necessary to ensure a smooth supply to users it will be extended to other countries, probably within the next few months. All the consumables we offer were rigorously tested last year by specialists at our printing centre and, where necessary, improved still further to guarantee the requisite standard of quality, safety, performance and cost efficiency. KBA PressConsum is no mere label covering a mixed bag of goods. The provenance, performance parameters and properties of all the consumables in this scheme are clearly defined. This is not the case everywhere.

Since an optimum interplay of consumables delivers the best results for users, all the consumables recommended for our Rapida presses are manufactured to high specifications. The consumables we offer were tested over a prolonged period of time in standardised conditions. Benchmark tests were conducted to determine the original manufacturers and materials that delivered the best results. The latter were subsequently optimised for use with our high-performance Rapids, and retested. We therefore clearly have no intention of changing either the manufacturers or the packaging contents listed. The exception would be if new products came on the market, or existing unlisted products were improved to the standards demanded.

Proven quality
Each new batch is subjected to rigorous quality checks to ensure that product quality remains consistent. This is as important for us as for our customers, since PressConsum consumables are used for press demos at our customer centre, for the commissioning and acceptance of new Rapida press lines, at trade fairs, at our experimental inplant printshop and for training purposes. The products are also tested by approved institutes, with the aim of detecting possible glitches in the manufacturing process and their potential impact before the materials are used by printers.

As a matter of routine we work closely with original manufacturers to develop consumables for other applications or to address shifts in market demand. No products are delivered until they have been tested thoroughly in-house and deemed to be better than before. Here we take the greatest care to maintain the repetitive accuracy that is so vital in print production. When it comes to meeting ecological standards, we make no concessions. Which is not surprising – over ten years ago KBA was the first press manufacturer worldwide to gain the internationally acknowledged “emission tested” certificate. Since then all pertinent emissions from Rapida presses, such VOCs, ink mist, powder spray and so on, are tested regularly. With PressConsum products, all emissions are well below the prescribed thresholds.

Day-to-day benefits
Our tests revealed that the cheapest consumables were not always the best value for money. Those we recommend, however, should deliver benefits on an ongoing, day-to-day basis. On the one hand users need deal with fewer suppliers, and on the other they can rely on the consumable offered being fully compatible. To give just one example: using washes from the PressConsum range in conjunction with the recommended inks can cut washing times by as much as 30 per cent, which also reduces
the consumption of both washes and washcloths. As a result you have more time for production, and lower material costs.

But the actual costs are just one side of the coin. Using KBA PressConsum consumables during standardised print production makes process calibration much easier: there is no need for lengthy tests and experiments, since we have already done them for you. This not only facilitates production to ISO 12647-2 offset lithographic standards, but also cuts maintenance costs and reduces the input required for quality monitoring and control.

Inks, blankets, print chemicals and specials

The PressConsume range encompasses printing inks for diverse applications, blankets, powder, conditioners and other print chemicals. The recommended ink series include inks for standard and high-performance production, for folding cartons and films, and for both conventionally dried and UV-cured food packaging (see table above). One special product that is not universally available is SensPrint, a new-generation, migration-neutral series of inks for primary food packaging. All the potentially migratory components in SensPrint are themselves foodstuffs or food additives. And for UV applications, SensPrint UV is a premium-quality product for low-migration printing on primary packaging. We worked closely with the relevant suppliers to optimise all PressConsum inks for their specific applications and Rapida presses. Alongside process inks the spectrum includes Pantone, special inks, opaque whites and oil-based overprint varnishes. The recommended blankets for conventional and UV printing have a new type of rubber coating. This, in conjunction with precision grinding, guarantees a flawless ink transfer, exceptional reproductive stability and a long service life. The blankets’ balanced compressibility is instrumental in creating the sharp images and uniform solids much appreciated by users of KBA presses. The compatible PressConsum conditioners clean superbly, restore the rubber’s natural elasticity and prevent premature hardening of the blanket surface.

The choice of print chemicals ranges from water hardeners to dampening additives for alcohol-free printing. This ensures that the water used in the printing process is consistently uniform and stable, despite regional differences in water quality. Washes for conventional and UV production, developed specifically for the Rapidas’ automatic washing systems, are also available, as are plate, roller and diverse special cleaning agents. The range even includes powder made from natural (ie non-GM) vegetable starch.

Convenient ordering

All medium- and large-format Rapida press lines shipped to printing plants in Europe are provided with a PressConsum starter kit, so the recommended consumables can be tested during the commissioning stage. Further supplies can be ordered using the convenient fax order form contained in the starter kit. Orders for ink go directly to the original manufacturer designated on the label. All other products are shipped from our warehouse. Our local sales and service agencies will be happy to provide assistance where necessary. All it takes is a phone call or e-mail. A web shop for online ordering will also be up and running in the near future.

An emergency poison hotline number is given along with the contacts and information on the product specification sheets. We are also happy to offer advice on technical aspects, or send service specialists to provide on-site assistance at your press.

KBA PressConsum contact:
Phone: +49 351 833-1199
Fax: +49 351 833-2660
E-mail: PressConsum@kba.com

Martin Dänhardt
steffen.maennel@kba.com

KBA now offers top-quality litho consumables under the brand name PressConsum

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<th>Type/application</th>
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<th>UV inks</th>
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All the potentially migratory components in SensPrint, a new, migration-neutral generation of inks for primary food packaging, are themselves foodstuffs or food additives.
String of large- and medium-format installations

KBA Rapidas blaze a trail in Turkey

Ten years ago Turkey was a relatively minor market for KBA sheetfed offset presses. But since Dereli Graphic, a venerable trading firm, became our Turkish sheetfed agent in 2004 and started working with our Radebeul personnel to improve sales and service, demand for Rapidas in Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara has taken off.

Bucking the economic recession, over the past two years a total of thirteen medium- and large-format press lines, some with multiple units and advanced equipment, have been installed at leading printers such as Duran-Dogan, Camis Ambalaj Sanayi, Bilnet and Egesan. Our high-performance Rapidas have brought cutting-edge process technology to the Turkish print industry in the form of hybrid capabilities and eight- or ten-colour perfecting, while in association with Dereli Graphic KBA has hit the mark among Turkish printers with intensive on-site investment planning advice and bespoke customer services.

Since founding Dereli Graphic in 1986 the proprietor, Ahmet Dereli, has developed the enterprise into a leading vendor of offset and flexo presses, pre-press equipment, printing inks and other consumables. The premises in Halkali (Istanbul) which Dereli Graphic has occupied since 2000 provide an attractive working environment for its 55 employees, and include spacious, well-appointed demonstration and training rooms plus a well-stocked spare-parts store.

Camis Ambalaj Sanayi: glass packaging and more

One of KBA’s biggest customers is Tuzla-based Camis Ambalaj Sanayi, a packaging offset specialist owned by Turkey’s Sisecam Group, a globally active glass manufacturer. After firing up a Rapida 142 six-colour coater press with hybrid and board-printing capabilities plus a double extended delivery, Camis noticed a huge improvement in productivity, quality and product diversity. The press mainly prints microflute and 230g to 450g (11-22pt) cardboard, and is therefore mounted on a 630mm (24.85in) plinth.

Sixty per cent of the products printed in Tuzla are for other business units within the group – household glassware, plate glass, packaging for glass and chemicals – the rest is packaging for breweries, food-processing and healthcare industries, and manufacturers of electrical goods, confectionary and shoes. Camis is one of the biggest packaging printers in Turkey, with an annual paper and board consumption of 28,000 tonnes (30,800 US tons).

The sheets printed in Tuzla are usually laminated onto corrugated. UV work accounts for 50 per cent of output, and rising. Plant manager Mehmet Akinci says: “We knew we had to invest in cutting-edge tech-
Alongside the increased colour capacity and range of finishing effects achievable, what really fascinates us about the Rapidas are their fast job changes, high output and advanced automation. At today’s prices, lengthy job changes are a waste of valuable time and money.”

Bilnet Matbaacilik: major contract sends industry signal
Since July last year Bilnet Matbaacilik, a market leader in the production of fine books and commercials, has pushed the button on no less than three Rapida medium- and large-format presses at its plant in Istanbul.

The three highly automated KBA Rapidas are part of a €40m ($56m) investment package. The eight-colour Rapida 142 is the first large-format perfector, the ten-colour Rapida 106 the first five-backing-five perfector and the seven-colour Rapida 106 the first new-generation KBA medium-format hybrid press in the country. These three premieres under one roof are a remarkable vote of confidence in KBA, particularly since Bilnet is a new customer.

In the three short years since it was set up by Ozman Oztürk in the Asian part of Istanbul, Bilnet has established a reputation for consistent quality excellence that has attracted a highly discerning clientele of prominent publishers, auction houses, ad agencies and museums. One of its early customers was Turkey’s star photographer Ara Güler, aka “the master of the Leica”, whose stunning works were printed in beautifully crafted volumes. But Bilnet’s key accounts also include major car manufacturers like Ford and Fiat. Its current product range even extends to school text books and labels. Nor does Bilnet confine its activities to the domestic market: it also exports to Germany, France, the UK, Austria, the Netherlands, Greece, Russia, Georgia and Kazakhstan, and is aiming to raise its export level from 30 to 50 per cent.

In 2009 Bilnet set about relocating to new premises, still in the Asian part of Istanbul, and raising capacity substantially with new high-performance presses. This major investment has certainly burnished the company’s reputation for quality-defining books, catalogues and brochures. The new Rapidas have boosted productivity by cutting turnaround times, enhanced flexibility in product design and allowed the company to offer diverse coating effects that were previously impossible. Bilnet is planning to utilise these capabilities to expand its product range still further and develop new markets such as packaging printing.

The company’s new headquaters supports these growth targets with 17,000m² (183,000ft²) of production space on three floors and an optimised workflow from the high-tech pre-press department through the press room – which has seven sheetfed presses, two web presses and one narrow-web label press – to the well-equipped finishing department. There are 225 employees in sales, administration and production.

At the top of the market
General manager Halim Baspinar says: “In terms of technology, this huge investment package has positioned us at the top of the market. We can now offer our customers an even better service commensurate with our rigorous quality criteria. The new equipment, of which the three KBA presses form the core, will enable us to achieve our ambitious goals.”

He continues: “The Rapidas, with their excellent print quality
and fast job changes, are perfect for our job structure. They have an amazing output in both short and long runs, and our press operators appreciate their easy handling. The way in which KBA and Dereli Graphic handled this major project right from the start deserves a lot of respect.”

Egesan:
Two Rapidas in quick succession
Following eight presses from another German vendor, last year Egesan Basim bought a Rapida 105 straight off the KBA stand at Ipex in Birmingham. The five-colour coater press with extended delivery, board-printing capability, automatic plate changers, nonstop delivery pile and DensiTronic colour control puts on a stunning performance. The press shipped to Izmir in mid-June and initially printed commercials, but is now increasingly being used for packaging. Nor is it Egesan’s sole Rapida: at the end of September an eight-colour Rapida 105 with coater rolled into action at subsidiary Egem Ambalaj in Manisa, where it joined two older, non-KBA presses.

Egesan Basim was started up in 1985 by Muzaffer Bugdayci, and now boasts four fast-growing print operations with several hundred employees: Egesan Basim and Egesan Form in Izmir, Egem Ambalaj and ege ofset in Manisa. Along with what are known in the trade as boutique products (catalogues and promotional literature for the hotel and tourist industry) Egesan’s extensive portfolio includes business forms, folding cartons, packaging, displays and labels. Ege ofset prints instruction manuals and brochures for international manufacturers of household goods.

Cihan Bugdayci, who is the son of the founder and now heads Egesan, says: “It may come as a surprise to some people that we suddenly switched from our previous vendor to KBA for our plants in Izmir and Manisa. But at Ipex KBA and Dereli Graphic were the only ones who took the trouble to provide the support and advice we expected from a vendor. Alongside the Rapidas’ technical features, optional extras and RoI, what played a key role for us was this personal aspect.”

Egesan management was equally delighted with the punctual delivery and commissioning of the Rapidas, and with the professional training provided for the press crews. Cihan Bugdayci says: “Both Rapida 105 press lines played their technological aces right from the start. The five-colour coater press with DensiTronic colour control allows us to achieve an even better quality and offer the coating effects which nowadays are increasingly in demand. It halved makeready times and is hugely productive. This is a crucial factor, since our job structure comprises a lot of short to medium runs. The eight-colour coater press is primarily used to print cigarette packs, because a new law stipulates that the images on the packs must be in four colours. We have tremendous confidence in KBA technology.”

Trust smooths the way:
Egesan company head Cihan Bugdayci (r) with Rolf Köhle of KBA agency Dereli Graphic.
New facility inaugurated in California

Foster Printing Company adds second large-format Rapida

Foster Printing Company, a large-format trade printer based in Santa Ana, California, has inaugurated a new 46,000ft² (4,300m²) facility with its second new Rapida 162a. The new press, a conventional five-colour version, stands alongside a Rapida 162a six-colour UV press.

Since the installation of our first KBA large-format in December of 2008 we’ve seen business grow tremendously,” says vice-president of sales Kris Blackburn. “To maintain this growth we started to think about purchasing a second KBA press. During the decision-making process we kept the needs of our customers in mind and wanted to fulfill their orders in a timely manner. We also wanted to grow our business, increase our print capacity and do what we do best: put ink on paper. In the end, purchasing a second KBA press within two years was an easy decision.”

The two KBA presses are tied together using the colour management console and DensiTronic Professional closed-loop colour control system that provide the best quality and repeatability available, says Blackburn. Both presses communicate with the LogoTronic management system to provide up-to-the-minute data on jobs, workflow, throughput and quality. There are plans to put two shifts on both presses and eventually expand to a weekend shift as well.

“Our new facility is the culmination of two years of planning and exceptional growth,” says Blackburn. It offers an additional 6,000ft² (560m²) of space with a custom workflow that enables Foster to be more efficient from the receiving department to pre-production to press to bindery and finally to shipping. While its workforce has not increased, Blackburn plans to add a shift for pre-press and bindery when they move to an additional weekend shift.

The move to the new facility was easy and uninterrupted because the firm worked long hours preparing for it. “We printed our last job at our old facility on December 9th and printed our first job at the new facility four days later on December 13th,” Blackburn recalls. “We had zero downtime, which was critical to us and even more important to our customers.”

Large-format printing niche

Foster Printing was established in 1922 by Walter Foster, who printed and published the widely recognized instructional Walter Foster Art Books. In 1988 the Blackburn family purchased the assets and restructured the company to include printing for the trade. Today, Foster Printing caters to printers, designers, corrugators and distributors, as well as Walter Foster Art Books. The majority of its work is colour packaging, point-of-sale displays, signage and posters, printed on a variety of substrates from paper to plastics.

The firm differentiated itself from others when it carved a niche as a large-format trade printer in Orange County. “Our success relies heavily on our ability to produce top-of-the-line work with one- to two-day turnaround and exceptional service along the way,” says Blackburn. “Our customers are our friends and we never want to let our friends down. Having two KBA large-format presses enables us to print with the highest quality and cater to high-end customers who have high-end expectations.”

The latest KBA press is the fifth model for Foster Printing in its history, cementing a strong, loyal partnership. “Foster Printing and KBA can be defined more as a friendship than a working relationship,” says Blackburn. “KBA has gone above and beyond to help make our dream come true and we look forward to a long working friendship.”

Eric Frank

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Related website: www.fosterprint.com
Where the boss himself still prints

Whether in the far north or way down south – our B2 (29in) Rapida 75 has accrued a keen following among small and medium-size print enterprises throughout Germany. Most of them utilise the inline coating options offered, some have gone a step further and installed perfector versions. The first 16,000sph Rapida 75E press lines with practice-oriented automation have also come on stream.

A seven-employee family enterprise in Albstadt, southern Germany, Hägeledruck is run rather like a good restaurant. This is because “the boss himself still prints,” as proprietor Frank Hägele proudly points out. Of course, he doesn’t work alone at the new five-colour Rapida 75 coater press – there is also operator Daniel Halder, who runs both the Rapida and a two-colour perfector in the same format. In addition the company has a two-colour B3 (20in) and a mono SRA2 (18in) press, plus two platen presses which are mainly used for die-cutting and perforating. In the finishing department there are two guillotines, two folding machines, a collator and saddle-stitching equipment. Agfa pre-press systems and a CIP3 link to the Rapida 75 complete Hägele’s full-service capability.

Green printing in Albstadt
Hägele’s green credentials are evident throughout the company, from the photovoltaic array installed on the roof in 2006, to processless Fuji plates and low-alcohol or alcohol-free print production. The new Rapida 75 fits well into this environment: along with its low level of start-up waste, a deciding factor during the selection procedure was its substantially lower power consumption compared to other presses in this format class. The Rapida 75 works with inks based on vegetable oils, not mineral oils, and in conjunction with ClimatePartner’s Footprint Manager software can deliver climate-neutral prints. The company’s green commitment includes a heat recovery unit with water preparation and air humidifier, and new, much more efficient lighting in place of conventional systems.

The Rapida 75 also fits perfectly into Frank Hägele’s corporate concept, combining as it does “perfection, quality, passion, performance and ecology”. Although he eyed up the press back at Drupa 2008, other commitments meant that the purchase had to be postponed until

Fast, no-stress plate change at Hägele – thanks to intelligent and practical automation

When Frank Hägele is not printing a run on the Rapida 75, operator Daniel Halder takes over
early last year. Now the new press has replaced a Rapida 72 installed in 2004. Previously the company operated two Rapida SR0 presses, starting with a two-colour version and later adding a four-colour version.

The products printed by Hägeledruck are pretty impressive. They include top-of-the-range catalogues, for example for wooden doors where the reproduction of colour tones and wood structure must be totally accurate. Catalogues and brochures in runs of 500 to 30,000 or even 50,000 copies account for most of the company’s output. With the new press it is now possible to coat such products inline to enhance gloss or create high-impact spot effects, and send copies to be finished with no interim delay for drying.

Value-added coating in Leipzig
At Gärtner Druck, an old-established printing business on the outskirts of Leipzig, a new Rapida 75 – also a five-colour version with coater – has heralded a transition from small to half-format. Managing director Holger Gärtner is exploiting the Rapida’s finishing options and implementing a rigorous environmental policy in response to the challenges posed by relentless price erosion for standard printed products and mounting competition from digital print providers.

Many of the presses available on the market were simply too big for Gärtner’s cramped press room. In the end there were just two alternatives: either extend the press room or install a space-saving Rapida 75. The more closely Holger Gärtner and his press operator, Mirko Vetter, scrutinised the Rapida 75, the clearer its benefits became. It has a very practical level of automation, including automatic format adjustment, but dispenses with costly and – in this format – superfluous monitoring systems. What is more important, the steps at the side fold up out of the way, leaving a 110cm (43.3in) passageway for pile transport. And the fifth printing unit plus downstream coater can be used to apply high-quality single and multiple coatings inline.

The new press came on stream in April 2010. Since then Holger Gärtner and Mirko Vetter have experimented with single and double drip-off effects, aromatic and iridescent coatings, and with shading effects achieved by marginally shifting matt and gloss coatings relative to the image. Alongside the existing embossing device the company has since installed a laser-operated cutting and engraving system, allowing business and other cards to be finished using an even wider range of options, and additional materials to be integrated in the printed products.

Perfecting after the second unit and an end-of-press coater make the five-colour Rapida 75E at Hoffmann-Druck a highly flexible production tool

Successful premiere in the far north, too
Hoffmann-Druck in Wolgast, north-east Germany, fired up the first Rapida 75E in the country last October. The fast, extensively automated B2 (29in) press has five printing units, perfecting after the second unit, a coater and an array of inline finishing capabilities for greater flexibility.

And at Hoffmann, flexibility is key: founded in 1839 and still run by the same family that acquired it in 1898, the company is situated in a region where print enterprises are few and far between. It caters mainly to tourist and business enterprises in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania, regional publishers and some big customers in Schleswig-Holstein, North Rhine-Westphalia, Berlin and Saxony.

Equipment includes mono and four-colour small-format presses, guillotines, folders, collators, glue-binders, die-cutters, drills, corner-rounding machines and sealing devices. A well-equipped pre-press department also handles design and agency services. In general no kit is more than three to four years old. Hard-cover production, large-format die-cutting and surface finishing (laminating or UV coating) are the only processes outsourced, to enterprises in Berlin and Rostock.

Since most jobs entail perfecting, a second B2 perfector to join the four-colour one was the obvious choice. And the new Rapida can apply spot colours in a single pass using the fifth unit, whereas previously a second pass was required. The new press is the first to feature a coater, but was a logical addition to meet a rising demand for finishing. Initially the company is offering solid gloss coatings, plus neutral protective coatings that allow copies to be finished without delay. Spot coatings and drip-off effects will be added at a later date.

In view of space constraints the Rapida 75E’s compact design helped clinch the deal for managing director Sebastian Ruge and his brother-in-law Karsten Lange, head of finance. Other contributory factors included a high output of 15,000sph in both straight and perfecting mode, a raft of features for minimising makeready – automatic plate changing (with semi-automatic changes of coating plates), format adjustment and diagonal register – and the option of expanding the choice of substrate thicknesses to 0.8mm (32pt).

Many other printers are enjoying considerable success with our B2 presses. In March 2011 Hoffmann-Druck will be the northernmost stop on our “Route 75” roadshow which is currently touring Germany and Switzerland offering prospects a chance to learn more about possible production scenarios.

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Exploiting the Rapida 75E’s competitive edge

Our Rapida 75’s cost efficiency has long been one of its main attractions, and many users have seen this demonstrated in their day-to-day production routine. Now our new Rapida 75E is raising the bar even higher with a raft of additional automation options.

Thanks to these innovative new features, makeready times with the Rapida 75E are substantially shorter than with its predecessor, while an automatic job-changing program allows all makeready processes to be aggregated at the touch of a button. So the operator at the ErgoTronic console can load the next job and preselect the relevant makeready sequences while the current job is still being printed. A CIP4/JDF-enabled interface allows the ink keys to be preset automatically, thus minimising both makeready times and start-up waste. With CleanTronic Syncro it is possible to wash the blanket and impression cylinders simultaneously. And with the new “print clean” function the blanket cylinder and plates are cleaned immediately the job is finished. This minimises both blanket-washing times and washcloth consumption. All the format settings for the feeder, infeed and delivery can be actuated at the console. Semi-automatic plate-changing has cut changing times by 25 per cent compared to earlier models. Automated measuring systems such as Techkon’s SpectroDrive and our own ErgoTronic ACR also support fast makereadies and enhance reliability during production runs. On average, job-changing times with the Rapida 75E are 30 per cent shorter than with the Rapida 75 (see fig. 1 below left).

The compact footprint and low energy consumption of the Rapida 75 have been retained: a footprint of just 23.1m² (249ft²) for a five-colour coater version with double delivery extension is around 30 per cent smaller than that of a rival press with the same configuration. For many printing plants where pressroom space is restricted, this compactness is a compelling reason for choosing the Rapida 75E (see pages 16-17). The half-format Rapidas’ low energy consumption is another. The five-colour coater press mentioned above consumes a median 46kW when running at an output of 15,000 sheets per hour. Some other presses for the same sheet format consume as much as twice this amount. It is the same in standby mode: the consumption figures for the Rapida 75E are again much lower than for a comparable rival press. Low-alcohol operation, press accreditation with the internationally recognised “emission-tested” environmental label and climate-neutral print production – an option offered by KBA in alliance with ClimatePartner – enhance the Rapida 75E’s appeal for printers committed to greening up their workflow.

The Rapida 75E’s practice-focused level of automation, its high print output, compact footprint and low energy consumption never fail to impress.
Management and press operators at Imprensa Nacional are proud of their new addition. For Robson Padua (2nd right) of Global Sistemas Graficos, KBA’s small-format agency in Brazil, the installation in Brasilia was the first of a number of orders nationwide.

Government printers are not the only fans

**Rapida 75 makes grand debut in Brazil**

Following successful installations in Cuba and Mexico, our compact B2 (29in) Rapida 75 is busy making inroads in Brazil, a key market. First up, in February last year, was a four-colour version at Imprensa Nacional, the government printing office in Brasilia, the capital. It was followed by a string of installations that included Companhia Riograndense de Artes Gráficas (Corag), the government printing works in the state of Rio Grande do Sul.

**Imprensa Nacional clinches the contract**

Established in 1808, Imprensa Nacional is under the direct authority of the Brazilian president. It has a current workforce of 340, 84 of them in production, which alongside sheetfed offset encompasses newspaper web and digital presses. The Rapida 75 is the sheetfed section’s fourth litho press and its new flagship. It is mainly used to print official government documents and communications, books, magazines, catalogues, folders and covers.

Prior to initiating the selection procedure the government put the contract out to public tender. KBA and its small-format agency in Brazil, Global Sistemas Graficos, won the deal by virtue of the Rapida 75’s compelling technology and attractive price/performance ratio, and by offering a comprehensive service concept.

Imprensa Nacional technical director Francisco Chagas Pinto was impressed by the handling of the entire project: “The outstanding performance of a KBA Rapida 74 – the forerunner of the 75 – at KBA reference customer Vangraf Grafica e Editora in São Paulo also helped to tip the balance. The new press made a fine start and has really delivered on its promise in terms of fast makeready, low waste levels and ease of operation. Compared to our existing presses the performance of the 15,000 sheets-per-hour Rapida 75 is stunning. It can be used for a broad range of jobs and delivers a superior print quality on all the stock types and weights we use.”

**Corag takes twin pack**

Last year Corag in Rio Grande do Sul boosted output with the addition of two B2 (29in) KBA Rapida 75 presses. The investment was part of an ongoing 75-million real ($44.3m) upgrade that also encompasses pre-press and finishing.

Corag, which was founded in Porto Alegre in 1973, employs 250 staff and prints both offset and digital. It specialises in books, government bulletins, documents and regulations but it also prints the documentation for public tenders. Around 80 per cent of its sheetfed offset capacity is reserved for government contracts, the remaining 20 per cent is used for jobs on the open market.

Company president Luciano Silva, technical director Arnaldo Amauri Rodrigues and offset production manager Alexandre Godinho de Oliveira were agreed that there was an urgent need to enhance quality and productivity with an equipment upgrade.

Luciano Silva says: “We had made virtually no major investments since 1995, and our lack of capacity meant that we had to contract out a lot of work. We decided to go for a high-tech, high-performance production tool offering real value for money. The Rapida 75.”

Installed in April and October, the two 15,000spsh 530 x 750mm (20.86 x 29.53in) KBA Rapidas replaced two older presses from another German manufacturer. Features include semi-automatic plate changers and automatic format setting, DensiTronic closed-loop densitometry, and nonstop facilities at the feeder and delivery to boost productivity during long print runs. Communication with pre-press via CIP3 is standard, and both presses are linked online to KBA’s remote diagnostics system.

Arnaldo Amauri Rodrigues says: “Alongside press specs and production flexibility, one of our top priorities was service. The support provided by KBA-GrafiTec and its agency Global Sistemas Graficos has given us total confidence and security.”

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Ast & Fischer gears up for growth with two Rapida 106 presses

Fischer AG für Data und Print in Münsingen, near Bern, was one of the first companies in Switzerland to purchase a new Rapida 105 after the press was launched at Drupa 2004. Today, following a merger with Ast & Jakob, Vetsch to create Ast & Fischer, relocation to new premises in Wabern and the acquisition of two new Rapida 106 five-colour coater presses as the backbone of production, it is evident that the long-term strategy of the world’s second-biggest press manufacturer delivers benefits for users as well.

KBA supports long-term strategy

The two Rapida 106 five-colour coater presses with delivery extensions handle the lion’s share of print production at Ast & Fischer

Sefigenstrasse 310, Wabern near Bern: this is where Swiss history was made. Until 2008 Benteli-Hallwag Druck occupied a multifunctional industrial building at this address. But when it was sold off to Farbendruck Weber in Biel the site stood empty for a long time until it was bought up by an investor and transformed into Grünaus Business Park, with the premises being divided up and let. In late summer last year Ast & Fischer moved in and the production of print media was resumed.

165 years of experience

Ast & Fischer is scarcely two years old, but with previous reincarnations it boasts 165 years of experience in the media business. The company was formed in 2009 following the majority acquisition of Fischer AG für Data und Print by Ast & Jakob, Vetsch. Fischer’s roots in Münsingen extend back to 1889, when it was a newspaper publishing company which within a few years acquired the Emmentaler Nachrichten. Around fifty years ago the firm started specialising more in the production of periodicals and advertising literature, along with publishing services. Ast & Jakob, Vetsch was founded in 1957 as a pre-press enterprise, but in more recent years broadened its base to encompass electronic and printed communication. In the course of digitisation the company installed networked databases and positioned itself as one of the leading service providers in the canton of Bern.

Why merge?

Stephan Ast, now managing director, and technical manager Daniel Troxler were the driving force behind the two companies’ merger. Ast & Jakob, Vetsch was a strong player in digital media, but since space at its premises was severely constrained, it was unable to install the medium-format litho presses it was eyeing up. Fischer AG für Data und Print, with three B1 (40in) litho presses to its name, was strong on offset printing, but on the lookout for a site offering better business opportunities. Profit margins in the print sector were steadily being squeezed, and since the two firms’ operations were mutually complementary management came to the conclusion that merging would enable them to expand their sales and range of services while giving them the size and heft to address future challenges. In the end the decision was made not only to merge but to relocate...
both businesses to new premises. A building project was tabbed that would have cost ten million Swiss francs ($10.8m).

But things turned out differently following the discovery of the empty industrial building in Wabern. Stephan Ast and his team decided that it would be the perfect location: in fact, with 4,000m² (43,000ft²) of production space on one level, it could hardly be bettered. It also meant that the two firms could be united under a single roof in less than a year. So in August 2010 a new, high-powered media provider was created with around 80 employees and a broad range of pre-press and press services: photography and imaging, typography and layout, desktop publishing, database systems, editorial systems, web-to-print and promotional, art, magazine, digital and poster printing.

Alongside the two Rapida 106 five-colour coater presses Ast & Fischer has two smaller Heidelberg presses plus an HP Indigo 5500 digital machine, making it one of the most advanced printing plants in Switzerland. Other firms specialising in media activities – agencies, IT specialists, photographers and a bindery – have also relocated to the same business park. This has given rise to a cluster of independent companies.

Reliable providers

During this transitional period there were two constants: Print Assist and KBA. In 2004 decision-makers at Fischer AG für Data und Print started scouring the market for a suitable new litho press. As Daniel Troxler explains: “After Drupa we took a close look at offers from the various manufacturers and held a lot of exploratory discussions. In the end KBA proved to be the most convincing. Its presses were technologically outstanding, and the Rapida 105, which was new at that time, impressed us with its high output of 18,000 sheets per hour and short makereadies. We also found the team-based press production line in Radebeul extremely interesting, as was the general structure and flatter hierarchy at KBA. But above all KBA was able to offer clear perspectives and commitments for future developments. And, of course, we must not forget the selling skills of Peter J Rickenmann, managing director of Print Assist, who impressed us time and again with new concepts and input. He and his team analysed our requirements in much greater depth than other providers and came up with a truly customised solution. If some aspect did not run as well as he had promised, he and his team worked on it until the issue was resolved.”

The association that evolved has been maintained to the present day. Says Troxler: “Look, KBA’s not the only manufacturer producing well-functioning printing presses incorporating advanced technology. What counts is the total input, and that is where, in our minds, KBA and Print Assist are simply unbeatable!”

Rapid printing

In the course of time Ast & Fischer and its predecessors have operated a string of KBA B1 (40in) presses, starting with a Rapida 105 four-colour perfector and a Rapida 105 five-colour straight press. In 2008 a new Rapida 106 five-colour coater press with delivery extension was added to the press room. Following the merger and relocation to the new premises management decided to replace the two older Rapida 105s with a second Rapida 106 five-colour coater press with delivery extension. That was in summer last year. Daniel Troxler says: “We deliberately expanded our capacity with an eye to shifts and developments in the market. We wanted to utilise this capacity more efficiently and today we operate in a mixture of two and three shifts. If you take a look at the figures for the past few months, you’ll agree that we made the right decision.”

What are the biggest differences between the Rapida 105 and the Rapida 106? Troxler replies: “KBA would be able to give you a whole laundry list of improvements. Basically the two models’ image quality and printing speed are comparable. But if you look at total productivity, then the Rapida 106 is naturally way ahead. The Rapida 105 was the first in a totally new generation of high-performance presses, so there were one or two teething troubles. These were sorted out in due course and the presses proved to be exceptionally reliable, but press operators still needed quite a bit of skill to get the absolute maximum out of them. With the Rapida 106, on the other hand, that is no longer an issue, and thanks to the no-sidelay infeed the press is even easier to operate. The two new Rapidas went into multi-shift operation as soon as they had been installed, and without missing a beat. Sometimes it is uncanny just how reliably they run, considering the sheer volume of print we produce on them!”

For Daniel Troxler and Stephan Ast the two new Rapidas are the key to the future success of this young enterprise. Says Troxler: “These are high-powered medium-format presses with a cutting-edge design, they are simple to operate and can be embedded with ease in the production workflow. Even though we churn out large quantities of printed products on both the presses every day, we encounter surprisingly few problems. And we enjoy a close and cordial relationship with KBA.”
Print industry on growth curve in South America’s biggest market

Brisk demand in Brazil for cutting-edge press technology

With some 200 million inhabitants, Brazil is the world’s fifth-largest state both by area and by population, and is the biggest print market in Latin America. Over the past two years the Brazilian economy has attracted widespread attention with above-average growth rates, and press manufacturers are among those who have profited from the positive investment climate. This includes KBA, which in the recent past has booked a number of orders for both sheetfed and web offset presses. Three examples of medium- and large-format sheetfed press installations are given below.

Rapida 130a completes press fleet at Grafica Brasil

The ambitious growth strategy pursued by Brazil’s no. 1 large-format printer of high-end magazines and books, Grafica Brasil, has made it a showcase for both large- and medium-format Rapida sheetfed offset presses from KBA. In September last year its fourth KBA press – a Rapida 130a perfector – came on stream at the main plant in Brasilia. The company also has operations in São Paulo and Goiania.

Grafica’s biggest customers are the Brazilian government, publishing houses and advertising agencies. In recent years it has invested more than 30 million real (US$17.6m) in pre-press, print production and finishing.

Founded in 1966, Grafica Brasil installed its first KBA press, a four-colour Rapida 105, at its Brasilia plant in 2002. This was later joined by a Rapida 105 Universal coater press. Shortly after Drupa 2008 the company expanded into large format with the addition of a four-colour Rapida 130a. It was the first large-format press to come on stream in Brazil for many years.

Company president Romeu Jose de Oliveira has never regretted this decision: “The investment had a transformative impact on our development and our collaboration with KBA. We seek to apply the most advanced technology in every aspect of production, and to offer our customers the highest standards of quality and productivity. The press’s larger format and faster throughput doubled our capacity.”

Less than two years later Grafica Brasil added a second Rapida 130a, this time a two-backing-two perfector. The new press incorporates automated plate changers and washing systems, LWC- and board-printing capabilities, and rollers for low-alcohol printing. Other features include IR dryers, ErgoTronic ACR automatic registration, and a LogoTronic production management system to which the other Rapidas are also linked.

Optimised production

Head of production Romulo Gregorio da Silva says: “With the new press we can print multiple perfecting jobs in one pass, which slashes turnaround times. Our customers often take their time placing orders, then expect rapid fulfilment. With the two large-format Rapidas in triple-shift operation, we’ve got it nailed.”

De Oliveira adds: “Since Deltagraf Representacoes Comerciais took over there has been a big improvement in every aspect of after-sales service. We enjoy a close relationship with KBA and are proud to be one of the most advanced sheetfed printers in South America.”

Emibra and KBA rekindle an old flame

An old flame never dies – or so it would seem with KBA and Brazilian packaging printer Emibra Industria e Comercio de Embalagens. After switching to another German press brand a while ago following the installation of three Rapidas, in August last year the Suzano (São Paulo) based enterprise fired up a Rapida 105 six-colour coater press. Alongside the durability and high
output with which the medium-format Rapidas have made their mark both in Brazil and worldwide, what prompted the return to KBA was confidence in the support provided by its new agency, Deltagraf.

Founded in 1974 by two brothers, Walter and Joao Braghiroli, Emibra soon became a market leader in Brazil’s fast-growing packaging market. Its customer base includes global brands in the drugs, cosmetics, perfume, hygiene and soap industries, plus chemical, food and automotive manufacturers from nearer home. The Suzano facility pumps out some 600 tonnes (660 US tons) of top-quality packaging every month. It was only the second printing plant in Brazil to achieve ISO 9001/14001 and FSC accreditation.

The new 16,500sph Rapida 105 is part of a comprehensive production upgrade and has delivered some key benefits in the form of quality- and productivity-enhancing features that were lacking in its predecessors, for example DensiTronic Professional quality management. It stands on a 600mm (23.5in) plinth, has a 2.6m (102in) delivery extension and can handle a format length of 740mm (29in). Features include a CX board-printing capability, a coater with semi-automatic plate clamping, automatic plate changers, automated washing units for the blankets, rollers and impression cylinders, VariDry IR/thermal dryers and ErgoTronic ACR autoregistration.

Says Danilo Braghiroli: “Press start-up went without a hitch. The Rapida has enabled us to enhance product quality, expand our product range and turn jobs around much faster. Our renewed alliance with KBA is on a sound footing.”

New Rapida 105 for Innovapack Embalagens

Innovapack Embalagens has also fired up a new KBA Rapida 105 six-colour coater press at its plant in Itaquaquecetuba near São Paulo. Innovapack was created in 2002 by Argentina’s HZ Group, one of the biggest producers of packaging in South America. Since then it has established itself in the market as a producer of high-quality folding cartons. The time savings delivered by the new high-speed Rapida 105 – which joined a number of other KBA presses – will enable Innovapack to raise its profile still further.

Innovapack has made a name for itself in Brazil as a maker of high-quality cartonboard packaging. Director Juan Pino says: “The market is in flux, and to keep pace with growth we must invest in new kit to boost capacity and productivity, and enhance quality. The latest version of the Rapida 105 may not be that common in the Brazilian market, but we have total confidence in KBA’s outstanding international reputation as a manufacturer of sheetfed packaging presses. The competent advice and service concept provided by KBA’s new agency, Deltagraf, also played a major role, and in the end KBA was our first choice.”

Production head Alessandro Mattioli agrees: “The Rapida 105 is operated in three shifts and demonstrates its class both in short runs and ultra-long ones of up to half a million. Our press crews were given in-depth training and see the new Rapida as a stimulating challenge.”
Holzer Druck und Medien is a long-standing user of medium-format KBA sheetfed offset presses that will soon be celebrating its 125th anniversary. Situated in Weiler (Allgäu), in the triangle formed by Germany, Austria and Switzerland, this 110-employee company has deployed measuring and control technology on its entire press fleet since 1996. Its most recent press installation, a Rapida 106 four-backing four perfector, incorporates DriveTronic SPC simultaneous plate-changing, Flying JobChange and QualiTronic inline colorimetry and control. In an interview with KBA Report, production manager Alexander Ott discussed the benefits of quality control in practice.

**Alexander Ott, production manager at Holzer Druck und Medien**

### Inline colour control a major asset in assuring quality

KBA Report: When initiating the selection procedure that resulted in your signing up for the Rapida 106, what were your key criteria in terms of performance and capabilities?

**Alexander Ott:** For us, the most important aspect was press productivity. The Rapida is primarily used for eight-colour perfecting, where a high output is required across our entire spectrum of substrates. But we also use it to print top-of-the-range products like facsimiles, which are one of our company’s specialities. Over the past few years we have noticed a lot of advances in the Rapidas’ feeder and delivery technology. Here I am thinking mainly of the AirTronic delivery, with its new sheet brake. Today we can safely say that the new press has really delivered on the promise in terms of productivity, surpassing all our expectations.

Another of our requirements was that makeready times should be substantially shorter. With the new Rapida 106 they have been cut by half and now total an average of just 25 minutes. And if the follow-on signatures, formes or jobs are of a similar type and printed on similar stock, makereadies are shorter still. By way of explanation regarding the 25 minutes I should perhaps point out that our press operators have instructions not to simply launch the production run as soon as the densities have been set, but to compare the print with the plot and to check the pagination. Sometimes print acceptance follows a proof pull or entails customer approval directly at the Rapida, which naturally prolongs makeready.

A third criterion was the inline colour-control system itself. Our objective was to produce top-quality print from the first sheet to the last, and to maintain consistently uniform colour throughout the production run, irrespective of length.

KBA Report: How are such controls implemented at Holzer?

**Alexander Ott:** On the presses we use DensiTronic online controls we pull and measure individual sheets. On average that works out at three to five sheets per thousand during any one print run. This gives us a high level of confidence with regard to print quality, and provides documentation that we can show our customers. However, there is no comprehensive control and documentation system. With inline colour control we know for certain that all the sheets have been measured and that every tenth sheet is subjected to automatic on-press control. So there are no more returns or complaints relating to colour fluctuations, and customer satisfaction is high.

KBA Report: Time and cost savings have been achieved specifically from the use of our inline QualiTronic colour-control system?

**Alexander Ott:** If I wish to maintain certain quality standards – and that is something for which Holzer is renowned – then I must be capable of achieving these standards in a minimum of time. Which means first and foremost that with inline control makeready times must head south. In terms of cost it is difficult to distinguish between the gains delivered by the high level of press automation and those arising from quality control. Compared to...
online press controls, inline systems save around ten minutes per job. As a rule no further proofs are needed after the first one. On top of this, we have been able to reduce the makeready overcount by around 300 sheets for a standard print job. And last but not least, with the new press our average production output has increased by around 4,000 sheets per hour. Since being brought on stream in summer last year the Rapida has been in operation for 900 hours, and for 37 per cent of that time it was perfecting at 15,000 sheets per hour. Our average production output since August has been 13,700 sheets per hour, and in January it climbed to 14,200 sheets per hour. Since our press operators can rely on the press working to order, they can focus much more intently on print quality.

KBA Report: Are there any specific production parameters associated with printing facsimiles? What are the benefits of inline quality control for this type of work?

Alexander Ott: The quality specs for printing facsimiles are very high. Imagine the process roughly like this: when the job has been photographed digitally, we run off a proof which is then compared with the original. If any tiny detail has not been reproduced correctly, the lithographer intervenes and makes the appropriate corrections, for example in a small image element or area. Then during the subsequent production run we must make sure that there is no dot gain and that corrections do not multiply absurdum. But before we even think about printing the job, we do a trial run with a dampening test forme provided by Fogra. This is because the press must be set with one hundred per cent precision, right down to the minutest detail.

Whereas tonal tolerances under ISO offset standards are ±4 per cent, when reproducing facsimiles we must work with tolerances of just ±0.5 per cent. The time lag between the proof for a job and the print run can be as much as twelve months. During this period we must be able to guarantee that each new proof will be absolutely identical to the previous proof and, of course, to the print run. That means the same chromaticity coordinates, the same densities and a dot gain of no more than 0.5 per cent. Here, QualiTronic controls are a major asset.

KBA Report: How do you see the future of measuring and control technology, with specific reference to your own print production?

Alexander Ott: We wouldn’t dream of buying a press without the appropriate measuring and control technology. And we keep a close eye on any new advances launched on the market by individual manufacturers, to see whether they could be of benefit to us. At present the Professional version of QualiTronic – the one with inline colour control and sheet inspection – and System Brunner’s grey-balance measurement software are of particular interest. This last system not only balances the four colours but also scrutinises over 36 process parameters for every ink key.

We know just how vital measuring and control systems are, and see this demonstrated anew every day. We at Holzer Druck und Medien could no longer imagine working without them.

KBA Report: Alexander, thank you for this interview.

The interview was conducted by Martin Dänhardt
martin.danhardt@kba.com

Powering along: the highly automated Rapida 106 eight-colour press at Holzer incorporates QualiTronic colour control

Comparison of press makeready times with online and inline colour control at Holzer Druck und Medien

Copies per hour

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Production statistics for the Rapida 106: with the new press, average output in January climbed to 14,200 sheets per hour, an increase of 4,000 sheets

Contrasting Rapida 5+C, 6+C, 8 (4/4)

2009/10 business year

2010/11 business year

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Comparison of press makeready times with online and inline colour control at Holzer Druck und Medien
Performance enhancements through ongoing product development

Large-format Rapidas – market leaders and ever more powerful

Over the past few years the performance of our large-format Rapidas has been enhanced with the addition of numerous new features and technological refinements, without this being reflected in a change of name. Ongoing product development to address shifts and emerging demands in the commercial, book, display and packaging sectors has shortened makeready times and improved the productivity, flexibility and quality of the world-beating litho presses built at our Radebeul plant. And users have long appreciated the big Rapidas’ many unique features.

Since the last Drupa in May 2008 alone, the list of innovations in the Rapida 130-162a series has lengthened considerably. It embraces the entire press, from the feeder through the printing and coating units to the delivery, and includes a raft of new features for inline colour measurement, quality control and emissions reduction. Here is an overview of the key advances:

- Fast navigation via short and sharp touch-screen commands
- ASP – automatic suction-ring positioning in the delivery
- New-design delivery for Rapida 142 perfectors
- Jackets for a high print quality in perfecting mode
- Bigger perfecting format
- Automatic coating-forme change
- Viscosity-based control of coating pumps
- Integration of coating feed and cleaning controls in ErgoTronic console
- 50% lower energy consumption with KBA VariDry BLUE dryers
- Reduction in washing times with CleanTronic Synchro
- QualiTronic inline colour measurement and control
- DensiTronic PDF scanner for comparing the printed sheet with the original PDF

Smaller footprint and reduced weight deliver cash savings

A major advantage of our big Rapidas over other press brands, but one that is often overlooked when new investments are announced, is their more compact yet exceptionally robust design. Space savings of as much as 20 per cent work their way through to machine overheads, a reduction of one third in press weight is reflected in the cost of the foundation. And when outgoings such as these represent money that must first be earned, the benefits are clear.

Presettable feeder...

Dedicated drives for the moveable components at the feeder promote a smooth press run and reduce maintenance input for abrasion-prone subassemblies and gears and, not least, manual setting work during job changes. The KBA feeder can be preset 100 per cent from the console. This, too, is a feature that is unique to our large-format Rapidas.

...and remotely adjustable airstream sheet guides

Presettablity is also the watchword for the new venturi airstream sheet guidance system between the printing units: optimum sheet transport can now be set in advance from the ErgoTronic console. The pack-
Ultra-short washing times

When it comes to washing, our big Rapidas have made huge advances in terms of speed and cleanliness. A “print clean” function – for which no more than twenty sheets are required – trims a full sixty seconds off the washing times for the plate and blanket cylinders by removing most of the ink from the cylinders.

CleanTronic washing systems are available in three different versions:
- CleanTronic: washes the impression cylinder, blanket cylinder and rollers
- CleanTronic Multi: suitable for both conventional and UV print production
- CleanTronic Synchro: washes simultaneously with two bars.

The two bars in the Synchro version can be used individually to wash the blanket and impression cylinders simultaneously or in tandem to clean the blanket cylinder much faster. Washing the blanket and impression cylinders simultaneously is of greatest benefit to commercial printers whose production routine entails short runs and fast job changes. Washing times can be cut by as much as fifty per cent. The ability to clean blanket cylinders with two bars appeals more to packaging printers whose production routine entails short runs and fast job changes.

age includes air-blasts upstream of the printing zone, which prevent the sheets from hitting the stops with force; suction units in front of the impression cylinder; mechanical guide bars for standard and heavy cartonboard; and a suction box beneath the transfer drums. Separate drum shells are no longer necessary. When set correctly, the sheets are conveyed between the drum and the blower plates with no contact whatsoever.

We have also substantially increased the speed of our automatic plate-changing systems. Plates are changed in three overlapping phases. As a result total changing time has been cut to less than three minutes – including zero positioning of the register. Plate changes on other makes of press take a minimum of three minutes.

Exceptionally fast changes of coating forms

Another unique feature of our large-format Rapidas is that the coating formses are changed semi-automatically. This takes a maximum of two minutes, which compared to other systems delivers a minimum time saving of 33 per cent. What is the point in having a coater press with high-speed plate changing, if the time gain is lost when the coating formses are changed? The same argument applies when changing the anilox roller in the coater. On our big Rapidas this takes no more than two minutes thirty seconds – and with very little manual effort, thanks to an automated hoist. And, of course, all coating and drying processes are controlled and monitored from the ErgoTronic console. There are no remote control desks at the drying cabinets or coating feed systems. This is something that press crews fully appreciate.

The economic and environmental benefits of our groundbreaking VariDryBLUE drying system have already been described in detail on pages 22 and 23 of KBA Report 36.

Quality control par excellence

Our big Rapidas also redefine the benchmark when it comes to in-line quality control. Our on-press QualiTronic colour-control system is available for our entire range of large-format models. Every sheet is scanned by a camera positioned above the final impression cylinder on straight-on presses or before and after sheet turning on perfec tors, and the colour density automatically measured. If necessary the closed-loop system automatically adjusts the colour on every tenth sheet. The result is extraordinarily fast dynamic control. After 150 to 200 sheets the system has achieved the specified target densities and maintains them until the end of the print run. Documentation software supplied free of charge allows a quality log to be generated for the customer – a service that is increasingly popular.

Our QualiTronic inline sheet-inspection system can be expanded without positioning an additional measuring device in a printing unit. And then there is ErgoTronic ACR, which automatically sets and adjusts sidelay, circumferential and diagonal register.

DensiTronic PDF is another module with no equivalent on the market. The system allows the printed sheet to be compared with the original PDF. It can be used to check texts (eg foreign languages), individual blanks, die-cutting and guillotine marks, and colour or ink flaws (complete with co-exposed lint or other contamination).

The feeders for our large-format Rapidas are 100 per cent presettable

CleanTronic Synchro: synchronised washing cycles for the blanket and impression cylinders (left) and simultaneous washing of the blanket cylinders (right)
Alderson Printing Company is the latest blue-chip UK print and communications organisation to switch to Rapida 106 press technology to regenerate margins in its sheetfed commercial print operation and drive future expansion. Installed over the year-end break, Alderson’s new five-colour B1 Rapida with coater joined one large- and one superlarge-format Rapida, replacing a six-colour Heidelberg CD immediately and another press to follow in the near future.

Growth plans

The Rapida’s productivity benefits are achieved through improvements which deliver saleable sheets with less run-up waste and offer complete on-press quality assurance to allow maximum benefit from quicker makereadies and higher production speeds. The new Rapida 106 was supplied complete with alcohol reduction, fully automatic plate change and SIS (sensoric sideguide-free infeed system). It also has 2400mm (95in) extended delivery, CIP3 and QuaITronic Professional and offers a significant saving in power consumption.

Surrey-based Alderson Print Group was established by managing director Peter Alderson more than fifty years ago with his brother Ron. “In the last few years we have invested heavily in plant to complete our unique ‘all on one site’ selling proposition,” explains Mr Alderson. “The primary reason for any new investment is to keep ahead of the field with the latest technology. We take ISO colour and management standards very seriously at Alderson’s and the QuaITronic element of this package is crucial to us; it is essential that we improve efficiencies without compromising on quality.”

Every opportunity was taken to identify the most market-responsive equipment, adds Pete Alderson: “We carried out a great deal of research before deciding on the KBA and, while the price was competitive to the rest of the market, we felt it out-performed all the other presses. We were very impressed with the demonstrations at Ipex and even more so in the manufacturing facility in Germany.”

KBA’s technology was pivotal in the decision-making process, he says: “For us, the total automation was a key feature – as was the on-press colour management system which integrated with our own, fitting in with our high quality standards. We are aware that, while you can always squeeze life out of an aging press, there comes a point at which the new-generation machines give you more in terms of quality and efficiency, and the Rapida 106 gives us most.”

As for the operational results: “It will definitely have an impact on production efficiencies and turn around times, which adds up to a more competitive and faster service for our customers,” says Pete Alderson. “This is critical in times when they have tremendous pressures placed upon them to get maximum value from their budgets. Our commitment to new investment in these difficult financial times will help our strategy for new business development come to fruition.”

The new Rapida 106 is Alderson’s third KBA press in as many years: “It is clear that KBA believe in their products and this is shown by the enthusiasm of their staff, from sales to support,” explains Peter Alderson. “Working with KBA feels more of a partnership. The quality of the press speaks for itself.”

The new KBA B1 press was preceded by a large-format five-colour Rapida 162 and a recently commissioned four-colour Rapida 205 VLF press in the Alderson Point of Sale division. The KBA triple offering delivers one of the industry’s most comprehensive range of products, including conventional and UV inks and a broad substrate range.

Corporate profile

Established in 1963 by brothers Peter and Ronald Alderson, Alderson Print Group is now one of the UK’s leading printing service organisations. Its operation includes dedicated web offset, sheetfed litho, digital printing, point of sales and specialist finishing divisions, turning over more than £25m ($40m) per year and employing a staff of 250 at its West Molesey site. Although ‘ink on paper’ is clearly at the heart of what they do, their mission is to ensure that their service performance hits exceptional standards and they have built their customer base, including some of the UK’s biggest household names, on this experience.

Vic Fletcher
cknapp@kba-uk.com
Fuchs-Druck is a family business founded in 1968 by Erich Fuchs. His son Klaus, who took over as managing director in 2005, believes that regular investment in new production kit is essential to stay abreast of customer demand. He says “I am delighted at Josef’s success and the publicity it has brought the company. Since there are only 26 staff, training is not a part of the established routine, so I am particularly proud of the fact that Josef achieved such an outstanding result.” For Fuchs, the company’s focus on quality is bearing fruit.

New Rapida 105 for broad product spectrum
Josef Haltmaier is planning to remain with the firm and take a master’s certificate later on. One reason he decided to stay on was the fact that at the end of December and beginning of January Fuchs-Druck installed its fourth medium-format KBA press in total but the second in the present fleet. It is a five-colour Rapida 105 with coater and delivery extension plus capabilities for printing substrates ranging from 40gsm LW paper (>30lb book) to covers and 1.2mm (48pt) board. Such flexibility is vital: Fuchs-Druck prints packaging and patient information leaflets along with commercials, books, brochures, financial reports and calendars.

The new press boasts inking-unit temperature control, washing units for the blankets, rollers and impression cylinders, and a non-stop roller facility. The coater has quick-action plate clamps plus a pumping and cleaning system controllable from the console. Quality is monitored and controlled via DensiTronic Professional, while a LogoTronic network connects all the Rapidas with each other and with the in-house management information system.

A qualified printer who has operated a lot of different presses, Klaus Fuchs is a longstanding and enthusiastic user of Rapidas. “In my experience KBA’s high-performance B1 presses are built to last and are much more reliable than other models. Our first Rapida, a 104, printed more than 200 million sheets – with not a single misregister or other problem.”

Top-notch training on Rapida presses
Josef Haltmaier, an apprentice at Fuchs-Druck in Miesbach, Germany, carried off the title of state and national best in his final exams to qualify as an offset printer. He was presented with his certificate by the Bavarian minister-president, Horst Seehofer, and the president of the German Confederation of Skilled Crafts, Otto Kentzler. Haltmaier trained in-house on a two-colour Rapida B1 (41in) perfector press.
CRP achieves litho goals with KBA

‘Turnkey solution’ for packaging & display leader

The major press investment announced by CRP Print & Packaging Group last August was commissioned at the end of the year with flying colours following a copybook installation by KBA at the group’s Corby, Northamptonshire, site.

Logical move into offset

KBA was awarded the contract following a visit by CRP to Ipex, where the manufacturer’s commitment to customer support was considered an essential element alongside the superior quality control and performance parameters of the higher performance Rapida press. “Making this investment was a natural step,” says CRP operations director Tom Lindop. “We already had on-site high-speed digital and flexo printing technologies but felt that this was the right time to add litho print so we could continue to develop our position as a major player within the European decorative packaging market.”

Support success

From the outset KBA’s focus was not just on the press installation, explains Lindop: “KBA helped us with the implementation of the whole litho process from pre-press to MIS. They introduced us to other key partners along the way – such as Kodak for CTP – and that helped us to be confident in the choices we had made and ensured that everything works together to create the optimum operating conditions. We wanted a turnkey solution to ensure everything was right from the very beginning.”

KBA UK director of consumables operations, Andy Pang, supported CRP throughout the commissioning of their new Rapida. He explains: “I was involved from day one – from placing adverts to find the right people to run the press, addressing and matching the CTP, specifying and testing the press consumables to commissioning the press and helping achieve the highest performance possible.”

A print consultant provided support throughout the implementation process. “Both he and Andy played vital roles in helping us develop and demonstrate the benefits that this new technology can now offer our customers, creating a highly flexible service offering that allows our clients to respond quickly to their market demands,” says Lindop.

CRP’s unit Rapida 162a is housed in a dedicated BRC food contact press hall at the group’s Corby site. It includes the UK’s first VariDryBLUE system of IR/hot air dryers, which was launched at Ipex and was specifically engineered to dry high-gloss coatings to a superior quality while reducing power consumption by as much as 50 per cent – even at high production speeds. The press also features the QualiTronic inline detection system and DensiTronic Professional, which measures ink densities and makes any subsequent adjustment recommendations for the individual inking units.

The £20m ($32.2m) turnover decorative products group counts Constellation, P&G and Kraft Foods among its major clientele. Its pre-printing business was the first in Europe to attain FSC and PEFC accreditation and its production team, which already operates to ISO 9001, will work with KBA and pre-press partner Kodak to achieve the ISO 12647-2 colour consistency standard. CRP is an industry award winner and received coveted European and UK POPAI awards last year along with UK design team of the year.

Pang will remain on hand following the press’s commissioning: “I will continue to work with CRP over the coming months to help them utilise the press to its full capabilities. I will also guide them in how the press can help CRP better meet the diverse needs of its clients. For example the double coater allows two processes to be added in one pass, saving time and energy. It also enables brand owners to be more creative with their products.”

Christian Knapp cknapp@kba-uk.com
Two Austrian commercial printers have placed orders for web presses from KBA. Southern Austria’s sole web offset printer, a-PRINT Bogen- und Rollenoffset Druck in Klagenfurt am Wörthersee, is expanding its press fleet with a 48pp Compacta 618, while Niederösterreichische Pressehaus Druck- und Verlagsgesellschaft (NÖP) in St. Pölten signed up for our new 16pp C16.

C16 for industry major NÖP

Dating back to 1874, in the course of its long history NÖP has established a name for itself in the Austrian market with the printing and publishing of newspapers and books. A controlling share in the company is held by the Bishopric of St. Pölten.

In 1984 NÖP expanded into commercial web offset with a Koenig & Bauer Compacta. Today NP Druck, its ISO 12647-2-accredited commercial operation, prints catalogues, brochures, flyers, magazines and journals in medium to multimillion runs for prominent industrial enterprises, retailers and service providers. “We print over 200 periodical titles, and are planning to add more,” says engineer and managing director Gerhard Schmidrathner. NP Druck also offers customers a complete service encompassing address labelling and subscription management. A Rapida 105 litho press installed in 2005 has impressed the firm with its high output. In April 2010 NP

Druck became the first printer in the country to be awarded the Austrian Ecolabel for its web, sheetfed and newspaper production processes.

“We expect magazines and journals to rebound. While many circulations will shrink, and there will be greater specialisation, the demand for rapid turnaround and high quality will be as strong as ever,” declares Johann Peter Jordan, head of sales and marketing. “In terms of technology, we believe the key to future success lies in maximising automation in order to minimise changeover times when printing different products, to cut waste, raise productivity and reduce maintenance input. One of the main benefits of the new press is that it will make short-run magazine production even more efficient,” says Schmidrathner.

The press for NÖP, which will go live this autumn, will have a cylinder circumference of 620mm (24.4in) and a maximum web width of 1,000mm (39.37in). Although the C16 is available with a maximum rated output of 65,000cph, NÖP opted for the 55,000cph version since it will mainly be used for short-run work.

The C16 delivers significant makeready benefits over earlier models by virtue of its high-speed automatic plate changing in tandem with EasyTronic for fast, low-waste press start-up and run-down. The C16’s advanced level of automation embraces reel logistics with Patras A; a Pastomat C50 reelstand; low-maintenance and energy-saving RollerTronic roller locks; a new rapid-conversion P3 folder with automatic copy control in the quarterfold; and LogoTronic Professional job and press management. Other features include colour measurement and control, cut-off register control, a gluing and softening unit and a sheeter that allows the press to handle stock weighing over 200gsm (128lbs).

Compacta 618 for a-PRINT

The high-performance, high-automation 48pp Compacta 618 for a-PRINT is scheduled to come on stream this coming summer. It will be engineered for a cylinder circumference of 1,240mm (48.8in), a maximum web width of 1,450mm (57in) and a maximum speed of 45,0000iph. It, too, will be configured with a Pastomat reel-stand embedded in a Patras A automated reel-transport system, and RollerTronic automatic roller locks, which are a new feature in commercial web offset. They not only eliminate time-consuming roller adjustment but also reduce roller abrasion and energy consumption. Other features common to the press for NÖP are automatic colorimetric and colour-register control, and EasyTronic facilitated start-up and run-down.

The Compacta 618’s heavy-duty P5 pin folder and KBA section stitcher support a wide choice of production options at web speeds of up to 15.5mps (3,051fpm). The company’s existing, Compacta 215 will be integrated in the new Compacta’s LogoTronic Professional production management system for job scheduling, press presetting, machine- and production-data capture.

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The perfect 16pp press for frequent, rapid job changes

On 26 November last year 150-plus print professionals from Europe and China gathered at L.N. Schafferth Druckmedien in Geldern, Germany, for an open house promoting the technological and economic benefits of our new 16pp C16. Since coming on stream this highly automated 65,000iph web press has routinely demonstrated its ability to pump out multiple short-run magazine titles with a minimum of makeready.

Following the opening address by joint managing director Dirk Devers his fellow md Dirk Alten provided a brief profile of the 250-year-old company, which is headed today by Dr Alex and Klaus Schafferth and their respective families, together with publishing houses Deutscher Ärzte-Verlag in Cologne and Rheinische Post Verlagsgesellschaft in Düsseldorf. The 300 or so staff at L.N. Schafferth DruckMedien produce around 180 magazine titles plus diverse catalogues and brochures, generating annual sales of some €44m ($58m). A second business unit, L.N. Schafferth Neue Medien, has ten employees and annual sales of €1m ($1.32m). The one 48pp and two 16pp web presses consume approximately 25,500t (28,000 US tons) of paper per year, entailing 45 million adhesive binding and 50 million stitching and addressing sequences. During the same period the two 16pp press lines print approximately 6,000 jobs averaging 36,000 copies. Ten makereadies and 15 changeovers are the daily norm. Schafferth’s commitment to conserving the environment is reflected in its FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) and PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes) accreditation.

Addressing present-day challenges
Speaking on behalf of KBA, deputy president Claus Bolza-Schünemann declared: “The 16pp C16 is KBA’s response to the challenges currently confronting printers in the commercial and magazine sectors. Diminishing print runs, demands for enhanced product quality and diversity, price constraints and rapid turnaround all underscore a need for greater product flexibility and faster job changes. In a fragmented market, faster, wider presses for up to 96 pages A4 are not always the solution – in fact they are often the problem. This was KBA’s experience many years ago in the publica- tion gravure sector.”

The press demonstration gave a clear idea of the C16’s performance and flexibility, from ultrashort makeready to sixty-second plate changes – the fastest in the
The C16 is based on the proven technology of the Compacta 215, with its ease of operation and reliability, and the innovative features of the Compacta 217, with its advanced automation, superb print quality, high production speed and ability to handle stock weighing up to 250gsm (160lbs). The result is a totally new press engineered for cost-effective, ergonomic and efficient operation, a minimum of maintenance from the reelstand to the folder, and incorporating intelligent automation with an array of new automation modules.

Each printing unit is driven by two motors, which reduce brak- ing and accelerating forces and hence mechanical abrasion on components. This means less maintenance, greater reliability and a longer life. Blanket plates, minigaps and the elimination of bearer rings – a feature exclusive to KBA since 1997 – also extend the service life of the driving components, while at the same time reducing energy consumption, abrasion and maintenance input. The printing units are water-cooled for consistency and stability during long production runs.

**Bridging the divide between web offset and digital**

But what most impressed those present was RollerTronic, another feature unique to KBA. An innovative “printer-friendly” roller bearing, RollerTronic allows all the inking rollers to be set automatically and precisely in less than two minutes, eliminating the need for manual setting. Reduced maintenance and longer intervals between roller recoatings deliver cash savings.

Attendants were unanimous in voting the C16 the press of the future – a blend of new and proven features and intelligent innovation. According to Joseph Marsanasco, general manager of major Italian print enterprise Rotolito Lombarda, where a digital web press is installed, the C16 could bridge the divide between web offset and digital. L.N. Schaffrath occasionally uses the C16 to print typical litho jobs of 10,000 copies or less.

**New Rapida 106 to join the retinue**

L.N. Schaffrath works closely with print buyers, offering them the use of its editorial systems, individually adapted image and ad databases of full-scale subscription service. The company’s strengths lie in its dual business of print and new media which is a response to ongoing structural changes in the media landscape.

Head of technology Rudolf Sturme says: “Long runs are relatively rare, but when we print them the C16’s speed of 65,000 impressions per hour is a big advantage. However, we generally print more medium and short runs, where the short makeready times and reduced manning levels are the biggest benefits.” Despite some minor teething problems, which are par for the course with beta installations, the overall verdict was so positive that the company has since placed an order for a Rapida 106 five-colour B1 (41in) sheetfed press with coater.

**Eight-minute job change**

KBA’s head of web press technology Patrick Schnepppe listed the C16’s many operational benefits. These include automated plate changing in less than one minute and a complete job change – including a change of stock and conversion to an adhesive-bound 16-page product – in around eight minutes. EasyTronic pushbutton speed reduction from the standard minimum of 12,000ipm during automatic run-up to just 6,000ipm cuts waste to well below 1,000 copies, while automated roller locks reduce maintenance input and roller abrasion. Dedicated AC drives for each printing couple (two per unit) eliminate the need for drives, clutches and a mechanical circumferential register, making press run much smoother and more energy-efficient. Minigaps and blanket plates help optimise print quality, as do the autoconvertible superstructure and folder with just one quarterfold for speeds up to 65,000ipm. A press demonstration with a complete job change, hosted by Patrick Schnepppe and product manager Hubert Kistner, compellingly confirmed Schnepppe’s figures for makeready and waste. Following conversion from a normal to an adhesive-bound and ready-trimmed 16-page product, start-up waste was around 700 copies.
Monochrome book printing is a relatively stable business and was less affected than other print sectors by the sudden slump in demand that followed the economic recession. In a market typically driven by supply, fast delivery is a decisive factor. In order to avoid cost-intensive warehousing of paperbacks and other books, only a limited number are printed at any one time (at present the average is around 8,000 copies with 320 pages; previously it was 18,000 copies). If a title proves to be a bestseller larger runs of up to 150,000 copies must be printed overnight. That is one reason why production in this sector of the book market has not shifted wholesale to Asia, as full-colour books have. Colour books are generally printed to order and have much longer lead times. In view of the rapid turnaround demanded for mono books, fast makereadies and job changes play a major role, in conjunction with efficient, high-output finishing capabilities. The Commander CT-B (B = book) is engineered specifically for such a scenario.

Imprinter cuts makeready time virtually zero

La Flêche (Département La Sarthe), where Brodard & Taupin and the world’s first Commander CT for book printing are located, is approximately 250km (156 miles) southwest of Paris. The Commander CT-B that came on stream there in January this year was custom-configured for monochrome book production. It has a half-height tower with just two stacked printing units (four couples) and an imprinting capability. Since it is possible to carry out flying job changes in one-over-one production and the press does not have to be brought to a halt for a normal change of signature (ie with no change of paper), makeready time is virtually zero. Alongside valuable time gains, flying changes also deliver substantial savings in waste compared to traditional book presses. Both these benefits reduce production costs.

A maximum web width of 1,480mm (58.25in) allows the Commander CT-B to output as many as 35,000 book sections per hour in straight mode. The maximum possible number of pages per hour in the most common range of formats is thus much higher than with standard book presses.

The press is equipped with PlateTronic automatic plate changers, which enable the plates for the next job to be mounted while the current job is still being printed. CleanTronic blanket washing, automatic colour and cut-off register controls and other automation modules boost productivity and quality even further. A Patras A automated paper-logistics system loads the reels automatically onto the Pastomat CL reelstand.

Long-grain production a big advantage

The infra-red dryer is another unusual feature. To improve energy efficiency its capacity can be adjusted to production specifics such as a narrower web. The downstream chill-roller assembly reduces the temperature of the paper from over 60°C to below 30°C (140° to 86°F), thus eliminating the risk of cockling which can cause problems in the finishing section and impair the quality of the end product. The design of the superstructure originated in publication rotogravure. The ribbons are turned 90 degrees over individual turner bars before entering the KBA book folder, where they are processed via the quarterfold (chopper fold) to create two-up copies. The press is controlled from a KBA ErgoTronic console complete with LogoTronic press presetting system.

In response to an emerging demand from CPI’s publishing customers for books — particularly...
thick books – that lie flat more easily when open, the new Commander CT press even supports long-grain production, where the paper fibres run parallel to the spine in both collect and non-collect mode.

When placing the order for the press in spring last year, CPI group president Pierre-François Catté commented: “As the European market leader in book printing we owe it to our customers to innovate on an ongoing basis. Our investment in this extensively customised and highly productive web press represents a major technological advance and sharpens our competitiveness.” The Commander CT-B’s performance to date indicates that his high expectations are well on the way to being fulfilled.

Successful start
The automated plate-changing system and the imprinter both function satisfactorily, as does the interface to the downstream Muller Martini post-press systems, which control the changing cycles. The press delivers a fine print quality at maximum speed. Waste rates during start-up and flying changes with the imprinter are even below the low levels specified. One peculiarity of this press configuration is that a “web lead master button” allows production to be switched between two web leads. One lead follows the “IR” route, with an automated webbing-up chain running at a speed of 40 metres (131 feet) per minute guiding the web from the reelstand through the printing unit, the IR dryer and chill-roller group to the turner bars in less than two minutes. The other lead follows the “coldset” route, guiding the web directly from the printing unit to the turner bars via automated diverters. Such a capability is an absolute first in this sector.

To address diverse market demands relating to finishing options and quality, the folder offers a choice of three different types of perforation: remotely adjustable notch binding, a length perforation and a special KBA interlocking perforation. These last two can be activated and deactivated on the fly. Even at web speeds just shy of 10mps (1,968fpm) the IR-dried copies pass through the folder without smearing, while coldset products have also lived up to the company’s high expectations. At present the press crew is still on the learning and optimising curve that is normal with a new installation. The exceptionally short plate-changing cycles, in particular, demand precision and skill. Some tweaking is still required to the blanket-washing programs, the run-up and run-down sequences and the colour and dampening curves for certain types of product and paper types, and the values must be stored for repeat runs. Here and there a few minor improvements are being made in production methodology with the assistance of KBA instructors and technicians. As the saying goes, practice makes perfect, and this is obviously the case in La Flèche, since the Commander CT-B has since been put into three-shift operation.

Offset still competitive for monochrome paperbacks
The CPI group was founded in 1996. In 2009 the European market leader generated sales of €480m ($647.5m) on an output of some 500 million monochrome books. CPI co-operates with over 2,000 publishers, among them the top European names. It runs 17 printing plants, including Brodard & Taupin and Firmin-Didot in France, Clausen & Bosse in Germany, Koninklijke Wohrmann in the Netherlands and Mackays in England.

In total, CPI’s production plants have more than one hundred sheetfed, web offset and digital printing presses at their disposal. Equipment includes an array of dedicated monochrome book presses from Timson and Comeran as well as large-format Rapida sheetfed offset presses. Some time ago CPI purchased a number of custom-developed Hewlett Packard inkjet web presses. The fact that it signed up for the Commander CT at roughly the same time indicates that, for mono book production, modern offset technology still delivers a number of benefits in terms of cost, productivity and efficiency.

Run length determines which process is used
From the economic viewpoint, the key criterion when deciding whether to print on an offset or a digital press is the run length. Toner-based systems are generally used for runs of up to 500 copies, digital inkjet for 500 to around 3,000 copies and web offset for everything above that. The higher the net output and the lower the per-copy costs of a web offset press for shorter runs, the more competitive it is with monochrome digital print production. In addition to makeready times, the comparative competitiveness of the two processes naturally depends on the level of waste, the maintenance input required and the cost of the consumables used (paper, ink and toner). Judged by these criteria, the Commander CT-B has the edge in many respects. KBA has plenty of experience with different technologies for printing books and we look forward to working closely with CPI in the future.

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Interview with Matthias Tietz, Rheinisch-Bergische Druckerei

“We wanted two commercial presses that could also print newspapers”

In terms of quality, the highly automated waterless KBA Cortina can deliver a much higher standard than a conventional newspaper press. In fact it could be called a newscom press, since its technology positions it somewhere between newspaper and commercial levels of capability, thus enabling it to be used for an array of additional work. This is what those at the helm of German media group Rheinische Post, and Matthias Tietz, managing director of Rheinisch-Bergische Druckerei (RBD) in Düsseldorf, had in mind when they decided to invest in two Cortina press lines. The presses went live in June last year and Gerd Bergmann, deputy editor of trade magazine Deutscher Drucker, spoke to Matthias Tietz a few months later to see how they were shaping up.

Bergmann: Matthias, following the decision in favour of the Cortina, your associate Clemens Bauer, chief executive of the Rheinische Post media group, said that the aim was to gain a competitive advantage. In what sectors did Rheinische Post and Rheinisch-Bergische Druckerei anticipate realising this advantage?

Tietz: For the Rheinische Post the transition has meant that five machines can now print all our titles on standard newsprint using 52lpc screens. But in addition to our daily titles, with the Cortina we can even print the special products designed by our ad department – still on standard newsprint, but in finer screens of 60 or 70lpc. That naturally gives us a much better image and ad quality. And because the press can handle multiple formats, we can run these products as broadsheets or folded broadsheets, tabloids or folded tabloids or even, since we don’t change the cut-off, as broadsheets combined with tabloids. That gives us a whole bundle of new formats.

Bergmann: How do you rate your company’s potential in the semi-commercial market?

Tietz: Here we must switch the focus from the Rheinische Post to the printing plant, which is a profit centre within the group. For the printshop the new presses are the passport to a totally new line of business. With the KBA Cortina we can take on jobs that were previously the purview of heatset. In fact, merely by changing the type of paper used we can deliver a quality that closely approaches heatset. We soon booked our first ex-heatset job – a freesheet – and the publisher could not be more delighted with the quality of the product we printed for him. The lower end of heatset, is how I would describe it. A second sector, for me, is web printing in general, which basically means brochures. While we had prior experience of printing traditional brochures designed for newsprint, the presses allowed us to move up to a higher level, for example to simple furniture brochures. We can also offer our customers catalogue printing. There are countless markets in the region where local catalogues are printed in runs of 50,000, 100,000 or 150,000 copies. Customers can select the quality level via the paper. It is the standard of quality that we have found in commercial web offset – and that we can easily deliver today. We are even venturing into gravure territory. At present we are challenging every boundary. And the printing process is no more costly than for newspapers.

Bergmann: Rheinisch-Bergische Druckerei has had a sales department for some time now…

Tietz: Yes, it’s been in existence for eighteen months, though we have been active in the semi-commercial market for longer than that. We start at runs of 10,000 copies and are happy to print entire circulations, preferably up to 400,000 or 500,000 copies. Any bigger and we can’t usually complete them in a single day. It’s hard to quote a competitive price for smaller circulations printed in conventional coldset. But even here the Cortina has helped by slashing production costs and waste levels.

Bergmann: What is the current customer structure at RBD Düsseldorf?

Tietz: Back in 2000, customer contracts accounted for seven per cent of our total output. At the end of
last year our preliminary estimates indicated 40 per cent “other” and only 60 per cent newspapers.

Bergmann: RBD had the opportunity to switch to waterless offset back in 2006/2007.

Tietz: Our remit was to expand the printshop into an industrial operation. And we said we’d only buy technology which was proven in the marketplace. At that time, and we make no bones about it, we considered the Cortina to be insufficiently mature for our purposes. We are delighted that there are still a few printers, such as our colleagues in Freiburg, who approach such issues from a different perspective. At the end of 2008 we judged that the Cortina’s industrial credentials were well up to the standard we had envisaged.

Bergmann: What were your specifications with regard to the new press?

Tietz: We told both KBA and its competitors that we were planning to purchase two 32-page presses. And that our preference was for two commercial presses which were capable of printing newspapers. In other words, we approached the whole subject from a different angle, not via newspaper production technology. The presses also had to offer additional benefits for our newspaper department, quite simply by enhancing and expanding our product palette. At the same time they had to provide us with the wherewithal to enter totally new markets.

One issue was format variability. Then we said we wanted much better print tolerances, which we discussed at length and have since achieved: tolerance ranges are now much better and tighter. If I want to move into a market with more commercial products, I need commercial-standard tolerances. I need the superior regulating ability of Oil colour control. Here, too, we have made substantial advances beyond previous standards. And we said, above all we must be able to handle a much broader range of stock weights: around 80 grams, which we can now use for copies with up to 48 pages, and 120 grams, which we use for copies with up to 16 pages. Those were our main specifications. Of course, we also made it abundantly clear that we wanted to print coated stock for contract work. This, without a doubt, is a capability that is unique to KBA.

Bergmann: Now you have a press constellation at your company that includes a conventional wet offset press, in the shape of a KBA Commander, as well as the KBA Cortina. And according to some comments you made earlier, the Cortina sets certain quality benchmarks. Do you split the workflow or can you “mix and match”?

Tietz: If you’re running a newspaper printing plant and you install a Cortina, then for your newspaper production you must accept a slightly lower standard of quality than is actually possible with the Cortina. We therefore print our newspapers on the Cortina in a 52lpc screen. However, we do print on the same stock. Naturally you can see the difference in image quality, because the pictures develop a slight gloss, even on standard newsprint. You can also see the difference in the fonts, because they are a bit thinner than with the same imaging data on the Commander. But if you were to place a copy before an observant reader, he would judge the optimum offset print quality and the slightly reduced Cortina print quality to be of an equal standard. And for all other jobs we run the Cortina in precise accordance with customer specifications.

Bergmann: Earlier on you also mentioned format variability, with the implication of double-spread capabilities. The Cortina here in Düsseldorf is the first to feature KBA’s new-generation plate-changing system with magazines, which naturally makes handling bigger plates that much easier.

Tietz: Precisely. With this you can switch between single plates and double-spread plates. That is absolutely brilliant. During RP production we run nine editions on each of the two presses. With five minutes scheduled changeover time.

Bergmann: Automatic plate changing is often mentioned when comparing systems. Does the magazine system have any drawbacks?

Tietz: You mustn’t make the mistake of drawing a direct comparison between the plate-changing systems offered by KBA and manroland. Instead you must ask yourself how they fulfil their functions. And I must honestly say, because we scrutinised the other system when we were assessing the press: both concepts are ingenious. But ingenious in themselves. With the KBA Cortina you can easily accept the fact that the press is closed on the side the plate should be inserted, because you can slide the two halves of the tower apart for service work. The magazine system, the lifts – our press operators have really come to appreciate them.

Bergmann: So automatic plate change – is that a must-have?

Tietz: If, like us, you have a single operator running a 32-page press from the console, that’s where the efficiency gains are made. Whether to have a helper or a robot loading plates is something every printer must decide for himself. Having said that, with plate changers you can cut as much as 60 per cent off routine makeready times. For newspaper printers with small individual circulations – our paid-for titles have a total circulation of 404,000 copies, but split among 31 editions – the savings are easy to calculate: you can spend 40 or even 50 per cent of the night with the presses standing still and being made ready.

Bergmann: Which means that makeready accounts for almost 50 per cent of total production time.

Tietz: With the Cortina it’s reduced to around 15 per cent.

Bergmann: In 2009 KBA and Beil launched PlateTrans, an automated plate-logistics system. Would that be an option for your company?

Tietz: Take the initial capital investment cost and divide it by the annual cost of one employee for plating-up, then consider how you can make the whole process cost-
**Rheinisch-Bergische Druckerei (RBD)** is a co-operative venture by Rheinische Post (Düsseldorf) and Westdeutsche Zeitung (Wuppertal). It runs two independent printing plants: one in Düsseldorf, where broadsheet newspaper presses are in operation, and one in Wuppertal (tabloid format). In addition to the two 32pp KBA Cortina presses RBD’s Düsseldorf plant also has a KBA Commander which was installed in 2000, extended in 2006 and comprises ten towers plus four folders configurable for 2 x 32 and 2 x 48 pages.

The Cortinas went live on 15 April and 15 May. They were fully embedded in the production routine on 1 June 2010, just in time for the football World Cup. They replaced Commander press lines installed in 1987 and 1988.

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**Website** (German language only): www.rbd-duesseldorf.de

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**Effective. It’s difficult. It may be worth while if you have six or seven Cortinas standing side by side. A second issue is flexibility. Look at the systems offered by manroland and KBA. What a performance it is if you want to insert a plate at short notice. PlateTrans technology is super. It’s mature. But I don’t think it can be deployed cost-efficiently at the present time.**

Bergmann: Elsewhere – for example in the reel store – you have automated extensively.

Tietz: When automating, our objective has always been to secure a rapid return on investment. We strip the reels manually. That, too, is because manual stripping is much more economic, over a period of one year, than installing a machine to do the work. Another advantage is that personnel can see what sort of quality has been delivered and can reject the reel if it’s not up to scratch. Also, they can make a log of the faults. Here human experience and skill is a valuable asset employed at the appropriate time and place. All subsequent processes are automated using KBA and Rocla systems.

Bergmann: What impact has the change in customer structure and automated processes had on RBD’s organisation?

Tietz: We have since expanded into three-shift operation from Monday to Friday, with two extended shifts on Saturday and Sunday: ten hours on Saturday and eight on Sunday. From Sunday to Friday we print the daily titles, but on Saturday six presses print nothing but freesheets. In addition to printing six runs per day of 420,000 copies we print around 2.9 million copies of other products a week.

Bergmann: So more shifts, but apparently with far fewer personnel.

Tietz: The Cortina is essentially run by a single operator. The second employee for each 32-page press, who fetches the plates, is also a trained printer. This is the agreement we reached with the works council.

Bergmann: What’s the situation with the Commander?

Tietz: There we have wage agreements on press manning. But these do not apply to the Cortina. Definitely not. That is the opinion of both the Print Federation and the trade union, Verdi. What we agreed on was this: if you buy a press, sit down with the works council and thrash out your own model. What we do is now the standard procedure and has been adopted by other printers in Germany for operating the press.

Bergmann: But a further issue relating to the Cortina has remained unchanged for years: energy and consumables.

Tietz: Absolutely. Whenever newspaper printers get together and talk about the Cortina, individual cost items are always one of the issues. But banging on about plate prices, “sky-high” ink costs or energy is the wrong approach. You have to look at the overall picture. And that is what we have done in the form of a degree thesis. If you were to read this thesis you would notice two things: for short runs, from 10,000 to 50,000 copies, the Cortina has the edge over the Commander. And we can safely say today that in the 50,000 to 500,000 range it is totally irrelevant whether you print them on a Commander or a Cortina: the cost structures are virtually identical. So the claim that the high plate and ink costs make the press uneconomic is completely unfounded. In the end what counts are the total process costs, and here we have achieved the figures that prompted us to buy the press in the first place.

Bergmann: Even so, demand has recently been stronger for the conventional model from KBA’s compact platform, the Commander CT.

Tietz: Whether the Cortina or the Commander CT – that is a decision that printshop managers must discuss with top management. Basically, it boils down to a single issue: am I running a print operation for the purpose of printing newspapers and newspaper-like products with the best possible offset technology currently on the market, or do I want to expand this remit to offer the market a broader spread of products. Yes or no? And then I can still decide whether to go for a conventional offset press with a heatset capability – the presses are out there on the market – or to opt for waterless offset.

Bergmann: And a final question: what can technology contribute to the profitability of a newspaper printing plant?

Tietz: It can furnish the right foundation. But that doesn’t apply solely to printing technology, it’s only possible in conjunction with a modern mailroom. Together, they support a huge diversity of products. Five years ago, who would have dared to suggest that you could print magazines on coated stock? And five years ago, who would have foreseen that you could insert a folded broadsheet product in a tabloid copy – without it protruding?

Today that’s a given with Ferag’s new StreamFold. Suddenly, there is a huge choice. However, one crucial factor is that we must show decision-makers in media houses and agencies, and buyers at big furniture stores, the quality excellence that newspaper products are capable of achieving. They are already familiar with the excellence of gravure and heatset products. What we must do is persuade print buyers – diplomatically yet compellingly – that newspaper printers can now deliver a new level of quality. So it’s not the Cortina as such that we are promoting, but a new printed product.
Compact tower presses on the advance

Following the success of our compact and waterless Cortina at prominent German newspaper publishers, the land of satellite presses is now discovering the benefits of compact conventional towers. In addition to customers from abroad (see pages 42-43), in the seven months from the end of June 2010 to the end of January 2011 no fewer than seven German regional newspaper publishers opted for a Commander CT with conventional offset technology. This brings the total number of orders from Europe and North America for such presses to 20, or 99 double- and triple-wide towers, some with heatset dryers for semi-commercials. The only question remaining is whether the next compact press contract will be for a Commander CT or a Cortina. There are compelling arguments for both, which is why KBA will continue to pursue advances in these two technologies with equal vigour.

Like the Cortina, the Commander CT has towers that split down the middle for maintenance access, e.g. for blanket washing or a change of washcloths. This makes operation much easier, as do the lifts on either side of the tower. Almost all the presses shipped and ordered to date have PlateTronic automatic plate changers, RollerTronic automatic roller setting, NipTronic bearer units and CleanTronic blanket-washing systems. The vast majority also have inking-unit washing systems, central ink pumping and automatic colour and cut-off register control. FanoTronic fan-out compensation is a standard feature of triple-wide presses.

Rhein-Zeitung in Koblenz: 96pp triple-wide Commander CT

Following close on the heels of contracts from Weiden and Karlsruhe (see last issue of Report) we booked an order from Koblenz-based Mittelrhein-Verlag, publisher of the Rhein-Zeitung, for a triple-wide Commander CT with four reelstands, four towers and two folders. The 96pp press is slated to come on stream in 2012.

The Commander CT for Koblenz will be engineered for the Rhine format, with a maximum web width of 2,100mm (82.67in) and a 510mm (20in) cut-off. It will have a maximum rated output of 90,000 full-colour copies per hour, each with up to 48 pages. In addition to the Rhein-Zeitung the press will print frees, inserts and contract work. The total weekly print run will average 1.9 million copies. The four Pastomat reelstands for reels 1,524mm (60in) wide will be located under the press and embedded in a Patras A automatic reel-loading system. It will be possible to select 5/12, 7/12 and 11/12 ribbons for spadas. Other equipment will include six double turner bars, two folder superstructures with three formers, cut-off register controls, two skip slitters, two Zip’n’Buy modules, two section stitchers and two KF 5 jaw folders. The press will be controlled from four ErgoTronic consoles. The production scheduling and press presetting software will be supplied by ABB and will include a proofing system.

Mittelrhein-Verlag managing director Dr Thomas Rochel says: “If printed regional daily titles offer a local focus, first-class news coverage and an attractive product, while at the same time reining in costs, they will thrive. This was the motivation behind our investment in cutting-edge press technology and peripherals. The triple-wide KBA Commander CT will deliver dramatic gains in cost efficiency, print quality and production flexibility, materially enhancing the long-term competitiveness of our printed titles in the media arena.”

Publishing manager Siegmund Radtke is equally enthusiastic: “Alongside the Commander CT’s high production output, the biggest aids to readership targeting and localisation are its ultra-short job and pagination changes. With the new press we can exploit the strengths of local news coverage even more effectively to offer our readers and advertisers attractive, quality products and enhanced immediacy.”
Aachener Verlagsgesellschaft: two 32pp Commander CTs

On the second day of the IFRA Expo newspaper trade fair in Hamburg last year Aachener Verlagsgesellschaft ordered two double-wide 32pp Commander CT press lines to print the 17 local editions of two daily titles, the Aachener Zeitung and Aachener Nachrichten, along with weeklies Super Mittwoch and Super Sonntag plus assorted special publications, supplements and magazines.

MDV in Giessen: 48pp Commander CT

Newspaper printer and publisher Mittelhessische Druck- und Verlagsgesellschaft is also gearing up with a Commander CT to address shifting demands in the newspaper sector driven by changes in media consumption. Slated to come on stream early next year, the 48pp double-wide press line will replace two non-KBA presses installed in the 1990s. It will have a maximum output of 90,000cph, a 470mm (18.5in) cut-off on a 940mm (37in) cylinder circumference and a maximum web width of 1,260mm (49.6in). The press configuration of three Pastomat reelstands, three towers and one KF 5 folder will be embedded in an automated reel-logistics system and controlled from ErgoTronic consoles incorporating EasyStart and EasyStop modules for automatic press run-up and rundown, a job-scheduling and press-presetting system, and a proofing system. Three turner bars, a half-cover guide and a section stitcher will afford a high level of product versatility.

“Printed regional titles have good prospects for growth and will remain one of our main business lines in the 21st century,” says managing director Dr Jan Eric Rempel. “However, we must cater more efficiently to the rising demands of our readers, advertisers and print customers, while at the same nailing down costs. This has led to the biggest investment in printing technology and intelligent workflow systems in our 65-year history.”

Still a family-controlled enterprise, MDV was founded in 1946, and launched the Giessener Freie Presse that same year. Today its daily titles are distributed in a region extending from Alsfeld via Grunberg, Giessen, Bad Nauheim and Friedberg to Bad Vilbel north of Frankfurt. Its regional titles – the Giessener Allgemeine (Giessener Freie Presse until 1966), Alsfelder Allgemeine and Wetterauer Zeitung, with a circulation of around 53,000 copies – reach some 185,000 readers on weekdays. MDV also prints over 700,000 copies of diverse frees and contract titles per week. Its regional information competence is evident on its website, which has central Hesse’s biggest appointments section. Alongside an ad alliance with the Buztacher Zeitung MDV has also teamed up with other Hessian newspaper publishers to create major regional advertising networks for Hessian newspapers and the central Hesse press.

Nordkurier in Neubrandenburg: 32pp Commander CT

The wave of investment by German newspaper printers in new produc-

Smiles all round at IFRA Expo 2010 in Hamburg after clinching the deal for two Commander CT presses (l-r): KBA deputy president Claus Bolza-Schüenemann, Aachener Verlagsgesellschaft joint managing directors Peter Seitz and Andreas Müller, KBA executive vice-president for web press sales Christoph Müller, consultant Reinhard Krick and KBA sales manager Matthias Horn

Lining up for the camera in the assembly hall at KBA’s main factory in Würzburg (l-r): KBA deputy president Claus Bolza-Schüenemann, MDV commercial manager Carsten Kromeier, managing director Dr Jan Eric Rempel and technical manager Otmar Buss, and KBA sales managers Matthias Horn and Karl Zorn
tion kit continued in December with an order from Verlagsgruppe Nordkurier in Neubrandenburg for a 32pp Commander CT press line with two Pastomat reelstands, two towers and a KF 5 folder. The purpose of the investment is to address more sophisticated demands in terms of quality, productivity and flexibility.

The new press will be installed early next year at subsidiary Nordost-Druck in Datzeberg, a good 130km (80m) north of Berlin, and will replace a 64pp KBA Express that is almost twenty years old. As well as the Nordkurier, a daily, the Commander CT will print a weekly, Anzeigerkurier, with a total circulation of 321,000 copies published in eight editions, plus diverse other publications and contract work.

Nordkurier, which has thirteen regional editions, has frequently been accepted for annual membership of WAN-Ifra’s exclusive International Newspaper Color Quality Club. Along with other in-house titles it covers the largest catchment area for a regional newspaper in Germany. The 45,000cph double-wide Commander CT will sport a raft of features including two Pastomat reelstands with 7/8 and 3/8 ribbons for spadia production; Patras A automated reel logistics; cut-off register and sidelay controls; a preformer web guidance system; and a skip slitter, a half-cover capability, Zip’n’Buy and a ribbon stitcher. The ErgoTronic console will be linked to an EAE Print production scheduling and press presetting system that is currently being upgraded.

Lothar Prehn, managing director of Nordost-Druck, can hardly wait for the press to be up and running: “Even though the KBA Commander CT has only half the page capacity of its predecessor, its practical automation features, higher productivity and fast job changes will enable us to give the local editions of the Nordkurier an even tighter focus, and expand our print portfolio. Extensive pre-investment research produced some compellingly arguments in favour of the Commander CT’s innovative concept and technology.”

The Nordkurier has a circulation of around 95,000 copies and is distributed in east Mecklenburg, the southern regions of West Pomerania and in Uckermark, north Brandenburg. The media house is also the leading private postal service in the outer reaches of northeast Germany.

Mayer & Söhne in Aichach: Commander CT for 150th jubilee

Last, but by no means least, print and media group Mayer & Söhne in Aichach has opted for a 32pp Berliner format Commander CT with two 4/2 towers that is scheduled to go live when Mayer & Söhne celebrates its 150th jubilee next year. It will replace an A 510 Journal newspaper press installed by our Frankenthal factory in 1995. Alongside in-house titles, freesheets and inserts the new press will print contract work that includes a compact edition of the Bild-Zeitung for Munich.

“Entrepreneurial vision and an innovative spirit have long been the key to our success,” declares managing partner Reiner Sixta. “For example, in 1979 we pioneered full-colour images in southern Germany with a KBA Express. We have followed the development of this compact KBA press with the keenest interest, because of the benefits its advanced technology delivers in terms of colour registration and fan-out. Alongside the outstanding print quality, what most impressed us were the operating concept and the enhanced flexibility afforded by the high level of automation.”

Established in 1862, the group is now in the fifth generation of the Mayer and Sixta families. In addition to the Aichach printing plant, which specializes in full-colour printing, and AS-Druck, a mono and two-colour offset operation in Lahr, the group owns the Aichacher Zeitung, the Stadtzeitung in Augsburg and a number of free titles distributed in Bamberg and Weißenburg (total circulation: 400,000-plus copies per week) and various publishing, service and sales operations. Unlike other newspaper printers Mayer & Söhne traditionally produces more for external customers than for its own publishing houses, and here the Berliner format is ideal. Its litho division primarily prints upmarket brochures, business reports, bound-in inserts, journals, corporate magazines and catalogues. The press fleet also includes a Compacta that is mostly used for brochures.

The new press will have a maximum output of 47,000 full-colour 32-page copies per hour. Thomas Sixta, principal shareholder of Mayer & Söhne and managing director of the publishing subsidiaries, says: “High output aside, the Commander CT’s ultra-fast job changes will deliver production reserves we can draw on, and innovative options both for our own publishing operations and for our extensive contract work. In a business where deadlines are pared to the bone, it will safeguard our renowned timeliness well into the future.”

The press package supports an extensive choice of products and ad specials. For example, the two Pastomat reelstands are also engineered to accept 7/8 and 3/8 ribbons. The folder superstructure with two formers has a skip slitter and half-cover guides, with provision for the later addition of a ribbon stitcher, Zip’n’Buy and a glued “pseudo” plough fold for creating four-page spreads. Extra towers can also be added at any time.

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Pictured after signing the contract for the Commander CT: Mayer & Söhne managing partner Reiner Sixta (l), principal shareholder Thomas Sixta (2nd r) and managing director Erwin Neudecker (r) with KBA sales manager Matthias Horn

Schematic of the Commander CT press line for Mayer & Söhne in Aichach

Verlagsgruppe Nordkurier has ordered a Commander CT similar to the one for Mayer & Söhne (see schematic below). Pictured here during a project meeting in Neubrandenburg are (l-r): Severino Venditti and Marco Fenile of Ferag, Martin Blume of mb³, Thomas Bergmann of KBA, Lothar Prehn of Nordost-Druck, Lothar Walther of Walther & Partner Neustrelitz, Wolfgang Fechner of Elektroplanung Neustrelitz, Michael Weidenbach of Graphic Engineering, Nordkurier-Verlagsgruppe md Lutz Schumacher and Christoph Hübner of Nordost-Druck.

Photo: Sebastian Haerter
Swedish media group Bonnier orders ultra-compact KBA press

Bold upgrades with Commander CT

Bonnier, a Swedish media group with an international profile, is investing heavily in printed newspapers. For its print arm, Bold Printing Group, it has ordered a highly automated Commander CT press line which will be installed at subsidiary DNEX Tryckeriet in Kista, near Stockholm. Bold also has production plants in Malmö and Borås, and is one of the biggest print groups in Europe.

The 96pp Commander CT with six reelstands, six double-wide four-high towers, one folder and automated paper logistics will go live next year in an existing building, replacing two other presses.

Clarion call for print

Leif Wiklund, managing director of the Bold Printing Group and chairman of the DNEX board, says: “The media environment is in a state of transition, and the demands of our customers and readers are becoming ever more sophisticated. The KBA Commander CT’s cutting-edge technology will enable us to address these demands while at the same time slashing production costs. We visited a number of Commander CT installations in Germany and North America, and met satisfied users everywhere.”

Erik Wallhed, DNEX managing director, agrees: “What most impressed us was the first-class quality in full-colour production, the ease with which this compact, practical and highly automated press can be operated, and its high output, with fast job changes and low levels of start-up waste. The way in which KBA and Mauser, the engineering firm, worked so smoothly alongside our project team to produce a comprehensive strategic concept also played a major role. This created a powerful basis of trust for a successful long-term collaboration.”

Bold Printing Group technical director Johan Stenberg comments: “Another subsidiary, Borås Tidning Tryckeri, has been running a KBA Colora since the end of 2001. Our satisfaction both with the press and with the service provided reinforced our decision to implement this key strategic move in tandem with KBA.”

Blend of traditional and new media

Bonnier is a family business with roots dating back to 1804. Today it encompasses some 180 companies in Europe, Russia and the USA. Its extensive print-based operations include book publishers such as Ullstein in Berlin, magazines, daily titles and business publications. In northern Europe Bonnier is a major shareholder in a number of enterprises, among them the biggest commercial television channels in Sweden (TV4) and Finland (MTV3). Radio stations, cinema chains, music and film production firms, online distributors and providers of business and economic data are also part of the group. Alongside its traditional activities Bonnier intends to expand more and more into new business models on the internet. In 2009 its 11,000-strong workforce generated sales of around €3bn ($4bn).

Productivity boost for newspaper business

The Commander CT for DNEX will have a 560mm (22in) cut-off, a maximum web width of 1,590mm (62.5in) and a maximum rated output of 90,000cph in straight production. Since the titles printed will have different page counts, conversion will be automatic from the console. The press will print the greater part of Sweden’s big-
Compact press for Mozart’s city

The first day of the IFRA Expo 2010 newspaper trade fair in Hamburg saw longstanding KBA customer Salzburger Nachrichten place an order for a triple-wide 6/2 Commander CT. The highly automated 48pp press with two reelstands, two compact 6/2 towers and one folder will be installed at the end of this year and will replace a 1990s-vintage Commander satellite press.

Along with the flagship title, Salzburger Nachrichten, which is printed in several editions and has a daily circulation of between 85,000 and over 125,000 copies depending on the day of the week, the new triple-width Commander CT will print six regional editions of a weekly title, Salzburger Woche (circulation: around 80,000 copies) in full colour throughout.

Salzburger Nachrichten, which first hit the streets in 1945, is distributed throughout the country. Still a family-owned publication, it is read by as many as 300,000 people. In addition to the broadsheet distributed nationwide, readers in Salzburg province receive regional and local news in a separate stitched tabloid with 24 to 40 pages. The company also has a website, salzburg.com.

Alexander Frommer, managing director of the Salzburg printing plant, says: “We used to print the broadsheet and tabloid products separately and then insert the regional section in the Salzburg edition. With the 6/2 Commander CT, which was engineered to our precise specifications for maximum versatility and features a skip slitter and stitcher, we can print regional editions – which comprise a major proportion of our output – in one pass. And because edition and pagination changes are so fast on the CT, we can print the entire run on one press, whereas previously we had to use two.” Roman Minimayr, managing director of the Salzburger Nachrichten publishing house, adds: “The new press has not only cut per-copy costs but has also enhanced immediacy, while its automated plate changing and array of automation modules have delivered huge savings in waste, labour and maintenance input.”

The benefits of a compact design

Dr Maximilian Dasch, publisher and co-proprietor of the Salzburger Nachrichten, says: “What impressed me most about this high-tech press was its huge output, fast makeready and first-class print quality. From what we have seen, the transition from the satellites that served us so well for many years to KBA’s innovative compact tower went without a hitch, even when the press was printing webs 1,800mm wide. For us, the benefits are overwhelming.”

The substructure Commander CT press line in Salzburg has a maximum web width of 1,800mm (70.75in), a cylinder circumference of 900mm (35.43in) and a maximum output of 90,000 four-colour copies per hour in straight production. It will be embedded in a Patras A automated reel-logistics system.

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In addition to a national Swedish daily, Dagens Nyheter, the Commander CT will print a second daily, Expressen, a business newspaper, Dagens Industri, and a freesheet, Metro. Other titles will include a business newspaper, Dagens Industri, a freesheet, Metro, and a second news daily, Expressen, which was launched in 1944 and has a current readership (with online edition) of over 1.5 million. Alongside these tabloid titles the Commander CT will still have plenty of capacity for printing supplements and inserts etc.

Press features include four turner bar assemblies, a folder superstructure with two formers, a KF 5 jaw folder and cut-off register controls, plus section and ribbon stitchers, a gluing unit and a quarterfold for even greater flexibility. The Commander CT will be controlled from two ErgoTronic consoles incorporating a production-scheduling and press-presetting system along with a raft of automation modules such as EasyStart and EasyStop for automated press run-up and run-down and a page-monitoring system.

Provision has already been made for an additional 90pp section, thermal air dryers, balloon formers and a change in web width.

Klaus Schmidt
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A

gest national daily, Dagens Nyheter, which was first published in 1864. Other titles will include a business newspaper, Dagens Industri, a freesheet, Metro, and a second news daily, Expressen, which was launched in 1944 and has a current readership (with online edition) of over 1.5 million. Alongside these tabloid titles the Commander CT will still have plenty of capacity for
Workflow optimisation with KBA PressNet

In view of severe budgetary constraints, producing newspapers efficiently and cost-effectively demands more than extensive, practice-driven automation: digital networking – embedding the individual production sequences in a single, computer-assisted workflow – now plays a major role. It can deliver substantial savings by automating production scheduling, press preset and start-up, edition changes and press run-down.

KBA EasyPlan

Careful planning is key to success. Which is why we have created EasyPlan, a press scheduling program that includes a dynamic catalogue of originals with predefined production data which the operator can use when presetting the press. Alternatively, he can key in the data individually.

Once job details have been entered into the system the intelligent, interactive software automatically determines the web and ribbon leads, followed by page and plate allocation. This accelerates edition changes and eases the operator’s workload. The plates can be allocated manually at any time if necessary. The finished production schedule is then instantly visualised on the screen in the form of a time bar, allowing the operator to check at a glance the plausibility of the proposed schedule.

KBA EasySet:

In order to minimise edition changes and waste, and also guarantee production stability and quality, various press parameters must be preset ready for the next print run. With KBA EasySet the entire press line can be preset quickly and easily from the console.

The multi-stage presetting system can store the preset data for register, web tension, dampening and temperature control, along with process-specific acceleration graphs and the pertinent offset values. Once optimised, the values can be stored and downloaded for identical or similar print runs, making print production much more efficient. The press operator can view the presetting data on the relevant data screens at any time. The controls for the optional ink-
key setting system are integrated in the console.

KBA EasyPlan and EasySet can be used for coldset, heatset and hybrid production.

KBA EasyStart: automatic run-up

The automation modules KBA EasyStart, EasyStop and EasyReport were developed with the aim of cutting production costs, eliminating human error and allowing production data and knowledge gained from previous jobs to be utilised for repeat runs. Both functions are controlled via push-buttons at the console.

EasyStart und EasyStop offer the following benefits:
- less waste, faster make-ready
- time gains through sequence optimisation
- more efficient press utilisation
- fewer and shorter down times
- standardised process sequences
- more reliable production.

EasyStart allows the press to be run up to production speed at the touch of a button. The acceleration ramp is freely configurable with regard to the ultimate speed to be attained and the length of time that any specific speed is to be maintained during run-up to the ultimate speed.

Semi-commercial production increasingly features hybrid products for which heatset and coldset webs are often guided over a common former. With KBA EasyStart, web tension is optimised automatically, so the heatset web can be brought up to speed much faster. The rapid build-up of web tension also reduces the risk of web breaks and thus saves time and waste.

KBA EasyStop: automatic run-down

With a KBA press, pushbutton rundown is no longer a distant vision. EasyStop incorporates predefined sequences for automatically running the web free, cleaning the inking units, dampeners and blankets, and removing all the plates. This gives the operator more time to prepare for the next job.

KBA EasyReport: message and documentation system

Detecting, analysing and remediying errors – and learning from them – are key factors in enhancing productivity and cutting costs. EasyReport is a valuable aid in documenting print production. The error-message system is divided into four categories: errors, start-up impediments, warnings and messages. All messages are recorded in a long-term history log. This, plus the ability to export and filter messages, supports error analysis and minimisation.

EasyReport’s message system also allows comprehensive documentation of all print jobs, with detailed production logs for each one. The logs contain job data, waste levels and other key factors. Statistical evaluations based on multiple production logs are generated automatically. Analyses of the stored speed diagrams can be used to optimise production. So you receive continuous updates on the actual performance of your KBA press.

An optional upgrade is available for evaluating consumption data, eg for ink and paper. It is also possible to export the various reports to a central server, insert an interface to the MIS or install a software link to a maintenance system.

KBA ErgoTronic: ergonomic workstation

A contented worker is a good worker. Which is why we have made our ErgoTronic console – the operator’s central workstation – both functional and ergonomic.

The height of the console can be adjusted electrically for each individual operator, and is equipped with a 10" touch-screen monitor. At the most advanced level the system includes a universally deployable reserve computer, allowing software to be installed much faster should the system computer have to be replaced. Press commands such as EasyStart, EasyStop, faster, slower, ink-key adjustment, dampener adjustment and register adjustment are executed using intuitive function keys.

The visualisation software supports both copy- and press-specific operation via separate, clearly laid-out data screens for functions and subassemblies. Clear, intuitively recognisable symbols aid the rapid selection of any data screen.

Intuitive controls for our EasyStart and EasyStop automation modules reduce production time and waste to a minimum.
Since its official launch on the high-growth markets of Asia and the Pacific at Pack Print 2007 in Bangkok, the Genius 52UV from KBA-MetroPrint has attracted a lot of interest. The result has been a succession of enthusiastic users. And applications are not limited to printing on foil and plastic: this compact press has demonstrated its superb print quality on traditional materials such as paper and cartonboard as well. One example is Teknik Print near the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur.

Genius 52UV cuts the mustard at Teknik Print in Malaysia

From show star to model of quality and performance

Established in 1997 by Liew Heng Keong, Teknik Print and its 33 employees offer a complete print service that soon extended beyond domestic customers to include multinational brand manufacturers. Along with displays Teknik Print specialises in printing synthetic packaging, PVC boxes and cling-on stickers, vinyl stickers, plastic cards, POS pop-up standees and wobblers, plastic menus and covers. The Genius 52UV, which joined a six-colour and a four-colour press, soon became an indispensable item of equipment.

Compelling benefits
Liew Heng Keong says: “We have total confidence in the Genius 52UV’s bleeding-edge technology and are proud to offer our customers a top press model that is made in Germany. This compact, waterless press very quickly became our primary production tool. In terms of productivity, output speed, makeready times, waste levels and ease of operation there is simply no comparison with what had previously been possible. The press also demonstrates its strengths when printing the eco-friendly substrates such as biodegradable plastics that are currently so popular – there is absolutely no impairment of quality. The Genius has enabled us to increase our sales and burnish our reputation among our highly discerning clientele. And its reliability is exemplary.”

Diverse range of applications
The Genius 52UV for a sheet format of 360 x 520mm (14.17 x 20.47in) is available as a four- or a five-colour version with coater. The press can be made ready in just seven minutes and runs up to saleable colour in less than twenty sheets, so it is ideal for printing short runs and/or costly substrates such as plastic or metal foil. Being both waterless and keyless, theinking units on the Genius 52UV deliver a 100 per cent ghosting-free image and guarantee consistently uniform ink application throughout the entire print run.

Genius 52UV at KBA-China’s demo centre in Dongguan

A Genius 52UV was also installed some months ago at KBA-China’s high-tech training and demonstration centre in the south China city of Dongguan, a location chosen for its proximity to Hong Kong. “Prospects are welcomed by a highly professional team of advisors with a detailed knowledge of the Genius 52UV’s technology and range of applications,” says Joseph Kwan, who is head of the centre.

Guided by customer recommendations, KBA-China selected a broad range of substrates, from paper and board to diverse plastics, for use in print demonstrations. Potential buyers are also provided with information on consumables and possible suppliers. The customer jobs printed prove beyond all doubt that the Genius 52UV delivers a superb quality.

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Laser-sensitive labelling for Mey’s Bodywear brand

KBA not only manufactures offset and other types of press for an extensive range of applications; it is also active in many other fields via its subsidiaries. The marking and coding systems offered by KBA-Metronic, encompassing inkjet technology, thermal transfer, hot-foil stamping and laser-enabled processes, are just one example.

They are chiefly deployed by brand manufacturers and automotive suppliers in their packaging lines, but are also found in many other branches of industry. German lingerie manufacturer Mey in Albstadt-Lautlingen, Baden-Württemberg, recently streamlined its product packaging workflow with the installation of a new laser-powered coding system provided by KBA-Metronic in alliance with Herma.

Cost optimisation as an ongoing objective

In contrast to most other enterprises in the textiles industry, Mey manufactures its entire range of panties, bras, pyjamas and nightdresses in its own factories. Profit margins are consistently in double digits. To control costs the company’s policy is to improve all production workflows on an ongoing basis. “If I hear of some way to raise productivity by thirty per cent at any one point in the production chain, I am instantly on the alert,” declares plant manager Thomas Linke.

So the launch of a new marking and coding system by Herma and KBA-Metronic was an opportunity not to be missed. The system incorporates a high-performance labelling device, a CO₂ coding laser and laser-sensitive labels with a special finish. KBA-Metronic’s K-1000 CO₂ laser “writes” a code, price etc in black on the appropriate area(s) of the label. The imprint applied is wipe- and scratch-resistant.

At Mey, marking and coding the packaging for its products consumes around nine million labels a year. The layout for the labels is always the same: EAN barcode, article number, size, colour and seasonal indicator. What has changed in the course of time is the number of articles in any one size and colour that are manufactured in a single batch. “Nowadays a batch often comprises no more than fifty to one hundred packs,” says Linke. After that the press operator must go on to the next job, which frequently entails a change in the type of packaging. There are some thirty different versions in total. “Which is why minimising makeready times is a major issue for us,” he explains.

Conversion from thermal transfer to laser

Previously the Albstadt company’s entire fleet of five marking and coding lines deployed thermal transfer labelling devices. However, since the quality of the EAN code printed was impaired by even the minutest specks of contamination, cleaning-fluid residue or damage to the thermal transfer tape, problems often arose when the code was read.

With the new technology the written image is razor-sharp, irrespective of whether it is clear text, a graphic or a code. The combination of KBA-Metronic’s ten-watt K-1000 CO₂ laser and the Herma 400 high-performance labelling machine supports high-speed marking and coding. “We have boosted our output from thirty to forty packs per minute,” says Linke. “That’s the speed we started off at with the new system.” But the labelling device and coding laser could increase the speed still further.

Higher speeds with KBA-Metronic’s laser-powered coding technology

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New blade chamber system for Genius 52UV shortens job changes

Making times and productivity are of overwhelming importance for modern-day print providers: where short-run work dominates production, every plate or ink change represents a loss of valuable time. And since time means money, when KBA-MetroPrint set about developing new upgrade kits for the Genius 52UV the focus was on maximising savings in both.

The new, faster exchangeable system certainly achieves this objective. As Rainer Endres, head of product development at KBA-MetroPrint, points out: “Since the ink no longer has to be scraped out of the ink chamber with a spatula, press makeready times when using multiple doctor-blade systems are substantially shorter. When closed, the new chamber can hold a much larger volume of ink. The result is a time gain per ink change of thirty to forty per cent. What is more, the new system reduces the consumption of cleaning agents, which is good for the environment.”

KBA-MetroPrint’s new blade chamber system not only accelerates ink changes at the Genius 52UV but can also double as a storage container for the UV inks. Replenishing the doctoring chamber has also been made much easier. Because it can be removed from the press there is much less contamination and it is also more user-friendly. The chamber has a bigger opening, so the ink can quickly be topped up if necessary and the print run continued. Another advantage is that the sealing blade no longer rests on the anilox roller during production stoppages, which substantially extends its service life.

In principle, the new quick-change blade chamber functions in precisely the same way as the familiar standard chamber, the only difference being that, no matter how full, the new chamber can be removed from the printing unit without the ink having to be removed beforehand. Also, the UV ink can remain in the redundant chamber and stored for a future job. Once reinserted in the printing unit it is ready for immediate use again.

World’s biggest litho press struts its stuff in Saudi-Arabia

The biggest sheetfed offset press on the planet has launched into action at Riyadh-based Al Bayan, one of Saudi-Arabia’s leading media providers. The Rapida 185 with seven printing units, a coater, two interdeck dryers, a second coater and a second dryer, extends 33 metres (108 feet). Weighing in at 320 tonnes (352 US tons), it may not hold the record for length (some of our smaller press lines are longer), but its twelve units and 1300 x 1850mm (51.8 x 72.83in) sheet format make it the biggest VLF press by far. The new Rapida at Al Bayan’s Riyadh operation mainly prints posters, displays and large-format packaging.

The first printing unit and the second coater are pre-engineered for UV production (eg the application of opaque white). High-quality hybrid coatings are also possible with the Rapida 185, and for this purpose the press was equipped on site with a number of modules, among them Grafix’ Hi-Cure UV dryer. A carton-printing capability that allows direct offset on corrugated cardboard was also part of the press package, as were nonstop pile-changing facilities and a pile-logistics system. Other automation modules include ErgoTronic ACR video register, DensiTronic Professional colour measurement and control, and LogoTronic software for networking the press with prepress. With its impressive dimensions and embedded technology the Rapida 185 in Saudi-Arabia is one of the many technological milestones in KBA’s 194-year history. And more have followed. A Rapida 185 six-colour press with coater and dryer that came on stream a few months ago at Linocraft Printers in Johor Bahru, Malaysia, prints high-quality packaging for vacuum cleaners and other consumer goods. So KBA continues to set the pace in large format.
Plastic Card Services (PCS) in Macclesfield has developed one of Europe’s first plastic loyalty card schemes manufactured with green materials and processes for Denmark’s largest retailer, Coop Danmark. Working in partnership with its Danish agent, Logocard, the Cheshire-based business has produced two million Coop DanmarkPlus loyalty cards using biodegradable polymers and KBA-MetroPrint’s Genius 52UV waterless print technology – the first in the UK to do so.

The bioPVC material is designed to decompose in less than three years, a considerable improvement on the conventional 300 to 1,000-year cycle for PVC. It conforms to the International Biodegradable Standard ISO 14855 and decomposes in water, soil, compost or standard landfill material, leaving no toxic effect on the environment.

UK company wins international green card brief

Using a waterless print process significantly reduces emissions of harmful compounds into the atmosphere and is considered by the industry as market-leading in efficiency, waste management and quality. The decision to ‘buy bio’ has cost Coop Danmark only a small percentage more than the standard PVC equivalent.

PCS produces over 50 million cards a year for household names across the UK including Next, Virgin, Ikea, Ford, Iceland and npower. The new bio offering will be made available to all existing clients.

Managing director Rob Nicholls has set ambitious targets for his firm and client base from the technology. “We want 50 per cent of our business converted to bio in the next five years and we think this is very doable. It is an easy, low-cost switch to make, which we believe will appeal to many companies who are interested in investing in sustainable businesses, but don’t want to compromise on quality.”

KBA roadshow tours the Middle Kingdom

Every October for a number of years now KBA sheetfed marketing manager Jürgen Veil has travelled through China with selected guest speakers on a technology roadshow that has become a hugely popular event among printers nationwide.

This year’s nine-day tour under the banner “KBA: Pioneer of Green Innovation” took in Beijing, Yinchuan, Jinan, Xiamen and Dongguan. Three of these cities were on the itinerary for the first time.

Ecological print production, brand protection, UV printing on plastic and large-format sheetfed offset were on the agenda at individual events, along with displays of high-quality print samples and practical demonstrations on Rapida presses. At the end of the day each participant was given a book of coating samples with handy tips on inline finishing. Some had travelled hundreds of kilometres to attend the shows, whose depth, diversity and geographical extent – beyond the major print hubs – are unique to KBA.

With our roadshows we are aiming to reach every region in the country. The print industry in northwest China, for example, is in need of a business stimulus such as this to promote development. Further east, Shandong province is experiencing rapid growth on the back of brisk demand, and the first event down south in Xiamen was packed out. KBA was the first press manufacturer to offer technology seminars in more remote areas, helping local printers to expand by slaking their thirst for a greater knowledge of the “wide world of print”.

PCS managing director Rob Nicholls at the Genius 52UV

PCS sheetfed marketing manager Jürgen Veil toured China briefing printers on the latest advances in sheetfed offset technology

KBA roadshow tours the Middle Kingdom

A full house at the KBA seminar in Yinchuan, northwest China

Updates on print technology were followed by practical demos on Rapida presses
From Expoprint to Rio Grande do Sul

In July last year, just a few weeks after making its Brazilian debut at the Expoprint trade fair in São Paulo, the first KBA Rapida 75C in South America came on stream at Tempo Grafica in Viamao, in the southern state of Rio Grande do Sul. Management had already drawn up a contract for a press from another German manufacturer, but made a snap decision to purchase the Rapida on the KBA stand. This sudden change of mind was prompted by the 75C’s impressive performance, its cost efficiency and the prospect of a quick delivery.

The 13,000sph B2 (29in) Rapida 75C is distributed in Brazil by KBA’s small-format agency, Global Sistemas Graficos in São Paulo, and targets small printshops with limited budgets.

Tempo Grafica is a young family enterprise that was established in 2002 and moved to its present location in Viamao in 2007. Managed jointly by Jose Fernando Schneider and his cousin Cleber da Silva, the company has twelve employees and has carved out a niche in the Porto Alegre conurbation. Most of its customers are supermarkets, but it also prints folders, brochures and business cards for the retail trade and industry. Prior to installing the new Rapida it operated secondhand two- and four-colour presses from other manufacturers. The KBA press furnishes the basis for further growth.

Jose Fernando Schneider says: “At Expoprint it was KBA’s demos that most impressed us. What clinched the decision for us was the thought of taking delivery just a few weeks later.”

Tempo Grafica management confirms the Rapida’s exemplary performance since July. “The Rapida 75C got off to a perfect start and has more than doubled our productivity. In 70 days we printed 700 jobs totalling 6.5 million copies – a level of output that speaks for itself. Also, the service package provided by KBA-Grafitec and Global Sistemas Graficos gives us the security we need. We have never regretted investing in the Rapida 75C; within a very short period of time it attracted a stream of new customers.”

Wohler Druck opts for new-generation Rapida 75E

One of Switzerland’s many small and medium-sized print enterprises, family-run Wohler Druck in Spreitenbach remains firmly wedded to the B2 (29in) sheetfed format, which it is convinced delivers both economic and process-specific benefits. At present the company is gearing up for future growth by investing heavily in a new facility with cutting-edge technology embracing every aspect of print production. This longsighted strategy includes a new litho press that will form the centrepiece of the entire workflow.

The two generations of the Wohler family who now run the company opted for a Rapida 75E after conducting a comparative analysis of all the possible models. The investment package represents a double first: it is the biggest industrial building project that Wohler Druck has ever undertaken, and it is the first Rapida 75E in the country. The press will print commercials and upmarket products finished to a correspondingly high standard of excellence.

The Rapida 75E for Wohler Druck will be a five-colour coater version for sheets measuring 530 x 750mm (20.86 x 29.53in). It will incorporate an array of features such as QuaLiTonic inline colour management and control in tandem with DenSiTonic Professional densitometry and spectrophotometry. Both systems will be supported by ACR-Control for automatic register setting. The press will have double-sized impression and transfer cylinders, a maximum rated output of 16,000sph and be capable of printing substrates from 0.04 to 0.8mm (15 - 32pt) thick. The anilox coater will have semi-automatic plate changing and will be embedded in a fully automated pumping and cleaning system. The press package also includes LogoTonic Professional, a server with a central database (preset/repro data, CIPLink software, PressWatch, SpeedWatch and interfaces to proprietary software). On the mechanical side there are fully automated washing systems for the blankets and impression cylinders and a Schneider powder extractor. During commissioning the press will be calibrated and integrated in the pre-press workflow by specialists from IPM (Integrated Print-Process Management).
KBA’s compact B2 (29in) Rapida 75 is busy winning fans in South Africa, and a five-colour coater version is in action at Johannesburg-based Collage Litho Quality Printers. The Rapida 75, which joined a fleet of presses from various vendors, is the first KBA machine to be installed at the company’s 1,700m² (18,300ft²) site in City Deep Production Park.

Collage Litho was launched in 1994 and is part of the books and maps division of the Avusa group, a leading light in the media and entertainment sector. A fast-expanding enterprise with 44 employees, the firm offers its customers a broad portfolio of products printed to the highest quality standards. These range from DVD/CD packaging inserts and promos for the entertainment sector. A fast-expanding enterprise with 44 employees, the firm offers its customers a broad portfolio of products printed to the highest quality standards. These range from DVD/CD packaging inserts and promos for the entertainment sector. A fast-expanding enterprise with 44 employees, the firm offers its customers a broad portfolio of products printed to the highest quality standards.

Collage Litho CEO Bradley Frew says: “The Rapida 75 offers a complete package: it combines quality, performance and service, economy, productivity and energy efficiency, a small footprint and intelligent automation. This is what persuaded us to choose a KBA press in preference to a model from another vendor. Despite the longstanding dominance of other vendors, KBA Rapidas have a fine image and reputation in South Africa. Alongside their high output and fast makereadies, what we and other users most like about these presses are their quality monitoring and control systems. But the professional service provided by KBA’s South African agency, Thunderbolt Solutions, is equally important. When the manufacturer is thousands of kilometres away, personal, on-site contacts promote confidence and trust.”

The new five-colour Rapida 75 at Collage Litho sports nonstop facilities at the feeder and delivery, remote diagonal register control, inking-unit cooling, washing systems for the inking rollers, blankets and impression cylinders, KBA DensiTronic and an ErgoTronic console with CIP3/JDF interface.

Bradley Frew and production director Allan Moolman have substantially increased their capacity and capabilities with the Rapida. Special colours, spot and solid coatings enable them to print even more attractive products. This is particularly true of packaging, which at present accounts for around 25 per cent of the company’s total output.

The Rapida 75’s successful premiere at Collage Litho has generated a lot of interest. At the end of October Pro Print in Durban signed contracts for two E (“Economy & Ecology”) versions of the Rapida 75. Further projects are being negotiated.

South African packaging manufacturer Nampak’s slogan, “Packaging Excellence,” could not be more apt. Over the past ninety years this international group with subsidiaries in Africa and Europe has made its mark worldwide with innovative packaging made of paper, plastic, metal and glass.

Nampak Cartons & Labels, a major group division and South Africa’s biggest manufacturer of folding cartons, recently fired up a Rapida 106 six-colour coater press at its plant in Johannesburg. The new press runs alongside a highly automated Rapida 105 that went live at the end of 2007.

The firm prints an extensive range of quality offset products for brand leaders in the automotive, beverages, food and household products industries. Nampak Cartons & Labels has a market share of over 40 per cent. The 1,000-plus employees at its factories process well in excess of 70,000 tonnes (77,000 US tons) of substrates per year.

The company’s first KBA litho press – a six-colour hybrid Rapida 105 with two coaters, installed in 2007 – was the first of a new generation. General manager Calvin de Souza says: “We decided to streamline our production flow, and were also looking to develop and print more sophisticated packaging designs using metallic gloss and other special effects. The Rapida was installed in no time and we profited immediately from its high output. The contrast with its predecessor was like night and day.”

The B1 (41in) Rapida installed in 2007 has a 2.4m (94.5in) delivery extension, a 450mm (17.75in) plinth, nonstop facilities at the feeder and delivery, no-sidelay SIS infeed, sheet monitoring between the printing units, automatic plate changers, inking-unit cooling, washing systems for the blankets, impression cylinders and rollers, automated coating-plate changers, a pumping and cleaning system for aqueous and UV coatings, temperature control, two IR/TA/UV dryers, DensiTronic Professional quality management and LogoTronic Basic MIS with an online link and CipLink workstation.

The two Rapidas have substantially boosted productivity at Nampak Cartons & Labels for choosing a slightly different configuration. Plastic is increasing-ly replacing carton as the material of choice, but we compensated for the slump in this sector by boosting sales of packaging for food and beverages. The Rapida 106’s high production speed of 18,000 sheets per hour and ultra-short makeready times have been an enormous help, enabling the rapid turnaround of short- and medium-run jobs of 10,000 to 15,000 sheets.”
Flawless start for Ipex Rapida in Verona

Drumming up business with the slogan “We print the impossible” demands not only total self-confidence but also a high level of competence. Verona-based Italian printer Artegrafica demonstrated this just a few weeks after Ipex last year when it fired up the six-colour Rapida 106 with which KBA had demonstrated flying job changes. The press rounds off an investment package that has laid the foundations for achieving Artegrafica’s ambitious quality and productivity goals.

Says Artegrafica president Antonio Faccin: “We were under enormous deadline pressure. At the same time we wanted to uphold the corporate philosophy we have pursued since the company was founded: making quality and innovation our topmost priorities when investing in new kit. We are confident that the new Rapida 106’s fantastic capabilities will decisively enhance productivity, quality and customer service.”

Since being founded in 1976 Artegrafica has built up a reputation in Italy and beyond for exquisitely produced books and catalogues. In 1998 it became part of the Graphicom group (Vicenza) and in alliance with a bindery operation, Legatoria Camisana, boasts a portfolio of products that are highly valued by well-known publishing houses, famous art galleries, museums and ad agencies. Artegrafica’s rigorous quality mindset has defined its success at every stage of its development.

Artegrafica’s production halls already house three five-colour Rapida 162a large-format presses and a six-colour Rapida 105 medium-format press installed in 2001.

Antonio Faccin has no doubts as to the wisdom of his decision: “We have been delighted with the performance of our KBA presses over the years, and at Ipex we expressed our satisfaction by awarding a further contract. The 106 represents the cutting edge in medium-format technology. Alongside ultra-short makereadies and an output of 18,000 sheets per hour what most impressed us were its DriveTronic SPC dedicated drives for simultaneous plate change, QualiTronic Professional inline colour measurement and control plus DensiTronic Professional online density and spectral imaging control. These highly efficient systems guarantee our customers immaculate prints and reprints.”

Ten-colour Rapida 106 at Mondadori Printing in Verona

Last year Mondadori Printing, a huge print operation owned by Italian market leader Gruppo Pozzoni, pushed the button on a ten-colour B1 (41in) Rapida 106 for five-backing-five at its plant in the operatic city of Verona. The highly automated press is the first perfector in Via Montelungo.

Mondadori Printing is one of the top addresses in the European print media industry, and this is reflected in its banner, “Quality at its very best”. Founded in 1907, it specialises in top-of-the-range books, magazines and catalogues for domestic and foreign markets. In addition to Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, the Mondadori group’s headquarters, its customer base has long included international publishing houses such as Bertelsmann, Langenschmidt, Metropoli- tan Museum, National Geographic, La Martiniere, International Master Publishers and Random House.

Verona is by far the biggest of the group’s production locations: in total 200,000m² (over 2 million square feet) of floor space are dedicated to pre-press, press and post-press.

Since the 1980s five 16pp to 64pp KBA commercial web presses have been installed in Verona. At the turn of the millennium there came a succession of KBA litho presses. Six 7B (64in) Rapida 162a five-colour presses, three of them in Verona, were followed in 2005 by Mondadori Printing’s first 18,000sh Rapida 105. The new Rapida 106 ten-colour perfector enables the firm to address more sophisticated customer demands and to strengthen its market position still further.

Simone Boggio, head of book production in Verona, says: “We were looking for an all-rounder – a press that can print books, magazines, catalogues and covers, and which has an advanced level of automation, fast makereadies and a high output. The Rapida 106 ticked all the boxes. We operate three shifts printing books with average runs of 5,000 copies, plus catalogue covers, so we make full use of the Rapida 106’s strengths as the world champion in makeready and production speed. The automated inline quality control and monitoring systems guarantee flawless prints throughout the entire run.”
Small-format open house at KBA North America in Dallas

In conjunction with the Printing & Imaging Association of Mid-America, on 18 January KBA North America held a small-format open house at its new customer centre in Dallas, Texas. Over 85 local printers and suppliers attended the event, learning how to innovate and seeing exceptional demonstrations on our popular Genius 52UV and new eco-minded Rapida 75 while discovering the wealth of business services provided by PIA MidAmerica.

“In today’s competitive market, printers are seeking presses that offer flexibility, gains in productivity and profit, the ability to run a variety of substrates, a reduction in waste, and increased environmentally-friendly features,” said Mark Hischar, KBA NA president and CEO.

KBA vice president of marketing Eric Frank stressed the need for printers to market their organizations and find ways to differentiate themselves, and KBA director of technology Chris Travis explained how products printed on KBA presses can differentiate a firm from its competitors with many unique applications.

Guest speaker Bob Hall, Quick Printing magazine executive editor, projected that offset printing will not be diminished in the future even though digital imaging has made a dramatic increase in the industry, and provided statistics to back up his claims.

What most excited the crowd were press demonstrations on the Rapida 75, which produced a four-colour job at maximum speed, complete with inline die-cutting, and the Genius 52UV, which printed lenticular film.

KBA NA moved from Williston (Vermont) to Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport in summer 2009, uniting all sheetfed and web sales, service and spare-parts activities under one roof.

Compacta 215 soon to roll in Hong Kong

The Ringier Group of Switzerland will soon be firing up a 16pp Compacta 215 commercial web offset press at its facility in Hong Kong. The press will join a fleet of non-KBA presses.

A global player with a payroll of 7,500 and a total of eleven production plants in Europe (Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Switzerland) and Asia, Ringier prints and publishes more than 120 newspaper and magazine titles worldwide. The group also holds sizeable stakes in a number of television and radio stations, produces and promotes over 20 television programmes, organises events and concerts complete with ticket sales, and operates 80-plus web and mobile platforms.

Ringier’s presence in Asia dates back to 1989 and the creation of the Hong Kong plant, Ringier Print (HK) Ltd, in the special economic zone as a 50:50 joint venture with a local company. In 2001 it acquired the other 50 per cent of the company.

The group expanded into China in 1997, and Ringier China now has 590 employees. In association with Chinese partners its Shanghai and Beijing operations produce city guides and other Chinese-language tourist books. Asia Inflight Ltd, a subsidiary of Ringier Pacific Ltd, which is also in Hong Kong, contract prints in-flight magazines for numerous Chinese airlines.

Compacta 215 press lines are in operation the world over, and Ringier chose one for its Hong Kong plant after visiting a string of installations in Europe and China. The new 55,000iph press will print part of the existing portfolio plus future jobs of between 10,000 and 200,000 copies. Configured as four printing units with an F3 gripper folder, it will have a 578mm (22.75in) cut-off, a maximum web width of 1,000mm (39.37in) and will feature manual reel logistics, ErgoTronic console technology, LogoTronic presetting and QuadTech colour control systems. Shipment is scheduled for completion in the current quarter.

Over 85 local Texas printers and suppliers attended KBA’s Invitation to Innovation event, where they spent the day seeing exceptional demonstrations on the popular Genius 52UV and new Rapida 75.
More Comet sales in Russia and China

The heavily utilised Comet at Prime Print will soon receive an additional Pastoline reelstand and a four-colour tower with automatic colour and cut-off register controls, bringing the total to ten reelstands, eight printing towers and two KF 3 jaw folders. The 70,000cph Comet, which is controlled from four consoles incorporating EAE’s Print 4 job-scheduling and press-presetting system, has a maximum page count of 80 broadsheet or 160 tabloid pages, with up to 64 or 128 full-colour pages respectively.

The titles printed on the Comet at Prime Print include the Moscow edition of the popular Komsomol’skaya Pravda, which has a daily circulation of up to 160,000 copies, and a weekly publication, Tolstuschka, with 350,000 copies. Total weekly output of its various titles is some six million copies.

Newspaper sales have been so brisk that Henan Daily Newspaper Group in Zhengzhou, China, exercised the option of an additional tower and folder even before its Comet was delivered. When it comes on stream in the next few weeks the press will comprise four four-high towers, four reelstands and two folders. Two Comets with a total of eight towers and four folders have been in operation in the capital of Henan province since 2001 and 2005.

Further Comet press for News Limited in Australia

Following KBA Comet installations at The Gold Coast Bulletin in Molendinar, Queensland, in 2004 and at a new printing plant in Hobart, Tasmania, in 2009, last autumn Australian media major News Limited placed a third order for our popular blanket-to-blanket tower press, this time for its Darwin plant. The Comet will start printing News Limited’s Northern Territory News at the end of the year.

The Northern Territory News, a tabloid title launched in 1952, has a circulation of around 47,000 copies per day on weekdays and 55,000 on Saturdays. The paper is printed in numerous local editions and distributed throughout the Northern Territory, which covers an area roughly as big as Spain, France and Italy combined, but has a population of approximately 250,000. The main sources of income for the region are mining, beef cattle and tourism. The News’ distribution centre is Darwin, the capital city with some 120,000 inhabitants. The new Comet will also print other News Limited titles: The Sunday Territorian, the Northern Territory Business Review, regional editions, pre-prints and the Darwin Sun.

The press will comprise four Pastoline reelstands, four printing towers and a double jaw folder with a 2:3:3 cylinder ratio. It will have a 578mm (22.75in) cut-off and be capable of handling web widths ranging from 630 to 870mm (24.85 - 34.25in), with 810mm (31.85in) the standard. Maximum output in straight production will be 75,000 full-colour tabloid copies. The contract also includes two KBA consoles with a presetting system, a RIP interface and a diagnostics PC for remote maintenance.
Knowledge transfer: Russian printers visit north German printing plants

At the end of October last year a delegation of commercial printers from Moscow and St Petersburg in Russia, and Yoshkar-Ola in the autonomous republic of Mari El, toured north German printing plants where KBA sheetfed offset presses are strutting their stuff. Their objective was to find out more about printshop organisation and process technology. Mensing Druck & Verpackung in Norderstedt, Weber Druck + Display in Weyhe, terminic in Bremen and Druckerei Weidmann in Hamburg were on the itinerary.

The members of the delegation were stunned by the diversity of the businesses they visited: one is a family-run enterprise in a residential area; another a packaging printer who was the first in Germany to compare proofs with pre-press data using Densitronic PDF; the third is a printer of plastics using UV; and the fourth a specialist in printing wall planners. All the plants visited were exceptionally clean, well organised and dedicated to quality excellence. The visitors were most impressed by wall-planner specialist terminic and UV specialist Weber Druck + Display, where they saw the production of advertising slides, lenticular films and electrostatically charged film like that used in guerrilla marketing. All in all a highly successful trip during which the Russians were given a wealth of advice and information.

Sixth Cortina user workshop

Sixth Cortina user workshop

In September last year Lake Constance was the venue for the sixth user workshop dedicated to our Cortina waterless newspaper press. It was hosted by Südkurier, a media enterprise in Constance whose two 48pp Cortina 6/2 presses had been ecologically printing Südkurier’s title daily, frees, inserts, special publications and upmarket contract work in an outstanding quality since the beginning of the year. Briefing the audience on the new technology, Südkurier production manager Michael Schäfer expressed his satisfaction with the quality and cost efficiency of this highly automated offset press. He said: “The Cortina is just what the company has been looking for to meet the challenges of the future, and in Constance its enormous potential, in terms of both quality and green technology, is being exploited to the full.” Südkurier’s Cortina is the first in which the temperature control system essential in waterless offset is fully integrated in the press, saving a lot of space and energy.