

Omniapiega Sew Up Specialist Pleating Services with Mimaki Technology

Bringing Print into the Fold

Pleating never goes out of fashion. On the contrary, the passion for pleated textures continues to set trends in the world of fashion and haute couture and has even conquered other creative sectors, such as design and architecture. Relunched at the turn of the century and made popular by Marilyn Monroe, the elegant, pleated skirt is synonymous with style.

However, when it comes to adding patterns or other graphic design elements to a pleated garment, the nature of the process creates some complications. This is where the introduction of digitally printed designs and patterns can take pleated garments to even higher levels of quality and appeal. Not only that,



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but digital printing techniques can also offer designers and textile companies increased flexibility when it comes to modifying a piece. Whether to improve the end result last minute or simply create a slightly different version of an existing design - changing the colours gives consumers multiple options of the same product.

Omniapiega is a company who recognises the opportunities made possible with digital printing. This Italian company's expertise in producing high-quality pleated garments is central to its success. Founded in 1970, Omniapiega has tackled various technological challenges over the years in order to continuously improve the complex pleating processes, enhance quality and deliver the best possible service. The most recent way this established business has driven even further success and maintained its competitive advantage was to add digital printing services to its offering.

Based in Carate Brianza, in the province of Monza Brianza - strategically located close to the textile districts of Como and Turin and the fashion capital, Milan - Omniapiega offers a highly specialist, customised pleating service to fashion designers and brands. "In the past, we used external suppliers for creative development and for printing, with very long and complex production processes," explains Pierfilippo Longoni, Fabrics Developer at Omniapiega. "However, when dealing with the world of fashion and creativity, tight deadlines, and last-minute changes are the order of the day. Even when a product is approved, very often variants of the design have to be made very quickly. Consequently, with production times exceeding two weeks, outsourcing the print was complicated and presented several problems."

This lengthy process and the need to create different versions of the same product on demand prompted Omniapiega's management to take the leap and bring digital printing in-house. The aim was to speed up production and guarantee consistent quality from the conception of the design to the choice of fabrics, right up to the delivery of the almost finished product.

With the support of Bompan, Mimaki's exclusive reseller in Italy, Omniapiega installed its first Mimaki JV5 printer in 2015, which was quickly followed by two more units.

"The first step was to create a dedicated printing team, including a technician specialising in sublimation printing for textiles, a graphic designer and a textile designer. It was with this new team that, after researching the solutions available on the market, it was decided to focus on Mimaki's technology," explained Longoni.

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With its expert team in place and three Mimaki systems printing reliably and at high quality, Omniapiega was able to successfully launch its in-house service, increasing both production speed and flexibility. The company could now easily meet the requirements of its customers for fast iterations or design versions, as well as provide more choice when it came to printing onto different fabrics.

"The ability to print in-house gave us the extra edge. Mimaki's technology proved effective right from the start, providing the quality, repeatability and production efficiency we needed. Over the years, we then turned our attention to perfecting the creativity and design element of our services," continued Longoni. Focused on production technology innovation and with the excellent experience Omniapiega has had with Mimaki to date, the company decided to upgrade its production facility in 2022. They added a Mimaki TS55-1800 sublimation printer, intended for continuous production on 350-metre reels, and a TS100-1600 sublimation printer for sampling. The combination of the two high performance machines allows the company to run proofs with greater flexibility before moving to actual production. The consistently high quality achievable with these two systems provides Omniapiega with the certainty that it will achieve the same end results, identical to the prototypes, every time.

Longoni continued, "The investment in the Mimaki TS55-1800 and TS100-1600 printers enabled us to further improve speed and productivity. But that's not all - Mimaki's technology has enhanced our creative processes too, making it possible to replicate a number of vintage jobs in a modern way. In our archive, we have around 6000 different samples for pleating processes and fabric designs. Designers have access to this archive and often take vintage designs or garments as inspiration. Thanks to Mimaki's technology, we are able to work with them to adapt these beautiful vintage patterns to ensure they look flawless when printed and then

pleated. The Mimaki printers produce vibrant colours and intricate, accurate details that add that final touch of creativity to the pieces."

"Pleating has always been our core business and we boast a leading position in the market. In fact, we can say that when we look in the shop windows of the high streets across Italy, the pleats on display are often our own work. With the addition of our dedicated team and Mimaki's digital equipment, we have been able to further consolidate our position as an industry leader. The high-end fashion brands we work with are excited with the applications we achieved with this technology, and likewise, they are happy with the exceptional service in terms of flexibility and speed, both in development and production, that we are able to provide thanks to the Mimaki printers. Last but not least, digital printing has opened up countless avenues of development and innovation for us, allowing us to further accelerate our path of continuous growth and evolution. We look forward to what the future holds as we continue to push new creative and technological boundaries together," Longoni concludes.

Fujifilm announces partnership with Lüscher Technologies to supply CTP devices

At Labelexpo Europe, Brussels, Fujifilm announces a new partnership with respected Swiss CTP equipment manufacturer Lüscher Technologies. The agreement signals Fujifilm's commitment to continue to invest in the future of its analogue business - at the same time as it is pushing the boundaries with its digital technologies. The Fujifilm-Lüscher partnership gives Fujifilm a global contract to distribute Lüscher's MultiDX! and Xpose! platesetter models. These expertly engineered devices will bring a range of benefits to Fujifilm label and packaging customers.

High image resolution is assured, with a range of dpi options, with up to 10,160 dpi available. And as the devices keep plates static during im-

aging, accuracy is also hugely improved. Other benefits include: small plate imaging without the need to slow the imaging speed; no requirement for clamp bars or taping, and no risk of the plate dismounting during imaging.

Furthermore, Lüscher Laser Diode Technology offers 980nm IR imaging for any ablative material such as flexo and letterpress plates and ablative films.

Fujifilm's existing partnership with HYBRID Software (announced earlier this year) will further benefit this partnership as multiple HYBRID RIP options, optimised for Lüscher CTP technology, are also available.

David Parker, Category Manager, Analogue Packaging, Fujifilm EMEA says: "Lüscher was a global pioneer in digital imaging for plates, and they've gone on to become one of the most respected companies in the field, so they were an obvious choice for us to partner with to ensure that we are offering our analogue customers the very best technological solutions. Together with the HYBRID software RIP options we also have available, our three companies working together provide a unique blend of expertise and experience that will give our customers a real edge in a competitive market."

Benedikt Strebel, CEO, Lüscher Technologies adds: "We are thrilled to be entering into partnership with Fujifilm, a pioneer and world leader in the graphic arts industry. Lüscher Technologies AG has long been synonymous with precision, quality and excellence in imaging solutions, and this collaboration with Fujifilm will undoubtedly raise the bar even higher.

"Our shared values of innovation, sustainability, and customer-centricity will serve as the cornerstone of this collaboration.

"Fujifilm's Flenex plate technology, in combination with our market-leading CTP devices, will offer label and packaging businesses unrivalled levels of speed, quality and reliability. We look forward to leveraging our combined strengths to drive new developments, set industry standards and deliver innovative solutions that

meet the changing needs of our customers.”

Commercial printers to expand application creativity with versatile RICOH Pro C7500 digital colour pres

Commercial printers can elevate their creative and versatile print production capabilities by achieving richer and more accurate colours with Ricoh Europe's next generation RICOH Pro C7500 digital colour sheetfed press. The latest portfolio addition follows last month's launch of the high volume RICOH Pro C9500 digital colour sheetfed press. The application versatile RICOH Pro C7500, like the Pro C9500, is an evolution of successful Ricoh technologies. It has been developed to further enable agile commercial printers to adapt to an ever-changing print production environment. Succeeding the RICOH Pro C7200/x Series, the RICOH Pro C7500 is compatible with Ricoh's original special colour toners that include white, clear, invisible red, gold, and silver. Its built in new neon colour profiles can automatically add neon yellow and neon pink to expand the colour gamut for richer and more vivid colour expression.

New on the Pro C7500 too, is an elastic intermediate transfer belt that enhances support for rough or uneven textured media. It can handle a wide range of grammages from 40gsm to 470gsm (compared to the maximum recommended grammage of 360gsm for the Pro C7200/x Series) and has been strengthened to support duplex printed long lengths up to 1030mm. These developments will enable progressive Print Service Providers (PSPs) to broaden their range of applications with, as examples, light packaging, greeting cards, and wedding stationery, while benefiting from enhanced print quality. The RICOH Pro C7500 is also equipped with the brand new RICOH Graphic Communications Operating System (GC OS). The newly developed engine controller enables efficiencies in device use, and the intuitive and simple operation of machine set-

tings. Remote access, via a web browser from a PC or tablet, supports streamlined operation in a multi-skilled environment where print operators are required to perform numerous tasks. New functions via software updates can be continually added in response to client feedback. New too is a powerful DFE (Digital Front End) developed in collaboration with Fiery that drives operational effectiveness. Additional printing efficiencies and labour saving functions have also been introduced to reduce time spent on maintenance and support real time trouble shooting. These include the quick and simple changeover of complete units for special colours and improved operator replaceable units to support responsive system maintenance. Eef de Ridder, Vice President, Graphic Communications Group, Ricoh Europe, says: "These exciting new capabilities on the RICOH Pro C7500 have been developed to respond to some of the key challenges in today's print production environment. They meet the demand for high quality, flexible and agile high value printing. Its broader colour gamut enables PSPs to embrace greater production possibilities while the introduction of the new GC OS helps reduce workloads and streamline operations." As with the just launched Pro C9500, the RICOH Pro C7500's capabilities are enhanced by a range of value-added software options including RICOH Supervisor, RICOH Total-Flow Production Manager and FusionPro that enable clients to maximise their product's effectiveness and return on their Ricoh investment.

Excelitas Technologies to acquire Heraeus Noblelight Business from Heraeus Group

Excelitas Technologies Corp., a leading industrial and medical technology manufacturer focused on delivering innovative, market-driven photonic solutions, announced that it has signed a definitive agreement with Heraeus Group to acquire the Heraeus Noblelight business with approximately 850 employees, including operations in Germany, United

Kingdom, United States, China and Japan, along with several key application centers. Heraeus Noblelight is an operative company within Heraeus Group, a broadly diversified and globally leading family-owned technology group. Heraeus Noblelight specializes in the development and manufacture of specialty light sources and solutions, from ultraviolet to infrared, used within analytical instrumentation, industrial curing, water treatment, electronics manufacturing, medical and cosmetic therapy, battery production and many others. "We see tremendous potential in the union of Heraeus Noblelight's technology portfolio with our own extensive offering in plasma and LED products. Leveraging our combined investments and expanded offering will drive growth and present innovative integrated solutions to our highly complementary customer and product mix across a variety of unique markets," said Michael Ersoni, Excelitas Technologies EVP Commercial Business.

The acquisition of Heraeus Noblelight will represent the latest in a series of strategic acquisitions by Excelitas Technologies since its establishment in 2010.

"As a leading player in the specialty light market, Heraeus Noblelight has a strong footprint in the areas of market access, problem-solving expertise, and technological bandwidth. We are convinced, that this agreement will further boost Heraeus Noblelight's stable growth path of the last years," said Jan Rinnert, CEO and Chairman of the Board of Managing Directors of Heraeus Group.

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