Further digital service expansion

On its way to become a circular and digital packaging solutions company, Siegwerk will expand its digital services by adding virtual tools for customer interaction and engagement. Since 2017, the company has strategically driven its own digital transformation continuously evaluating new technologies to further improve efficiency and strengthen its customer service.

Siegwerk, one of the leading global providers of printing inks for packaging applications and labels, plans to focus on virtual tools and services to further digitalize its customer engagement strategy going forward. By doing so, the company wants to add value to its customer relations especially in times of limited business travel.

The company is currently exploring different communication formats and technologies to engage with customers, demonstrate products and solutions, share knowledge and provide guidance and support. The goal is to make expertise quickly accessible, increase efficiencies to further intensify and improve interaction and cooperation while reducing time-consuming travelling. “We want to further virtualize the customer experience by adding digital customer engagement tools such as live streaming events, digital conferences, virtual demonstrations, trainings or webinars,” explains Ralf Hildenbrand, President Americas and Member of the Board at Siegwerk. In addition to its successful face-to-face customer events, the company now plans to translate its INKday events into a virtual concept to enable participation from all over the world. For more than 12 years Siegwerk has been hosting its popular INKday events offering customers and experts alike a unique platform for fostering discussions around current and future industry topics. “By increasing the digital exchange, coupled with region-specific events and personal meetings, we will be able to engage in an even faster, more effective and personalized manner going forward”, adds Hildenbrand. In 2017, Siegwerk began its digital transformation as an early adopter and one of the first companies in its industry to do so. Since then, the company has been strategically driving the expansion of its digital offerings to continually enhance the overall customer experience. Today, Siegwerk embraces digitalization across all business areas including data-driven innovation, digitalization of processes as well as the development of new and circular business models, with services and platforms leveraging its ink and packaging know-how. Latest milestones in the company's digital transformation include the opening of a fully-automated state-of-the-art Blending Center at its German headquarters in Siegburg as well as the establishment of online services such as the Vendor Managed Inventory System MyInkroom and the online customer portal mySiegwerk. Moreover, the company is continuously looking into the potential of big data and artificial intelligence for improving production cycles and gaining further efficiencies.

As a family-run company with an extensive history, Siegwerk has long been aware of its responsibility to future generations.

Siegwerk focuses on an increased virtual customer engagement strategy
To build a sustainable business with long-lasting growth advantages, Siegwerk is not only driving its own digital transformation but also attaches the utmost importance to proactively driving the realization of a circular packaging industry. Just recently, Siegwerk has invested further resources in the future by establishing its Circular Economy Hub to specially manage the transition towards a circular economy across the company. As a family-run company with an extensive history, Siegwerk has long been aware of its responsibility to future generations. “We are strongly committed to always maintain a sensible balance between ecological, social and economic needs without compromising the resources of future generations,” says Bettina Horenburg, Head of Corporate Communications at Siegwerk. “The constant launch of innovative communication technologies offers ever new opportunities for internal and external cooperation enabling us to connect and exchange even faster and more efficient in an international environment.”

As a result, the company now plans to selectively adjust its overall presence at global industry trade shows with either a virtual exchange or a physical presence where advantageous. That’s why Siegwerk has now decided to not attend drupa nor interpack’s supplier trade fair “components” in 2021. Participation in other exhibitions is currently under review. An attendance in certain Asian trade fairs has already been confirmed as relevant to further drive the regional and mid-term consequences,” adds Horenburg. “In the printing company C. H. Beck (Nördlingen) reacts to the smaller book runs by investing in a highly automated web offset press tailored for quick plate changes. The smooth plate supply is ensured by an equally individual logistic solution from BEIL. Founded in 1763, the printing house C. H. Beck with around 300 employees produces brochures, hardcovers, loose-leaf works, magazines, technical documentation and electronic publications for the publishing house of the same name and many other companies. C. H. Beck is a leader in Europe when it comes to high-quality and page-heavy books on thin paper. In January 2020, the world’s most modern web offset press for printing products on thin-/ and book-printing paper went into operation in Nördlingen. This is remarkable as in Germany the last installed new web offset press for books is about 15 years ago. C. H. Beck broke this long-lasting trend by investing around seven million euros in a manroland Goss Lithoman autoprint including plate feeder and product disposal, thus ushering in a new era in offset printing for books. It replaced a book printing line that had been in operation for nearly four decades. With the new technology including printing plate feeders, folding systems and product disposal print shops can now print papers between 22 and 100 g/qsm with even higher quality and productivity. Such an extensive range of substrates was not possible with the offset printing presses currently in use on the market, as well as the digital printing presses currently in use. Runs as small as 800 copies are no problem with the state-of-the-art control electronics. The situation in the field of book production is characterized by declining circulations, but an increasing number of titles. Books become more individual and book programs are updated at ever shorter intervals. With the latest investment, C. H. Beck has addressed the plate change and setup process. Now plate changes are possible even during operation. At the same time, the printing speed of 35,000 prints/h can be fully utilized at higher runs. The machine is also intended to prove that the offset process can be used to successfully produce books in small editions. About two years passed from the conception of the new production line to its completion and installation. BEIL-Registersysteme GmbH was chosen to design and implement the logistics concept for the project. BEIL was perceived by C. H. Beck as a flexible, strong company capable of successfully implementing the design concept needed. The contact between Beck and Beil has existed for many decades - via the manual devices used in Nördlingen. The latest project has now been implemented together with manroland Goss and Hans Lüscher. The logistics solution consists of the following components: Several plate trolleys with removable gondola for eight bent 1,470 x 1,292 mm plates. A lifter system installed next to the reel splicer, which lifts the removable gondolas (the car remains on the ground) to gallery height, and a rail system on the gallery of the printing press for moving and buffering several gondolas. This simplifies plate transport and allows reliable delivery of printing plates directly to the lower and upper printing units.

This system of printing plate logistics is indispensable for the full utilization of the rotation; a manual transport of the printing plates to the printing units would make the whole concept impossible. In addition, networking in production at Beck is “very important,” as Uwe Bauhammer, Head of Printing, confirms. As many machines as possible should be included. Key words such as automated order data exchange and interface automation are part of the production strategy. The “marriage” of the gondola and the printing plate sets for the new book line takes place, for example, via barcode readers. The print jobs and the associated plates on the gondolas are displayed on monitors. The printing plate logistics in this production area of the printing company C. H. Beck can be expanded in the future by integrating the complete plate production department into a closed and fully automatic system.
However, even the current expansion stage leads to a improved efficiency strong for the existing staff. Less man-
ual intervention, for example, reduces the risk of damage to plates, and the barcode organization ensures the cor-
rect processing of the production plan. The results are reduced waste and greater overall efficiency for the new production process.
The improved plate transport ultimately ensures the replenishment for the numerous plate changes, which sometimes follow each other within a few minutes. Despite small print runs, Beck plans to print around 1.2 million pages per hour or up to eight billion pages per year with the new production line. The system can operate format heights of up to 200 mm - ideal for paperback areas. Thanks to the two printing units, either 1/1-co-
coloured can be printed with a flying plate change or a 2/2 colour.
On 13th of January 2020, the new web offset press with the first official or-
der "Simonen - Die Marie vom Hafen", was put into operation. In the first few months, the performance con-
tinued to rise. "In retrospect," says Printing Manager Uwe Bauhammer, "was the decision for the plate logis-
tics solution from BEIL just right." Six months after implementing the new production system from Beil, the con-
cept is working exactly as expected al-
lowing C. H. Beck to effectively com-
pete in today's short run book market place.

EFI Cretaprint Hybrid Digi-
tal Printing takes Centre
Stage among leading

ceramic tile manufacturers

As the Chinese ceramic tile industry begins to rebound, leading manufac-
turers are showing increased interest in EFI Cretaprint Hybrid technology from Electronics For Imaging, Inc. for on-demand manufacturing of digitally printed ceramic tiles, using either eco-solvent or eco-friendly, wa-
ter-based inks and glazes.

Hybrid printers and other EFI Cretap-
print solutions generated significant in-
terest among attendeess at the Unice-
ramic tradeshow last month in Foshan, China, where EFI completed nine or-
ders for systems from leading manu-
facturers, including Champion Tile and Marco Polo.

EFI Cretaprint participated in the show with Zibo, China-based distribution partner Cremix, a company known for its strong support of tile manufactur-
ers. The successful exhibit with Cremix highlighted the modularity and versa-
tility that have always been the hall-
mark of EFI Cretaprint technology.

"Uniceramic attendees were able to see that Cremix and EFI are very closely aligned in our partnership," said Cre-
rix's founder and general manager, Mr. Eddie Cheng. "We are both dedic-
ated to supporting our customers' busi-
nesses with innovative solutions, and excellent service is our common target."

One of the Cretaprint printer purchas-
ers at Uniceramic, Champion Tile, is a long-time EFI Cretaprint user that chose the new Hybrid system because of the productivity and sustainability advantages it provides. "We have been looking for a real innovation in ce-
ramic decoration that may help us to differentiation our company," said Mr. Tang Zhineng of Champion Tile. "The EFI Cretaprint Hybrid printer, with its ability to use water-based inks, is defi-
nitely an evolution aligned with our product and brand strategy."

In addition to the breakthrough Hy-
brid printer, customers such as Cham-
pion Tile are attracted to the complete ecosystem of solutions EFI provides for efficient, sustainable and productive digital tile decoration. EFI Cretaprint Hybrid technology has been exten-
sively tested and implemented with a complete system that features wa-
ter-based inks and glazes, and an EFI Fiery proServer digital front end that provides exceptional ink savings and highly accurate colour management for ceramics.

The Hybrid printer’s ability to use wa-
ter-based inks and glazes reduces VOC emissions by more than 90% compared to solvent-based inks, and carbon emis-
sions by an average of 73%. In addition, water-based inks and glazes re-
quire less drying time and deliver a more homogeneous application of glaze, guaranteeing high quality in large format pieces and slab manufactur-
ing. The ability to operate with water-based inks as well as eco-solvent inks is a unique advantage that only the EFI

Cretaprint Hybrid printer offers. It also features improved ink delivery, clean-
ing and electronics systems to keep humidity and prevent sedimentation. The printer is available in widths from 700 to 1400 mm, with up to 12 print-
ing bars. New, 5th-generation Cretap-
rint software incorporated in the Hy-
brid printer delivers increased connec-
tivity with third-party applications and an improved operator interface for in-
creased ease of use.

“This technology has been proven in the field, and it received the presti-
gious Alfa de Oro award during the Cevisama trade show held in Febru-
ary,” remarked Evandro Matteucci, vice president and general manager for Building Materials and Packaging at EFI. “Now, we are seeing growing in-
terest in Greater China, reflecting both an increased desire to reduce the en-
vironmental footprint of ceramic tile manufacturing and the entrepreneu-ial spirit of manufacturers who are ag-
gressive in adopting the latest state-
of-the-art technologies to differenti-
ate themselves.”

Long-time Dongguan, China-based Cretaprint user Marco Polo, a large-
scale manufacturer and distributor of architectural ceramics for the home, acquired an EFI Cretaprint Shield sys-
tem and two EFI Cretaprint P4 print-
ers to enable full digital production at its Jiangxi Wonderful subsidiary.

Jiangxi Wonderful’s Shield system - the first such solution sold in China - con-
ists of satellite bars for digital glazing and other applications. Shield technol-
gy gives customers the power to com-
plement their existing equipment. Us-
ers can place Shield units prior to tile printing to apply digital glaze, or af-
ter tile printing to apply glues and other effects.

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