

U. Günther GmbH: From solo to duo with an anniversary model

Flexcel NX System in tandem

Leading German packaging prepress service provider boosts its commitment to Flexcel NX Plate technology with a second Kodak Flexcel NX Wide 5080 System – from Kodaks limited anniversary edition.

Five years after Kodak Flexcel NX Plate technology made its debut at U. Günther GmbH with the acquisition of a Kodak Flexcel NX Wide 5080 System, a second line of the same type was commissioned in November 2018. U. Günther is now the first Kodak customer in Europe to use two of these large-format systems to make high-resolution, high-performance flexographic plates in 1270 x 2032 mm size.

Established in 1968 by Ulrich Günther, this family owned Hamburg firm currently employs around 125 people. The portfolio covers everything from consulting through packaging design, artwork and mock-up pro-



Left to right: Thomas Pyssa (Operations Manager at U. Günther's production facility in Greven), Sascha Paus (Sales Manager DACH, Flexo Packaging Division, Kodak) and Peter Tarnowski (Managing Director of U. Günther GmbH) next to the new Flexcel NX Wide Imager.

duction, reproduction and platemaking for any letterpress application to print production support on behalf of brand owners and retailers. Early in 2016, rapid growth prompted the decision to transfer the company's entire platemaking operations to Greven, about 35 miles to the east in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania. Twenty-five percent of U. Günther's turnover is generated with international clients, with business not confined to Germany's immediate neighbors but as far afield as Greece, Israel, North Africa and Turkey.

At U. Günther, flexo dominates platemaking with 85% of all plates produced; the remainder are letterpress and offset varnish plates. Among the flexo plates, paperboard and corrugated postprint account for 50% of the total surface as opposed to 35% for flexible packaging and 15% for labels. The packaging prepress service provider uses Flexcel NX Plate technology for all of these flexo applications alongside various LAMS systems and a direct laser engraving system. When asked about his reasons for purchasing the first Kodak Flexcel NX

Wide 5080 System back in 2013, Peter Tarnowski, Managing Director of U. Günther GmbH, replies: "We select the plate material based on our customers' needs and preferences. They're free to choose whatever solution suits them best out of all of the production processes available in the market. Flexcel NX Plates had a very good reputation and with demand booming, that investment was a logical step. It was soon clear that the Kodak plates provide exceptional consistency and repeatability. We achieve high-quality results even if the press settings aren't absolutely precise." Tarnowski is equally enthusiastic when it comes to the Flexcel NX System's printing properties: "The ink laydown is very homogeneous and we can control it in a targeted way using the special advanced Kodak Digicap NX Patterning. We conduct tests upfront to determine which Digicap Patterning best matches the combination of press, anilox rollers, inks and substrate. That way, we can deliver Flexcel NX Plates that convince the customer all round with good ink laydown, optimally controllable dot

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gain and excellent printing results." U. Günther uses Flexcel NXH Plates for flexible packaging and labels as well as Flexcel NXC Plates for corrugated printing in every conceivable thickness from 0.76 to 3.94 mm. As far as screen resolution is concerned, the prepress experts manage up to 200 lpi with Flexcel NXH Plates and up to 150 lpi with Flexcel NXC.

The volume of plates manufactured has increased steadily since the first Flexcel NX System was installed five years ago. Today, 25% of all photopolymer flexographic plates made by U. Günther are Flexcel NX, and the figure is still rising.

Business with Flexcel NX Plates developed extremely positively, and so the decision to invest in a second Kodak Flexcel NX Wide 5080 System was an easy one. "On the one hand, we've succeeded in winning new customers who were looking for Flexcel NX Plates while on the other, a backup solution is vital in the interests of delivery reliability. Our original Flexcel NX Wide 5080 System had got so busy that if it had ever broken down, the short delivery deadlines that are nowadays the norm in the plate world would have caused serious problems for us," Tarnowski explains. "Having an extra system gives us double the capacity and one-hundred-percent backup." This newest acquisition is one of a special anniversary edition, which is limited to just 25 units worldwide. Kodak created this exclusive series to mark the tenth anniversary of the Flexcel NX Plate technology, giving it a striking design that is symbolic of the technology's benefits for packaging users.

According to U. Günther's Managing Director, the Flexcel NX System was incorporated "noiselessly" into the production process from the outset and soon became an integral part of it. "We took the right decision back then. In the meantime, our portfolio would be unthinkable without Flexcel NX Plates and thanks to the second system, we've now got the backup and the spare capacity we were previously lacking," Tarnowski concludes. "We've not had a single complaint from customers. Printers who use our Flexcel NXH and Flexcel

NXC Plates are more than happy with them. Make ready, start up and print - that's all they have to do."

EFI announces preliminary results for fourth quarter 2018

The Company indicated that its results were impacted by weakening economic conditions experienced across its direct businesses, with customers delaying spend on capital equipment and software, which materially reduced the Company's close rates at quarter end. "Late in the quarter we began seeing a substantial shift in buying behavior versus the prior year in many of the industries we serve. This was felt most significantly in the Americas. Customers became increasingly concerned about economic trends and many decided to defer capital expenditures until they had greater clarity on the economic environment," said Bill Muir, CEO of EFI. "Though we entered the quarter with a robust pipeline and our Inkjet sales progress through mid-December was tracking ahead of the prior year, the last few weeks of the quarter were exceptionally weak."

The Company reported that the majority of the revenue shortfall was in its Industrial Inkjet business, which declined approximately 5-6% year-over-year. Display Graphics and Building Materials, which were expected to be weak in the quarter, were down more significantly than anticipated. As expected, there was strong demand for the new mid-range Display Graphics products, which sold out, and again weakness at the high end of the portfolio. However, there was greater than anticipated softness around more mature hybrid products. The competitive advantage offered by the newest products outweighed some economic concerns, but not enough to make up the shortfall from the mature hybrid products.

In Building Materials, the shortfall was primarily in China along with other developing economies, with deals pushed out due to the weak construction industry. Textile was also below plan, with weakness in converting the pipeline during Decem-

ber. Nozomi revenue was approximately \$65 million for the full year with some customers delaying decisions until 2019, with concerns about capex spending cited as a significant reason. The Company continues to expect that Nozomi will achieve revenues of \$120 million for full year 2019.

Productivity Software declined approximately 6-7% year-over-year due to pushed deals and a significantly lower fourth quarter close rate. The Americas were the main source of the weakness for Software, with currency also a factor for delays in Latin America deal closings.

Fiery revenues are expected to be largely in line with guidance, at approximately \$60 million. The Company believes that the majority of the unclosed deals across all of the business units remain in the pipeline and were not lost to competition.

"While I am very disappointed in the quarter, I remain confident in our market positioning and new product portfolio. One example is our BOLT printer, which was very well received by the textile industry when it was introduced in October. I continue to be encouraged by the large number of packaging companies actively evaluating Nozomi, as they look to leverage the new opportunities that digital technology brings to their business, in what we expect will be a \$9 billion market for equipment and ink."

During the quarter, EFI also completed steps to enhance its capital structure, including issuing a \$150 million convertible bond and, on January 2, 2019, closed on a \$150 million revolving credit facility.

Mr. Muir continued, "As I learn more about our industry and spend time with customers, I see so many opportunities, but I also see gaps in our execution. The industry is consolidating, and our customer base increasingly comprises larger and more complex organizations. In my first few months with EFI, it has become clear that our go-to-market approach has not sufficiently evolved to meet the growing needs and expectations of many of our customers. Additionally, the results of the quarter reinforce the need for comprehensive strength across our

product portfolio; gaps such as those we are currently experiencing in the high-end of Display Graphics only exacerbate revenue headwinds.

"I am firmly committed to addressing the robustness of our portfolio, augmenting our go-to-market approach, and improving the customer experience. Initiatives to address these areas have already kicked off, and I look forward to providing detail around our plans at our Investor Day in May. I am confident we will see substantial progress from our efforts late in the year, allowing us to deliver the results our customers, shareholders and employees deserve," concluded Muir.

Global Imaging Systems rebranded as Xerox Business Solutions

Xerox is focused on better serving the small-to-medium size business (SMB) market with a more client-centric, simplified and integrated approach across the company. This approach will include better leveraging enterprise-wide our capabilities in the areas of technical services, eCommerce, marketing and IT, to deliver more value to customers.

An element of this change includes a rebrand of Global Imaging Systems (GIS) to become Xerox Business Solutions (XBS). XBS is a leading provider of business technology solutions. Its companies sell and service document management systems, including printers, multifunction devices and copiers, network integration services and software solutions.

"XBS is an important piece of our growth strategy, as we continue to penetrate the lucrative and growing SMB market," said Mike Feldman, president, Xerox Americas Operations. "By better leveraging the strengths of XBS and sharing best practices in areas such as software and IT services opportunities, we believe we can grow share with SMB customers."

The companies that make up XBS will continue to serve customers with their current names, to maintain recognition in the communities they serve. They will also continue to deliver on their existing strategies of success, including offering full lines of multi-branded office and production sys-

tems, software, supplies and workflow solutions. XBS companies manage all aspects of the customer relationship, including sale, installation, training, support and service.

Ed Bass remains president of XBS, reporting to Feldman. The rebrand will initiate on February 5.

Durst strengthens Large Format Printing division with new dual leadership and central management

Durst is expanding its high-revenue Large Format Printing (LFP) segment with a new leadership. Previously, the segment was divided into the areas of web-fed printing in Brixen and flatbed printing at the Lienz production site. With the introduction of the P5 technology platform and the future development of hybrid printing systems, the historically grown structure will be dissolved in favor of better efficiency in the daily dealings with Durst customers and the business unit will be controlled from the Durst headquarters in Brixen, northern Italy.

The new dual leadership will be formed by experienced Durst managers Christian Harder and Andrea Riccardi. Both employees have been with the company for over 20 years and have helped shape the evolutionary stages of Durst inkjet technology in all its facets. As the new Global Sales Director, Christian Harder has cross-segment know-how and has been responsible for successful worldwide sales management for Ceramics Printing in recent years. Prior to that, he was responsible for sales in Eastern Europe and Latin America in the LFP segment. Andrea Riccardi, as the new Head of Product Management, worked for many years in direct sales in the important LFP market Italy and since the end of 2016 has been responsible for the product portfolio in LFP web printing and the further development in Soft Signage/Fabrics Printing.

"The reorganization in the LFP segment brings together the building blocks we set in 2017 with the introduction of the P5 technology platform, the expansion of the Lienz and Brixen customer centers and the new headquarter in Brixen," says Christoph Gamper, CEO of the Durst Group. "The

new dual leadership has my fullest confidence and the best prerequisites for further developing the segment and consolidating our position as market leader. By concentrating the management function in the Group, we are also paving the way for optimal networking and integration with the relevant areas in development, software and services. The Lienz location will also benefit from the cross-segment technology transfer."

Intertype in Australia: First With Color-Logic on Fuji Xerox Iridesse

Intertype, a premier printer in Australia, recently installed a Fuji Xerox Iridesse press and became the first printer worldwide to utilize the Color-Logic process on this press. Discussing the installation, Color-Logic Director of Sales and Marketing Mark Geeves said: "Color-Logic is fast becoming the preferred process of Iridesse press users around the world. Intertype previously used Color-Logic on a Fuji Xerox Color 1000i press, so the transition to their new Fuji Xerox Iridesse was effortless. The company finds many customers for their metallic print offerings."

Ian Bosler, Intertype CEO, commenting on his use of the Color-Logic process, said: "Australian customers are beginning to measure advertising effectiveness by tracking the return on investment of their marketing campaigns. They particularly like the metallic special effects we are able to produce using the Color-Logic process. Our use of Color-Logic has yielded many new projects from existing clients and has garnered us many new clients as well."

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