

## Digital printing grows even at a time of economic stasis

The world's first Rho 1000 was installed at Iffland AG in Gelnhausen in mid-January 2010

This silkscreen-printing firm, on the market since 1969, responds to new customer needs with a high-yield printing system for slabs up to 2.5 m wide.

"In 4-color printing serigraphy is losing ground", explains Alexander W. Bohlender, Iffland board chairman. "Today customer needs are different from even just two years ago.

Quantities have lessened, margins too, and delivery times are increasingly short. All these factors can be dealt with using a high-yield digital printing system for slabs like Durst's Rho 1000". The decision to buy Durst's top model was made just after this new machine was presented at Fespa Digital 2009 in Amsterdam. And so, in just a year and a half, Iffland AG installed two Rho printers; the first, a Rho 800 Presto, dates from May 2008. "Thanks to our good experience with this machine it was easy to decide to buy a new Rho" says Bohlender. "We were struck by the system's print quality and stability as well as the reliability of post-sales service".

### Investing in the future

This stock-market-quoted company, whose main field is advertising for POS and vehicles, has 55 employees, including three trainees. Where orders are concerned, the lion's share comes from business and the gourmet food and automotive industries. But Iffland AG also has an ad technique department, which for instance offers adhesives for cars and does mounting work through partners throughout Europe. Individual branches usually handle the biggest budgets, from processing order-data down to shipping. Not an easy task: according to Bohlender "with an excess of production capacity, margin pressure increases".



Iffland AG, in Gelnhausen, Hessen, has 55 employees.



Alexander W. Bohlender is chairman of the board of Iffland AG.

In 2009 even Iffland AG felt the financial crunch, but the sectors it works in reacted differently: "Digital printing grew even during the slump", the board chairman says with satisfaction. "And so more people went to work in the digital printing department, which increased from three employees to six. Personnel have to be trained internally, so serigraph printers who are interested in it can dare to enter the digital age. "Using the Durst Rho is much more efficient than silk-screening lines" Bohlender says. And not just due to printing speed: "In routine production, many machine down times are caused by inadequate handling of the material. This means that output is quite inferior to what makers indicate". The Rho 1000 instead uses loading and unloading methods borrowed from serigraphy. "It works really well", declares Bohlender with satisfaction. And it's no wonder: in the final stage of machine development Iffland AG contributed its experience to adding the Rho 1000 to the serigraphy department without needing to halt production. Because, all things considered, the company is still working with three big single-color silk-screen installations. Often a single order combines serigraphy and digital printing, for example when you have to preprint white on a colored support. "This is also why we chose the 6-color version, with pale cyan and pale magenta, but without white printing or coating", explains Bohlender. "Thanks to modular structures, the user can order Durst machines that suit precise needs". Come mid-year, Iffland will be installing a special option for printing on rolls up to 2.5 meters wide. With its two lines of roll serigraphy in 1.3 and 3.7 meter formats, the company has a machinery roster truly exclusive nationwide. "Our aim is to go from small runs to digital printing", Bohlender declares.

### Workflow adaptation

With top speed of 600 slabs/hour in a 125 x 80 cm format, Durst's Rho 1000 needs an appropriately sized post-print department so bottlenecks won't be created and interfere with production. Iffland met this challenge with military precision. Serigraphy had accustomed the company to big volumes. According to Bohlender, a factor even more important is that "orders can be printed at a single time. Retail customers order different productions from individual branches. In serigraphy these orders can be filled only one after another, with considerable storage and commissioning costs. In this case digital printing offers enormous advantages". And to take the best advantage of them, in addition to having just completely revamped, towards the middle of the year Iffland will be installing another high-yield slab cutter. Of the 750 pallet slots formerly hosted in the main offices only about 150 remain in a refrigerated warehouse a few miles away, while the ad technique department has returned to occupying the production plant. "This is the only way we can take the best advantage of digital printing", says Bohlender. "The flexibility and speed of the Rho 1000 guarantee us a competitive edge. Purchasing it was a further investment in our future".

Text and photos: Sonja Angerer



Iffland AG mainly furnishes POS materials to customers in the business, gourmet foods and automobile sectors.



Impressive: the new Durst Rho 1000 at Iffland AG: the first to be installed worldwide.



High-performance post-printing is needed to take the best advantage of Rho 1000 production, which can reach 600 slabs per hour.