

First Rho 161 TS Traffic Sign Printer in Finland

Normiopaste, of Tampere, is the first company in Finland to install a Rho 161 TS, which is designed specifically to print road signs using 3M reflective materials and inks.

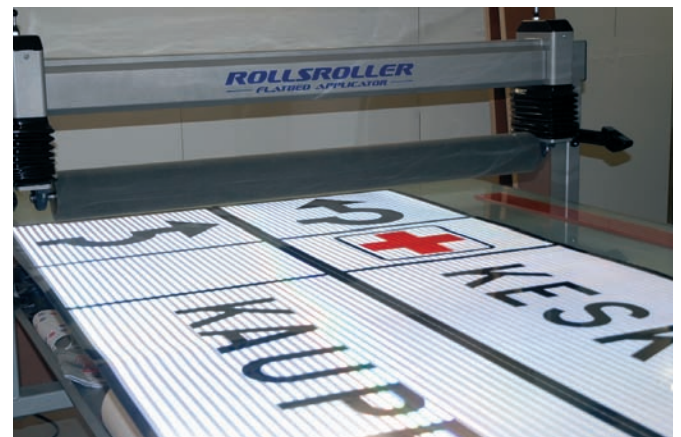
Normiopaste was formed over 25 years ago as a road sign installer by the current owner Tommi Saarni. The company soon became well established and recognised as the best in the business. This led the owner to diversify into other areas including a specialist mining company, road electric company and, more recently, a sporting events centre. Today the group employs 50 people all based in and around Tampere.

Sign manufacturing is the latest addition to the Group. This division was created in March of this year and Joonas Mutttilainen, the Production Manager, was brought in to set up the production plant and run the business. He has an advertising and digital printing background and so had a good understanding of the necessary digital equipment. The machinery was installed about 3 months ago and included the Rho 161 TS, a digital cutting table and metal forming machines amongst other equipment in purpose-built premises. Already the business is flourishing and there is a plan to increase the number of staff in the very near future.

At the centre of the production process is a Rho 161 TS digital printer. Joonas Mutttilainen said: "We saw a real business opportunity for digitally printed road signs in Finland; until now all signs were produced by the silk screen process. The Rho allows us to produce short print runs or one-offs economically and we can also offer a much better service. From receiving the order we can print, mount and install a sign in two days, if necessary, instead of the usual 4 to 8 weeks. Actually this does happen quite often with new road building when it is discovered that one or more additional signs are required urgently."

"However, probably the most important factor is being able to print on 3M high reflective material. Tradition silk screen signs tend to be produced on engineer grade material which is not very reflective and has a fairly short lifespan (only a minimum 3 years with silk screen printing). With our long winters in Finland there are many hours of dusk or darkness and the high reflective signs are much easier to see and safer. And, with the 3M inks and media we are able to offer up to 12 years MCS warranty. Even using engineer grade material, digitally printing with the Rho extends the lifespan of these signs to 7 years. We have found both Durst and 3M very helpful. The Rho has proven to be very easy to use and the quality of print is excellent."

The business has ambitious goals: "We want to be the leading road sign company in Finland within 5 years," said Joonas Mutttilainen. "We also will be looking at the possibility of exporting our signs to different countries. Certainly there are opportunities in other Scandinavian countries such as Sweden and Denmark, also Estonia is a growing market and even Russia."



"We also intend to offer a whole range of different signs in addition to road signs, including warning signs and illuminated signs. Reflective warning signs are much more effective than standard ones. Similarly, the Rho enables us to print in different colours without increasing the cost, which is ideal for producing industrial signs, for example."

"The more we convince our customers: local authorities, town councils and highway contractors, of the benefits of the high reflective material and the durability of our digitally printed signage, the faster our business will grow."

For more information on Normiopaste Oy,
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