

Lüscher lets you have it your way

Stefan Thulin, Vice-President of Sales, tells Packaging MEA why Lüscher's new imaging line offers the perfect combination of quality and flexibility as the transition to flexo gathers pace



Stefan Thulin, Vice-President of Sales, Lüscher Technologies

Packaging MEA (PMEA):

Please tell us briefly about Lüscher Technologies.

Stefan Thulin (ST): Lüscher was founded in 1946 in Obstalden, Switzerland, and has been engaged in designing and manufacturing equipment and machinery for the graphic arts and related industries. Today, we produce high-end computer-to-plate and computer-to-screen.

Since 2013, Lüscher has been based in Bleienbach. In 2015, we integrated into the Heliograph Holding Group. International distribution of our products and after-sales service is taken care of by us directly or by our distribution partners in more than 60 countries. In March 2020, the company moved to Oftringen.

PMEA: What is your take on the trend from rotogravure to flexo?

ST: Not long ago, flexo was seen as low quality and gravure the benchmark for highest quality printing. Due to consistent technical developments in flexo over the past 10-15 years, it is fair to say

flexo printing has today reached the same quality level as gravure.

Gravure is still the choice when it comes to long high-quality print runs. However, there is increasing demand for shorter runs and fast delivery. In such cases, printers will investigate flexo solutions.

PMEA: How does Lüscher position itself in digital flexo plate-making and why should MEA repro houses and package printer-converters consider you?

ST: Lüscher XPose! FlexLine systems combine inside and outside drum technology which allows easy and quick operating. There is no need for clamping or time-consuming taping of the plates on to the drum, since the plates are static.

XPose! FlexLine guarantees the highest productivity. The output speed is constant, and the line is equipped with fibre-coupled infrared laser diodes with extremely long service life. So, there is no need for expensive maintenance contracts and there are also no license fees

in the software packages we supply. Furthermore, XPose! FlexLine is an open system. The customer is not tied to a certain workflow or certain plates; they can choose what they prefer.

A hybrid system is also possible. Depending on the application, two different laser diode types can be combined, allowing the imaging of different printing forms in one machine. It is possible to image many different print forms in the same machine – for example, rotary screens, letterpress plates, waterless offset plates, flexo plates, thermal offset plates, conventional UV offset plates, and film, diazo and ablative.

PMEA: Please give us some technical specs of your imaging device.

ST: The XPose! FlexLine comes with a dual optic system which enables the user to make exposures in full HD with 5080dpi or standard resolution 2540dpi.

A highlight is the fleXtreme! Optic for any desired resolution.

The changeover is fully automatic and tailored. fleXtreme! Optic ensures each plate or screen is imaged at the correct resolution.

For the highest quality demands, we have X!Mask Software, which eliminates hard edges and unsteady images with unsatisfactory colour density in solid areas. With X!Mask micro-cell/surface patterning software, the highest possible density in solid areas and the ability to reproduce very fine dots are achieved.

XPose! FlexLine 330L can image a max plate size of 1067 x 1524 mm and the larger XPose! FlexLine 360L images a max plate size of 1270 x 2032 mm. With the inside drum concept, even much smaller plates can be imaged without clamping or taping.

XPose! FlexLine is equipped with fibre-coupled infrared laser diodes with an extremely long service life guaranteeing 15,000 exposure hours. This means the lowest possible maintenance costs, and there is no maintenance contract or license fee.





PMEA: Does Lüscher collaborate with any digital front end?

ST: All Lüscher systems are open systems supporting 1 Bit Tiff files that could come from any RIP software or workflow. Other file formats can also be processed with plugins. However, as many customers prefer a complete solution, including powerful pre-press software, we work with Hybrid software and have achieved many successful installations with them.

PMEA: Congratulations on your association with Heidelberg Gulf Est. Please give us more details about this new partnership.

ST: Contact was established early this year and, after a few meetings and visits to the UAE, the MoU was recently finalised. Heidelberg Gulf will promote our products in the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Later, more Gulf countries will be added.

PMEA: What are your plans in MEA and why did you choose Heidelberg as your regional partner/distributor?

ST: Lüscher has been present in MEA for many years, with installations. However, as we want to expand in this region, the only way to do so is to appoint a

regional partner/distributor with good technical knowledge and a strong after-sales team. This is why we chose Heidelberg.

To complement this association, Heidelberg has also partnered with Hybrid Software, Belgium to connect the Luscher Digital Imager as its digital front end for workflow and allied software applications.

Packaging MEA also spoke with the Sales Manager CEE/ME of Hybrid Software, Mustafa Dilek to know more about the DFE-Workflow solution that Hybrid offers.

PMEA: Mustafa, could you share with us Hybrid's move to partner with Heidelberg Gulf Est. and what this means to Hybrid Software from a Gulf-regional perspective?

Mustafa Dilek (MD): According to Mordor Intelligence's forecasting, the UAE packaging market is expected to reach USD 6193.16 million at a CAGR of 4.6% by 2026. To service the growing industry, including offset folding carton packaging, it was a natural next step for us to extend our activities in the region. The goal of this cooperation is to equip our customers to manage

this massive growth successfully. We believe that together with Heidelberg Gulf East and Luscher Technologies we can supply the industry with innovative technology to do so. The first projects have already begun, and we are looking forward to the next steps of increasing the efficiency and quality levels of packaging prepress and print production in the UAE.

PMEA: How does Hybrid fit into Reprohouses and also packaging converters who are currently using other DFE and workflow solutions as a connection to their digital imaging systems.

MD: By "listening to our customers and acting upon their input" (our Hybrid motto), we

prioritise innovating our software on a regular basis based on customer feedback and the newest technological possibilities.

As our business relationships are always eyed to the eye and built on mutual understanding, new efficiencies are constantly being added to customers' workflows to allow for saved time in prepress, better organization, and higher print quality. With our agnostic software solutions, customers are never forced into proprietary formats or tools but receive powerful, open solutions in all areas of prepress and print. Adding continual value to our customers' initial investments is important to us, and this business ethos allows us to enjoy the market success that we do. 📄



Mustafa Dilek, Sales Manager CEE/ME, Hybrid Software

