

Printesso: Journey to the future with EFI VUTEk

Skilled IT specialist Robert Schmidt and his partner Sylvio May started a part-time on-line business in 2004 selling consumables which they obtained at low cost from the Far East. Their business exploded thanks to online sales, and today they have a logistics hall of about 11,000 square metres in the Großdubrau business park, including a warehouse that ships out an average of 30,000 parcels a month. With 25 employees, they had a turnover of approximately 8.8 million euros in 2015, enough to start looking for another mainstay.

In his eight years in sales at a large-format printshop, Alexander Augustin had witnessed the rapid development of inkjet digital printers, as had his customers. His customers had become accustomed to the increasingly print quality available with newer machines on the market – at a time when the printshop he worked in was still trying to amortise its existing equipment. His customers were not shy about sharing their concerns that Augustin's shop did not have the latest technology.

Augustin explained this problem within a private group of friends, including Schmidt and May, and told them that his dream would be to have his own printshop with the latest equipment, the best print quality and the highest level of automation.

Schmidt recognised the huge potential of this idea. He had the expertise, the financial means and, with an extra hall, enough space to make their shared dream come true. Plus, in Augustin, he had a young, dedicated and experienced friend who he knew would be capable of running a digital printshop. So Schmidt and May encouraged Augustin to set up a printshop with them, which the gentlemen could all run together. Hence the three friends established Printesso GmbH in November 2014 and became three managing directors with equal rights and the same capital contribution. The unused 1,500 square metre hall was renovated and they planned their purchase of the necessary machines.



Challenge:

Meeting customer expectations for higher print quality.



Printesso is an example of a successful seller of printed materials who got the opportunity to set up his own business with two childhood friends and a new large-format printshop. Robert Schmidt and Sylvio May were looking for another mainstay for their successful Internet business, and they had the financial means, space and entrepreneurship to do so. Alexander Augustin, on the other hand, was a seller of large-format printing and had been looking for the opportunity to print quickly, economically and to the highest quality using the latest machines.

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Only the best is good enough

Augustin knew exactly what he needed: a roll-to-roll printer with a width of up to five metres capable of printing top quality products at the highest speed and with the finest resolution. In addition, he also needed a medium-width hybrid machine that could print from a roll or on boards – also at the highest quality and at the fastest speed. Furthermore, the finishing equipment had to be able to cut or mill large print formats.

Through their many trips to the Far East, Schmidt and May were aware they could purchase inkjet machines there at very low prices. Together they visited a trade fair and checked out the print quality offered by numerous machines, but to no avail. They continued their search at Viscom in Düsseldorf, but still could not find a five-metre press that offered a sufficiently fine resolution. Only EFI™ had machines which met their needs and, with 1,000 dpi and 12 picolitre drops, printed the highest quality at the highest speed. A visit to the demo centre in Brussels with some work samples revealed the right machines would be the EFI VUTEK® GS5000r and the EFI VUTEK GS3250Lx Pro. In addition, they decided to purchase two 320-cm wide Zünd cutters to automate the finishing process.

Well-trained

The complete set up cost 2.5 million euros, and the Sächsische Aufbaubank helped with financing. Once funding had been approved, the VUTEK GS3250Lx Pro was installed. EFI provided thorough training on the machine, which took about 2 weeks. Since both machines were purchased with a maintenance contract, which also included a small stock of parts for replacing wear parts, not only were they trained to operate the machine, they were also given some maintenance instruction.

“The intensive training of our printers has helped us discuss and resolve minor issues or faults quickly with assistance from the service hotline in Brussels,” said Alexander Augustin, praising the meticulous training and telephone support.

The new business’s partners were also introduced to the EFI Fiery® proServer, which automates communication between the Fiery XF software and the printer regarding job-specific tasks. That way, tasks such as nesting, step and repeat, scaling, cropping and tiling can be controlled from the Fiery.

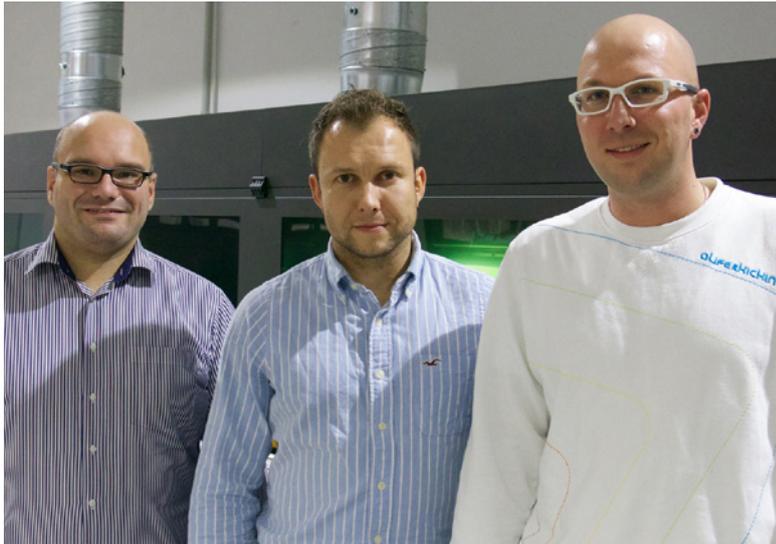
Same quality on rolls and boards

The GS3250Lx Pro printer’s LED-cured inks adhere to practically all absorbent and non-absorbent surfaces. And the printer can quickly change from one printing mode to the other. “We wanted to offer the entire range at the same quality for our customers,” says Augustin,

Solution:

“LED curing was especially important for us because it allows us to print on a wide range of substrates.”

ALEXANDER AUGUSTIN, MANAGING DIRECTOR
PRINTESSO GMBH



Left: The three managing directors: Robert Schmidt (l), Sylvio May and Alexander Augustin. Right: The EFI VUTEK GS3250_{LX} Pro prints 60 1.20 m x 2.40 m boards an hour.



explaining their purchase. “We have definitely achieved that because today we can produce the same quality on flexible and rigid materials.”

Improving images with white

The GS3250_{LX} Pro prints with 8 colour channels that can include either double CMYK inks or CMYK plus four light CMYK colours. In addition, there are two colour channels for white, which can be printed in one pass with the process colours. So on coloured substrates, users can apply gleaming white under the whole printed image to make the process colours appear more brilliant. Users also employ a method to apply the white under parts of the image, which, when done on products like films for light boxes, provides same high contrast on an image in transmitted light as in reflected light.

Print on practically anything

The GS3250_{LX} Pro cures the inks using LED lights so films and plastics can be printed without difficulty. With mercury-vapour lamps, on the other hand, these are difficult or impossible to print on because of the heat. “LED curing was especially important for us,” explains Augustin, “because it allows us to print on a wide range of substrates: in addition to cardboard and paper, we can also print on textiles, PVC, mesh, tarpaulin, self-adhesive films and vinyl for floor coverings.”

Flexible, good and fast

“We chose the EFI LED printer because of its great flexibility, quality and speed,” Augustin added. He gets greater flexibility with the printer because it prints on boards or rolls and can handle a practically unlimited range of print substrates. It offers quality because it always prints with 1000 dpi resolution and smaller 12-picolitre droplets. In eight colours plus white, it prints at a rate of about 110 square metres an hour. The LED lights have no problem curing this, so the company can finish boards and rolls immediately after printing.

Result:

“We chose the EFI LED printer because of its great flexibility, quality and speed.”

ALEXANDER AUGUSTIN,
MANAGING DIRECTOR
PRINTESSO GMBH

The workhorse: VUTEk GS5000r

The company's five-metre EFI VUTEk GS5000r UV roll-to-roll printer, delivered in early August, prints with the same 1000 dpi resolution and 12 picolitre drops. With eight colours plus white, it prints 96 square metres an hour to the highest quality on paper or cardboard, heavy textiles and mesh materials up to 3.2 mm thick. Printesso can print any width up to 5.18 metres, or on up to three rolls of 152 cm wide each.

All types of applications

With its VUTEk printers, Printesso can print everything their customers need: banners, posters, city light posters, television studio decors, mega posters for cinemas or building wraps. Some of the projects the company produced in its first six months with the printers were very impressive.

- Printesso produced three studio backdrops for the next season of German station RTL's show Deutschland sucht den Superstar
- The company printed a 33 x 16 m product advertising poster that weighed 200 kg and took considerable effort to assemble
- For the 2015 Christmas season, Printesso printed a 6 x 17.5 m facade for a DIY store

Satisfied customers

Although still in its early stage of operation, Printesso already has 14 employees working on a single shift, sometimes longer during peak periods. For shipment of the prints, Printesso has found a reliable partner in UPS who are based in a nearby town. Any parcel submitted to the company by 6:45 p.m. is delivered to the customer the next day.

In addition to the new customers, Augustin also has won over some of the demanding customers from his former printshop. Recently, one of those customers sent an e-mail about an 8.50 x 2.40 m banner job: "Dear Mr. Augustin, The banner arrived today. We are delighted with the fantastic resolution. Until now, everything had been much grainier. Thank you!"



The EFI VUTEk GS3250LX Pro prints on rolls at up to 110 m²/h with 1000 dpi and 12 pl.

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