

UWE SCHÜRSMANN WE ASK THE QUESTIONS

AS GUNDLACH PACKAGING GROUP BEGIN THE BETA-TESTING OF THE SCODIX E106 DIGITAL ENHANCEMENT PRESS, WE SIT DOWN WITH THEIR GROUP CEO TO FIND OUT A BIT MORE.



Gundlach Packaging Group is a seventh-generation family-owned printing business leveraging cutting-edge technology to address changing market conditions. As the first company in Europe – and the second worldwide – to install the Scodix E106 Digital Enhancement Press for beta stage testing, we talk to Gundlach CEO and Managing Partner, Dr Uwe Schürsmann, to find out more.

FCI: Gundlach was founded in 1847, can you tell us about the company's journey since then?

US: Change is a constant at Gundlach. The company began in 1847 printing newspapers, in 1905 it installed Germany's first offset press, in the 1920s it was printing bank notes and by 2010, Gundlach had diversified into three distinct divisions – packaging, publishing and process intelligence. Change is a part of Gundlach's DNA. It's intentional that we move desks regularly to inspire this mindset, we develop new partnerships, we upgrade our

environment and we invest in innovative technology. We manage and embrace change because we believe it's key to a thriving business. There's no assumption here that just because something has worked in the past, it will continue to do so indefinitely.

Today, the Gundlach Packaging Group division is a 'multi-specialist' business. We are a leader of various niches within the packaging market – such as tea tags and envelopes, tobacco and confectionary – 85% of our business is international and our products can be found in almost every European household. We have one of the largest assemblies of gravure and offset production equipment under one roof in Europe and we're currently in the process of renewing our offices and investing in another offset press and new workflow, in addition to installing the Scodix E106 Digital Enhancement Press for beta testing.

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SCODIX E106 BETA-TEST



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FCI: Considering Gundlach is heavily invested in gravure, flexo and offset technology, why take such a pioneering role in digital enhancement with the Scodix E106 press?

US: A driver for most companies at present is digitalisation. Not just in the world of print, everywhere. Despite our lucrative use of litho technology, digitalisation is in fact a part of our business model; because while digital products cannot substitute packaging, as a tool for enhancing processes, digital technology is proven and is now significantly impacting the way a lot of packaging is produced. It's a trend that is only set to increase. As such, we continually review new technologies from the digital sector and when we first saw Scodix at drupa last year, we could instantly see substantial opportunity for our business.

FCI: How so?

US: Common challenges in packaging include balancing standardisation against fragmentation, the difficulties of short runs for versioning and personalisation, shorter and shorter timescales and increased competition in a challenging economy. Scodix provides the solution. It's fast. Make-readies are practically eradicated.

It enables products to be personalised with repeatable precision. The packaging market is still in the early stages of digital technology adoption, many are now investing in digital printing, but digital enhancement in a B1 format is still the frontier – consequently Scodix provides a true distinction from the competition.

For example, hot foil stamping has no answer to short-run demand. Hefty tooling costs means it is simply not an option for many of our customers. In its 'industrialised' B1 format, the Scodix E106 provides the

answer. It's fast, it eliminates costly, lengthy make-readies, the quality is superb with ultra-fine detail and intensive colour and applications that were previously unattainable are now possible – foil-over-foil effects, adding Scodix sense effects over foil, or personalising with Scodix variable data sense or Scodix variable data foil. There are similar arguments for each effect – embossing, high gloss, variable density, metallic, spot, barcode and braille – produced by the Scodix E106 press.



SCODIX E106 BETA-TEST

FCI: Do you think your customers understand the benefits that Scodix digital enhancement will bring to their businesses?

US: Packaging is such an important part of a brand, it's one of the few tools marketers and brands can use to communicate with consumers at the point of purchase. Scodix enhancements create nuances. Embellishments can be seen and touched, they create value, differentiate brands on the shelf and arguably influence the purchase decision significantly.

Gundlach customers absolutely understand the importance of shelf appeal and understand how something new and attractive can deliver a positive consumer experience and impact sales. Scodix enhancements are different to anything they've seen before. As Scodix often says 'touching is believing', we've shown our customers samples of what can be achieved and we have seen immense interest from our customers.

It's our view – and our customers agree – that Scodix technology is not just an upgrade to the next technology, it's not the 'new' hot foil embossing. It's a whole new world for packaging. A new way of doing business. We've been working with our employees, holding workshops on how the company should innovate and working closely together with Scodix to re-think packaging. It's our conclusion that enhancements won't just be the finishing touch anymore, it'll be an integral part of the process. We will continue to print high volume runs with offset, but then we'll be able to segment the products using Scodix digital enhancement; or personalise each individual product. That's a whole new

way of thinking about the product, how the customer interacts with the product, a new way of designing it and marketing it. It opens up possibilities for new customers or new market niches who've previously faced too many barriers to using enhancement.

FCI: What impact do you think the Scodix E106 press will have on your business?

US: Scodix technology will of course provide a true competitive edge for our business. We can easily differentiate our services and provide value-added products with a very healthy margin. With no tooling and basically no set-up cost we see the breakeven point to be more than 10,000 sheets. But in addition to those more obvious benefits, we see a lot of potential for the growth of the business.

Gundlach's strategic vision is threefold – digitalisation, growth and internationalisation. The company is growing in Germany and exports already account for 85% of our business, but we aim to expand further in Dubai – where we have another facility – and beyond. Digital enhancement is a fundamental part of that strategy and we are expecting big things.

Broadly, we will offer the benefits of Scodix to the niche markets we currently service and grow that business. Customers that have not been able to leverage enhancement before will now be able to do so, quickly and cost-effectively. Then, we believe it will create whole new niche markets for the business. We have an idea that we'll look at the whisky and cosmetics markets, but who knows? First of course, we complete the beta testing. Then it's a whole new world for packaging. ■

