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Trelleborg meets diverse needs of printers in Latin America and the Americas

As Business Director for printing solutions in the Americas, Mark Barrington deals with distributors and customers throughout a region of the world that is huge in area and diversity. In the following article he explains why Trelleborg and its brands of offset blankets have had such a significant success.

“To my mind there are three words that sum up Trelleborg and our market requirements ... innovation, innovation and innovation. Alright, it’s only one word, but this is so core to the company’s entire philosophy that there is no doubt it has played a crucial role in the success it is experiencing throughout the Latin American and Americas printing industry.

“Printers want choice and they need ever greater efficiencies on the shop floor. This means flexibility, which can only be achieved via innovation ... in the way people approach problems and in the way they create solutions. Suppliers have to truly listen to customers and take the time to understand their individualism, as well as their special operating and quality requirements. We’re all unique, as people and as businesses.

“Take, for instance, a packaging printer producing 70% of the work on his press with UV inks and the rest conventionally. Real life, with its pressures, unexpected orders and challenges means that those jobs will be mixed up throughout the working week. The goal is better print, greater efficiency, and improved pressroom flexibility.

“It’s not cost effective to keep changing blankets every time the ink is altered. What that printer needs is a blanket that ensures high productivity with both types of ink, not one that can perhaps be used in each scenario but only if the operator combines lower press speed and productivity with higher levels of waste. That’s not acceptable in a modern printing environment.”

Trelleborg’s facility in Barueri, Brazil, is equal in quality standards to any offset blanket manufacturing facility throughout the world, while its facility in Lodi Vecchio, Italy, is a global



leader in regards to the elimination of solvents during blanket manufacture. The company's long-term, strong stance on having as little impact on the environment as possible has resulted in leading edge solventless technology.

The Brazilian facility produces the industry-leading Printec brand of offset blankets and approximately 80% of this output is exported around the world. With the ability to import other Trelleborg brands such as Vulcan and Rollin, in addition to a range of specialist products such as metal-back blankets and blankets for metal decorating, printers throughout Latin America are able to obtain solutions that match their particular requirements.

"Printers today have to consider a whole range of different factors, including what their own customers expect," says Mark Barrington. "Most of the big corporations want their printers to be environmentally-friendly and so our ability to produce offset blankets without using solvent is highly appealing.

"Also, the growth in areas such as UV inks has seen a shift in the types of blankets that many printers need. Trelleborg's engineers at its extensive R&D department in Lodi Vecchio, Italy, have been pioneering the development of blankets specifically suited to the new energy-efficient UV printing systems on the market. Throughout the Americas we have been working extremely closely with some of the major packaging groups to further develop solutions that meet their individual requirements now and in the future."

During 2017 Trelleborg established Centre of Excellence distribution and blanket converting operations at its facilities in Morristown, Tennessee, and Barueri, Brazil. These operations are equipped with CAD cutting plus the latest technology and equipment to support its distributors and end-users.

Over the years Trelleborg has created a well established network of experienced distributors and dealers who are able to provide fast, local support to customers. This level of ongoing contact enables the company to gather information on trends etc as well as feedback on products. Its R&D team in Italy analyzes this data and compares it to that received from other parts of the world to help steer the direction of research.



“We’re often able to identify emerging trends before they may occur in Latin America and this lets us prepare the most suitable technology ahead of other blanket manufacturers,” says Mark Barrington. “Conversely, the opposite is also true and in many instances Latin America is pioneering a certain technology, which can then be applied in the rest of the world. This degree of market visibility is highly beneficial to us and our customers.”

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