

**Trelleborg’s Vulcan technology helps rapidly growing South African packaging print business meet innovation and production efficiency challenges**

*The Vulcan Zenith printing blankets from Trelleborg’s printing solutions operation are helping South Africa’s CTP printing group deliver increasingly complex packaging solutions for its blue chip customer-base and improve its own print production efficiency.*

Rapidly growing demand for carton and packaging printing combined with the need to remain as competitive as possible in a fast-paced and evolving market, means CTP is increasingly committed to searching out the best global print technology available.

With main production plants in Cape Town and Johannesburg, the company offers an extensive range of packaging options with innovation an ever-present driver behind its business decisions, says CTP Cartons & Labels Divisional Prepress Solutions Manager Dave Monda.



“The packaging side of our business is growing almost exponentially and now accounts for over 50% of our total sales, so its ongoing expansion is high on our business agenda moving forward.

“South Africa is a developing country with rapidly changing consumer requirements so it’s very much a case of trying to keep one step ahead of our competition technically whilst making sure we keep our production costs under control to meet customer price points.”

CTP’s areas of specialism currently include general folding cartons, as well as litho laminated, quick service restaurant, cigarette and shelf ready packaging plus point of sale materials, with new items constantly joining the portfolio, he points out.

“We are a major supplier of cardboard printing to the large fast food restaurants in South Africa.

“One day we can be completing a 600,00 print run for any of these and tomorrow it could be a short run of just 20,000 design-intensive items for a high-end user.

“We’re being pushed on an almost daily basis to deliver new ideas and innovations for our customers.”

Such a varied range of customers, each with their own individual requirements puts demands on our entire manufacturing system, Dave Monda says.

“We’ve got to be able to combine creativity with technical delivery as well as achieving premium quality. To this end all our systems and cross-platform infrastructure has to integrate seamlessly and be based on state-of-the-art global technology.

“Fundamentally, it’s critical that what we create at pre-press is delivered accurately and consistently in the finished item in terms of detail and final quality.”

Over the years, CTP has come to realise that printing blanket performance lies at the very heart of achieving this objective. Today, Trelleborg Vulcan Zenith blankets are used on all CTP’s sheet-fed UV and conventional litho presses.

“It’s imperative the blankets we choose deliver to the standard our customers demand but also help us run efficiently as a business.

“That means having a product that our machine operators trust and can have confidence in and that all those involved in the various production stages – from pre-press to finishing – have faith in, too.

“It’s too easy to think of customers purely as the people you sell to, but all stakeholders in the production process are affected by the business decisions you make and you can’t let them down either.

“The Trelleborg Vulcan blankets don’t just produce the level of detail and print quality we must achieve across all the different medium we use, which can range from recycled boards to virgin TMP, they meet our team’s needs for dependability and simplicity of use as well.

“This has proven to be the case whether it’s working with FM and AM screening or our own in-house-developed combination / hybrid screening.”

Reliability, strength and longevity are critical factors, Dave Monda says.

“Under sometimes extreme print conditions, we have found the Vulcan blanket performance, smash resistance and recovery to be exceptional”

As important as product performance is customer support with Trelleborg’s South African distributor Thunderbolt which is responsible for the critical role of combining its own on the ground experience and knowledge with the product and technical expertise of the Italian-based manufacturer.

Managing this all important relationship is Thunderbolt Group Sales Director Wayne Stevens.

“We’ve been in business for 20 years now and we know it’s not enough just to provide products – however good they are. In an area as rapidly developing as print, you have to be able to support those products fully in the field and keep your customers up-to-date with technical developments.

“That’s a philosophy shared by us and Trelleborg, so it’s why the relationship is so powerful. South Africa is 10,000 kilometers from Europe but that commitment to ‘knowledge transfer’ from both sides is what really makes the difference.

“We can offer the peace of mind that comes with close local support for customers alongside the world-class manufacturing and technical expertise offered by Trelleborg.”

As well as providing technical support and product back-up, Thunderbolt makes available conversion facilities to match Trelleborg blankets specifically to individual presses and customer requirements, alongside a growing range of printing equipment and consumables, he points out.

“The challenge of keeping pace with the demand for printing technology can only grow in the future as South Africa’s economy evolves and technical collaboration, such as that with Trelleborg, is a great way to fast-track the best thinking and products into the country.

“Our print industry can only expand in the years ahead and so will the demand from progressive printers like CTP for the technology to drive it.”

For CTP’s Dave Monda, embracing new world-class technology is fundamental to the business.

“We’re all under price pressure in order to compete but if you want to stay at the forefront you’ve got to offer new solutions, provide better service and become an indispensable element of your customers’ success.

“The relationship with Thunderbolt and Trelleborg is a great example of this thinking in action.

“There are always going to be lower cost blankets out there but the performance of the Vulcan product, the efficiency of output it allows and the results produced on the press, far outweigh cheaper options.

“If you add in access to the latest thinking on print techniques, interest in what your business needs are and a genuine desire to help you and your people prosper, then you really do have something that can transform your business.”

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