

South Korean metal printing specialist relies on Trelleborg's product quality and commitment to local technical support

With printing blanket performance critical to the quality and efficiency of offset printing on metal, a three-way collaboration between manufacturer, distributor and end-user is helping South Korea's largest exponent of the process set new global standards.

Trelleborg's printing solutions operation, the world's largest offset printing blanket manufacturer, working in conjunction with distributor Hwasung Major to provide specialist local support for its Vulcan products, is helping South Korea's KMP printing business go from strength to strength.



Inhwang Lim, Sales Director of Hwasung Major and Anthony Lee, CEO of KMP

The tie-up is not only allowing the metal printing specialist improve its production efficiency and meet the demanding quality standards required by international markets, it is also helping it achieve both domestic and global growth targets.

By any measures, KMP is an impressive operation. With capacity to produce 20,000 metric tonnes per month of printed sheet metal using a range of two, four, six and eight color presses allied to sophisticated finishing technology, it's a business built on high standards.

From its creation 50 years ago, the company has focused on exceeding customer needs and quality expectations by utilizing the latest technology with several firsts along the way, including the introduction of Korea's first six color fully automatic printing line in 2002.

Today, KMP is South Korea's largest specialist metal printing company with strong domestic business underpinning a successful launch on to the world stage and an impressive number of high-profile global customers gained since its export drive started 20 years ago.

According to Anthony Lee, CEO of KMP, whilst the company's heritage is undoubtedly South-Korean, it sees itself increasingly as an international company.

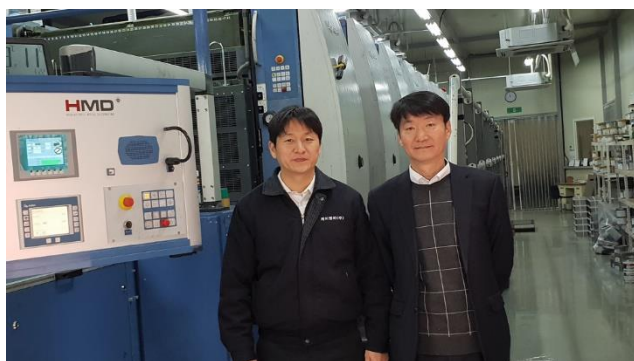
"We've put a lot of emphasis on understanding the needs of our customers and building partnerships with them so we are much more than just a print supplier. This business model has worked well for us and in recent years we have taken our philosophy into export markets such as the US, Europe and Australia as well as Asia.

"Our aim is to supply the world's best quality coated and printed metal sheets to global customers on time, to precise specifications and with a level of customer service that rivals the best international organizations whatever the sector. As a result, we now have a growing list of renowned global can and metal container making companies as our long-term business partners."

Competitive Edge

Competing on the world stage means KMP has to be increasingly focused on the processes, quality standards and technologies it uses with economic efficiency always at the forefront, Anthony Lee explains.

"We follow global standards to meet our partner's production criteria and we know they have other print options, so we have to be the best we can be in all areas including quality and consistency. Our products are typically two and three piece food cans, aerosol, paint containers, bottle caps and we're working to the highest global standards including ISO9001 quality protocols and FSSC 22000 food safety certification."



Delivering this involves a range of printing systems including UV and non-UV with both inside and outside coating/varnishing options plus other services including waxing, coil shearing, DRD warping as well as digital design, CTP services and metal proofing.

As well as the high output achieved by its printing operations, a range of Tandem coating and varnishing equipment delivers a potential of 15,000M tonnes/month to complement this.

In addition, the wax line is capable of 5,700 sheets/hour on aluminum sheet, electrolytic tin plate (ETP) or tin-free steel (TFS) and the coil shearing line can deliver 2000m tonnes/month. A total of eleven ovens are used.

Achieving the combination of high output and top quality puts a lot of emphasis not just on technology but also quality of supplier support with the performance of printing blankets critical in KMP's production equation.

According to Marco Carlini, Asia Pacific Sales Director for Trelleborg's printing solutions operation, Trelleborg-made Vulcan printing blankets are used by KMP with the accuracy and reliability they deliver being key requirements for any offset printing application.

"The Vulcan brand is recognized throughout the world as the premium choice for offset printers as it provides optimum performance day-in day-out with an exceptional lifetime and there's a large range to suit virtually all production needs and requirements.

"At KMP, Trelleborg Vulcan Folio is used for the multi-color presses with Vulcan Folio UV being the blanket of choice for the dedicated UV units. Vulcan Deco is used for the two-unit Fuji Kikai presses to guarantee optimum solid printing."

Whilst Trelleborg printing solutions has invested considerable time and resources in developing the best printing blankets possible, quality of its distribution network is also key to it achieving its business objectives, he points out.

"During the past years, we have been focused on working closely with our end-users through a professional and skilled distribution network and this allows us to better understand local requirements and fine-tune the solutions we offer. This partnership approach has proved very successful and the relationship with our Korean distributor Hwasung Major is a great example of this."

The best products and support

A leading supplier of essential printing consumables such as printing plates, printing blankets, fountain solutions and various washes for offset printing industry, Hwasung Major has been working directly with Trelleborg Printing Solutions for over 35 years.

The company is not only responsible for delivering printing blankets to the precise specification demanded by KMP, it also provides them with the technical expertise and support necessary to get the most out of them.

Building a close relationship

According to Inhwang Lim, Sales Director of Hwasung Major, a close relationship has been built up with Trelleborg at a technical level, with both companies sharing the same exacting values when it comes to customer service.

“We know that it’s not enough just to provide the best products we can. In an industry as complex as modern printing, it’s essential we offer the highest level of technical support we can too.

“We are also importing printing chemicals from Japan, Singapore, Malaysia and Europe, and printing plates from Spain and China. In addition, we manufacture printing chemicals ourselves at our factory in Paju, so are involved in printer support at all levels.

“The Trelleborg Vulcan range is the bestselling printing blanket in South Korea and we offer a dedicated conversion facilities to provide a perfect match of printing blanket and individual print requirements.”

But key to the best possible relationship with customers is investing time in understanding their business and working with them to perfect the products and services offered and ensure they are working to optimum performance for them, Inhwang Lim says.

For Anthony Lee such partnerships are what they have built their business on are equally appreciated when it comes to their suppliers.

“Printing is an increasingly technical business and we rely on the quality of the manufacturers, products and third-party support teams we use to give us our competitive edge. This will become increasingly important as we continue our journey into new global markets.

“When you’re relying on something as key to your business as printing blankets, you just can’t take any risks - a single failure can cost you a lot of money. Using highly-developed top quality products like Trelleborg Vulcan obviously minimizes that, but the benefits from close contact with the company through Hwasung Major in terms of knowledge, advice and solutions, are invaluable.”

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Profile of the Trelleborg group and Trelleborg’s printing solutions operation:

Trelleborg’s printing solutions operations, part of Trelleborg Coated Systems, offers first class solutions for the printing industry with worldwide recognized brands, such as Vulcan®, Rollin®, Printec®, Sava and Axcyl. Its solutions are leading edge in the offset and flexo printing markets for a variety of applications including newspapers, magazines, catalogs, business forms, labels, metal decorating and packaging. www.trelleborg.com/printing

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