

TKM France has developed its know-how in Flexo printing for several years. As for this company, Flexo printing technology has progressed drastically during the last decade. Interview of Emmanuel Mougenot, Packaging Market Specialist at TKM France.

## How do you see the evolution of Flexo printing ?

*Flexo printing is improving in many different directions, without losing its historical strengths. The most significant changes can be seen in the quality and in the speed of the machines. What an amazing change with what Flexo was 20 or 30 years ago! Most of my customers are working everyday to make Flexo's image change among their own customers and prove them that their quality can be equivalent to other technologies known as "top level". As the European leader within the doctor blade production, we launched some blades that can allow remarkable dot gains (tests made at DFTA in July 2008 with the FlexoTip OptiPrint doctor blade). We do our best to be active in this great permanent evolution process.*

## What are the other notable evolutions?

*We have to keep in mind that Flexo remains flexible and fast. The consumables have followed this trend : anilox with a longer lifetime, with improved anti corrosion layers, some new equipments to spray the ceramic and to engrave the rolls, as well as having a better finishing. Cylinders are lighter and lighter, easiest to manipulate (sleeve systems). From the doctor blade point of view, we have enlarged our range with notably a unique one: our RMB DuroBlade allows using time until 20 times longer than a standard blade, while improving printing quality! We also work on improving lifetime of end seals which can be also a critical point for printers.*

## What about sustainable development? Any improvement?

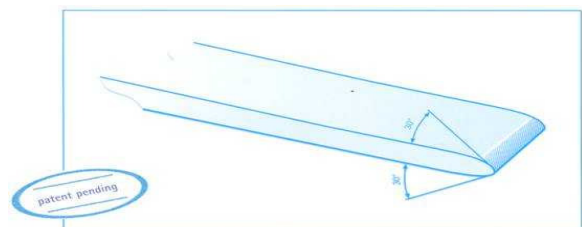
*The engraving of Pamarco anilox rolls is made with the latest multi Hit laser, installed the last 2 years. Besides their extreme precision, these lasers work faster and use much less energy. Furthermore, our RolfMeyer doctor blades are packaged in a 100 % reusable carton packaging, which is a proof that every single link of the graphic chain must feel concerned.*

## Are you also concerned with safety matters?

*Of course, we think, as a supplier, that we have to facilitate the operator's job and think about their safety first. If we take the example of RolfMeyer GmbH, we can speak about some blades that help the cleaning, reduce the scoring lines risk on anilox rollers, reduce the back-doctoring phenomenon (ink flowing outside the doctor blade chamber) or ink spitting in UV inks. Our Flexo blades have not only these advantages: they are also less dangerous for operators, less cutting, even after use. We decreased drastically the cutting risk while adapting the bevel's shape and dimension, also thanks to a special treatment.*

## Has TKM France some projects related to Flexo printing ?

*Yes, our company is striving to propose a permanently improved service level for its customers, notably in the Flexo market. TKM France has also roots in the Offset Market, thanks to the IKS Klingenberg guillotine knives or the innovating Innowatec blanket cleaning brushes. That was natural for TKM France to consider the varnish unit market. About Flexo, I am personally in charge of visiting customers in France and Belgium. I work with 3 persons in back-office. Also our General Manager is very technically involved because he is Product Manager at RolfMeyer for almost 10 years. We modestly think about releasing our Flexo knowledge to our Offset customers, for their varnish units. These printers are often very surprised with our service and quality level that we can provide them with: anilox audit, advise for an engraving type and a volume selection, advise to choose the most effective doctor blade type depending on their machines and varnish, ... Our diagnostic capacity, combined with technical advice is very much appreciated by a demanding market. Varnish units at Offset printers will, for sure, be one of our priorities for the coming years.*



## Success story : how does a French printer see the approach from TKM France



*Varnish unit is an important part of the machine for Sheetfed offset printers*

STATIM is a printing company based in Normandy since December 2005. It was founded by people who have passion for Offset Printing. STATIM employs 30 workers and has a 8 colours Komori S40 Sheetfed Offset machine, with a flexographic technology varnish unit. More that 95 % of their printing jobs are produced with acrylic varnish, which gives a real added value to these high quality print jobs, for the food industry overpackaging.

The Technical Manager, Christophe PITREY, explains : *“when we started, our varnish unit was working with standard stainless steel blades. We were working with only 2 shifts. With good parameters, these blades resisted only 5 days before the first leakage. Our company developed very fast. We are printing on paper and cardboard, we can print until 14 000 sheets/hour ! We are now printing from Sunday 21.00 to Saturday 18.00. It is clear that we are always looking for the best solutions to avoid stopping our machines, for example to change doctor blades and clean the chamber. In 2008, we definitively choose to change our blades to the RMB DuroBlade, after a first trial that really impressed us. These doctor blades, ready for use since they are pre-cut are very easy to install. Their greatest advantage is the fact that they have an enormous lifetime. We leave these blades 4 weeks in the machine, without changing anything! When we consider the fact that we are now working with the 4X8 hours system, I let you make the calculation! We are not in the same planet with those blades. The time saving are very high, if we consider the mounting, demounting, cleaning and so on. That is easier for our operators and also a pleasure for our financial Manager!”*

Please note that the RMB DuroBlade is a doctor blade with a steel or stainless steel body completed with a ceramic projection on 1 side. This material, just a bit less hard that an anilox roll, will be worn very slowly without damaging the cylinder. The doctoring will be consistent and perfect. This blade is existing for more than 10 years within the Flexo industry and can be used for varnish units with success.

