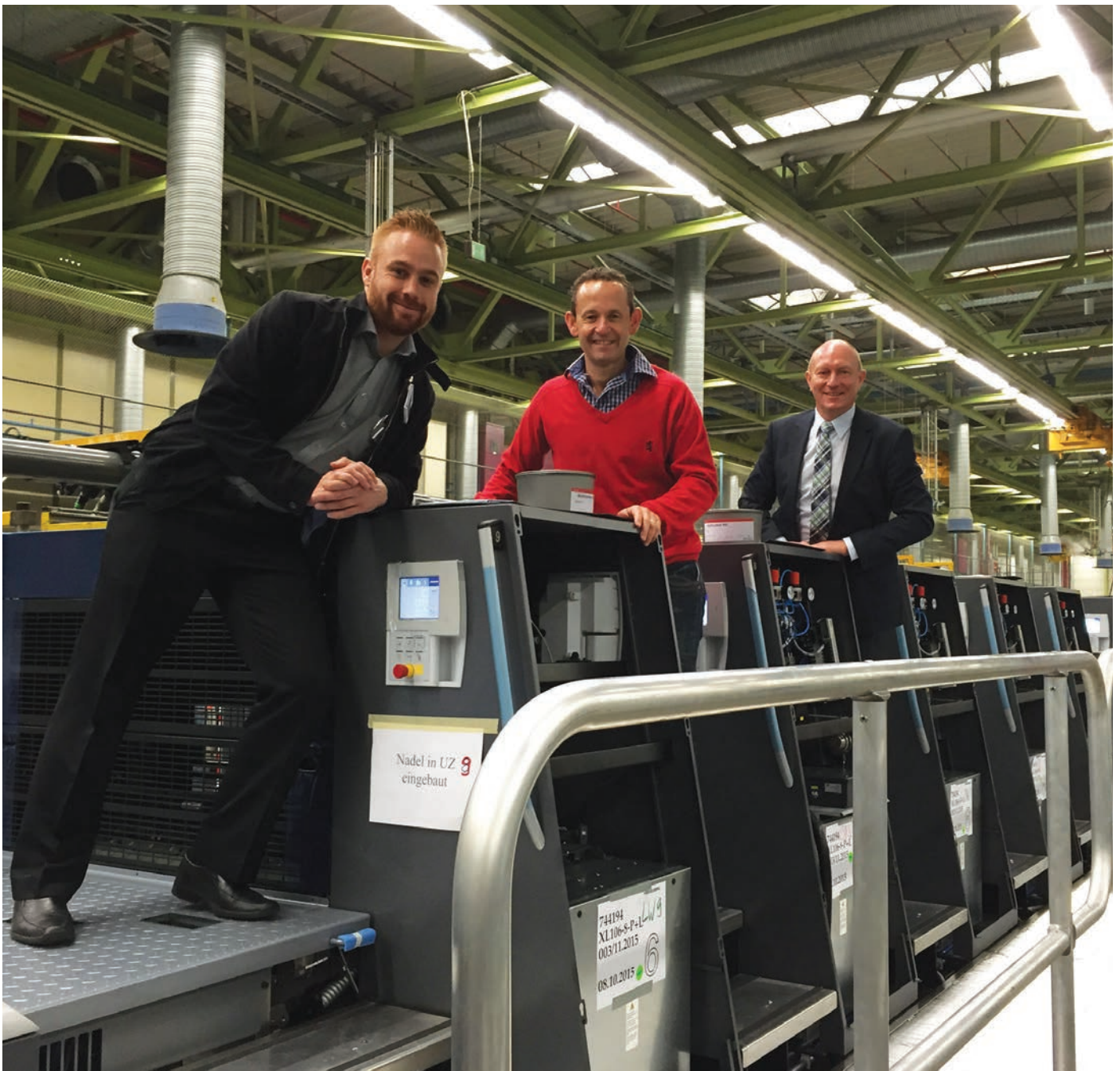


'Quality is a given Productivity is key'



Warren Jones of Heridelberg Graphics, Bryan Miltz of Typo and Thomas Necker of Heidelberg Germany.

Consider printing a 376-page book, which equates to 23,5 sections of 16-pages each. Factor in the time it takes to change each set of plates, that is a total of 188 plates, with the accompanying time required for wash-up after each section and you are in for a long printing process. Well, at Typo Colour Printing Specialists (Typo), this entire job was printed in just six hours. That is less than one full shift. How is this possible?

With Typo's latest acquisition, namely the first Speedmaster XL 106 eight-colour plus coater and long perfecting press in the country, Typo has now the latest state-of-the-art technology at its fingertips.

Each and every feature of the press is designed to achieve maximum productivity while maintaining top-class quality. Every plate change, including wash-up is done in just two minutes using the Intellistart system from Heidelberg. With this press, Typo is aiming to gain on efficiencies and to improve on turn-around times.

Typo is a family owned, medium-sized business which was founded in 1934 by Zelman Miltz. In 1980, Zelman passed down the company to his son Sam which was then passed onto his grandson Bryan Miltz. The company employs 100 full-time staff and over the years has grown to become a full-service printer. Typo does not only offer litho, but also digital and large-format printing as well as a complete binding service. Situated in Jeppestown, Johannesburg, the company is centrally-located to most customers but also supports those that are located further afield.

Bryan commented, 'Printing has undergone a major change in recent years, run lengths are now much shorter and the demand for faster turnaround times has increased. The one thing that has not changed is the demand from clients for top-level quality. Quality is a given – productivity is key.'

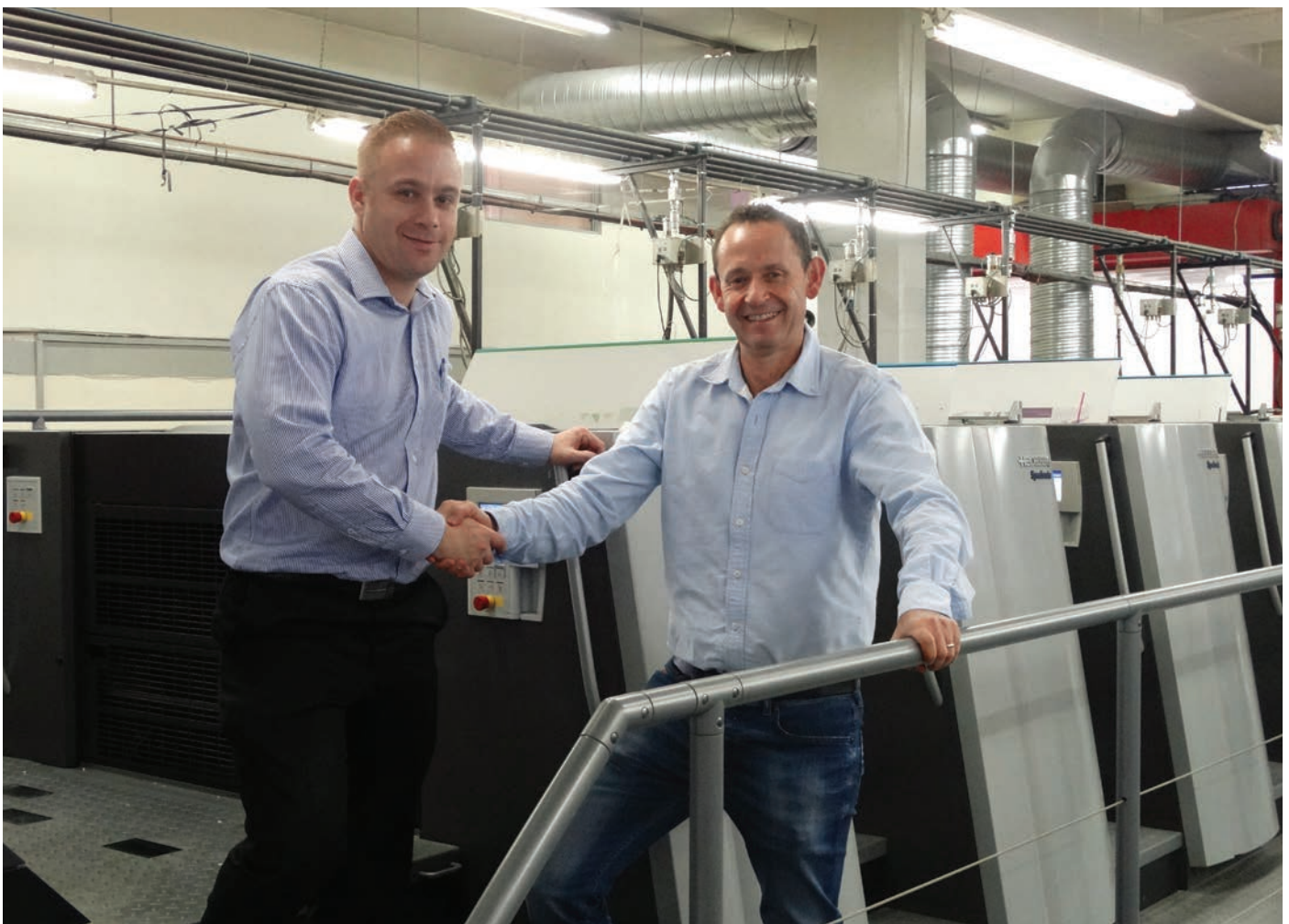
This statement is not only true for customers but more specifically for the printer as well. Only by ensuring maximum uptime and the fastest possible throughput can printers keep to their promise of delivering fast-around turnaround times along with being cost-effective as well as economically competitive. Bryan added, 'Many printers try to compete on price alone, but that is not the only factor to consider. By increasing efficiencies we can put more work through the press per shift, per day and per week which allows us to be more profitable.'

For these efficiencies to materialise, this is where the Heidelberg Speedmaster XL 106 press comes into play. The Speedmaster XL 106 has the highest level of automation on the market. For the first time in the history of offset printing, operators can now change jobs fully automated with the revolutionary Push to Stop function.

Typo is built on the philosophy of using the best technology, i.e. opting to spend the extra money on the latest equipment to save later in the long run. The XL 106, commissioned in March this year, offers a completely new level of efficiency and as such replaces Typo's five year old eight-colour Heidelberg Speedmaster 102 press

Every aspect of the XL 106 is designed to allow the printer to focus on achieving maximum productivity. Starting with the process of plate loading, all eight plates can be loaded automatically in a staggered process using AutoPlate XL2. Inking is also handled automatically as the ink zones do not require any calibration. The Prinect Image Control 3 spectrophotometric colour measurement system measures and controls the ink which measures the entire print image and automatically controls all printing units simultaneously. Once the press has completed the process of washing the blanket and impression cylinders and the automatic pre-inking is complete, the printing process can start.

Throughout the printing process, the Prinect Inpress Control 2 system automatically measures and controls the colour and register on-the-fly at full printing speed. The measuring unit is integrated in the press and measures scale colours, spot colours and register in the control strip. Any necessary corrections are automatically forwarded to the Prinect Press Center XL 2 control station for adjustments. Quality is further ensured by the Prinect Inspection Control 2 which checks each sheet for hiccups, material defects, ink splashes and scumming using two high-resolution colour camera in the coating unit.





With this high level of automation and autonomy, the operator is able to control the press almost entirely from the Prinect Press Center, which includes the Wallscreen XL – a fully interactive interface which provides maximum transparency across all queued and active processes. On longer runs, the Wallscreen also gives a complete overview of print run progress showing where colour variations have occurred.

Bryan stated, 'The majority of our work is in the short-run sector of the market and as such there are certain of the features of the Wallscreen which we do not use. This is also the reason we decided to specify our machine with a maximum print speed of 15 000sph. Where we achieve the greatest benefit is in the ability to turn jobs around quickly. On our old press, a job change could take up to 20 minutes, all of that time is lost. On this press, a full job change can be done in just a few minutes which means that across a full shift we can produce an additional three or four jobs – and sometimes even more.'

Increased productivity and throughput is not the only benefit Typo has experienced since the press was installed and commissioned. The Intellistart feature ensures that correct colour is achieved faster which results in significantly lower waste levels at the start of each job. While makeready and colour could take as much as 300 sheets on the old press, Typo is up to colour in just 50 sheets on the new press. Add to this the fact that the press consumes as much as 20 per cent less energy to run than older presses, the savings can be significant.

Bryan added, 'The press has another feature which made it ideal for our requirements – it can handle thicker substrates than our old machine. This gives us the ability to handle the heavier cover materials – up to 0.8mm - and lighter body stocks which have become popular but it also means that should the need arise we can handle packaging printing. While this is not a major part of our business, if there is a need for it we can certainly take it on.'

Such has the increase in productivity at Typo been, that Bryan has managed to reduce the number of shifts on his remaining Heidelberg Speedmaster 102 down to a single shift per day. The XL 106 operates for a full three shifts per day running Monday to Friday and a single shift on Saturday.

Bryan concluded, 'The new press has increased our productivity to such an extent that despite an approximate 15 per cent increase in workload we have still been able to reduce the number of shifts on our other press. If the need for additional capacity arises, as it occasionally does, we can simply add extra shifts on that press to take up the slack.'

This increase in the volume of throughput has highlighted areas within the company where further streamlining of processes will be required. Bryan revealed, 'In our platemaking department the operators have quickly understood that they need to have plates ready for the press. This is a very hungry machine and our plate makers generally try to ensure that there are sufficient plates ready to keep the machine producing. It is also the reason I added a second assistant on this machine. He ensures that the plates are ready for the next job and the old plates are removed, thereby freeing the first assistant to ensure that the paper is moved up to the press in good time for the next job. One area which is finding it a bit more difficult is the finishing department where the machines cannot keep up with the sheer speed of the XL 106. This is a challenge we are learning to deal with and we are actively seeking solutions.'

While the printing industry has had more than its fair share of uncertainty, Typo Colour Printing Specialists has made a positive investment through the addition of this future-proof press. Bryan believes that there is still more consolidation ahead for the South African printing industry but he is convinced that there is still a bright future ahead for the industry and this press is just the first step in promoting a positive outcome.