

# INDUSTRY IN-DEPTH

## HEIDELBERG REPORTS SUCCESSFUL DRUPA

**Ryan Miles, Managing Director at Heidelberg Graphic Systems Southern Africa, gives his verdict on the expo.**

### **WHAT WERE THE MAJOR TRENDS AT DRUPA 2016?**

Firstly, and most importantly, Industry 4.0 was an overriding theme that will drive the industry going forward. This includes automation and digitisation of processes to enable more efficient, increased productivity at lower costs. Secondly, the increase in digital equipment available to the industrial commercial and packaging markets was evident.

### **WHAT WERE THE PRODUCT LAUNCHES FROM YOUR COMPANY?**

While there were numerous new products on display from Heidelberg, our company demonstrated a complete repositioning of our portfolio and cemented our position as the leading industry supplier across litho and digital printing formats.

We demonstrated that our entire portfolio is geared to help our customers achieve the best results as they push for Industry 4.0 standards. Our repositioning included new digital products (Primefire, Omnifire), new products (unique folding technology in new folders), major enhancements to workflow and automation software (Prinect) and digitisation and automation in all printing processes. This results in the new terms/processes called 'autonomous printing' and 'push to stop technology' on litho machines, which achieve higher productivity and hugely improved make ready times from an already industry-leading position, as well as allowing our machines to create and log service calls in a proactive way when particular events are triggered as opposed to having to log a breakdown call.

In addition we showed our powerful partnerships with Masterworks (for post-press packaging and industrial commercial needs) and Polar (new Digicut Pro machine). We also launched a new customer interactive tool called Heidelberg



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Assistant. This will work in the Heidelberg Cloud to transparently and securely share information with our customers on numerous aspects of their environments, including but not limited to, machine and workflow productivity, service call status, etc. The Heidelberg Assistant works both ways, so customers will also input information into the tool.

### **JUDGING FROM THE EVENT, WHAT IS THE GENERAL FEELING FROM THE PRINTING INDUSTRY? ARE PEOPLE FEELING POSITIVE ABOUT THE FUTURE OF PRINT?**

Leading world markets are highly positive about their industry and its future. But for South Africa, there are many misconceptions about the 'future of the print industry' and generally mixed feelings.

We need to be careful not to get two issues confused.

Firstly, in SA, as has already occurred in the leading markets of the world, the industry is consolidating due to certain printers having adopted a move towards Industry 4.0 and others not. Those who have adopted this strategy are able to gain market share from those who have not had this strategy. This is not a reflection of the amount of print work in the market, simply a reflection of early adopters in a fast-changing industry gaining a competitive advantage through such early adoption.

Secondly, SA commercial printers are experiencing changes in their customers' requirements. These include a push for faster turnarounds, shorter runs, and changes in their customers' marketing

strategies (ie percentage spend on print vs. other media). Again though, we can learn from the leading markets in the world that this will reach a healthy parity and once that happens, print volumes should be stable. SA packaging printers, and this is a very general statement as certain packaging segments are fast growing, face a different scenario, which is linked to our economic growth and when this is depressed, so are their volumes. An improvement to our economy will see immediate benefits for them and there is also upside potential in African markets for those who have a growth strategy in that area.

So, the long term future of the print industry is sound, but those printers who are unable or unwilling to adapt to change will struggle in the short and medium terms and this will fuel the consolidation (and resulting negativity) that we are dealing with until it reaches parity. The fact that there will be less printers producing the same or more print work in the future bodes very well for a strong print industry in the long term.

### **DID YOU HAVE ANY EQUIPMENT PURCHASED FROM AFRICA OR POTENTIAL INTEREST IN PURCHASING FROM THE REGION?**

Yes, we achieved more than our original goals and we are enthusiastic about how our customers appreciated Heidelberg's portfolio repositioning, and how they understand the benefits thereof to their companies. 🇿🇦

**Heidelberg Graphic Systems SA**  
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