



The **Rotocon-Wink** success story

TOWARDS the end of last year, Rotocon was named as the official South African representative for Wink Stanzwerkzeuge – a German manufacturer of cutting tools for the graphic arts industry. Now, just a few months later, the two companies report that Wink has taken the lead in the supply of die-cutting tools to South Africa's printers and converters.

'We're very satisfied with our partnership,' remarks Ludger Bastubbe, Wink's area sales manager for South Africa. 'Although we've been serving the South African market for some time, the breakthrough came with Rotocon's appointment as our agent. The Rotocon team has the technical skills and market insights that are crucial for our mutual success. In addition, Rotocon shares our customer-focused philosophy – to offer not only the best products but also the best service on the market.'

Adds Detlef Geske, Wink's sales director: 'The South African market plays an important part in our global growth strategy. In Rotocon, we're pleased to have found a reliable and proactive partner, supporting us on our path to success.'

Over the past few years, Wink has invested steadily in expanding production capacity and improving efficiency, resulting, the company claims, in Wink's flexible dies becoming the benchmark in terms of quality and delivery times. And now further investments have now been approved in order to meet continuously rising demand from around the world.

A large part of these investments relate to ecological matters, ensuring that production processes are as 'clean' as possible. By using state-of-the-art filtering and recycling techniques, for instance, Wink uses lower quantities of chemicals more efficiently, especially for etching steel plates. And, as most processes run in closed loops, waste is minimised.

Another example is the installation of solar panels to produce eco-friendly electricity.

Expanding flexible die production

Last year, Wink expanded its production area by some 1 400m² and invested heavily in new machinery to meet growing demand for die-cutting tools. At the same time, workflow was optimised to allow the increasingly efficient production of high-quality tools.

Among the most important measures were the installation of an automatic coating machine for flexible dies; new engraving machines with high-precision control; a new etching machine; refurbishing of existing engraving machinery; expansion of the packaging/final quality control department; new offices for sales and CAD-CAM departments; and the installation of a photovoltaic system.

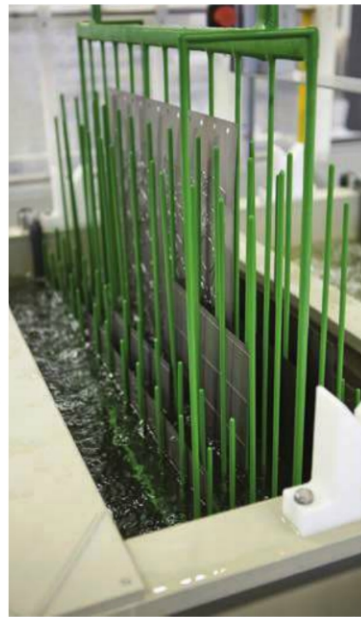
'We've always produced to the highest quality levels,' explains MD, Alan de Natris. 'But last year's expansion enabled us to meet the increasingly stringent requirements of our international markets.'

Wink's magnetic flexible dies are made from high quality steel using state-of-the-art CNC technology for milling and sharpening. Wink guarantees minimum tolerances, maximum durability and optimum cost-effectiveness.

Wink's SuperCut flexible dies – available with several finishes and coatings to maximise die-cutting efficiency – significantly exceed these standard requirements, with tolerances of only 2µm.

New coating technologies

And now the company has moved yet another step forward. Complementing its already wide range of flexible die finishes, Wink now offers an MCR (MicroChrome) coating.



Among last year's extensive investments were a new engraving machine and a revamped packaging/final quality control department.

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Die-cutting labels is very demanding with several factors influencing the choice of tooling. While some applications can be run with a standard, uncoated flexible die, most need a special hardening of the tool to guarantee efficient processing.

For processing long runs of abrasive materials and inks (thermal paper, opaque white), for instance, the new MCR coating combined with laser hardening offers a considerably prolonged life. The MCR coating – specially-developed hard chrome composite applied to the tool surface by galvanic means – protects the cutting edges from wear. This means that coating does not impair tolerances, flexibility and magnetic adhesion.

Over the years, the company has developed several surface treatments and finishes, each suited to different applications and customer demands.

Laser hardening is generally recommended for cutting-through as well as for large quantities of difficult-to-cut filmic materials. Wink's established MC coating offers good protection against wear when kiss-cutting abrasive (thermal) materials but this is now exceeded by the MCR coating.

Additionally, Wink offers four non-stick coatings that represent the optimum solution for converters in combating ink and adhesive residues. The non-stick coating minimises these residues on the cutting edges and on the surface of the die, ensuring an undisturbed production process.

Ed's note: Rotocon's new website is now live ... visit it at www.rotocon.co.za.

Top-quality every time

SINCE Long Run Labels & Laminates (formerly known as Track & Trace Labels) commenced manufacturing in 2001, substantial investment has gone into rotary and flexible die technology.

Comments co-owner, Teresa Adinolfi, 'Much has changed in our business in the last decade. Not only do we now run a fleet of advanced narrow-web and wide-web flexographic printing presses in various widths, we also convert a wider range of materials such as supported and unsupported films and paper stock with PET liner for speciality applications. Having a trustworthy die supplier, such as Rotocon, who recognises our specific converting needs has been invaluable.'

Production manager, Lance Zeeman, concurs: 'Rotocon understands the need for reliability and, with the Wink brand of flexible dies, we know we're getting a top-class product that provides a perfect precision cut time and again, no matter what type of press we're using.'

As more and more brand owners demand 'just in time' service, keeping machine downtime to a minimum is vital, and, as Lance points out, Rotocon's impressive service levels ensure a smooth production



A satisfied customer! Patrick Aengenvoort (Rotocon) and Teresa Adinolfi (Long Run Labels).

process. 'Patrick Aengenvoort is always ready to go the extra mile and the longest we'll wait to receive a new, European-built Wink flexible die is three days. That's pretty impressive!'

Converting
matters