

NEW GENERATION METEOR DP60 PRO POWERFUL ADDITION FOR R+A PRINT

MGI's flagship Meteor DP60 PRO has been a bit of a learning curve for R+A Print in Johannesburg. But all that's worth it for getting the most out of this new generation digital press that's been causing a sensation abroad, and is now set to change the digital print landscape in South Africa a mighty way.

The new generation and flagship MGI, the Meteor DP60 PRO, supplied by local agents Ferrostaal Equipment Solutions (Pty) Ltd incorporating Printing Products, has been causing a great deal of interest and excitement abroad has found its first home in South Africa – at R+A Print in Johannesburg.

The machine is fogra certified using the ISO 12647-7 standard, and is thus perfect for the evolving graphics arts market, integrating many offset qualities into a technically sophisticated digital press.

It has also been hailed as the most versatile digital press in the market, mainly due to the wide variety of paper and plastic substrates which can be used – up to 400 microns thick. Substrates include matte, gloss, envelopes with windows, textured papers with labels/stickers, and plastic/synthetic. Substrates include PVC, polycarbonate, polyester, Teslin, vinyl, PET, and canvas and magnets. All substrates are printed in high quality resolutions of up to 2 400dpi with

variable line screen capabilities.

"It is also the only digital press that uses an oil-free toner, which makes a huge difference," says Andre van Beek, Managing Director of R+A Print. "It doesn't give you that oily, dark, shiny look that is normally associated with digital prints. This produces prints which are truly amazing, probably the closest to true offset you'll ever get. The colour is also absolutely consistent from first page to last. There is no slow-down for heavier stock either. The great plus is that registration is spot on!

"I actually showed a print off the Meteor DP60 PRO to one of my top machine minders, He thought it had come off one of our litho machines, the quality is that good."

The press also has the largest array of supported sheet sizes, ranging from 100 x 150 mm up to 330 x 650 mm in standard configuration, in addition to a wide range of envelope sizes. Printing speed is up to 3 900 A4 pages per hour.

The Meteor DP60 PRO's colour consistency and print stability



integrates into the most production printing environments, and is an ideal complement in the offset business.

"This press definitely bridges a gap that has been evident between digital and litho. It is not a conventional digital machine, in that it produces quality more suited to higher-end commercial printing but has all the abilities – and more – needed in today's demanding digital printing era."

The machine has a pile feeder like a press. The pile can hold up to 2 500 sheets of paper and an air knife helps feed the paper into the press. Inside, the press has an infrared heater with dry ink technology – ensuring as the prints come out, they are bone dry!

The Meteor DP60 PRO fits so perfectly within the environs of R+A Print that it seems to have been made for this purpose. Standard litho in the form of an A1 Heidelberg 6-colour CD with coater and an A2 Speedmaster 74 4-colour plus coater combines seamlessly with the new digital production into one dynamic all-powerful workflow.

"We had to get into digital because that's the way that print is moving, and although it will never replace offset, it is the print medium of the future. For smaller runs and on-demand printing, there is no way to go but digital – and you also need to get into things like personalisation, which can only be handled with digital printing."

The front end of the Meteor DP60 PRO is a robust EFI Fiery running System 8, which handles all variable data formats with ease – and the ability to customise content to target customers individually is the fastest growing area in print today.

Documents are fully customised to be relevant to the prescribed audience and applications include personalised



advertising, automatic numbering, bar codes, alphanumeric databases, and photos on virtually any paper or plastic substrate.

Andre says he really wanted something different in a digital press, and spend considerable time in search of one, culminating in the discovery of the Meteor DP60 PRO.

"Everyone I know that has a digital press has more or less the same kind of thing, but I was determined to get something completely different. I knew that I had stumbled onto something good when I saw this press in action at drupa last year. It is totally unlike any other digital press that I know... and has lived up to all my expectations."

It's also early days yet, as Andre has only had the press for a month, but already it is producing the kind of stuff that has everyone, including Operations Manager Vesco Milkov, who has just returned from a training session in France at MGI headquarters, very excited.

"We want to make an impact in the card market – things like access cards and promotional cards just among the many ideas we have. In this regard, we also acquired two optional extras – the The PressCard Pro and the PunchCard Pro and these are also working brilliantly for us."

The Press Card Pro is an industrial lamination unit for paper and plastic substrates, and can manufacture plastic cards (ISO CR-80) from 100 up to 850 microns, RFID, labels, signage and many other applications, including clear PVC overlay with embedded magnetic stripes.

MGI's PunchCard Pro is a stand-alone hydraulic finishing unit for paper or plastic Cards. Each sheet can be cut into 21 or 24 ISO CR-80 cards (85.5 mm x 54 mm) with rounded corners and a maximum thickness of 850 microns. Crop marks are read using integrated fibre optics, which ensures precision die cutting.

"We've been on a big learning curve here," says Andre, "as this is all completely new to us. Considering it's only been a month, I think we've done pretty well. The local agents have



also been really excellent, installing the machine and training us, and they have since been looking after us exceedingly well. The two guys that were trained by the agents both come from an IT background, so they have the kind of mindsets that are needed for this kind of printing."

Andre says they don't operate on the click-charge basis.

"We buy our consumables as and when we need them. At the moment the agents are putting them in on consignment and we pay for what we use. This is a great system and I believe your costings are far more accurate." Did others think he was crazy investing in an economic downturn?

"Absolutely – but that's where others and I part ways. My wife, who is also the financial director, and I believe that you should be making purchases in downturns. We got an excellent price at a very good exchange rate. It also means that we can get up to speed technology-wise, so when the upturn comes, we will be ready to fly!

"Obviously no-one wants to spend money, but you've got to in order to make money. You also have to diversify to remain competitive. I could easily have shut this place down technology-wise for five years – but after that, what then? You'll never be able to catch up where technology has arrived in this business, and we all know how fast it actually moves in this business!"



Andre could actually be dubbed one of the trailblazers in the industry, as he was also the first to install chemistry-free plates in his prepress set-up. In fact, it's doing so well that he's ready to put in his second chemistry-free system – and this after he was considered rather crazy by others by going chemistry-free in the first place.

"Trailblazer, guinea-pig, crazy, whatever – I'm obviously doing something right," quips Andre. "I'll tell you something else that you can hold me to – this Meteor is going to light up the sky like nothing else."

Indeed. And if it's true that the difference is in the dynamics, this great alternative to widely available commodity print solutions from offset and digital vendors has arrived with perfect timing. – **BIG**

⊕ For more information on the Meteor DP60 PRO call Ferrostaal Equipment Solutions (Pty) Ltd incorporating Printing Products on 021 948 0820

⊕ For more information on R+A Print call Andre van Beek on 011 608 2445

