



FOCUS ON WHAT'S IMPORTANT

A German professional pre-press partner that is active across Europe, Carl Ostermann Erben provides flexo and letterpress printing plates made to latest technology standards and solutions for the most demanding of printing challenges. Emma-Jane Batey spoke to business development manager Michael Halfar to find out more.





Carl Ostermann Erben was founded in 1891 in Bremen, Germany, by pioneering printer Carl Ostermann. His forward-thinking vision saw that pre-fabricated counter plates would replace the current factory-made counter plates and so, to turn his idea into a reality, he set up a small production company that quickly became successful. Carl Ostermann's pre-fabricated counter plates soon gained a great reputation for performance and quality both at home in Germany and abroad, with the company's quick yet stable growth reflecting its position.

Today, Carl Ostermann Erben (COE) has enjoyed a number of moves and expansions while remaining a family-owned German company, with family members still at the helm and maintaining the innovative spirit of its founder. Now one of Europe's full-service pre-press partners, COE appreciates that its success remains founded in fair business ethics, innovative technologies and materials and taking care of employees.

Yesterday and today

Business Development Manager Michael Halfar spoke to Packaging Europe about how the strong history of COE helps to keep the company on track today. He said, "We are rooted in our history as well as being fiercely passionate about innovation. It's a good mix as essentially we are the plate making department for our customers; they trust us to work as part of their business and to deliver the exact plate making solution they need."

The COE core business is to investigate the possibilities of printing plates by assessing and analysing the best technology available on the market. It then invests in this technology if it hasn't already and is able to offer it to various printing houses. Mr Halfar explained, "We invest in printing plate technology so our customers don't have to: our customers get the best possible selection of the available technologies as we do all of the research and can present the relevant information. It saves a considerable amount of time and money for our customers as they are guaranteed to have the most appropriate printing plate solution." ▷





Once COE has assessed all of the relevant printing plate technologies and has presented its findings to its customers, it can provide printing tests done on site. Mr Halfar continued, "We make a fingerprint of their press and carefully assess the results in order to ensure that we are offering the best technical solution. This is all based on fact – it's been measured. We know that we are truly offering the best printing plate solution for their requirements because it is proven by facts and figures."

"One of the solutions to our customers is the new water wash AWP™ Pinning Top Dot plate technology from Asahi Photoproducts. We have seen particular advantages of that plate in the very fine highlight dot areas as well as its good registration capabilities. The printer most of the time finds a clean plate after printing which is highlighting the fact that he does not need to stop the press during the run for plate cleaning."


A true partner

By working as a true partner, COE lets its customers focus on their core business. Through delivering a complete pre-press service, it embeds its many years of experience into its customers' businesses. Mr Halfar added, "We spend each and every day using our pre-press experience so that our customers can enjoy perfect results. Our customers can benefit from the very latest industry developments and innovations without spending the time and money it takes to assess this information. We also work closely with machinery manufacturers and ink suppliers so that the solutions are quick to market and our measurement lab constantly guarantees precise analysis. We consider every step of the process in our one-stop shop so that our customers can focus on their core business."




COE's main type of customer is European label printers, with around 80 per cent of its current activity coming from the label industry. Usually it works with label printers with just one to six flexo presses as it is here that its 'all inclusive' research and investment provision is most appreciated. Mr Halfar noted, "Bigger players tend to make their own plates, but we can still certainly add value for these customers as they tend to stick with the technology they've historically invested in whereas we can assess the whole market. We can see if there's a more appropriate solution as we're not restricted in any way. COE is certainly a JIT printing plate partner for major player too."

With COE continuing to 'grow gently', Mr Halfar is clear that its future will be every bit as successful as its long history. As the label industry is known to work based on partnerships, the fact that COE is highly experienced in building long-term, mutually-beneficial relationships and can clearly measure and deliver the facts is a welcome approach. Mr Halfar concluded, "Convincing customers of the advantages of working with a printing plate partner takes time, but as we are able to quantify our benefit through saved time and money and we have excellent references from our long-term partners, we know that we can show how COE is a valuable addition to your team." □

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