



◀ A visit to Cartes in Italy in October not only provided the Sign & Seal contingent with training on their new machine but also ensured that Presstec fulfils the promise of after-sales service and backup. Seen here are Sign & Seal's Carlo Steyn and Henk Crous with Presstec's Byron Hendricks. On the right is Luca Goldoni of Cartes.

▼ Carlo Steyn and Henk Crous are delighted with the multiple capabilities of their new baby – a Cartes CE160 finishing line.

Exceeding expectations

A second Cartes finishing line has landed in Cape Town – this time at Sign & Seal Labels, reports GILL LOUBSER.



ABOUT ten years ago, Henk Crous decided to bow out of the Johannesburg rat race and relocate to the Cape. Having spent many years in both the packaging and petroleum industries, he fancied a change of scene. Enticed by the manufacturing sector, he eventually settled on label printing for his new career and established Sign & Seal Labels – a business that's gone from strength to strength in seven short years.

At inception, the fledgling Sign & Seal Labels was housed in a factory unit in Winelands Park (a neat industrial complex at Saxenburg Park, close to Kuils River in the Western Cape), and Henk's first major capex went into a locally-built Pacom seven-colour flexo press.

Today it's a whole different business. Now spread throughout two adjacent units in the same complex, he boasts various flexo presses capable of printing from one to eight colour jobs (the latest being a Mark Andy 2200) on a range of different substrates. Printing is complemented by Rotoflex inspection machines and now the latest investment – a brand-new Cartes CE160 finishing machine imported from Italy.

The focus at Sign & Seal is on self-adhesive labels, decals and tags, primarily for the consumer goods and retail sectors, but also for the textile and clothing industries.

However, as Henk explains, realising that the business needed to be taken to another level – out of the highly-competitive commodity end of the market, with its ever-tightening margins, and firmly into the realm of added-value labels (for the wine and other luxury goods markets) – the time was ripe to raid the piggy bank and invest in a sophisticated finishing system.

'We had already earned an excellent reputation with our customers and increasingly they were requesting more specialised label finishes, such as foiling and embossing, so we decided to take the plunge and import the Cartes line in a bid to "test the water",' he relates. In the event, the project exceeded all expectations. The management team was amazed to find that business picked up such momentum that they experienced 5% turnover growth in the first month following its commissioning.

Not surprisingly, this revelation is accompanied by smiles all round!

Why Cartes?

So how did Henk and his team come to choose the Cartes line?

'We already had a long-standing business relationship with Antron Hendricks and his brothers at Presstec, primary suppliers of our tooling and rotary cutting dies,' he relates, 'so it made sense to consult with them on the best equipment to meet our fresh aspirations.'

Having settled on a Cartes CE160 line (formerly designated the CE152), Henk and factory manager, Carlo Steyn, travelled to Italy for a thorough induction and training session. And since their return have relayed this training to other staff members.

The CE160 is designed to print on a variety of substrates, including self-adhesives, PVC, board, plastics, woven tapes, artificial leather and satin. As the series is modular, Cartes can design a line to suit specific production needs. It can be configured with different numbers of hot stamping units; and

other possibilities include a cutting unit, a flat die-cutting or laser die-cutting unit, or both. According to Luca Goldini, Cartes sales executive, the hot stamping system is clean and non-polluting, and can be used with the wide array of coloured, metallised, holographic and special foils available on the market.

'Apart from enhancing our business, and allowing us to add value to our labels and tags, this purchase has had another positive spin-off – it has provided opportunities for staff advancement,' Henk notes. 'Our employees can now progress to another level of sophistication, and already we've been able to promote one staff member.'

Taking up the story, Antron Hendricks, MD

of Presstec, comments: 'We're extremely proud of this second Cartes installation in South Africa. It underlines our promise to be more than just an industry supplier. Our number one priority is to provide solutions that add value to our customers' businesses. Our gratification comes from having truly satisfied customers such as Henk.'

And final word goes to Henk: 'To stay current, we believe in investing in our people and our machinery. This latest addition aligns with our strategic direction and we embarked on this route with confidence as we view Presstec as a strategic partner in the process of growing our business. We plan to extend the capabilities of our Cartes finishing line in the near future.'

Presstec invests in labelling

PRESSTEC'S commitment to continue investing in the labelling industry by providing strong technical service and support on behalf of all its overseas principals was the primary reason for a recent visit to Italy by Byron Hendricks, Presstec's senior technician, for training on both Omet and Cartes equipment.

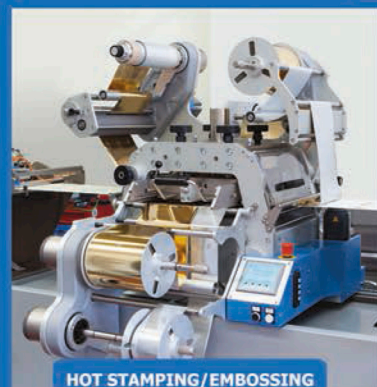
Byron spent a week at each facility and, reports Presstec MD, Antron Hendricks, feedback from both principals has been entirely positive.

'We will continue to provide the industry with technologically-advanced solutions that provide our customers with increased productivity and efficiency,' Antron adds.

'Apart from our current principals – Omet, Cartes, Grafronic and Vela – some exciting additional partnerships will be announced in the coming weeks. These will further enhance our already impressive "value-added" offering.'



Byron Hendricks spent a week at Omet and a week at Cartes, undergoing intensive training on all equipment in order to offer strong local back-up and support.



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