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Celebrating two decades of signage leadership

Q&A with Sharif Rahman, CEO, International Expo Consults



Abdul Rahman Falaknaz, Chairman, International Expo-Consults and Mona Ghanem Al Marri, Director General, Government of Dubai Media Office at the inauguration of SGI 2017

1. How has SGI stayed relevant and influential during the past 20 years?

The journey began with humble beginnings 20 years back as we envisaged a dream to nurture SGI Dubai into a colossal event which would be looked up by everyone. Today SGI Dubai is a force to reckon with, and being the largest exhibition of its kind in the Middle East, SGI Dubai has exhibitors and visitors from across the world who mutually stand to benefit from each other's presence. This mega event is a one-stop-shop where exhibitors and visitors can interact with sign makers, print and production manufacturers, architects, media agencies, real-estate developers, brand and image consultants.

The SGI Dubai show has many reasons as to why visitors and exhibitors should take part in this exhibition. Primarily one gets to meet the most important and eminent decision makers apart from networking with the key local and international industry professionals. There is scope for exploring the latest innovation and breakthroughs around the globe. One can get the chance to experience innovative developments first hand and also build and develop a strong customer base including future

prospects to expand and propel one's business. We have 415 exhibitors this year.

2. What are the new features of SGI 2017?

SGI Dubai 2017 will bring more specialized pavilions to cater to the ever-developing needs of the digital, retail, textile, screen printing, LED, finishing and fabricating industries. We have added new dimensions to the show based on the growing industry requirements and our research team is on top of this. In this 20th edition, we will have a strong representation of exhibitors from across the GCC, Africa, the Sub Continent, Europe, Asia and US among other regions. This edition will also have the largest showcase of innovative products and the best brands in the industry.

Many exhibitors of SGI Dubai 2017 are participating in the 'Wall of Fame' which is a newly introduced segment which will help the exhibitors to showcase their brands in form of an artwork. The 'Wall of Fame' is a concept that has been introduced by the SGI team to welcome its exhibitors to be part of its prestigious highlighted segment that provides exquisite brand visibility. It is a lucrative opportunity to make the

exhibitors' brand famous. Exhibitors were urged to showcase their best campaigns that were developed in 2016, which could be anything to do within the printing and signage industry in the form of artworks.

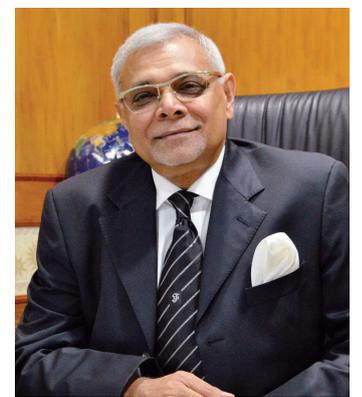
3. How is SGI positioned to grow in the coming years?

SGI Dubai is aptly positioned to cater to the demands of the industry and is in sync with the exponential growth that the region is witnessing. Confidence has returned to the region in a big way post Dubai's Expo 2020 win and we can see the development happening around us at a rapid speed. The demand within the printing and signage industry has grown tremendously, and I am sure the stakeholders in this industry have experienced this growth since the last few years.

The SGI Dubai show is a brilliant trade event with a plethora of incredible opportunities. It boasts to be the one of its kind show in the world with numerous products and technology on display. It just gets bigger and bigger every year with infinite opportunities for the visitors to see and discover. A huge build-up of potential customers and numerous business opportunities await the exhibitors of SGI Dubai 2017 which is truly a niche event in the Middle East. This show has the best and it offers class offerings with potential avenues for sales and a platform to channel the latest and the finest every year.

4. What excites you the most about the signage industry in the Middle East and its future?

The UAE will play a significant role within the digital signage sector and the growth will be largely driven by the country's growing retail, commercial, healthcare, tourism, education and infrastructure sectors.



According to a report by Global Market Insights Inc. the global digital signage industry is expected to touch \$23.02 billion by year 2023.

The worldwide digital signage systems market is poised to touch \$13.8 Billion by 2017 as per a new report by Global industry Analysts Inc. As per reports, the UAE digital signage market is pegged to grow at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of around 23% during 2014-2019. This growth is being attributed to the surge in travel, retail, tourism and hospitality industries in addition to the fact that Dubai would be hosting one of the largest World Expos in 2020.

Investments within the government and educational sector and the need for enriched user experience and subsidised prices for display panels will all facilitate the growth of this sector. Several mega projects in the GCC region are in various stages of construction. With global mega events, particularly the World Expo 2020 in the UAE and the FIFA World Cup 2022 in Qatar will also trigger the need for high end digital signages in this region. Despite the oil and market conditions, the retail establishments in the Middle East market are upbeat on the digital signage technology.



HOTSPOTS

Not to be missed at SGI 2017

Jacky's Business Solutions

Hall 7, Stand E124



Jacky's Business Solutions is introducing the HP Latex 570 and HP Latex 1500 printers for the first time at SGI. The 1.63m large format HP Latex 570 printer for sign and display industry is designed for mid-size to large print service providers (PSPs) with increasing print volumes. The 3.2m HP Latex 1500 printer is more suitable for mid-volume print services for indoor and outdoor applications, including PVC banners, self-adhesive vinyl, textiles and double-sided prints.

The company is also presenting the ScreenTruepress Jet W3200UV HS printer, capable of delivering high-definition print quality on a variety of rigid and flexible print substrates. The 3.2m wide roll-

to-roll option makes it a versatile hybrid machine which can produce an extensive range of products, including display graphics, banners, and wallcoverings.

Other products on display include the Flexa Easy Lite 160 laminator for mounting images on panels, applying double-sided adhesive films, application tape and protective films; FlexaMuir II, an automatic cutting machine with rotating blades for X and Y trimming of printed images and other materials and flexible supports, such as paper, Durantrans, PVC coated adhesive films, polyester, polycarbonate, reflective material, magnetic rubber, banner, wallpaper and different types of fabric; Ronchini Massimo (RM) Easy Step 3D, a professional pantograph machine for crafts and production of glass, rapid prototyping and three-dimensional artistic realisations; and RM AluStep 3D, is an alternative professional pantograph machine ideal for milling and engraving of plastics, glass resins, wood, aluminium, brass and stone.

"With manpower costs rising across the region, automated, more efficient printing, fabrication and finishing solutions have become the order of the day which is why we have shifted focus sourcing such solutions this year," said Ashish Panjabi, Chief Operating Officer of Jacky's Business Solutions.

Canon Middle East

Hall 6, Stand D84



A highlight at the Canon stand this year is the UVgel printing technology, a new UV curable ink that instantly gels on contact with the media, resulting in precise dot placement, and area control for consistent high-quality images at high speed. "Volumes printed on roll-to-roll printers are growing year on year. In addition to this, over 40% of orders usually need to be turned in 24 hours, demonstrating the pace and the expectations that are now commonplace in this industry. Canon's UVgel technology addresses these limitations; it enables to jet the ink faster onto the media which increases the productivity and speed, while using less ink and still delivering an improved colour gamut," said Ayman Aly, Professional Products Marketing

Manager, Canon Middle East. The entire portfolio of Canon print solutions includes the Océ Arizona 1280GT flatbed printer; Océ Colorwave, imagePrograf iPF8400SE and imagePrograf PRO-6000S large format printers for outdoor and indoor signage. Also for the first time at SGI, Canon is showcasing its Xeed range of projectors targeting verticals of retail and hospitality. Canon is also launching the Canon Business Solutions augmented reality with Canon Emirates. It is a self-service online marketplace and virtual storefront providing authorized dealers a simple way to offer, order, manage, bill and deliver subscription-based document and information management solutions from Canon.



Magic Trading Company | Hall 7, Stand E04



Magic Trading Company (MTC) is launching the Stahls' Hotronix Dual Air Fusion Heat Press for heat

transfer printing on garments. Applications include printing on t-shirts and promotional items. With two loading stations, garments can be loaded efficiently and production speed can be increased. The upper platen moves between heat printing stations, allowing operators to prepare garments on one station while the other is being pressed. Auto-Adjust Pressure automatically adjusts to the thickness of the item being printed. A laser alignment system, ensures accurate placement and alignment. A touch screen stores frequently used settings, production cycle counter, and auto on/off capability

"Traditional ways of printing like screen printing and heat transfer are still the main methods of printing garments. But, as the cost of direct-



to-garment printers become lower, and they become more reliable, more PSPs in the Middle East will invest in them to increase productivity. The Hotronix Dual Air Fusion Heat

Press cuts production time in half by programming one station for pre-treatment and the other for curing," said Sina Haghi, CEO, Magic Trading Company.

Epson | Hall 7, Stand E44



Epson is launching the SureColor P10000 and P20000, designed for high-production photographic, fine art and indoor display graphics printing. The company is also relaunching its signage and fabric range printers with

the latest generation PrecisionCore TFP printheads. PrecisionCore is a scalable technology suited for products ranging from industrial systems such as large-scale label presses to desktop printers. Its modularity allows PrecisionCore print chips to be arrayed in both moving serial print head and fixed line head configurations. A new printhead structure means fewer vibrations, and more accurate ink droplets and dot placement.

"Our PrecisionCore TFP printheads demonstrated at SGI is one of our major break-through innovations and is the result of one of the largest investments in research and development in Epson's history, merging the company's expertise in MEMS (Micro Electro Mechanical Systems) fabrication with advances in material science. We have experienced strong demand for signage printing



in this region with an 18% growth in 2016. With the introduction of new products and upgraded technology, we look forward to capturing larger

share of the regional signage sector," said Shihab Zubair, Regional Sales Manager- Professional Solutions, Epson Europe.

Agfa Graphics | Hall 7, Stand E64

Agfa Graphics is demonstrating the Anapurna H3200i LED, a high-speed hybrid UV LED-curable inkjet system with a printing width of 3.2 m for indoor and outdoor applications. The white ink function creates possibilities for printing on transparent material for backlit applications or for printing white as a spot color. The Anapurna H3200i LED is fitted with air-cooled UV LED lights that save energy. Due to their minimal energy output, the LED lights are ideal for thin heat-sensitive

materials. They also lead to faster operations as they can be switched on and off instantaneously.

"The wide-format hybrid Anapurna H3200i LED is ideal for sign shops, digital printers, photo labs and mid-size graphic screen printers that want to combine board and roll-to-roll print jobs. It produces top-quality prints on uncoated rigid media, such as corrugated boards, rigid plastics, exhibition panels, stage graphics and advertising panels, as well as roll



media such as film, vinyl and paper, canvas and banners. It can also be used to print niche products such as wood, DVDs or personalized objects,

or to create architectural and interior decoration," said Manesh Shetty, Regional Sales Manager, Agfa Graphics Middle East.

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“Just because the sign is ‘printed’ does not really mean it has been finished”

By Dr. Nicholas Hellmuth, FLAAR Reports



All the attention in the world of wide format inkjet is focused on the printer. Ink is also a crucial topic especially since today so many new inks are becoming available. In all this world of ink chemistry and printer technology, we all forget about having to handle the print after it is printed. ‘Finishing’ is the jargon, especially in giclee, but also in signage, for everything you need to think about after the print

comes out of the platen.

The primary components of finishing are drying (if water-based or solvent); final curing (if UV); coating, spot varnish; laminating, laminating tables; mounting; cutting, creasing, or edging

Printing is only the first step in producing a finished inkjet product. Space for trimming, cutting, lamination and mounting is usually overlooked when a family or company start a new print shop. Finishing your images will require more space than printing them. Finishing means everything that has to happen to your print before it leaves your shop. Just because the sign is ‘printed’ does not really mean it has been finished. Many printers lay down so much ink the print must dry first. Thermal printers, especially old ColorSpan and Encad technology, lay down lots of ink. If you do not limit the ink (via color management and/or your RIP software) then you will lose many prints because the wet ink sticks to any surface, including other

parts of the same roll of media (and that pulls the ink off or otherwise smears). Some newer printers are not quite as bad, but nonetheless, some prints need time (and space) to dry. However most vehicle wrap is going to be accomplished with some form of solvent ink.

Then you have the drying issues with solvent prints. Many printers are sold at cheap prices to entice the buyer. So the printer manufacturer skimps on heaters and on-board dryers. Even some new Japanese printer brands have a sly add-on heater option. Naturally most people buy the bare basics, and only find out the printer can’t dry the sign once the machine is installed.

So you may need an add-on heater or dryer, and still, your image (if with solvent inks) may not be fully dry. Perhaps dry to the touch, but not yet ready for lamination. You need to allow time, and space, for your prints to dry thoroughly. Some media dries more quickly than others. The other side of the coin is that some media

dries more slowly than others, such as glossy material.

Although technically the concept of ‘finishing’ means what to do with the supposedly finished print, in the true facts of workflow, you need to understand each ink and what post-printing action must be taken (even if the action is letting it emit VOCs for a while).

Allowing the ink to fully cure

UV-cured prints with the ink chemistry of several years ago also were not fully cured on the printer. Perhaps ‘dry’ but not cured. They gave off odor so unpleasant that some clients returned them, as the odor was offensive to many people. Some of the newer UV-cured inks and UV-curing systems today are better and have (hopefully) less odor.

If your solvent or UV print is rolled up, it’s tough to get it to finish outgassing or to finish curing if a UV print. So again, be sure you allow for all this when you plan the space needed for your printing business.

Altech presents Intec ColorSplash range of digital colour printers



The ColorSplash range includes the CS4000 – a new 4 color professional print production system and the

CS5000 model – a new 5 color print production system which adds a fifth print station to provide stunning digital color for multi-media printing, with the added benefit of clear and white printing.

In contrast to standard office printers, the Intec ColorSplash CS4000 and CS5000 digital imaging systems are aimed towards print professionals seeking an affordable entry level production device, with outstanding print quality, complete media flexibility and the lowest imaging cost possible.

In addition to offering white and clear toner printing onto thick boards of up to 400gsm/micron, Altech also the models with specialist feeders and media stackers for greater productivity and the handling of a wide range of medias from heavy stocks, envelopes, packaging boards, labels, polyesters and much more. The CS4600/CS5600 models utilize a professional continuous/uninterrupted top loading envelope hopper which feeds the printer from the bottom of the stack ensuring you can refill the envelopes as you continue to print.

With the addition of the Fiery XF for Intec RIP, greater color accuracy and stunning prints can be achieved through colour management and workflow tools such as specific Intec colour profiles, nesting, imposition, variable data and more.

“These revolutionary new printer models ensure that Intec continues to offer industry leading print solutions for graphic arts professionals and the production on demand market place,” said Aneesh Pai, business development manager of Altech International FZE.