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Harmsworth Quays Printing wants Q.I. Press Controls' IDS-3D for quality and the environment

Oosterhout, May 2015 – In 2015 Harmsworth Quays Printing Ltd. shifted its focus to improvements in print quality and the reduction of waste. In an interview, Group Technical Director Martin Hunt tells us how indispensable Q.I. Press Controls' IDS-3D is in meeting these targets.

Harmsworth Quays Printing Ltd. (HQP) in West Thurrock (UK) is the printing division of one of the UK's leading multimedia concerns. DMG Media is responsible for publication of the *Daily Mail*, *The Mail on Sunday* and *Metro*, whilst HQP looks after the printing operations. The organisation has two printing plants, one in West Thurrock and the other in Didcot, both of which are flexo. HQP's ambition is to deliver high-quality products as inexpensively as possible with the least possible impact on the environment. Hunt tells us that the West Thurrock plant is the greenest of its kind in the UK. *"The aim was to create the greenest possible plant at no extra cost and we have succeeded in doing this because we were able to start from scratch. The only water we use in the production process is rainwater and the building is heated during the day by the heat given off by the presses at night. This means free heating in the building, without the need for gas."*



Group Technical Director Martin Hunt

Consolidation and cost-savings have been the priority in recent years, Hunt explains. This year however, the focus has shifted to the improvement of print quality and reduction in the use of raw materials. This is one of the reasons that HQP placed the order with Q.I. Press Controls for the IDS-3D.

The possibility of an order was first mooted during a visit to the IFRA 2014 in Amsterdam, where Hunt met with Menno Jansen, managing director of Q.I. Press Controls, with whom he had been doing business for the last fifteen years. Jansen was able to demonstrate the new IDS-3D for colour register and colour control. *"We got talking about the possibility of using the IDS-3D on a flexo press,"* Hunt explains. *"This would help us reduce waste levels as well as improve the quality of the product using an advanced control system. Following detailed discussions, we got the green light from management in January to start the project."*

Management at HQP agreed to the first order for the West Thurrock plant which accommodates what is believed to be the longest press line in the world. Four of the 36 full-colour towers and one of the six folders on the 165-metre long KBA Flexo Courier will be fitted with IDS-3D cameras with colour control, colour register, AIMS, fault detection, waste gate control and plate change detection. The Intelligent Quality Management (IQM) information system will also be installed. Ultimately, the goal is to install the system on all towers and folders.

The flexo printing process does not allow ink to be adjusted during production. Nevertheless, HQP has decided to invest in colour measurement. Q.I. Press Controls wondered what the organisation aimed to achieve by this. Hunt explains: *"Ink levels can't be adjusted during printing, but the IDS-3D does allow us to check whether every flexo plate is fixed in the right position and help us react quickly if anything is amiss. Normally, an operator would only find out whether a plate had been incorrectly positioned after he picked a copy from the*

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folder delivery belt and this might cost us as much as 50 production copies. In next to no time, the IDS-3D enables us to check at a glance whether the image is correct and respond accordingly. The density regulation helps us anticipate any ink splashes, low ink levels and ink loss. We don't have to wait for the operator to do the checks anymore. The system will not only save on usage, but on time too whilst improving both the quality of production and the quality of reporting."

It's not without reason that Hunt decided on Q.I. Press Controls. The Q.I. Press Controls' IRS system has been integrated on HQP's presses for years. Hunt adds that the system still operates to his complete satisfaction and, when required, the service is always efficient. He believes in the system, adding that there is a good rapport with the management team at Q.I. Press Controls. The organisation is on the same wavelength as Hunt: *"We both want to continue developing and will do so until we are satisfied everything works perfectly."* The good relationship HQP enjoys with David Waller, Q.I. Press Controls' UK agent, has also been instrumental in building up confidence in investing in a new system.

It's striking that Q.I. Press Controls finds itself working with a flexo print partner, since the organisation has built up a name primarily in the web-offset market. However, this is because Q.I. Press Controls wishes to expand into other markets and sees in HQP a partner with which the product can undergo further development. The organisations have the joint goal of producing flawless fully automated print copies on flexo presses whilst minimising waste.



Printing site in West Thurrock

Hunt explains the importance of the ongoing collaboration between HQP and Q.I. Press Controls: *"We also have a desire to work on innovative solutions with Q.I. Press Controls. (...) We aim to bring about a situation in which we will have accurate copies automatically rolling off the presses. The only thing an operator needs to do will be to check the cut-off. The rest will be done by the control system: the cameras are the extra eyes that are able to constantly check quality. They are able to check whether the print is in register, that pages are in the right place and that the ink is in balance. It closes the waste gate automatically and is significantly quicker than an operator is assessing whether the best quality is being produced. When things should go wrong the control system will quickly notify the operator or even stop the press immediately thus keeping waste to a minimum."*

Hunt concludes: *"I believe the system we've acquired will meet our expectations. If so, it means we can make big savings and do the next investment that pays for itself in the shape of the installation of IDS-3D cameras on the remaining 48 towers in West Thurrock and Didcot!"*

About Q.I. Press Controls:

Q.I. Press Controls develops and delivers innovative, high quality optical measure and control systems. We are globally active in the newspaper and magazine printing industry. Our total solutions are supported by a worldwide service network. These reliable systems are proven in the market of existing and new printing presses and offer our customers structural better results.

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