

From dryers and powder sprayers to providing complete systems

DRYING AND POWDER SPRAYING. Grafix, a Stuttgart-based company, has been a systems seller of integratable components for sheet-fed offset presses for almost 60 years. Process engineering know-how is focussed on ink adhesion following the application of ink to the print sheet. This includes both active ink drying (UV, IR, hot air) and the support of ink dry-up by powder spraying. Now there is interesting news from the Stuttgart headquarters.

Powderspraying was the business starting point of Grafix GmbH Zerstäubungstechnik in the capital of Baden-Württemberg. For a harmonious interaction of all press components, the portfolio was success-

ful, as head Hans Georg Platsch explains. In addition, the Swabian company has been expanding its manufacturing depth for a number of years in order to cope with the particular requirements of this segment of



All controllers for Grafix products are developed in Stuttgart

conditions, which includes cooperation with universities. »The middle-class company



The Grafix leadership crew (from right to left): Hans Georg Platsch, managing director; Hans-Ulrich Platsch, managing director; and Andreas Döderlein, sales manager. Right: Dryer assembly in the new 1998 Stuttgart-Vaihingen headquarters.



ively extended to include drying (UV, hot air and IR), cooling and suction removal technology (cold air blasters and cooling with heat recovery as well as powder suction equipment).

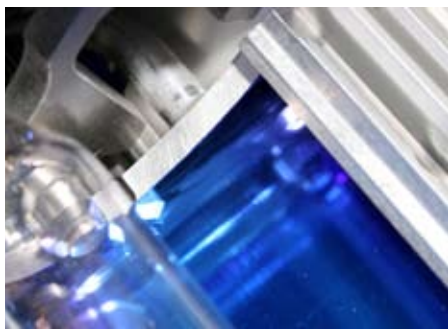
OEM SUPPLIER. For several decades, Grafix has been an OEM-supplier for nearly all press manufacturers in the international market. »For enduring flexibility and quality, Grafix ignores the current trend and relies upon production in Germany and continuous investment into an automated process chain and qualified personnel«, company

the capital goods industry – for example, with a hive-off affiliate for electronic controllers and an advanced sheet manufacturing facility of its own at Leonberg. Production at the Stuttgart headquarters is mainly concentrated on drying systems. At Unterlöß near Celle, the extended workbench of Stuttgart, Grafix recently opened its third workshop hall for the industrial manufacturing of the powder spraying systems.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT. To maintain its leading position in technology, research at Grafix is done under laboratory

structure of our company allows speedy information transfer and unbureaucratic response«, junior boss Hans-Ulrich Platsch adds. In this context, Hans Georg Platsch emphasises »pronounced team-oriented product and series developments including all specialist disciplines«.

MARKETSITUATION. Grafix GmbH is represented locally in the major markets. It has its own branch offices in the United States with a staff of twelve and in Japan as well as intensively trained partners in something like 20 service and sales offices on four continents.



Detail of a Grafix-UV drying element – UV hardening systems are available

»Our customers get all the assistance they need in matters of training and service as well as a rapid transfer of knowledge about recent technological developments and customer requirement.« At the beginning of this year, Grafix and Fujifilm Graphic Systems concluded an agreement for cooperation in the selling of drying systems in the Japanese market. By such cooperation, Grafix expects to gain better access to the Japanese market for drying equipment. The main focus is on UV drying systems, which are offered in all formats.

PRODUCT PORTFOLIO. There are two Grafix product lines:

- Drying systems (IR, hot air and UV) inclusive of cooling technology and

- powder spraying systems inclusive of powder suction systems. Characteristic features of the Grafix-dryers:

- IR hot air dryers of compact design by an integrated powerful heating cartridge

- UV dryers with heat management for maximum resource economy

- Dryer alternation by interchangeable cassettes

Characteristic features of the Grafix-powder sprayers:

- Precise powder application

- Heatproof components for longevity

- Partly monitored powder metering in extremely fine grades



IR dryer production.

INNOVATION. Grafix puts new products to intensive testing under laboratory conditions and several months of trial service before they go into series production. Current product developments include:

- Double-sided powdering with integrated powder suction, mainly used in duplex machines (Twintronic-S powder spraying systems for presses with powder application and powder suction in one system).

- Twintronic sprays powder onto both sides of the substrate and at the same time removes excessive powder in one step. The press stays clean, machine wear is reduced, and you need less powder.

- HEP nozzle tube with more nozzles per unit of length and new powder application technology.

»High-Efficiency Powder (HEP) nozzle tubes have substantially more nozzles than conventional nozzle tubes«, Hans-Ulrich Platsch adds.

»Moreover, special nozzles make sure powder application is less affected by airflow, resulting in more evenly distributed powder, especially at high speeds, and improved adhesion. This makes HEP nozzle tubes ideal for the use in high-speed presses in a space too closely confined for other options such as adjustable nozzle tubes.«

- Drying for duplex machines

- UV drying system for extra-size formats.

OFFERING SYSTEMS AND SOLUTIONS.

In the major markets of the world, including Japan, the Stuttgart-based company sees itself as a market leader in the segment of powder spraying and powder suction systems, which accounts for some 40 percent of its sales. In drying equipment, about 60 percent of its sales, Grafix is among the frontrunners. Over the years, continual investment into advanced manufacturing technology and company expansion have turned this originally handicraft-type business into a systems seller for process and plant engineering. Grafix offers its customers complete optimised solutions based on competence and know-how. This includes the maintenance of powder sprayer and dryer systems as well as consulting and planning service for press manufacturers.

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IGRAFIX– chronological portrait

The company's history summarised:

- 1947: Albin Platsch founds the company in Stuttgart. Grafix stands for »Graphic fixing«. The first product is a liquid sprayer for letterpress machines.

- 1952: Grafix develops the first dry sprayer.

- 1954: The company makes its first appearance at Drupa.

- 1968: Grafix puts the Exactomat on the market, worldwide the first powder sprayer with vibration metering, the technological basis for all follow-up products, over 20,000 units of which are sold.

- 1970: Hans Georg Platsch, the founder's son and today the managing director, joins the company. Powder suction is added to the range of products.

- 1973: A sales and service partnership in Chicago (US) lays the foundation stone for the international presence of Grafix.

- 1980: For the first time, Grafix puts an infrared dryer on the market; more than 5,000 units are installed within a few years.

- 1983: Start of series supplies for press manufacturers.

- 1988: Development of the first hot air-dryer.

- 1990: Opening of a production facility in Unterlüß near Celle.

- 1994: UV dryers complete the range of Grafix products. The workforce at the four locations Stuttgart, Unterlüß, Chicago and Tokyo rises to over a hundred.

- 1995: Grafix is certified under DIN-ISO 9001 by Dekra.

- 1998: Official opening of the new company building in Stuttgart-Vaihingen.

- 1999: With Hans-Ulrich Platsch, the founder's grandson, the third generation assumes responsibility in the company.

- 2001: A new production hall at Unterlüß provides more capacity.

- 2002: Grafix concludes the development of UV equipment based on the Cocure process for the use of hybrid inks. There have been more than 200 installations so far.

- 2004: Series production and installation of large-size UV dryers in the 205 cm format width.

- 2005: Opening of the 18th international representation in Australia.

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