

External view of ODS' award winning factory



(L-R) Johannes Knapp, Eduard Fischer and Ralph Joser

# KEEPING THE FAITH

WHY ONE OF AUSTRIA'S LEADING CARTON CONVERTERS CONTINUES TO INVEST IN MANROLAND SHEET FED TECHNOLOGY.

## NICK COOMBES REPORTS

A successful working relationship with Manroland sheet fed presses that dates back over 60 years has been fundamental to Offsetdruckerei Schwarzach (ODS) position of pre-eminence in today's carton market — but history alone cannot justify the continuation of this mutual business when one party suffers a financial collapse. Yet, five years on from Manroland's near demise, and the acquisition by Langley Group Holdings of the sheet fed press division and all its assets, the company has successfully sold and installed three high specification sheet fed presses at ODS' modern 52,000sqm plant in Vorarlberg that employs 350 people on Austria's border with Switzerland.

Today, ODS has six medium format Manroland 700 presses, as well as a 200 series that is used in its own in-house operator training centre. Managing Director, Eduard Fischer takes up the story. "We have developed a reputation for high quality and innovative carton packaging that demands we keep up with the latest trends and essentially have the capability to respond quickly to changes in demand. As far as printing is concerned, we have always relied on Manroland presses to produce the consistency our customers demand. And that is as true today as it was back in the 1960s."

Serving international brand owners in markets as diverse as food, confectionary and cosmetics, ODS prides itself on

## EVOLUTION SUCCESS



of Manroland's successful 700 Evolution series, of which more than 500 units are now installed around the world. It was the first to be installed in a carton house, and speaking for Manroland Austria, Key Account Manager Thomas Blechinger stated, "If three presses in the five years under Langley is not proof of our technology and ongoing commitment, I don't know what is! This is a clear message for all of our users, which number more than 10,000 worldwide."

Asked about his choice of an Evolution series, Eduard Fischer commented, "We needed additional capacity in 2015 and knew that the Evolution was under development by Manroland. After a visit to the manufacturing plant in Offenbach and a series of print tests on a variety of our existing work we were satisfied that the new press offered significant improvements over our existing 700 series presses. It would allow us to meet the new quality and performance criteria that our customers were demanding. I'm delighted to say our expectations have been fulfilled."

Fitted with InlineInspector, InlineColorPilot and InlineSorter, ODS' new 706 Evolution 'hit the ground running' according to Fischer, and has been routinely producing high quality work at high speed since installation. "It was not only the technology that gave us the faith to invest in an Evolution. Although the insolvency came as a shock, we were quickly aware of how the Langley recovery programme was working. The continuity of service and support it gave in the early days was vital and has continued throughout," he said.

Beginning life in nearby Dornbirn in 1913 as a commercial and book printer, today's ODS, which is now part of a cooperative international network, began to focus on cartons back in the late 1980s. Today's group includes three companies that produce print for the commercial and advertising markets, Buchdruckerei in Austria, Neluplast Tiefzieh-Technik in Germany and Transylvania Pack & Print in Romania, which between them employ around 275 staff. Datas Brandwork, a small company of five people located near to



### Automated logistics allow continuous operation

playing a dynamic role in brand strategy, whether it be for high performance industrial cartonboard, or premium short run hand-finished packaging. The common thread that runs through all the work at ODS is quality, with a 'right first time, every time' mentality. A key part of this has been the reliability and performance of the Manroland presses. With 53 print units, eight coaters, and an inline cold foiler, ODS knows a great deal about how to get the best out the 700 series presses.

The company has two long perfectors, a 707 (1/6) and a 708 (1/7), both with coaters and extended deliveries, and a straight 706 with LTTL twin coater and drier configuration with UV curing in the delivery, all of which pre-dates the Langley era. Significantly, ODS installed two 707HS lines in the immediate aftermath of Manroland's renaissance, one with UV and an inline cold foil unit that can run conventional or UV inks/adhesives.

The most recent, in 2015, was one

## EVOLUTION SUCCESS



Delivery unit of the latest 700 Evolution



Inline cold foiler fitted to one of ODS' Manroland 707 HS presses



the main Schwarzach plant, specialises in project management tools for print data.

Milestones along the way include the switch to offset in 1956 and relocation to the present site in 1968. ISO accreditation was gained in 1994, since which time the company has garnered a whole host of international awards, accolades and certifications that have become an underlying signature for quality. These include HACCP, BRC/IoP, FSC/PEFC, FDA, and ÖKOPROFIT, the ecological and environmental standard. The company is also 'carbon-neutral', offsetting its unavoidable emissions by investment in climate projects.

The quality mantra runs deep at ODS. Managing a blend of form and function that both appeals and protects, the company is well known for its bespoke range of packaging, including carton sleeves and clever opening mechanisms for high quality foodstuffs such as soft cheeses which are presented in round boxes with close fitting lids and have great shelf impact.

In the case of cartons for premium confectionery, ODS is mindful of the potential problem created by the fat content in chocolate. This can cause ink migration, so the printed packaging must ensure that there is no odour or taste change in the product. This is checked by the Robinson Test (DIN EN 1230-2) and the latest low migration inks are used throughout all food packaging, which comply with International Food Standard (IFS). Other checks include those for abrasion and a 'wipe' microbiological test for contamination of packaging leaving the plant, as well as the machinery on which it was produced.

In 2013 ODS commissioned its photovoltaic system which has an annual power production capacity of 400,000 kWh, and one year later achieved ISO 50001, the worldwide standard for energy management.

"Everything we do here is geared towards quality and we were delighted to win the ECMA 'Carton of the Year' award in 2015, because it was just reward for our practices and hard working staff," concluded Eduard Fischer. That the company continues to invest in Manroland sheet fed technology as part of this quality ethos speaks volumes for the press manufacturer's pedigree. ■



Delivery unit of the latest 700 Evolution