



Changing an industrial culture can be difficult at the best of times. It is never easy transiting from one set of work practices and quality levels to a new level of operation. One way to accomplish it is to employ the very latest technology in order to lift the game. Paul McCullum and Fareydun Pourshashb look to a new Gallus granite solution to burnish Dragon Printing's reputation.

A valued technology partnership: Paul McCullum (centre) shakes on the deal with James Rodden, Gallus Australia, with Fareydun Pourshashb by his side.

Dragon fires up with granite press

Many people in Sydney's label printing and converting sector will be surprised at the latest investment in a Gallus ECS340 by Dragon Printing. Apart from the fact that not many other label converters in the country's largest metropolitan area are currently investing in new presses, Dragon Printing, even in the estimation of its directors, Paul McCullum and Fareydun Pourshashb, is an unlikely candidate to leapfrog to the forefront of the technology space.

The Mascot-based commercial label company has a chequered technology history. Its series of machines over the years, a Kopack, some Mark Andys, two Gallus R160s, a Sanki, a Sanjo and a couple of Labelman presses, were basically acquired due to what became available on the second hand market. There was no overall equipment investment strategy, a style of operation not uncommon in the general commercial label industry. Then McCullum, a 28-year industry veteran, came on board four years ago, around the same time that Fareydun, a chartered accountant and son of the company's founder, also re-engaged with the firm.

Shortly afterwards, Rasheed Pourshashb, well-known industry identity and the founder of Dragon Printing, passed away.

Left with the question as to how to progress, the two directors made the decision to work on transforming the company culture, in technology, work practices and quality control. While Dragon Printing always had a 'can do' reputation and a wide array of clients, the two knew there was a lot of work to be done to turn the company around.

The process began by buying another second-hand Gallus R200 press to go with an existing one. This investment put the company on to the path of continuous improvement, which it has pursued ever since.

The latest acquisition, the first ever granite-base Gallus ECS340 in Sydney, puts Dragon onto a whole different level of label production. It is a potent symbol of the company's transformation, a visionary leap towards the future.

■ In the dragon's lair

In an era defined by a rush into specialisation and niche production, the breadth of Dragon Printing's range is impressive. According to McCullum, there is practically no job the company will knock back, apart from very large runs that threaten to tie up the factory for days. Dragon Printing is a textbook case, a jobbing shop with a well-founded client

list ranging from brand owners to print managers and for-trade work, along with work practices that have evolved rather than been planned.

The busy, crowded factory floor bears witness to the productivity and turnover of the company with jobs piled awaiting despatch, mixed with remnants from already completed work. It is an industrious, bustling site that speaks volumes about the individual skill and old-fashioned understanding of what it takes to run a printing factory.

But it is changing and changing fast. Management is now embarked on a transformative mission to turn the company into a modern, quality-driven enterprise. Part of the strategy is to drive down costs by the use of better technology. While the scheduling and costing will still rely on McCullum's industry experience, the issues of cutting waste and power consumption through the introduction of automation are high on the agenda.

The new Gallus press will reduce start-up waste by as much as two thirds. It comes equipped with auto registration—a high-tech feature that McCullum is convinced will pay for itself in no time. In addition, the latest in UV lamps and energy use will see power consumption fall by as much if not more.

Quality is gold

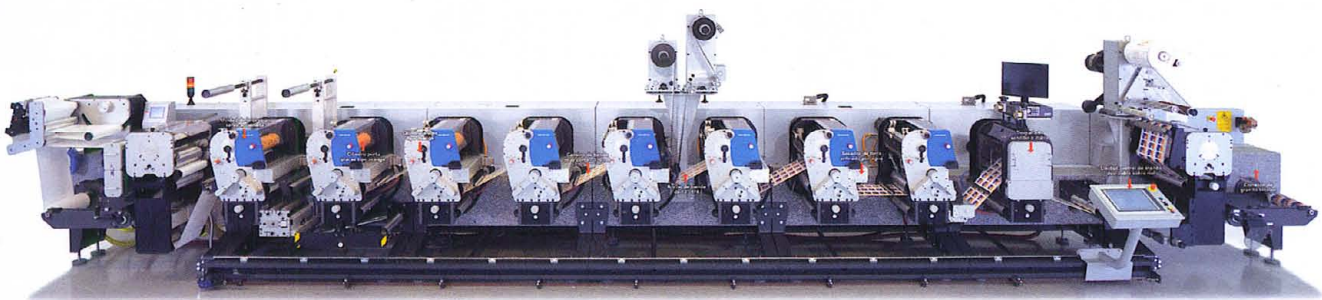
Nothing is as important when promoting quality production as making sure every label is correct. Dragon's management is targeting quality consistency with its investment in the latest Italian-made Prati Saturn 100 per cent inspection system, also from Gallus Australia. This will ensure the company's policy of absolute quality control becomes its benchmark. Coupled with the Gallus press, the two represent

the latest in label technology and arguably the best system in its price range.

According to James Rodden, managing director, Gallus Australia, the investment by Dragon Printing is doubly important as it illustrates not only the quality proposition of the Gallus but also its affordability. "Many people used to say that while Gallus was good we were also too expensive, only suitable for high-end producers. The ECS340 has changed that and people can see we have presses for

different price levels," he said.

The press is due for delivery in October and its arrival is likely to set off a realignment of Sydney's label converting industry. Dragon Printing has always been a force to be reckoned in its market place, which at this stage is still 80 per cent straight-forward letterpress and flexo variable. Now, with the latest Gallus technology, it is going to enter other, more complex and longer run sectors where it is likely to prove to be an equally serious contender. ●



Technology snapshot: *Gallus ECS340*

- Affordable flexographic press with unique granite core
- Short web path between stations to reduce material waste
- Run speed of 150mpm with 340mm print width
- Intuitive touch-screen control for easy set-up
- Front-loading anilox and plate cylinder sleeves for rapid changeovers
- Individually servo-driven printheads
- Water-cooled impression cylinders for maximum substrate flexibility
- Chambered doctor blades for fast colour change and quick set-up

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