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SCREEN and ROTOCON: Transforming the South African Label Market with Digital Inkjet Printing

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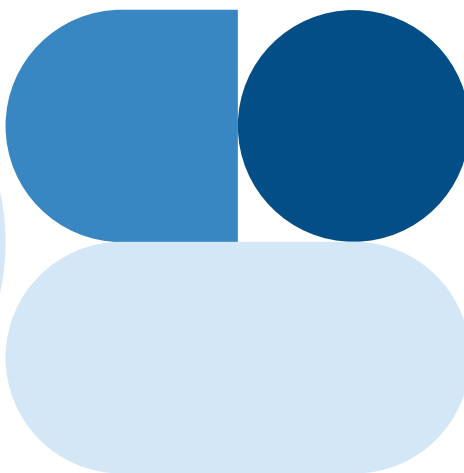


Introduction

The ROTOCON Advantage: Building Trust and Expertise

ROTOCON, SCREEN's dedicated distributor of digital inkjet printing solutions in South Africa, has become a driving force in the local label printing market since partnering with SCREEN ten years ago. Together, these industry leaders have cultivated a strong relationship founded on trust, dedication to innovation and providing the best printing solutions possible by adapting our inkjet printing technology based on ROTOCON's knowledge of the needs and requirements of local labelling converters.

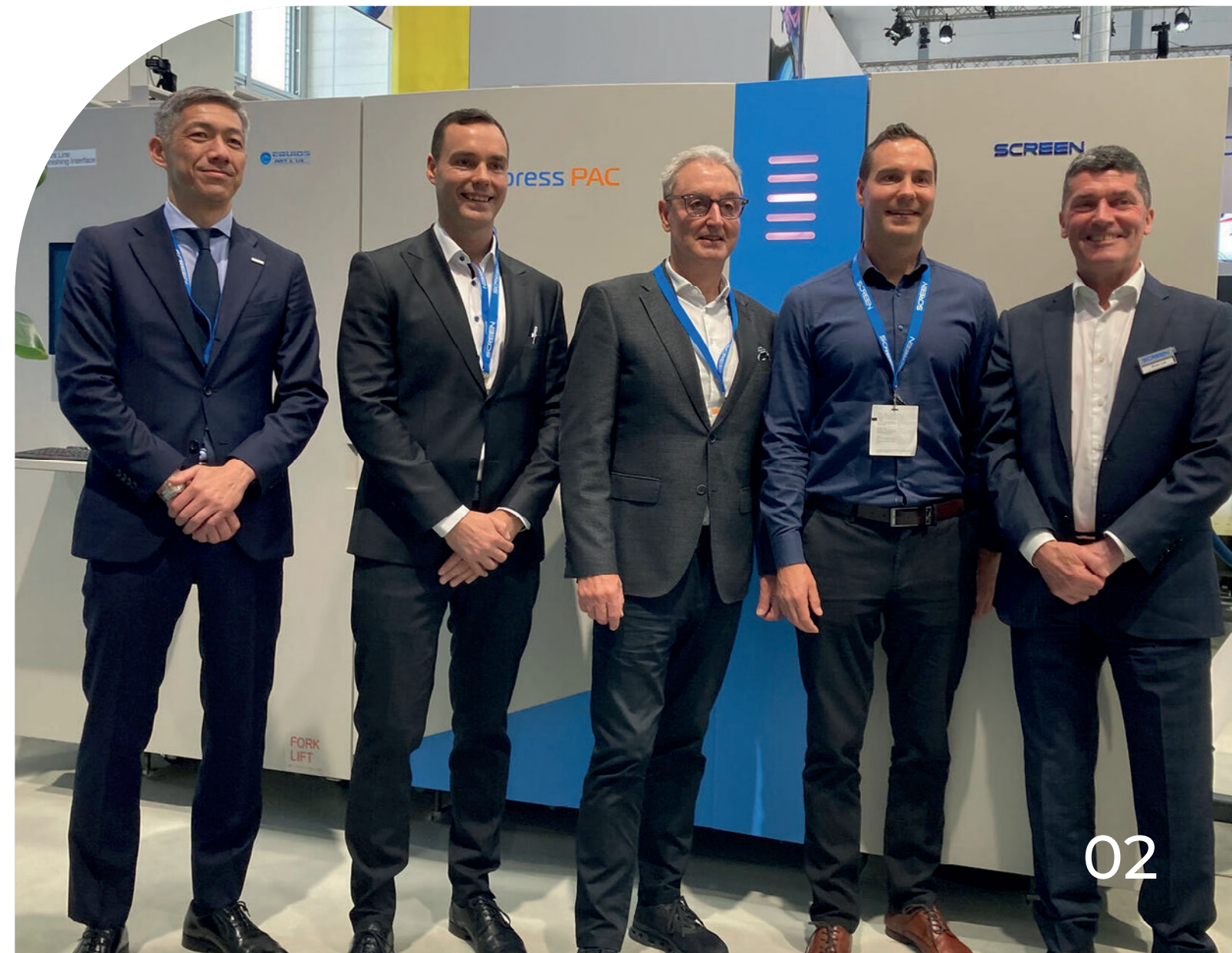
"The core of our success," says Michael Aengenvoort, ROTOCON's CEO, "has always been providing our customers with access to some of the world's most robust and reliable presses coupled with exceptional service. Since we began our partnership with SCREEN, we've seen them continuously innovate, offering an expanding collection of high-end, cost-effective and profitable digital inkjet presses."



Michael Aengenvoort
CEO, ROTOCON

This commitment to supplying only the most advanced printing solutions and dedication to top-notch installation, training and support has culminated in back-to-back wins at the African Excellence Awards for 'Leading Label Printing & Converting Equipment Partner' in 2024, 'Most Innovative Printing and Converting Equipment Supplier' in 2023 and 'Best Printing & Converting Equipment Supplier – South Africa' in 2022.²

Their team of highly skilled engineers have successfully facilitated the installation of digital inkjet presses across South Africa, including at prominent printing service providers like Label Links, Sullwald Printing Solutions, Sign & Seal Labels, and SA Litho Label Printers in Cape Town; FIL, VR Print, AVVO Labels, and GTV Labels in Durban; Rebsons Labels and Avocet in Johannesburg; and SA Print in Bloemfontein. This momentum is only accelerating with four Truepress LABEL 350UV SAI label presses sold in early 2024 alone and approximately €1 million in consumables sold annually.



Rapid Growth and Increasing Competition

As a rapidly developing country, South Africa is witnessing significant growth in its label printing market.

The market size is estimated to reach

57,45 billion euros by 2029

growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of

4.09% annually.³



This growth is driven by the expansion of the food and beverage, wine, mining, chemicals, pharmaceutical and retail industries that rely on label converters and the growing consumer demand for customised and individualised labels.

The competitive landscape in South Africa's label printing market is also intensifying, with businesses working to differentiate themselves with faster turnaround times, high-quality materials, competitive pricing and exceptional customer service. However, these initiatives also face new challenges, such as smaller orders with shorter average job lengths, a shrinking labour pool of highly skilled analogue press operators and increasing consumer safety and sustainability regulations.

To meet these demands and challenges key players in the South African label printing industry are intensifying investments into new label printing technology, putting increasing pressure on the numerous small to medium-sized and local family-owned enterprises to find innovative methods to remain competitive.⁴



A Partnership South African Label Printers Can Rely On

Given the rapid growth and increasing competition in the South African label printing market, label converters need reliable partners offering the latest, cutting-edge label printing technology, excellent technical knowledge and comprehensive expertise in the nuances of the local printing industry.

The latest, next-generation SCREEN digital inkjet label presses supported by ROTOCON's comprehensive service can provide the flexibility and adaptability that label printing businesses need to effectively 'future-proof' their operations in a rapidly growing and changing market.

Reliability and Support

SCREEN label presses like **Truepress LABEL 350UV SAI series** are engineered with reliability in mind, resulting in robust equipment exceeding 90% uptimes where most regular maintenance can be performed at the operator level. Additionally, the TRUST Network Service support programme uses remote equipment monitoring and predictive diagnosis to identify and prevent potential malfunctions remotely before they occur or guide operators through preventative maintenance.

For more in-depth service and repairs, ROTOCON's team is trained to the highest levels by SCREEN's own engineers to provide prompt and thorough technical support. Their local engineers are readily available to provide technical support or arrange repairs on short notice to resolve the issue and resume production.

SCREEN digital inkjet presses and their proprietary workflow management software EQUIOS have also been designed to be instantly and seamlessly integrated with a wide variety of label finishing equipment. This extensive and ongoing collaboration with various industry-leading partners in label converting ensures that ROTOCON can offer a one-stop catalogue of end-to-end label printing solutions businesses need to meet the diverse expectations of their customers.

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Ease of Use and Comprehensive Operator Training

The printing labour market in South Africa is shifting as younger generations exhibit a stronger inclination towards digital and IT-related careers. Digital inkjet technology aligns well with this trend, as it utilises existing digital skill sets that are easily applicable to inkjet printing and demands less specialised training compared to analogue presses.

An intuitive, user-friendly design allows all printing operations to be performed from a single graphical user interface (GUI), enabling label printers to expand their workforce and production workflows despite a labour market where experienced press operators are becoming increasingly scarce.

Even with a streamlined design, skilled and responsive operators are still needed to maximise inkjet productivity. Recognising this, ROTOCON ensures press operators are exhaustively trained and, after only one week, fully proficient to begin printing duties.

Truepress LABEL 350UV SAI S



EQUIOS
ART & UX

Digital Inkjet Innovation in South African Labelling

The Truepress LABEL SAI series digital label presses supplied and installed by ROTOCON stand out as a perfect fit to provide customised high-quality labels delivered within a short time frame to engage consumers that South African label printing businesses are increasingly seeking for a variety of applications from personalised medication labels to boutique wine bottles.

Neuromarketing Insights on the Importance of Label Design

The need to provide clients with labels reproducing high-definition images and intricate details can be highlighted by observing South African wineries. These winemakers are currently in a labelling arms race, seeking to outdo one another with premium labels, often integrating more specialised finishes like foiling and embossing effects.

A neuromarketing study by Label Life by UPM Raflatac⁵ further reinforced the importance of quality labels in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. They found that wine label design influenced consumer preferences within the first five seconds of observation. Additionally, labels with textured papers and metallic or embossed embellishments enhanced the perceived quality and taste of the wine.

Truepress LABEL 350UV presses can provide outstanding image quality that guides consumer preferences with its seven expanded colour gamut inks (CMYK + white, orange and blue) specially formulated for optimal functionality with its advanced inkheads. Additionally, the newly formulated Truepress Digital Primer can add the flavour enhancing pseudo-embossed and matte effects at a lower cost on coated and uncoated substrates while also improving image density, graininess and scratch resistance.

For labels for food, pharmaceutical and hygiene products, Low Migration inks are also available with the Truepress LABEL SAI-LM. These inks are fully compliant with the EuPIA Exclusion Policy for Printing Inks, Swiss Ordinance and Nestle Guidance for packaging inks.



Variable Data Printing and Cost-Effective Productivity

Current trends throughout the entire South African printing market are driving local converters to focus more on limited-scale, highly customised printing runs. For instance, many of Cape Town's trendiest bars offer limited edition micro-brewed gins, while beer manufacturers continually produce a variety of beers with labels designed to keep up with the latest consumer trends. Meanwhile, pharmaceutical, chemical and industrial consumer safety and sustainability regulations are increasing the need for labels to contain accurate and individualised data points.

SCREEN Digital inkjet printing presses are ideally suited for producing the specialised labels in small quantities required to fulfil this growing sector of the label market with variable data printing (VDP) capabilities and enhanced productivity.

With VDP functionality, every label can be produced with a unique design. These label images can create labels using individualised information and QR codes, reactive limited-edition designs, and support regular seasonal campaigns, to encourage consumer engagement in an increasingly competitive market.

Digital inkjet solutions also make these increasingly common specialised short-run label orders more profitable. In-depth levels of personalisation, printing speeds up to 60 metres per minute and on-demand printing functionality that eliminates minimum order quantity (MOQ) makes smaller printing jobs more cost-effective. This enables label converters to accept orders that were previously not profitable to expand market share and client list.

"The Truepress LABEL 350UV SAI-S press delivers three times the productivity of analogue presses while maintaining exceptional quality and consistency," says Henk Crous, owner of South African wine label specialist Sign & Seal Labels, "the machine helps us streamline our operations and reduce waste."

Automation and Digitalisation

Automation and digitalisation is steadily shifting from a cost-saving measure into an industry necessity for market growth. Following technological improvements and a shrinking labour market, human intervention is increasingly becoming the bottleneck in printing productivity.⁶ Label Converters will need to embrace automation innovations to maintain consistent growth in the labelling market.

EQUIOS workflow software automates many previously manual processes like setting printing positions for ink discharge, colour matching after roll replacement, and even daily ink head cleaning to reduce the number of manual interactions required and eliminating many of the repetitive tasks involved in label finishing.

With these and many more automated processes, operators will be free to begin working on the next printing job sooner, streamlining printing workflow and reducing operator error, further improving cost-efficacy while expanding production capacity and profitability.

Conclusion

The South African label printing market is undergoing significant transformation. Driven by the industry’s rapid growth and the increasing demand for high-quality, customised labels produced quickly in short runs, label converters must keep up with the latest technologies and innovations to meet rapidly evolving market demands.

ROTOCON and SCREEN are ready to meet this new horizon with the next generation of digital inkjet label presses, supported by exceptional local technical assistance and a commitment to client satisfaction to ensure South African printing businesses are well-equipped with the printing quality, efficiency and profitability needed to gain the competitive edge to thrive in a price sensitive market.

