

PERFECTING AND PROTECTING BRAND VALUES



Athena Graphics (participating at Pace Europe) is a European market leader in pre-press solutions for a broad range of customers in the packaging business. Philip Yorke reports on a company that continues to grow and set the standards for the industry.

Athena Graphics is an independent, family-owned business that was founded in 1991 in order to offer 'best-in-class' pre-press solutions for printers, retailers and brand owners. The company has seen consistent growth with offices in France and the Netherlands and more recently moved into purpose-built state-of-the-art offices in Roeselare, Belgium.

Today over 100 people are employed at the company's three sites, which has a wide customer base that includes brand owners in many diverse sectors ranging from the food industry to pharmaceuticals.

Tailor-made solutions

Athena Graphics guarantees its high-quality prepress services for its client's prepress packaging requirements and handles more than 35,000 orders a year for more than 100 important brands. The company has developed a platform for tailor-made solutions that simplifies the packaging chain, streamlines workflows and brings a structure to workflow visibility that eradicates bottlenecks. In addition to offering a unique status overview, it is possible to use an online approval cycle, a digital asset management tool and an advanced project management system to optimise operations.

The company told Packaging Europe that it acts as a brand guardian: its operators perform the necessary colour corrections and are able to optimise images according to each individual printing technique. Athena also ensures brand consistency on all its customers' packaging requirements regardless of the type of substrate or material involved.

A multilingual team of 25 dedicated account handlers are responsible for the coordination and optimisation of the finished product either on- or off-site. The carefully

calibrated proofs in combination with GMG software provide a realistic image of the final printed result, and in addition the company can create exciting 3D visuals, videos and virtual pack-shots. Athena's goal is to minimise the need for re-work, reduce the time-to-market and decrease operational costs.

On-going investment in new technology

As an independent company, Athena Graphics is able to make fast decisions that benefit its customers and reduce overall production costs. These values, along with the strategic decision to invest constantly in the latest technologies, form the basis for the competitive edge Athena Graphics enjoys.

Concerning artwork and pre-press solutions, Ignace Cosaert said, "We continue to invest in all the latest software from both Esko and Hybrid. When it comes to flexo printing plates, we are able to select the relevant technologies from Esko Full HD Flexo, Kodak NX, Next and Pixel+ to achieve the best possible printed result."

Over the next few years the company plans to continue investing in new technologies and will also develop its own online range of dedicated customer services. The latest development is 'Packaging Couture', which consists of three unique concepts designed to optimise the printing on labels, foils and cardboard. Ignace Cosaert added, "Packaging Couture is just like Haute Couture offering the cream of the crop at a quality level where artwork is transformed into the most beautiful printed result." □

For further details of Athena Graphics innovative prepress solutions and services visit, www.athena-graphics.be

