

Heidelberg Suprasetter:

Heaneys Performers in Print is one print company that is reaping rewards from the installation of Heidelberg's Suprasetter CTP

A number of factors have impacted developments in the design of CTP systems in recent years. In particular, shorter print runs, the flip-side of which is an increased volume of individual jobs for the printer, and increasing complexity of customer orders.

For printers to manage these changes successfully, investment in adaptable and responsive equipment is required. Such investment needs to be sustainable and viable. Machines need to have a longer shelf-life, with the capacity to be adapted to changing needs in the years to come.

It was at drupa 2004 where Heidelberg introduced the Suprasetter range, a new generation of thermal external-drum plate setters. The Suprasetter is now being delivered to customers across the globe.

Queensland printer, Heaneys Performers in Print (HPIP), which is based in Molendinar on the Gold Coast, installed its Suprasetter S74 in April this year in concert with Heidelberg's highly successful Printready automated workflow.

According to HPIP director Susan Heaney, the business was expanding at such a rate that an upgrade in its prepress equipment was necessary, and had in fact been in planning for a number of years prior to the purchase.

She says, "We'd had it on the drawing board for about three years. The reason it's taken that long is because we have been waiting for price to become more competitive and for the market to test the technology thoroughly prior to our installation."

Price was not, however, the major factor in HPIP's choice to purchase the Printready, proofing and Suprasetter package. Heaney explains, "It was more expensive than the other units we were looking at. The reason for our final decision was based around the fact that we are now basically a full Heidelberg shop. We saw the value in linking technology into the presses and, in the future into the finishing side of production." She adds, "Also, it was because of the research Heidelberg is putting into the Suprasetter."

With the Printready workflow well proven, Heidelberg set out to develop a CTP recorder that had many of the most wanted features asked for by printers wishing to invest in CTP – the result was a system design that has flexibility for upgrades in both speed and automation.

Additionally, the new laser modules in the Suprasetter feature an intelligent diode system (IDS). If a diode fails, the system automatically identifies the greatest string of active diodes to the right or left of the failed one. Production can then be maintained using these active diodes, meaning that downtime is reduced to a minimum – keeping the printing press running, which is the priority of all printers. Conversely, the more laser modules a Suprasetter contains, the greater its imaging speed and as such additional laser modules can readily be retrofitted on site after the unit has been installed to upgrade its imaging capability.

All components of the Suprasetter have been developed by Heidelberg and it supports all Heidelberg plate formats



HPIP's Speedmaster 74-5 operated by printer Michael Cross

for sheet fed and commercial web offset. The Suprasetter offers a wide range of plate throughput options and features an end-to-end modular concept that provides a great deal of investment security. Users have access to a wide variety of add-on options which meet all their needs while at the same time remaining flexible for subsequent adaptations.

Another significant feature is the new Plate on Demand function which, integrates all current Heidelberg CTP devices (Suprasetter, Topsetter and Prosetter) even more efficiently into the pressroom. To use this function, the operator of the Prinect CP2000 Centre does not even need any prior knowledge of the prepress processes. He simply selects the required job on his touch screen. At the touch of a button, he then starts the plate imaging for the required colour separation or the entire job directly via the CTP device. This direct control of plate production is particularly useful during

Suprasetter – Facts at a Glance

Suprasetter 74 / 105. 4 and 8 page

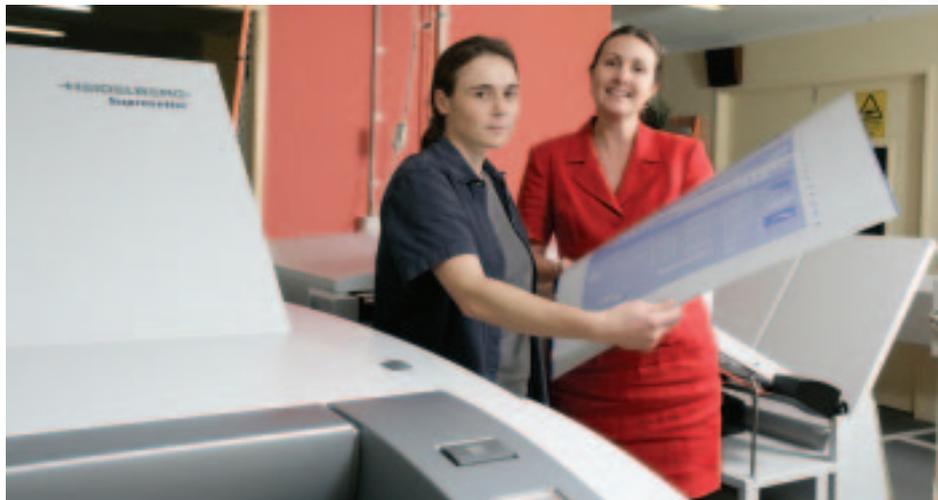
DESIGN: External Drum

PRODUCTIVITY: up to 19 / 30 plates per hour.

PLATE HANDLING: manual, semi-automatic with online processor, fully-automatic with single (SCL) or multi cassette loader (MCL). Field upgradeable. Up to 3 / 4 sets of internal plate punches

PLATE TYPE: Thermal with a sensitivity of 830nm

RESOLUTION: 1,270/2,540 dpi
Plate on Demand from Heidelberg CP2000 press console.



(l-r) Ute Hardy de Sohnrey, prepress, and Susan Heaney, director

A new generation of CTP

a night shift or for post-production of a printing plate.

Prior to its release on the world market, the Suprasetter had been tried and tested in the Heidelberg demonstration centre in Germany. All Heidelberg press demonstrations requiring thermal plates use plates imaged on the Suprasetter.

After so much research, development and testing on the product, as well as the thorough pre installation planning carried out by Heidelberg and HPIP, Heaney is seeing the impact of HPIP's CTP upgrade right away. She is delighted to see a two-fold effect, both on employees and customers.

"Our employees were a bit sceptical to start with", says Heaney, "but after their Sydney visit, they could see the potential; the result of all the research and development that Heidelberg has put into CTP."

Heaney describes the initial period after installation. "We've experienced small teething problems, as you do with the installation of any new equipment. Heidelberg is being pro-active in working with us to deal with issues that occur. Now that the employees are working with the system and they can see that the problems are being solved, they are looking forward to working in an environment with a streamlined workflow – one which is better organised and regimented, and allows for plate processing overnight."

Heaney has described what plate setting was like at HPIP prior to installation of the Suprasetter. Its previous manual process required prepress to make ready around 300 plates on a Friday for the six weekend shifts. With four people in the prepress department, this was a demanding undertaking, with employees putting in a lot of overtime and often having to come in early the next day, on a Saturday, to finish off the job. Heaney says, "We have a really good team here and we couldn't keep putting that sort of pressure on them."

Such an investment should have an immediate and recognisable impact on the work being produced for customers, not just in the efficiency of the print operation and as expected, Heaney talks about the change in print quality experienced as a result of installing the new system, and in particular to the definition in the print. The inclusion of Heidelberg's Quality Control Colour Kit and prepress interface has added benefits, using Prinect to improve production efficiency and output quality.

"There is definitely more clarity and colour is more accurate. With the press being calibrated to pre-press, we are picking up errors at an early stage. We



David Thorley, production coordinator

are getting a clearer and more accurate proof, and therefore a clearer and more accurate finish on the press. Once our production is fully integrated from prepress to post press, make readies will be easier throughout the business."

HPIP also intends to make the most of the enhanced automation brought about by installing the Suprasetter by adding value for non-local customers through remote proofing facilities. "We've been expanding as the Gold Coast grows, and we'd like to expand our Sydney market as well. We intend to link the Suprasetter further by putting in a plotter in Sydney, so that our customers can get their proofs a lot sooner than we can currently provide. We expect that within a four hour turnaround they will have a hard proof on their desk," explains Heaney.

She goes on to explain that the Suprasetter facilitates good, consistent quality when there are several printers handling the one job. As she describes, "With various printers working on the same job, rather than just relying on the eye, as we have done in the past, you've got the pre-controlled settings going out to start with so they've already got a good foundation to begin with."

She talks about the importance of the business relationship HPIP has with Heidelberg; with support for HPIP covering aspects of the business beyond simply installing new machinery. Heaney is impressed with the interest the manufacturing giant has shown in the business and its future stability and growth. In particular she lists Heidelberg's contribution with business development and planning advice, training of HPIP employees, response to

service issues and the option for engaging in Heidelberg's Remote Service.

As is typical of many small to medium size print shops, HPIP has evolved from a family run business. As the Gold Coast has grown, so too has HPIP's customer base. With customers primarily in South East Queensland, and roughly one quarter in Sydney, the Suprasetter offers HPIP the right platform to grow its business from.

The very changes in the industry that prompted development of the Suprasetter are also the reason why HPIP has made a considerable investment in upgrading their equipment. "We changed from A1 about four years ago and we basically became an A2 quick-turnaround print shop. For the future the Suprasetter offers us cutting edge technology. We have to promote that side of our business and keep ahead of the market. The future looks positive for us and our clients," says Heaney.

In reading the HPIP website, you will see its proud claim that it is 'Not an Overnight Sensation'. HPIP has earned its reputation as one of Australia's most respected print trade establishments by focusing on customer satisfaction and wise investment. Being proactive, to anticipate customer needs, as well as providing quality work has proved a successful combination for HPIP. Heaney also values relationships, not just with her customers and her employees, but with suppliers.

"It's about the right supplier and the good relationship we have with Heidelberg," she says, "it's been a good relationship all along and we are happy to convert to a full Heidelberg shop." AP