

Sinapse PackSim Gravure Simulator at Shorewood Packaging

September 8th, 2008 – Sinapse Print Simulators (www.sinapseprint.com), the world's leading supplier of training simulators for gravure and offset presses, announces that Shorewood Packaging — a business of International Paper — has introduced a Gravure Simulator and formal training program for their operators in Newport News, Virginia, USA.

The Sinapse simulator's ability to help reduce make-ready and waste has helped achieve savings of 15% for Shorewood, in conjunction with their introduction of optimization teams for their 45 million cartons per month production facility.

The difficulty of finding trained printers in rural areas of the U.S. and elsewhere is a significant problem to many companies. Shorewood Packaging in Virginia is no exception. They have to progressively train staff on their gravure presses which makes for a very expensive learning process.

"It's very difficult to find trained operators around here," says Myron Braggs, shift supervisor at the plant. "It's rare to bring in a first or second operator who has the necessary experience to run a press. They need a lot of help. Consequently, some operators have not been properly trained."

The solution to their problem came from the Gravure Association of America who arranged a demonstration of the PackSim press simulator from Sinapse. As a result Shorewood have introduced a formal training program for their gravure operators.

"The value of press simulation training was clear right away because we needed to create a skills-based training program for all of our operators," says Braggs. "In the past, when operators were training on a live press, we'd be running waste as they learned. The simulator gives us the same level of training but without the waste or the downtime." The simulator acts like a real press and comes with press exercises that include bleeding, chatter and cylinder repeats. It simulates errors such as hazing, screening, ink lines and missing print with a high level of realism to learn valuable troubleshooting skills off press.

The simulator's ability to help reduce waste and maintain quality was a significant factor because the plant produces 45 million cartons per month for consumer, cosmetics, sporting goods and tobacco for North America, the UK and China.

Slashing Makeready and Waste 15%

The Newport News plant felt that the value of this training was sufficient to justify the purchase of the simulator without a formal cost analysis. It quickly became apparent that the decision was the right one. Waste and makeready have been slashed by 15% at the plant from a combination of optimization teams and simulator training. Part of this success is the

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Sinapse PackSim's flexibility to create sets of exercises that reflect the operating issues in a plant. Braggs created exercises unique to their Bobst Champlain presses to give operators the skills to troubleshoot problems that don't happen very often such as failures of the dryer, electrostatic assist, and compensator rollers.

A paper-based skills program is being developed by the plant to complement simulator training. The complete program takes 40 hours with operators training eight hours per week and it will be shared as best practice with other Shorewood Packaging plants.

The program includes:

- Classroom training to introduce operators to the simulator;
- Individual training on the standard exercises, with instructor support;
- Introduction to tracking waste and downtime through the simulator;
- Unique exercises created by the Newport News trainers to build operator confidence

Thinking Things Through

Already, Braggs is very enthusiastic about the results. "The realism of this simulator is great. The accuracy of the problems and the results are amazing because it's like working on a real press. The operators also enjoy this kind of training too," he says. "Initially they treated it like a video game. However, they understand what we are trying to do and they are working through the exercises to develop their troubleshooting skills. The positive results are apparent, not just in the reduction in waste and downtime, but in the operators themselves. "They are more involved on what goes on the press, especially the younger operators with no troubleshooting experience. I see a big difference in their confidence level. In the past, if the first fix didn't work they would turn to someone else. Now, when something goes wrong they start troubleshooting themselves."

As a shift supervisor, Braggs finds it very rewarding to watch the operators grow and learn. "You now see them thinking things through. It's also good that they think it's fun — how many other training programs can you think of where the operators say, 'Is it alright if I go do my training now?'" From a human resources perspective, the Sinapse PackSim has also taken the pressure off hiring new operators. "Our training program now allows us to train best-in-class operators from the ground up."

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For more information visit www.sinapseprint.com or contact:

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Publication images like these are available from Sinapse:



Photograph 1: A typical Bobst packaging gravure press.

Note : higher resolution images of these presses are available for publication

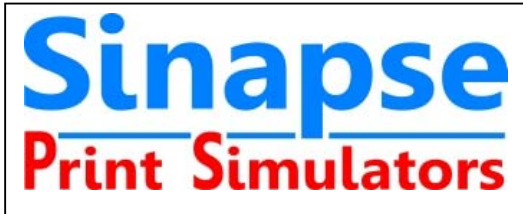


Image 2: The new logo for Sinapse Print Simulators (formerly known as Sinapse Graphic International).

Note : higher resolution logo files are available for publication

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