

Sinapse Celebrates 1,300th Press Simulator Installation and Fourth Purchase by Graphic Packaging International, USA

Sheetfed Sinapse SHOTS Simulator Saves Downtime

September 29th, 2008 - American packaging printer Graphic Packaging International, Inc achieved landmark '1,300th Sinapse simulator customer' status with repeat orders for the European company's market leading Sheetfed Offset Training Simulator (SHOTS) process training systems.

Graphic Packaging International (recently merged into the Altiivity group) was so impressed with higher production speeds and press downtime savings for both new hires and existing employees, that they signed an order for a fourth new Sinapse SHOTS training simulator for their Gordonsville site.

Sinapse Print Simulators (www.sinapseprint.com) makes a wide range of press process training simulator systems for sheetfed and web based production – offset, flexo and gravure – they lead the world market in such high technology press simulator training systems with over 1,500 installations to date.

For continuous packaging process applications, maintaining high levels of production quality & efficiency using systematic staff training is key. A vital component of Graphic Packing International's recent success in this area has been the use of extensive press simulation training:

- Frequent 'continuous improvement' process training sessions for existing employees
- Efficient and fast process education for 'new hires'

This focus on systematic use of the SHOTS press simulator training capability created by Sinapse has delivered very low downtime levels, consistent production quality and highly skilled production teams. New hires can be trained quickly and effectively and integrated into existing press production crews.

Why is off-press simulator training so vital in the packaging industry?

Graphic Packaging International, Inc. is one of America's largest producers of cereal boxes and other food packaging, and with 24/7 operation and millions of feet of carton running through the plants each month, there is no room for downtime.

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Efficient training of 'new hires' is vital and a real challenge in today's hiring environment, in which new employees have little or no experience and are often trained on press.

In the Fall of 2006, Graphic Packaging International, Inc.'s Gordonsville, TN, and Kalamazoo, MI, plants invested in SHOTS press training simulators from Sinapse. The two installations come on the heels of the highly successful 2004 SHOTS installation at Graphic Packaging International, Inc.'s Ft. Smith, AK, operation.

Gain experience fast without downtime for new hires

For the Gordonsville, TN, plant the ability to give trainees production experience without downtime on the press has been invaluable. "Before SHOTS, new hires went through a safety orientation, then straight to the press," says Dave Zeman, training coordinator of the plant, which has more than 120 employees. "They are paired with more experienced operators, but in our business, accuracy of reproduction is critical. The cartons have to look perfect. When they start making errors, it's costly."

Add to this the challenge of accurately representing brand colors. Both Gordonsville and Kalamazoo produce four-color packaging, plus two (but potentially up to four) spot colors.

For Richard Self, technical trainer and promotions manager for the Kalamazoo plant, training issues focus on ink and water balance. "Not a lot of people understand the concept of litho—how it works and the principles behind it," Self says. "It takes a long time to learn, and if you start throwing away pallets of product, those costs don't take long to add up."

Continuous improvement process training

The Gordonsville plant has been training on the simulator since October, 2006. Zeman currently has two training programs in place—one for new hires and a continuous improvement program for existing employees. The SHOTS simulator runs 30 exercises produced by its trainer to match its workflow. This gives new hires "a feel of what will happen in the pressroom, what can happen, and why it happens." It also includes exercises at the medium and advanced levels.

Zeman is very enthusiastic about the realism of the simulator. "We can show operators a register mark, for example, and say, if you move this, it moves that, and reproduce what actually happens on the press. They can experience, in real time, what happens when you move the register to the right, left, or back."

One of Zeman's favorite exercises relates to packing size and how it can impact the quality of print. "This is something that is very non-intuitive, so it's only something operators learn through hands-on training," he says.

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Are the exercises challenging for experienced operators, as well? Zeman says that even he has been stumped by the realism of the simulator. In one training session, one of his trainers “turned off” the air conditioning in the building. “It really messed me up,” says Zeman. “I couldn’t figure out what it was. I had no idea the simulator could change the temperature of the pressroom!”

Downtime analysis determines simulator training frequency

New hires start on the Sinapse simulator within two to three hours on their first night. After that, both new and experienced operators rotate in an as-needed basis. Zeman felt the training was so important that he hired temps to open up training time. How does he determine where additional training is needed? “From the downtime reporting system,” says Zeman. “I load the downtime reports and find out which one is the killer.”

SHOTS training has been particularly helpful for the plant’s third shift, where press operators have only been running a press for two years or less. Zeman has seen a noticeable improvement in their confidence and skill levels, especially among new hires.

Training investment pays back many times over

Making this training particularly sweet is that Zeman was able to obtain funding for SHOTS from state of the Tennessee, through the Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency.

For the Kalamazoo plant, it was a matter of simple payback. “Management realized that, once you start throwing away pallets of product, you can burn up the cost of the simulator in a few hours,” says Self. “They recognized that [with the reduction in waste and downtime] the training pays itself back.”

SHOTS is one of the press training simulators for offset, flexo and gravure produced by Sinapse Print Simulators. With more than 1,500 simulators installed around the world, Sinapse is recognized as the leader in print training technology systems.

For more information on the **Sinapse SHOTS (Sheetfed Offset Training Simulator)** product, contact diane.delorme@sinapseprint.com or visit www.sinapseprint.com for additional news, case studies, product documentation and a list of distributors.

Sinapse Print Simulator enquiries can be made at the Printing Industries of America/Graphic Arts Technical Foundation booth, ‘Grand 2’, in the main show concourse at Graph Expo in Chicago, October 26 to 29, 2008.

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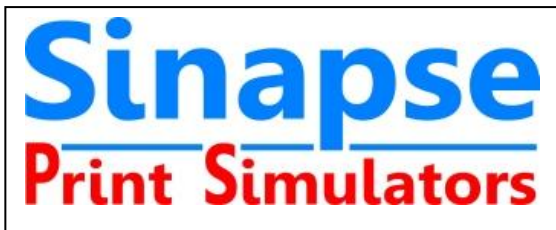
Publication images like these are available from Sinapse:



Sinapse SHOTS press simulator customer training room

Gary Wix trainer at Graphic Packaging Gordonsville (left) and Victor Sadler (right) working with the SHOTS Simulator.

Image source: Sinapse Print Simulators



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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