



Simulators & Software for the Graphic Arts

Printpack Inc. - FLEXO CASE STUDY

Cost Cutter & Confidence Builder Too: PrintPack Trains With A Simulated Press

Three days into the job it happens. A new recruit, still familiarizing himself or herself with the layout of Printpack Inc.'s Hendersonville, N.C., plant sits down at the on-site FlexSys Training Corp. Press Simulator. Once exposed to the machine, it grabs his/her attention and keeps his/her interest. Bob Hipps, plant trainer, watches the scenario play out time and time again. On each and every occasion, he likes what he sees. "The Simulator is definitely the best training tool available--hands down! It eliminates the need to use heavy machinery, which is very costly and also wastes large amounts of material.

"The Sinapse Graphic's Press Simulator is the greatest thing I've seen since I came into the flexographic printing industry 25 years ago. The most impressive thing about it is accuracy," Hipps continues. "Based on what a press will do, it's about 95 percent there. Press operators that I put through Simulator exercises are absolutely amazed. It does a super job. The training approach is really down to earth. The Simulator is extremely user friendly. Developers definitely did their homework and delivered what they promised."

Hipps admits that at Printpack, "We are trying to build a strong foundation and the Simulator helps us accomplish our objective. We emphasize bringing people in, training them and retraining them. We want our new employees to establish a strong connection with the company. To do this, we do extensive training upon hiring. Our turnover rate has dropped dramatically since implementation of the new hire orientation program. Right now, we're incorporating the Simulator into the core curriculum.

"It's a great tool to show people an anilox roll and the different components on the press," Hipps notes. "It is valuable that they see that the company has invested in tools to increase their skills in the future. That helps to peak their interest and commitment to the company up front."

SINAPSE GRAPHIC International

Bât. Epicure – Les Algorithmes – Route de l'Orme aux Merisiers – 91194 SAINT AUBIN CEDEX - France

Tél. : +33 (0)1.69.35 54 00 - Fax : +33 (0)1.69 35 07 15 - e-mail : info@sinapsegraphic.com

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According to the Printpack trainer, “Spending time with a new employee at the Simulator station makes him feel more comfortable and the one-on-one attention serves to encourage him to stay with the company for a longer period of time. With the FlexSys Simulator, a new employee gains valuable, hands-on experience and the machine brings consistency to the learning process. Gone are the days when we simply brought Bill in, introduced him to Ralph and let the two work side-by-side for six weeks, which exposed Bill to Ralph’s good habits and Ralph’s bad habits.”

“What sold me on the Simulator?,” Hippias asks. Then he answers, “The objective from the onset, and the biggest benefit is the training of new operators. We use it for troubleshooting purposes and it definitely assists us in reducing setup costs. My next step will entail incorporating the Simulator into experienced press operator training programs.”

At Printpack’s Hendersonville plant, the state-of-the-art training equipment is being merged with a training curriculum that was developed years ago, Hippias reports. “We are very pleased with the results. We go through the Printpack Operator Trainer Manual and create exercises targeted to each part of the press. The Simulator keeps the employee interested. We have tried teaching from a book and found that, around chapter 2, we lose the person’s attention and interest. Since the Simulator gives him the chance to practice what he learns, it builds confidence up.”

Hippias is not the only Printpack trainer now using a Press Simulator. “Rhinelander, Wis., jumped on board and now Villa Rica, GA has purchased our third Simulator.” Our Corporate Consultant John Lee is helping co-ordinate activities between the three plants. With John’s direction, we also plan on demonstrating the simulator’s abilities to the other Printpack facilities at a press trainer conference coming up in the near future. The press trainers will see the press simulator and how it can fit in with the current Printpack training program. Hopefully those trainers still unfamiliar with the Simulator will immediately see its value. After all, we are trying to build consistency of training throughout the company and orchestrating a full roll-out for the Simulator is how we can do it.”

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Additional details on the FlexSys Press Simulator can be obtained by calling Sinapse Graphic International at + 33 (0)1 6935 5400.