



Italians Take Lead in Gravure Training Technology

by Virginia Harvey
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The packaging industry is one of the most dynamic segments of the graphic sector in Italy. This is particularly true in Northern Italy where gravure is often the process of preference for large companies.

Industrial expansion goes hand in hand with a skilled workforce. To promote expansion and growth, the Italian spirit of innovation was applied to give birth to a unique, industrially oriented training center in the beautiful Como region, northeast of Milan.

An Innovative Training Structure

To meet the industry's increasing training demand, the local Graphic Committee, an association of 35 printing companies and unions, decided to expand its training facilities. Says Pietro Lironi, Managing Director of Goglio Cofibox S.p.a. (Goglio group) and President of the Committee, "Our first task was to build a brand new school with new classrooms, laboratories, and meeting rooms, which was inaugurated in 1997. We then set up new industrial courses for the employees of the region. Printers from member companies, who are given time for this work, provide the training. We also worked closely with Ripamonti High School to put together a five-year 'Technical Graphic Course,' which began in 1989."

One problem was how to train large numbers of workers at the same time and how to give them "hands-on, problem-solving" experience without buying and running expensive presses for the different print technologies. In addition, market demand required a way of accelerating the training and condensing years of experience into months of training.

The Most Modern Training Tools: Sinapse Graphic International Simulators

"When we heard about the simulators, we thought that it would be the ideal tool to complete our training offer and better satisfy industrial needs," adds Pietro Lironi. "The simulator is a very flexible training tool that allows training of novices as well as experienced personnel."

The training consortium decided to purchase three different Sinapse Graphic training simulators for the packaging industry: PackSim for gravure, Flexsys for flexo, and SHOTS for sheet-fed offset.

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The first set of simulators was installed in Como in September 2001. Within one year, the training consortium ordered six more simulators: three PackSim and three SHOTS. It is clear that they consider the simulator to be an essential part of their training program.

"We saw that the simulator was best used by two or three apprentices at the time," explains Graziano Pagani, Secretary of the Committee. "This way, we feel that each apprentice is really trained in a thorough manner without being distracted."

The simulation learning center has been equipped with four computers, each in a twin-monitor configuration. The first screen shows the console and settings while the second screen displays the print result. An additional computer connected to a beamer is available for projecting the simulators on a big screen for a larger audience.



“Currently,” says Graziano Pagani, “we are completing the ‘Train the Trainer’ course for all future trainers. By March 2003, we will start the training for all employees.”

The Training Curriculum

A simulator training program has been established with three levels:

- The entry level is dedicated to novices or employees in the production area. It helps them become familiar with the basics of the press and its components.
- The intermediate level is for more experienced employees such as assistant operators or third operators. This level lets them experience press situations and gives them plenty of exposure on quality problems and on the costs of their actions.
- Finally, the last level is dedicated to lead operators who will integrate their own parameters and solve complex problems.

“Our aim is to have a uniform knowledge level among all operators within a company,” says Pietro Lironi. “In a way, the simulator helps us define production standards.”

The Conclusions

Simulator-based training is faster and far more economical than hands-on training. “The simulator is able to show a variety of printing problems in a much shorter period of time than in real life,” explains Pietro Lironi. “Plus, the simulator generates only *virtual* waste and costs. Therefore, we expect to offer better quality while reducing production costs and gaining professional skills.”

Training Supervision and Process Expertise

Augusto Viganò and Stefania Romano were the key figures in the successful implementation of this training center and of its adoption of simulator training technology.

Mr. Viganò’s experience as technical director for industry suppliers, including Coates and Sun Chemical, gives him a clear view of process problems, how to solve them, and how to teach others. Mr. Viganò acts as curriculum director for the Como school and is actively involved in introducing the simulators to the larger Italian market.

For more information on simulator training technology, please contact Virginia Harvey from Sinapse Graphic International at virginia.harvey@sinapsegraphic.com.



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