Peter Kesper and Peer Kesper at FESPA 2019.

CST and Nova Intertech provide sustainable solutions for the printing industry

Peter Kesper is a well known personality for the printing industry in Pakistan having close relations with the sector for many decades. The screen imaging technology of CST has a strong installed presence in Pakistan. Pakisan Textile Journal caught up with Mr. Kesper recently for an interview that we are pleased to share with our readers. Also present were Thomas Heym, Managing Director, Nova Inter Tech Ltd and M. Moazzam Baig, CEO Visitex Systems, representatives of CST and Nova Intertech in Pakistan. The photograph above, of Peter Kesper, and Peer Kesper, was taken at CST stand during FESPA 2019 in Munich.

Can you tell us about about your Company?

We have several companies and generally, the oldest one is Kesper printing solution. This company is 147 years old, it's a family own business, previously a small business. When I joined it, I was very much interested in new techniques, so we developed new machinery for our own use. However, we realized that it was too expensive for us to develop a machine solely for our own use.

It was then that we decided to make machines for others and became a leading machinery manufacturing company that became much larger than the original family business. Today we have several companies making machinery. Thomas Heym and I began to work together 23 years ago with an idea of developing a pollution free stripping machine for cleaning screens for reuse and recycling. We were the first in the world to develop this machine in Krefeld Germany. I am a shareholder in Nova Intertech, which was established in 2000 with Mr. Thomas with the idea to support printing companies with pollution free recycling of their rotary screens.

The rotary screens are quite expensive and because of this today you must reuse them more frequently than in the past. Today the customers are printing orders as small as even 2000 to 3000 meters while in the past one design would be printed on 50,000 to 100,000 meters.

This is the reason the screens need to be recycled today. This is also important for environmental reasons. While stripping of the screens in the past required hazardous chemicals, our solution is water based. This high-pressure stripping is the perfect solution because it does not need hazardous pollutant chemicals, keeping the screen alive so we can reuse it. Some of our Pakistani customers are reusing their screens more than 14 times. In Pakistan, we have 24 machines in operation and 130 machines installed worldwide.

In 2000 you started your collaboration with Nova IntertechCould you share with us other siginificant technologies you have supplied in Pakistan?

We started with the scanner, that would scan the designs to make the film which was used to expose the design on

the screen. This was how it was done in earlier days. The next development was an engraving unit, which was, in the beginning, a wax engraver. The wax compensated for the black in the film. First, it was the film making followed by wax than it was ink, masking the emulsion on the screen. Today we have direct exposure, which is DLE, the direct line engraving, which is the main machine now in the market. There is also a laser engraver which is an expensive and slow method. We developed this machine 40 years ago, much earlier than any of our competitors and we still havefive lasers. in our engraving shop. As I said it is not a commercially viable option being very expensive and slow. In Pakistan, there are only two or three machines for the laser while at least a hundred ink and DLE machines.

Pakistan has always been always a very strong market for us. But we also make machinery for other market textile markets such as Indonesia, Thailand, Turkey and Bangladesh that account for 20-30% of our sales. We are working worldwide but Pakistan remains a strong market for us. It is a country that has been very progressive in investing in new technology and that is now a major market for digital Printing printing machines.

In Pakistan, there are two types of markets one is digital and other is rotary

Thomas Heym, Peter Kesper and M. Moazzam Baig.

printing market, the digital market is very small exclusive to some retailers and almost customized and which is not entirely a mass market.

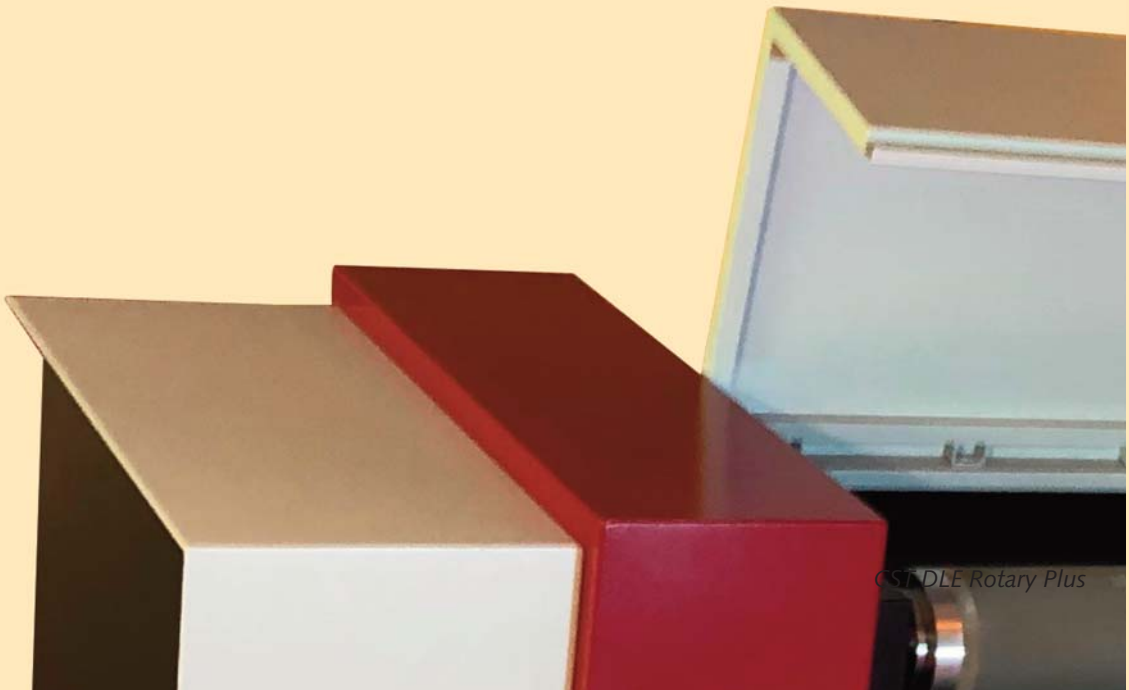
Yes, it's right, but digital is also going mass market with high-speed machinery. Like Lario and other high-speed machines like Reggiani has introduced a new single pass. But if we talk about digital as the replacement of rotary screen printing I believe would be wrong.

The demand for conventional screen printing remains strong because digital printing is still in the process of development. Screen printing has a lot of advantages, you can print numerous dyes, pigments, and bold colours some special effects colours which you cannot do with digital.

In Pakistan, you can get orders of fifty thousand meters which is mass production that may not be possible to go for digital printing for that order as the per meter cost is still very high in digital as compared to the rotary printing. The digital printing is fast growing and selling in Pakistan but the conventional rotary printing remains th most practical solution for home textiles.

Have you sold your machines for the rotary printing sector in Pakistan recently?

Yes, several machines. In fact, they are our best selling machines in Pakistan. The time has not yet come to say that rotary is finished. The digital is a technique which you can say completed a process that was lacking previously. Other



CSI DLE Rotary Plus

NovaJet 3500.

advantages of digital are it saves water and it is environmentally friendly as the demand for the environmentally friendly process is getting stronger. Now, most of the digital printing machines are reactive colours because digital pigments are not there yet.

So the buyers are asking for even more environmentally friendly processes and this brings us to the pigment printing where digital printing is quite weak due to the limited technology and also the high cost of pigment inks as compared with reactive. Traditionally pigment printing had a negative reputation of being cheap and of lower quality only for those who do not have money for finishing machines like steamers. But now things have changed and advanced pigments processes are now used to produce high fashion brands to achieve the good look, feel and softness. With home textiles, pigments have a definite advantage which can only be achieved through rotary printing so far.

Some of the textile mills have also improved their processes regarding pigments. The screen printing is also getting better and better in competition with the digital machines. Because of the equipment we are working with much higher resolutions. In the past, it was 580dpi but now we are looking at 2400 dpi, we also have a new engraver working with 2400 dpi.

Please share with us the benefits of your screen stripping machines?

I think we helped quite a lot with our stripping machine for the screens because the screens for the rotary printing are very expensive. With our stripping machines, the screens are reusable at minimal cost resulting in huge savings over time. That is why we see digital as an add on and not necessarily a replacement of rotary printing. For us, it is also motivating us to do better.

Another kind of printing that you will witness in ITMA is paste printing in which gold, silver and white paste will be used on hybrid machines. This would require screen printing at the end of the digital process as these special colours and effects are not yet possible with digital printing.

I would like to mention that digital printing has also provided a lot of advantages for screen printing sector as it helps our customers to make the digital sampling which is much faster. However, the large installed capacity of rotary screen printing machines allows our customers to meet the bulk of their orders adequately with the rotary machines thanks to the developments in screen making and recycling technologies.

Sometimes the designs by our industry are not optimum to the capacity and potential of the new technology. How would you comment on that?

It shows that people are not using technology as they should be doing. For example, we don't need a very fine 2400dpi screen to produce a simpler design. For that, we need to educate people to use the screens and to best utilize the technology. Even the new persons coming from educational institutions have no experience related to the machine functions.

I think with the solutions that we can offer to Pakistan's textile printing industry, the industry can achieve great success with high quality of printing possible due to our new DLE technology as well as our screen stripping technology resulting in great savings.

CST is represented in Pakistan by Visitex Systems.