

Inspire

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Laminators



Optima² Flagship

The SOMA Optima² 10-color printing press will be showcased at drupa 2024. Experience the state-of-the-art automation and press intelligence for yourself during the live demos.



Hall 15
Stand A01

Visit our live demos at drupa.

Read more and register at: www.soma-eng.com





PAVLA KUSA INTRODUCTION

Dear SOMA Readers!

“The rising costs of resources coupled with the demand for ever shorter print runs have pushed us to rethink and innovate, not just in our products but more critically, in our workflows and processes.”

As we embrace the unfolding chapters of drupa 2024, it is with great enthusiasm and a sense of profound duty that I present this edition of our company magazine. Our journey through the past decade has been nothing short of a monumental shift in the flexible packaging industry, marked by an unyielding pursuit of productivity, the embrace of digitalization, and the strategic navigation of market dynamics.

The past few years have seen our industry engaged in a continuing race towards enhancing productivity. This has been largely driven by the advent of more powerful machines and a significant leap in digitalization, reshaping the very fabric of our operations and offerings. Amidst this evolution, the rising costs of resources coupled with the demand for ever shorter print runs have pushed us to rethink and innovate, not just our own products but more critically, our workflows and processes. The margin, we've learned, is increasingly found in the efficiency and intelligence of our operations.

Yet, as we've navigated these waters, it has become abundantly clear that productivity, while essential, is only one facet of the multifaceted challenge posed by digital transformation. The landscape is being reshaped not only by those who aim to do things better, but also by those who dare to do things differently. Creative startups and established players alike are not content with being 10% better; they strive to be 100% different. Their innovative business models and strategies underscore a bold

reimagining of what success looks like in our industry.

SOMA has stood at the forefront of this transformation, recognizing that the path to success is not paved by following the status quo but by daring to redefine it. Our response to the industry's shifts has been holistic, embracing innovation not just in our technology but in our approach to every challenge. Our commitment to excellence and innovation is exemplified by the development of the highest level of CI flexo technology within our Optima family of flexo presses, including its wide portfolio of Intelligent Printing Units. At the upcoming drupa event, we are excited to present the flagship of our development from this family, a 10-color Optima² model that is a marvel of engineering, capable of reaching speeds of 600 m/min even on the most demanding jobs. It incorporates all the features of automation that significantly minimize the time required to switch from one job to another, reducing it to mere minutes.

SOMA has adeptly addressed the flexo industry's challenges of short run

inefficiencies and the scarcity of skilled operators with its Optima Intelligent Automation, featuring the Changeover Wizard for enhanced operator guidance through job changeovers, and automating tasks like plate mounting and drive tuning for greater efficiency. The web-based SOMA S-Cloud platform streamlines data exchange, reducing manual errors, while its cloud-based Intelligent Service facilitates effective communication and support. This comprehensive approach not only optimizes workflow and improves operator skills but also significantly reduces the potential for mistakes, ensuring a smoother, more efficient production process.

This edition of Inspire is filled with stories of resilience, creativity, and innovation, reflecting our team's dedication and the spirit that drives SOMA forward. I thank our team, customers, and partners for their support and collaboration, as we continue shaping the industry's future.

With my best regards,

Pavla Kusa, Commercial Director



SOMA

TOPIC

What makes the

SOMA Optima² Flagship 10C

press special

The SOMA Optima² flagship 10C is the epitome of SOMA brilliance: a ten-color flexo press that combines exceptional SOMA Optima² performance with the latest cutting-edge technology.



A press might offer exceptional quality at high speeds, but it is only useful if it can also make short runs cost effective—and competitive. This is done by assuring that job changeovers and makereadies are completed as quickly as possible. A press isn't helpful if it's not running.



The SOMA flagship press is exceptional. For starters, it delivers the print quality for which SOMA is recognized. When designing the Optima², SOMA focused on minimizing bounce and maintaining accurate registration. They did this by developing the **Advanced Bounce Control** system to assure that even challenging designs could be printed at high speeds. It features a massive cast iron print unit frame, a sophisticated printing deck design, and composite mandrels. The result? Exceptional quality at speeds up to 600m/minute.

With **SOMA Job Tuning**, a specially designed drive tuning algorithm, perfect registration is guaranteed while maintaining a consistent impression while printing. The effect is extraordinary print quality at maximum speeds.

And, as a **ten-unit press**, the SOMA Optima² flagship flexo press gives the package printer and converter many options for special inks and varnishes.

Short run efficiency

A press might offer exceptional quality at high speeds, but it is only useful if it can also make short runs cost effective—and competitive. This is done by assuring that job changeovers and makereadies are completed as quickly as possible. A press isn't helpful if it's not running.

To get a job done right, each one has its own unique **Job Recipe** information, located on the S-Cloud, available to connected SOMA equipment. Sending one unique job recipe to all equipment prevents human errors, and provides the foundation for efficient job changeovers.

SOMA S-Mount mouter: It all starts with the SOMA S-Mount mouter. The automatic S-Mount makes the mounting process fast and error-free, mounting the plate quickly, precisely, and accurately.

It's what is optional in the S-Mount that is truly special. The **Intelligent Registration Impression Setting**, or what we call **IRIS**, automatically measures the plate topography and registration. This sets all active printing decks into impression and registration in just a couple of minutes, for quick press makereadies. There is almost zero ink and material waste, and minimum operator involvement.

How would you like to prepare the press for the next job, while the press is still working on the current one? With **Flying Sleeve technology**, there are sliding doors that give the operator access to the anilox and printing sleeves on any inactive printing deck—while other decks are running. This means that you can set up plates and aniloxes for the next job.

The last thing you want to do is drain a lot of ink from a press when refilling a unit with a new color. The **SOMA Ink Cartridge system** reduces ink costs by minimizing ink volume and residual waste. Thus, printers can reduce ink costs on printing jobs where expensive spot colors, special effects and metallic formulations are required—helping printers to maintain profit margins while meeting end user price demands.

 SOMA





Print jobs are getting shorter and there is a lack of skilled operators. The award-winning Changeover Wizard assures fast, error-free makereadies. It guides the press operator automatically through every step during the changeover process, working in harmony with the Job Recipe.

Ergonomic features to make it easy for anyone to operate

What also makes a press easier to use are ergonomic features that take into consideration the operator. SOMA has put a lot of thought into this.

Web threading is a motorized system that automatically feeds the job substrate through the Optima² press. This includes the path around the central drum in the printing unit.

The **Optima² ergonomic drying heads** are cantilevered; easy to open and access them for cleaning. SOMA i-Dry is an extremely efficient system for stand-by modes, low speeds, or printing designs with low ink coverage. The system can adjust the speed of ventilators and/or keep them on a minimum level during stand-by mode. The three-fan drying system, consisting of a between-deck drying loop and drying tunnel loop, helps to dry ink quickly. It can also deliver exceptional energy savings via the possible integration of heat recuperation from regenerative thermal oxidizers. The energy is recovered and used to preheat the air-drying systems in the press.

The **ergonomic doctor blade chambers** is a lightweight cassette system made of a carbon composite for easy operation, attached to a massive cast iron body holder,

which can be pneumatically rotated for easy access to on-board exchange of blades and seals.

To access the top deck to add new print sleeves, SOMA integrated hydraulic platforms to reach the position quickly and safely. SOMA also offers a **sleeve handling system**, a pneumatic device to ease the heavy lifting of print sleeves and aniloxes.

An intelligent flexo press

What really makes the Optima² press special is the built-in intelligence; the ability to help the operator run the press optimally.

Print jobs are getting shorter and there is a lack of skilled operators. The award-winning **Changeover Wizard** assures fast, error-free makereadies. It guides the press operator automatically through every step during the changeover process, working in harmony with the Job Recipe. The Changeover Wizard analyzes the differences between the job that is currently being printed and the job that is next in line. Based on the analysis, the Wizard suggests the optimal sequence of steps to be taken during the job changeover.

Anilox Management - The Optima² press collects information about total run length of the anilox as well as run length since the last deep cleaning, and stores it in an RFID chip integrated in the anilox. It lets the operator know if it's time to clean or replace the anilox.

A set of high-speed, high-resolution **intelligent cameras** surround the Optima² press. The cameras even have a programmable, event-triggering function to analyze what was happening on the press, in every detail.

It's nice to know how your SOMA Optima² press is contributing to the bottom line, by helping calculate job costs. **SOMA Press Supervision** offers efficiency overviews, as well as an energy and ink consumption overview, which can provide more precise cost calculations in the future. All significant press parameters are monitored online. Any S-Cloud connected device can examine what is—or has been—happening on the press, online.

A press that helps to assure expert service

The web-based SOMA Intelligent Service platform cloud solution, made possible using SOMA S-Cloud technology, offers a quick, problem-solving communications channel for every SOMA customer. Thus, the Optima² press not only makes the press operator smart. It makes SOMA service smart, too.

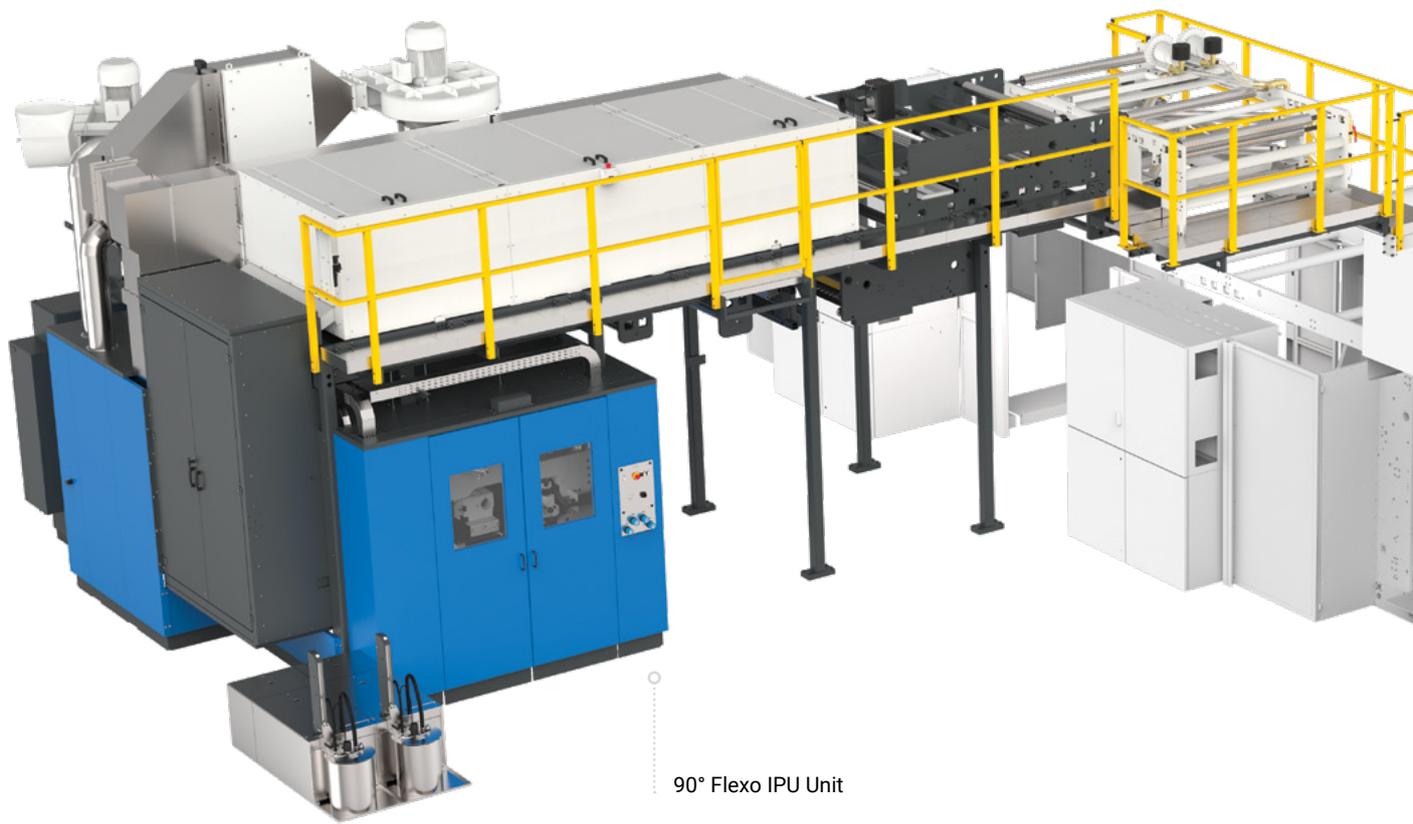
SOMA S-Cloud data sharing contains a lot of helpful information, such as equipment manuals, instructional videos, a list of spare parts and retrofits, and a menu of available service programs.

In case of a press issue, a service request is delivered to SOMA's service team using the **SOMA S-Chat**—a very convenient and useful chat-type of communication easily accessed from any S-Cloud-connected device. The SOMA S-Chat provides 24/7 support for its customers via integration of the global SOMA service team on the back-end of this platform.

If there's an emergency, **remote diagnostics** are conducted via a secure VPN connection.

The best, most efficient way for our service experts to help is if they can literally see where your problems are. **SOMA glasses** enable a real-time remote expert connection. With them, SOMA experts see exactly what you see, so they can troubleshoot and guide you as if they were standing right next to you.

There's a lot more to what you can just spot from the outside of the SOMA Optima² flagship 10C. We'd be happy to show you.



90° Flexo IPU Unit

TOPIC

SOMA's Intelligent Printing Unit:

Pioneering sustainable and efficient flexo printing solutions



The IPU is designed to integrate seamlessly (as an upstream & downstream unit) with the SOMA Optima², a state-of-the-art CI flexo printing press. This integration allows for single-pass operations, dramatically increasing the efficiency of package print production.

While the packaging industry continues to seek innovative solutions to enhance efficiency and reduce waste, SOMA remains at the forefront of technological advancements. Our latest innovation, the Intelligent Printing Unit (IPU), exemplifies our commitment to pushing the boundaries of flexographic printing technology. So, how is the IPU revolutionizing the printing process, ensuring sustainability, and maximizing operational efficiency?

Efficiency and sustainability with IPU

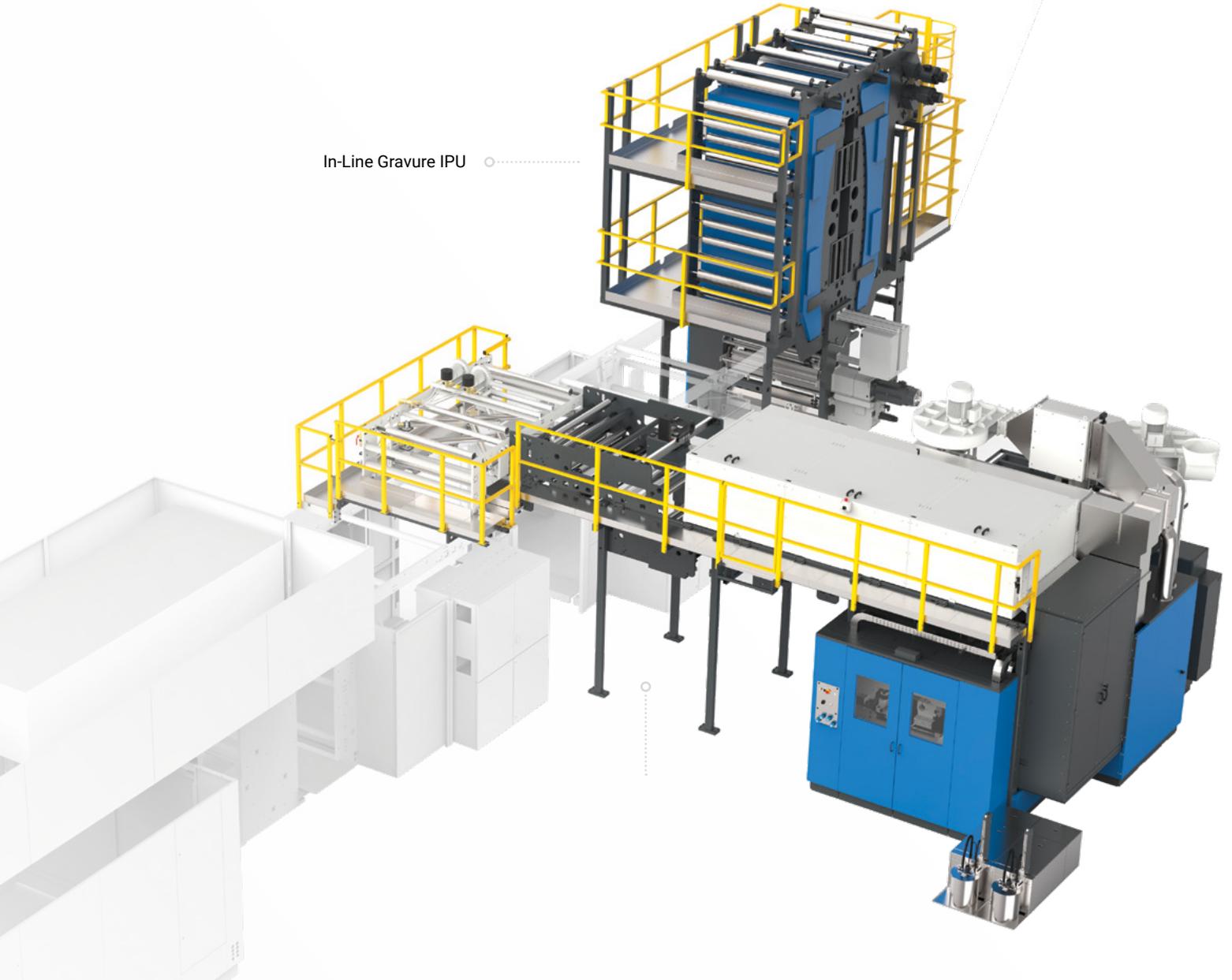
The IPU is designed to integrate seamlessly (as an upstream & downstream unit) with the SOMA Optima², a state-of-the-art CI flexo printing press. This integration allows for single-pass operations, dramatically increasing the efficiency of package print production. The IPU is available with one or two flexo printing decks in upstream or downstream configurations—or with a gravure unit—offering unparalleled flexibility to meet the diverse needs of our clients.

Offering a wide range of configurations, IPUs can apply various barrier or functional coatings, including heat/cold seal coatings. These applications are crucial for producing sustainable packaging solutions that do not compromise the protective qualities required by the industry. By facilitating these applications within a single pass, the IPU significantly reduces material waste and energy consumption, aligning with SOMA's sustainability objectives.

90° Flexo IPU

The 90° Flexo IPU from SOMA is a top-selling innovation, favored for a versatile design that allows operation either upstream or downstream, adapting effortlessly to various production workflows. Its space-saving orientation is a key advantage, especially in facilities where floor space is at a premium, offering a compact yet powerful solution for applications requiring additional print, heavy coatings, varnishes, heat seals, and more.

In-Line Gravure IPU ○

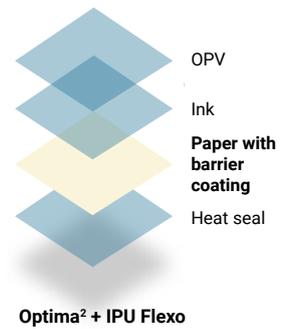


Cold Seal Application by Gravure IPU

The gravure configuration of SOMA's IPU excels in producing packaging for foods like high quality chocolates, applying cold seal layers with precision. This specialized setup ensures a secure seal that preserves the chocolate's flavor and quality while also providing an easy way to open the package—something that consumers appreciate.

Heat Seal Application with Flexo IPU

The IPU in its two flexo printing deck configuration stands as a testament to innovation in packaging technology. This advanced arrangement is capable of applying a sufficient layer of coating to create an effective heat seal, an essential feature for countless packaging applications. This ability ensures that products are securely wrapped, preserving freshness and extending shelf life.



Barrier Coatings in Frozen Food Packaging

A standout application of the IPU is in the realm of frozen food packaging. Here, the IPU excels by applying a barrier coating directly onto the paper substrate. This innovative method offers a sustainable alternative to traditional packaging, by eliminating the need for additional plastic layers, thus facilitating recycling and reducing plastic waste.

IPU: A Transformative Component

SOMA's Intelligent Printing Unit is more than just an addition to a printing press; it is a transformative component that redefines what is possible in the packaging industry. By integrating advanced technologies and sustainable practices, the IPU ensures that SOMA clients can meet the ever-evolving demands of their markets while adhering to environmental standards. As we continue to innovate, the IPU stands as a testament to SOMA's dedication to excellence and sustainability in printing technology.

Offering a variety of IPU configurations, IPUs can apply various barrier or functional coatings, including heat/cold seal coatings. The IPU is available in the following configurations with Optima presses:

- 90° flexo IPU **Most popular**
- In-line flexo IPU
- In-line gravure IPU
- or as a flexo IPU in combination with a Lamiflex solventless laminator

How the SOMA family of Optima flexo presses

Adapts to sustainability challenges

Sustainability of the planet will continue to be a significant issue for printers and converters; not only because brands require it, but also because it is the right thing to do. Of course, there are many objectives, including less waste, less ink, less energy, and less CO₂ expended. As energy has become an even more crucial commodity (one need not look farther than Europe), SOMA has been adding features to optimize energy consumption wherever we can. For brands, this goes far beyond printing; for example, into transportation, consumables and package recycling.



A greater environmental approach in packaging is guaranteed. One option is bio-renewable packaging. The second option is 100% recyclable packaging. It seems that the path is not defined yet, as both technologies have their pros and cons. Yet, surely, there will be new printing challenges associated with this—and SOMA will ensure that our presses can handle these challenges.

This puts pressures on the manufacturers of the substrates and inks—as well as SOMA, who must make them print well on press. To that end, SOMA is doing all we can to handle all environment-friendly technologies such as water based printing, paper or biodegradable / recycable films or mono-structure laminate printing, EGP or energy cured inks (UV).

There has become a two-pronged approach from SOMA. One is to assure successful ways to print attractive graphics on difficult substrates. The other is to offer ways that operation of the Optima² press itself puts less strain on waste and energy requirements.

Innovative substrates

Packagers and more importantly, brand owners, are always looking for new materials that are easier to work with, and substrates and inks that are safe—for food products, in particular.

There is an influx of new materials that assures packaging is fully recyclable, or reduces the carbon footprint, while not impacting on product quality or the appearance of the packaging.

There is also an effort to offer various barrier coatings to replace laminates,

applied either on the press, a downstream unit, or at a separate station. From a basic brand's interests, it complies easily with food safety standards while allowing 100% recyclability of the packaging. Manufacturers of these new substrates are trying hard to assure that anything they develop can be fully useable on current packaging equipment. SOMA Optima family of presses in combination with newly developed Intelligent Printing Units (upstream/downstream stations) can guarantee production efficiency of sustainable materials.

Ink systems

With new substrates and a trend away from harmful materials, there is a movement away from solvent-based inks, with many more preparations of water-based inks. In fact, in its 2022 report, The Future of Water-based vs. Solvent Printing to 2027, Smithers projected aqueous inks to grow 5.6% annually through 2027, compared to solvent ink growth of +1.3%.

Another sustainable solution is UV LED ink. It is a volatile organic compound (VOC) emission-free process, with no ozone extraction required, resulting in reduced infrastructure exhaust systems, air exchange, and power delivery. Moreover, UV LED ink makes design graphics pop out from the

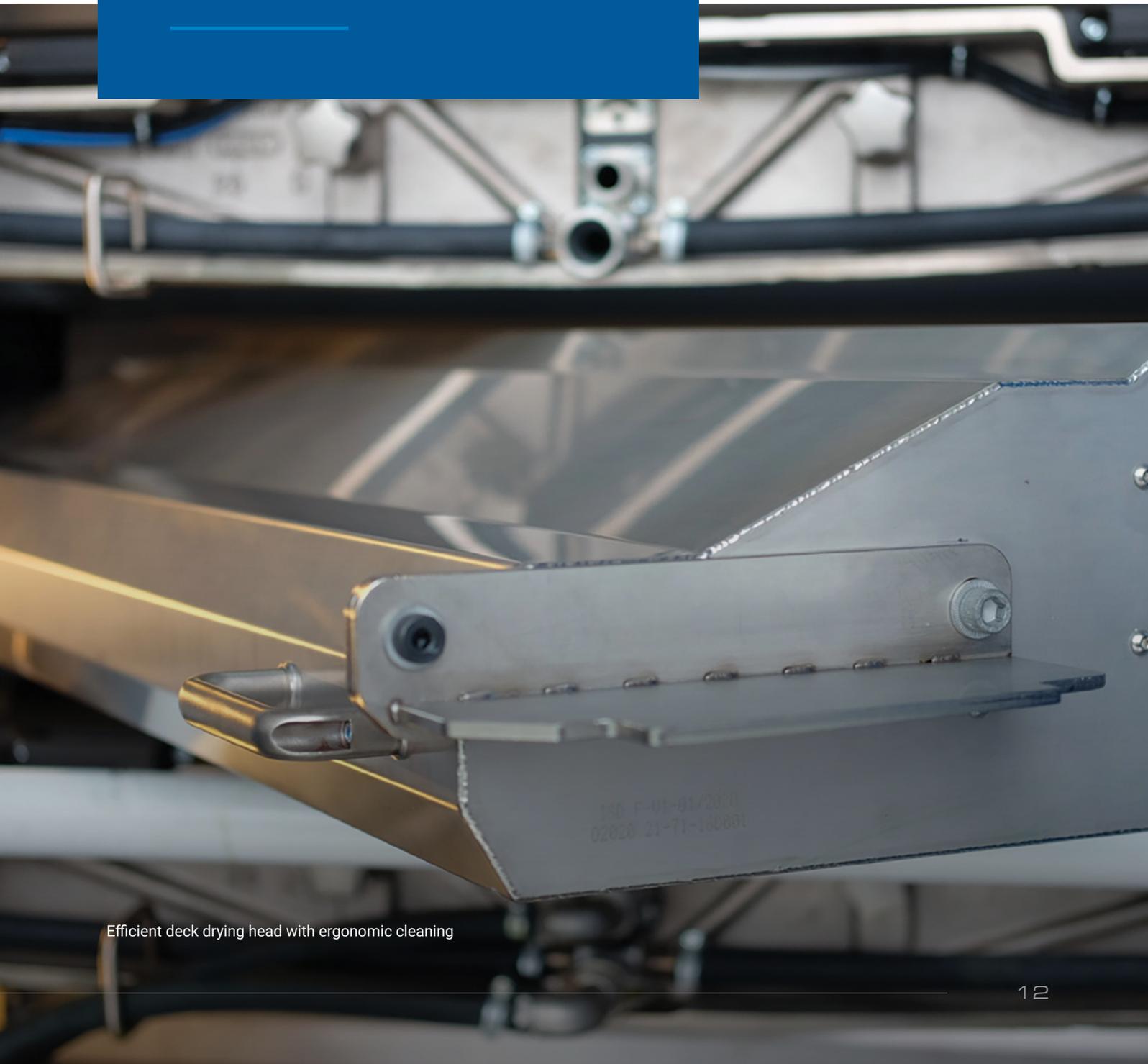


If you can prepare the next job while the previous one is still running, you have a leg up on time and reducing waste. Some systems measure data used for makereadies on the press, during the plate mounting procedure. The SOMA IRIS intelligent register & impression setting system offers printers a powerful solution for short runs.

package. Greater ink pigmentation also means less ink volume is required. SOMA Optima family presses are designed to integrate all inking systems including EB curing.

Ensuring heating systems are effective

For solvent and water-based inks, one way to assure that slow-drying inks are dried as efficiently, and as fast as possible, is to create 'intelligent drying'. If you can create an almost closed loop drying system, you can dry inks efficiently. Only when it reaches the defined LEL level (solvent saturation in the exhaust), will the system output a minimum amount of air (and energy) needed to



Efficient deck drying head with ergonomic cleaning

drop the LEL level to a defined level. SOMA has achieved this with our i-DRY drying setting for optimal energy savings. The software can set the press to different drying performance levels for individual machine modes.

SOMA i-Dry is an extremely efficient system for stand-by modes, low speeds or printing designs with minor ink coverage. The effective system can adjust the speed of ventilators and/or keep them on a minimum level during stand-by mode. The three-fan drying system consisting of a between-deck drying loop and drying tunnel loop helps to dry ink quickly. It can also deliver exceptional energy savings via the possible integration of heat recuperation from regenerative thermal oxidizers (RTOs). The burned fumes energy is recovered and used to preheat the air drying systems in the press.

Sustainable expanded color gamut (ECG) printing

ECG printing has become a hot topic and a number of companies offer solutions. When it comes to expanded color gamut economics, the resulting environmental impact is just as important as the aesthetic advantages. By avoiding the ink changes between runs, a printer can reduce wasted ink and washing solvents. This results in a more ecological package printing process with more run time, less set-up time, less cleaning, and less waste. Ink inventories are reduced because there is less need to store expensive spot colors. It also means no anilox change, reduced usage of solvents for washing the press, and the ability to print multiple jobs on the same run. Furthermore, gang-run printing allows great flexibility to print short jobs more ecologically and efficiently.

SOMA continues to explore ways to make ECG printing as efficient as possible. All SOMA Optima family presses can handle ECG printing due to perfect impression and registration consistency.

Color Management

Don't forget color management for conventional CMYK + spot color printing. A good color management and/or matching solution will allow printers to reduce makereadies as much as 25%, increasing capacity, saving ink, and reducing waste.

SOMA Optima family presses are designed to integrate color matching solutions from industry experts in this field.

Minimum waste during press make-ready

If you can prepare the next job while the previous one is still running, you have a leg up on time and reducing waste. The SOMA IRIS system measures data used for make-readies on the press, during the plate mounting procedure. The IRIS system offers printers a powerful solution for short runs. When a sleeve is inserted into a flexo press, registration and impression data is read from RFID chip and prepared for fully automatic operation. It helps to assure that every job is automatically in registration & impression is set quickly. This reduces makeready time and assures faster completion of jobs—along with almost zero meters of set-up waste—a flexible, agile, and sustainable solution for short runs.

A number of sustainable features that can add up

There are many more features that every press manufacturer can offer to make a company more sustainable. Here are a few:

- **SOMA has improved insulation in the Optima² flexo press:** By maintaining temperatures in the deck and tunnel drying, the press is more efficient.
- Sometimes SOMA's **press monitoring system** can have as much influence as any mechanical improvement. The advanced, modern press monitoring system can allow supervision and long-term monitoring of flexographic press efficiency and energy consumption via the Internet, from the office or anywhere in the world.
- **Energy recovery:** Installing the latest, most efficient drives—some of which can include electricity retrieval—can reduce the amount of power required to operate the press. With a recuperation system, the kinetic energy—the total random moving energy—can be converted into useful electrical energy.
- **Gas/electric hybrid drying system.** The SOMA Optima² includes a system where the operator can make a decision based upon gas or electric energy costs at any given time. While they run separately,

both systems are installed, and the operator chooses, on a panel, which will operate during printing.

- **SOMA Ink Cartridge system:** Certain inks, particularly expensive spot colors, special effect and metallic formulations, can be costly—and it is always a shame to waste any ink. On average, about five to seven liters of ink are in the press system in one deck (doctor blade chamber, pump, hose, etc.). When a print job is finished, this ink is returned to a bucket, yet some percentage of the ink is always lost on its way back, due to cleaning or residue. The SOMA Ink Cartridge system can reduce ink volumes and residual waste. With the SOMA Ink Cartridge system ink cartridge, only a minimum of 1.5 liters (maximum up to 4.5 liters) is ever in the system.

What should we expect? What could happen in the future? A greater environmental approach in packaging is guaranteed. One option is bio-degradable packaging. The second option is 100% recyclable packaging. It seems that the path is not defined yet, as both technologies have their pros and cons. Yet, surely, there will be new printing challenges associated with this—and SOMA will ensure that Optima family presses with Intelligent Printing Units can handle these challenges.



Scan for more information



TOPIC

Launch of a new SOMA press: Proxima

The Proxima is the latest addition to our SOMA flexo press portfolio. It expertly balances simplicity with complex capabilities, tailored for diverse materials and applications. Designed for efficiency, Proxima offers economical printing at speeds up to 400 m/min, featuring customizable options to minimize make-ready times. Its ergonomic design enhances user comfort and operational efficiency, positioning it as a smart choice for those seeking user-centric design.

Designed for the Short Runs

FALCON X: The automated system for register and impression settings is based on microdot recognition by a web video camera and kiss-print impression setting system.

IRIS: The fully automated system in Proxima flexographic printing presses sets all active printing decks into impression and register in couple of minutes, with almost zero ink and material waste.

The Proxima may be delivered with SOMA's **S-Mount automatic plate moulder**. The automatic plate mounting process is much faster and more accurate than manual mounting. With it, press downtime due to incorrect plate mounting is minimized. The S-Mount comes with the unique IRIS feature: plate topography and registration measurements, which provides the foundation for automatic registration and impression settings on press.

The Ink Cartridge system offers printers a means of reducing ink costs on printing jobs where expensive spot colors, special effects and metallic formulations are required. These high pigment inks are expensive consumables and reducing ink volumes and residual waste permits printers to maintain profit margins while meeting end user price demands.

User-centric Ergonomic Design

- Step-free and ladderless access to all printing decks
- Compact and very small press footprint
- Cantilevered drying heads for effortless maintenance and CI drum cleaning access
- Viscosity calibration setting operated directly from the ink pumping station

Printing decks	8
Print width	1050/1270 mm 41.3/50"
Speed	400 m/min 1312 fpm
Repeat length	330/360-800 mm 13/14.17-31.5"
Roll diameter	1000 mm 39.37"
Roll weight	1000 kg 2205 lbs
Inks	Solvent/ Water-based
Printed materials	LD PE, HD PE/ PP, CPP, BOPP, PET, OPA, paper, laminate

Automate to make the job easier

for next-generation press operators

SOMA often asks customers what flexo press features we need to develop next. A few years ago, a British customer responded, "I just hired a taxi driver to operate our press. I fear what might happen during the night shift." The concern of novices operating a press could be scary for anyone. For example, any job changeover requires a number of steps that a skilled operator should know—but a less skilled operator might not. We have taken that in consideration with a number of press features. They are part of SOMA's complete focus on workflow automation, including plate mounting, drive tuning, and registration/impression meakereadies on the press.

SOMA S-Cloud communicates everything

For starters, by connecting software and equipment to SOMA's S-Cloud, operators can utilize intelligent functions that boost efficiency and minimize errors. The S-Cloud is the glue that ties everything together.

There is a lot of data that can be shared between software and hardware systems. Key parameters, such as specific job information affecting changeovers, press status, and press energy consumption are just some. They can be entered on a press control panel, from any Cloud-connected device. Thus, the press knows exactly the settings for each job to be printed.

A different recipe every time

Every job has uniquely specific data. SOMA has created what we like to call a 'recipe', defining each job. A recipe includes design specifications; substrate, sleeve, anilox, and ink data; and unwinding/rewinding, drying and tension parameters, among others. Anyone with permission can create, use and edit recipes—and they can be shared between machines, entered on a press control panel, and/or from any Cloud-connected device.

The recipe provides the foundation for efficient job changeovers on a SOMA Optima² press. With a pre-defined recipe, operator errors are eliminated because we always know the specific parameters for each job—and they're not retyped incorrectly.

SOMA S-Mount: Making plate makereadies smarter

With SOMA, the automated plate mounter plays a part in the complete system that delivers speed and accuracy. SOMA S-Mount systems can offer intelligent off-line registration and impression settings—powerful for short runs. While mounting a flexo plate, essential data for registration and topography/impression settings are stored in RFID chips. When the sleeve is inserted into a SOMA Optima flexo press, this data is read and prepared for fully automatic operation, assuring very quick—and accurate—settings. There is no longer a burden on the press operator. It helps assure that every job is automatically in perfect registration.

SOMA Changeover Wizard: Fast and easy standardized changeovers between jobs on press

Any job changeover requires a number of steps that must be taken in proper order. With an automated self-directed system, even inexperienced operators can run the press and perform efficient changeovers.

The SOMA Changeover Wizard—a 2022 FTA Technical Innovation award winner—is a flexo press user interface that guides the press operator involved with changing from one job to the next. The built-in intelligence analyzes differences between the job currently being printed and the job that follows. Based on the analysis, the

Changeover Wizard suggests the optimal steps to be taken during the job changeover. It can reduce the number of tasks, defines their optimal correct order, and also automates as many steps as possible, saving the printer time during the changeover process. Experienced operators can overrule any suggestion at any time, but the Changeover Wizard process will continue, making adjustments based on the operator's input.

As an example, inking is not only about which printing decks need to be washed. The system also suggests the proper amount of cycles, and how intensively they should be washed. The Changeover Wizard can help determine, job by job, the most efficient way to conserve ink.

While the retiring generation of press operators was much likely more skilled in terms of the printing 'craft', the Changeover Wizard allows less-skilled labor to do as good a job when prepping a press.

Ready for a tune-up

The SOMA Optima drive mechanisms already analyze performance. During job setup—and taking less than one minute—it can automatically tune the press with specially designed algorithms that maximize registration accuracy and can minimize the bouncing effect for each particular design. It takes into consideration the dynamic effects of the bridge, the sleeve, the tape and the design itself. This lets each specific

piece of artwork achieve its ideal drive setting on the press. It's quite a revolutionary technology that can bring control of printing stability to new levels of precision. This leads to less vibration and bounce while reaching better registration.

SOMA Supervision: cloud based monitoring system

After the job, post-production feedback is important. SOMA OPTIMA presses feed data into the SOMA SUPERVISION monitoring system, overseeing efficiency and energy consumption. Thus, there is fast

job reporting no matter who is running the press. Anyone on the press or online can review what is happening in the press—like measuring uptime and downtime, comparing data with master company calculations for every job and every operator, and efficiency and energy consumption. Past job history of time and waste can help change future estimates if they have been previously inaccurate.

Can you help me?

In case of a press issue, a service request/ticket is delivered by a very practical 'chat'

type of communication to SOMA's service team. It can include files, pictures, and videos. It's almost like a service team is on site 24/7. In case of an emergency, many presses can immediately connect to SOMA's service team, who often can identify a problem remotely. Moreover, the SOMA S-Cloud contains all relevant information, such as communications history, press supervision, spare parts list, or service programs available—even instructional videos.



Scan to read more about S-Mount



TOPIC

Sustainable and efficient demo at drupa

As sustainability becomes an everyday requirement of much of the world's packaging, the challenge becomes how to best print using new materials and inks, and how to make graphics as attractive as possible. All the while, time and efficiency are imperative, assuring quick makereadies and fast press speeds. The demos at SOMA's stand at drupa 2024 show that human and pet treat packaging can look appealing—even with difficult vignettes, high tonal contrast, and special inks—using the right printing tools and the SOMA Optima² 10-color flagship flexo press.

Sustainable substrates

The jobs are printed on two of Jindal Films' recyclable substrates used to replace PET films. The Cookies packaging is printed on the BICOR™ 12MB100, a very thin BOPP film that has low shrinkage, high heat resistance and high MD modulus to allow ease of conversion in all printing processes for flexible packaging. To resist the tendency of ink to spread during printing, PureFlexo Printing technology from Miraclon, on FLEXCEL NX plates, was used to assure the least dot gain and significantly reduced ink build up.

For the Pet packaging, ETHY-LYTE™ 20HD200 is a thin BOPE film that is non-heat sealable and has improved MD resistance to elongation to allow ease of conversion in most printing processes for flexible packaging. Quartz, new screening technology from ESKO, captured all the detail of the pets, popping right from the package.



Job Setup with Intelligent Automation

- Ethy-Lyte™ 20HD200 is a thin BOPE film for fully recyclable packaging solutions
- Quartz screening technology from ESKO
- Exceptionally vibrant colors
- Perfect highlights
- High tonal contrast
- Natural, smooth transitions to zero
- Gold color printed using SOMA Ink Cartridge



Bouncing Challenge at 600 m/min

- Bicolor™ 12MB100 is a thin BOPP film designed to replace PET for fully recyclable packaging solutions
- Challenging "bouncing" job
- Printed at 600 m/min due to Advanced Bounce Control
- Pure Flexo screening from Miraclon
- High tonal contrast
- Soft vignettes
- Natural colors and incredible details
- Gold color printed using SOMA Ink Cartridge



Pet SOMA
TRAINING SNACKS
Chicken bites
4 kg

SPECIALIZED FORMULA

100% Recyclable

100% Recyclable
High Barrier OPP Laminates

Bouncing Challenge
On account of these animals, this design is subject to the same conditions as the design of the packaging. The design of the packaging is subject to the same conditions as the design of the packaging. The design of the packaging is subject to the same conditions as the design of the packaging.

SOMA Cookies chocolate

150g

100% Recyclable
High Barrier OPP Laminates

Packaging 100% Planet

100% Recyclable
High Barrier OPP Laminates

Bouncing Challenge
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Packaging 100% Planet

TESTIMONIAL

Walnut Packaging Inc. invests in an

often-ignored way to improve packaging productivity:

A new SOMA Pluto slitter

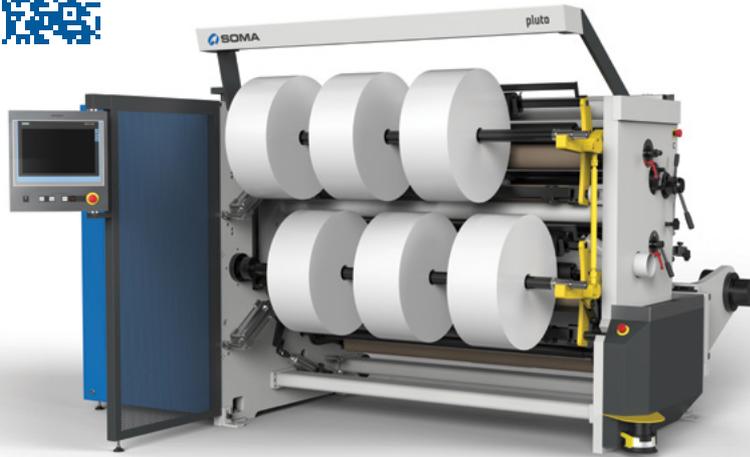
SOMA slitter rewinders are equipped with advanced features that enhance both productivity and efficiency, while also minimizing waste. These machines are designed to work seamlessly with web inspection systems and effectively utilize the roll map system to optimize material usage.

Models such as the Venus III.2 and Venus III.2-Turret may include a rewind shaft specifically for handling waste material. By integrating these features, SOMA slitters not only boost the productivity of operations but also contribute to a cleaner, more efficient production environment. This setup ensures that less material goes to waste, helping a business save on costs, while supporting sustainability efforts.

Pier of Long Island, Long Island City



Scan to read more about Slitters



SOMA is pleased to announce that Farmingdale, NY-based Walnut Packaging Inc. has been successfully operating its new SOMA Pluto III.2 slitter/rewinder.

Walnut Packaging Inc. provides customers the highest quality plastic bags at a competitive price. Their product range covers an extremely wide range of bags, from die cut shopping bags to produce, header and ice bags. They serve companies delivering a variety of products, from confectionery and snacks to poultry and meats, and household and personal care products.

“My father founded Walnut Packaging Inc. in 1962 as a converter with one bag machine. Over several years we grew and purchased more equipment,” remembers Jose Alvarado Jr., Vice President. “We invested in our own press and started mounting plates and printing, moving from our original facilities in the Bronx, to East Farmingdale. We expanded, reaching out to work with bigger and better customers. Keeping up with the times, we invested in new converting machines, a SOMA Premia printing press, slitter, and optic moulder.”

This remarkable background gave Walnut Packaging Inc. an advantage working with an extensive array of designs. They have experience with many different substrates, including polyethylene, polypropylene, polyester, shrink films, metalized films, and various co-extrusions. “Our customers all want the same thing: deliveries on time, exceptional quality, and the best prices. We give customers what they ask for—and if we can do better, we will. We help design projects from the beginning to the end product. In fact, we patented a poly bag a few years ago to pre-

serve the life of potatoes. It has helped the industry.”

Recently, Walnut Packaging Inc. wanted to invest in a faster, high quality slitter with updated technology that was quick to make changeovers in different sizes. “We also decided that we did not want an inline slitter. We had decided that if you have a problem with any of your inline equipment, you have to stop everything. With an offline system, everything else can still run while you resolve the issues,” says Alvarado. They invested in a SOMA Pluto slitter.

A sometimes overlooked area where printers/converters can be more efficient is slitting. The Pluto III.2 slitter/rewinder with automatic knife/ blade positioning and automatic laser core guiding ensures quick and precise knife settings and core settings for new jobs. A variable knife shaft permits tangential slitting with lower and upper rotary knives or with razor blades against a grooved segment. The Tenzomat II tension control system provides precise unwind and rewind tension control—slitting very thin and difficult substrates. Several touch screen panels help operate the machine. It offers mid and wide web printers and converters a cost-effective solution for slitting a wide range of substrates.

“We are using our new Pluto slitter on more different materials, because the tension is easier to control. The cutting capacity is also greater. If we run 40” or 50” wide on

our press for a 10” piece of art, the job can be done in a quarter of the time. It goes through the slitter and ends up with 10-inch rolls,” explains Alvarado.

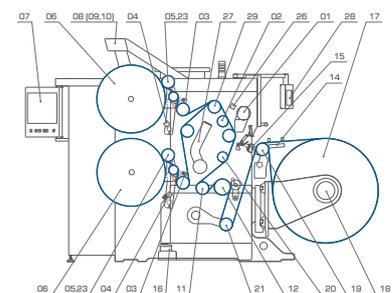
Most slitters don’t allow people to quickly set up jobs. “One thing our slitter does differently is that the unloading mechanism delivers the finished slit rolls to a stand that rotates horizontally or vertically. So, we can take rolls off the machine and put them aside, making it much easier to move on to the next roll,” comments Alvarado. “My guess is that our new slitter is 35% faster than what we were using.”

Even with the speed, the slitter delivers exceptional quality. “We’re getting a much cleaner cut,” says Alvarado. “There is a job we do with micro perforations. With the new slitter, we can cut it with much smoother micro perfs. It even provides a cleaner end roll cut.”

Operators find the new slitter much more user-friendly. “With some slitters you have to use a cart to load rolls, and there is the potential for one to drop, causing an accident,” comments Alvarado. “Our slitter has a device that picks up the roll itself. Operators don’t have to stress out with big, heavy rolls.”

“Walnut Packaging Inc. is a great example of a converter who has always believed in maintaining technology that keeps up with customer demands,” remarks Garrett Taylor, SOMA Sales Director, North America. “We are proud that their business has thrived by using SOMA equipment and are happy to have had them as a long-term customer here in the US. We also commend them for their foresight to realize that even slitters can measurably increase productivity.”

“Our new slitter was worth the investment. It’s well built, and I like the way it runs. As the Vice President, the most important aspect for the company is that the slitter helps our customers save money,” concludes Alvarado.





The contents of Hall C will hold a logistics center and a modern paint shop. Changing rooms and office facilities will be included within the administrative portion of this hall.



Hall C will hold a logistics center and a modern paint shop.

TOPIC

New SOMA manufacturing assembly areas in Hall C

to meet future growth

As demand for SOMA flexo presses and other equipment increased, SOMA put into action the development of manufacturing capabilities and capacity that would assure the most efficient production workflow for the assembly of our products. Also important was a comfortable, yet suitable, site for effective SOMA customer equipment facility acceptance tests.

Just a bit more than a year ago, SOMA announced that we successfully opened two new fully-operational manufacturing facilities, Assembly Halls A and B. These are used for the assembly of all SOMA machines and are located at our headquarters in Lanskrone, Czech Republic.

The contents of Hall C will hold a logistics center and a modern paint shop. Changing rooms and office facilities will be included within the administrative portion of this hall.

At the same time, the installation of warehouse technology and the rather demanding paint shop technology will take place. They should be available for trial operation by June 2024, at the latest.

The logistics center, with an area of 1,730 m² (nearly 19,000 square feet), will be equipped with several types of shelving systems that will be used to store both purchased inventory and manufactured items. The lower shelves of the pallet racks will be used for simple and quick distribution of small goods. The upper shelves of these racks will be used for storing larger parts in pallets—served by a special system stacker. An interesting feature is that the operator cab of this pallet stacker can be lifted together with the pallet, to a height of up to nine meters. Large oversized parts will be stored in cantilever racks.

The output of the logistics center will be complete carts of equipment parts that will be delivered to the adjacent assembly area.

A large paint shop will be built within a second portion of Hall C. It will bring together two different types of painting systems within an area of 1080 m² (roughly 11,600 square feet). In addition to the wet paint technology used by SOMA today, powder coating technology will also be installed. This is particularly helpful for weak sheets and steel structures.

The new paint shop will be able to accommodate even the largest equipment parts. Handling them will be done by means of an overhead conveyor. The suspended part will be moved from the degreasing area to painting, and then to the drying area. A truly technological innovation within the new paint shop will be the hybrid heating of the painting and drying ovens. This new technology will make it possible to heat the enclosures with either gas or electricity. Combined with the use of solar panels installed on the Hall C roof, this system will bring significant energy savings.

The convenient location of the Paint Shop will allow the easy transport of heavy parts directly to the assembly area. Machine ‘skins’ will be painted at the last possible

moment to keep them as attractive and clean as possible, and will be transported, in sets, in special technological pallets directly for assembly. This will eliminate any possible damage to the paint during storage and handling.

To make the workplace as comfortable as possible for SOMA guests and employees alike, there will be an underfloor heating and cooling system for all areas. There will also be large windows installed at the Logistics Center reception area.

The new spaces in Hall C will make the logistics processes significantly more efficient, while those in the new Paint Shop will use high capacity capabilities to assure the smooth flow of painted parts directly for assembly.

SERVICE

Intelligent Service

The web-based Intelligent Service platform is a comprehensive cloud solution that offers a quick problem-solving communications channel for every SOMA customer. It is made possible using SOMA S-Cloud technology.

In case of a specific press issue, a service request is delivered to SOMA's service team using the SOMA S-Chat—a very useful chat-type of communication. The SOMA Intelligent Service also allows a number of files, pictures and videos to be shared from any S-Cloud connected device.



S-Chat

A very convenient chat-type of communication that includes files, pictures, and videos—easily accessed from any S-Cloud-connected device.



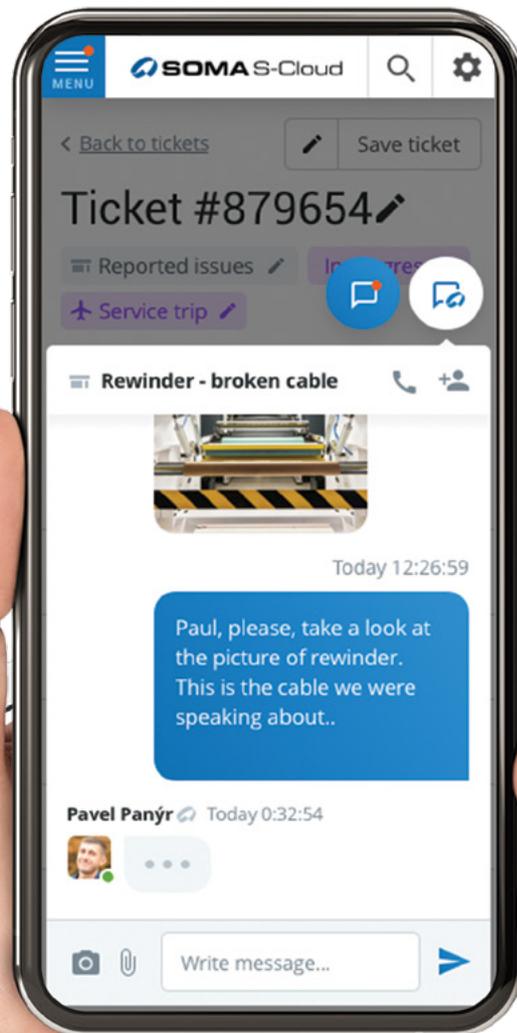
Remote diagnostics

In case of an emergency, remote diagnostics are conducted via a secure VPN connection.



Data sharing

The SOMA S-Cloud contains a lot of helpful information, such as equipment manuals, instructional videos, a list of spare parts and retrofits, and available service programs.





SOMA Glasses

Enhance your efficiency with our service glasses, enabling real-time expert connections. Experience seamless remote assistance as SOMA experts troubleshoot and guide you, seeing exactly what you see.

	Silver	MOST POPULAR Gold	Platinum
Preventive maintenance visit Includes all travel costs	N/A	One 2-day visit per year	Two 2-day visits per year
Support	24/7 (included)	24/7 (included)	24/7 (included)
Remote diagnostics	Included	Included	Included
S-Cloud (S-Chat & Data Sharing)	✓	✓	✓
Unlimited remote diagnostics	✓	✓	✓
Service rate discount	N/A	10 %	20 %

SOMA Care

SOMA Care is a new service program designed to provide customers comprehensive maintenance. There are several programs offering increasing service, adding unlimited remote diagnostics, 24/7 hotline, covered preventive maintenance visits, and services rate discounts, as programs progress from silver to platinum. A la cart service is still offered, but at less cost-efficient basic rates.

SOMA opens a new service center in Latin America

SOMA also announces the appointment of Leonardo Pozo as Regional Service Manager

SOMA is pleased to announce that it reinforced a new service center in 2023 to assist its customers in Latin America. With the center, based in Guayaquil, Ecuador, SOMA brings exceptional, local service and support. The permanent installation of our center is the result of SOMA's dedication to our customers in Latin America and commitment to provide excellent, accessible assistance.



“With the opening of our new service center, we promise to deliver quality service to assure the utmost satisfaction; accelerate service to minimize downtime; and confidentiality, assuring personal and business information are safe,” assures Milan Papacek, SOMA Head of Services.



SOMA S-Chat already provides a very convenient type of service communication making it possible for SOMA to remotely respond to potential problems. However, SOMA understands it is only possible to actively and adequately respond to our customers' needs if a local service center is available.

With establishment of a service center, it has greatly increased our regional presence and, above all, clearly demonstrates how important our customers in Latin America are.

In our service center, SOMA provides a wide range of services, which until now were only available from our service department in the Czech Republic.

Some of our key services include:

- **Installation:** In cooperation with local companies, SOMA technicians are able to provide the installation of delivered products—within an agreed timeframe and with proficiency.
- **Repair and Maintenance:** SOMA's team of experts is ready to help with the repair and maintenance of SOMA equipment. The company has state-of-the-art tools and the knowledge to provide fast and reliable local service support.
- **Diagnostics and Training:** SOMA wants our customers to be completely educated about the status of their devices. We offer advanced diagnostics and training to help operators better understand SOMA systems and to optimize their operation.

- **Spare Parts:** SOMA will be happy to provide help to ensure parts orders and delivery meet customer expectations.

Concurrently, SOMA appointed Leonardo Pozo as Regional Service Manager. Mr. Pozo has extensive training experience servicing just about any piece of printing equipment, from flexo and offset presses to platemakers, and from digital cutters to finishing equipment—and, of course, the entire SOMA product line.

“With the opening of our new service center, we promise to deliver quality service to assure the utmost satisfaction; speed service to minimize downtime; and confidentiality, assuring personal and business information are safe,” assures Milan Papacek, SOMA Head of Service. “We look forward to working with our customers from our new service center, providing exceptional, local help.”

SOMA customers in Latin America are encouraged to reach out to the SOMA service center at:

**SOMA Service Center
Guayaquil/ Ecuador**

Phone: +593 95 878 3769

Email: pozo@soma-eng.com

SERVICE

SOMA service in Germany

An interview with
Andre Diestelkamp



SOMA is an innovative company which, with its motivated team, is dedicated to the tasks demanded by the market. This philosophy fits perfectly with the capabilities and values of Inter-Flex.



Please tell us a bit about your company.

Inter-Flex GmbH has been a global player in the printing and packaging industry for the past 23 years. Our wide-ranging portfolio includes service and maintenance, machinery modifications, new product technology reproductions, turnkey projects, training and consulting.

What are you responsible for with SOMA? What services can you provide SOMA customers?

We provide technical support to SOMA customers who are located in Germany.

Why did you decide to partner with SOMA? What impressed you about SOMA?

SOMA is an innovative company which, with its motivated team, is dedicated to the tasks demanded by the market. This philosophy fits perfectly with the capabilities and values of Inter-Flex.

How do SOMA presses, mounters and slitters help serve the German market?

They offer a perfect option to the renowned German manufacturers of printing presses.

Please tell us a bit about yourself, professionally. How did you get to the role you have now. What are some of your special experiences?

Since 1988 I have been working exclusively in the field of printing technology. I have joyfully watched the development of the industry's technology for years. With the founding of Inter-Flex GmbH in 2000, our network was able to serve significant areas of the industry and, in this way, build an extensive portfolio of products and services.



Product Portfolio

Flexographic Presses



Optima



Optima²



Optima² 10C/8CL



Proxima



Intelligent Printing Unit

Laminators



Lamiflex E



S-Mount A

Plate Mounters

Slitter Rewinders



Pluto III.2



Venus III.2



Venus III.2-Turret

Die Cutters



Bulldog



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