

Higher throughput and ten percent faster

Many of the products supplied by Siplast GmbH from Kreuztal in North-Rhine Westphalia appear to be quite unspectacular at the first glance. What's so special about ring binders, badge holders or CD packaging? However, at the second glance it quickly becomes clear that the specialists at this family-owned company turn classic articles into real eye-catchers with impressively high marketing and recognition value using colors, embossing and other finishing effects. To make sure that everything runs smoothly during their production, which can be quite complex, the company with its workforce of 35 also uses a Polar N 155 PRO.

Volker Weihe, one of the two Managing Directors of Siplast GmbH, summarized this as follows: "We make products that are essential for daily life in an office, a public agency or a warehouse and which make work easier for staff." Volker Weihe is a plastics engineer, and what he means becomes apparent when you have a look at the catalog of the company that was founded more than 50 years ago, and whose premises also include an old glider hangar from the twenties. In addition to a wide range of dividers, folders and clip boards, the company produces badge boxes and holders, name and stock pockets as well as CD covers and packaging. The principles of the company include customizing these products so that they exactly meet its customers' specifications. In concrete terms this means that depending on what is required, standard on-stock articles can be supplied immediately, or Siplast assumes responsibility for planning, design and the complete production of special articles. Volker Weihe: "The customized articles are then produced in special formats, with special materials or with unusual printing." The same applies to the size of the print run that can range from one to several million. The companies that appreciate this flexibility and experience, and especially the fast delivery times in comparison to Far Eastern manufacturers, include those in the office stationary, health care and also the logistics sectors. "All the products we make out of plastic foil and cardboard help our customers master the challenges of documentation, archiving and also presentation," comments the 43-year-old.

Varied production equipment

For many years Siplast has employed ISO-certified processes as well as a comprehensive and continuously updated range of machines to ensure that the varied demands of its customers are always optimally met – and always with an excellent cost-benefit ratio. These include various options for die-cutting, welding and embossing as well as screen, digital and pad printing machines for production. Cutting of the various materials to size has also played a central role in the production process. The company acquired a Polar machine seven years ago and at the beginning of 2013 this was replaced by a Polar N 155 PRO. Volker Weihe: "The reason we decided to replace the machine was that we wanted to make use of the features of the new version to speed up our processes."

Scan function

The existing barcode scan function was at the very top of the list of advantages. "Although we were already using this in the previous Compucut® machine and were able to upload cutting programs to the machine, cutting is now easier than ever before," comments Weihe. After positioning the material on the cutting table, the operator now only has to place a printing sheet, a job ticket or special card under the scanner and the machine starts – and even automatically if required." Depending on whether the pattern is used frequently or not so often, it is either saved locally on the machine or on the server that is also connected to the machine by means of a LAN cable. The programs can also be uploaded and downloaded between the machine and the server. Another advantage of the network solution between the machine and the server – all data are optimally backed up.

Faster and simpler

Another reason for purchasing the new machine was the larger 22 inch color display, touchscreen operation and the completely new user interface with animated graphics and a real image of the sheet cutting operation. These are the features that Weihe finds most impressive: "With the simpler operation and the scanning system, we were able to demonstrate that we can boost throughput and speed up the processes. In all, savings of ten percent are definitely possible with the new machine. This is even more remarkable in light of the fact that Siplast does not follow a typical printing shop process sequence, but more a process that is geared to office supplies." In concrete term this means that while printing shops normally position several customer projects on one sheet, individuality is more the rule in Kreuztal. This means that there are no mass products, or in other words all materials are cut directly so that the final format is produced. Around 80 percent are special orders and only 20 percent series production.

Comprehensive applications

The Polar N 155 PRO is used to cut almost all materials used for Siplast production today. In addition to paper and cardboard these include both hard and soft plastics as well as self-adhesive foils. The measurements and formats of the employed materials range from a width of a few millimeters up to 1.55 meters and a thickness of up to two millimeters, also in stacks. "Apart from its reliability and sturdiness, the great thing about this machine is its flexibility," Weihe continues. "Recently, when we cut a 12-meter long and 4-meter high exhibition stand made of printed plastic boards to create single elements with a width of 1.5 meters, the machine ran without any trouble at all." The same applies for foil, which is not always easy to handle, as it has to be tensioned exactly at all times. Due to the variable clamping pressure, the correct setting is always possible, and the experience of personnel takes care of the rest.

Soft factors as an extra plus point

The fact that Polar machines have been in operation at Siplast since the nineties has both something to do with the machine quality as well as the soft factors of the company. The spare parts and delivery service are regarded as good and the friendly staff sees to the rest. The most important thing for the Kreuztal company was also the resale value. "If we buy a Polar we know that we will still get a good price for it in years to come."

Products and options

High-Speed Cutter N 155 PRO including flexible false plate, automatic pressure regulation, Compucut® and Barcode reader

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Photo material



Volker Weihe, Managing Director



POLAR High-Speed Cutter N 155 PRO at Siplast



Barcode reader on High-Speed Cutter N 155 PRO