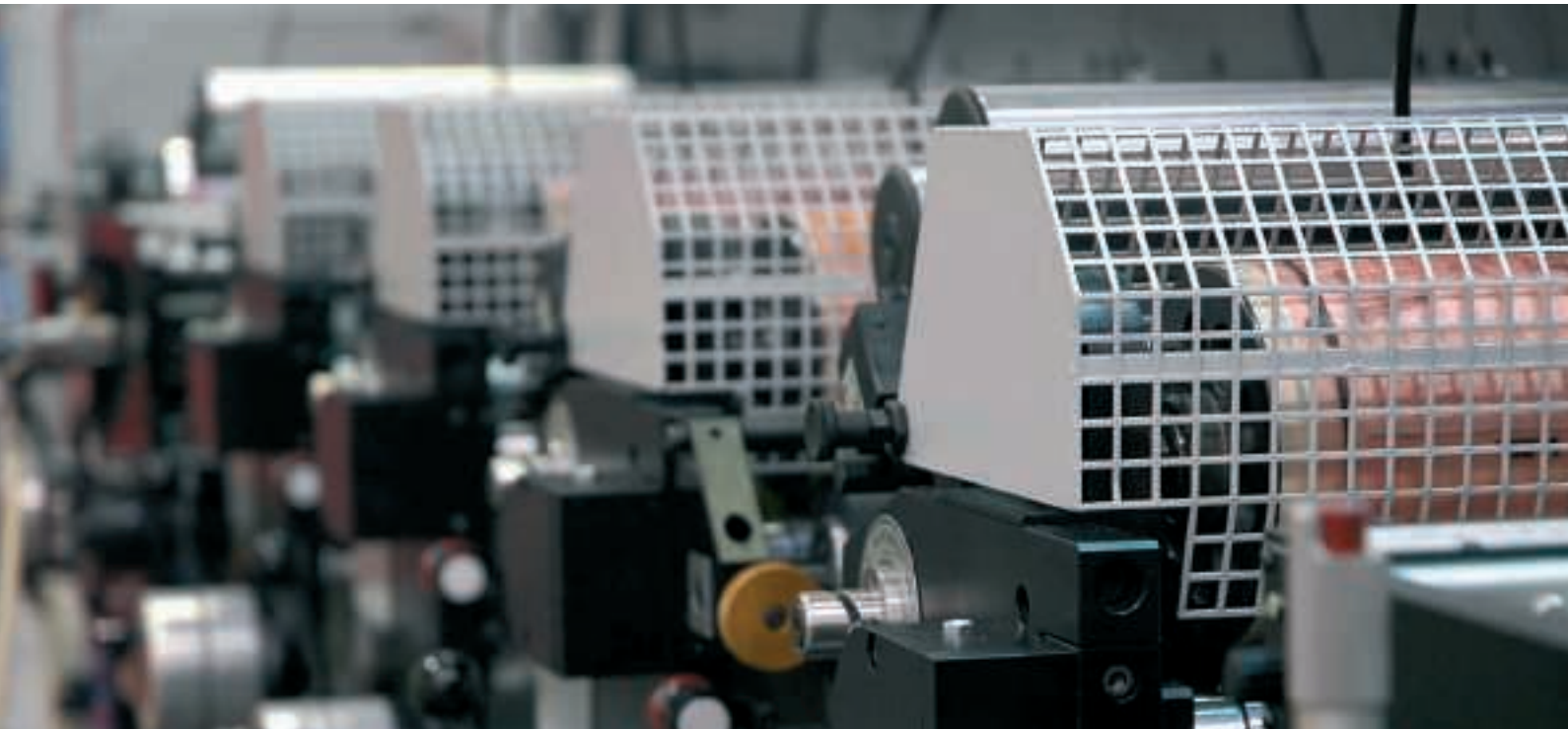


Printing and publishing technology

The UK printing and publishing technology sector has a long and illustrious history



Today it includes many well-known international brands which are synonymous with innovation and the development of leading-edge printing equipment. The UK industry encompasses an enormous range of expertise, products and services: these include printing presses; reprographic machinery; papermaking and converting machinery; glues, inks and chemicals; binding and ancillary equipment; and much more.

The majority of the sector is made up of small to medium-sized enterprises. Most have strong track records in exporting their products to customers around the world; to countries such as Saudi Arabia, Thailand, China, Hungary and the Czech Republic, to name a few.

DESIGN AND INNOVATION

UK companies design, manufacture and supply everything from heavy printing presses to software for the efficient management of complete print production systems.

The UK is known for its experience, attention to detail, flexibility and good design. Research and development has led to innovation in many areas. All-round manufacturing excellence has won the sector a strong reputation for the high-build quality of its products.

PRINTING EQUIPMENT

The UK printing equipment sector includes manufacturers of everything from large web offset presses, to banknote, label and envelope printing machines. Customers will also find suppliers of book manufacturing lines, and other equipment associated with digital colour printing systems, colour-

control systems, ink-jet and laser printing machines, powdering devices, damping equipment, air drying and conditioning equipment, as well as washing technology.

Timsons Ltd, for example, is a well-known UK company with an admirable reputation for the design and manufacture of custom-built web presses for the production of books. Product ranges include vertical web line presses with simultaneous, semi-automatic plate changing systems, and models that feature a facility for automatic job change at full web speed.

Moreover, Goss International is a global leader in web offset printing solutions and offers a range of newspaper and commercial press systems, as well as mailroom and post-press equipment. Like others in the UK sector, Goss has a strong research and development programme and has brought a range of innovative technologies to the print industry. The latest addition to its product line is the 90,000 cph compact press, which delivers high levels of flexibility and productivity, and high print quality.

The UK also boasts other specialists that manufacture high-resolution direct laser engraving machinery.

PRINTING CONSUMABLES

UK manufacturers supply a variety of printing consumables, including a wide range of inks, additives and concentrates, as well as specialist papers such as carbon paper, impregnated papers, book printing paper, thermosensitive papers, metallic papers, photographic papers and others. The sector also manufactures and supplies adhesives and glues, metallic powder and paste pigments. ➔



All-round manufacturing excellence has won the UK printing industry a strong reputation for the high-build quality of its products



Customers include commercial sheet-fed and web-offset printers, as well as digital, direct mail, packaging and label companies



Furthermore, specialists in the field of printing consumables manufacture high-quality coatings and overprint varnishes. The sector invests heavily in research and development, and includes leading suppliers of printing blankets. Ranges include award-winning products, developed especially for the graphic arts industry. Companies also manufacture and supply folder consumables for cutting, punching and perforating paper, suitable for web-offset, gravure and narrow web machinery.

Other UK firms manufacture specialist water-based coatings and UV varnishes. Companies initiate research into new techniques to meet the latest application requirements and individual customer product specifications.

PRE-PRESS

The pre-press division includes software specialists; manufacturers of chemical mixing and replenishing systems; colour management, calibration and control systems; computer-to-press technologies; ink supply, feed and level control devices; platemakers and screen printing chemicals and materials; and many other kinds of equipment.

One example of a UK company leading the field in this area is Presstek, which offers the latest in direct imaging and computer-to-plate technologies. Presstek manufactures chemistry-free CTP systems and revolutionary direct imaging presses, which encompass high-quality, chemistry-free imaging and waterless printing. Others are developing more environmentally

friendly printing technologies that reduce water consumption. Algraphic, for example, is renowned for its ceramic CTP technology, which requires little change in production techniques and offers enhanced printing quality with a sharper dot and more vibrant colours.

The UK also boasts developers of specialist software for the printing industry. Products are available in different languages and customers include commercial sheet-fed and web-offset printers, as well as digital, direct mail, packaging and label companies.

POST-PRESS

In the post-press field, the UK has manufacturers of adhesive application machines and devices; barcode systems; book gluing, stitching, lining, jacketing and embossing machines; coating machines and devices; collating machines and a wide range of other equipment associated with cutting, laminating, numbering and packing.

CONVERTING

The UK is home to suppliers of equipment for making a range of paper and cardboard items. These include bags, cups and boxes; printing equipment for similar items; label manufacturing; stationery production as well as varnishing and lacquering machines. ■

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