

Automation and environment solutions for flexible packaging

A.T.E.'s registration, static electricity and circulation systems

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At the recently concluded PackPlus 2017, A.T.E. presented its full spectrum of packaging and printing industry solutions comprising static charging and discharging, ink circulating and conditioning systems, energy recovery systems, register control systems, web video systems and plant conditioning/ventilation systems. *Packaging South Asia* met Ashok Sethuram, director, Valence Electronics, an affiliate of A.T.E. and Anand Mehta, vice president and head – print and packaging equipment (operations), A.T.E., along with KV Sanil Kumar, head – sales and service, Valence Electronics, for a discussion on the group's exhibits as well as the scope and potential of these solutions in the Indian market.

A.T.E. has a history of over 75 years, beginning with the role it played in the country's freedom movement by selling high-quality German textile machinery to make a dent in British monopoly of the industry in India. Over the years, the company has grown into a multifaceted engineering enterprise, involved largely in manufacturing, industrial sales, distribution and service as well as managing turnkey projects. A.T.E. has significant experience in the print and packaging solutions segment, offering the most advanced range of equipment and accessories from principals across the world for gravure, flexography, web offset, and sheetfed machines.

Sethuram explained that Valence has been at the forefront of controlling and removing static electricity which creates problems like operator hazards and fire on the shop floor. The other role of Valence is ink-handling and controlling on rotogravure printing presses, flexographic printing presses as well as offset printing presses. It involves cooling of the ink to ensure that the temperature is maintained at optimum levels for minimum/no evaporative or fugitive loss.

The other benefit of this process is that it prevents the sharp smell of the ink from spreading across the shop floor. The third specialization of Valence is recovery of waste heat. The rotogravure printing machines as well as the other printing machines require heat for their processes; this heat gets released with exhaust, and is recovered and recycled for preheating the air used in the process, resulting in energy saving. The fourth specialization of Valence is surface cleaning and removal of dust from paper, film, foil and other products. This suite of specialized solutions from A.T.E. will witness higher demand as the Indian market upgrades to greater levels of operational efficiency in the days ahead.

EcoAxis is another division of A.T.E. that was started about a decade ago and today, it is the only manufacturer of register controllers for rotogravure presses in India, according to Mehta. He shared that most OEMs in India manufacturing rotogravure presses, use EcoAxis register controllers. The company also handles a lot of retrofit work wherein the older rotogravure presses are fitted with register controllers, especially with automation coming into the industry in a big way. Register controllers have been the mainstay of EcoAxis; however, new product additions include web video systems to monitor print during production runs.

The company offers two variants at present—the ViewAXIS Mega, an entry-level video system which was launched in November 2016 and has sold over 20 systems as of now. The other is ViewAXIS Tera, which was launched at PackPlus 2017. The ViewAXIS Tera is a unique product which shows full print repeat on the screen instead of smaller parts/sections. Both the variants are made in India at the company's Pune facility and were on display on A.T.E.'s stand. ■



L to R - Anand Mehta, vice president and head – print and packaging equipment (operations) A.T.E., KV Sanil Kumar, head – sales and service, Valence Electronics and Ashok Sethuram, director, Valence Electronics

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