

“LISTENING TO ‘VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER’ HAS ALWAYS GIVEN US IDEAS FOR NEW PRODUCTS”

says Anand Mehta, Vice President Print & Packaging Equipment, ATE Enterprises Private Limited in conversation with Team Print & Publishing.



ATE has a history of over 75 years beginning with the part it played in the nation's freedom movement by selling high-quality German textile machinery to make a dent in British monopoly of the industry in India at that time. Over the years, the company has grown into a multifaceted engineering group that it is today, involved in manufacturing, industrial sales, distribution, service as well as managing turnkey projects. Here, Anand Mehta, Vice President Print & Packaging Equipment, ATE Enterprises, shares more about their company and their unique offerings for the print and packaging industry.

P&P: Share a brief history about the company, highlighting the major milestones?

Anand: ATE has diversified into diverse verticals over the years. It has been present in the print and packaging vertical for over three decades. With domain knowledge in the print and packaging field built over the years, ATE is known as a reliable source of quality products. ATE has developed customised solutions for demanding and complex printing and converting applications.

We started our journey with in-house development of the automatic register



Anand Mehta

control system Alygn, which later was upgraded to AlygnAXIS. Today, we have over 250 installations worldwide. ATE's motto being 'future ready,' we gauged the changing market needs with feedback from the industry, and started product development for vision and print defect detection range. In 2016-17 we launched web video, full print repeat web video and 100% print defect detection system.

P&P: What are ATE and Valence offerings to print and packaging industry in India? What has been the response so far?

Anand: Print and Packaging Equipment (PPE) is the business unit of ATE Enterprises, catering to the print, packaging and converting industries. Today, we are one of the only manufacturers of register controllers for rotogravure presses in India. Most OEMs in India manufacturing rotogravure presses use ATE's register controllers. ATE 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. The exports market is another major thrust area for us.

Register controllers have been the mainstay of PPE during the initial years; however, new product additions include a range of vision systems to monitor print during production runs. The range includes two variants at the moment, i.e., ViewAXIS Mega and ViewAXIS Tera. ViewAXIS Mega is an entry-level video system. The ViewAXIS Tera is a unique product which shows a full print repeat on the screen, instead of smaller parts/sections,

as is the case with entry level systems. For rotogravure printers either there is an entry-level web video or a 100% print inspection system. A full repeat web viewing system, which could monitor full width of the web in real-time was a need for many years, particularly in the Indian market. The 55" 4K monitor displaying images of 50+ megapixels resolution results in 'near-print quality' visualisation. The ViewAXIS Tera was an idea given by a few printers and OEMs. They said can we have an intermediate system which in stage 2 can be upgraded to a 100% print inspection system. The advantage of doing this is two-fold, first operators get to learn to identify the defects on a full print repeat monitoring system, and second is investing in two stages/parts. Besides the web video systems, we also manufacture DetectAXIS – 100% defect detection system. Built on one of the latest platforms, this is comparable to best in class inspection systems.

Valence Electronics Private Limited – an ATE group company headquartered in Bengaluru is a leader in providing world class solutions for managing static electricity, ink handling, surface cleaning, and heat recovery in various industrial applications. Valence is involved in design, manufacturing, marketing, sales and support of various products and serve customers from various countries across the world with innovative products and solutions. Presently, Valence offers a wide range of products and solutions to a plethora of industries such as flexible packaging, printing, textiles, plastics, glass, pharmaceutical to name a few.

In many industrial applications, excessive presence of static electricity can create unwanted problems like shocks to operator, dust/dirt accumulation and reduced productivity and fire hazards. Hence, during a production run, such static charges pose a huge problem and hence needs to be neutralised. Valence offers static charge eliminators that are deployed for effective static charge removal.

Closer the proximity of static eliminators with the moving charged target, better are the chances of effective static charge removal. In certain processes for effective static removal, the bar also needs to be positioned in explosion prone hazardous locations. Valence is the only Indian company to offer ATEX certified static bars which are certified for use in explosion prone areas. These are highly efficient static eliminating bars, designed for neutralizing electrostatic charges from ▶



► fast moving films, paper and other non-conductive substrates (webs) in hazardous conditions.

Another significant product group from Valence is ink-handling and conditioning systems, for rotogravure and flexographic printing presses. In the ink handling area, we offer pumps, filters and ink tanks for efficient ink circulation. For ink conditioning, we offer the Ink temperature stabiliser (ITS). ITS cools the ink to ensure that ink temperature is maintained at optimum levels during the production run. This reduces evaporative or fugitive loss of solvents, improves ink transfer and reduces solvent odour on the shop floor. The third product group is recovery of waste heat. The rotogravure printing, coating/laminating as well as extrusion coating machines needs heat as a process requirement. Waste heat from the exhaust stream is recovered and recycled for preheating the air used in the process, resulting in energy saving. The fourth specialisation of Valence is surface cleaning and removal of surface contaminants like dust and lint from various substrates like from paper, film and foil.

This range of specialised solutions from ATE and Valence are witnessing growing demands as the Indian market is striving for higher levels of operational efficiency, quality, and safety.

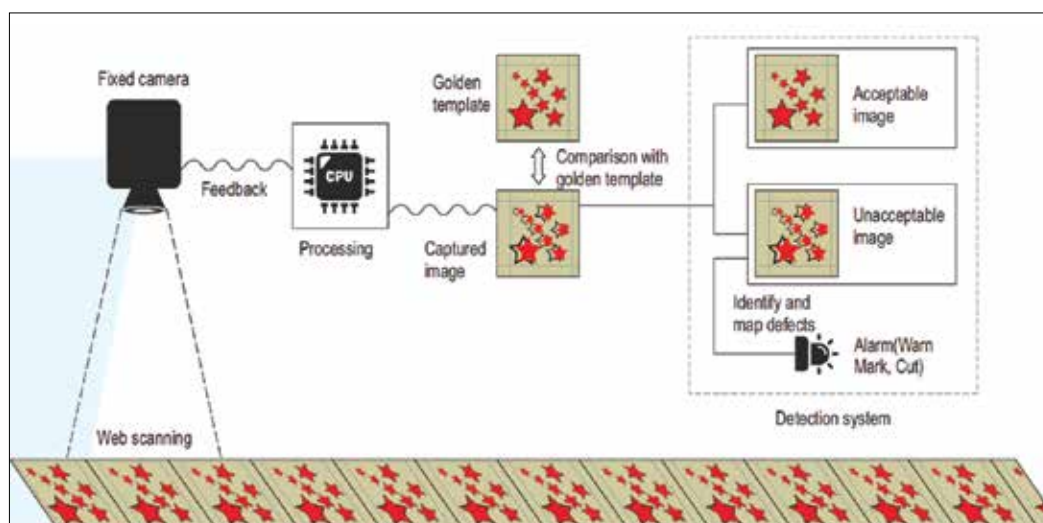
P&P: What is the USP of your company? Are these products made in India? If yes, share details.

Anand: Our close and constant connect with the OEMs and end users have helped us understand customer requirements. This learning in turn has given impetus for our product development efforts. We have a strong hardware and software development team working closely with application specialists, who ensure that a 'close fit' solution is found for solving field issues. We are proud to say that all our products are manufactured in India, ensuring high quality import substitute products. All products can be accessed remotely by our team, besides having a pan India after sales service team, providing prompt service. Needless to say, we work towards continual development and are ISO 9001:2015 certified organisation.

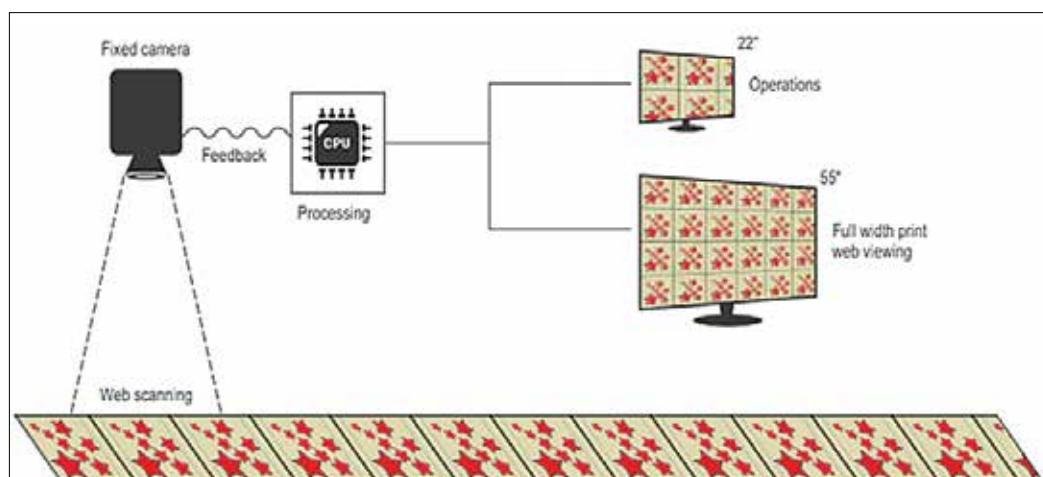
We are the only Indian company to offer ATEX certified sensors on AlynAXIS, the register control system, ensuring safety of use in explosion prone areas. Typically, the sensor is mounted very close to the ink tray where the atmosphere is laden with solvent fumes.

P&P: Brief us about the ViewAXIS Tera - a first full print repeat web monitoring system and how it can help printers.

Anand: We are proud to present this made in India smart imaging technology-driven product – ViewAXIS Tera. ViewAXIS Tera is bundled with features such as instant error identification, better image control, and precise web monitoring. Split screen feature aids in the viewing of traffic



DetectAXIS schematic



ViewAXIS Tera schematic

lights on both edges simultaneously. This system can be used for any type of roll to roll printing applications and for various packaging substrate.

P&P: Share something about the DetectAXIS, a defect detection system?

Anand: ATE's DetectAXIS is a 100% print defect detection system for various applications including rotogravure and CI flexo presses, among others. The DetectAXIS with cutting edge smart imaging technology captures sharp images of the print web. With the help of high resolution line scan cameras, it captures sharp 'near print quality' images at full production speeds. The captured image is compared with a golden template to detect defects that are practically invisible to the operator. Using line scan cameras of more than 150 DPI, even the tiniest of errors are identified with a resolution of up to 0.01 mm² at production speeds up to 500 mpm. When a defect is spotted, DetectAXIS generates alarms and electronically tags the defect, consequently bringing to the operator's attention that corrective action is needed. The system displays the defect snapshot with defect location on the screen making it easy for the operator to spot. It ensures defect free, high quality print output.

P&P: What are your views on the recent plastic ban and how it will affect the print & packaging industry in India?

Anand: There are views and counter views

on use of plastics. I think plastic is a wonder material which has impacted human kind and nature on multiple fronts. While the pros include ease and multiplicity of use, increased shelf life of food products/processed foods, carriage of material, health/medical devices, transfusion of fluids, safety..., you would agree that list of application can go on! The cons have fundamentally to do with the abuse of plastics (irrational use of plastic products), lack of collection at point of use and a standardised process of recycling. Hence, if we were to address these 'cons', I am sure we will leave behind a better world for future generations.

I can go a step further and say that using paper is detrimental to the environment too. We destroy trees when we make paper, besides using tons of water and energy in various forms. The positive side is that recycling of paper helps reduce the impact on the environment.

P&P: What next can the industry look forward to from the house of ATE?

Anand: ATE is committed to continue offering products that contribute to reduce waste, increase safety at work, recycle energy and aid ease of operation. Listening to 'voice of the customer' has always given us ideas for new products/customer needs. ATE will continue to hone its products and services as we work towards providing our customers with innovative and cost-effective solutions.