

Screen printing - better than ever

According to Andreas Ferndrager, screen printing continues to offer unparalleled possibilities, although unnecessary limitations are being set because some processes have not been systematically optimised.

Screen manufacturing is the crucial weak point of the screen printing process. Far too often, users seem to forget that this process is decisive for print quality, print output and especially, their associated costs.

Swiss suppliers, Grunig and SignTronic have dedicated their activities to the screen manufacturing and preparation processes. Under the slogan 'the perfect screen', they offer solutions that can be summarised by the terms 'technology' and 'automation'.

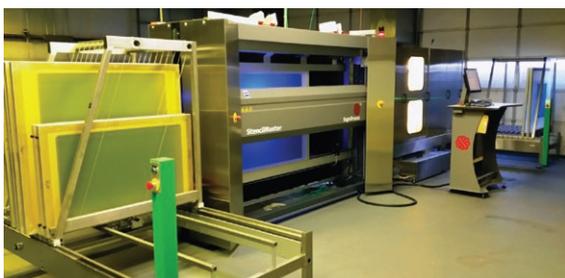
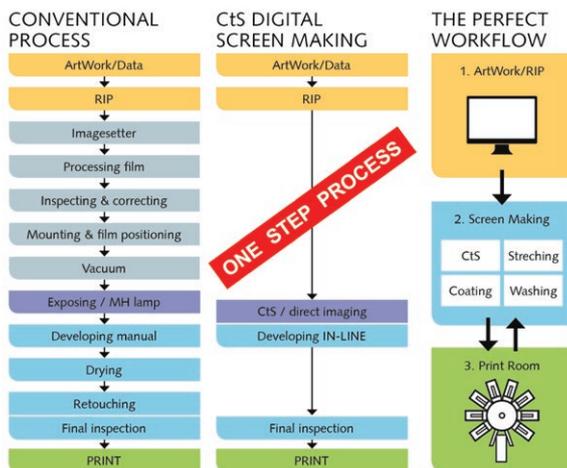
In the field of CtS direct exposure, technology is indispensable for forward-looking companies. The purpose of this technology is to eliminate various screen preparation processes and – based on the artwork data – to expose the screens directly and without any deterioration of quality, without film, montage, vacuum frames etc.

This advanced screen printing technology offers two essential aspects that should be kept in mind:

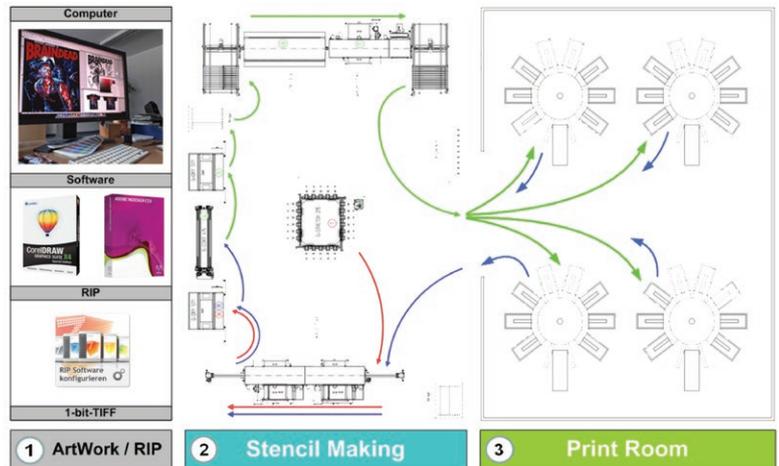
- Considerably improved printing qualities with smooth transitions/continuous tones, sharp details and lines up to photo-realistic prints that look digital but have actually been achieved by screen printing.
- Substantially lower screen costs and – thanks to shorter set-up times – reduced costs result for the overall process, as well as increased printing output.

THIRD GENERATION

SignTronic has been offering CtS direct exposure technology for more than 11 years and now offers an extensive product



A combination of technology and automation.



Overview of factory workflow.

range of third generation StencilMaster equipment. Now smaller, front loader versions are also available: STM-ONE for smaller screen quantities in sizes up to 1200mm x 1200mm and STM-XS for very small screens for multiple image production with up to 16 screens simultaneously.

AUTOMATION EXPERTISE

When applied to screen manufacturing, automation is setting standards in the field of almost operator-less screen preparation involving various processes. Grunig has been designing equipment and systems for automating the screen preparation processes for more than 48 years. In recent years, the company's engineers have systematically worked towards the objective of combining various processes by integrating them into an in-line solution.

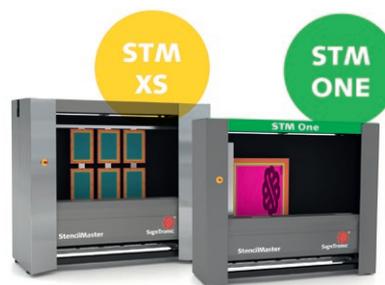
The extensive product range covers all screen sizes from 10cm x 10cm up to XXL screens measuring 5m x 12m. In this context, it does

not matter whether the solutions are required for the industrial, textile or graphic markets, as the ultimate goal in state-of-the-art screen printing will always be the perfect screen. Products cover stretching, gluing, coating, drying, washing, developing, preparation and water treatment.

COMBINED APPROACH

Together, Grunig and SignTronic have developed the LAB concept, whose key factor consists of positioning screen manufacture as an essential link between the artwork/RIP and printing departments.

The accompanying image (bottom left) shows a combination of technology and automation, implemented for a customer in the USA: STM-TEX-PRO-10. ■



STM-ONE and STM-XS are smaller, front loader version CtS machines from SignTronic.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Andreas Ferndrager is CEO and Sales and Marketing Director at SignTronic/ Grunig-Interscreen

FURTHER INFORMATION:

SignTronic AG, Widnau, Switzerland
tel: +41 71 727 1900
email: a.ferndrager@signtronic.com
web: www.signtronic.com

Grunig-Interscreen AG, Schwarzenburg, Switzerland
tel: +41 31 734 2611
email: fa@grunig.ch
web: www.grunig.ch