

GROWING INTO THE DIGITAL TEXTILE MARKET

Rosaria Pozzoni describes what's needed for success in this expanding segment

As a manufacturer of disperse digital inks for sublimation and direct printing on polyesters and mixes, J-Teck3 is now a well-known name in the segment for digital textile printing, recognised as one of the market leaders as a manufacturer of high quality inks. Founded in 2003 by a team of people with a long and valued experience within the textile and screen-printing fields, the company quickly consolidated its name for formulating, manufacturing and selling its digital textile inks.

J-Teck3 believes its strengths lie in its good ability of developing high quality products that feature innovative characteristics. The company says it was the first to manufacture an environmentally friendly dye sublimation ink free from alkylphenol ethoxylate (APE), developing nano-dot and cluster technologies to make the ink extremely stable and fluid for use within any digital printing machines.

The company started with just three people, and has grown through the years to have a total of 50 by the end of 2013. Situated in the Como lake area in Italy, traditionally an area for high quality textile printing, its success has been based on a group of capable and determined people who, with hard work and ideas, has led a small company to grow into one of the leaders in the digital sublimation market.

When J-Teck3 was founded in 2003, textile digital printing was still at its beginnings, and only really known in Europe, the USA and Australia. Now, more than a



J-Teck3's head-quarters in Albese con Cassano, Como, Italy

decade later, textile digital printing and sublimation, in particular, are experiencing a large and continuous expansion. This doesn't apply just to typical applications like sportswear or visual communication but, also, within industrial segments such as fashion and the automotive industry.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAM-WORK

J-Teck3 admits it was very difficult to grow so quickly and, at the same time, maintain the quality standards which it targeted in terms of service, product quality and performance. This was a combined effort and necessitated considerable team-work as all the people in the company contributed both their time and their ideas to overcome the difficulties and

find solutions.

In the early days of the company, the market sector was still niche with only a few players. Now that it has developed, many new companies, small and big, are entering the textile digital market every year. J-Teck3 believes that this makes it more difficult now to keep one's position and find new opportunities. But, at the same time, it is also more exciting.

Having built up to a staff of more than 50 people, J-Teck3's output has grown 20 times and, as a market leader, the company is represented worldwide from Brazil to Australia, and from France to Thailand. Today it has a complete range of digital inks for textile and graphic applications which can suit all the

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The first J-Teck3 team comprised Enrico Grasselli, Rosaria Pozzoni and Italo Mariani



J-Cube RF/KF new dye sublimation digital ink for Ricoh and Kyocera print-heads



Rosaria Pozzoni with Shao Cen of Shanghai J-Teck at Fespa Asia in Singapore

digital printers in the market.

The most significant members of staff include Italo Mariani, who is sales director, Enrico Grasselli, technical director, and business operation manager Rosaria Pozzoni. These three were the first to start in the autumn of 2003. Other significant members joined by the end of that, notably one of them being Luca Guggiari, who is manager of J-Teck3's R&D laboratory, J-Lab.

INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS

During the past ten years of activity the company has launched what it believes to be many innovative products. But it states it is almost impossible to detect the most significant one as they are all part of the J-Teck3 history – from J-Eco Subly, Flag and Print, born in 2004 and the first APE-free digital disperse inks through to the last being J-Cube RF/KF digital sublimation ink for Ricoh and Kyocera heads passing through nanodot and cluster technology, and finishing with EPS, a patented system for double-sided



J-Next Subly is a best-seller among J-Teck's range of sublimation inks for Epson print-heads

printing in digital textile applications.

Focusing only on digital printing, with the motto 'true digital', J-Teck3's best year to date was 2013, having experienced an increasing turnover year-on-year since the company's foundation. During this time, it has constantly taken on opportunities and entered new markets.

However, today's best-seller is J-Next Subly, a digital sublimation ink for Epson DX6 and DX7 print-heads. J-Teck3 says it was the first to develop an ink for the newest version which was launched at Fespa 2011 in Hamburg, with the firm view that competitors arrived only two years later with a similar product.

Currently J-Teck3 is selling all over the world but it says that its biggest territory is Asia. As an international operation with a market that is the world, the company is always looking for new areas and ready to take on any opportunities, particularly where digital textile printing is still new or expanding. As well as Asia, the growth in South America has

been rapid during the last three years.

Additionally, with trust being the most important factor in relationships between customers and suppliers, J-Teck3 believes that, in order to build a trustful partnership a company must have good products, good service and an open and co-operative mind.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIPS

During the next five years J-Teck3 has already developed a project through which new investments will be made in terms of production equipment and enlargement of its production site. Another important issue is the development of the R&D sector plus important partnerships with universities and research centres for the study of innovative, eco-friendly products.

As far as digital textile printing is concerned, the company sees that there are still many opportunities to reach as only a minor part of all that is printed with conventional systems has turned to digital. Sublimation printing will continue to grow and develop further in sectors such as textile for fashion and home decoration. This is also due to the advances in many new polyester fabrics now being used more and more in the fashion and garment markets. Their flexibility and versatility is replacing conventional fabrics like silk and cotton.

In conclusion, manufacturers and suppliers have to be very attentive to all market changes and trends. They have to be very good in catching the new feelings and sensations within their reference market in order to adapt to the sudden changes in market direction. A company thinking it has arrived could end up making a big mistake, particularly in the fast and dynamic market of digital printing. ■

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The J-Teck3 stand at Fespa, London in June 2013