**GFIA Winner Profile**

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**U. Günther GmbH sets ’gold standard’ for sustainable flexo printing with KODAK FLEXCEL NX Technology from Miraclon and proprietary screening process**

Peter Tarnowski, Managing Director of U. Günther GmbH of Hamburg, Germany, is excited about his company’s recent Gold Award success in the Miraclon-sponsored Global Flexo Innovation Awards: “We wanted to see how something our customers love competes in the international arena,” said Tarnowski when asked what motivated him to enter.

**Ice cream bars brilliantly reproduced in a more sustainable process**

The joint entry submitted by U. Günther GmbH and its sister company Flexo-Service Cl. Jaehde GmbH – an insulated cooler bag printed with a *Ferrero Rocher Ice Cream* motif – made a convincing impression on the awards judges. It earned the Gold Award for the conversion from another print process to flexo, print production workflow efficiency and commitment to sustainable print. The job – which was printed with KODAK FLEXCEL NX Plates – had previously been produced in gravure with seven colors plus white.

By converting the job to flexo, U. Günther GmbH was able to reduce the number of colors for the insulated cooler bag to six plus white. In doing so, the repro service provider was responding to a need specifically voiced by the customer, says Tarnowski: “Printing with fewer colors means we can lower the environmental impact of packaging and cut printing costs.”

He adds: “We were sure we could produce the job better in flexo with FLEXCEL NX Plates. Cl. Jaehde GmbH took care of the reprographic composition while U. Günther GmbH was responsible for central color management and platemaking. OMM Kunststofftechnik of Lindlar, the printer, likewise did a magnificent job. When we saw the result, we all agreed that the ultra-smooth gradients, the vividness and sharpness of the ice cream bars and the elaborate detail, for instance in the wood grain of the stick, would be hard to beat. It thrills me every time I see those bags at a supermarket. We’ve extended the series with more designs in the meantime, and they all look fantastic.”

**Combination of success factors**

It was the combination of KODAK FLEXCEL NX Technology with its advanced plate surface patterning, Impulse Screen technology and in-house color management that U. Günther GmbH regards as the crucial factors behind the firm’s success at the Global Flexo Innovation Awards. Impulse Screen was developed by U. Günther GmbH and Flexo-Service Jaehde GmbH and has been available in the market since early 2020. This screening technology allows moiré-free multicolor printing or printing of very fine halftone patterns using existing, or comparatively coarse, anilox rollers. It lets flexo printers achieve much finer levels of screening as well as excellent detail without visible halftone dots – and without having to invest in anilox rollers with a higher screen ruling or modify their presses in any other way.

Tarnowski describes the combination of FLEXCEL NX Plates and Impulse Screen as “a successful tandem that helps us produce applications we could never have imagined doing before.” He cites “the extremely clear reproduction of even the finest highlights and the high solid ink densities. There are also none of the jumps in tone that you get with halftone screens and none of the typical problems of hybrid screening, where the transition between FM and AM tends to create artifacts.”

More than two years of practical experience have meanwhile confirmed that the Impulse Screen and FLEXCEL NX Plates combination is equally ideal for extended color gamut (ECG) printing as it supports the gamut expansion effect with its stability and excellent, wide tonal reproduction from the shadows to the highlights. Furthermore, by using this screening technology with FLEXCEL NX Plates, printers have noted ink savings of up to 15% per job, coupled with a potential 25% increase in print speed.

**Stronger together as a Group**

Apart from platemaking, U. Günther GmbH’s service offering includes consulting, packaging design, artwork, mock-up production, reproduction, color management, proofing and production support. Together with Cl. Jaehde GmbH of Berlin, Repro-Feil GmbH of Memmingen in southern Germany and software specialist PreCess GmbH, the company is part of Grotenkamp Holding Management & Beteiligungs GmbH (Managing Director: Peter Tarnowski). The Group employs more than 150 people.

FLEXCEL NX Plate technology has been an integral part of U. Günther GmbH’s portfolio since 2013; the company currently operates two KODAK FLEXCEL NX Wide 5080 Systems at its platemaking center in Greven. “The original decision to use FLEXCEL NX Technology was spot on, and I wouldn’t hesitate to choose it again. It allows for excellent stability on press to enhance production efficiency, and it supports a very high print quality,” Tarnowski comments, emphasizing the enduring, trusting partnership with Miraclon in the same breath: “I particularly value Miraclon’s innovation strategy that builds on their core technology, as their technology upgrades and innovations comes in well-planned cycles, which is really helpful for our business in the high-end segment.”

**Committed to a future with ECG**

With FLEXCEL NX Plates and Impulse Screen, U. Günther GmbH firmly believes in its ability to now spearhead ECG’s growing adoption in the market. “We’re starting to work with bigger projects and offer ECG on a larger scale in Europe. It’s a process that will allow us to help significantly alleviate many of today’s pain points for flexo printers without brand owners being forced to accept any deterioration in quality. This includes reducing makeready times and waste, and increasing production efficiency and consistency on press with the aim of substantial cost reductions,” Tarnowski explains. “What’s more, ECG affords opportunities to offset – at least partially – the recent cost pressures the industry has felt across the board. It is a well-established technology at our company; and a key account will ensure it gains even further in the market.”

U. Günther GmbH now sees itself as having reached this point. A pet food manufacturer is planning to convert all of its flexible packaging to ECG, which includes over 1,000 different designs produced at several European printers. “The customer’s objective is to reduce the number of colors used in print jobs and simultaneously profit all round from the brilliance which our Impulse Screen provides with FLEXCEL NX Plates. That client trusts us, and we’re absolutely motivated to make this extraordinary project a success,” Tarnowski adds confidently.

The Managing Director views the Gold Award not simply as confirmation of U. Günther GmbH’s innovative strength but also as recognition of the high flexographic expertise of the Group’s employees. “Another positive was that Miraclon made it easy and straightforward to enter the awards, without undue extra administrative work. In my opinion, this was a huge advantage. And that’s why we have every intention of getting involved again in the future,” Tarnowski says in conclusion.

ENDS

Image captions:

Miraclon\_comparison\_FLEXCEL NX Impulse\_gravure\_text.jpg

Comparison of text rendering in flexo printing with FLEXCEL NX Plates and U. Günther’s Impulse Screen (left) and in gravure (right)

Miraclon\_comparison\_FLEXCEL NX Impulse\_gravure\_image.jpg

Comparison of the reproduction of an image detail from the winning entry in flexo printing with FLEXCEL NX plates and Impulse Screen (left) and in gravure (right)

**About Miraclon**

Miraclon is the home of KODAK FLEXCEL Solutions, which have helped transform flexographic printing for more than a decade. The technology, including the industry-leading FLEXCEL NX and FLEXCEL NX Ultra Systems, and FLEXCEL NX Print Suite that enables PureFlexo™ Printing, maximizes on-press efficiency, delivers higher quality and overall best-in-class results. With a focus on pioneering image science, innovation, and collaboration with industry partners and customers, Miraclon is committed to the future of flexo and continues to be positioned to lead the charge. Find out more at [www.miraclon.com](http://www.miraclon.com), and follow us on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/miraclon-corporation/) and [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAZGpziB6Lq_Kx8ROgoMdCA/featured).