

Coding efficiency, line productivity drive Videojet development efforts

The marking and coding specialist strengthens partnership with Tomco in Thailand to boost presence in Southeast Asia

BOOSTING production efficiency through optimally designed machines and equipment is the philosophy behind every product launched by Videojet Technologies, a global leader in product identification technologies.

The US-based company, which specializes in in-line printing, coding and marking products, application-specific fluids and product life cycle services, underscores advanced coding and marking innovations in its latest products to enable customers to increase the efficiency of their production lines. It believes that by raising uptime and equipment reliability while reducing coding errors and total cost of ownership, manufacturers can bump up overall productivity and subsequently, profitability.

"A growing number of customers are now more interested in efficiency in their production line rather than capital investment. They want coding equipment that will not stall the production line. A 5-minute downtime can spell huge implications on revenue and profit," said Josselin Prats, general manager of Videojet Technologies (S) Pte Ltd SEA/ANZ. Mr Prats whose experience with Videojet spans the Africa and Middle East markets, brings with him over 10 years of expertise in the coding business.

Reliability is king

This strong emphasis on innovative solutions is reflected in the new Videojet 1860 continuous inkjet (CIJ) printer, which made its debut in Southeast Asia during ProPak Asia, held from June 14 through 17 in Thailand, after the global launch at interpack 2017.

"Predictability is very important for our customers. The majority of the customers we talked to want predictability in their machines. Predictability in that the coding equipment will tell them what to do, when to do it. Predictability towards ensuring better productivity on the line," Mr Prats added.

Packed with smart yet simple-to-operate features, the 1860 is designed to be the best-in-class predictable CIJ printer in the market today. It utilizes over 50 real time sensors to help users understand the machine, know its status and identify when maintenance is needed.

"It's not about waiting for the equipment to fail and slow production. It's about preventing such from happening," Mr Prats added.

The 1860 boasts cutting-edge predictive capabilities. Using, for example, an industry-first ink build-up sensor, the printer can alert operators up to 8 hours in advance about the most common fault conditions that can affect uptime. These advanced notifications, which can be displayed on the printer or sent to a smart device, allow operators to plan ahead and take pre-emptive corrective actions.

The 1860 also has more than 50 real-time sensors continuously monitoring 150+ key indicators of printer performance to provide diagnostics, analytics and guidance.



The Videojet 1860 continuous inkjet printer has predictive capabilities such as the industry-first ink build-up sensor, where the printer can alert operators up to 8 hours in advance about the most common fault conditions that can affect uptime.

Ease of use, high speed, compact design growing trends

Videojet likewise puts a premium on simplicity of design. In particular, the company stresses simplicity in operating the machine. The 1860 adopts minimal touch philosophy through its new Videojet Simplicity™ user interface with advanced Code Assurance capability. In addition to minimising operator interactions, this interface design is meant to cut operator training, lessen user errors and ensure print quality.

"We have also brought simplicity to the way the machine is maintained. With the 1860, printer maintenance is not only less costly but is also less time-consuming," said Mr Prats.

Videojet believes that with the manufacturer increasingly able to focus on the production line as they need not worry about coding and marking, automation will be increasingly adopted.

High-speed marking is another trend to watch out for. The company's new fiber-laser marking system, the 7610, supports high-speed applications such as bottle cap printing and pull tab engraving. Capable of high-legibility codes 122 percent faster than previous Videojet fiber-laser machines, the 7610 is ideal for high-speed beverage, pharmaceutical and extrusion manufacturers requiring high-contrast codes on hard plastics and metals.

The machine increases marking time with its large marking window, resulting in greater product throughput and productivity. It can work at faster speed – up to 600m/min – even on different substrates, promising similar print quality across more products.

Besides faster speed, the 7610 features a compact design to fit any production line. Compared with previous Videojet fibre lasers, the unit has 74% smaller footprint. It also allows flexible configurations such as marking head position variations to accommodate space considerations.

According to Vorrathep Vongsthatat, business development manager at Tomco Automatic Machinery Co. Ltd, "The 7610 is designed to be very compact. It allows as many as 37 adjustments on the firing unit to fit any production line."

Mr Vongsthatat who has a degree in Industrial Engineering and Economics from the Purdue University, is responsible for leading the sustainable growth and expansion of Tomco, mainly on segmenting product portfolio, customers' engagement and technical capabilities.



The Videojet 7610 fiber-laser marking system supports high-speed applications such as bottle cap printing and pull-tab engraving. It meets the needs of high-speed beverage, pharmaceutical and extrusion manufacturers requiring high-contrast codes on hard plastics and metals

Food safety, key concern in competitive market

Tomco and Videojet agree food safety remains one of the top issues in the market, in particular in Southeast Asia.

With continuous growth expected for the food industry on the back of rising consumption levels and expanding population, quality and safety standards will have to be enforced more strictly. The growing variety of food products aimed at meeting market demands and fed by an expanding middle class with greater purchasing power will make this an even bigger challenge for manufacturers and companies engaged in the food business.

"The issue is even bigger in such sectors as ready-to-eat food, where demand for single-serve visible packaging is rising steadily," said Mr Vongsthatpat.

Marking and coding solutions can play an important role in providing product information. "To address consumers' food safety fears, it is very important to give data on whether or not food is still safe to eat, when food is expected to expire, where it was produced and so on. Traceability is likewise important. This will help in checking in the event of a defect or product recall," Vongsthatpat added.

These factors could spell the difference between competitiveness and failure, particularly in markets as competitive as Southeast Asia.

Mr Prats, who has observed the markets in the Middle East and Africa, notes the same trends among customer preferences in Southeast Asia. "There are lots of similarities in terms of what customers want. More and more customers are not really looking for coding equipment. They are now more interested in coding solutions," he added.

Being new to the Southeast Asian market, Mr Prats's participation at the recent ProPak Asia is aimed at getting a clearer understanding of the region and the expectations of the customers.

"From having visited with a lot of customers I was able to confirm some of the major trends in Southeast Asia now. These trends point to greater efficiency and productivity of machines. These are what customers want because they want increased productivity on their lines," he shared.

Videojet acknowledges the stiff competition in the region, noting, however, that it is good because it makes companies innovate. Continuous product development and innovations result in new solutions that, ultimately, benefit customers.

The company differentiates itself by continually investing in technology, Mr Prats said. "We are very strong in lasers, CIJ, thermal transfer, laser marking and related technologies. This allows us to offer a full basket of products and make recommendations to our clients to address their needs," he added.

Catering to Southeast Asia's SMEs

In Southeast Asia's food industry, where there are more small and medium enterprises than big companies, Videojet offers products that can cater to the needs of the different segments.

The company's 1040 CIJ printer is designed for SMEs or even companies with low-volume operations fewer than 5 days per week. It can apply codes on primary products and outer case packaging up to 7.5mm in height. It uses accurate drop placement technology to ensure precise character formation in multiple printing environments even at multiple speeds.

The 1040 features the Smart Cartridge fluid delivery system, which aims to ensure correct fluids are used. It also eliminates spills. The printing parameters can adjust automatically along with changes in temperature and humidity conditions with the product's Dynamic Calibration™ technology. The unit can work for 12 days continuously without cleaning using the auto-cleaning print head.

"But what we also want to emphasize is that when SMEs decide to purchase a product or make an investment it is not based solely on what is the cheapest product available. They are looking for the best product that could give them ROI the fastest. They want a product that will boost their productivity and improve their brand," said Vongsthapat.



Vorathep Vongsthapat, business development manager at Tomco Automatic Machinery Co. Ltd and Josselin Prats, general manager of Videojet Technologies (S) Pte Ltd SEA/ANZ

Collaborating with partners

The company enriches its development efforts with partnerships with other firms.

Videojet has been working with Tomco for nearly three decades now, their collaboration starting in 1990. The former strongly believes that a closer relationship with Tomco, its partner in Thailand, and with its other partners in other parts of Southeast Asia will enable Videojet to meet the needs of its customers, both old and new alike.

Tomco, which provides total packaging solutions such as coding and marking, inspection, barcode and labelling, and packaging and weighting, is keen to boost engagement with customers and work with them in increasing productivity.

"Our partnership with Videojet has been a strong collaboration. Videojet has introduced a new line of products that will help manufacturers in Thailand achieve their goals," said Mr Vongsthapat.

Mr Prats added, "We've been working with Tomco for a very long time now. We're happy to be working more closely with partners such as Tomco, which is in the process of transforming into a digital enterprise with a greater focus on customer engagement."

Staying attuned to the market

Videojet aims to continue Videojet Global's practice of being close to the customers. Being part of the Danaher Group, Mr Prats said that Videojet adheres to the group's core values, one of which is Customers Talk, We Listen.

"All the innovations we have today are a result of this Customer Talk, We Listen core value. All these innovative solutions stem directly from our desire to meet our customers' needs in terms of coding and marking technologies," Prats shared.

According to Prats, the combined expertise and industry experience of Videojet and its partners such as Tomco has enabled them to provide customers with recommendations for their specific requirements.

"Our customers expect us to offer solutions in terms of what coding equipment to use to match their needs, product line and applications. Videojet has a complete basket of products for the marking and coding market. With Tomco, which also has a very strong experience in this line, we are confident we will be able to address the needs of the market," said Mr Prats.

With more than 345,000 printers installed around the world, Videojet's products enable companies across the consumer packaged goods, pharmaceutical, industrial goods and other industries to print on more than 10 billion products per day. The company has more than 4,000 team members in 26 countries across the globe. Its current distribution network comprises more than 400 distributors and OEMs scattered across 135 countries.

Vorathep Vongthapat, business development manager at Tomco Automatic Machinery Co. Ltd and Josselin Prats, general manager of Videojet Technologies (S) Pte Ltd SEA/ANZ