

Esko-Graphics and Mikkelsen Graphic Engineering announce strategic partnership in digital cutting

Esko-Graphics' Kongsberg XL series integrated with MGE's i-cut® vision system and i-script™ workflow, for the first time demonstrated at SGIA '04

SGIA '04 – Minneapolis, October 6, 2004 – Esko-Graphics, the market leader in Pre-production solutions for the packaging industry, and Mikkelsen Graphic Engineering (MGE), the market leader in complete cutting systems solutions for short-run printing in the sign-making, screen-printing and digital printing marketplaces, announce a strategic partnership to integrate MGE's i-cut® vision control system and i-script™ workflow with Esko-Graphics' Kongsberg XL series of cutting tables. These solutions will be primarily targeted at finishing digitally printed rigid materials for the sign- and display market. The first product resulting from this new cooperation is demonstrated at the Specialty Printing and Technology Imaging Show 2004 (SGIA 04, October 6 – 9, 2004) at the MGE booth (# 939) and is immediately available for purchase.

Esko-Graphics has set the standard in larger format heavy-duty cutting solutions with its Kongsberg line of cutting tables, the XL-series, the market leading solution in the cutting of corrugated materials. Recently it has again expanded its reach with the introduction of the new MultiCUT head, which features a 1000W milling tool, ideally suited for cutting and milling a wide range of rigid sign-making materials.

MGE today is the industry reference in vision controlled finishing solutions for cutting tables in the sign-making, screen-printing and digital printing marketplaces with its patented i-cut® vision system. Its i-script™ workflow has become the de-facto standard through its integration into the RIPs of all major digital flatbed presses.

At SGIA MGE demonstrates the Esko-Graphics' Kongsberg XL20, equipped with a belt feed mechanism that links to the MGE's i-feed automatic feeder. The table is equipped with Esko-Graphics' new MultiCUT head, in which the MGE i-cut® camera is integrated. MGE's i-script™ workflow allows the RIP of the digital press to automatically generate the cutting contour of the graphic image. It also automatically adds registration marks to the print image. After printing the i-cut® camera will read a RIP generated barcode containing the cut file name, retrieve this file via company network, recognize i-cut® register marks – also inserted by the i-script™ compatible RIPs - or in prepress, followed by automatically aligning the cutting to the graphic. The result is a very precise cut, following the graphic contours, even compensating for image or media distortions.

"Digital flatbed printing is one of the strongest growing applications in the sign and display making industry as well as in the packaging industry. The integration of Esko-Graphics and MGE products brings a breakthrough solution for more precise and productive finishing of digitally printed rigid materials." says René Delbar, Senior Vice President Marketing of Esko-Graphics.

According to Steen Mikkelsen, President of MGE, "By partnering with Esko-Graphics, and utilizing the Kongsberg XL tables' higher cutting pressures, high system rigidity and stronger drive system, MGE's i-cut® digital finishing solutions will dramatically expand the opportunities for Graphic Producers and digital printers permitting them to efficiently convert any printing media produced by any digital printing device, while increasing productivity and throughput."

MGE will distribute these joint solutions in North America to the sign-making, screen and large format digital printing markets. Esko-Graphics will distribute the systems to the packaging market.

About MGE

Mikkelsen Graphic Engineering, Inc. is a pioneering digital cutting/finishing systems solutions provider. Since the mid-eighties MGE has developed and marketed innovative digital cutting systems. Its product development program is focused on improving and automating the cutting and finishing processes used by screen printers, digital printers and many other industries. MGE's digital finishing solutions, *i-cut*® and *i-script*™ were developed and tested in close contact with leading screen and digital printers. MGE is continuously researching and developing new successful solutions for its customers. MGE takes pride in its long reference list which includes leading companies in the industry, among which are several Fortune 100 companies. As its existing customers continue to add more equipment, this attests to the high-efficiency and positive return on investment generated with its cutting/finishing solutions. For more information, visit MGE's web site at www.mge-us.com

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About Esko-Graphics

Esko-Graphics is the world leader of packaging pre-production solutions and a global supplier of prepress systems for commercial printers. The Esko-Graphics portfolio of products and services starts from a clear vision on user requirements in specific market segments. The company focuses on smart software tools and hardware devices with the lowest cost-of-ownership, to create more value for its customers.

Key product lines include a comprehensive range of workflow software components, reaching out into the entire supply chain, and integrating graphics, structure and project management; Computer-to-Plate systems for offset exposing violet metal plates or polyester plates; Computer-to-Flexo plate systems; copydot scanners; samplmaking tables and flexible digital converting systems.

Esko-Graphics is headquartered in Gent, Belgium, and employs around 1,000 people worldwide. R&D and manufacturing facilities are located in Denmark, Belgium, Norway,



Germany, the United States and the Czech Republic. Esko-Graphics has local sales and support organizations in a number of countries throughout Europe, North America and the Asia/Pacific region, including Japan and China. Its products are also distributed through a global network of resellers and OEM partners.

For more information, visit Esko-Graphics' web site at www.esko-graphics.com

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All press releases, as well as corresponding product pictures, are available at the press section at www.esko-graphics.com