

Customer
Testimonial

:Sublima

Commercial Printer

Company: Sticher Printing, AG

Location: Lucerne, Switzerland

Gaining an Advantage in a Price-Conscious Market.

Higher Quality with No Extra Effort.

Ask Robert Sticher, general manager of Sticher Printing in Lucerne, Switzerland, how the market has changed, and he will tell you it used to be quality first, price second. Now it is the other way around. And he should know. Once considered the top producer of medieval art books, he remembers a time when quality was the only consideration. Today he continues the quality tradition but must do it faster and cheaper. Sticher looks for any means that will allow his company to offer higher quality without affecting turnaround and cost. XM screening technology is allowing him to do just that.

The 50-person printing company, located in Lucerne, Switzerland, extends its offerings with (Creation, Media and Service) CMS Sticher AG, a ten-person prepress firm. The co-operative operation handles projects for the financial markets, catalogues for luxury products, industry, art and wine, as well as technical documentation and schoolbooks.



The first time-saving step that also increased quality came two years ago, when Sticher switched from computer-to-film (CtF) to computer-to-plate (CtP) and automated the workflow. An :Apogee workflow system drives a :Galileo platesetter and two :Sherpa inkjet proofers. Sticher also maintains an ISO 9004 certification, which allows him to keep the operation running at peak performance.

Quality-wise Sticher differentiates by offering 12-colour printing, accommodating spot colours and varnishing.

:Sublima XM screening technology has given the company its newest advantage. “With :Sublima, says Sticher we can offer clients higher quality for the same price and with the same turnaround.”

:Sublima employs a patented technology known as XM (Cross Modulated) screening. It aligns FM (Frequency Modulated) microdots along AM (Amplitude Modulated) angles and applies AM dots to midtones for perfectly smooth gradations. The combination retains all the benefits of AM and FM, yet it handles as easily as a 175 lpi AM screen.

Sticher says there are more benefits to using :Sublima. He sums them up this way: “We get sharper images and better detail rendering, soft skin tones, uniform print quality, no moiré or rosette patterns, photo realistic image reproduction and no visible raster dots. It even delivers better quality than stochastic screening.” Sticher uses :Sublima at 210 lpi for matte paper and 340 lpi for glossy paper.



“When we started with :Sublima,” says Sticher, “the CtP system and the presses required calibration. But once that was done, the production time was exactly the same as with :ABS (Agfa Balance Screening).”

Sticher also notes that :Sublima requires no additional efforts or skills from the prepress operators. “When we switched from :ABS to :Sublima our printers didn’t notice any difference on the press. With the experience we have today we noticed one small difference—with :Sublima ink/water balance needs a little more attention. But even on our relatively old presses, the eight-year old eight-colour Speedmaster with 135 million of copies and the 12 year old five-colour Speedmaster with 150 million copies, the implementation of :Sublima went very well,” he says.

For the highest productivity, Sticher intends to use :Sublima as its standard, rather than switching between :ABS and :Sublima. “For the moment 85% of our production is :Sublima, we use :ABS for the remaining 15% for reprints. Printing with :Sublima 100% of the time will simplify production and save us even more time.”

As far as his customers are concerned, Sticher says that the first to notice a difference in quality were the professionals: photographers and graphic

designers. “But the best thing about :Sublima is that we can attract new customers by offering higher quality for the same money.

“:Sublima is a sales tool,” adds Sticher. “We organised a training session for our sales people in co-operation with an Agfa specialist, to show them how to promote this new added value.”

The ability to deliver higher quality gives you a competitive advantage, but when you can offer it at no additional cost, that’s an advantage that goes straight to the bottom line.

About :Sublima

:Sublima uses a patented technology known as XM (Cross Modulated) to achieve line-screen rulings of up to 340 lpi (lines per inch). It combines the benefits of AM (Amplitude Modulated) screening, which are smooth gradations and highly controllable midtones, with the benefits of FM (Frequency Modulated) screening—fine detail rendering in shadows and highlights and continuous-tone like reproduction. It aligns FM dots along AM angles and replaces AM dots at the precise point where the AM dot can no longer be held on a specific press. The result is a smooth transition from one mode to the other with no visible crossover.

:Sublima also takes press characteristics into account so that it will never produce a dot the press cannot hold. As a result, every detail gets printed.

Process tints, fine lines, even delicate typefaces print like solids using four-color process. Flesh tones are perfectly smooth and colour accurate.

Because :Sublima can hold the tiniest microdot on press, enlarging or reducing images have no effect on quality or the ability to sustain details. This also widens the variety of papers that you can use at high line rulings—from high-gloss coated stocks to translucent vellums and newsprint.

