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HS Automatic Goes from Automated to Inkjet Using Xaar Technology

With the digital print market growing year on year, and inkjet technology making a significant impact on this sector, there is little wonder that industries such as coding and marking are recognising the capabilities of inkjet solutions and are capitalising on the action. As companies invest in inkjet printing machines, they benefit from the integration of increasingly sophisticated technology, such as leading printhead manufacturer Xaar plc's revolutionary digital drop-on-demand inkjet technology. Xaar's uniquely designed and market-leading patented technology is being used globally by Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) who have incorporated Xaar printheads into their industrial inkjet printers. Together, Xaar and its OEMs are supplying markets such as coding and marking, and other packaging printing applications with advanced solutions which meet the increasing requirements of variable data printing, including printing barcodes, logos, regional language variation and numbers onto a variety of different products and substrates.

One organisation which has successfully embraced Xaar's inkjet technology for coding and marking applications is HS Automatic, a Denmark-based OEM. HS Automatic radically changed its business model from producing automated systems to manufacturing industrial inkjet printers six years ago when it was assigned a specific project focussing on the electronic aspects of coding and marking within the packaging sector. The company's detailed research unveiled a gap in the market for producing industrial machines which aid the coding and marking process within a production line. Through working with Xaar to integrate XJ126, XJ128 and XJ500 printheads into the HSAJet series of printing machines, HS Automatic has significantly increased its profit margins and global market share. In fact the company anticipates increasing its turnover from \$3.1 million to \$6.2 million in this next financial year alone.

Mette Noergaard, Marketing Manager at HS Automatic, explains why the company decided to move away from developing and manufacturing automated systems and instead build inkjet machines for the packaging industry. "The company's background lies in producing controllers and drivers for handling industrial robots, automatic test systems and electronic industrial machine handling. However, when a client approached us to carry out a research project which concentrated on the packaging sector and in particular coding and marking applications, we very quickly realised the potential of producing industrial inkjet printing machines that would sit easily as part of a production line. It was apparent there was a gap in the market and, given our electronics background, we were confident that with the right technology investment and support we could establish ourselves within the marketplace."

"Although our research guaranteed potential market positioning, we needed to invest in the right inkjet technology to ensure our machines would achieve high quality end results. When researching the capabilities of inkjet technology and looking at the refined dynamics of printheads, we came across many references to Xaar's piezo drop-on-demand digital inkjet technology. Xaar is a respected market leader, known for its leading-edge inkjet technology as well as its commitment to helping its OEM customers bring new and exciting inkjet products to market. Our development team here was very keen to meet with Xaar, given its strong profile, and discussions with the inkjet market leader sealed our belief in its unrivalled expertise and its sophisticated yet easily integrated technology. We have been exceptionally impressed with Xaar's advanced research and development, its strong portfolio of products and the levels of integration and technical support provided. By working with Xaar and incorporating its printheads in our machines, we have set HS Automatic apart from our competitors as well as providing our customers with high quality coding and marking solutions."

HS Automatic's products are solely designed for the coding and marking industry and are sold through a growing global dealer network - something the company is constantly looking to expand. Working together with Xaar as a partner to help the development of its systems, HS Automatic is committed to ensuring its HSAJet products: the HSAJet, HSAJet SA, HSAJet CU and HSAJet CB, maintain a high profile

in an evolving production environment. In addition, HS Automatic works closely with customers that have a unique or specific production requirement to produce bespoke printing machines which also incorporate Xaar technology. HS Automatic sees this service as vital in a market which is experiencing many changes.

Mette Noergaard continues, "The coding and marking industry is particularly dynamic and with the introduction of digital inkjet technology we are beginning to see systems reduce in size, excel in speed and think a little smarter. This evolution is a really big step forward for the industry because previously, traditional coding and marking machines were large and cumbersome and in many instances manually operated. It's true to say we are witnessing more and more production environments switch from manual systems to digitally automated solutions, hence speeding up the production line and offering companies a greater return on investment."

"In addition, we are also seeing clearer images appear on packaging materials. Xaar's printhead technology is so advanced that it allows our machines to produce images of exceptionally high quality and at high speed. With the support of this technology we can be sure that HS Automatic is offering its customers cost-effective and intelligent solutions which, in turn, will add value to their product applications, setting our customers aside from their competitors."

Inkjet is undoubtedly the future of coding and marking. As the market continues to grow and becomes more aware of machines which offer variable data applications such as form and direct mail printing, production processes will continue to become more advanced. Market leaders such as Xaar are working with OEMs to develop smarter printing machines which incorporate advanced technology and which cope seamlessly with the rigours of a busy production environment. By working together, Xaar and its OEMs will continue to offer the coding & marking sector advanced high quality printing solutions.

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