Heliozid Océ offering special prices for Colorado, Arizona at trade show

The 23rd edition of the SGI Dubai show has witnessed 10% more participation from the previous years and is hosting two new countries, said International Expo chairman Abdul Rahman Falaknaz in an interview with PrintWeek MEA on the sidelines of the event’s inauguration.

When asked about the near future of the digital signage industry in the Middle East, Falaknaz commented: “The industry will reach at a high point as it has been predicted, thanks to Expo 2020. The economy, which is stagnant now, will take off in the second quarter. We are all striving to ensure that the situation gets better after 2020.”

About the fate of printing, Falaknaz positively said that the printers are moving ahead with time. “They (printers) know that print is fading away so they are turning to amazing innovations such as printing on textiles. To improve any situation, one needs to adapt with the changes that come with time. What’s gone is gone. Most of the exhibitors that I spoke to, have something unique in mind and want to do better. This is the most important aspect. In fact, many of them are already doing well because they are being supported by their agents as well as their clients,” he said.

When asked to say a few words to encourage the printers who are struggling due to the low economic mood, Falaknaz said: “There is a famous saying in the UAE – ‘The country gets sick, but it does not die’, and we are on the way to recovery. The tough market situation is the indication that things will get better and we will go further.”

Long-term exhibitors

Heliozid Océ has announced special discounted prices for their German-made large format Colorado and Arizona printers. MD Philippe Husni said: “Our printers are made entirely in Germany. They are technologically superior, very reliable and long lasting. The Arizona is a robust machine capable of multiple applications including 3D effects, suitable for the retail industry, real estate sector, surface coverings and other industrial applications. It is uncompli- cated to use and can be adapted quite easily. We are offering special prices for purchase during SGI.”

Talking about the benefits of participating in exhibitions, Husni said: “I believe in shows and there are many reasons for that. Internally, our sales people get to see the machines in operation, reinforcing their conviction in the strengths of the product. New prospective customers visiting our booth, often translate into sales. The advantage for clients would be that they can see the machine in operation multiple times, have doubts cleared by our staff and make an educated decision. In the first half of the day today, we had over 27 people visiting our booth and two new prospective customers from Saudi Arabia.”
Al Mahir seeks to help SMEs survive in current market

Sharjah-based printing equipment trading company Al Mahir, has been a part of the SGI show for 21 years.

“This year we are showcasing Graphica’s small printing equipment for SMEs mainly. We want to help medium and small businesses to survive in the market which has been going through tough times due to both the political as well as economic situations in the region,” said Dilawar Dalwai, the owner of Al Mahir.

Dalwai informed that the Al Mahir booth is also displaying printing products from China-based Bestuhu, Impress and Colour from India, and France based VFP.

“We grow year-after-year with the support of our existing partners. It is because we have both printing and trading divisions that we are able to maintain a balance even if one of the segments weak at times,” he said.

“Despite the recession-like business mood, we started 2020 on a good note and the pace is picking up. But, even so, business is visibly hesitant when it comes to capital investment,” added Dilawar.

Regarding the company’s expectations from the upcoming Expo 2020, Dilawar said that he’s positive. “We will definitely gain,” he said signing off.

Numerous digital display equipment at TMS booth

As the name suggests, Total Media Solutions based in Deira, Dubai, has quite a few advertisement and digital display equipment in their booth at SGI this year.

Director Pradeep Kumar said, “Our stall has a waterproof, outdoor LCD kiosk with sensors that can control brightness in accordance with sunlight. We have video boards and LED screens for both indoor and outdoor displays. The LED screens are ready-to-install cabinets available in sizes 1mX1m and 50cmX1m so that they can be joined for various display sizes. We also have double-sided kiosks that can either have the same ad playing on both sides or individual ones. We also have an interactive white board that can be connected to various software to be used as video screens or be used to write and erase during classroom or office presentations.”

Another interesting equipment at their booth is the huge photo mirror booth. “It is fitted with Canon 1500D and a printer. It can be used at events to capture and instantly print pictures and even send them to your social media accounts directly. The booth can also be used as a digital advertisement kiosk simultaneously.”

How will 3D digital signage impact retailers?

Retailers are continually adopting digital signage in great numbers and using more advanced tools like 3D technology to craft immersive customer experiences.

“3D is already pervasive in retail. Nearly every major retailer is using 3D content in some capacity — and it’s growing,” Beck Beseker, CEO and co-founder of virtual reality company Marxent said. “Case in point: Nearly every major furniture firm has a 3D product configurator.”

What’s the big deal?

There are a number of ways 3D is transforming retail spaces such as immersive interactive content. One of the most common 3D digital signage tools is the endless aisle where customers can customize products digitally.

“The majority of our clients are using 3D graphics for digital signage — the most popular is an endless aisle offering where consumers can configure and discover all product variations on in-store kiosks or laptops,” Janus Jagd, CEO of product visualization solutions provider Cyildo. “In addition, translating the online product personalization experience in-store provides a compelling reason for consumers to visit the store while getting some expert advice from the store personnel.”

Visualization is another way 3D content is transforming retailers. For example, when customers come to a furniture retailer, they often have trouble visualizing how a certain piece of furniture will fit in their houses. 3D content can help with that.

“The introduction of 3D augmented reality technology on mobile devices has democratized the ability to quickly imagine how design elements occupy space. Everyone can now virtually design their living areas and workplace in real time and in full scale,” Boaz Ashkenazy, CEO, of augmented reality company Simply Augmented said. “Decisions are made more quickly and there are fewer surprises once the final installation is complete.”

Besecker, however, believes this is just a small slice of the 3D pie. He says that by 2030, every adult will have a 3D digital mirror of their environment and possessions.

“3D Content standards will facilitate a revolutionary change in retail. Every facet of the shopping experience will be upended by 3D — from print/TV/Online advertising moving from 2D product photography to 3D content generated procedurally from business rules, to the in-store experience, ecommerce portals, store layout and design, and more,” Beckeser said.

What’s holding it back?

While 3D technology has been around for quite some time, there few industry specific standards for the technology. This has led to a lot of problems for retail clients.

“At Cyildo, we’ve felt the pain and the challenges involved in delivering 3D commerce content directly to consumers through many years, and we have built our own standards,” Jagd said.

What can help?

One way vendors are attempting to address this issue is by joining industry initiatives such as the Kronos 3D Initiative. This group aims to develop standards to streamline 3D content creation, management and display.

“Developing a common base structure for the technology that enables retailers to show products in 3D online and standardizing creation and integration processes for Interactive 3D, AR and VR experiences, will largely facilitate access to these innovative technologies and democratize the engaging consumer experiences they make possible,” Aurelien Vaysset, CEO of 3D product platform Emersys said.
Promotional products may offer more luxury than you think...

When you think of promotional products, what comes to mind? Branded hats and pens? Tote bags? Many printers may not see these items going with their clients’ high-end image, so they may not give these complementary offerings a fair shot. But promotional items are more than this. Think luxury leather bags, vintage cameras, and masculine steel and leather bracelets. Think custom-designed wet bags: the kind of unexpected gifts that would turn the head of the CEO who has everything...but they don’t have this.

Inspired Brands opened my eyes to a different class of promotional products designed for high-end corporate events, C-level executives, and key influencers. These products are not only luxurious, but they are developed and produced from the perspective of sustainability.

“The key for us is looking at the lifetime usage of a product,” explains Brian Hollowaty, CEO of Inspired Brands. “Cost comes into play, but when we create something that is well designed and super durable and interesting, people will keep it much longer. They talk about it. They share it. When you are catering to the C-level executives, you need that.”

For the company, “sustainability” means more than simply using sustainable materials. Inspired Brands’ promotional deck states: “We seek to design a secondary purpose and reduce the environmental impact for every item we produce. Through innovative design thinking, we increase the chances that consumers will use, re-use, and love our products.”

As one example of sustainable design, Inspired Brands created a wine shipper that converts from a wine case to a wine rack. The sustainability element extends to the shipping, too. The rack is designed to hold the products in suspension, so the entire packaging can be slipped into the shipping box without additional packing and fillers. This saves cost, storage space, and raw materials used. As another example, it offers branded note-books made from paper crafted from waste stone from the construction industry. Velvety smooth or not, the paper is made from 85% calcium carbonate and 15% non-toxic resins used to bind the stone particles.

If you have customers unimpressed with traditional promotional products, you just might find something in this repertoire that will captivate them. If not, Inspired Brands will design it for you. The company is doing a project whose target audience is “CEOs who have everything.”

“It’s easy for them to buy whatever they want,” says Hollowaty. “They all travel a lot, so the school came to us and said, ‘What can we get these people who have everything? Something they will use and find value in?’ Our designers came up with a modular zip-around packing cubes made of see-through rip stop nylon so you can keep everything organized and see inside. The bags are branded with the business school’s logo on them. It’s not something everybody has.”

Many of the beauty brands are gravitating towards luxury promotional products for bags and kits, adds Hollowaty. “They are doing packages and PR kits sent to agencies and influencers,” he says. “They see us in a different category from traditional promotional products.”

While Inspired Brands does work with large print service providers (and is working on a project currently), the CEO was not willing to give details. But, he said, the company does develop partnerships with third parties like printers as part of a variety of campaigns.

— by Heidi Tolliver-Walker

Al Shabak shares an old relation with SGI

Participating in SGI since 1998, Al Shabak General Trading LLC, has brought in a Bentley in their booth to showcase their newly launched Mactac ColourWrap Series.

Elaborating on the products on display at their stall, general manager Govind Unni said: “We have World Graphics products for interior decoration including leather, canvas and textures. We also have some glass decoration films which are optically clear, frosted and dusted. We also have certified anti-slip floor graphics laminating film – Floor Grip. Our wall choker – a self-adhesive blackboard vinyl, printable with UV printers – can be used in classrooms. Lastly, we have white board films.”

Commenting on Al Shabak’s long-standing relation with SGI, Drashty Saggar who looks after Al Shabak’s marketing and specification, said: “SGI is a platform for us to connect with our clients.”

Even though the adverse weather conditions affected the footfall on opening day of SGI, Saggar said that the quality of customers visiting the booth has been better this year compared to previous years. “If we had 100 visitors on the first day, probably 50 of them would be potential clients. This year, however, if the 80 people visited us, perhaps 65 to 75 of them were genuinely interested in the products and not just collecting catalogues.”

When asked about the scope for Al Shabak’s products and services in Expo 2020, Saggar said, “It will hope fully be a big booster for us. As digital printers, I’m sure the digital world is ready for a lot of graphic requirements. We have been getting several inquiries, nothing is concrete yet. Perhaps, it will gain pace after the first quarter.”
In an era of disruption, SGI Dubai 2021 will ensure that the show supports and addresses the evolving needs of the industry stakeholders by showcasing the best innovations in 2021. Be the change to lead the change!