

“Perfect Binding Is the Start of a New Era for Us”

After entering perfect binding and installing an Alegro from Muller Martini, Johann Sandler GmbH & Co. KG in the Austrian town of Marbach has almost doubled the number of jobs it prints and finishes annually. Its value added along the whole production chain has also increased to an impressive 95 percent.



► Until summer 2014, Sandler print & packaging produced around 1,700 jobs per year – mainly saddle stitching jobs with runs of a million copies and more. Since commissioning the new Alegro last August, the number of jobs for its customers, 25 to 30 percent of which are located abroad, has risen to around 2,800. “Perfect binding is the start of a new era for us,” says Managing Director and trained printer Hannes Sandler, who has been involved in the family business, which was established by his father Johann in 1982, since he was ten.

Changes Afoot

A new era for Sandler means that 32 years after the company was established, it has first employed two sales representatives,

with the welcome result that the volume of products printed both for other printing plants and for direct customers has increased significantly.

The new era also means that Sandler has increased its permanent staff from 40 to 50 over the past two years as it has expanded its range of products and services. The company also employs 15 temporary workers. “We need them to back up our permanent staff, since our job volume fluctuates widely at times. We generate some 50 percent of our turnover in late summer and fall, when we produce catalogs for the Christmas business.”

More Machines than Employees

However, the changes are not solely a consequence of entering perfect binding and

installing the extensive Alegro line (see box). Sandler print & packaging with its four core segments of commercial printing, package printing, finishing and mailshots/bookbinding invested some EUR 9.5 million in new printing presses a year before commissioning the new softcover system from Muller Martini. Today, it has no fewer than thirty 75 x 105 cm printing heads at its disposal, two of them with roll/sheet feeders, spread out over three machines.

Together with the Alegro, layer folding production has been doubled and a cellophaning machine has been installed to film wrap the covers. Two screen and flexo printing machines for UV and LM coatings are also used for production. “With our technology, we’re uniquely positioned not



1 *Managing Director Hannes Sandler (left): "If we're going to enter softcover, then it has to be in-house." Right: Max Demczuk (Technical Director). Center: Peter Cerer (Sales Manager at Muller Martini Austria).*

2 *A high level of automation, central control and as few staff as possible – Sandler has achieved those three key goals with the new Alegro perfect binder.*

3 *The Orbit three-knife trimmer (right) ensures maximum net output, while the CB 18 book stacker produces top-quality stacks.*

only in Austria, but also in Europe. I don't know of any similar operations," says Hannes Sandler with pride.

Guaranteeing Print Finishing

The fact that Sandler has commissioned a perfect binder for the first time since a brief period of using a small three-clamp manual machine in the early 1990s was also a direct result of the investment in new printing technology. "We're in for a penny, in for a pound – if we're entering print finishing,

then we also have to guarantee quality, transport and deadlines," emphasizes Sandler.

"With such an investment, it's also important to create the right conditions in terms of space, staff, the folding process and palletizing, and to plan processes fully, right through to loading onto the truck." It was therefore clear to Sandler from the start: "If we're going to enter softcover, then it has to be done in-house, since that's what our key customers require." >





For the Alegro investment, Sandler created the right conditions in terms of space, staff, the folding process and palletizing (pictured is the Pluton palletizer), and fully planned the relevant processes, right through to loading onto the truck.

95 Percent Value Added In-House

Before commissioning the Alegro, Sandler had one or two perfect binding jobs per week, which it outsourced. Now that number has risen to two to four jobs a day, and, thanks to the new machines, Sandler can keep an impressive 95 percent of the total value added chain in-house. Only hardcover is still outsourced today.

The company chose the Alegro, the company's first solution from Muller Martini in its 33-year history, because "Muller Martini presented us with a complete concept as a total solution," says Hannes Sandler. "Second, we wanted a perfect binder with a high level of automation and central control so that as few staff as possible would be required." Sandler has achieved that goal. Today, 50% of softcover production is performed by two people, including the machine operators. A maxi-

imum of three operators are required for the remaining 30 percent of jobs.

More and More Short Runs

The Alegro is predominantly used to produce magazines and brochures, in A6 landscape to A3 formats, in run sizes of between 3,000 and 50,000 copies, though the run sizes can exceed 100,000 copies in rare cases. However, Sandler also prints short runs with as few as 300 copies, even including a special catalog in Japanese recently.

"Run sizes are falling, in some cases dramatically, but the number of jobs continues to rise," says Hannes Sandler. That is where the new Alegro with its quick make-ready comes into its own. ◀

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"AMS Was an Important Factor"

Sandler's extensive Alegro line with hot-melt and PUR, a splitting saw for increasing double production, a 3696 gathering machine (with 15 stations plus a book block feeder), an Orbit three-knife trimmer, a CB 18 book stacker, shrink tunnel and Pluton palletizer from Solema also includes the System Adhesive Monitoring System developed by Muller Martini.

AMS minimizes glue consumption and production waste in perfect binding. A laser near the gluing unit continuously monitors glue application, even for differing glue patterns, by means of heat measurement. That enables the amount of glue applied to be adjusted at any time.

"AMS was an important factor in our decision to invest in the Alegro, since it enables us to provide our customers with even greater reliability in terms of glue application."