

MailLiner: the Optimal Solution for the Automatic Sorting of Inserts

All direct distributors of unaddressed advertising around the world face the same challenge: millions of insert sets are manually gathered, which translates to high wage costs, with increasing pressure owing to statutory wage regulations. Muller Martini has the answer to that challenge: thanks to its innovative gathering system, the MailLiner finishes inserts efficiently and automatically without the need for an expensive carrier or foil.



► The minimum wage of EUR 8.50 per hour that has been in force in Germany since January 1, 2015 has had a particularly severe impact on the direct mailing industry and its numerous distributors of printed advertising. Unlike newspaper publishing companies with their successful weekly newspapers and large numbers of automatically inserted inserts, direct mail companies do not have a carrier for their softcover books and flyers. Instead, they deliver the insert sets loose to mailboxes and have them sorted manually by the delivery personnel beforehand.

Frey Plus, for instance, is facing an estimated 15 percent increase in costs across its operations according to its Managing Director Markus Springer, owing predominantly to the raise in wages of distribution personnel due to the minimum wage legislation. Ulm-based Frey Plus, one of the leading direct mail companies in Germany, has a distribution rate of 95 percent, well above the industry average, and distributes up to 20 million leaflets to 800,000 households weekly. They are delivered to mailboxes by some 4,200 delivery staff, who spend half the time sorting the leaflets.

1 Markus Springer (center), Managing Director of Frey Plus: "The MailLiner will win us new insert finishing jobs."
Left: Roman Bückle (Logistics Manager).
Right: Peter Stein (Area Sales Manager at Muller Martini Germany).

2 At the gathering line of the MailLiner, one of the inserts is used as a cover and folded using an air blade – a Muller Martini innovation.



Carriers and Foils Are Too Expensive

Frey Plus has estimated how much it would cost to give the insert sets a cover or to wrap them in a foil. "However, both options are far too costly, have no added value for consumers and are problematic from an environmental point of view," says Springer.

An A3 cover printed on four sides and folded would come in at almost EUR 500,000 a year for weekly delivery to 800,000 households, while foil wrapping would cost some EUR 120,000 a year.

A Brilliantly Simple Solution

Springer explains that it has been clear to Frey Plus for some time that "we need to switch to a machine solution for the finishing of our leaflets, to spare our delivery personnel that work and to save costs", owing not only to the new minimum wage legislation, but also in order to make the delivery job more attractive. The only question was which solution to invest in.

Frey Plus, which has been in the market for over two decades and whose subsidiary Frey Plus Media is the exclusive marketer for national leaflet advertising for all daily newspapers in Germany, found what it was looking for in Muller Martini's new MailLiner. The MailLiner, which will be used at Frey Plus as a field test machine, is based on the proven FlexLiner newspaper inserting system. It was developed specifically for direct marketing, and provides direct mail companies with a brilliantly simple solution for the sorting of unaddressed adver-

tising thanks to an innovative concept that is one of a kind in the market.

Insert Serves as Cover

At the MailLiner gathering line, one of the inserts is used as a cover and folded using an air blade – a Muller Martini innovation – after all the other inserts have been applied. The gathered insert sets then enter the FlexPack. Since the integrated bundle builder does not, unlike other compensating stackers, compensate layers, it is ideally suited to this innovative insert gathering process in terms of flexibility and product quality.

First, the individual inserts can have different sizes, without the inset sets becoming unstable. Second, the various bundles can be of different sizes without losing stability.

Instructive Visit to DMC

Springer explains that Frey Plus, in which Südwest Presse in Ulm and Schwäbischer Verlag in Ravensburg each hold a 50 percent stake, picked the Muller Martini solution for two reasons. "First, from a purely technical point of view, I like the concept of the air blade. Second, I was impressed by how thoroughly the people from the various departments of Muller Martini took care of our needs. For instance, I had the opportunity to see the FlexLiner live in action at the leading Swiss direct mail company DMC, and to speak in depth with the relevant people at DMC and with the Muller Martini technicians. That's also why it's

particularly attractive to us to be involved in the field test phase of a new machine."

New Jobs Soon to Come

The MailLiner, which is designed for an output of 30,000 copies per hour, has 28 feeders and can be extended at any time thanks to its modular design, and the Flex-Pack bundle building systems were delivered to the company in Ulm at the end of July. Frey Plus, which previously had a horizontal finishing system with output of 1,200 copies per hour for small distribution areas, had a new hall built specifically for the new machine.

In the first weeks of operation, the company intends to focus on its existing jobs. However, Springer has no doubts that "the MailLiner will win us new insert finishing jobs long term." ▶

www.freyplus.de



Please scan the QR code above to watch an animation of the new MailLiner on Muller Martini's YouTube channel.