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98 percent fewer manual interventions – HEIDELBERG showcases autonomous pressroom at drupa

- **Autonomous printing in packaging production: Push to Stop takes automation to a whole new level**
- **Enhanced competitiveness in commercial printing: Speedmaster XL 106 perfecting press operating at 21,000 sheets per hour boosts productivity by up to 15 percent**
- **Sustainability: Up to 25 percent less paper waste**
- **Postpress: New-generation Stahlfolder boosts productivity and StackStar C collaborative robot helps cushion effects of skills shortage**

Heidelberger Druckmaschinen AG (HEIDELBERG) is using its new Peak Performance generation of the Speedmaster XL 106 to address the major challenges facing print shops – huge cost pressures, the manifest shortage of labor and skilled workers, and the growing sustainability requirements in printing. Manual work is a thing of the past – at drupa 2024, HEIDELBERG is showcasing sheetfed offset printing on a whole new industrial scale under the motto “Unfold your Potential”. Based on the new Peak Performance generation of the Speedmaster XL 106, the company is exhibiting a highly automated or autonomous end-to-end production workflow for commercial, packaging, and label printing respectively. In commercial printing, 98 percent of manual interventions across the entire value chain – from job data through to the finished brochure – can be eliminated compared to production that doesn’t utilize Push to Stop. In packaging printing, numerous innovations on the Speedmaster XL 106 are resulting in up to 20 percent higher overall productivity while also reducing manpower requirements, paper waste, and energy consumption. This ultimately means lower costs per printed sheet, which is the decisive competitive factor for

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print shops. Along with its partners POLAR and MK Masterwork, HEIDELBERG is thus addressing the most pressing issues faced by industrial print shops worldwide – cost pressures, the skills shortage, sustainability, and digitalization. “At drupa 2024, HEIDELBERG is emphasizing the competitiveness and future viability of sheetfed offset printing,” says Dr. David Schmedding, Head of Sales at Heidelberger Druckmaschinen AG and Board Member for Sales and Service with effect from July 1. “At the same time, our customers have a strong and reliable partner at their side supporting them with a complete ecosystem based on their business model,” he adds.

Autonomous printing in packaging production with Push to Stop

Thanks to the new Peak Performance generation of the Speedmaster XL 106, autonomous printing is now making its mark in packaging production. HEIDELBERG is achieving this with its new highly automated **Push to Stop coating unit**, which changes the coating plate, screen roller, and coating fully automatically. This unit reduces the overall makeready process by up to 30 percent. Having been prepared while production is ongoing, makeready in the coating unit takes place on a fully autonomous basis. A further highlight when it comes to the production of sophisticated print motifs is the new **AI-based Hycolor assistant** in conjunction with another new product, the **Hycolor XL inking unit and dampening system**. Operating entirely autonomously, the assistant optimizes the presetting of the inking unit and dampening system before the first sheet enters the press, thus cutting the amount of setup waste by up to 25 percent and reducing the time it takes to achieve the first OK sheet. “Thanks to a combination of mechanical and AI-supported software innovations for the new Peak Performance generation of the Speedmaster XL 106, our packaging customers are benefiting from up to 20 percent higher net productivity. That’s a huge step toward boosting their competitiveness,” insists Christian Steinmassl, who is in charge of the Packaging segment at HEIDELBERG.

Competitiveness – 21,000 sheets per hour with sheet reversal now also achievable

The cost pressures in commercial and publishing printing are huge, and qualified staff are hard to find and hold onto. The Push to Stop philosophy on which the new Peak Performance generation of the Speedmaster XL 106 is based means production can, for the most part, take place without any operator intervention – now also at up to **21,000 sheets per hour in perfecting mode**. The new fully integrated **Prinect Inspection Control 4** has an efficient approach to quality assurance, checking both sides of the print sheet on perfecting presses for the first time ever. Simply by using this solution, customers can make total savings of some 120,000 euros when it comes to paper waste, costs associated with

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complaints, and personnel expenses. Thanks to a combination of inline defective sheet ejection and delivery logistics, the system ensures that waste-free stacks are delivered to the postpress section without any operator interventions.

Productivity – postpress innovations result in 1:1 performance ratio

What's more, the new highly automated Peak Performance **generation of Stahlfolder TH 82-P folding machines** restores a 1:1 performance ratio between pressroom and postpress operations. In other words, a new Stahlfolder TH 82-P can handle the entire output of a new-generation Speedmaster XL 106 at the postpress stage. The new Stahlfolder TH 82-P generation offers HEIDELBERG customers a further improvement of around 15 percent in net output without increasing the speed of the machine. In addition to all this, the new collaborative **StackStar C robot system** relieves the strain on staff. This highly flexible robot automatically deposits product stacks in the postpress section. StackStar C is mobile and can be moved easily between different machines. It operates on a collaborative basis and, thanks to an innovative safety concept, ensures staff and the robot system can work together safely. This means no safety fencing is required. What's more, quality control processes can be carried out during production without stopping the robot. Using two StackStar C units working in tandem makes it possible to double production capacity, and the different stacking patterns and pallet sizes can be selected intuitively at the control terminal.

“The enhanced automation and process efficiency we're offering our commercial printing customers means they can boost their productivity while also using fewer resources. In this way, we're helping them further improve their competitiveness in the future, too,” says Dr. Frank Schaum, who is in charge of the Print segment at HEIDELBERG.

Fully automatic reel splicer on CutStar brings another productivity boost

The **new fully automatic reel splicer** on the CutStar sheeter achieves another productivity boost of over 12 percent. It results in a further substantial reduction in downtime and paper waste, too. This system also makes the Speedmaster XL 106 attractive to web offset businesses, who are increasingly facing shorter print runs.

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Red Dot Design Award for new-generation Speedmaster XL 106

The Red Dot Design Award recognizes exceptional design quality. The international panel of judges only presents this coveted accolade to products that excel in this area. The design of the new Peak Performance generation of the Speedmaster XL 106 resulted in HEIDELBERG being named one of the 2024 winners. “At HEIDELBERG, machine design is never an end in itself. As an integral part of HEIDELBERG UX, our user experience, it is always functional and is aimed at making life easier for operators, boosting efficiency, and preventing errors. Winning a Red Dot Award this year is an endorsement of this approach,” says Schmedding.

HEIDELBERG at drupa 2024:

At the event, there will be demonstrations in English and German every 30 minutes relating to the workflows being showcased based on the Peak Performance generation of the Speedmaster XL 106.

Press release for media week in March 2024:

[Peak Performance technology from HEIDELBERG \(new Speedmaster XL 106 generation\)](#)

[drupa 2024 | HEIDELBERG](#)

[drupa interview with Dr. David Schmedding](#)

[drupa 2024 | HEIDELBERG press kit](#)

Figure 1: A world premiere at drupa 2024 – the new Peak Performance generation of the Speedmaster XL 106, which achieves up to 20 percent higher productivity than the previous generation.

Figure 2: With the new Peak Performance generation of the Speedmaster XL 106 and the enhanced Push to Stop concept, autonomous printing has now arrived in the packaging production sector, too.

Figure 3: Red Dot Design Award for the new Speedmaster XL 106 generation – the enhanced, ergonomic HEIDELBERG UX operating concept relieves operators of routine tasks.

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Figure 4: The new StackStar C is a collaborative robot system that safeguards productivity and relieves the strain on postpress staff.

You will find additional details about the company and image material in the [Press Lounge](#) of Heidelberger Druckmaschinen AG at www.heidelberg.com and in the [Media Library](#).

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