

## Training cracks the die-cutting code

As part of its ongoing quest to provide customers in the labelling and narrow-web sector with excellent service, support and education, ROTOCON offers training for tooling purchase or sales staff, press operators, and assistants. The training module addresses the ordering, manufacturing, shipping, and delivery of flexible and rotary dies plus magnetic cylinders; the role of cutting angles and materials; as well as care instructions and fault analysis.



**EARLIER this month, Lebone Paarl Labels' management team requested ROTOCON to assist with a die-cut training module to ensure that all its highly qualified operators – who have worked at various printing companies over the years – are on the same level of understanding in the highly technical process of die-cutting a wide range of specialised materials.**

Operations manager, Arrie van Wyk, attended the first of four training sessions to gauge the level of information and the way it was being explained by Allan Musakwa. Arrie was impressed with Allan's knowledge and ability to answer technical questions. 'The feedback after this session was positive, with everybody learning something or at least refreshing their memories,' Arrie reports.

Lebone Paarl Labels also scheduled training sessions for the operators' assistants on each of the four shifts, the estimators, those responsible for ordering the dies, and the sales team. 'When ordering the dies, the team must ensure that they provide ROTOCON with all the relevant information to obtain the correct dies, while the sales representatives need to be able to provide customers with the best technical assistance when choosing the correct die for a specified material,' adds quality officer, Hettie van Wyk.

She also agrees with Arrie that a refresher training, every few years, is vital in reminding the team about aspects they may have forgotten about, receiving updates on the latest technological developments, knowing what's currently available in the market, and how all this can be applied in the production environment. 'This type of knowledge

improvement, which goes beyond the basics that they usually receive, is crucial in terms of the full picture of what dies to recommend to customers (depending on their material needs); die maintenance and replacement; usage tips and how to test for problems,' Hettie states.

'We'd like to thank ROTOCON for its ongoing service and assistance as a value-adding supplier,' Arrie concludes.

Allan Musakwa explains that this course covered four key aspects. The first aspect was rotary die, magnetic cylinder, and flexible die handling (care and storage instructions) to maximise tool-life value and ensure the best cutting results.

The second aspect provided insights into the different die finishes for specialised materials. The third aspect identified the types of dies that work most efficiently for specific jobs; and the final aspect unpacked how to troubleshoot die-cutting problems.

Allan notes that in most cases, cutting problems are caused by issues with the cutting unit, cutting tool, or material. Cutting unit problems can range from dirt, worn bearers, improper pressure to the wrong gap between the magnetic cylinder and anvil, or incorrect width-circumference ratio (flexing). Cutting tool issues are also related to dirt and wear, and occasionally, a manufacturing fault that is caused by unclear or imperfect order data. Material faults, on the other hand, relate to the type of material film/paper; liner thickness and types of cuts (kiss-cut, cut through, multi-layer, etc.) being used.

Although Allan is based at ROTOCON's Cape Town branch, he travels countrywide to label printing operations requiring this in-depth, value-added die-cut training module.