

Digital printing technology in an alpine scenery

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It covers an impressive 2,000 square meters: the Technology Centre that ZIMMER AUSTRIA has built at their Kufstein headquarters. After a mere nine months of construction, the new building has been inaugurated officially on July 5, 2016. At the inaugural event, combined with an international „Agent Symposium“, CEO Tony Naschberger and the staff of his sales team welcomed some 40 sales partners from all over the globe. On the second day, long-time customers were invited to visit the complex of buildings.

„Acute shortage of space“ has been the main reason to build the Technology Centre, together with a storehouse of 600 square meters, as Tony Naschberger explained. Now this space problem has been solved, and **ZIMMER AUSTRIA** is capable of presenting their complete range of products from the field of digital printing at Kufstein's Eibergstrasse, the location of their headquarters. The upper floor of the Technology Centre also includes lecture rooms and a separate lab for ink development, a research field where this traditional Austrian enterprise cooperates with **DyStarColors**. The roof terrace offers recreation space for employees and seminar participants. **ZIMMER AUSTRIA** has invested a total of 3.5 Million Euros in their new Technology Centre.

"Potential customers will enjoy a visit to Kufstein"

With production sites in Klagenfurt and Kufstein, **ZIMMER AUSTRIA** is for decades now a worldwide leader among the producers of machines for textile and carpet finishing (digital printing systems, functionalisation, flat screen and rotary screen printing, coating systems, steaming, washing, drying). The Tyrol based division has specialised in the development of digital printing machines for the textile and carpet industries, and also is well-known as system provider for carpet backing lines.



INTERVIEW

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On the occasion of the inauguration of their Technology Centre, IDtex had a conversation with Tony Naschberger, General Manager of Zimmer Maschinenbau, Digital Printing Systems, Kufstein.

Tony Naschberger's professional background is electronic engineering. When he joined the company in 1976, he started supporting the team for digital carpet printing, later he changed to the R&D department, and for several years he was engaged in field service, project management and sales. In 2010 he was appointed CEO.



IDtex: Mr. Naschberger, why has Zimmer decided to build a Technology centre?

Naschberger: We had several good reasons. Our new Technology Centre offers multiple functions: On one hand we intend to intensify our in-house developments, on the other hand we are planning to invite more customers from the fields of textile and carpet industry, in order to demonstrate our technologies and abilities. In our Technology Centre we can perform product tests, and we can conduct trainings and seminars. At the same time, we will reduce our trade fair activities.

IDtex: What kinds of trade fair activities will be concerned?

Naschberger: Of course we will still be present at trade fairs, but our booth sizes will be reduced. In 2017, we will appear at a total of 16 trade fairs. The "Techtextil", for example, is of big importance to us. We will however reduce the number of machines displayed at exhibitions, because they cause especially high efforts and expenses. Just think about the personnel we need for building a dedicated exhibition machine, shipping / air freight expenses, labour costs for installing and operating the machine at the fair. Whatever we print at the exhibition cannot be used later, we even have to bear the costs of disposal. We also like to avoid annoyances with customs authorities (like we experienced recently in Shanghai), and with "customers" trying to purchase an exhibition machine at a dumping price, because they know that shipping the machine back home causes high expenses again.

When evaluating the "quality" of trade fair attendants, we have repeatedly experienced that most of them are no potential customers for **ZIMMER AUSTRIA**. From now on, we will invite prospective buyers to Kufstein, because here they will not just see a single machine – like at an exhibition – but we can present our complete range of solutions. We will have enough time to focus on the visitors' special needs and applications, and we have all our specialists available here. The visitor will experience how we can fabricate his own product instead of just seeing general patterns and samples.

The Technology Centre will also act as some kind of filter: Purchasing a printing system represents an investment in the range of 500,000 up to 3 Million Euros. If somebody is planning this kind of investment and still does not find the time for a visit to Kufstein, he can't be a serious businessman. We have sold about 90 percent of our machines to customers which have been to Kufstein before.

IDtex: Seems like customer care is an important topic for you ...

Naschberger: Of course, we want to accompany our customer right from the start. If he decides in favour of a **ZIMMER AUSTRIA** machine, he enjoys the facility to experience his own application right here. This way he easily avoids half a year of experiments at home until the system matches his individual demands. Digital printing still represents a young technology for many producers. **ZIMMER AUSTRIA** however is active in this field since the 1970's, so the customer will benefit from our huge

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knowledge and experience.

We will also hold seminars, but with the focus on special topics only, serving specific groups of customers. When we invited selected customers from the carpet printing industry for our very first symposium on July 7, all of them accepted. A symposium in autumn will focus on "Digital Functionalisation" for the chemical industry – presently one of their major topics. Our seminars also serve as a neutral, private platform, where the participants can gather and exchange experiences and ideas.

IDtex: What is the distinct profile of ZIMMER AUSTRIA Kufstein in the market?

Naschberger: **ZIMMER AUSTRIA** wants to show their specialisation, their capabilities for niche markets. We are the leading manufacturer of special machines for heavy textiles. We have accumulated huge know-how in this field. Concerning "floor coverings", we can cover all materials from needle-felt up to high-priced brands. And heavier textile material always requires extra complicated production lines. Usually, our customers already have a clear vision of their products. They provide the textiles they want to process, and we will determine and provide the best technology for their purpose. We adapt the processes to a wide range of applications, and we even integrate our own **CHROMOJET high-speed jets** and our **COLARIS piezo jet technology**.



Photo: Tony Naschberger and Stuart Kugler ((c) S. Jährling)

ZIMMER AUSTRIA focuses on these five business segments:

- „**Textiles**“, ranging from home textiles to heavy textiles and to textiles for the workwear industry – which however is a highly competitive market, with a price war waging in the field of printing machine investment. The digital market will experience a separation between low budget products and quality products.
- „**Floor Coverings**“, digital carpet printing
- „**Narrow Fabrics**“, digital ribbon printing
- „**Digital Functionalisation**“
- „**Specialities**“, graphic applications like banners or textile displays.

IDtex: How important is the German-speaking market for you?

Naschberger: Germany, Austria and Switzerland are important markets for us concerning high-quality products. Belgium is of high importance as well.

IDtex: How many people are employed at the Kufstein headquarters?

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Naschberger: At present we have a total of 160 employees, with eleven people working in the Technology Centre with the various **COLARIS** and **CHROMOJET** machines.

IDtex: Which machines are on display at the Technology Centre?

Naschberger: „**COLARIS**³“ already represents the third generation of our high-performance digital printing machines, equipped with up to 64 „FUJIFILM Dimatix Starfire“ printing modules with ink circulation system. Three printhead models are available, offering drop sizes from 10 to 120 pico-litres and a standard resolution of 400 x 400 dpi. **COLARIS**³ offers a maximum output of 1,670 sqm/h and a maximum resolution of 1,600 dpi. It is available in working widths of 1.80 m up to 4.00 m. It is completed by an unwinding system, steamer, dryer and complete software.

„**COLARIS.INFINITI**“ represents our off-the-shelf solution at a highly competitive price. Offering a working width of 1.80 m, this system can be equipped with up to 8 colours and 32 „SPT 1024GS“ printheads (drop size ranges from 7 to 21 pico-litres). Production speed ranges from 520 sqm/h at 360 x 360 dpi and one pass to 170 sqm/h at 360 x 1080 dpi and 3 passes, 4 heads per colour.

Our showroom also includes a **CHROMOJET.MULTI** for various applications with carpets, and a **CHROMOJET.TABLETOP** printer. Here we talk about a compact digital lab printer for developing new applications, processes and recipes, featuring the well-tried **ZIMMER AUSTRIA CHROMOJET** jet nozzle technology. This product simplifies the development of new applications for digital coating and printing.

Our customers will experience in our Technology Centre how easy it can be to develop new applications for digital functionalisation and printing.

IDtex: Thank you very much for this interview!