

Making a Great Impression

The need for homegrown products has lead Melbourne based company GSB Chemicals to raise the bar in the manufacturing and servicing of press room chemicals

ASK most web offset printers five years ago if they have heard of GSB Chemical and the answer would most probably be 'no'. But five years on GSB has made an impression in consumable supplies for heat set and cold set presses throughout Australia.

As a fully Australian-owned company the founders of GSB are happy to promote the fact that their products are developed and manufactured in Australia. It is their belief that local R&D is as good as any in the world. But they also recognise that in an industry dominated by German-made presses, it is important, not only to have acceptance by the major printing groups here, but also to have international certification.

International Seal of Approval

According to Colin Benson, national sales manager, as more new presses are installed in the country, manufacturers and customers are now requiring that the press wash up solutions be independently approved.

"Sales people were finding that it was becoming more and more difficult to sell wash ups even though they have been tried and proven over the years. Customers wanted the products to carry the approval of the press manufacturers themselves," he said. "We therefore sent products to Fogra in Germany that were formulated and manufactured in Australia with raw materials sourced in Australia, to be measured against the best in the world. What we wanted was our own Aussie home grown approval, not some- thing that had been approved from sister companies overseas and may not be within the very critical specifications, when manufactured locally;" he said. GSB products have now met all the critical FOGRA specifications.

The company's fountain solution and silicones are successfully running on the six recent Rotoman and Lithoman installations in Australia. This has come about because GSB employs leading technology alcohol replacement fountain solution, and high solid silicones, which are able to deliver stability in any pressroom conditions.

The company is not confined to servicing the web press market. Early on GSB recognised that there was a lack of high quality sheet fed fount being manufactured by Australian-owned companies. Most pressrooms were using either imported fount or ones from multi-national sup- pliers. It set out to rectify this situation and fulfil the market's requirements.

"We recognised the opportunity for homegrown founts, and developed two founts, one with driers and one without. We are having great success with these two founts and also our pressroom cleaning products," said Benson.

Getting bigger and better

Sales have increased at such a rate (around 70 per cent per year) that GSB needed room to expand its manufacturing facilities. It did not have to look far for premises, constructing a state of the art manufacturing plant across the road from the two older premises. This move has changed the dynamics for GSB, propelling it into an expansion mode. It has given it the ability to service its customers on a just in time basis, improving service levels.

To cope with the new business GSB took on anew sales executive earlier this year, dedicated to servicing its customers in the Victoria market. Jason Kent came to his present position of technical sales executive with the company via Coates and CPI.

There is also rapid growth for the company outside its home base. The N S W operation has been growing at such a rate that the company now has a warehousing facility in Sydney. The state manager, Jeffrey Fox, is delivering very healthy sales growth in both web and sheet fed.

And there is a growing market for GSB products overseas as recognition spreads of the high quality of its Australian made and developed products. "Our product ranges have become so popular, we are now exporting into New Zealand, Hong Kong and China," said Benson.

'After concentrating on Australia over the past 10 years, we have found a ready market for our products overseas. Our philosophy of high quality and value for money products is working well both at home and away.'

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