

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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RMGT 920 Series: A Brief History

Back in the early-2010's, Ryobi (now RMGT) decided that it was time for the industry to revisit SRA1 format. Why had this press format all but disappeared from the market? Once RMGT started to examine the potential for such a machine, the advantages quickly became apparent.

As a starting point for the actual hardware, why not re-work existing plate and transfer cylinders? The technicians realised that they could extend the printing area to 900mm x 640mm, without needing to change the footprint of the press. That would mean that the new configuration could produce eight x A4 pages to view, along with sufficient space for essential ingredients, including register and trim marks, with the all-important colour bar, all in a press with a footprint no bigger than the B2 frame.

The next question, for printers: Why use two B2 presses when you could use one single, reliable SRA1 press, to print the same number of pages as two machines in half the time! That's half the time with one fewer press minder to pay as well.

One more technical addition: Why not include an option for Ryobi's own LED-UV fast drying technique? A viable alternative to existing drying solutions, due to cost per sheet, plus the integral safety on offer. LED-UV uses light to cause a change in the state of the photo initiators within the ink. Existing drying techniques used heat-based solutions – a technique that was guilty of causing many printers to literally go up in smoke! Ryobi's initial work on this development was really crying out for a larger press to really make good use of it.

Ryobi 920 in Action

By 2015 / 2016 UK printers were certainly showing serious interest. Companies such as Sheffield based Pro Co and Barking (then Dagenham) located Precision Printers

were two of the early adopters – the two companies were to eventually merge to create Precision ProCo.

As one early adopter explained, “Coupling the larger sheet size with the LED-UV made an awful lot of sense to us – we will get dry-to-the-touch sheets exiting the press, meaning that we can back up jobs immediately or send the work straight to the finishing department, with no waiting time. The technology also means that we will have few concerns about working with the ever-wider range of challenging substrates that customers are now demanding – some of which can pose tricky drying issues with standard litho presses.”

A serious competitor to digital print was now emerging: dry sheets exiting the press, but with the widest range of stock (including plastics) possible, but at a lower cost per printed sheet.

Group Chief Operating Officer of Precision Printing, Andy Skarpellis, commenting the machines at the time of installation, said: “The market we are now pursuing allows us to produce uncoated work, same day into London, which was unachievable with conventional machines. It mirrors our digital platform beautifully and allows us to utilise the cross platform much closer than before.” In other words, digitally printed variable pages combined with static pages printed at a lower cost with litho.

Skarpellis, discussing the RMGT presses in 2023, having worked with the presses for some seven years, said: “The reality is that these machines have certainly lived up to our expectations. We really do hammer these presses, six days a week, and 24-hours each working day. The LED-UV [on a duplex press] means that sheets exit the machine dry on both sides, which in turn means that the job can move straight on to the print finishing department.” That’s a 16-page section for every sheet exiting the press.

Precision ProCo expect to produce 2.5 make-readies every hour: “This quantity of work also tests the manufacturers claim to be the most reliable press supplier on the market. They do need maintenance, of course, like any press, and our press crews are fully aware of what they need to do, plus we are well supported by MPL – the UK distributor for RMGT. The MPL engineers are very appreciative of our need to keep work flowing through our factory. Thankfully, “mechanical failure” breakdowns are fairly few and far between, and we can usually keep on printing.”

The Technical Detail

The RMGT 920 model is an SRA1 size offset press for sheet width up to 920mm (900mm printing area). This model enables printing of international A1-size posters, as well as eight-up printing for both international A4-size and US letter-size pages. With various superior features such as high speed 16,000 s.p.h. printing, one-pass perfecting printing up to 8-to-10 colours, plus an in-line coating capability, the press can meet the diversified need of printing companies.

An RMGT 920 offers significantly lower printing plate costs, paper costs, lower power consumption, and has the space requirement of a B2 format press. The optional addition of LED-UV curing allows for the production of dry sheets in the delivery.

With regard to print quality, RMGT is fully equipped with the latest cloud-based solutions. Inline printing control of printing sheets including a quality inspection function, a printing density tracking function.

We return to Andy Skarpellis to sum up his experience of the RMGT 920 Series: “We looked in detail at RMGT, and at other suppliers’ equipment, before making our final decision. RMGT offered the most competitive solution as well as products that just had the technical edge over other presses that we looked at – the automatic plate changing, for example, will load a new set of eight plates on the 928P in less than two minutes.

“We believe that litho printing can complement digital throughput – they should not be viewed as competing technologies at this time. Initially, we set the breakpoint for an offset job to be in the region of 600 copies. Real-world stats have brought this down to 250 copies.”

Whilst Precision ProCo’s Chief Executive Officer, Gary Peeling, said at the time of the initial purchase: “If we are going to have successful offset business we won’t do it by doing the same thing we have done for the last twenty years, so we are going new and modern and looking forward to the opportunities greatly.”

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