

A new player in flexographic printing

CITOCLYN – a coordinated portfolio of different cleaning products for flexographic printing plates and anilox rollers

Many in the flexographic and gravure printing industry are most likely already familiar with CITO as a solutions provider for print post processing in the packaging production. The medium-sized industrial company is a renowned and popular partner worldwide, when it comes to components and services for all aspects of the manufacture of flatbed dies for boxes, corrugated board packaging and displays. CITO has a very heterogeneous portfolio, which is extended continuously with new product innovations for the printing industry. Flexo+Tief-Druck spoke to Jürgen Mariën, CEO of the CITO GROUP, and Roberto Croci, product manager of CITO-SYSTEM GmbH about the remarkable company that has been involved in printing and paper processing for over 100 years.

CITO has been successful in the printing industry for more than four generations. What is the secret of your success?

Jürgen Mariën: We have always developed our products and our know-how from our own practical work. This means that we are very familiar with the needs of our customers; we speak the same language. A very significant part of our success is our consistent brand policy. CITO is now a brand recognised worldwide in the paper converting industry.

How would you describe the development of CITO in previous decades and recent years?

Jürgen Mariën: Our present day company arose from a cardboard conversion business founded in 1906. Since the beginning of the 1970s we have specialised in developing practical solutions for paper and carton conversion. The international breakthrough occurred at drupa in 1986; since then our business has grown continuously. In 1982, our company consisted of a production facility with seven

employees. We now operate in six European countries with more than 250 employees. Our products are currently used in more than 100 countries and we have a worldwide sales and distribution network with long-standing and loyal partners.

To what extent do social changes caused by the Corona pandemic, climate change and digitalisation affect CITO's business? What effects does this have on the strategic orientation of the medium-sized company?

Jürgen Mariën: As far as the Corona pandemic is concerned, we are still in a short-term timeframe. Until now we have mastered this challenge very well; here we benefit from our flexibility and long-standing experience in dealing with external crises. We have been dealing with the topic of climate change for many years. We consider it our social duty to work continuously on developing resource-efficient processes. The idea of corporate responsibility for our planet plays a central role in our R&D work. Especially in our industry, advancing digitalisation is a particular chal-



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CEO of the CITO GROUP

lenge, as it is associated with drastic technological change. No company can evade this challenge. In the future we will concentrate even more on new technologies, especially in the packaging industry; this is one of the reasons why we are currently additionally developing our flexographic printing business segment.

At the beginning of 2020, CITO-SYSTEM GmbH was taken over by Bobst Group SA. CITO is a worldwide reputable solutions provider of consumables for diemaking. BOBST is a worldwide leading producer of machines for packaging production, which also include diecutters for corrugated board conversion. Why did BOBST absolutely want to buy CITO?

Jürgen Mariën: I cannot judge whether we are the right persons to ask this question. I can only give you my personal opinion, although formed by the many discussions with our new partner: It is a strategic partnership. Our strong brand and decades of experience in the successful marketing of consumables are very interesting for our Swiss partner. In addition, they also value our flexibility as a medium-sized company and our strength in implementing R&D projects quickly.

What advantages and synergies resulted from the takeover by BOBST?

Jürgen Mariën: First I would like to point out that it was not a takeover. BOBST very deliberately acquired a 51 % majority shareholding in our company. The strengths of the company CITO should be retained. Synergies from this partnership are obvious, because now one of the world market leaders in machine construction and systems development works closely together with recognised experts in consumables. This is reflected in joint development projects and further increased customer benefits.

“As in our other business segments, we want to become a competent partner for the flexographic printing industry.”

Jürgen Mariën,
CEO of the CITO GROUP

Have you already been able to realise joint projects in this constellation?

Jürgen Mariën: Many projects have been started. The first months of our work together were made distinctive by open communication and by jointly drawing up a list of priorities. Anyone can imagine that this poses a particular challenge during times of a pandemic. Nonetheless, various consumable product projects have already been implemented. These mainly concern diecutting technology. The medium-term project is also to establish the CITO brand as a leading brand for consumables at BOBST. Here the focus is, of course, on the core area of our “tooling in the diecutting process”.

For CITO, the market launch of the new CITOCLYN series of cleaning products in October 2020 was at the same time its entry into the flexographic printing industry. What were the reasons for this step?

Jürgen Mariën: For us, the placement of our cleaning agents is only the first step. As in our other business segments, we want to become a competent partner for the flexographic printing industry. Our partnership with BOBST, of course, also plays a major role in this. We also expect synergy effects due to our worldwide network. In recent years we have grown rapidly, especially in the area of corrugated board conversion and as you know, flexographic printing plays an eminent role here.



“The CITOCLYN portfolio covers the full spectrum, from the daily cleaning agent to the intensive detergent.”

Roberto Croci,
product manager CITO-SYSTEM GmbH

CITOCLYN includes a range of different product solutions for the cleaning of flexographic printing plates and anilox rollers. Can you briefly describe the CITOCLYN portfolio?

Roberto Croci: The CITOCLYN portfolio covers the full spectrum, from the daily cleaning agent to the intensive detergent. These are cleaning agents that can be used in both inline and offline washing systems. Detergents for manual cleaning are also included in the product range, of course.

CITOCLYN Cleaner perfect cleaning for printing plates and anilox rollers

	Printing plate		Anilox roller		
	automatic cleaning	manual cleaning	automatic cleaning	manual cleaning	external cleaning
CITOCLYN Uni Eco	x	x	x	x	
CITOCLYN Uni	x	x	x	x	x ¹
CITOCLYN Man		x		x	
CITOCLYN Anilox				x	x
CITOCLYN UV		x	x	x	

x Aqueous cleaning

x Water-free cleaner

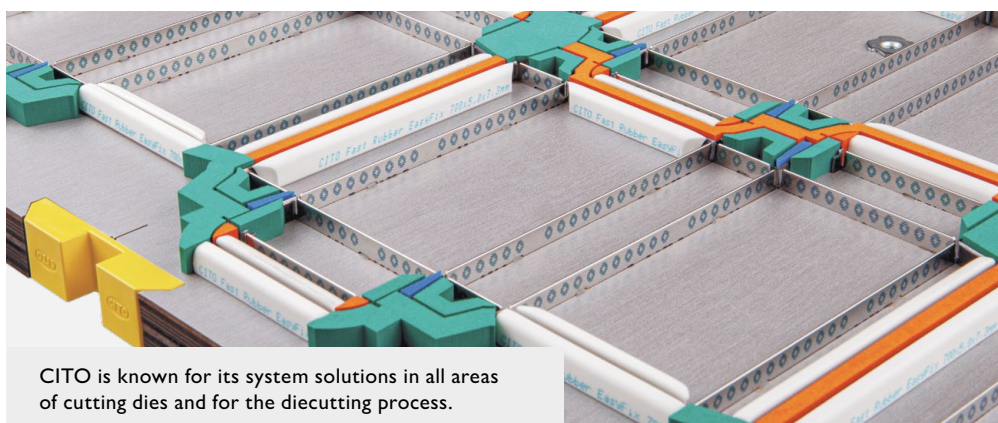
¹ Ultrasound cleaning

What differentiates the cleaning agent from those of your competitors?

Roberto Croci: For example, CITOCLYN Uni Eco is a cleaning product that is not subject to mandatory hazard labelling under CLP and is ISEGA certified. The washing agents are characterised by their outstanding cleaning properties. In practical use it was found that the quantity of cleaning agent could be reduced by around 50 %, and still achieve the full cleaning effect. An additional user benefit of the all-round detergent is significantly faster cleaning. By using CITOCLYN considerable time savings are achieved: the washing time is reduced by 20 %. These are very clear advantages as far as the cleaning effect, time savings as well as health and safety and environmental protection are concerned.

Did you work with partners when developing the CITOCLYN cleaning agents?

Roberto Croci: When developing new products we focus on providing exactly those solutions that the market needs. We also rely on cooperation and exchange of experience. For example, for the flexographic printing cleaning agents we worked with competent partners in the industry. The cleaning product range was developed together with chemical suppliers and renowned packaging manufacturers.



CITO is known for its system solutions in all areas of cutting dies and for the diecutting process.

How were the cleaning agents tested for practical suitability before their market launch?

Roberto Croci: On the one hand, our employees in the R&D and product management departments subjected the cleaning agents to intensive and comprehensive tests in our in-house test laboratory. On the other hand, new products are always tested in practice before they are launched on the market. Here we work hand-in-hand with different packaging manufacturers in the corrugated board sector. The knowledge acquired was directly incorporated into the cleaning agents to optimise them for the intended applications.

What other product solutions does CITO provide for the packaging printing industry?

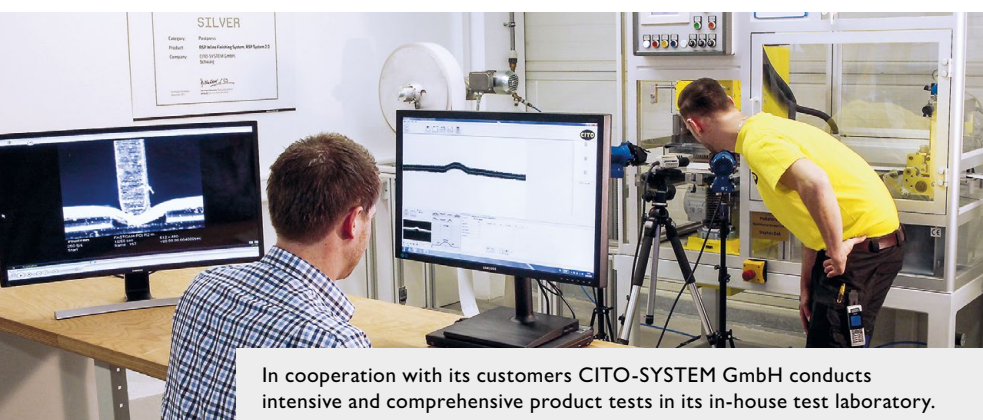
Jürgen Mariën: CITO should be sufficiently known for its system solutions in all areas of cutting dies and for the diecutting process. In

addition, for more than 20 years we have also been a competent contact for our worldwide partners in offset printing, in particular when it comes to print finishing. It is less well known that we have also spent many years working on the topic of quality measurements and the corresponding equipment.

Finally, to close our interview, I would like to ask you to complete the following sentence: Despite the extraordinary times, in the future CITO will also ...

... remain your partner for success.

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In cooperation with its customers CITO-SYSTEM GmbH conducts intensive and comprehensive product tests in its in-house test laboratory.