

EskoArtwork to Acquire Mikkelsen Graphic Engineering

EskoArtwork, a supplier of solutions for packaging, commercial printing, and professional publishing recently signed a letter of intent to acquire Mikkelsen Graphic Engineering, Inc. (MGE), a developer of vision-controlled finishing systems for cutting tables in the signmaking, screen-printing, and digital-imaging markets. The transaction is expected to close by end of this month. No financial details were disclosed.

"EskoArtwork and MGE started their close cooperation in 2004 with the integration of MGE's *i*-cut vision system onto our Kongsberg digital converting tables," says Carsten Knudsen, president and CEO of EskoArtwork. "The resulting *i*-XL and *i*-XE digital finishing systems have seen great success in the market, with today more than 350 such systems installed and operating worldwide.... I am extremely pleased to extend our partnership with MGE, now working as one team to deliver even stronger solutions to our customers."

MGE has also served as EskoArtwork's distributor for the Kongsberg *i*-XL and *i*-XE digital converting tables into the US since 2004. EskoArtwork reports that MGE's operations will be organized as a strategic business unit within the EskoArtwork structure under the leadership of Steen Mikkelsen, president of MGE.

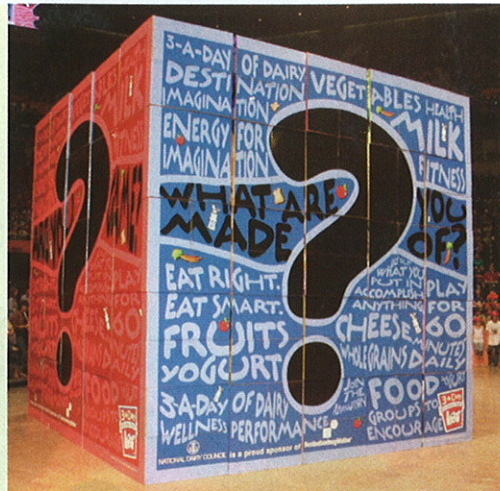
"It's not just accurate cutting anymore that drives profitability, it's the addition of workflow capabilities that increases the competitiveness of our user base," Mikkelsen says. "By fully aligning our development and distribution efforts with EskoArtwork's hardware and software technologies and global sales and support channels, we will be able to bring even more attractive and [high-performance] converting systems to the digital-printing and sign and display markets."

Avery Donates to Children's Problem-Solving Program

More than 1000 teams of elementary and middle-school-aged children from around the world gathered Knoxville, TN in May and worked together to construct more than 100 cubes and a gigantic puzzle cube in a problem-solving challenge. Avery Graphics played a role in the challenge by donating more than 7000 sq ft of its MPI 2010 vinyl to the event, titled the 2008 Destination Imagination Global Finals. The event is the world's largest creative-problem-solving program for children.

Graphix Solutions, Old Bridge, NJ, printed graphics on Avery's donated vinyl and wrapped 125 individual cubes used in the Power Cube Challenge. During the challenge, teams of children assembled a 15 x 15-ft puzzle cube for the event's National Dairy Council Nutrition and Fitness Challenge.

"We were pleased to provide MPI 2010 vinyl to this year's Power Cube Challenge at Destination Imagination," says Joel Ross, marketing manager for Avery Dennison Graphics and Reflective Products Division. "This conference is a valuable opportunity for children to develop their leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities. The gigantic puzzle cube is quite an impressive example of what today's young, creative minds can accomplish."



SGIA Survey Shows Expanding Sales Opportunities

A total of 40% of imaging businesses who responded to the 2008 SGIA Business Growth Survey plan to grow their businesses by increasing Internet sales in 2008. Other imagers will grow by hiring staff and adding new products and equipment.

According to the survey, 49% of the imaging community is planning to offer new products this year. Garment decorators (25.7%), graphics producers (35%), and industrial-use printers (45.7%) confirm that these new product lines are the reason they are purchasing equipment in 2008.

SGIA's 2008 Business Growth Survey offers a complete analysis of actual equipment-purchase plans as compared to planned purchase projections from 2006, 2007, and 2008. The analysis is broken down by industry sector, which includes graphics producers, garment decorators, industrial-use printers, and suppliers/distributors.

"Almost half of imagers reported that finding new customers is difficult," says Katy Lellelid, SGIA's business information associate. "But most are overcoming this challenge by launching new marketing and advertising campaigns because they see the need to expand to new markets to stay profitable."

The survey ran from mid-March to mid-April and collected information about sales per employee. SGIA members can access the complete survey at www.sgia.org, keyword: surveys.