Press Release

# Maximum Process Automation with Fully Automatic Plate Logistics from Koenig & Bauer

Over one million plate changes in just two years of use at Druckhaus Mainfranken

* Modular logistics for medium and large-format Rapidas
* Technology permits integration of one or several presses
* Process automation for maximising productivity in web-to-print business
* Unique feature for large-format sheetfed offset presses

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The plate logistics systems installed by Koenig & Bauer have handled more than one million plates in just two years of use at the two locations operated by Druckhaus Mainfranken (DHM). When checked on 15 March 2024, the counters on the logistics systems that were commissioned and connected to Rapida sheetfed offset presses at DHM’s Marktheidenfeld and Kesselsdorf plants in December 2021 had recorded a throughput of exactly 1,160,634 printing plates**.**

The automation of plate loading and plate transport directly to the plate channels on the printing units, and then back to a disposal station, lends a significant boost to the performance capabilities of a printing press. Where ultra-short runs dominate in particular, as is characteristic for web-to-print business, production can be implemented much more profitably. Koenig & Bauer enables maximum process automation with its plate logistics system, as illustrated by the more than one million plates changed in just two years of use by Druckhaus Mainfranken.

### Different concepts at different locations

At the Marktheidenfeld plant, a separate system is in use for each Rapida press on which plate logistics is implemented. The plates are taken from the pre-press department to the presses by trolley. There, the plates are loaded one by one into the transport system, identified by means of a data matrix code, and transported to the appropriate printing units ready for plate changing. After a plate change, the used plates are transported to the disposal station and deposited on a pallet for disposal. The transport circuit is based on chain conveyors with corresponding plate holders. Over 716,000 plates have been handled since the system was installed two years ago**.**

In Kesselsdorf near Dresden, large-format sheetfed offset presses from the Rapida series have been integrated into a modular plate logistics system that goes one step further than its counterpart in Marktheidenfeld. The plates are handed over to the chain conveyors well beforehand during the pre-press activities. A diverter ensures that each Rapida press receives the correct plates for its next jobs – in accordance with the defined job assignments. Plate logistics systems for large-format sheetfed offset presses – especially at this level of automation – offer users unique benefits. To date, they have been installed exclusively by Koenig & Bauer.

### Profitable production of ultra-short runs

Ulrich Stetter, managing director of Druckhaus Mainfranken, considers plate logistics systems to be a game-changer in web-to-print business: “The number of jobs that we are able to process per shift or working day has increased significantly since we started using the logistics systems.” At the same time, far fewer mistakes are made compared to plate changing processes that involve manual loading of the plates into the changers.

There are rarely longer periods between job changeovers. Most jobs – typically requiring 300 good sheets – are completed in no more than three minutes. It would be barely possible for a single person to keep pace with this throughput rate – especially for the entire duration of a shift. Assuming a continuous sequence of such ultra-short runs, this person would be walking a distance of 3 km per shift to change the plates on a medium-format Rapida. And that while carrying plates with a combined weight of 148 kg every hour. On a large-format press, the figures are correspondingly higher. This workload would soon push even experienced operators to their limits.

The obvious conclusion: the automation of plate loading and transport directly to the plate changers on the printing units, and then back to a disposal station, lends a significant boost to the performance capabilities of a printing press – in particular where ultra-short runs dominate. Short-run production jobs like these, as are characteristic for web-to-print business, can be implemented much more profitably.

#### Photo 1:

Eight-colour Rapida 106 X with a perfecting unit for 4-over-4 production and plate logistics facilities at Druckhaus Mainfranken in Marktheidenfeld

#### Photo 2:

Loading of individual plates into the transport system (foreground), disposal station (background)

#### Photo 3:

Plate logistics system ready for a fully automatic job changeover

#### Photo 4:

The used plates are deposited on pallets at the disposal station

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#### About Koenig & Bauer

Koenig & Bauer is a globally active printing press manufacturer with headquarters in Würzburg (Germany). It supplies machines and software solutions covering the entire printing, finishing and conversion process, with a particular focus on packaging. Machines from Koenig & Bauer are capable of printing on practically all substrates – the portfolio ranges from banknotes to board, corrugated, film, metal and glass packaging, and includes book, display, coding, decor, magazine, advertising and newspaper printing. With a history extending back more than 200 years, Koenig & Bauer is the oldest printing press manufacturer in the world and is today at home in virtually all printing processes. Together, the group companies count a total of around 5,500 employees. Koenig & Bauer operates manufacturing plants at ten locations in Europe, alongside a global sales and service network. In the financial year 2022, annual sales amounted to €1.2 billion.

Further information can be found at [www.koenig-bauer.com](http://www.koenig-bauer.com)