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Agfa announces robotic plate loader to automate prepress and boost productivity

Agfa introduces a plate loading robot that streamlines and speeds up printers' prepress operations, while reducing the overall cost.

Mortsel, Belgium – 22 June, 2020

Agfa's robotic plate loader frees prepress staff from heavy manual, repetitive tasks such as plate loading cassettes of autoloaders, or fixing pallets on the base frame of skid loaders.

"Heatset printers usually have multiple presses with different sizes, and therefore multiple CTP lines. Linked to that come so-called COMBO loading configurations, each consisting of a pallet loader and autoloader. The robotic plate loader replaces both configurations, reducing footprint by up to 30%, and making prepress operations more efficient and productive," says Iris Bogunovic, Product Manager Plate & CTP Systems at Agfa.

In a first phase, Agfa offers its plate loading robot to printing companies using its Avalon VLF platesetters. The robot is custom-built according to a printer's exact needs and can simultaneously feed multiple plate production lines with a picking speed of up to 80 printing plates per hour, independent of plate size. The set-up is especially convenient for printers that need to handle multiple (up to five) plate sizes. For optimal ease of use, the plate loading robot is fully integrated with Agfa's Apogee workflow software.

Leading Scandinavian printed marketing solutions provider Stibo Complete is an early adopter of Agfa's robotic plate loader. As the company's strategy for the future includes a whole range of investments, as well as acquisitions of companies, one of the conditions for its success is the configuration of its print business to handle more output with less

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resources. The investment in Agfa's new state-of-the-art plate loading robot supports their journey perfectly.

“Automation is important in the strategy of any growing and forward-looking company,” says Svend Erik Grue Nielsen, Operations and Development Manager at Stibo Complete. “Agfa's robot plate loader gives us a competitive edge as it improves our productivity, reduces costs, minimizes mistakes and optimizes working conditions for our employees. Our plate loading robot saves employees from approximately 230 tonnes of heavy lifting per year.”

More information about Agfa's robotic plate loader can be found on www.agfa.com/printing/products/plate-loading-automation-using-robotics.

About Agfa

Agfa develops, produces and distributes an extensive range of imaging systems and workflow solutions for the printing industry, the healthcare sector, as well as for specific hi-tech industries such as printed electronics & renewable energy solutions.

The headquarters are located in Belgium. The largest production and research centers are located in Belgium, the United States, Canada, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Austria, China and Brazil. Agfa is commercially active worldwide through wholly owned sales organizations in more than 40 countries.

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