

I-MAX

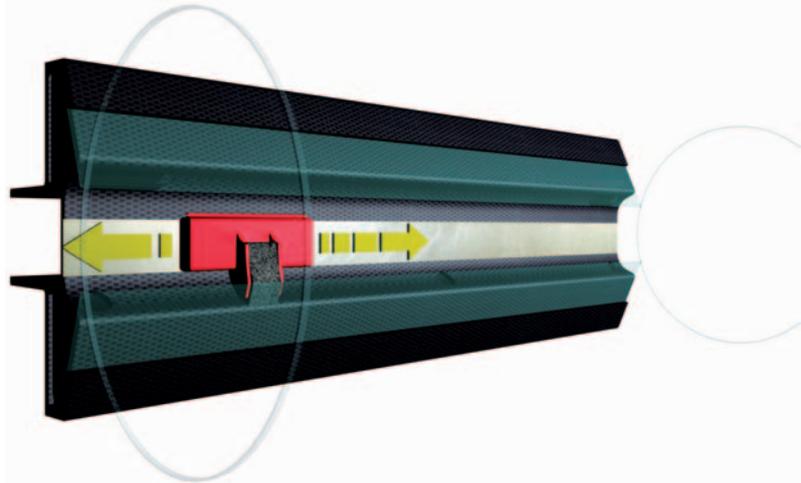


“INDUSTRY FEEDBACK CONFIRMS THAT IMPROVING INK YIELD, REDUCING WASTE, REDUCING COSTS AND IMPROVING ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE ARE CORE BUSINESS OBJECTIVES. THE I-MAX FROM ABSOLUTE ADDRESSES ALL THESE OBJECTIVES.”



Antony Whiteside

I-MAX is a new woven carbon fibre chambered doctor blade system from UK based Absolute Engineering. Chambered doctor blades are standard specification on most modern post print machines. The driver for this has been print quality, and it remains the over-riding issue. The I-Max ink chamber is set to impact positively on the environment, whilst boosting profits.



Basic facts

- Ink is the highest cost item after the board in box production.
- Most chamber wash-up procedures are designed to effectively clean the chamber and anilox, but do not maximise ink yield.

- **90 PER CENT SAVINGS ON COLOUR CHANGE INK WASTE**
- **90 PER CENT SAVINGS ON DOWNSTREAM WASH-UP COSTS**
- **REDUCED PRODUCTION DOWNTIME**
- **REDUCED IN-PLANT MAINTENANCE COSTS**
- **IMPROVED COLOUR CONSISTENCY**
- **REDUCED ENVIRONMENTAL COSTS**
- **PAYBACK WITHIN MONTHS**

- Only 50 per cent of all ink purchased is applied to the board.
- Environmental regulations are increasingly stringent, leading to a greater on-cost for waste stream management.

Non industry observers would be shocked to learn of these levels of waste. Not only is the cost high, but the environmental implications are also significant.

Waste Cost Issues

- 25 per cent ink loss during wash-up @ €3.50/kg
- A large proportion of ink loss is in wash-up water and in disposing of it. Many factories have flocculation plant, the annual operating costs of which are high.
- Costs of ink cleaning chemicals are approximately €1.50/kg of wash water cleaned.

- The residual 'inert crumb' generally goes into landfill. This can cost a large plant €10,000 per year.

It is clear that this inherent waste not only significantly reduces profits, but also leads to larger ink stores, more stock, bigger and flocculation plants — leading to higher maintenance costs.

How Does It Work?

I-Max is an ink maximisation system, consisting of two elements — an integral wiper shuttle which resides permanently in the ink cavity, and an external linear drive unit. During ink changeovers, the wiper shuttle is actuated within the chamber cavity by an electro magnetic drive. This drive is non-invasive and ensures that contamination can not enter the chamber, and conversely, that ink can not escape.

During operation the residual ink is wiped towards and down the end drain



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ports, leaving virtually no ink remaining in the chamber. With the residual ink removed, the wash-up cycle uses proportionately less water and is completed in far less time.

Operation of the I-Max system also ensures that large or heavy particulates do not settle in the chamber cavity, resulting in consistent application, even at very large widths.

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