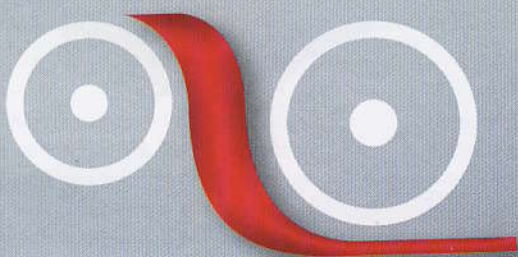


Marabu



Marashield Liquid Coatings



Primer Finishing Protection



Screen Products in Hall A1/320
Digital Products in Hall B1/440

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ADDING VALUE TO SURFACE FINISHING

The benefits of triple function liquid coating is explained by Marabu's Product Manager, Gianni Robertazzi

The finishing process is gaining in importance in digital printing companies. The added value going along with surface finishing helps printing companies to differentiate its product offerings. But what's technically the best and most cost efficient way of print finishing? Which coaters are able to offer solutions on rigid and flexible media?

The original requirement behind surface finishing was the protection of prints, initially only realised by film laminating. Once protected, these prints could be used for prolonged outdoor use, and gained additionally in chemical and physical resistance.

As an alternative to film lamination, a liquid coating process with water based coatings was introduced. It is proven to be an excellent alternative for flexible media, such as self-adhesive vinyl, banner, wallpaper or canvas. Depending on the print width, the coatings are applied automatically with a coater using Mayer bar technology or, in case of large-format banners, by mop or roller application. Clearstar LP, a member of the Marabu group, is one of the leading manufacturers in this field, offering both the StarLam coater and a complete portfolio of water based coatings.

Since the introduction of UV-curable ink-jet printing, a new requirement came up in the form of the coating of rigid substrates, not possible with water-based coaters. To offer a compact machine with high throughput, the fast curing UV technology was the choice and this showed a specific characteristic, different to previously used ink-jet inks. Due to the 100% solid content of the inks and the immediate curing, there is no height reduction when being cured. Therefore prints show a somewhat structured surface, differing from other higher gloss graphics such as screen prints. Technological progress such as cure delay, smaller drop sizes and inline varnishes are trying to improve this characteristic effect.



Marashield liquid coatings from Marabu

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The coating machine from Marabu's co-operation partner, Bürkle

A liquid UV coating is able to turn these prints into a high gloss surface, coated edge-to-edge with no further trimming needed. In contrast to a film lamination added on top, a UV liquid coating is based on the same chemistry as the UV-curable ink-jet inks creating a real stern-like sandwich.

At FESPA 2010 Marabu is launching the new Marashield product range of liquid coatings based on three pillars – primer, finishing and protection.

Products in each respective area are tailor-made for the application and approved on the new UV coaters by Marabu's co-operation partner, Bürkle, from Germany. The combination of Marabu's new Marashield UV coatings with the superb UV coater quality allows an industrial and, therefore, reproducible coating quality. Short set-up times, automatic height settings and coating thicknesses from 8 to 30 micron are key features.

PRIMER

UV primers are needed when the UV-curable inks have problems with adhesion onto difficult substrates such as glass and polyolefins. A suitable UV primer applied in a homogeneous layer can get the necessary adhesion to the substrate and allow it to be overprinted with standard UV-curable inks. To a large extent this widens the scope of a UV-curable flat-bed printer in terms of suitable substrates.

FINISHING

In the finishing range the decorative optic is key. Point-of-purchase/point-of-sale applications often require a very high gloss level of 95 measured at 60d. The high gloss improves the overall brilliance and colour depth, especially in darker areas of digital prints.

In contrast, often required for indoor prints in museums or galleries, are elegant and velvet matt finishes with a gloss of >10 at 60d.

PROTECTION

The important field of protection is often named in marketing brochures, but many times are not backed by industry standard tests such as DIN EN 12526 ASTM regarding chemical or physical resistance or Xenon/QUV weathering tests. The first product will be suitable for high-quality PVC labels, suitable for fleet marking, and showing exceptional flexibility.

In summary, Marabu is finalising the Marashield product range for a global launch at FESPA 2010 in Munich. Tests around the world have shown enormous potential, giving digital printers more options in their installed printer base. ■

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