**PRESS RELEASE**

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**Extraordinary solutions in extraordinary circumstances: how BOBST and Packages Limited got a crucial printing press back up and running during COVID-19**

**When the COVID-19 lockdown struck mid-way through a major reassembly of a company’s printing presses, BOBST went the extra mile to resolve the problem.**

Imagine the situation. You are a major packaging converter and business is on the up. You are halfway through an upgrade to your gravure printing press to increase capacity. The machine will be out of action for a period while it is reassembled and upgraded, but no problem – they’ll soon be back up and running and even better than ever. Just in time to fulfil a large new order from one of your biggest clients. Then a global pandemic strikes. The engineers have no choice but to leave. Your machine is in pieces and now you are worried that parts of your business could be too. It is a nightmare scenario, but exactly what happened to Packages Limited, one of the leading packaging converters in Pakistan, which provides various industries with a wide range of folding carton board packaging solutions.

**Coronavirus crisis**

BOBST was in the process of upgrading the company’s two Gravure printing units and new PLC system on the BOBST LEMANIC® 82 Rotogravure Press CH 82 – to extend from seven to nine printing units. When COVID-19 arrived, the company was forced into lockdown and the BOBST service technicians were repatriated via some of the last flights out of Lahore.

While the situation was out of everyone’s control, it was not tenable for Packages Limited to be left without such an important machine in production for a significant amount of time. The CEO and Managing Director of Packages Limited, Mr Syed Hyder Ali, picks up the story: “We were very concerned about the situation at the time, because we had promised to deliver a major order for one of our largest clients, and we were concerned that this development might lose us a lot of business. The situation was becoming absolutely critical. We asked if BOBST technicians could help us remotely, supported by our excellent engineering team. But ideally we still needed a BOBST expert at the site.”

“We fully understood the urgency and endeavored to think of every possible solution to get the machine back up and running asap,” says Eric Pavone, Business Development Director, Business Unit Web-Fed at BOBST. “Just as it seemed we had explored every option, our Head of Services, Christian Falk, realized that one of our very able Field Service Technicians was in the process of repatriating to Pakistan from the UK due to COVID-19. It might be the breakthrough we needed.”

Mr Falk contacted the technician – Mr Haseeb Gull – to see if he would be willing to try to tackle the problem in a socially distanced way, and with full support from the BOBST Remote Service team. He was very happy to help – but he had absolutely no experience of these particular machines. “We had to get him trained up pretty quickly,” continues Jean-Marc Aubry, Customer Service Manager Web-Fed Solutions at BOBST. “But his attitude was so positive and helpful and he is such a skilled and able technician, that he was able to pick up the essential details in no time. Unfortunately, he faced a quarantine period when he arrived in Pakistan, so while we waited for him, we had other technicians working remotely to get some of the foundation work done.”

**Thinking outside the (packaging) box**

When Haseeb arrived at Packages Limited, he saw the scale of the task on his hands, but with the aid of the Production Manager Shahid Islam and his team, provided invaluable hands on support throughout the process. With several other technicians supporting him remotely, he was able to reconfigure the machine to its previous settings. But the story didn’t end there.

“We were thrilled to be up and running again but desperately wanted to have the extra capacity provided by the extra printing units,” says Mr Numan Noor, Head of Folding Carton Division at Packages Limited. “Again, Haseeb went the extra mile and together with our team and the BOBST remote technicians, got to work and managed to complete the upgrade.”

With the extra printing units in place, the Packages Limited team was able to fulfil the order for its major client and is in excellent shape for the future, regardless of the challenges presented by the pandemic.

“The team at Packages Limited were very thankful to everyone at BOBST, particularly Haseeb, as they realized that everyone put absolutely everything into find a solution to this extraordinary problem in extraordinary circumstances,” says Eric Pavone. “It demonstrated great outside the box thinking and exceptional teamwork between the BOBST team and our valued customers at Packages Limited. We look forward to continuing our successful partnership for many years to come. Take care and all stay safe!”

Photos:

* Mr Syed Hyder Ali, CEO and Managing Director, Packages Limited
* A BOBST LEMANIC® 82 rotogravure printing press

**About BOBST**

We are one of the world’s leading suppliers of substrate processing, printing and converting equipment and services for the label, flexible packaging, folding carton and corrugated industries.

Founded in 1890 by Joseph Bobst in Lausanne, Switzerland, BOBST has a presence in more than 50 countries, runs 15 production facilities in 8 countries and employs more than 5 500 people around the world. The firm recorded a consolidated turnover of CHF 1 636 million for the year ended December 31, 2019.

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