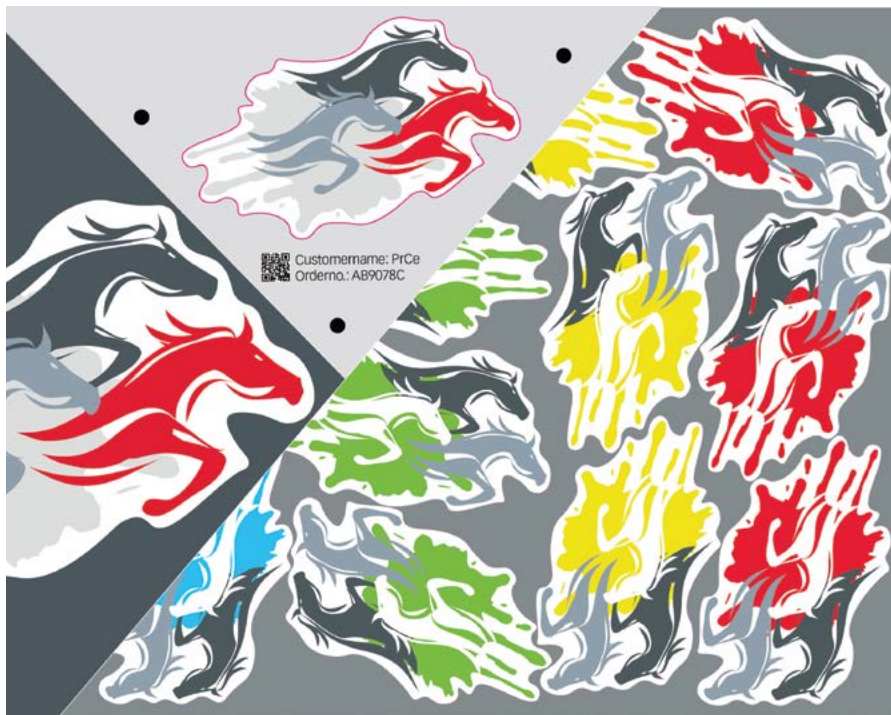# CONTROL CENTRE

Daniel Bischof explores how a new software solution simplifies file preparation and output and enables users to configure their workflows with an appropriate level of automation

Lars Bendixen is Zünd's Segment Manager for Advertising Technology

PrimeCenter provides the necessary metadata at the end of the production line

Automation is a growing trend in printing and advertising technology. Digital printing, in particular, demands automation. The challenge is to integrate downstream processing and finishing steps. Otherwise, a lot of things can go up in smoke.

Cutting systems manufacturer Zünd Systemtechnik is convinced that automation brings advantages when it is done correctly, i.e. intelligently. "To automate intelligently means to think carefully about which processes are worth automating and which are not," says Lars Bendixen, segment manager for advertising technology at Zünd. "This is
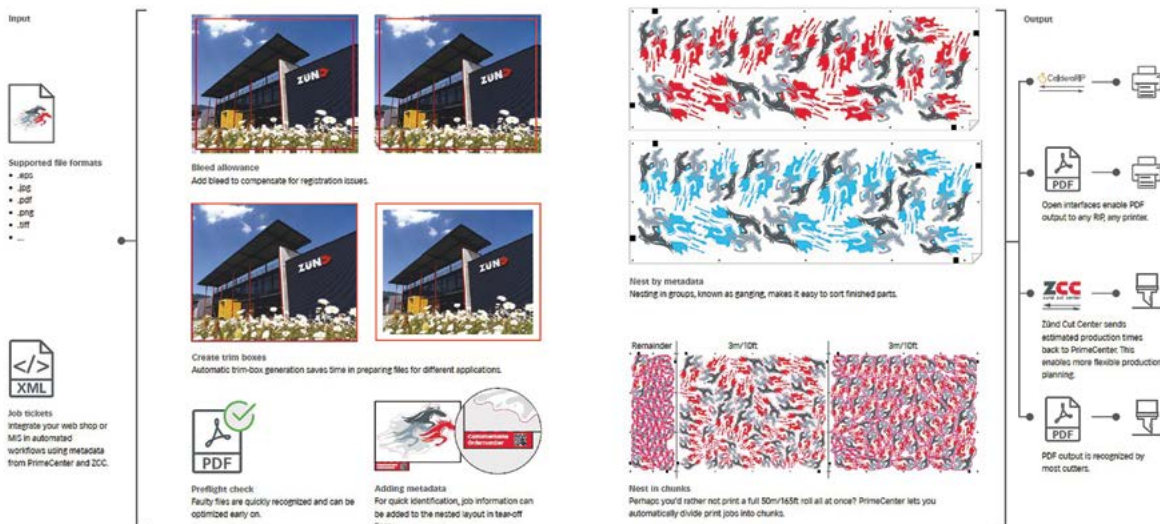
weighing up the pros and cons, because not every effort for automation is in the right proportion to the profit. Intelligence also means that automation does not necessarily have to be expensive. Often even small steps have a big impact on efficiency. A specific example of this is nesting," Bendixen concludes.

No matter whether you are dealing with a single item, small, partial or large series, if you have productivity and profitability in

mind, nesting processes can help you achieve optimum utilisation with several jobs on one sheet or plate (paper, cardboard, plastic or wood) or on films and textiles from a roll. It is usually complicated when the cut parts have to be assigned to the respective order again after cutting. To solve this problem, Zünd has developed PrimeCenter pre-press software together with French software company Caldera.

An overview of the PrimeCenter workflow

DISCONNECT AND RECONNECT

PrimeCenter serves as the control centre for the creation of print and cut data. The software simplifies data preparation and output and enables users to automate their data workflow between design, print and cutting individually and according to their needs. Bendixen explains: "Based on the available PDF print data, PrimeCenter

"This is revolutionary for customers with large–format printing applications"

sorts the various jobs on a sheet or roll material – depending on the desired characteristics of maximum material utilisation, delivery deadline or other. This nested print image can be fed into the production process. PrimeCenter then passes on the metadata associated with each order throughout all production steps. At the end of the production line, after cutting, a robot gripper arm in the fully automated version can then remove the individual parts and assign them to the respective orders. PrimeCenter provides the necessary metadata at the end of the production line."

METADATA AVAILABILITY

"This is revolutionary for our customers with large-format printing applications," believes Bendixen. "Everyone who produces digitally has to sort different jobs on one sheet again and again. In production, however, the metadata is usually lost. This means information like the order number, customer name, number of parts per set, quantity of sets, right or left parts, etc. – all this information is not stored in the print PDF and is therefore not passed on in the course of further processing. PrimeCenter is the first software to do so."

"PrimeCenter offers users maximum freedom to automate their pre–press workflow in the way that makes sense for them"

According to Bendixen, PrimeCenter is compatible with any RIP software.

A great deal of manual work is still being done, however, especially in the advertising technology segment. The need for manual work or automation can also vary greatly depending on the season. Zünd and Caldera have taken this into account in the development of PrimeCenter. Therefore, Bendixen says, users are offered as much flexibility as possible: "Regardless of whether the user makes the settings manually or wants to automate them completely, PrimeCenter offers users the maximum freedom to automate their pre-press workflow in the way that makes sense for them."

With full automation, the metadata is exported from an MIS, an ERP or a web shop via hot folders, customised file names or with XML-based job tickets. With different program versions: Basic, Pro and Max, the degree of automation can be adjusted at any time "The unique thing about PrimeCenter," says Bendixen, convinced, "is that the individual parts can be reassigned to the orders after cutting or sorted according to other characteristics, such as individual dispatch or collective delivery. No matter whether it is a single item, a small order, a partial or large print run. It's never been seen before in the large format segment." ∎

Daniel Bischof works in Corporate Communications at Zünd