



JOB-MANAGEMENT  
BUSINESS SOLUTION FOR  
PREPRESS-COMPANIES



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## JDF works! A Time-Saving Philosophy

Horst Gries GmbH & Co., a family company established in Germany, Hamburg since 1887, specializes in prepress and repro services for flexographic printing and flexible packaging, adhesive labels, carrier bags and corrugated packaging. Its customers include packaging printers, manufacturers of branded goods, and advertising agencies for the food, cosmetics and electrical goods industries. Consolidating their company's position and achieving controllable growth is one of the business philosophies of its proprietors, Alex and Joerg Gries.

In pursuit of these ends, Gries recently started to handle their production process using JDF technology. Since the beginning of 2006, the JDF interface has been in place between the ARAMIS Management Information System (MIS) from Quick Brown Fox (QBF) and the BackStage server element of Esko's Scope packaging software suite. In the first three months of this year, roughly 1,600 jobs were handled using JDF with excellent results. The people at Gries would never have dreamed of the enormous impact that the integration of JDF technology would have on day-to-day production, saving operating staff and customer service almost half an hour per job! They use this freed-up time to reduce production time and handle a larger order volume with the same capacity. One of the main reasons for the trouble-free installation and configuration of the system was the efficient cooperation between Gries and the manufacturers involved.

### No more duplicate data entry

The first step towards networking the MIS and production departments was taken three years ago, when Esko's Scope packaging software suite was linked to the ARAMIS MySQL database. Based on simple database queries, this makes it possible to use any desired information from ARAMIS in BackStage. This technology is used at Gries to generate the job tickets, which contain all relevant job information, including the printing specifications regarding color, screen, punching tool, etc. The most updated data, which has to be entered only once, is constantly available for the production of PDFs. "Duplicate data entry always annoyed me, and it was an unnecessary source of error," says Joerg Gries, describing the reasons that he pressed for more extensive workflow automation.



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### **Order handling – same as ever, but faster**

JDF is a growing standard for information exchange, status reports and task lists. At Gries, it is now used to transfer parameters such as job numbers, customer names, deadlines, etc., from ARAMIS to BackStage. This automatic background function accelerates order handling – with all information now accessible to every member of staff. RIP parameters, part of the job setup process in BackStage, are also transferred by JDF. This saves manual entries by the operator, since the BackStage ticket already contains all the relevant information for output – fully automated by JDF! This additional process reliability is guaranteed by the fact that, if and when necessary, the parameters can only be changed in the MIS, and are updated on the production server by JDF. The staff members handling the job no longer have anything to do with the JDF itself. Once they have entered all the job-specific data in ARAMIS and saved the job, generation of the JDF file and its transfer to BackStage take place entirely in the background.

### **BackStage: the mother of the packaging workflow**

While ARAMIS assumes the 'father's role' of managing the company, BackStage has the function of the 'mother', acting as the executive organ, so to speak. BackStage is a key element of Esko's comprehensive Scope packaging solution. The BackStage modular workflow server integrates all design and production components in the packaging workflow and automates routine tasks. The system rationalizes all communication in the printing environment. It stands for error minimization, increased production, a quality boost, the ability to communicate in all directions, and ultimately for enormous cost savings. Since BackStage is JDF-capable, it can – as is the case at Gries – be linked to an MIS system, thereby further optimizing workflows. Esko's aim is to no longer occupy the operator with recurrent tasks that the program now handles in the background. The operator should instead use his time for activities that really call for his knowledge and experience.

### **Looking to the future**

Thanks to the gradual and smooth integration of the JDF workflow, Gries did not suffer production losses at any time. "We're convinced that JDF automation and the associated shorter production times will enable us to acquire further new customers. We hope that our own enthusiasm will encourage them to change things," says Joerg Gries, looking to the future.