



**Martin Rickards**  
Managing Director  
Komori International Europe

### What is driving Komori's success in Europe?

Komori is increasingly successful in Europe and in many markets we have become the top supplier. We established our reputation originally in the UK and France. Since then we have built a name for delivering a complete range of sheetfed and webfed presses that are top of the league in build design, quality and performance.

### How has the expansion of Europe had an impact?

With the enlargement of Europe over the last couple of years, Komori International Europe (KIE) has brought Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Africa under its remit. Since then we have been building our sales network in these regions with impressive results. First-rate distribution partners have come on board in the Czech Republic, the Baltics, former Yugoslavia, Russia, Turkey and South Africa, and more will be announced this year.

The combination of good products with a reputation for high reliability, low maintenance, alongside good service and support and an excellent distribution network has accelerated the investment in Komori presses in these regions. There is a great deal of enthusiasm, optimism and opportunity in Europe that will see Komori continue to grow in strength in the region.

### How do the mature and emerging markets of Europe compare?

Europe is an interesting mix of mature and emerging markets and each has its particular characteristics. In the mature markets of Western Europe, we are seeing a trend in highly automated multicolour long perfectors with inline coating and drying that enable printers to produce high quality jobs in one pass, quickly and efficiently.

In the emerging markets in Europe we are seeing a great deal of interest across the SPICA, Lithrone and Web System ranges. The SPICA, in particular, has seen phenomenal success in Europe. The entry-level market appreciates that it delivers all the benefits and quality of a Komori press, including quite a high level of automation, at a good price.

### Why has perfecting come of age?

The day of the long perfector has arrived for a number of profound reasons, key being the high level of automation and full workflow integration. Print is a highly competitive market where the print buyer has immense power and seeks the best quality at the best price and in the shortest possible time. Consequently, printers have to provide more than just print — they have to provide a service. They also have to extract cost from their production process or migrate to lower cost markets in order to succeed. This environment contributes to the popularity of perfect-

ing presses that are effectively 250 percent as productive as a single-sided press with the same manpower.

### Do you see a trend for traditionally sheetfed printers to invest in web solutions?

Komori is unique in offering commercial printers both web and sheet press options from one manufacturer. We are seeing a trend where printers are investing in web presses to handle a variety of run lengths quickly and efficiently, with fast makeready and low waste. It's a logical evolution and all they have to do is keep it busy!

### What will be the highlights of 2006?

This year heralds an important new phase — the launch of two new high-performance presses with the accent on perfecting, automation, productivity and workflow integration. It's a year, too, when we expect our 32-page web to penetrate the market strongly, particularly in the new European regions. Innovation is a key theme for Komori. We are a profitable company, and it's this financial strength that allows us to make substantial investment in R&D to keep us at the forefront of development and further drive growth. While other companies are closing factories, this year sees our new factory in Tsukuba start production to keep up with increased demand. It doubles our capacity for the production of B1 presses. A nice position to be in!

## Martin Rickards and Neil Sutton Analyse State of European Printing



**Neil Sutton**  
Sales Director  
Komori UK

### What are the challenges facing UK printers?

In this mature and highly competitive market, printers are looking to streamline productivity, increase cost competitiveness, and enter new markets by offering a broader portfolio of services. Consequently, presses have to be multifeatured, flexible and highly automated. Because Komori manufactures the most automated presses on the market, we are well placed to answer the needs of printers. Industry research shows that our presses deliver the highest reliability, which in turn minimises press downtime and results in the lowest all-round cost of ownership.

The UK is Komori's biggest European market and currently boasts the highest density of perfectors in the region. In fact, the technically superior Komori B1 and B2

Long Perfector presses now dominate the UK due to their speed, automation, flexibility and fast makeready. What attracts UK investment is their remarkable high-speed makeready that results in impressive productivity levels.

### How important is the ability to configure a press to specific business needs?

With Komori, printers have the flexibility to customise a press to suit their specific needs and applications. We offer all sorts of configurations enabling companies to be creative and produce a variety of products. The UK packaging market, in particular, has taken advantage of this flexibility with significant success.

Being able to print, add special colours and coatings,

fold and deliver into finishing allows printers to add considerable value to print and to their services. In the UK, we see printers adding value to presses for book and carton packaging, and the ability to specify bespoke presses has been popular and given printers a definite market advantage.

One of the reasons for our success is that we look beyond the printer and the press. We monitor trends in the industry and look at the evolution of design techniques that printers have to be able to support. By pushing the boundaries of design, we drive new printing techniques, which in turn drives R&D and results in leading-edge presses.