Printing SA sets its sights on FESPA

As the only likely candidate operating within southern Africa, Printing SA is currently making massive inroads into becoming the local representative for FESPA. With its members delving deeper into the digital printing market, it seems fitting for the association to develop in this area. By Abby Vorster

A well-known brand in the global printing industry, FESPA is a global federation of 37 national associations for the screen, digital and textile printing community. Founded in 1962, FESPA organises leading exhibitions and conferences for the printing community, and reinvests profits from these activities into the global print community.

In May 2014, Steve Thobela, Printing SA’s deputy CEO; Patrick Lacy, Printing SA’s CEO; and Geoff Warren, director of the KZN chamber of Printing SA, travelled to Munich to attend FESPA Digital. It was there where they met with key members of the federation to discuss the foundations of the relationship and the due diligence process.

In an interview with Graphix, Lacy highlighted some of the key pointers as to why the association is best suited for this development. ‘We are in the process of creating a generic training course for the digital printing segment which will be a unique offering on a worldwide level. It will include key technical information, psychometric testing, practical exposure and on-the-job digital lab experiential learning, and will act as a sieve for appointment new employees into positions in digital printing,’ he says.

Views from the federation

At the inaugural FESPA Africa exhibition, Graphix also caught up with Sean Holt, FESPA’s general secretary and Lorraine Harrow, FESPA’s marketing manager, to find out more about the federation’s views on Printing SA.

They also visited a number of print shops and commercial printing businesses in Johannesburg where they both were intrigued by the level of professionalism and the excellent quality of work.

‘This trip marks my first visit to South Africa. It’s been a wonderful experience, and I’ve so enjoyed the friendly warm rapport of the South African people,’ adds Harrow.

Where to next?

During their visit, Holt and Harrow undertook a formal documented interview with Thobela and Lacy from Printing SA, to take back to the FESPA board in London, UK. According to Holt, their passion for the printing industry really came through in the interview. ‘Steve and Patrick know their responsibilities and are aware of benefits of the association with the FESPA brand. We look forward to working with Printing SA going forward and to support its members through a positive partnership,’ adds Holt.

The next step in the process is for Printing SA to submit a formal application to FESPA. This will be assessed by the FESPA general assembly, which will then notify the association of the approval. Thereafter, Printing SA will enter into a two year probation period wherein it will have fulfill a number criteria in order to become a permanent FESPA representative.

Graphix wishes Thobela, Lacy and their team everything of the best with the application and approval process and looks forward to publishing the news soon, about the developments in this regard.