Skills, solutions and sustained success

Two months into his role as the new managing director of Heidelberg Southern Africa, Ryan Miles is ‘settling in well’ and positive about developing the brand in specific and well defined areas of growth. **By Abby Vorster**

In an effort to facilitate a smooth transition from Jimmy Joujou, Miles’ predecessor, Heidelberg Southern Africa ensured an excellent and well-planned handover. His first few weeks on the job were filled with an orientation trip to Germany to Heidelberg’s headquarters, where Miles had the opportunity to develop relationships with key people while gaining a deeper understanding of the manufacturing process of its printing equipment. ‘I’ve also travelled to the UK recently, to learn more about Heidelberg UK and what is deemed a leading market for the company,’ he adds.

Considering his background and the challenges businesses faced in the office automation sector over the past eight years, I was interested to find out more about how he could apply some of the lessons learned in the past to develop a positive future for Heidelberg Southern Africa. ‘There are certain similarities between the two industries,’ he comments. ‘At Itec, we had to learn to adapt quickly and move the business from a hardware vendor focus to that of a consultative and service orientated one. In the printing industry, the challenges are similar. Though change is taking place over a longer period, manufacturers and print service providers also have to learn that their sustainability will come from continuously adding value.’

Onward and upward

From a supplier’s perspective, competition is fierce in the printing industry. ‘At Heidelberg Southern Africa we have to add value, to nurture ongoing relationships and consult in a smarter, professional way while fully assisting our customers who are smart about investment and developing their businesses,’ says Miles. ‘Despite the difficulties in the economy, we’re positioned to do really well in the Southern African market and I’m excited about the prospects that lie ahead.’

Miles also hopes to develop talent and skills within Heidelberg as there is a strong shortage of skills in the industry. ‘At Heidelberg, part of my mandate is to move the business from what’s been perceived as mature and stale, to focus on a youthful workforce by developing emerging talent,’ he concludes.