

Halsall International design packaging 'in house'

Established for over 55 years, with extensive offices and showrooms in Fleetwood, Lancashire, Hong Kong and Nuremberg, Germany, Halsall International Ltd is the UK's largest, privately owned toy manufacturer. Halsall's extensive UK showroom is one of the largest and most prestigious commercial showrooms in Europe with over 18,000 sq. ft. floor space dedicated to fully merchandised displays of Licensed, Everyday and Distribution toy ranges under one roof. The company's 300 sq.mt permanent showroom at the Nuremberg Spielwarenmesse exhibition centre in Germany

is situated side by side with the biggest toy manufacturers in the world and provides Halsall with an important location from which to showcase and present its extensive portfolio of international licensed toy ranges and core own brand products to its worldwide customer base.



Halsall is Europe's No.1 supplier of Everyday toys, the UK's market leader of dolls prams and pushchairs, market leader of role-play toys and a leading and specialist supplier of outdoor and wheeled toys. The company is also a major distributor for global toy companies such as Mattel, Hasbro, Zapf, Megabrand, Bandai, Tomy, Digital Blue, Grosvenor and Funrise making full use of their 300,000 sq. ft warehouse in Fleetwood.

The company is a key supplier all levels of the toy industry from major high street and grocery retailers to mail order and internet accounts, independents, value retailers and wholesalers. With over 40 years trading with Far Eastern suppliers, Halsall boasts specialist and experienced Design, Brand and Sourcing teams both in the UK and Hong Kong who are focussed on continuous new product development and innovation. Offering such a service places an enormous amount of pressure on Halsall's packaging suppliers, samples could take days to arrive, and may not be made to the given brief, and all other lead time issues of working with third parties can slow the process down on a regular basis. The ever increasing focus on the need for fast packaging turn-around prompted the purchase of a Canon Digital printer and laminator. This investment has given the Halsall designers the ability to hand make printed packaging proto-types, make minor adjustments to artwork within minutes and improve the efficiency of supplying mock-ups to customers, nonetheless, the speed and accuracy of the scalpel and steel ruler still makes for a slow and sometimes painful process.

After investigating what equipment was available in the market place, Halsall invested in the purchasing of an AG/CAD's KASEMAKE system.. Andrew Coplestone, Halsall Marketing Director, commented "Having the ability to print for packaging and display samples is a fantastic tool which contributes enormously to securing business and listings confirmations with our customers, however, we needed something to speed up the actual packaging design process too."

The KASEMAKE Design Software is more specific to structural packaging design. With the extensive library of standard styles, the designers are able to start with a standard style and add their own flare to it, Lee Glickman, a Halsall Designer, says "Just by entering simple information such as Length, Width and Depth, I have a design on screen instantly and I just need to edit the drawing to suit the customers brief." He continues: "These styles have already helped me with some quick solutions, but have also given me ideas for other designs'. Alternatively, the designer can just as easily work completely from scratch using KASEMAKE's specially developed drawings tools.



"Having structural and graphic design in the same room is fully appreciated when there is an urgent project that needs looking at. Our show room has been extended to the design office where we can turn projects around swiftly for the customer." – states Alison Swift, Halsall Design Manager. "Conceptual packaging presentations can be made without the need for physical samples by utilising KASEMAKE's 3D facility; this has saved valuable time at the design stage. When a sample is required, with the KM626A we are able to complete jobs required for cutting far more efficiently and with 100% accuracy guaranteed."

As a high performance cutting table, the KM626A is ideal for Halsall and their application; with an extensive cutting area of 2500x1600mm it is capable of cutting large POS Displays and multiple samples. Versatile cutting and creasing tools give 'die cut quality' samples. With a choice of blades for the oscillating knife, it is suited to the multitude of substrates Halsall uses. The KM626A makes light work cutting and creasing corrugated and carton board packaging, but also the foam core for displays and headers; all made accurately to print register.

Halsall are utilising the KM626A capabilities by not only producing prototype samples, but are running short run production when needed. Without the need of a die form, production can start immediately after sign-off by the customer, so no time is wasted. "It was essential for us to find a better solution than hand cutting samples." Alison Swift explains, "We found AG/CAD to be the best value for money, offering first-class package at an affordable cost. Just from the demonstration we could see the huge benefits the system would give our company, and this has already been proved. This investment has enhanced not only our design capabilities and customer service, but has also saved us the extra cost and time involved with using an external sample / design source."

With the installation of KASEMAKE design software and a KM626A cutting table, Halsall have complete control of the entire design route, not only giving the customer the benefit of upgrading to a faster and more efficient sample / design service, but allowing the designers time to develop their ideas and achieve the most effective solutions.