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## Our service technicians know the machines inside and out

**The slogan “better to plan ahead than stand still for a long time” is something that all our customers around the world should take to heart. Yet there is no other continent that it applies to more than for Africa, which I have been responsible for as Muller Martini’s Regional Sales Director for more than a decade.**

Proactively ensuring that their saddle stitchers, perfect binders, hardcover booklines and newspaper inserting systems are in good shape is particularly important for African printing plants and print finishing companies for one reason. Since it is only possible to travel to many countries with a visa, if any malfunction occurs, it often takes at least two weeks before a technician from the machine manufacturer is on site. If things go badly, the machine stops working for a whole month or even longer.

To prevent this from happening, Muller Martini has three service strings to its bow for its African customers.

- Within the framework of our [MMService](#) program, first, we offer preventive (note: plan in good time!) inspections and regular maintenance for the best possible machine availability.

- Second, we have agencies with highly trained technicians in numerous African countries. Not only are they on site faster when things get tricky, they also speak the same language as the customers. And they are very familiar with the concerns of the customer and their production systems (“know your customer – and know his machines”).

- Third, the online connection of the machines via <sup>MM</sup>Remote or telephone support via <sup>MM</sup>Support helps us to support our customers quickly and easily in the face of visa regulations and impassable routes. Instead of having to travel arduously (and at high cost!), our specialists from the Muller Martini plants in Zofingen, Rahden or Bad Mergentheim look into the machine in Lagos, Djibouti or Addis Ababa and ensure that stitching or binding can be carried out again quickly.

### **Many contemporary production systems...**

You may counter, "<sup>MM</sup>Remote is all well and good, but the online connection is only available for newer systems, and in Africa older machines are more likely to be in operation." That's where you're wrong! This is because in Africa – not least due to the so-called tender system, which sets clear rules for tendering procedures with public-sector customers – government-owned or government-related graphics companies in particular often have state-of-the-art production systems.

If I tell you, for example, that in South Africa alone between 50 and 60 million textbooks are printed and bound each year for various countries, you can well imagine that the latest machine technology is required for these quantities – with the appropriate online connection, so as not to jeopardize the usually tight deadlines in case of technical issues.

And yet you are not entirely wrong in your assumption. It has indeed become more difficult for the private printing sector in many African countries – where long-term planning suffers anyway because of day-to-day business pressures – to obtain capital for investments from banks. After all, the graphics industry has long since ceased to be considered Triple-A worthy by financial institutions. In addition, printers and bookbinders often suffer from considerable exchange rate fluctuations.

### **...but also many older machines**

As a result, many graphic arts companies have been producing with older machines for years – and have therefore, of course, a corresponding need for service. Our <sup>MM</sup>Services program extends the life cycle of existing machines and increases their performance. For example, older control systems and control terminals for which spare parts are no longer available should be replaced in good time – true to the motto "better to act in time than react too late".

When it comes to saddle stitchers, for example, this reduces the downtime to two days that can be planned, while a reactive replacement of the control system in the event of malfunction can result in a saddle stitcher experiencing a downtime of several weeks due to the complexity of provision.

In order to enjoy optimum service performance, it is a great advantage (and this, of course, is not only true for my African customers!) if you have your Bravo, Primera, Pantera or Acoro inspected and overhauled by Muller Martini service technicians or by our local agencies and not by some random freelancers. After all, our service technicians are highly trained, they know the Muller Martini machines inside and out and can solve our customers' problems in the shortest possible time. By contrast, freelancers usually need to familiarize themselves with the machine before they can start working.

### **<sup>MM</sup>Inspect: A fantastic tool**

South Africa is a typical example of how our customers benefit from proactive intervention by our service technicians. Our local Muller Martini representative, Thunderbolt Solutions, carries out more than a dozen machine inspections there each year. Antony Breddy,

Thunderbolt's Service Manager for Muller Martini systems, completed intensive training at Muller Martini's plants, immersed himself deeply in the [MMInspect](#) program and is constantly passing on his extensive knowledge to his service team. And in Jannie Du Plessis, Thunderbolt has a proven expert in Kolbus machines.

The experienced specialists show customers the benefits of <sup>MM</sup>Inspect, which I think is a fantastic tool, and present the advantages of the Muller Martini service program and the fast delivery of original spare parts. After the inspection, Thunderbolt technicians return to the customer with a detailed report on the condition of the machine and the spare parts they believe are needed, and discuss with the customer the measures to be taken to improve machine performance.

Do you have any questions about the <sup>MM</sup>Services program? Your local Muller Martini contact person will be happy to help you! Please do not hesitate to also contact me directly ([jules.dietz@ch.mullermartini.com](mailto:jules.dietz@ch.mullermartini.com)).

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