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WHAT'S IN A NAME

What is print? It's a real question, not just a rhetorical one, because I bet very few of those as yet uninitiated in its ways and means have any inkling of how this industry now operates. I don't necessarily mean the deeply nitty-gritty techy stuff either. I mean they don't have any kind of understanding about the breadth of print applications available or the career opportunities it affords. Why? Because we're rubbish at telling people. We need to change that. What we need - and I know I've been saying this for years, but I'm at that age where I repeat myself - is a pool of print ambassadors. Savvy, upbeat, knowledgeable and entertaining people who will engage with the wider world on what we're all about and get them to buy into the modern world of print, not that of yesteryear. It's not just me having a gut feel here. Turn to p40 and read this issue's Zeitgeist to understand the necessity for us to make a more cohesive effort to 'sell' print and all the industry now represents.

One company that is working hard to change print's outmoded image is Psycho Peacock. I know, not what you might expect a PSP to be named. Go to p26 to find out why it made the decision to rebrand - and specifically steer away from using the word 'print' in its name. Its website alone tells a story - Google it and you'll see what I mean.

Talking of websites, do you do Web-to-print? It's still way down many a large-format company's to-do list, but for others it has been a business saving development. This issue I asked four PSPs for their take on the opportunities and pitfalls of investing in this route to market - see p24.

There's plenty more to get stuck into too - perhaps have a think about creating talking print. There's an interview on p28 with a man who can help you make it happen. Enjoy

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 Image Reports is available free to printers based in the UK. Register at www.imagereportsmag.co.uk/register.

To purchase a subscription please visit www.imagereportsmag.co.uk/subscribe - UK £54, overseas £84

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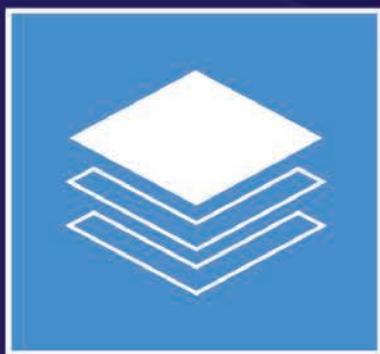
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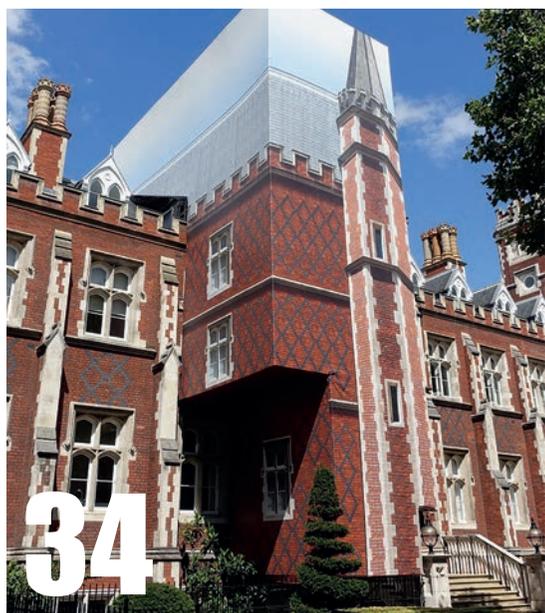
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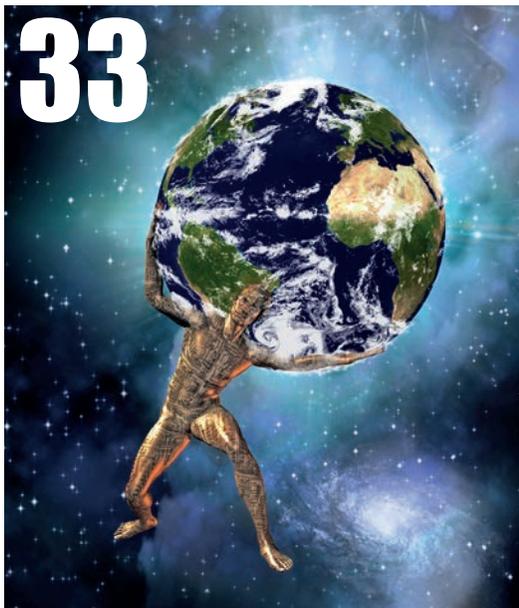


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New Mimaki printers get an airing

Hybrid Services used the recent Print Show to unveil the Mimaki JV300Plus Series wide-format solvent printer and the CJV300Plus Series integrated printer/cutter. Also, making its European debut at show was the Mimaki SWJ-320EA 3.2m-wide eco-solvent printer, and the first public presentation of the Mimaki JFX200-2513EX flatbed LED UV printer.

Both the 1.6m-wide CJV300Plus and JV300Plus use 600ml ink bags placed within a reusable eco cartridge. Other enhancements include a production mode, increased weight capacity on the take-up unit and improved media feeding accuracy and correction.

The new printers are accompanied by the release of the Mimaki CG-FXIIPlus cutter, which also houses the new ID Cut function utilising barcodes for error reduction, increased efficiency and a 25% increase in cutting pressure.

The SWJ-320EA includes MAPS4 (Mimaki Advanced Pass System) and NRS (Nozzle Recovery System). It is equipped with four high-speed printheads arranged in a staggered array for resolutions of up to 1,200dpi and print speeds at up to 137m²/h. There is a stable media feeding system and a newly designed tension bar to prevent media from cockling and to ensure high grip. A twin-roll printing function is optional for those wanting to print up to two rolls (with maximum width of 1,524mm each).

Thanks to a new printhead configuration, the new JFX200-2513EX doubles output speeds when printing with white ink in all print modes and with the addition of a new draft mode, resulting in a maximum speed of 35m²/hr.

New people at the top for EFI

EFI has appointed its executive chairman Jeff Jacobson as CEO, replacing Bill Muir who is stepping down for personal reasons. Veteran tech finance executive Grant Fitz has been taken on as chief financial officer, replacing Marc Olin who assumes the role of COO.

Jacobson, who retains his position as executive chairman, has spent 30 years in the digital imaging and industrial technology sector. Prior to joining EFI he served as CEO of Xerox, and before joining Xerox in 2012 he was chairman, president and CEO of Presstek. He also served as CEO of Eastman Kodak's Graphic Communications Group and served for five years as CEO of Kodak Polychrome Graphics, a joint venture between Sun Chemical and Eastman Kodak.

Jacobson said of the new appointment: "I am thrilled to be expanding my role on EFI's leadership team. Together with my experienced and talented colleagues on the EFI team, we will provide the leadership needed to help EFI accelerate the transformation of industries where colourful images matter."

SDUK to be revamped and reinvigorated

Sign and Digital UK is being revamped. The 2020 event (NEC, 28-30 April) will be delivered by new event director Jenny Matthew. She will work alongside Rudi Blackett, who moves to become key account director, to deliver a reinvigorated show intended to reach beyond its traditional core audience and bring in visitors from textile production to end users in the creative, retail, lifestyle, education and local government sectors.

A new marketing team has been brought on board for SDUK 2020 and there are promises of a fresh show with a new look, new website, new layout, new features and new stand options for exhibitors.

New for 2020 is TextileTech, a learning zone that will feature applications and demonstrations,

skills workshops, industry speakers, specialist exhibitors and a textile trail. Other new show features will include Sign Making Essentials and an Applications Gallery. There is also the intention to expand the raft of industry presentations, seminars and live demonstrations at the 2020 event.

Matthew said: "We're investing strongly in our long-standing and much loved Sign and Digital UK event, to help us deliver more for both visitors and exhibitors in 2020. With a new marketing and sales team to help grow the show, we're also taking a fresh look at the show to help elevate it to the next level. We have some exciting plans in place and believe 2020 will be the best year yet."

Vivid launches the Velo Blade



Vivid Laminating Technologies has launched a new flatbed cutter, the Velo Blade. The system combines cutting, creasing and perforating in a single pass, and has auto-feed, conveyor belt and collection tray for unattended production.

The Velo Blade handles stocks and sizes ranging between 210mm x 297mm to 600mm x 400mm, and cuts at up to 1000mm/s.

Gantry mounted vacuum clamps operate alongside air separation jets, feeding stock into production - loads from 100mm up to 1.5mm or 1200gsm can be handled. A CCD camera picks out registration marks to align the cutting head then a tungsten steel blade carries out the cutting process, whilst the vacuum-grip conveyor belt holds stock in place. It is then automatically stacked in the collection tray.

Pyramid Display Materials buys out POS Plastics

Pyramid Display Materials has acquired the assets, stock and goodwill of plastic substrate distributor and fabricator POS Plastics.

Based in Wakefield, Yorkshire, POS Plastics has been supplying the market since 2002, focusing on plastic sheets from 3A's Composites, Staufen and Klockner as well self-adhesives from JAC. It will continue as a trading division of Pyramid and relocate to the latter's facilities in Castleford.

Dennis Morgan, Pyramid MD, said: "The acquisition reinforces our strategy of diversifying the group into areas aligned to our core retail display market but giving us specialist expertise in what we class as the growth area of industrial plastics. We can also now give POS Plastic's customers the option to buy a much larger range of digital roll and flat sheet products."

James Shannon, who will continue as sales manager of POS Plastics, added: "This is great news for POS. Having the option to sell an enhanced range of products to our customer base will ensure the business continues to grow for many years to come and with the backing of Pyramid in the form of marketing and logistics support I'm confident we can become an integral part of the group"

OKI makes key staff changes

OKI Europe has made a number of new senior appointments as it seeks new revenue streams.

Marzio Gobbato - VP for OKI Europe's south region - has been appointed as OKI Europe deputy managing director, reporting to Dennie Kawahara, who continues as managing director.

Shu Watanabe moves from his position as head of the wide-format business unit to become vice president industry print, reporting to Gobbato.

Chiharu Asai, formerly marketing director, becomes vice president corporate planning. Predecessor Susumu Miura has been made vice president operations and special projects. Koichiro (Ken) Fukano, previously vice president, operations for OKI Europe, is appointed vice president marketing and supply chain management, reporting to Gobbato.

"Modern business tactics and trends require a new approach and way of thinking," said Kawahara.

"The breadth of experience and wide-ranging expertise of the new management team will help align the organisation and place us in a strong position to meet all the challenges of a fast-changing market."

Epson launches new 12-colour SC-P series of fast, photographic quality printers

December will see the commercial availability of two new 12-colour printers from Epson - the 24in-wide SC-P7500 and 44in-wide SC-P9500. Their introduction continues the company's run of SureColor printer launches - the new 64in-wide dye-sublimation SC-F9400 and SC-F9400H having only recently been announced - the latter providing yellow and pink fluorescent ink options.

At the unveiling of the SC-P newcomers Epson UK sales manager, prographics, Phil McMullin, said: "For large-format PSPs the real interest here is the productivity gains they offer. The SC-P7500 is up to four times faster than the existing SC-P7000 for instance."

He said that for now the SC-P7000 will continue in production, as will the SC-P9000, though the SC-P10000 will be disappearing from the product portfolio, "which will be streamlined in 2020".

At the time of going to press, UK pricing on the new SC-P printers had not been formalised,

though McMullin said they would be "price competitive."

The printers - said to offer 99% Pantone coverage - use TFP12 printheads with 300dpi resolution and Epson's newly-developed UltraChrome Pro12 inkset, with K3 technology.

Of the new SC-F printers Neil Greenlough, product manager, Epson Europe, said: "The introduction of a genuine fluorescent solution adds new value. This is a first for us and we believe that we've made fluorescent inks that are superior in terms of brightness and colour density".

He added: "We've also introduced a wider choice of EMX files, an instructional / maintenance video (launched from a QR code), and a host of other features that make set-up, usage and maintenance as simple as possible."

CMYUK adds Gerber's MCT laser cutters to its portfolio

CMYUK has been appointed UK and Ireland distributor for Gerber's MCT laser cutters.

Scott Schinlever, president and COO, automation solutions, Gerber Technology, said: "It's a natural fit. The UK is the second largest Western out-of-home signage market in the world, following the US. With CMYUK's position in the market, I see it as a huge opportunity for us together to serve CMYUK's growing customer base with digital finishing and workflow software."

The Gerber MCT laser cutter complements the full CMYUK digital cutting portfolio for the sign, graphics and soft signage markets.

"Laser cutting is perfect for anyone who wants to get into soft signage, textiles and flags," said Nick Reed, CMYUK's digital cutting specialist and Esko business manager. "The ability to eliminate the need for sewing is such a compelling advantage,

and one which is set to be such a strong focus for the near to medium term.

"We are witnessing huge demand for soft furnishing, interior décor and personalisation within the digitally printed textile market. These need to be cut with a laser, which not only handles irregular shapes with ease, but also seals raw edges. Further down the line, prototyping, fast fashion and highly customisable short-runs will be screaming out for this type of finishing," he added.

The Gerber MCT machine is equipped with a high-powered laser for heat-sealed, non-fraying edges and offers 'no-touch' cutting. According to CMYUK, the system offers 8-12 times the throughput and productivity compared to manual cutting while also reducing waste through close nesting of parts.

Integration Technology gets new MD and replaces its debut UV curing system

UV curing developer Integration Technology has a new MD in the form of automotive industry specialist Simon Roberts. The company is also replacing its debut UV curing system Lampcure VZero - built into Zund wide-format platforms - after nearly 20 years.

Roberts, the former MD of Antonov Automotive, is working alongside founder Adrian Lockwood, who remains as chief executive.

Roberts' skills span technical consultancy services, software, engineered products and capital equipment, new product development and the commercialisation of engineered products. "Simon's expertise greatly complements the existing broad depth of industry and

technical knowledge residing within the current team," said Lockwood.

Integration Technology - which developed Lampcure VZero in 2000 in partnership with Xaar and Sericol Inks - has promised that spare parts for the system will continue to be manufactured until 2024. Users are meanwhile being directed to alternative solutions to VZero and the later VZero 2 model. Arc-based technology users are recommended either the Integration Technology SubZero or the MBS5Li from IST Metz, while the VZ and VZX air-cooled solutions are preferred systems for processes requiring UV LED curing.

PSP rebrands as Service Graphics

Paragon Service Point has re-branded as Service Graphics. The move follows Paragon Group UK's acquisition earlier this year of the assets of Service Graphics Glasgow and Skelmersdale.

The combined, re-branded entity has a network of over 40 high street and business park locations, along with large-format production sites in Glasgow, Skelmersdale and Taunton, and display sales offices in Nottingham and south west London. It employs nearly 600 and, in addition to large- and small-format print and graphics, provides digital services including CGI, virtual reality, photorealistic imagery, online marketing portals, digital archiving and hybrid mail.

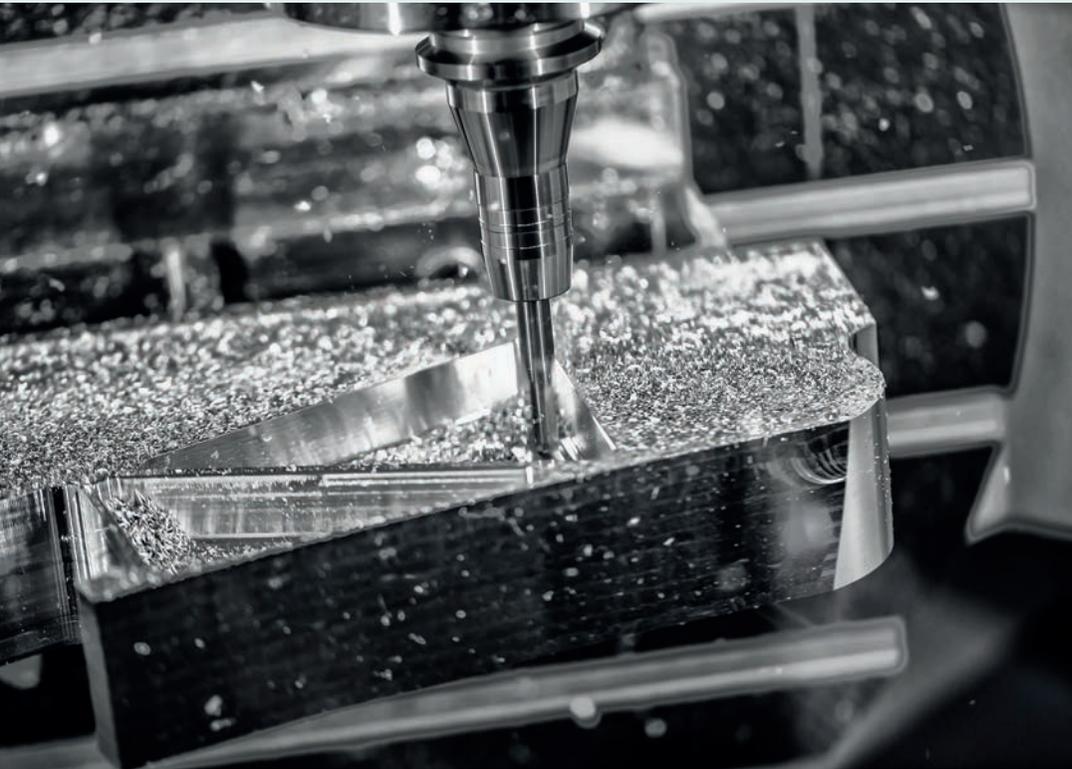
John Eager, CEO of Paragon Graphic Services Division, said: "The new Service Graphics name, logo and bright, fresh look better reflects what the company does while positioning us for further growth. We are looking to use this exciting new platform to add further locations serving blue chip brands as well as SME businesses. We are very excited about our enhanced product offering and the infusion of new expertise and energy in the company."

Martin Hutchings, MD of Service Graphics (Display), added: "Service Graphics (Display) has set the standard in large-format graphics for more than 60 years. This rebrand is a positive move that extends the reach and service offering of both Display and Print and Design businesses. It creates the ultimate end-to-end design, print and display service. I believe we have the most talented team in the industry, and with the opportunities this presents for growth, we will continue to attract and employ the brightest and best."

Service Graphics is part of the Paragon Group, which has operations in over 15 countries.

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- SGP forges further links to support greener supply chain
- New colours added to Pantone Matching System



FAST, CLEAN, EFFICIENT AND INNOVATIVE: THE UNICO RANGE FROM PROTEK

NOT ALL TECHNOLOGIES ARE CREATED EQUAL

ITALIAN SPECIALIST PROTEK CNC TECHNOLOGY MANUFACTURES A COMPREHENSIVE RANGE OF CNC-CONTROLLED MILLING MACHINES DESIGNED AROUND PRODUCTIVITY AND EASE OF USE. THE CONCEPT AND APPROACH BEHIND THESE ADVANCED DEVICES HAS TAKEN THE DESIGN OF THIS SPECIALIST EQUIPMENT A STEP INTO THE FUTURE, CREATING A ROBUST, HIGH PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO OF MACHINES CAPABLE OF HANDLING A COMPREHENSIVE RANGE OF MATERIALS RANGING FROM WOOD AND PLASTICS THROUGH TO ALUMINIUM, ALLOYS, COMPOSITES AND SO MUCH MORE BESIDES.

So what makes these machines so special? With the focus on speed, efficiency and productivity, every aspect has been cleverly designed and expertly manufactured. Hailing from an industrial heritage, the UNICO range of products is particularly suited to the rigours of the manufacturing industry. These powerful units successfully build upon and optimise PROTEK's considerable expertise in heavy duty milling machines developed for the challenges of the industrial market.

RELIABILITY AND LONGEVITY IN ACTION

Designed around a solid and robust single piece electro-welded structural steel chassis structure, which allows the transfer of full power to the manufacturing process, the PROTEK UNICO workcentre is designed for longevity and reliability, providing excellent return on investment.

PROTEK build the chassis in one piece, making it much more robust and less susceptible to vibration for a high-end quality result. In addition, the ability to work materials using milling techniques as well as blade cutting systems means these workcentres rank amongst the most versatile currently available on the market.

PROTEK UNICO IN ACTION

This is a very clever design principle. The multi-function tool changing mechanism means that users can cut substrates normally requiring multiple tools in one operation; the device will complete all the required cuts with one tool then automatically change the tooling

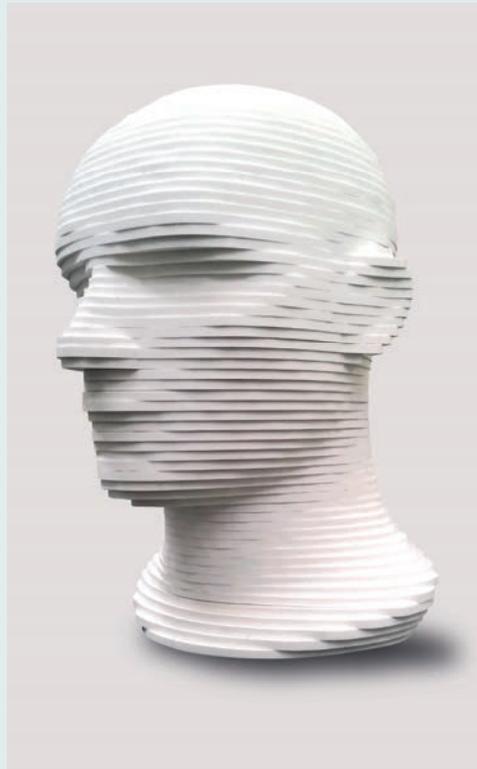
and move onto the next. This automatic tool change functionality significantly reduces downtime and saves on machine preparation time.

The axes are all moved via brushless motors, digitally managed via an integral encoder, and the CNC parameters are managed directly by the drives, which results in significant improvements in cutting and milling precision. The X and Y axes utilise a precise helical rack and pinion system, whilst the Z axis is driven by a recirculation ball screw system.

The cutting head mechanism is a rack and pinion angled drive, which improves accuracy and cuts down on noise. In addition, this is an extremely clean process; the proprietary vacuum system developed by PROTEK for removing swarf is very efficient, and the vacuum bed is zoned so the process works just as efficiently even on smaller jobs.

SIMPLE AND INTUITIVE USE

The PROTEK UNICO range is designed around ease of use, too, requiring no previous CNC machining experience from the operator and ensuring the training process is quick and simple. The software has been developed in-house and is very user friendly with a simple and intuitive graphical interface and the ability to import 2D drawings in various formats (DXF, DWG, AI, PDF). This means that the machining parameters for each specific project are pre-set, speeding up the process, reducing errors and driving new levels of efficiency.



The machine can be equipped with a 9kW electrospindle 36000 rpm HSK 40, capable of machining a comprehensive range of materials at varying thicknesses, giving a 360° scenario of opportunities across a wide range of different market sectors. Applications include sign making, 3D milling / prototyping, routing, cardboard finishing and packaging materials amongst many others. In addition, working with materials including all types of plastics, wood, aluminium and aluminium alloys and composites, flat and corrugated cardboard, MDF, Foamex/Corex, acrylics, rigid foams, magnetic media, polypropylene, carpet and Dibond – even fibreglass, Kevlar and reflective materials.

The UNICO range workcentres feature an automatic planar tool change with 6, 9 or 12 positions, dependent upon machine width and individual customer configurations. This means that users can process a wide range of different materials using a single machine, with minimal changes required to switch from substrate to substrate, adding to speed, flexibility and efficiency.

The PC console is integrated into the design of the machine, on a fixed wheel support. Mobile consoles on wheels are available as an optional extra for applications where the control console may need to be isolated from the working environment. All electronic components are protected inside an electrical cabinet, located inside the machine itself.

THE PROTEK UNICO RANGE

The range currently includes the PROTEK UNICO CNC, followed by the PROTEK TT, which is a true 3D milling machine as well as a real plan plotter capable of cutting and creasing multilayered and alveolar corrugated cardboard, moulding carpets, mats, rubber gaskets, sponges and foam. The UNICO TT can be supplied equipped with electric, pneumatic and rotating cutting heads in addition to the more traditional milling systems, which means the equipment is truly multifunctional.

Also available is the UNICO TT CONVEYOR, available with three different cutting widths including 1650, 2150 and 3300mm. This machine is equipped with a full range of heads for cutting, creasing, V-cutting and kiss-cutting and can be supplied with a full range of accessories such as loading tables, winders and unwinders. The ultimate versatility and extreme accuracy of this model makes it a highly effective investment in terms of quality and productivity.

ADJUNCTS AND ACCESSORIES

PROTEK Unico workcentres are available with a full range of accessories dependent upon application. These include lubro-refrigerating tool kits, a selection of creasing wheels, a full range of sheet holders, surface flatness probing systems, video nesting for shredding optimisation, PTK Reverse software which facilitates reverse engineering for flat shapes and multifunction cut software.

In addition, PROTEK has an open approach to new applications. The company offers a bespoke sample service, where customers are invited to supply substrates and MSDS information enabling PROTEK to put forward effective solutions for a wide range of materials and environments. This enables potential users to assess the efficacy of the equipment and gain an insight into how the equipment could integrate into their own manufacturing processes.

PROTEK equipment for the graphics industry is supplied, installed and supported throughout the UK by Dennison Group, who have an established reputation for providing high quality service and support across the printing industry. Dennison Group operates a team of PROTEK-trained specialist engineers located across the UK, providing swift and knowledgeable support to UK users, with access to fast supply of spares to ensure that the machines are maintained in optimum working condition.

SO WHAT MAKES THESE MACHINES SO SPECIAL? WITH THE FOCUS ON SPEED, EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY, EVERY ASPECT HAS BEEN CLEVERLY DESIGNED AND EXPERTLY MANUFACTURED

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GIVING KUDOS TO JETRIX PRINTERS



FABULOUS LARGE SCALE WEDDINGS, LUXURY CELEBRATIONS, CHARITY EVENINGS, PRODUCT LAUNCHES AND THE ULTIMATE IN CORPORATE EVENTS – THERE’S NOT REALLY ANYTHING ON THE EVENTS FRONT THAT KUDOS CANNOT DO. NOTHING IS TOO BIG!

Fabulous large scale weddings, luxury celebrations, charity evenings, product launches and the ultimate in corporate events – there’s not really anything on the events front that Kudos cannot do. Nothing is too big! This is why this leading London based event management company recently looked to up its game and take on a new level of large format printers. The ever increasing scale of production and demand for bespoke, unique pieces at their events needed to be met. What’s more the company had significant ambitions to grow and an escalating desire to take the business to completely new places in terms of event management.

THE TIME WAS RIPE FOR INVESTMENT

However the myriad of large format printer options available meant choosing was proving tricky. While many in the sector move more towards traditional large format printer brands, the Managing Directors Hardeep Kataria & Rajan Chonkaria were seeking something different; something superior. But more importantly, this needed to be a piece of kit that could truly take on the significant demands of being part of Kudos. It needed to be capable of relentlessly operating to constantly deliver the jobs. Exploring the market took time, but the clear all out leader was the JETRIX printer range by South Korean based InkTec Ltd.

RAZOR SHARP DEFINITION COMBINED WITH HIGH PRODUCTIVITY

Initially Kudos invested in a JETRIX LXi8 LED UV printer - a 3.2m x 2m wide flatbed. This utilised all of the extensive industrial printing experience that InkTec offered, alongside all the well-known quality and build attributes typically associated with JETRIX. Specifically developed to deliver high production speeds of over 180sqm/hr combined with optimal printing results, Kudos knew it would deliver. Razor sharp edge-to-edge high definition print and the ability to print on more unusual media, such as acrylic, wood, glass and metal and for thicknesses up

to 100mm meant the versatility of the JETRIX surpassed the previous set-up.

However, increased productivity with this printer extends beyond the physical speed of the kit right the way through to the job set up and pre-production. It also hosts a range of other appealing features within InkTec’s dedicated JETRIX GUI (Graphical User Interface). This simplifies, optimises and automates many of the standard printing steps, including a very practical application where images can be moved and nested to enable duplication without the need for additional ripping of massive files every time. The resultant decrease in rip time means less time is spent in pre-production, less operator time involved and more job capacity. The user is also able to map and move images around to maximise the use of the media. This directly delivers cost savings, as it is a far more efficient use of the printing space, with the very minimum amount of media used for the job.

TAKING PRODUCTION TO NEW SCALES

Close on the heels of the JETRIX LXi8 into the Kudos portfolio was the LXiR320 – a 3.2m large format roll to roll digital LED-UV printer. This was just perfect for the high volume, large scale production of PVC, flex, fabric banner, backlit banner and signage that are an integral part of their event productions. This roll to roll printer can print up to 2160 dpi maximum resolution at speeds of up to 110 sqm/h. What’s more regardless of what is being printed it will ensure there is a precise and consistent supply of media and has the ability to run multiple rolls on the spindle.

“After having the JETRIX LXi8 for a little while, there was absolutely no doubt in our minds about going for a JETRIX again when we were looking for a roll-to-roll. For us our popularity for delivering really immense themed events and celebrations means that these printers really do take a pounding. However, they just take it in their stride and whatever we want to print is delivered by either one of these machines.” Rajan Chonkaria, Managing Director.



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WHAT'S IN YOUR NEXT **PRINTER?**

ATTEND ESMA'S IJC CONFERENCE IN DUSSELDORF ON 29-30 OCTOBER AND YOU MIGHT FIND OUT, AS STEVE KNIGHT, DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL DIRECT TECHNOLOGY AND FOUNDER OF THEIJC, EXPLAINS.

Yup, the IJC (inkjet conference) is techy. But should that put you off or prompt you to go?

Every year we see new printers coming to the market, each one performing better than the generation before. But what is driving the evolution and what can we expect to see next? Some changes are driven by better integration knowledge, some by new core technology - inkjet is not one area of development but many. Understanding inkjet evolution needs an eye on each of the technologies involved and on how they interact. In isolation each of these changes is an improvement - cumulatively they make a generational change on each equipment release.

Let's try and break down some of the new technologies considered at TheIJC, and at how quickly they'll appear as features on new products in the market. Firstly, let's look at the key technology areas.

CHEMISTRY AND CURING – SUBSTRATE INTERACTION AND VALIDATION

A huge topic to kick off with - it is after all the main objective of printing - but what we often forget are the special challenges inkjet presents. The challenge is presented by the narrow physical requirements of the inkjet printhead. We can only use small particles due to the nozzle size, and we can only use a narrow range of viscosities due to the firing mechanism. Understanding this challenge helps the printer understand and resolve some of his print problems.

As printers we need to know about surface energy and how to measure it and how it affects everything from image quality to curing and adhesion. Many of the presentations at TheIJC cover this topic, understanding the problem makes finding a solution much easier.

Among others, Fujifilm Ink Solutions will talk this year about 'Inks for MEMS printheads: challenges and opportunities', ImageXpert will explain 'Ink and waveform performance optimisation' and Toshiba Tec will demonstrate the 'Advantage of real through channel recirculation and compact ink recirculation system'.

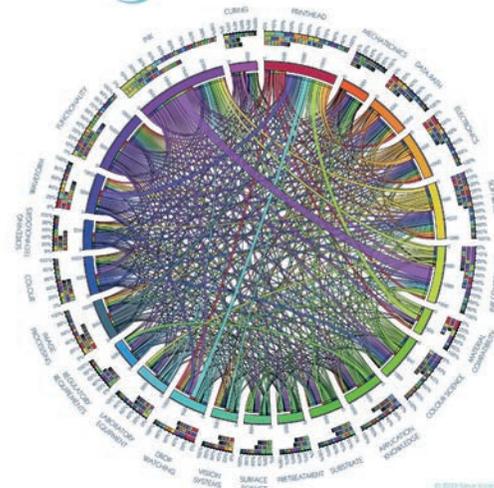
SOFTWARE AND IMAGE ENHANCEMENT

Computers continue to evolve in both processing power and memory performance, new software algorithms and calibration techniques now eliminate some of the print artefacts, such as banding and other variations in print. Not only is image quality enhanced but equipment performance can also be increased and longevity of key

“**UNDERSTANDING
INKJET
EVOLUTION
NEEDS AN EYE
ON EACH OF THE
TECHNOLOGIES
INVOLVED AND
ON HOW THEY
INTERACT**”

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components such as printheads could be affected. Knowing what's possible and whether it's available could be vital for your next investment. Key software companies explain data handling, image quality and defect correction for high speed printing systems at TheIJC this year.

PRINTHEADS

How will the next generation of printheads impact the next generation of printers? As MEMS printheads start to mature and more 1,200dpi native resolution printheads come to the market, how will this impact printer performance? All the printhead manufacturers are at TheIJC to answer these questions: Epson, Fujifilm Dimatix, Konica Minolta, Kyocera, Memjet, Ricoh, Seiko, Toshiba Tec and Xaar will present. There is ample time during the networking sessions to meet and discuss their products and technologies.

ANALYSIS

We continue to see more analytic equipment presented at TheIJC, and whilst it is unlikely to be used at the printer site, knowing the routine analysis that occurs in ink development and manufacture will help an understanding of the quality of product that most ink manufactures supply.

IN SUMMARY

The sixth European edition of the IJC will provide insight across the whole gamut of technologies that come together to create successful inkjet products and solutions. Each aspect of inkjet will be covered in over 60 presentations from an international community of engineers, chemists, application specialists and academic figureheads.

Inaugurated in 2014, the conference is a one-of-a-kind event, bringing together global technology suppliers, machine builders, print service providers and brand owners. This year all participants will receive a free daily ticket to Drupa 2020 as well as crucial information on the technical direction of the inkjet market.

HERE'S AN INK KLING



...AS TO WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE DIGITAL INKJET INKS FRONT. SOME OF WHAT SIMON CREASY HAS TO SAY MAY SURPRISE YOU.

Historically, when a PSP looked to buy a new piece of kit, the sales pitch would focus on the hardware's capabilities. The sales patter would usually run along the lines of: "The machine is capable of printing at X sheets a minute, it can handle X type of stock and the quality is better than anything else on the market." If ink was mentioned at all it would usually be as an afterthought or as part of the conversation surrounding total cost of ownership. Times have changed.

Press manufacturers have recognised that there is only so much you can do with a printhead to enhance performance and the marginal gains achieved on the latest generation of heads are getting ever more marginal. The rest of the performance enhancement and the reduction in the total cost of ownership for the end user has to come from ink and the way it performs when it hits the substrate. That's why a number of leading manufacturers are focusing a lot of time, money and R&D effort to devise new ink sets for their large-format printers.

One company that's really pushing on this front at the moment is Epson. According to Phil McMullin, UK sales manager for pro graphics, the company spends about \$1.5m a day on R&D across the corporation and a "big chunk of that is on ink chemistry because ultimately along with our piezo head, that is what differentiates us from other players in the market".

Fujifilm says the reception from the market to Uvijet OX has been very positive



He adds that digital PSPs are coming back in large numbers to this "older technology" and to emphasise his point he says the company has seen sales growth of 60% this year for its UltraChrome GS3 ink set and he anticipates this trend will continue.

Another 'older' ink set that appears to be performing well at the moment is UV. It's a particular area of focus for Fujifilm, which recently launched Uvijet OX - a high adhesion ink for the company's Onset platform that has been specifically developed for rigid plastic media at the fastest multi-pass print speeds.

Andrew Berritt, marketing manager, Fujifilm Speciality Ink Systems, describes the ink as a "real leap in technology" for the company. He adds that the reception from the market to the Uvijet OX has been very positive.

"UV ink has started to be perceived as 'old' technology, as other print technologies are being more

aggressively marketed,” says Berritt. “But the fact is, UV ink technology remains the ideal solution for many applications and as printers and printing equipment evolve, the ink systems need to as well.”



The Océ Colorado 1650 is the latest addition to the UVgel inks family

Canon is also pushing on the UV front with the Océ Colorado 1650, which launched at Fespa Global this year, and is the latest addition to the UVgel family. According to Duncan Smith, county director for production printing product at Canon UK, it offers flexible inks and Océ FLXfinish with a matte or gloss finish, without changing inks or media, as well as double-sided printing.

“This means customers can print on a wider range of SAV media, and the matte option gives more opportunities in the interior décor market,” says Smith. “We designed the product as a clear response to evolving requirements for new applications. After the success of the Colorado 1640 model - which also offers proven UVgel advantages - we identified further opportunities with customers that prefer a matte finish and a more flexible ink.”

Smith adds that through the company’s UVgel inks which “push the boundaries of innovation, Canon is meeting a strong need on the market from customers seeking to differentiate their print offering. Inks that can offer breakthrough productivity, low TCO and a wide choice of applications - with both matte and gloss finishes - will continue to be in demand from customers”.

These are the same guiding principles used by Kornit, whose latest pigment ink set is Neopigment Robusto. “This ink was developed to last and has better wash and rub durability ideal for baby, DIY, and fashion industries,” explains Sharon Donovan, project manager for Kornit Allegro direct-to-fabric print system. “It has high UV fastness that enables extended outdoor exposure, perfect for home décor applications. It answers the highest industry demands with a wide variety of fabric types and an extended application range. This ink has increased colour gamut, volume, and spot colours coverage. It improves productivity and maintain the highest market standards.”

WHAT WE’VE
SEEN OVER
THE LAST 12
MONTHS IS A
RE-ADOPTION
OF ECO
SOLVENT

**Mimaki
metallic inks**

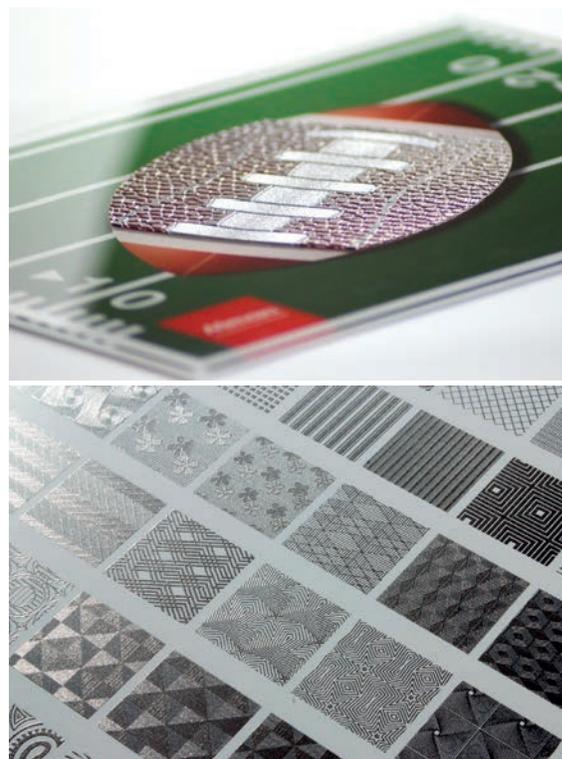
Donovich says customer reaction to the new range has been very positive. “Both new and existing customers find this product a huge improvement on the previous version and the opportunities with this product are much larger. According to customers, the new Robusto ink demonstrates enhanced colour fastness properties and a continued focus on low impact coloration.”

Over at Hybrid Services, exclusive UK and Ireland distributor for Mimaki, Brett Newman, chief operations manager, says that one of the most exciting additions to the company’s own range of inks is a new metallic LED UV ink, designed for Mimaki’s UJF-7151plus mid-format flatbed printer.

“The world’s first metallic UV ink is created by mixing a bright pigment into the ink, resulting in the ability to directly print without the need for a separate manual transfer process, as is the case when applying glitters or foils to produce a metallic effect,” explains Newman.

He says decorative options such as printing both gloss and matte tones, texture expression with embossing effects, and full-colour metallic expressions can be achieved by printing coloured ink overlaid on the metallic ink.

“This revolutionary new ink expands the creative horizons for our customers, enabling them to offer increasingly premium printed products that can deliver maximum revenue potential,” adds Newman. “Mimaki’s metallic ink design achieves the maximum amount of light reflection by placing pigment particles flat against each other once cured, giving a really shiny effect and a uniform finish.”



He says customers are always looking for new “ways to diversify, add value and create desire and want from their customers” and Mimaki’s metallic ink has really hit this sweet spot in this regard.

While equipment and ink manufacturers are happy to

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talk up the latest additions to their product ranges, most are understandably coy about where their future NPD efforts in the ink space lie. McMullin says that going forward Epson has lots of NPD in the pipeline, both around hardware and inks, following a hiatus of a couple of years when the company didn't introduce much new technology to the market.

"You're going to see a plethora of products coming from Epson over the next 18 months to two years which will cover all of the different ink sets in application spaces you've never seen us play in before so it is an exciting time for us."

He anticipates developments in numerous different areas, including UV. "The challenge with UV has always been its flexibility. If you're trying to put it on a vehicle, for instance, you will have trouble printing onto a self-adhesive vinyl and then wrapping the vehicle with that vinyl because the ink will probably crack off. We've taken that on board and the guys in Japan are working on UV inks that are much more flexible."

Another area the company is focusing its R&D efforts on is dye-sublimation. "What the end users are looking for is improved colour gamut, so we will be developing inks in that direction and also we will have additional colours coming out - spot colours, fluorescent colours, light colours so you can use that in production for photographic reproduction of images.

"Personalisation is the buzzword in the industry and people want to reproduce anything they have photographed or painted on rigid media, or on textiles, exactly as they've envisaged it, so the ink needs to be at a better level to perform to people's expectations and you will see that from Epson coming down the line as well."

As for Fujifilm, Berritt says the company is "regularly looking at the altering legislation and requirements to ensure global compliance and helping our customers print into more applications - food packaging being an important example".

“YOU'RE GOING TO SEE A PLETHORA OF PRODUCTS FROM EPSON ...IN APPLICATION SPACES YOU'VE NEVER SEEN US PLAY IN BEFORE”

EFI also has one eye on the legislative landscape and is particularly keen to develop inksets that are more environmentally friendly. "We're always looking for greener solutions," says Mark Goodearl, product manager - display graphics, at EFI. "The consensus is everyone wants a greener solution, but they don't want to pay a premium for it. We've been working in that direction and with the low power consumption and other benefits that LED has brought to the table we are moving in a greener direction."

The big issue for EFI and rival manufacturers of late has been the rising cost of raw materials, which is having an impact on their operations. Goodearl says that despite the economies of scale that a company as large as EFI enjoys it has been challenging to deal with the rising price of raw materials across the globe.

It's a scenario that's all too familiar to Fujifilm. "The cost of production has increased and violently fluctuated over the past 12-18 months," says Berritt. "This is mainly due to global raw material shortages of specific key components. This has certainly had an impact on our business as we've been hesitant to pass on these drastic increases to our customers as they would be very challenging to manage."

Raw material cost increase concerns aside, the roadmap for future ink development looks pretty exciting. With each new printer launched being successively quicker than the previous generation and with customers demanding increased print quality at these new high speeds, equipment and ink manufacturers seem to have finally started to recognise that ink has a greater role to play than perhaps at any time in the industry's history.

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MATERIAL BENEFITS

TEXTILES AND ENVIRONMENT - THEY ARE THE TWO WATCHWORDS WHEN IT COMES TO KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN DIGITALLY PRINTABLE SUBSTRATES. SO HAVE THE MANUFACTURERS/DISTRIBUTORS GOT THE FOCUS RIGHT?

At the start of 2019, when Image Reports conducted its annual Widthwise poll of the UK/Ireland large-format PSPs, 11.74% of the 247 respondents said general banners/flags/signage was proving the fastest growing part of their wide-format business - far ahead of the other job application areas. Far fewer - 3.24% - said textile printing specifically for banners/flags was the fastest growing part of their business but, when asked which areas they planned to move into over the next two years, 5.26% said textile printing of banners/flags - the biggest area of movement (even though textile/dye-sub printers were still relatively low down the investment wish list).

When it came to asking how important it is to offer 'green' print options nowadays, 46.15% of the responding PSPs said more so than it was two years ago, but 31.17% said no change - it was still unimportant - and 15.38% said it had become even less important!

It's a complicated landscape, so how is the fact that media/substrate manufacturers and stockists are focusing so much on textiles and eco options impacting you - and have they got it right?

Take Soyang. In the last issue we ran an article on how Soyang Europe is collaborating with waste/recycling firm Blue Castle to deliver the print sector a PVC Banner Recycling Scheme. According to Tim Egerton, sales manager at Soyang Europe, "there's pressure being placed on substrate manufacturers and distributors to meet the eco-demands of the end users as well as an ethical movement taking place to 'green up' their acts.

"At Soyang Europe, we're taking steps to towards a circular supply chain, with our partnership with Blue Castle, but re-using and recycling at Soyang extends beyond this, in particular with the development of new green textiles from our own factories in China and also our European partners."

There's that watchword 'textiles', and you can expect to see it a lot more throughout this feature. So many media developers and stockists have picked up on reports - like the oft quoted 'The Future of Digital Textile Printing to 2023' from Smithers Pira - that forecast tremendous growth and therefore money-making opportunities. Needless to say that's where a lot of focus is being placed, though that's not

OVER THE NEXT
FIVE YEARS WE'LL
SEE LOTS OF
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AND THE MARKET
WILL CHANGE
SIGNIFICANTLY

necessarily always going to benefit you.

You know CMYUK, the independent supplier of large-format digital printers, cutting equipment and media - it's the exclusive distributor in the UK and Ireland of materials from Pongs and in the UK from Berger. Well, according to MD Robin East: "In five years' time I think our revenue will have doubled - and that will be down to textiles. The growth could be even more than that if you look at all the technical and market indicators. The opportunity is immense."

Currently around half of CMYUK's revenue comes from equipment sales, and the other half from materials. "We have seen year-on-year turnover growth as a whole within the company for some time, but in the last four years - when we've had a focus on large-format textiles - we've seen a 50% growth year-on-year in the materials business," says East, who admits that making the most of this opportunity is about more than servicing CMYUK's 'traditional' large-format client base, where the increase in demand for things like tension frames is boosting the move towards fabric-based printed products. He notes: "Our strategy to develop revenue has to include reaching new emerging markets - and digitally printed textiles is our focus.

"Over the next five years we'll see lots of development and the market will change significantly. We'll start to see short-runs for interior décor certainly, and that may be via existing digital PSPs, or via analogue textile producers switching to digital kit. Or will designers bring digital print in-house? And I think we'll see a new breed of specialist décor print PSPs too. However it pans out, the growth is going to be massive - if you look at the food chain, kit and materials manufacturers and distributors are working hard at demonstrating the possibilities to all sides. We're not taking our eye off the ball with sign/graphics, after all, we're in the same food chain, but we have to be entrepreneurial - and so do our customers."

Becoming greener is also high on the list of must-do's. CMYUK is introducing an Eco range of substrates that includes backlit, display and wall cover textiles, all of which, are manufactured from yarn developed by using recycled pet plastic bottles that would otherwise have entered the waste stream.

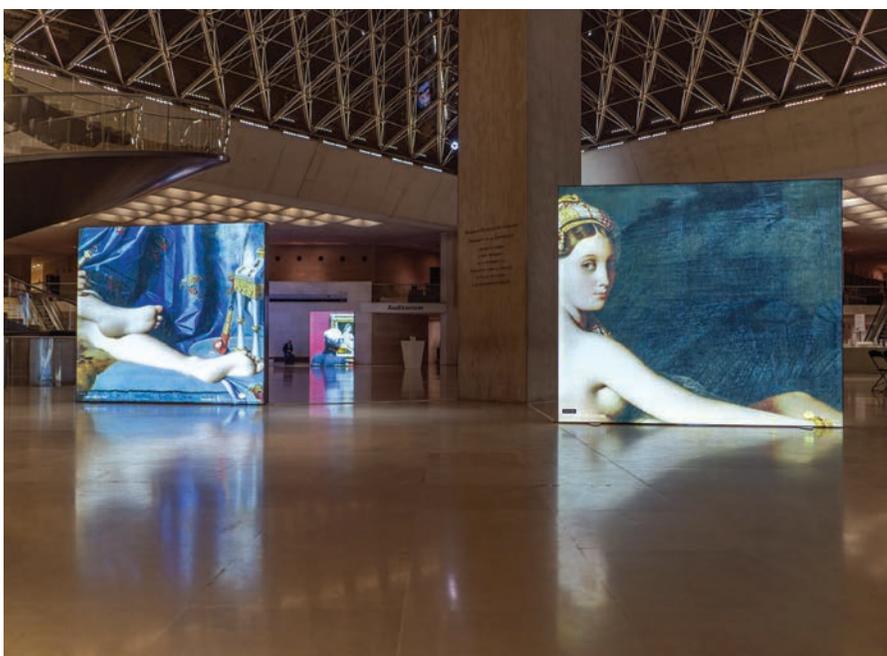
This new range of accredited materials has recently passed the 'safe for incineration' process. In concert with this, CMYUK will soon launch a closed-loop process with a leading environmental company, providing full circle services to remove its accredited materials and produce local energy sources within the UK.

"Textiles are already more environmentally-friendly as they are PVC free," says CMYUK's commercial director Michael Crook. "But what people forget is that part of the make-up of the textile is the coating, and in order for that to be environmentally-friendly, the coatings and the process of manufacturing need to be environmentally-friendly too. In order for these textiles to be recycled and reused again or incinerated to produce energy, everything within has to be green

and clean. This consideration forms part of our new Eco offering.”

Customarily cost has been a factor in the lack of take-up when it comes to ‘green’ products but CMYUK says it is putting together alternative green solutions closer to the price of historically used materials.

“Textiles are the main part of our materials business,” says Crook, pointing out that polyesters have seen the biggest growth in market share, largely down to developments in the fabrics, some of which can now mimic natural fabrics, are inherently flame retardant, and with recycled threads starting to break through. “Digital printing is opening totally new markets and these are within reach for both our traditional customers and new clients,” he stresses.



Taking you back to Soyang, it too is offering new, improved and environmentally friendly printable textiles options. Developed by its partners at Senfa, Sublimis is a backlit fabric made from 100% polyester and suitable for printing with both direct and transfer dye-sublimation as well as UV curable inks. Also new is Altimis, with all the benefits of Sublimis but with extended eco credentials as it's manufactured from 100% recycled yarn. It is then coated with Senfa's smooth finish and comes with fire-retardancy certification.

Also new from the Senfa stable is Alterra, a backlit fabric based on the well-know Decoprint Perar but including recycled fibres. It is PVC-free and suitable for use with UV and latex inks.

“At Soyang Europe, we see great opportunity for further development of products that incorporate recycled yarn in their construction. It's an obvious manufacturing process to aim for and as that grows one would naturally expect that general costs will start to reduce too.

Sublimis as in use at The Louvre

“As more textiles manufactured from recycled yarn become available there is also the need to echo the typical current curve of offering it at 5m widths, further extending its use to outdoor media such as building wraps and large mesh installations. Equally, advancing ink compatibility to ensure a wide range of hardware can be utilised is an obvious next step in the development cycle,” says Egerton.

He adds: “All of this simply reinforces the ethical importance of committing to corporate social responsibility and making better use of the raw materials we have available.”

WHAT ELSE IS NEW?

ANTALIS

Since launching Xanita (a sustainably engineered fibreboard made with fibres recovered from recycled paper products) to the UK market earlier this year, Antalis says it has seen a surge in visual communications customers looking for sustainable media. Nautilus was introduced this summer and is a 100% recycled uncoated paper and board manufactured by Mondi.

Triaprint is the latest edition to the sustainable range and is a 100% recyclable polypropylene product being sold as an environmentally friendly alternative to foam PVC, foam board and other rigid plastics.

EMBALL'ISO-M2

The Airplac foam board factory in Leigh on Sea launched a new substrate this year, made of 100% polystyrene foam, and 100% recyclable. The foam is extra dense in order to rigidify the panel for print and POS applications. The waterproof, lightweight panel has a smooth white surface for UV digital printing, is pH neutral and has an anti-static agent.

It comes in all sizes up to 1524 x 3050mm. The standard thickness is 10mm but 5mm is available on request. It can be cut using laser technology, hot wire machines or flatbed cutting machines.

By the way, all of Emball'Iso -M2's production waste is compacted and sent for recycling at its German partner company Isopor.

INKTEC

According to Peter Davidson, head of IP consumable sales at InkTec Europe: “The market for repositionable window and wall graphic media for retail and event applications alongside other temporary graphic applications, is continuing to grow and the drive to reduce the use of PVC products and the desire to recycle means more conscientious businesses are keen to offer and include this feature into their offerings.”

To that end it has introduced several polyester-based repositionable clear and white window films in the last 12 months. The most recent is Tex-Ra, an opaque self-adhesive fabric made of 100% polyester and with a textured surface.

Also new is an anti-scratch, silver back, block out banner of rigid polyester/polypropylene construction that can be printed with aqueous, dye, pigment and latex inks.

WallShark from Kernow has been developed from FloorShark



KERNOW

WallShark from Kernow is a self-adhesive, PVC-free, and scratch resistant film introduced this year and developed from the floor graphics film FloorShark, using the same shark-skin ink-receptive technology. It has been developed to look like a high-end quality

traditional wallcovering and can be printed with all types of wide-format inks.

Kernow has also developed two wide-format metallic ranges, Metalik Cut&Print and Metalik Inkjet, available in silver, gold and rose-gold. They are PVC-free and printable with solvent, eco-solvent, UV-curable and latex inks.

Metalik Cut&Print has the same metallised colour on both sides and has a removable adhesive. Metalik Inkjet is mainly designed for lamination of larger areas on any smooth substrates. It can be applied on aluminium composite panels like Dibond, before or after printing, or directly applied on walls.

WILLIAM SMITH

In response to what it sees as the fast growing décor market, the company has added two newcomers to the Avery Dennison MPI 8000 Wall Film Series - now known as the Interior Design Collection.

MPI 8826 is a white textile film with lustre canvas finish and high-tack adhesive that is printable with eco/solvent, latex and UV technology. MPI 8520 is a white matt finish paper with a permanent adhesive and which is also printable with latex and UV technology. Both products are PVC free and MPI 8520 is also FSC certified.

William Smith is now stocking the Avery Dennison MPI 8520



and the MPI 8626



PROFILE PICKER

Drytac has created thousands of ICC profiles for its digital media based on popular printer models, inks and Rips and added them to its revamped Drytac.com website.

Over 1,800 Drytac media profiles have been created by the Mimaki colour engineering team at the printer manufacturer's headquarters in Japan. These profiles are compatible with Mimaki wide-format printers up to 1.6m and including print-and-cut, eco-solvent and UV technologies. The profile selection also covers all the ink configurations available, such as SS2, ES3 eco-solvent inks and LUS 170, LUS 175 and LUS 200 series UV-LED inks, and all ink sets-up including CMYKCMYK, CMYKcLm, and special colours. In addition, there are profiles for both white and clear inks for all Mimaki UV machines for multi-layer printing.

The Drytac profile collection also comprises nearly 30 HP Latex certifications, profiles and machine settings on the PrintOS portal, which includes profiles for the new R Series printer; a wide range from the Roland Profile Centre, which includes all Eco-Sol Max ink types for VersaCamm and TrueVis systems, including the latest models; profiles for OKI ColorPainter; and profiles for Fujifilm Acuity LED 1600 II, for both the Caldera and ColorGate Rip platforms.

Drytac is also expanding the range of colour profiles and settings on the Epson Connect cloud service. A complete range of profiles for the new Ricoh Latex Pro devices, in particular combining Drytac's clear products and Ricoh's new white latex ink technology, is coming soon.

Drytac is working with Caldera, ColorGate, Onyx and providers of local Rips included with devices, such as Roland Versaworks and Mimaki Rasterlink. "Through working in tandem with printer and software manufacturers, we have made literally thousands of profiles accessible via our website," Shaun Holdom, global product manager at Drytac. "The selection is being constantly updated and, additionally, we have the in-house capability to provide custom profiles as required."



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Unlike cheaper, inferior products on the market that have no sustainable supply chain or quality control parameters, PONGS® materials are manufactured in Germany and adhere to the strictest standards both in terms of product quality and environmental credentials.

CMYUK

PONGS® uses state-of-the-art energy and environmental technology to conserve resources, minimise the impact on the environment and produce climate-neutral products. Thanks to a fully biological wastewater treatment plant, ozone reactors, flotation and ultrafiltration, electrocoagulation, wastewater leaves the production cycle as cleanly as it enters. Exhaust air pollutants are filtered out with state-of-the-art air washers, neutralisation and activated carbon filters at a rate of 99.9%.

The PONGS® goal is to generate heat, compressed air and electricity completely, thanks to the latest block heating, compressed air heat and solar power plants. PONGS® power plants already generate 40% of its heating requirements, and have reduced the company's CO2 emissions by around 900 tonnes per year. Another solar power plant of approx. 600,000kw is already being planned. In order to use the energy for further processes, almost all machines and the compressed air thermal power plant are connected to heat recovery systems translating into energy savings of more than 300,000 litres of heating oil per annum.

PONGS® takes its responsibility to the planet very seriously, and to stay true to its green philosophy it invests in the latest and future-oriented process technologies. The majority of PONGS® textiles are labelled with the OEKO-TEX® label, and chemicals used in their finishing processes are REACH compliant. As a member of the Institute for Building and Environment, its construction products are also EPD certified according to DIN EN 15804,

PONGS® TAKES ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO THE PLANET VERY SERIOUSLY, AND TO STAY TRUE TO ITS GREEN PHILOSOPHY IT INVESTS IN THE LATEST AND FUTURE-ORIENTED PROCESS TECHNOLOGIES

which verifies their sustainability. The company also attaches great importance to the quality and reliability of its suppliers, so for example, cardboard packaging for its products is 100 per cent recyclable.

Together with the world's most renowned research institutes, such as the Fraunhofer Gesellschaft, PONGS® is researching environmentally friendly, naturally degradable fibres and coatings. Today these are free of antimony halides, formaldehyde, bromine compounds and heavy metals, and because they are water-based, contain no solvents.

Says Michal Crook Commercial Director at CMYUK: "There are a number of inferior products that have been launched to market that make all sorts of claims, but PONGS® produce quality products manufactured with great respect to the environment and accompanied by correct certification. The company is constantly striving to pioneer products that meet the most stringent environmental parameters. It is acting consciously today to develop the best products of tomorrow."



Michael Crook,
Commercial Director

ABOUT CMYUK

CMYUK is the UK's largest independent supplier of large format digital printers, cutting equipment and materials for all production environments. It offers the latest LED UV curable, textile, solvent or aqueous-based printers, the most versatile cutting and finishing products, and efficient end-to-end, productivity software. It also provides installation, training and support.

CMYUK is home to the most advanced, state-of-the-art showroom and demonstration centre in the UK. Based in Shrewsbury, this is an unrivalled, knowledge-based facility that offers matchless testing and sampling opportunities.

CMYUK is the UK hub for digital textile printing. It supplies printing and finishing equipment, materials, and a comprehensive, consultative approach to print service providers (PSPs) and other businesses wishing to expand into new market sectors.

CMYUK is a distributor for EFI (exclusive UK and Ireland), ESKO (exclusive UK and Ireland), Mimaki (UK and Ireland), PONGS® (exclusive UK and Ireland), Gerber MCT (exclusive UK and Ireland), Graphtec (UK and Ireland), Klieverik (UK and Ireland), Xaar (exclusive UK and Europe), Berger, HP (UK), AE Sewing Machines (exclusive UK and Ireland), Easymount (UK and Ireland).
www.cmyuk.com



W2P: opportunities and pitfalls



Richard Clark

Owner, Raccoon



Stuart Maclaren

CEO, YPP Group

Do you have a Web-to-Print portal? If so, how much of your business comes in via that, and do you expect that to change much over the next couple of years?

Yes, we launched the www.bigprintfast.com website a few years ago. A minimal amount of business comes through the site though - it accounts for approx. 0.1% of our print related turnover.

We currently have a Web-to-Print portal which has been developed in-house for a large part of our business. At present all of our new brand customgifts.co.uk artwork is auto-created on our website and the print files is generated at the time of payment and sent straight into our production system. This way we can cut down on the volume of artwork needing to be checked and already know the files are print ready and feed into to production around the clock for the team. In terms of our large-format side of the business, we currently have around about 40% of this feeding into the business this way but with a large amount of work being done in the background to develop new links and integration we will be offering this to more clients to feed orders in, change address and files all the way up to the point of when it is going to be printed.

Is it proving worth the investment?

As an investment it hasn't proven worthwhile. However, we have continued with the investment and committed to the website since its launch. It hasn't opened new revenue streams and never was meant to. It was more about providing customers with an easier way of placing print orders and for us to have a more efficient way of processing low-value enquiries.

This has been a massive investment - currently over £200k - and in the long time this will pay off without doubt. We are increasing the volume of orders we can produce, and it is a major part of showing major brands that we can keep within guidelines and also within the brand rules with fonts and also checking for paternity checks.

In the large-format sector as a whole, Web-to-Print has been slow to take hold. Why do you think that is?

I believe the reason for the slow take up within large-format print is that there are too many variables to consider for each sales enquiry and order. The potential customer always has a lot of questions that need answering and is very often unsure in respect of materials, finishing requirements and end application. This means that the sector still leans very heavily towards 'consultancy' and 'service' during the sales process, eliminating the W2P automated process that you see within small format print. I don't see it ending anytime soon.

It's hard for large-format for a number of reasons we have come up against. Because people have a logo on a business card doesn't mean that same logo will work on a flag or a roller banner, which they don't always realise. Creating the designs in a live window is also a lot more technical. This means that customers tend to want you to check over their stretch stand which has a cost price of £500 compared to some business cards at £20. It means you become more of a tech company than a print company - tech and Web developers are joining our team faster than people in any other department we have.

The other challenge we have found is that you need to find people not only used to building websites, but ones learning and building api links into systems which currently don't let you feed automatic files around the clock - to make sure the volume of orders are Ripping ready for the team to print.

Given the bespoke capability of digital inkjet print and with the rise and rise of personalisation - especially in the online B2C market - do you think large-format PSPs need to attend to a W2P offering or risk newly emerging competitors stealing a march?

I believe that all PSP's need to give thought to their W2P offering, introducing either a website or portal that compliments their business activities and brings additional efficiencies and automation to the sales and order taking/processing stages.

Well this is B2C market is where YPP Group has been investing, signing major brands under European and UK master partnerships - meaning not only can we produce personalised gifts (from football clubs to major films such as Harry Potter and Batman to Loony Toons and Toy Story) in-house, but we have the rights to resell these items to other gifting markets too. I think the personalised market is something that will grow each year but you need a lot of money, integrations and support to make this happen.

How do you think W2P will play out across the large-format print sector over the coming five years?

It's a difficult question to answer and it depends on what your end product is within the large-format sector. For those PSPs that focus primarily on providing print and have an emphasis on trade clients then I believe it will gradually grow and that customers will start to adopt W2P for sourcing and purchasing. For those companies that work within niche markets, this will also see an increase in W2P adoption. For those companies that combine print with other services and products and offer a more bespoke offering, then W2P will continue to be irrelevant.

I think W2P will not yet make a major change to most of the large-format sector. I think this is a big part of where the market is going, but the cost of development is along way off where the return will be.

The systems on the market all have little bits that are good, but there is not one system that can deal with all sections of the W2P market at present. I think the businesses that invest in this will benefit, but when you are spending tens of thousands on producing the systems the business must believe in what they are creating.

Despite the rise of online personalised print offerings and oft quoted 'run of one' capability of digital inkjet, Web-to-print continues to be eschewed by a large swathe of large-format print companies. Is it only too obvious why that's the case, or are you missing out?



Ed Curren

Creative director, Vinyl Impressions

No we don't. We got rid of one we were developing after it failed to meet key ROI milestones. I wholeheartedly believe however, that we need to get out of the way, but allowing customers to get straight to the price and place an order...? But, they know what they want, so we will keep researching this.

Unfortunately not. It has burnt a fairly large whole in our pocket and we have only the experience to show for it. But it won't stop us going again.

Being such visual products, and such a wide range, there needs to be a combination of visualisation and variable pricing happening in tandem (unless selling to the trade). This makes it a more complex challenge. Coupled with large, complex design files that need to be preflight proofed, all round it is not easy.

I think personalisation in the B2B world is different because generally the design is created bespoke for the product. But what is interesting is being able to get a system that would create a bespoke template based on custom inputs.

Due to the complexity of products, I do think it will be a slow burner. I don't think we will have a disruptive switch that we should all be panicking about. I think that a print marketplace is more likely to be the disrupter that I'm watching out for.



Richard McCombe

Director, Matic Media Services

We have the most awesome portal that runs both the front-end, client facing bit but which is also used by our customer service team. It is loaded with 350 product types with the power to deliver a quote, create instant templates for any sized anything, upload artwork, preflight, edit and proof in... 60 seconds. No-one else believes us either, but it's true.

What is most valuable is that the artwork is then delivered directly to the Rip stations that then deliver the artwork to either dedicated roll-to-roll machines, dye-sub or flatbed. The cutter files are automatically delivered to our Zund.

We are currently integrating our CRM for pop-screening our customer service team and automated remarketing to visitors to the website who have used the facility but not placed an order.

It is an ongoing continual investment project that has changed our entire business model to "many customers with many orders of low ATV". Our W2P platform powers our trade service <http://graphicwarehouse.co.uk>

Our largest contract came to an end and was not renewed owing to public sector cutbacks. The amount the public sector was spending halved and we were looking down the barrel of a shotgun unless we launched our trade service earlier than expected. This has allowed us to sustain our existing turnover and we have recently returned to the profit margins we were making after two years' of pain.

It's been worth the hard work and effort of our in-house developer/director Robert McCombe.

It has reduced the reliance on projects arriving on time as the low risk orders for commoditised items are still in demand. Without this platform we would not have been able to offer a competitive trade service.

Our research showed that an 8-colour commercial printer with all the usual finishing equipment has around 12.5K combinations. We took our stocks, ink types, printers (five technologies), finishing equipment, etc and realised we had 125,000 combinations!

To create our W2P platform we took all our 'ingredients' and mapped these to stocks, then stocks to printer compatibility and ink, then mapped these to finishing equipment and created 'recipes'. The recipes create commoditised products, which are not restricted by size or volume. However our system calculates the dimension and weight while also selecting the correct carrier based on these parameters giving the client and automatic delivery cost by pinging the correct carried servers. It took a year to simply map the system out.

We have manufactured over 30,000 photo canvases for 20,000 unique customers. We did this through Groupon, Living Social, It Is On... but the bubble burst. After this we simply could not find a route to market with a product that was not damaged by competitive margin erosion. The cost of acquisition for consumers was so high without going through a consumer buying platform, we found this model unsustainable.

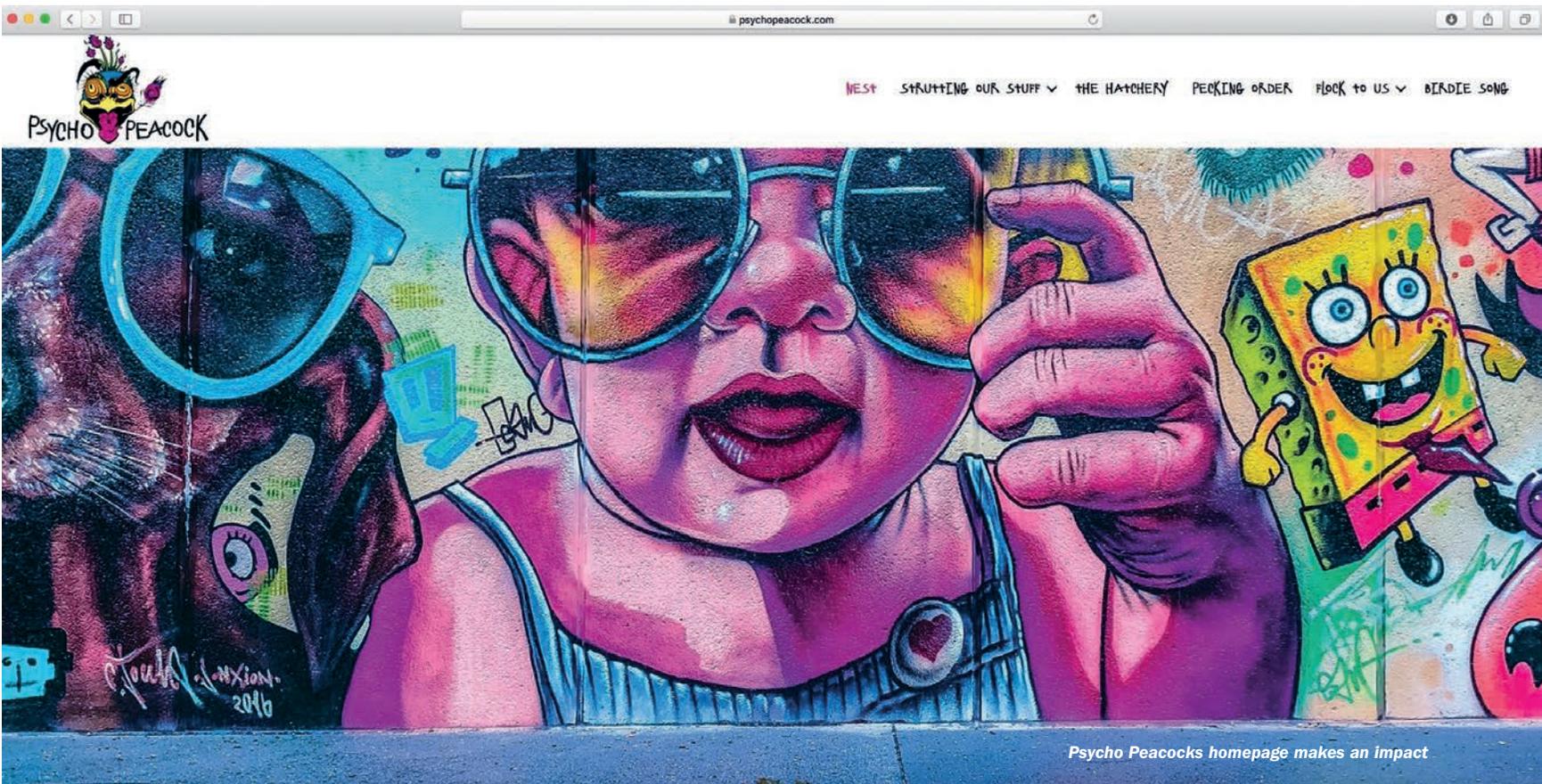
There are other selling/buying platforms now that may offer a lower cost route to the consumer market but we could not make the numbers work for us. This does not mean we have not had many ideas of things that consumers could purchase using our print technology.

We do have a website that we leave running, it ranks high in Google (Next Day Posters) and it is posters which are purchased online and printed automatically on our Océ Colourwave - this is true W2P with no human interaction.

It is an obvious step but we still find little on the market that does everything we can make our own platform do: CRM integration, instant pricing, costing, proofing, editing, outputting print-ready files, generating cutter files, scheduling, carriage management and tracking - and of course accountancy software integration.

This is a lot and it depends on what the need is: take online orders with print-ready PDF's; client integration with your workflow which works for your product range; end-to-end integration from enquiry to sale and then remarketing. I could go on and on here and this is where the interpretation of W2P is confusing. For us it is not just one thing.

Each large-format PSP has its own needs and combinations of speciality - so, who can develop a W2P platform with the software, hardware, media and product knowledge other than grassroots businesses that really understands the needs while also having the expertise to integrate through existing software with (or without) API's? It is not easy to develop.



Psycho Peacocks homepage makes an impact

STRUTTING THEIR STUFF

WHAT'S IN A NAME? PSYCHO PEACOCK'S MD THINKS THERE'S A WHOLE LOT, WHICH IS WHY HE'S THROWN EVERYTHING AT THE COMPANY'S WHACKY REBRAND. COULD YOUR BUSINESS BENEFIT FROM A SIMILAR APPROACH?

What's the name Funky Pigeon got to do with greetings cards? And what's the name Psycho Peacock got to do with print? Absolutely nothing. And that's the point. "We want to bamboozle people and get them Googling who we are and what we do," says Simon Higginbottom, MD of the £3m turnover Manchester firm, currently moving from its original location to a newly fitted out site 15 minutes down the road - one that will be a better home for the expanding, rebranded business.

Until March 2019 Psycho Peacock was GBM - the initials of the company's founders - which two years before had been bought-out and amalgamated with the new parent's other acquisition, Contact Photographic Services (CPS). Staff from the latter - which was based just about a mile away - were moved to the GBM site, with the GBM Group providing print, joinery, electrics services to largely local clients. When Higginbottom, a director at GBM, became MD of the enlarged operation he saw a chance to revamp and reenergise it.

"From day one I was always looking at rebranding because we had amalgamated a large customer-

base and it was confusing. Plus, we had a good name for ourselves around the M60 area, but beyond that no-one had really heard of GBM," he explains. "We wanted to make our brand more recognisable nationwide - something more modern and off-the-wall that would stick in peoples' minds. We also wanted to make a visual impact and get people talking."

It's done that as Higginbottom himself regales: "Around here we get greasy spoon vans and I'd been going to one of them for about 20 years when the lady in it asked me why we'd changed our name and style and what did we do? In all that time she'd never once asked me about GBM. But our name and visual branding is making a stir and that's what we want - people asking 'Who are you'."

Just take a look at the company's vans and website and you'll get it. The mad bird logo across Psycho Peacock's transport fleet certainly makes heads turn. Go to its webpage and not only do the stunning, whacky visuals continue, but the bird-based creative theme continues with drop down menus like 'Nest', 'The Hatchery', 'Pecking Order', much of it - but not all - created in-house. And that's at a company that doesn't even have a proper marketing team.

"We've never had a marketing department, either internal or external, but now we are getting better know we can't just sit in our nest, we have to keep hatching new plans, so that might change," says Higginbottom, who takes pride in having personally come up with the company's new strapline 'Thinking Beyond Print'.

"That was my idea, because people aren't coming to us for 'print' but for a 'service'. A lot of what we do goes beyond print - consultancy, joinery, electrical, making it all happen. It's one of the reasons why we took the decision not to have 'print' in our name. The word 'print' itself has connotations that don't necessarily align with what we are or how we want to

be perceived. We are in a creative sector and want to showcase that," stresses Higginbottom. >

That was key to the brief given to specialist branding agency Blo after holding a workshop together on the company's focus and aims. "They came up with a list of possible names which we dwindled down. They worked up some branding around those and we chose Psycho Peacock. Blo came up with the logo and some brand guidelines, after which we changed all our marketing materials, vans, website etc. - did everything from scratch.

Higginbottom says the switch from GBM to Psycho Peacock branding in total took six months, with an internal team providing input and a freelance website designer handling the site relaunch, "which only took about three weeks to be up and running from the time of providing him with our brief!"

The focus now is on the business's relocation and expansion. Since the takeover of GBM more than £120,000 has been invested in new production kit, including an Oce Colorado and Jetrix IR320 (the 100th Jetrix sold in the UK) large-format printers. At the time of writing a new Zund cutter was due for installation, to replace one of the existing two, and another two printers are in the pipeline for next year - one likely to be a dye-sub machine to meet Psycho Peacock's move into fabric printing.

"Before the changes GBM was about 80% retail focused," says Higginbottom. "But retail is in difficulty, so yeah, we have been thinking about other growing markets. Exhibition/events is probably about 40% of what we do now, museums another 5-10%, and retail the rest. Our widening focus hasn't necessarily impacted our rebranding ideas, but the rebranding itself is definitely helping us make more of an impact."

So how do you measure the ROI of such a move? By the number of new clients? "Well, about 10% of our clients have come on board since the rebrand," says Higginbottom, and we're getting many more hits on our website - we know because we've got somebody monitoring that for us. In terms of turnover it's still early days to say how that is going to be affected, but interest has certainly increased."

Some of that interest could be put down to Psycho Peacock's decision to strut its stuff more publicly too. This year it exhibited at Confex North, a show for the conferencing sector. Higginbottom says it is also considering taking part in a family attractions event.

"I think we need to get ourselves out and about a bit more. Some of the shows are just not cost-effective to attend, but some other niche ones are. We took on two new clients from the Confex North show alone. When we put our stand up people kept coming over and saying 'we have to ask what you do?'. That was all because of the logo and artwork."

Psycho Peacock's also splashing the eye-catching branding all over its new production site, "something that was always in the plan from the amalgamation," says Higginbottom.

"If you ask me 'is the rebrand paying off?', my answer would be '100% yes'."



Simon Higginbottom, MD

OUR NAME
AND VISUAL
BRANDING IS
MAKING A STIR
AND THAT'S
WHAT WE WANT -
PEOPLE ASKING
'WHO ARE YOU'



Psycho Peacock's newly rebranded vans are creating a stir



David Hyams...

In 2011 long-time graphic designer David Hyams founded Talking Print - a company that provides audio and video implanted print services. Image Reports interviewed him a couple of years later, excited about the dynamism his services could bring to print and how they could stimulate new opportunities. Over the years Talking Print has grown significantly, with David now employing another two staff and turning over £900,000. But he's still to crack large-format print. Why?

By Lesley Simpson

Print may talk - but not when it comes to large-format it seems. Is that a fair summary when it comes to the level of take-up you've had for your services from this sector?

Yes. Put bluntly, we've done nothing really with the large-format sector.

Is the 'talking print' message falling on deaf ears when it comes to 'selling' the idea to large-format print companies - or is it something else, like them being unable to move the conversation forward with their potential clients?

I think it's that people need to get their heads around how large-format print can actually use the type of integrated services we provide. Basically, we make print talk and sing.

We have really marketed our services by word of mouth and waited for people to knock on our door and say 'hey, can you do this for us?'. And the thing is, if the creatives don't know what can be achieved with sound and vision integrated into large-format print they're not going to ask to do it. And perhaps the print supplier doesn't know enough about possibilities either to pitch them to their clients.

So, have you been trying to get involved in the 'creative' conversation between large-format print companies and their clients about the possibilities of talking print over the years?

At the moment we sell to clients/brands direct, to agencies and to printers - albeit not large-format ones. Someone will come to us and say 'we like the idea of putting a voiceover or a piece of music, or a video into a brochure - can you help us fulfil that?' The conversation has never been 'can we integrate it into a really enormous poster, or museum graphic' or whatever. I know I'm reactionary rather than being pro-active and I have to admit that I myself have not pushed the conversation forward in the large-format space.

However, we are very high up on Google search listings - if someone just types in an online request for something like 'video in print', so it's not like we aren't visible.

Because I've been working in print for so long now I have a lot of contacts in the industry and I'm fairly well known as someone to come to if you want to do something whizzy - so in a way it's odd that the large-format print community has not asked about our services because there is certainly scope.

To your mind, what needs to change then if 'talking print' is to make real noise in large-format print applications/markets?

I think it all has to start with the creative and them coming up with ideas. If they're designing a poster, why not make it talk? Integrating screen technology is passé now, but integrating embedded sound technology is not - and it's a lot cheaper.

We have a portfolio of integrated print technology, all of which is currently in small-format, but all of which could be used on a much larger scale.

I think the barriers that people perceive when it comes to large-format print is that it is often outside and viewed from afar. But we know that there are many more applications and situations where adding something like sound could make a real statement - and for really quite a small amount of money because the technology isn't that expensive.

So, we could have a large-format poster on a wall with a ten-inch video screen inserted, where someone pushes a button and it activates. I'm not talking an expensive LED screen but a cheaper option - and we can supply just one if that's the requirement. Or we can supply 100, whatever. The thing is it brings print to life, and that's what needs to be pitched to clients.



...founder, Talking Print

The actual act of integrating the technology is a post-print job, but the thing is it needs to be planned for at the creative stage, which is why I say the creatives need to buy into the possibilities first. The problem is, they are so bound up in digital that they just don't think about how they can make print more creative.

What about getting your message out via shows and events?

I've done a number of print shows, but the thing is the audiences are printers - and they go to print shows to look at machines primarily, and also, those that do listen to what I've got to say are not necessarily the best salespeople when it comes to selling the concept up the chain.

Partnering with printers to make a pitch is probably the most sensible way forward because I can provide samples, and usually that's what gets the clients/creatives on board - it's that touchy/feely thing. I'm happy to be white label and work with printers who would like me to go with them to meetings with creatives and discuss the possibilities of print that can talk, sing, light up... and to show examples of what can be achieved.

So have you got a marketing plan to specifically reach out into the large-format print space?

I haven't. And I hold my hands up that I've not been very proactive, mainly because I've been kept busy with work coming into me from the small-format print side of things. But large-format is really a whole new, untapped market, and there are so many novel opportunities.

For instance, there is a photographer/video artist - who I can't name yet - who made a printed wall display of his work and used our video units within that.

The thing is I've had a couple of conversations with

large-format printers, who say, 'wow, this is fantastic', then things just fizzle out, and I guess that's because the idea doesn't get from them to the real creatives. When they are doing a POS job or something the possibility just doesn't seem to be in the creative's mind.

How do you manage to educate the right people then?

I guess it's up to the companies to put something on the table in front of those responsible for the print purchasing, and saying 'look, have you thought about this?' It makes sense for me to get involved at that stage and show actual ideas, which is what I do in more conventional areas of print.

So when you are talking to those people about small-format does the conversation not ever naturally move on to possibilities that would involve large-format - eg exhibition graphics, museum work etc?

No! I often show an 'innovation' PowerPoint presentation showing work I've done recently - and as I say, these have been small-format - but a light doesn't seem to go on and anyone think, 'Ah, so I could incorporate those ideas in other areas of print that I am involved in'.

I don't have the manpower to pitch to everyone so I tend to speak with those people who come to me. I understand it is a bit of a chicken-and-egg situation, but I'd be happy to get involved with large-format print companies who want to offer something novel and very bespoke. You can have a poster with a motion sensor that makes a light come on. You can make a phone call from pressing a button on a print. There are all sorts of interactive and attention grabbing possibilities, but it's about needing to engage with the right people across the print industry and with their clients.

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Account based marketing

According to Marketo, ABM makes the sales process more efficient by reducing up to 50% of sales effort on unproductive prospecting. 80% of organisations that practice ABM properly (and that's an important distinction) say that it's more effective than other marketing channels. In addition, Gartner has shown that 70% more opportunities are created using the ABM approach. So perhaps you should be employing it.

THERE'S NO DENYING IT - SELLING HAS BECOME MORE DIFFICULT. SUDDENLY THE MARKETING TERM ABM (ACCOUNT BASED MARKETING) HAS REPLACED 'CONTENT MARKETING' AS THE MOST EFFECTIVE OUTREACH. NO DOUBT A NEW TERM WILL BE COINED OVER THE NEXT 18-24 MONTHS, BUT THE PRINCIPLES WILL EFFECTIVELY REMAIN THE SAME. SO HERE'S HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF IT ACCORDING TO CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-CUMMING, MD AT MARKETING AGENCY ICE BLUE SKY.

1.

FOCUS YOUR AIM

There are, on average, seven decision makers involved in a B2B buying cycle (Spotio) and anywhere between 50-90% of that journey is completed before a buyer interacts with a vendor. This places more emphasis on marketing than ever before, and means you have to think about the ecosystem of decision makers at your target company. Categorise them into who owns the budget, who makes the decision, who influences the decision, who would you be likely to work with on the project. Divide them up into personas and think about how you would tailor an approach.

2.

LEAD NURTURE

79% of marketing leads never convert into sales and lack of lead nurturing is the lead cause of this (Marketing Sherpa). Plan a campaign over time, not in a 'big bang' and plan different types of content and touchpoints to make the relationship more natural.

For example, create a programmatic email flow in MailChimp (automated email sequence) that shares various types of assets over a two to three week period. When someone downloads something from your website, pop them into the recipient list for that email flow and the system will do the nurturing for you. Make sure the content is personalised for more than just name and company - on your form capture you could ask one or two questions about their business and use this to populate a personalised field on the email or to determine which asset would be best for them.

Then, schedule a time to call people to follow up - don't expect them to do all the hard work.

3.

DO THE LEGWORK

The difference between ABM and content marketing is primarily that with ABM you're tailoring your marketing to specific accounts and, in some cases, people. This doesn't mean just swapping out the name, job title and company within the communication, it means having a solid strategy in place as to who you're going to target and why, and then what you're planning on saying to them.

The next step is to then research that company so you can understand what commercial priorities and challenges they may have that you can align to the topic you wish to discuss with them. The less you talk about yourself and the more you ask about them, the more successful this approach will be.

Good steps to take here are:

- Create a list of organisations you want to win business from. Base the selection on ideal customers you'd like to replicate, either from a specific vertical or company type
- Aim to contact five to ten a week, pick a marketing asset that's suitable, or create one from scratch, and work out which elements could be personalised
- Define your channel outreach, email and physical direct mail
- Do the research on the organisations and use that to create the personalised content

made manageable

4. MIX IT UP

As mentioned in point 2, things won't happen overnight and one piece of communication is not enough. Plan a cycle of communication, which could look something like this:

- Something physical and creative in the mail to get their attention
- Follow up with an email with a useful asset
- Follow up again in the mail, but this time with a commercial asset (research report for example) tailored to that organisation
- Connect with a phone call
- Launch a LinkedIn sponsored update

5. GET THE TOOLS FOR THE JOB

To effectively keep track of the activity, particularly if you have a team working on it, you'll need at a bare minimum a decent CRM such as Insightly, Hub Spot or Really Simple Systems. An email sending tool such as MailChimp is also important, although many CRM systems now have email sending capability which helps with tracking responses. Ideally you'll need tools for:

- Managing contacts
- Tracking which contacts have received which content/campaign
- Automating email sends and content distribution
- Content creation

ABM IS APPROPRIATE FOR WHEN YOU'RE LOOKING TO CREATE A LONG LASTING RELATIONSHIP WITH AN ORGANISATION WHERE YOU DON'T WANT TO COMPETE ON PRICE

6. WORK CLOSELY WITH SALES

ABM will only work well when it's done in close collaboration with sales. The reason for this is that sales have to 100% support the process in order to conduct effective follow up and to build the requisite relationships.

Sit down with sales and select the target accounts, this decision should be made around current intelligence held by the sales team, relevance to your specific type of solution and existing relationships and/or touch-points.

Next, demonstrate to sales what content is planned via what channels and at what point in the customer journey, and plan follow up activities and schedules. On a weekly basis update sales on what's been sent to whom, and give them all the information needed to follow up.

7. BE REALISTIC

ABM, much like any other kind of marketing, is not a magic wand, nor is it necessarily easy. ABM requires time and discipline. It's not inexpensive so you have to balance expected return against the predicted investment. For example, if what is being promoted only costs a few pounds and generates very little margin, ABM is probably not appropriate.

ABM is appropriate for when you're looking to create a long lasting relationship with an organisation, where you don't want to compete on price. The ABM process allows you to challenge thinking through good content, and to build a relationship through multiple touch-points.

And with Sirius Decisions noting that companies that take this approach achieve 27% faster growth than companies who don't, that creates the compelling argument you probably need.

ABM REQUIRES TIME AND DISCIPLINE. IT'S NOT INEXPENSIVE SO YOU HAVE TO BALANCE EXPECTED RETURN AGAINST THE PREDICTED INVESTMENT

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CAN PSPS IN THE UK TAKE A LEAD FROM SYDNEY-BASED MESH DIRECT, WHICH HAS LAUNCHED ECO CAMPAIGN #THINKGREENDOGREEN AS SOMETHING OF A CHALLENGE TO THE INDUSTRY AS A WHOLE?

“We took a look at where the signage industry is at in terms of being a green industry - and we did not like what we saw.” That was the moment when director Andrew Doenicke and his colleagues at Australian wide-format printer Mesh Direct decided to change the way the company worked and launch a campaign called #ThinkGreenDoGreen.

Nearly all signage - including 600 tonnes of billboard banner material - ends up in landfill in Australia, and it was this that initially spurred Mesh, a commercial wide-format printer based in Sydney, New South Wales, which is particularly strong in construction and event signage, to launch its own eco-campaign as a challenge to the industry as a whole. Soon the company was discovering other challenges - how to reduce the carbon emissions from the energy and transportation it relied on - and managers set a target of becoming carbon neutral by 2020.

To achieve this, Mesh's leaders know they have to act now. The business has long-term green goals - which we'll explore later - but has also taken several short-term measures to reduce its emissions. The immediate steps include carbon offsetting for itself, offering customers offsets on every order, and making an offset donation for every referral from a top client. The company has also launched two new sustainable signage materials - EcoBoard which is plastic free and completely recyclable, and EcoVinyl which can be recycled into park benches, decking, bollards and fence posts - and it plans to develop more.

At the same time, directors are thinking long-term. Managers are exploring the practicalities a scheme where stakeholders return its products to a centre where, hopefully, they can be reused and repurposed. If all goes to plan, this will start up in 2022. Doenicke says: “We are working on a business case with the Australian Vinyl Council for producing tiles for building materials made from old vinyl banners. Repurposing vinyl would help dramatically reduce our waste.”

None of this is revolutionary but it is ambitious and, as the company says, this is only the beginning. “We'll continue to ask challenging questions and discover new

“THERE IS A DANGER THAT THE MEDIA, COMPANIES AND THE PUBLIC COME TO SEE THE SECTOR AS A SIGNAGE VS THE EARTH, ALIEN VS PREDATOR-STYLE CLASH”

ways to help the planet and reduce our impact as a business,” says Doenicke. One of the most difficult challenges, in a country the size of Australia, is how to make delivery more carbon efficient while still meeting customers' other expectations.

With the way the industry is operating in Australia at the moment, there is a danger that the media, companies and the public come to see the sector as a signage vs the Earth, Alien v Predator-style clash. Such perceptions have encouraged marketers to turn to digital signage in the belief that this is somehow more 'eco-friendly'. This ignores the fact that recycling digital signage can be a complex and expensive task and that, once printed signage is installed, there are no further carbon emissions.

This false dichotomy is something Mesh wants to change and hopes that other wide-format businesses will want to change too. The company's Instagram account, which has just over 4,000 followers, is certainly promoting the message but it would be fair to say that it hasn't exactly gone viral.

In this respect, the experience is not that dissimilar to the Sustainable Green Printing Partnership in North America which, despite the obvious benefits to companies' image and efficiency of getting accreditation has made steady, rather than spectacular progress since it was formed back in 2007. Yet many companies are still plugging away: in June, British company Signs Express Bath announced it had joined the Planet Mark sustainability scheme and sourced a new vehicle wrap vinyl from a non-PVC polymer material. In the last issue of this magazine we carried a piece on a new recycling initiative between Soyang and Blue Castle, and CMYUK is working on a recycle scheme too.

To truly change the game, wide-format companies need to educate their customers about the real environmental impact of competing media and keep challenging themselves to reduce their environmental impact. Pledging to become carbon neutral, as Mesh has done, is a bold step, but, when environmental credentials are so often the subject of claim and counterclaim, it is a relatively straightforward benchmark for customers to get their heads around. Isn't it about time that more PSPs took up the challenge?

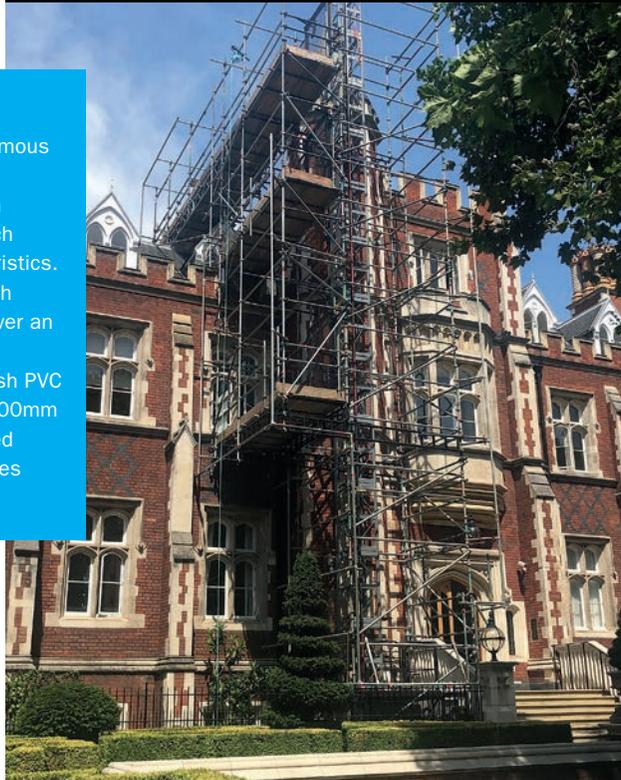


a. All wrapped up

Project Print Management (PPM) has delivered this enormous building wrap at The Bromptons in London.

Built 1844 and originally a hospital, the site has been redeveloped as a residential property by Northacre, which wanted to preserve the building's architectural characteristics. PPM's brief was to hide or disguise the scaffolding, which housed a hoist, while renovation work was carried out over an 18 month period.

The wrap was printed on a 5m-wide printer onto a mesh PVC and finished with eyelets (internal hole size 14mm) at 300mm centres through a 6mm roped edge pocket with a webbed fold and high frequency weld edging on all sides. Rear ties prevents the wrap from peeling.



a.

b. Watt a work

Digital Plus produced 225m² of print direct to eco friendly Bubble Board for the The Library of Birmingham's exhibition celebrating the life and work of James Watt, the Scottish inventor and engineer.

c. Biker groove

Earlier this year Banner Box worked with the Midland Scooter Centre to revamp its newly acquired retail space in the centre of Nottingham. The project involved a complete refurbishment of what could only be described as a "dark, damp derelict premise" into a light and bright eye-catching space.

d. Love all

Space within a shopping mall in Calgary, Canada was transformed into this promotional tennis court using floor graphic media from Drytac.

e. An inside job

Printerior at Fespa 2020 will again hope to showcase the best of large-format print possibilities, such as furniture and soft furnishings.





b.



c.



d.



e.

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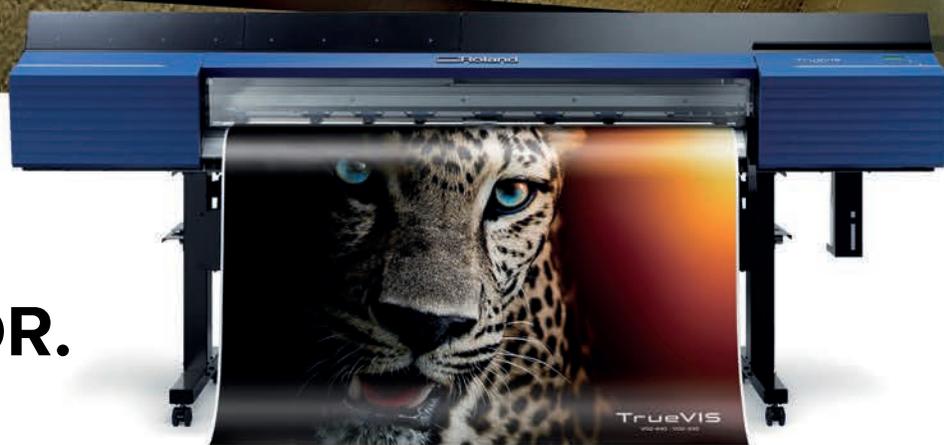
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Ticking over. That's the most accurate description of business at Mole Graphics right now. Customers don't seem to want to make long-term plans until you-know-what is resolved. As a species, we are hard-wired to struggle with uncertainty - it usually makes us want to take 'flight or fight'. It doesn't help that, through volatile financial markets, digital technology and the profusion of 24/7 media, we have effectively created mechanisms that are very efficient at spreading fear and anxiety almost instantly around the globe. Not just spreading fear and anxiety, but amplifying it.

There is a lot to worry about. The B-word, Trump, the fact that the Amazon rainforest is ablaze and the return of Strictly Come Dancing (which always necessitates a certain amount of negotiation in the Mole household) are all, in their very different ways, troubling. Yet it is important to remember the good stuff - West Ham look decent this season, there is a lot of good TV about (I just watched Chernobyl which was simply mesmerising, best thing I've seen

in years) and, even at a time when the country seems to have collectively lost the plot, business at Mole Graphics is still ticking over. Most customers - bless them! - are placing orders.

This year may not be as good for Mole Graphics as 2018, but it will still probably be better than I feared this time last year. And that's kind of the point isn't it? Too many people seem to have forgotten the message in that famous warning: "Your income from shares can go down as well as up." In business, as in life, there are periods where you are marking time - where we display what management consultants call 'resilience'. This seems, right now in the British wide-format sector, to be one of those times, although that shouldn't stop us reflecting on the future.

I've always liked the story about the French marshal who asked his gardener to plant a tree. The gardener replied that the tree was slow-growing and would not reach maturity for 100 years. The marshal said: "In that case, there is no time to lose, plant it this afternoon."

EVENTS

THE INKJET CONFERENCE (THEIJC)	FESPA GLOBAL 2020	SIGN AND DIGITAL 2020	DRUPA 2020
When? 29 - 30 October, 2019	When? 24 - 27 March, 2020	When? 28 - 30 April, 2020	When? 16 - 26 June, 2020
Where? Dusseldorf, Germany	Where? IFEMA Exhibition Centre, Madrid, Spain	Where? NEC, Birmingham	Where? Dusseldorf Messe, Germany
Cost? Non-ESMA members 695 Euro (Various options online for more than one delegate)	Cost? TBA	Cost? Free for trade visitors.	Cost? TBA
Who will be there? The is the sixth European edition of the IJC, which aims to provide insight across the whole gamut of inkjet related technologies in 60 presentations from engineers, chemists, application specialists and academic figureheads	Who will be there? This is the biggie for large-format, so expect most of the manufacturers/suppliers to be there.	Who will be there? Too early to talk about the exhibitor line-up, and as it is sandwiched between Fespa Global and Drupa you may not see the same amount of large-format exhibitors as in other years	Who will be there? Good question! We need to wait until closer to the event to see which companies of relevance to large-format will be exhibiting. It's likely that those who do so will have already launched any new products at the preceding Fespa Global 2020
Should you go? If you are not particularly techy this may not be for you, but if you are and want to keep ahead of the inkjet curve it could well be worth your while	Should you go? Oh yes!	Should you go? Given this is the UK show most orientated towards this sector - though the plans are to broaden its appeal - it's probably still worth a look-see	Should you go? Depends what you want from attending. If you want to see new large-format kit and you've attended Fespa Global 2020, you'll probably not see many more introductions. If you want to see how the industry as a whole is progressing, then it's a big tick
Rating 5/10	Rating 10/10	Rating 7/10	Rating 9/10

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RYAN SHELTON, GENERAL MANAGER, BANNER BOX

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What's having the greatest impact on your business at the moment?

The route to the market has become cheaper than ever with budget inline dye-sub printers. This, in turn, sees a lot of smaller businesses cropping up across the country, which means our products have to be competitive in quality and price. Add to this lower and lower margins and the current climate is very different to that of previous years.

Where do you see the greatest wide-format opportunities?

Tension fabric systems seem to be booming at the moment. We've had an influx of both back-lit and front-lit tension systems and stands.

What would make your day-to-day operations easier?

The introduction of automation - many of our processes involve a lot of manual labour, which eats into production time and increases costs.

Your favourite bit of kit is..?

Our Reggiani Vutek 340. This machine has opened up our capacity exponentially. With the large array of media that it supports, it seems the only limit is our imagination.

What's the best bit of business advice you've been given?

Work smart, not hard. No is never the right answer, there is always a solution.

What are you most proud of achieving?

The team we've put together at Banner Box has never been stronger, with a shared vision and passion for large-format print.

What lesson does the wide-format sector need to learn?

Eco-friendly products are key to staying on top of the ever increasing carbon footprint.



VITAL STATISTICS

CREATIVITY, TRAINING AND STAFF RETENTION ARE KEY ISSUES FOR SIGN INDUSTRY REVEALS NEW RESEARCH COMMISSIONED BY ISA-UK, POWERED BY BSGA.

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95% provide design recommendations, even if the customer doesn't ask for them

80% of respondents to the survey said design and innovation are very important to their business

68% said that recruiting and retaining qualified staff is a key issue

67% said they are frequently asked to make design recommendations

62% said that accessing training is an issue for them



Stand and deliver

WILL YOU BE AN AMBASSADOR FOR PRINT? WILL YOU HELP EDUCATE THE NEXT GENERATION ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITIES A CAREER IN THIS INDUSTRY AFFORDS THEM? DEBBIE MCKEEGAN OF TEXINTEL AND FESPA TEXTILE AMBASSADOR MAKES A RALLYING CALL.

The print industry is a vibrant hub of innovation, excellence and disruptive technology. Well, that's my perspective, and I believe it's accurate...and it's been my world for the last 25 years. I'm sure that many colleagues in the industry would agree. However, it's also true to say that the industry is struggling to convince - and recruit - the next generation. So how do we engage with the - potential - bright young stars of the future?

The summer months are filled with thousands of talented students graduating in all aspects of design and other areas pertinent to print, many of whom will never find employment within their chosen vocation. Why? Because the academic sector and the print industry on the whole, do not have a deep connection, and that's critical to the future of both. It's not good enough that people from the print industry visits final year shows or whatever, looking to recruit. For sure, the sector offers awards and internships for the few, but in reality the connections that will deliver change need to be nurtured much earlier in the education cycle.

In a bright new world of opportunities the print industry must reach out to students, to inspire and educate them as to the variety of employment opportunities and rewards it offers the gifted.

The university system is flawed - with no consistency in curriculum it has become a lottery

AS A PRINT
COMMUNITY
WE MUST
DO MORE
TO MAKE
A POSITIVE
IMPACT

for many individuals who, dependent on where they study, will receive a varied, insufficient education, and one that does not fulfill either their own expectations or those of the workplace. Many courses are not delivering the curriculum the print industry needs, and this has generated a sub-culture of internships, many unpaid, whereby the student must complete at least a year of mentored employment to reach an acceptable level of accomplishment to gain full-time employment.

As the Fespa Textile Ambassador, I was recently asked to speak at the School and College Fashion Week - a new event that engages youth across the UK by delivering career information. The vision is to inspire the next generation (for many of whom university isn't the right option) by connecting with industry and utilising storytelling to showcase the diversity and incredible opportunities the print sector has to offer. As digital nomads, the innovation this industry practices should be an attractive proposition to our youth - if only they knew about it.

It was alarming that as I chatted to many young people and their tutors, their understanding of how our industry functions was on many occasions limited to an old fashioned vision of pigment and steam, and mass production. That's not the industry I know! The print industry clearly needs to be redefined to attract the next generation.

The academic sector is desperate for help, but resources are scarce to say the least, with fewer staff, remote learning and with high numbers of students to staff ratios. Time is limited for all, and we must make a serious effort to alleviate the current situation. It's my belief that this is why the negative space exists - tutors simply don't have the time to reach out to build strong connections with industry, and ironically invest critical time to deliver the learning and external networking platform that will provide jobs for their students and an appropriate curriculum. As a print community we must do more to make a positive impact.

Perhaps one of the issues we overlook is the speed of change that as print practitioners we have all embraced in our daily lives - how can we expect the academic sector to keep up with the industry's eco-system and technology if we don't share our knowledge?

It's a tough industry, and in the years post-recession many businesses simply strive to get to Friday making a profit, whilst working flatout - at the same time adopting essential new technologies to meet customer demands and stay in business. We are just not looking at the wider picture and taking the time to engage with the future generation.

Time is precious, but as professional practitioners we must make the time needed to educate and encourage our youth given they are the future of the print industry.



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