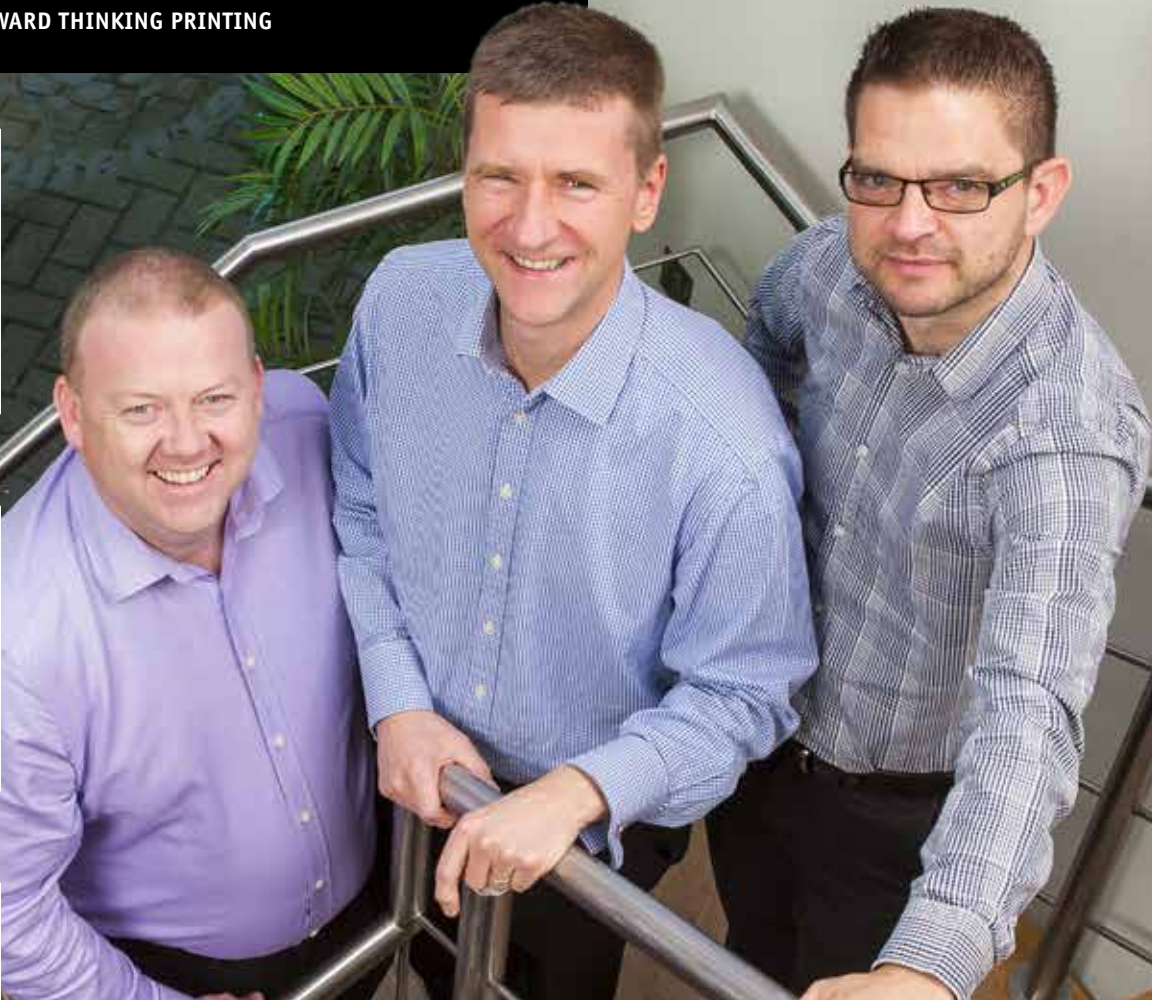


PRINT BUSINESS

THE MAGAZINE FOR FORWARD THINKING PRINTING
JANUARY 2014



CLIMBING TO NEW HEIGHTS

THE REAL DEAL

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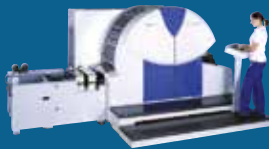
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COMMENTARY

THE NEW YEAR BRINGS WITH IT HOPES FOR new beginnings, a better year than last and resolutions both on a business and personal level to somehow improve on 2013. Some will be the obvious ones about healthier lifestyle choices with vague goals that will be watered down within six weeks. Others may stick.

Some business goals are self evident: improving environmental performance for example will get a big tick from customers and will almost certainly help to reduce costs and thus the bottom line. Others are equally sensible. Look to add services, perhaps wide format or variable data printing. Make the web to print system work effectively. Set up a proper ISO 12647-2 process controlled workflow. Get closer to customers. To discover how shallow these objectives are, try them in the negative. In short such thinking should already be ingrained in any business.

What most in print lack however is an innovative edge. To a large degree success over the next few years will be determined by how effectively they can innovate. Even with economic recovery, print volumes are not going to soar. And every printer offers quality, service and a keen price. How is a buyer to determine which company to use? The answer will come from the fourth dimension: innovation.

Innovation can apply to products a business creates and it can apply to how those products are created. The first requires a combination of customer insight, technical know-how and operator skill. The second needs the ability to question what you do. It is no accident that innovation has tended to come from those outside the industry who ask challenging questions about cherished procedures. Even the kaizen element of lean management does not provide the space for a real challenge to how a business work, concentrating on small improvements to the status quo.

Most printers will not encourage innovation, or change. It is disruptive and demands time. But innovation is more necessary than ever. Customers want to work with and people want to work for innovative companies. In 2014 that is going to become clear.

GARETH WARD *Editor,*



JANUARY 2014

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NAPM calls it a day as major members' exit leaves it stranded

THE NAPM IS TO wind down after more than 90 years representing the interests of UK paper merchants.

The demise was made inevitable after Paperlinx withdrew its membership because it was unwilling to share market figures with rival companies.

Without this information and without its arch rival in membership, Antalis has also decided to step away. As these

two companies dominate the market, and as Premier Paper is also a non member, the continuing for the remaining members was not an option.

NAPM director Tim Bowler says: "It's sad for the industry, but nothing is for ever and things have moved on. It's no good thinking that the NAPM could be representative of the industry, which any trade association strives to do, without

having the support of 95% of the sector."

There have been conversations with the BPIF to ascertain whether a rump of NAPM members might join the federation or what it might offer.

Certainly Paperlinx chief executive Andrew Price has indicated his preference for membership of an organisation that might stimulate his business.

With the market acknowledged to be in decline, Paperlinx believes that discussing the decline in the market has a demotivating effect on sales staff.

At a forum organised by the NAPM last year the most optimistic market forecast was that the decline in volumes would slow to 5% a year for the next five years. It has been running at 9% a year.

MAKE READY FOR IPEX IN TWO MONTHS' TIME

IPEX IS ADDING a Make Ready Challenge to the features at the show which is now less than two months away.

The idea is to pit two-man teams against the clock to achieve a pass sheet on a ten-year-old Speedmaster 52 without the aid of makeready features.

The contest is the idea of IpeX sales director Wayne Beckett who has persuaded print machinery breakdown insurance specialist Burnetts to sponsor the feature.

There will be significant cash



The race to make ready on Speedmaster 52 is on.

prizes for the winning teams as well as glory.

Entry is limited to 36 two-man teams who are expected to be familiar with the press.

IpeX is looking to attract international interest as well as UK printers.

Each team will load 250 sheets of paper, mount the plates and achieve the pass sheet before running out of paper or time.

After each time trial the press will be cleaned and returned to a starting state for the next team. Six teams will compete each day.

Colchester Print Group gets greener with PV

A NEW PHOTOVOLTAIC panel installation has helped push Colchester Print Group to being recognised as one of the greenest companies in East Anglia.

The company is one of the Green 50 Norfolk businesses recognised as part of the Anglian Green 100 awards.

It is the only print business in Norfolk to earn the accolade says group managing director Philip Colchester.

The company has long been an advocate of environmen-

tally sustainable policies which has helped it secure work from NGOs concerned with wildlife and the environment.

It has held ISO 14001 for some years, the first in the region with the certification, and had more recently achieved Emas certification.

Part of this is that, working through the Paperlinx organised scheme, it can offer to carbon balance a print job, resulting in 17,230kg of CO₂e being offset through the World Land Trust.

This year the company has

installed a solar panel array to its Breckland Print premises close to Norwich.

It is using Agfa's Azura TS chemistry free plates in order to satisfy the requirements of customers like Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace.

Colchester says: "We are incredibly proud to be in the Green 100.

"Our Group recognises and accepts it has a responsibility to produce products that care for the community and the environment, and in doing so

we introduced award winning initiatives to improve our environmental performance throughout.

"We can carbon offset manufacturing at Colchester Print to go carbon neutral, and we've also installed photovoltaics that produce a 50 kilowatt system so we are now generating our own energy.

"Ultimately our clients enjoy all benefits of well produced printed material, safe in the knowledge they're playing a part in protecting the environment."

Domino on target to sell 25 N610i presses after predecessor success

DOMINO PRINTING Sciences is stepping up its efforts in inkjet label printing, aiming to sell 25 of its N610i presses following the launch of the press at Label-expo in September.

It has sold ten of the N600 model, its first attempt at making an end to end printing press, earning almost £8 million from the venture according to its 2013 preliminary results. These show the company with sales up 8% at £335.7 million and underlying profits almost static at £53.0 million. However, the company has decided to write down its investment in US egg marking venture TEN Media to nil. This is equivalent to a £30.3



million impairment charge for the 14.85% holding that Domino has in the business.

Further redundancy and reorganisation costs reduced the declared pretax profit to £17.7

million (£53.9 million). The company enters 2014 with “a more positive outlook than for the past two years,” says group managing director Nigel Bond. This comes from improving economic outlook, new products and assistance from legislation. The Falsified Medicines Directive will require coding on pharmaceutical products, which will drive demand for coding equipment as the industry gears up for implementation over the next four or five years in order to deliver audited traceability.

Full details of how extensive the coding and data management aspects of the FMD will be must wait until national legis-

lation is implanted, which must be done by 2016. However, Domino has suitable equipment and inks and has been at the forefront of helping packers and pharmaceutical companies meet the requirements of the Directive.

The group is well balanced both in the geographies it serves and market sectors. Food, beverages, pharmaceutical and commercial print represent 67% of total sales while geographically, Europe is 41%, the Americas 25% and Asia and the rest of the world, 34%. It increased sales to China by 11%, despite the uncertain conditions in the country.

Nicholson & Bass celebrates 75 years and looks to future

BELFAST PRINTER Nicholson & Bass celebrated its 75th anniversary at the end of last year, looking forward to calmer waters than the last five years have delivered.

“The last five years have been a battle,” says managing director Jonathan Megarry. “We have cleared out the old guard, those stuck in old ways of thinking and have signifi-

cantly remodelled our business to make it leaner, more efficient and invested in the latest technology to keep us at the top of our game.”

The printer is the smallest of three B1 print businesses in Northern Ireland, and the company has won more quality awards than any other in Ireland.

This allowed it to win a lot of

work from the Londonderry/Derry city of culture celebrations last year.

It is looking forward to printing for the start of the Giro d'Italia, the grand tour cycling event which spends three days in Northern Ireland in May before returning to Italy.

It has undertaken benchmarking exercises to monitor prices against those from

England and Scotland, finding that it comes out much cheaper says Megarry.

“And we are working hard to grow digitally, we will be looking more at that, checking new avenues for the business, including mailing,” he adds.

The longer term aim is to ensure that the business will be around in another 25 years to celebrate its centenary.

Paragon picks up ex-RR Donnelley direct mail producer in France

PARAGON HAS BOUGHT a French business, which until this summer traded as RR Donnelley SAS as a direct mail producer from a factory at Cosne sur Loire, little more than an hour south of Paris.

The €14 million business will now trade as Paragon marketing Solutions SAS. It has offices in Belgium, France and the UK and 116 staff that have transferred to Paragon.

RR Donnelley announced

plans to sell or close the business in May, eventually striking a deal with a French business which failed to stick.

Paragon has stepped in to merge the business within its Paragon Marketing Solutions arm, where European sales director Eamonn Burke says: “This acquisition marks very exciting times for the Paragon Group. With the addition of an innovative and established direct mail division, coupled with

Paragon’s portfolio of complementary marketing services, we have a strong offering for brands and businesses of all sizes”.

There will be few changes in the short term, but Paragon has already pledged to invest.

It will spend €3-5 million to create a centre of excellence for direct mail at the plant, handling personalised direct mail as well as medium and long run campaigns.

The first slice of this, some

€1.5 million, will come through in the new year.

At the same time the UK based company plans to provide the existing customers in retail, charities and luxury brands access to other group services, including intelligent marketing solutions.

Paragon operates a €185 million business across Europe with 12 manufacturing operations including an existing plant in Cosne sur Loire.

Xaar invests in R&D in bulk piezo technology and wide 501 head

XAAR IS GROWING its R&D commitment, taking on a third unit to increase floor space to 48,000sq ft and anticipating an increase in spend to 11% of its increasing revenues from 10% currently. It has increased staff levels in R&D by 60% to 130 this year.

The activity is split between what it calls the bulk piezo technology division, which develops its current range of products, particularly around its 1001 head. This has come to dominate the ceramics and industrial print market where Xaar is expected to earn £97.9 million this year, compared to £14.7 million from graphic arts and £16.8 million from packaging. Profits increased 231% to £22.3 million in the first half of this year.

The company is on course to introduce the 501 head, a high performance, low cost head that is aimed at its wide format OEM



Current head production is largely mechanical.

customers in the first quarter of 2014. It is also working with five OEM partners on direct to shape printing for the packaging market.

However, the greater potential comes from the thin film piezo technology division, which is concentrating on a new style of print head, produced by MEMS manufacturing rather than mechanical assembly as with the current generation

of heads. The thin film piezo head will have a 1,200dpi resolution and will run three times as fast as the 1001 head for the same size droplet. This will open new applications including high quality printing for commercial print applications. The heads will have a lower cost of operation and it will be easier to create larger arrays for single pass colour printing.

This head will not be shipped

until 2016, with a select few customers invited to participate in a beta sampling process at the end of 2015. Sometime this year Xaar must decide whether to use part of its cash mountain to invest in its own MEMS fab plant or to outsource elements of the manufacturing process.

Ramon Borrell, R&D director, says: "I am delighted that we have been able to continue to grow our investment in R&D to support Xaar's future over the longer term. We have an enormous opportunity ahead of us to disrupt large and well established markets with innovative technology which is transforming a number of sectors."

This includes new processes to add tactile and lustre effects for tiles, huge opportunities in printing wood laminates, where currently just 1% of the material is printed digitally and which is forecast to grow to 40% by 2022.

ROI360 takes a six-figure stake in new Pageflex Inc

UK DISTRIBUTOR ROI360 has acquired an undisclosed stake in the newly formed Pageflex Inc, ending a period of uncertainty for the web to print software developer.

The Cambridgeshire business has invested an undisclosed six-figure sum in the newly formed entity, but has declined a board position.

The deal, announced in early January, ends a period of uncertainty for Pageflex users as the former Bitstream owned business has sought to quit the US stock market to establish itself as a private company. This has been completed through a merger between Marlborough Software Development Holdings and a company called Pageflex Acquisitions. The

new company has changed its name to Pageflex Inc, in which ROI360 is a major shareholder.

As a result ROI360 gains a greater strategic say in how the software is developed and has the opportunity to expand representation of the SaaS version of Pageflex to cover Europe.

It is not an option that the UK business plans to exercise in the immediate future says ROI360 director Simon Ellington. "We have the right to appointment our own distributors and resellers for the SaaS product across Europe, but have no immediate plans to do so. We are quite excited about the opportunities we have now we have a stake in the business and to shape its future."

The US company had sold its Bitstream font business to Monotype two years ago and its mobile browser business has also ceased leaving a company based on the Pageflex Storefront and other applications.

Revenues had also shrunk to the point where paying the \$600,000 per annum to be a listed company made no sense. Reorganisation had already brought redundancies and the business sought to reshape itself earlier this year.

The aim had been to complete the process by the end of September.

Pageflex president and CEO Pinhas Romik says: "The main goal of Pageflex is to continue to ensure satisfaction of its customers while seeking to

manage a growing and profitable business." This is certainly the case for ROI360 says Ellington, pointing to the way that companies have adopted online purchasing have been able to grow during recession.

"Our research shows there are just over one third the number of printing companies in the UK than there were in 2005. As the market has been shrinking the average net worth of an ROI360 customer has increased by £257,995.

ROI360's marketing portals, powered by Pageflex technology have proved time and again to be the linchpin in driving new business wins for our customers and that is why investing in a strategic stake in Pageflex makes a lot of sense to us," he says.



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Falder Matthews installs XL106 to increase capacity at Basildon plant

ELLE MEDIA has kicked off the new year with a new press. The company, previously trading as FM Print and also known as Falder Matthews, is replacing its ten-colour Komori Lithrone 28 with a Heidelberg XL106 five-colour plus coater. The machine arrived on 6 January, after the Komori had been shipped out.

The investment will increase capacity at the Basildon company thanks to faster running speeds and short makereadies, which managing director James Cuthbert intends to make full use of. "It's hugely quicker than the Komori," he says. "It's an 18,000sph machine that we will be running at 18,000sph and make sure that we take advantage of all the makeready advantages.

"When we went to see it, we fully expected things to have moved on, but we hadn't realised things had moved on that much." The company had had some inkling because competitors with this generation of



The new board with James and Bruce Cuthbert flanked by Bill Kelleway and Chris Hilleard.

machine have been able to offer much keener pricing and remain profitable. As a consequence says Cuthbert, the industry is dividing. "It's getting to the point where there's a big gap between those able to offer the quality and the cost that the new technology delivers and those that haven't got it."

Cuthbert has stepped up to be managing director on a restructured board that comprises Bill Kelleway as operations director and Chris Hilleard as production with Bruce Cuthbert becoming executive chairman. Since moving to a 26,000sq ft factory, previously occupied

by a company producing dashboard for Ford Motors, in 2010 and investing in a secondhand SM102 long perfecter, sales have climbed from £2 million to £5 million.

As well as print, the Elle Media Group comprises a creative design arm and a greetings cards publishing business which contributes about 20% of sales says Cuthbert and "has been growing nicely". The rest comes from commercial print, with a strong element of sustainability. The company has held ISO 14001 since 1997 and is able to carbon balance what it prints. This ethos led to specifying

that the new press should be supplied as a carbon balanced machine by Heidelberg. "That is important to our customer base that comes to us for this reason," he explains.

The company is sending staff to Heidelberg at Brentford for training and will also train on the press once it is in place. "We have been offered help in training by a nearby printer that has an XL106 and a minder who joined us in the summer already has experience on the XL106," says Cuthbert.

He is not rushing to the next stage of the investment plan, which may include looking at finishing and plate making capacity once the press is in operation. Before then, Elle will be looking at strengthening its MIS and its production workflow in order to get jobs to the press efficiently. "The newer MIS systems can cope with the ganging we do on cards and fulfilment as well," says Cuthbert. "This is just the start of the investment plan."

Sturdy Labels adds eight-colour Edale flexo press

SKELMERSDALE label printer Sturdy Labels has added an eight-colour Edale FL-3 UV flexo machine to join a line up that includes an Edale Beta 250mm wide web press.

The new machine is a dual servo press, has a 350mm wide web and offers cold foiling, variable length sheeting, delay and

realm functionality. It is being used to produce labels for the healthcare and food sectors as well as chemical, glass, electronic and paper sectors. The new machine allows the company to further expand into film labels and flexible packaging applications.

The installation follows a two-year gestation period after Simon

Sturdy saw the Edale at Label-expo in 2011, which led to a follow up visit to Edale's factory in Hampshire. He says: "We looked and demonstrated many different machines but decided to go with the Edale FL-3 due to the quick turnaround, fast job changes and minimal ink and material waste."

And the experience to date is that the company is delivering on this. It has worked to create an opaque white ink to run on the press to meet the expectations of the personal care sector, where the ability of the press to cope with low calliper unsupported film, will pave the way for future developments, Sturdy explains.

SECOND FOLIANT GEMINI 400A LAMINATOR FOR UK MAIL

UK MAIL has ordered a second Foliant Gemini 400A laminator from IFS following a happy experience with the first which was installed at the company's Birmingham site. The second is going to its Bristol plant.

Both are intended to add a finish to postcards ordered through a new app that is an initiative from the company's Imail division, allowing mail campaigns to be launched by phone. Lamination will add a

layer of protection to the digitally printed cards as well as enhancing the finish of the toner printed cards.

The Foliant Gemini is the entry level machine running at 15m/min, operated through

a touch screen and with a fast warm up cycle. Nevertheless the machines will be busy.

UK Mail anticipates a 150% growth over this year with a return on investment inside two years.