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What do you do when you want to offer a complete solution or extend your product offerings?

You can invest in the necessary equipment and capabilities. Or you can partner with a company that offers the finishing touches that complete the solution. That’s what you will learn when you read our feature articles on Technology Partnerships and the Benefits of Partnering.

There is another aspect to partnering that I recommend you consider. As rewarding as partnering can be, it comes with some risks. You’ll no longer be totally autonomous, for one thing, and you’ll need to decide how and who handles both technical service and account management. If partners don’t see eye to eye, you can wind up losing the customers you’ve both worked very hard to gain.

Here are a few practices that will allow you to avoid any mishaps. At the top of the list—make sure whichever you choose to partner with has the same vision and goals that you do. Check out your prospective partner’s reputation—the two of you should enhance each other’s offering rather than detract from it. It’s always best that your client has only one phone call to make should a service issue arise. Just be sure the call is routed to the person who can best resolve the issue with the greatest of ease. Have regular meetings with your partner to review and perfect not just your relationship but the ones between the two of you and your clients.

Speaking of partnerships reminds me of Connect. This is a conference where EFI connects not only with our technology partners but with our most important partners—you. It is here that we exchange ideas, learn from experiences and gather the input that allows us to continually improve EFI offerings. If you didn’t get the opportunity to get to Connect 2015 this January, you can still send us your feedback. Let us know what would make your printing life better. Tell us how you would improve the hardware or software products you use. Write to me at adriana.puccio@efi.com.

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The Benefits of Partnering

You’ll increase resources, reduce costs, share delivery systems and avoid duplication. That means you’ll earn more money as you reach new markets.

The handwriting is on the wall. Digital printing is the future. But it is not that simple. Not all digital printing is created equal. To ready your business for the future, you have to set your sights on growth markets. By doing this, you will also achieve short-term growth.

If your current setup does not allow you to reach those markets, you need to do one of two things: Invest in the necessary equipment and personnel or find a partner who already has those capabilities. When you find the right partner, you’ll enjoy a multitude of rewards.

Targeting growth markets
What are the growth markets? Think of all the types of marketing that cannot survive without a printed element and you will have your answer. It is difficult to purchase a product that isn’t in some type of box or has a label. Getting consumers’ attention requires a colourful display that is relatively inexpensive to produce. These types of printing fall into the category of what EFI CEO Guy Gecht likes to call the imaging of things. “Things” also includes items that need to be decorated such as textiles, ceramic tiles, furniture, mirrors, wallpaper, etc.

Another area of growth is personalisation. Marketers are setting aside large portions of their budget to implement personalised marketing campaigns. They are doing that because those who have already used personalisation have realised upwards of a fivefold increase in results. The stats show that by combining personalised direct mail with PURLs (personalised URLs) and other advertising channels (known as cross-media marketing), marketers have seen as high as a 475% return on investment. This type of success cannot be ignored.

Finding Partners
If you want to target new large-format applications look for another large-format printer whose printers or finishing equipment complements yours. Most importantly, look for a partner who works in specialised markets different from the ones you serve. Consider “thing” manufacturers like makers of snow or skate boards. Partner with them and a talented designer to offer a line of artsy sport boards.

When it comes to cross-media marketing, you have several options. If you don’t have the talent in-house, partnering with a marketing agency is a must. If you are a large-format printer then you’ll need a partner who can produce personalised direct mail, while you supply the products for the other advertising channels such as billboards and POP displays.

Reaping the benefits
Partnering will allow you to offer your clients a complete solution—an entire cross-media campaign from a single source, for example. In addition, partner collaboration will allow you to bring new, more exciting product innovations to your clients and your partner’s clients.

Because both partners have separate customers, your prospect base increases automatically. Plus you’ll be able to bring new joint products to an entirely new audience.

You’ll have access to a new talent pool which will allow you to develop new ways of addressing complex challenges. You’ll be able to draw on a wider pool of technical expertise, experience, skills, labour and networks. Plus you’ll be able to offer employees greater professional development opportunities.

You’ll increase resources, reduce costs, share delivery systems and avoid duplication. That means you’ll earn more money as you reach new markets.

Your reputation and credibility will grow. You’ll gain loyal customers who will see you as a customer-oriented marketing partner.

Drawing on your clients
Perhaps the most valuable partners you can have are your customers. Here is where loyalty begins. Finding out what will make their lives easier, how you can help with their marketing challenges is the perfect place to start when you are looking for the perfect technology partner.
Let’s say you want to purchase a wide or superwide format printer. But in addition to printing outdoor banners, exotic point-of-purchase displays or vehicle wraps, you want the ability to cut and finish them so that they are ready for installation. What do you do if the press manufacturer doesn’t make finishing equipment? Sure, you can purchase it separately and then hope and pray they work well together, or you can find a complete solution.

Luckily, when EFI calls its products “innovative” it includes their ability to communicate with the most complementary cutters, finishing equipment and software solutions. It means giving its customers an uninterrupted, profit-producing workflow.

Technology partners

Here are a few examples of the products that integrate seamlessly with EFI printers.

**ESKO**
Essentials from Esko’s iCut Suite are integrated into Fiery XF’s Layout Option. With Fiery XF’s Layout Option, you can optimise nestings by using the cut path or object borders instead of the bounding box. You can create cut paths, edit them or optimise them without leaving the Fiery XF ecosystem or advanced training in DTP applications.

**ZÜND**
Fiery XF communicates directly with Zünd’s Cut Center application (ZCC) and the production versions can place Zünd marks without the need of the Fiery XF Cut Server Option. EFI and Zünd successfully showcased this feature during Viscom 2014 in Frankfurt where they printed on the EFI H1625 (deer, trees, Christmas decorations, cake holders) on Katz Display Board. The Zünd L1200 cutter cut the items within the workflow—all initiated by EFI Digital StoreFront through Fiery XF to the printer and to the Zünd cutter.

**Enfocus**
Fiery XF has a connector to communicate with hundreds of other applications by using Enfocus (an Esko company) Switch. This feature and the new Enfocus iSend products offer remote flexibility for file transmission, verification and sign off.

**3M**
Combined with 3M materials and co-developed EFI inks, the output from select VUTEk and Jetrion printers qualify for the 3M™ MCS™ Warranty. The matched 3M components combine to offer weathering technology that assures brand owners that their image will perform as expected for the life of the product. In addition to this EFI worked with 3M to develop SuperFlex, highly flexible inks that stretch with fabrics and other flexible materials to facilitate applications such as foldable signage.

The right partners can make your products more valuable and your customers’ operations more efficient and profitable.
Artists with Machines Expands its Ability to be More Creative, More Rapidly

Making the Impossible Possible

Praises the flexibility and environmental benefits of LED curing.

For several years beyond its founding in 1995, General Theming Contractors (GTC), the forerunner of Artists with Machines (Ohio, USA), made its mark with hand painted murals. In about 2001, when customers began requesting multiple copies of the same mural, the company added its first superwide format solvent printers.

As business snowballed and there was a demand for both rolls and sheets, the company upgraded its fleet by adding two EFI VUTEk PressVu 320 printers. Then in early 2013, Artists with Machines again reevaluated its production platform.

“We wanted to stay ahead of the technology curve,” says Bryan Waddell, the company’s executive director of Creative Technologies. “And we were getting customer requests that required faster throughput, higher resolution and a greater range of colour. We also believed that there was a significant need for a printing solution with white ink.”

“We had had VUTEk printers for quite a few years,” Waddell says. “We saw a similar culture to ours: We try to deliver what customers desire, and VUTEk was adding resources to make sure they effectively served their customers. We felt it was a no-brainer to stick with EFI as we upgraded our fleet. We saw how the VUTEk GS3250lx printers with LED curing could take us to the next level, and we knew we would have the support we needed to make this transition.”

With that in mind, Artists with Machines acquired two new VUTEk printers in January of 2014 – a VUTEk GS3250lx Pro flatbed/roll-to-roll LED printer, and a VUTEk GS3250lxr Pro roll-to-roll LED printer.

The two new printers tripled Artists with Machines’ capacity. It also meant the company could focus on printing with the latest and greatest technology it had to create better printed results.

“Their new printer line-up is enormous,” says Waddell. “We didn’t want to be left behind. We’re always trying to push the envelope. We’re also trying to stay ahead of the technology curve.”

“Now,” Waddell says, “about 90% of our production is going through the new VUTEk LED printers, and our sales people can be more aggressive about filling in some of the down times we experience in our primary markets of retail and construction.”

The new EFI VUTEk printers make a strong showing as workhorses within Artists with Machines’ facility. “We do so many different things, it is actually hard to believe we have all of it under one roof – laser cutting, routing, traditional painting, and we also have a metal shop. It is a lot to take in,” Waddell says.
Artists with Machines serves many different clients in the retail and construction industries, and not all of them have an extensive background in what it takes to create top-quality graphics. Taking a plant tour is essential to prove to new customers that we can really do everything we promise. “When we show visitors our two giant printers, it is eye-opening for someone not entrenched in the business,” says Waddell. “It is always nice to see the majesty and capability of our VUTEk printers through the customer’s eyes.”

But Artists with Machines’ work doesn’t stop once something is printed. Items are overcoated, routed or turned into some kind of fixture or structure, or sometimes they become an element of something else, and that is where the LED printing – with its cool cure capabilities – changes the equation.

“The quality of the ink and its stability in these post-printing processes is critical,” Waddell says. “We have had excellent feedback on the quality we are getting out of these new printers, as well as our ability to deliver work faster.”

Although about 90% of what is created using the VUTEk GS3250.xr Pro printer is wall covering, Artists with Machines produces some very unique rigid-substrate applications using the VUTEk GS3250.x Pro printer in flatbed mode.

According to Waddell, “We are the guys that make the things you think are impossible. Not only are we getting better quality and higher throughput, but we are getting resounding kudos from clients on the results.”

Another big productivity-booster with the VUTEk GS3250.x Pro printer is wall covering, Artists with Machines produces some very unique rigid-substrate applications using the VUTEk GS3250.x Pro printer in flatbed mode.

With the roll-to-roll VUTEk GS3250.xr Pro printer, the ability to run two rolls at once “gives us an elevated capacity that we didn’t think could ever be achieved,” Waddell notes. “It is amazing to have that in our back pocket.

“Our team gets a great deal of enjoyment out of accomplishing some of the crazy projects that come to us,” he adds. “They like the challenge. They like being asked to do something people think is not possible. And our two new VUTEk printers are critical tools that let them take their creativity to a whole new level.”

As artists, the staff and management at Artists with Machines are also concerned about the environmental impact of their work. For that reason, “we love the LED curing,” Waddell says. “When you walk into our shop, you don’t smell that ozone-like scent or the solvent ink smell. Even clients say that our operation smells cleaner than other plants.”

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Soft Signage Gets a Facelift

No more cracking thanks to SuperFlex Inks. Partnership with 3M makes it possible.

Jamie Herand, vice president of graphic operations for the Orbus Exhibit & Display Group says, “SuperFlex Ink opens new avenues for us in soft signage. It gives us more vibrant colour and it doesn’t crack the way traditional UV inks do.”

Available for EFI’s 3.2m VUTEk GS32500.xr Pro LED and 5m VUTEk GS55000.xr Pro LED roll-to-roll inkjet printers, SuperFlex Ink provides an extended colour gamut and can withstand greater than 150% elongation. The ink is ideal for fabric-printed soft signage, vehicle wraps, outdoor graphics and other applications requiring exceptional flexibility and durability. EFI “cool cure” LED technology on Orbus’s new printer cures ink at a lower temperature than other curing or drying methods, giving Orbus the ability to print on fabrics, films and other flexible media that cannot withstand high heat.

Foldable signage

The productivity and unique capabilities the Woodridge, Illinois, US-based company gains with its VUTEk GS3250.xr Pro LED printer and SuperFlex inks provide a distinct advantage. Orbus, which already uses traditional UV and dye-sub inkjet printers, is a leading provider of tradeshow products and graphics. But, UV inkjet inks are not flexible enough for fabric-printed soft signage designed to be folded and stored for re-use, and the company’s dye-sub printers present throughput capacity challenges. The new VUTEK printer and ink have helped Orbus meet increased demand for high-quality, reusable, backlit fabric applications. “Soft signage is an important part of Orbus’s offering in the tradeshow industry, and with the new VUTEK printer and inks, we are able to replace an older, dye-sub printer with a faster, high-quality system,” says Herand.

Partnering with 3M

EFI worked with 3M to develop this superior, highly flexible ink, bringing industry-leading LED inkjet technology into new applications that make users more profitable and more productive. Orbus, one of the country’s leading providers of exhibit display graphics, is moving the industry forward with this application of new, superwide-format inkjet print technology.
EFI® Select

Innovation and Integration News

Print and Packaging
MIS/ERP Portfolio Expands

EFI™ has acquired substantially all the assets of DiMS! organizing print, a developer of comprehensive MIS/ERP systems for print and packaging companies.

Based in Lichtenvoorde, the Netherlands, and founded in 1986, DiMS! offers multi-language, seamlessly integrated MIS/ERP workflow products.

“DiMS! organizing print is a respected provider for print MIS/ERP software serving some of the industry’s top European and multinational print and packaging companies,” said Gabriel Matsliach, senior vice president and general manager, EFI Productivity Software. “Europe is a fast-growing and very dynamic region for EFI, so we are excited to have DiMS! team members and customers join us as we continue creating more value for customers around the world with efficient business and production workflow solutions.”

“EFI has outstanding capabilities as the world’s leading print MIS/ERP provider and it has always been one of the most progressive firms in our industry in championing integrated workflows,” said Gerard Marneth, former CEO of DiMS! organizing print. “The DiMS! organizing print team is pleased to join EFI to offer advanced, productivity enhancing MIS/ERP solutions. Together, we can help customers worldwide set new benchmarks for reduced waste, faster turnaround time and administrative efficiency.”

EFI has assumed support operations for DiMS! customers. DiMS! technology also will be integrated with EFI Fiery® digital front end technologies for automated digital print production. An expanded range of MIS/ERP topics relevant to DiMS! users will be added to the Connect user conference’s calendar, which will take place at the Wynn Hotel, Las Vegas, 20-23 January. For more information or to register, please go to www.efi.com/Connect.

EFI™ has acquired substantially all the assets of DiMS! organizing print, a developer of comprehensive MIS/ERP systems for print and packaging companies.

EFI Acquires Polymeric Imaging’s Thermoforming Ink Technology

EFI™ has acquired key intellectual property assets for digital inkjet printing of thermoformed products from Polymeric Imaging, a specialist provider of UV and LED inks for industrial and graphic arts applications.

Based in North Kansas City, Mo., Polymeric Imaging has extensive R&D experience in the development of inkjet inks that address important curing, adhesion, density and durability issues that industrial and graphic arts print professionals encounter when printing on challenging substrates. EFI will use the acquired technology to enhance its customers’ inkjet production capabilities for thermoforming and other high-elongation applications requiring exceptional ink durability and flexibility.

“This acquisition continues EFI’s momentum in inkjet graphics printing following a highly successful SGIA Expo highlighting our leading portfolio of UV and LED inkjet technologies,” said Stephen Emery, vice president of EFI’s ink business. “The technology we are acquiring will allow EFI to continue expanding our efficient, high-quality inkjet platforms into new markets.”

“As a world leader in UV inkjet manufacturing, EFI has long set a standard for excellence and innovation in digital printing,” said Polymeric Imaging founder and owner Don Sloan. “This deal provides significantly greater scale and reach for the development and commercialization of some of the key R&D breakthroughs we have made with inkjet ink.”

In addition to buying technology from Polymeric Imaging, EFI has hired key Polymeric Imaging employees responsible for technical and market development of digital ink and coating products. Those employees are currently assisting EFI’s ink operations in the development and testing of new formulations for use in EFI inkjet products.
AlphaGraphics adds an EFI H1625 LED

Developing Creative Business Opportunities

New capabilities lead to growth.

The AlphaGraphics centre in Suwanee, Georgia, United States, has installed an EFI H1625 LED wide-format printer. The hybrid roll/flatbed device includes industry-leading white ink and EFI’s “cool cure” LED inkjet technology.

With the assistance of AlphaGraphics’ headquarters, Alan Akins, owner and president, AlphaGraphics Suwanee and his team evaluated a number of different offerings. “One of the things that moved us toward EFI is the quality of the white ink,” Akins said. “It is so much better than everyone else’s, a true white without the blue tones, and it is a much denser ink. Its speed gives us great throughput and we are really happy with the registration and overall quality.”

LED innovation fuels success with reduced waste and lower energy usage

The printer’s LED technology handles media that cannot withstand the heat of other curing processes. Plus, the instant on/off LED lamps provide more consistent imaging with fewer wasted prints. The lamps also last longer than halide lamps employed in UV inkjet printers, reducing users’ consumables costs.

The printer also is a greener option compared to other print methods, printing with virtually no VOCs. Plus the printer’s LED lamps can significantly decrease power consumption.

“We’ve been in the printing business since 1990, and joined the AlphaGraphics network about three years ago,” Akins noted. “Since that time, we have tripled our business to $1.2 million (975,000 Euro) in annual revenues with 11 employees. Our new EFI wide format printer will be a key factor in helping us continue that growth.”

“We have tripled our business to $1.2 million...
Our new EFI wide format printer will be a key factor in helping us continue that growth.”

The EFI H1625 LED printer acquisition is the latest in a series of upgrades that have helped to expand the business. “We have been able to add wholesale work for other AlphaGraphics centres in Atlanta to our mix,” he said, “and we have been really pleased with the ability to print backlit materials and do direct printing on black boards. This is something we couldn’t do before. We’ve experimented with just about everything, including black neoprene and metal side pieces for equipment such as x-ray machines.”

Another new opportunity for the company is the ability to print on 80 g/m² roll paper. “This helps us compete with the latex printers out there,” according to Akins. “And, we can do a lot of things that they can’t; the printer is extremely versatile.”

Software offerings from EFI provide additional advantages. Akins is pleased with the EFI Fiery® XF software they use to drive his new printer. “We have Fiery servers running other equipment in the centre,” he said, “and we are very familiar with the workflow. We have also been happy with Fiery’s colour management capabilities since we often produce pieces of the same job on colour toner presses and our wide-format solvent printer.

AlphaGraphics Suwanee also uses EFI PrintSmith™ business management software for estimating and accounting tasks. ©
Easy Operation and Maintenance

Every aspect of the entry-level EFI H1625 LED wide-format printer drives to simple daily operation and routine maintenance for optimal up time without compromising print quality.

With fewer moving parts and less failure points in advanced LED inkjet printing devices, the time needed for printer maintenance is minimal. The following outlines how easy it is to start up, operate and shutdown the EFI H1625 LED printer. We’ll also review the recommended weekly maintenance tips to keep the printer up and running.

**Startup**

1. In the EFI Print Control Utility, click on the “gear” button at the bottom of the window (see Figure 1). Getting your printer up and running at the beginning of the shift is as simple as clicking on the “moon” icon in the Print Control Utility (see Figure 2). Your printer is now awake and ready for the production day.

2. Click on the Head Sweep icon at the bottom of the Print Control Utility window (see Figure 3). This will purge all of your print heads to the default time of four seconds (this can be adjusted by user/service technician for desired results). Once purged, the carriage will automatically sweep the excess ink off of the heads. This will clear any nozzle blockages that may have occurred during the sleep or idle state.

3. If you are concerned about ink waste or plan to print only white or only CMYK, click either of those individual icons (see Figure 3). A purge and sweep of only those heads will be performed.

4. A Nozzle Check print (see Test Prints/Nozzle Check at bottom of Figure 3) will determine whether or not all of the nozzles are free, clear and ready for production print. Use scrap media sized at least 86 cm (34”) wide x 10 (4”) cm deep, so there is no media waste involved.

5. Before the first Nozzle Check or production print, the carriage height must be set (see Figure 3). Simply load the current media and click either the Roll or Rigid radio button in the Media section. Next, adjust the Gap Height test location in the Carriage section (measured from print edge zero point). Finally, if you are using light coloured media, activate the Media Scan and enter the preferred margins in the Media section. You are now ready to perform either your Nozzle Test or start production.
**Shutdown**

1. Turn off the media belt vacuum via the footswitch (see Figure 4).

2. Enter the Print Control Utility window and click the green up arrow in the Carriage section to lift the carriage (see Figure 5).

3. Wipe the bottom of the jet plate with only EFI Flush (part# 45080261) using a lint-free cloth. Try to avoid too much contact with the actual print heads. Gently wipe around the perimeter of the carriage jet plate and in between each head (see Figure 6).

4. Clean the LED lamp glass with Isopropyl Alcohol only (see Figure 7).

5. Drop the carriage back down to home height by clicking the green down arrow in the Carriage section of the Print Control Utility window.

6. Click the Sun icon at the bottom of the window, and it will turn into a moon. The fans will eventually shut off and your production day is done.

**Weekly Printer Maintenance**

1. Clean over spray or print mistakes from the media belt by applying EFI Flush to a lint-free cloth and scrubbing the ink off the belt. The flush will soften any hard to remove ink and a soft wire brush may be used to help remove any remaining ink.

2. Lightly clean the encoder strip on the gantry rail with only Isopropyl Alcohol applied to a lint-free wipe. Be gentle and do not scrub this strip as it may scratch.

3. Clean any loose debris from the inside of the printer “box,” which ensures the carriage and print heads are in the cleanest environment possible.

4. Drain the Cyclonic Vacuum Separator. The centre button at the carriage home (see Figure 8) can be held for any length of time to remove what ink may be in the separator. If more than average purging and sweeping has occurred, this step may be required more frequently.

5. Emptying the ink waste container once or more per week is recommended. Even though there is a built-in level indicator, emptying the ink waste container before it is full allows for easier handling (see Figure 9).
In 2009, after careful analysis, the Rhineland-Palatinate Regional Finance Directorate at Koblenz, Germany, learned that they could cut costs substantially by replacing their in-house offset print operation with a digital print shop managed by a third-party. The Berlin-Wilmersdorf-based Koebcke printing company won the Europe-wide bid to insource the Directorate’s new in-plant. To ease ordering and print production the company installed several Xerox printing systems as well as the EFI Digital StoreFront (DSF) web-to-print system. Five years later, everything changed.

For one thing, the Regional Finance Directorate became known as the State Office for Taxation. The in-plant operation hosted two new digital printing presses and DSF advanced substantially.

In the last five years, Digital StoreFront has proved to be an extremely user-friendly ordering system for us,” says Meckel. However, when two new printing systems, an Océ VarioPrint 5160 and the fast Canon imageRUNNER 9070 Pro, were delivered in the summer of 2014, DSF needed an upgrade.

“As part of the DSF evaluation, he asked four staff members to place an order using the system without any training. Thanks to DSF’s intuitive design, all four managed to do so without any errors or problems.”

“Documents that are reprinted often are now stored centrally, ready for retrieval and printing.”

“We have not received a single query from any of the ordering staff since the changeover.”

In-house integration
The State Office is networked with all the tax offices in the state through an in-house data centre, which requires its own separate printing centre. Digitised forms with personalised data for the 27 tax offices and taxpayers are produced there. In 2013, the data centre printed over 112.5 million pages and mailed more than 10.6 million letters.

In September 2014 the in-house print shop that had been managed by Koebcke, along with two new digital presses was integrated into the data centre. Around 80 percent of the materials produced by the print shop are training documents. Other materials include collateral materials for the Press/Events Office department.

Heinrich Meckel is responsible for evaluating all print investments. As part of the DSF evaluation, he asked four staff members to place an order using the system without any training. Thanks to DSF’s intuitive design, all four managed to do so without any errors or problems.

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Keeping Pace with Changing Needs
From In-House to In-Source back to In-House.

We have not received a single query from any of the ordering staff since the changeover.”
Multi Packaging Solutions Standardises Business Processes with EFI Radius.

New York City-based Multi Packaging Solutions (MPS) is standardising its entire multi-national production operations on the newest version of EFI Radius ERP software. The upgrade will consolidate and integrate operations following MPS’s merger with Chesapeake Corp., creating a comprehensive, efficient infrastructure to manage the value-added print and packaging offerings MPS provides to many of the world’s leading consumer product and healthcare companies.

Both MPS and the former Chesapeake Corp. have been long-time EFI Radius users but each have operated using their own unique deployment across their various facilities, something that will now change as MPS establishes highly flexible, albeit consistent, business management processes using the packaging industry’s leading ERP system. MPS has signed a new contract for Radius ERP software, services and training that give the company the flexibility to expand from a standard platform and quickly adapt to its rapidly changing markets.

“The merger MPS and Chesapeake completed this year creates many new opportunities for growth and operational synergies,” said Nancy Smith, MPS’s vice president of customer systems. “Standardising all of our operations on the latest EFI Radius platform will help us streamline management for our global operations, reduce waste, and service our customers more effectively, giving our customers even more value in their packaging supply chains.”

Streamlined integration for production efficiency across three continents

With Radius, MPS has streamlined, end-to-end business management from the point of job submission, through estimating, scheduling, production, billing and fulfilment. The software is uniquely capable at handling complex multi-plant and multi-national packaging operations; MPS has Radius installed in different languages to handle business in the U.S., China and across Europe. Radius also handles estimating, billing, financial reporting and other features at MPS facilities using different currencies based on country.

The newest upgrade at MPS will provide more-robust, centralised management and reporting tools for MPS’s New York City headquarters, assembling and standardising data from across the company to provide accurate, up-to-the-minute information on global operations using advanced business intelligence features.
Brand Factory employs 428 staff across the Nordic region and offers project management, production, design and installation. Operating from high-capacity production facilities in Finland, Sweden and Estonia, the company supplies products and services for branding and visual communication to brand owners and store chains all over the world.

The company decided to take its growing production operation into the future. To do this, Brand Factory invested in two new 3.2m wide-format printers. The first of its investments was the VUTEk HS100 Pro high-speed flatbed and roll-fed digital press, with 3/4 automation. The second was a VUTEk GS3250 Pro roll-to-roll LED printer. Both printers satisfied Brand Factory’s need to provide enhanced productivity as well as giving the company the opportunity to work with a far broader selection of application types. The automated material handling and high-speed hybrid capabilities of the VUTEk HS100 Pro gives the business necessary strength in production planning, which is vital with today’s short lead times and varying demand.

The VUTEk GS3250 Pro roll-to-roll LED printer works with EFI’s and 3M’s new co-branded SuperFlex ink to handle jobs where high levels of flexibility are required. The “cool curing” technology also means that Brand Factory can now print on sensitive surfaces and thinner materials.

“The VUTEk HS100 Pro gives us all the advantages of a hybrid press offering greyscale technology, six colours plus an opaque white ink, multilayer printing, and precision droplet control with EFI's Pin & Cure for optimum gloss control,” states Brand Factory production manager Johan Höckert. “This is complemented by the full 3M MCS (Matched Component System) Warranty that comes with the VUTEk GS3250 Pro. With the benefits of LED curing, we now have excellent ink flexibility and strong adhesion on even the most difficult materials.”

Johan Höckert, Production Manager, Brand Factory
It Could Be You

The prestigious FESPA Awards are open to all screen, digital, specialist and multi-technology users for printing, sign and POP, textile, decoration and industrial applications. And you don’t have to be a member of FESPA to enter.

You have until April 2015 to submit your work for consideration. For all the details, go to www.fespa.com/awards

UK’s PressOn wins FESPA Gold Award for in-store project of the year in 2014

According to managing director Andy Wilson, “The Christmas Express was a series of train carriages across 11 store windows and an accompanying series of lift graphics that needed to be installed over one night. The final printed execution of the train needed the metallic solidity of a real train.” Thanks to the EFI VUTEk QS2 Pro, PressOn was able to master this complex project.

FESPA Awards 2015 is open for entries!

Amazing Quality. Versatile Operation. Affordable Pricing

Now mid-volume operations can take advantage of UltraDrop Technology.

The 2m EFI VUTEk H2000 Pro printer provides wide-format signage and graphics companies with a more-affordable entry point into high-end production printing while giving them the option to add features – including white ink, clear varnish and roll-to-roll media handling – as they grow their business.

The printer brings EFI’s UltraDrop greyscale imaging to the mid-volume inkjet graphics production segment. UltraDrop Technology combines 7-picolitre drop sizes with greyscale imaging and more precise control. It provides true multi-drop addressability in each dot position, giving high apparent resolution and high-definition quality with four-level greyscale and two ink density levels. UltraDrop Technology also produces outstanding smoothness in shadows, gradients and transitions, as well as superb text quality with four-point text, fewer satellites and more clarity in all print modes.

VUTEk H2000 Pro users can run rigid, sheet and flexible media up to 5,08 cm thick on the printer, and it offers standard multi-queue functionality for continuous production. Enhanced hybrid vacuum belt technology on the new 2m UV inkjet printer optimises substrate feeding.

The six-colour printer features EFI’s Orion operating system and is available with Fiery proServer or Fiery XF digital front ends as well as JDF integration to EFI web2print and MIS/ERP software.

Don’t Hesitate. Become an Award Winner in 2015.
In fact, the IT-department has grown to the stage where Fynske Medier actually sells software solutions to other publishers, such as custom made DAM (digital asset management) systems and a suite of publishing apps. The company’s printing portfolio includes offset and digital print as well as large-format production.

With a fleet of digital printing presses—40% of all jobs are now printed digitally—Fynske Medier needed a Digital Front End (DFE) that could integrate seamlessly into the existing MIS and workflow system from Heidelberg. Their first choice was an EFI Fiery DFE. They looked at other alternatives but they didn’t offer the speed and efficiency that they needed. With a powerful client-server solution the Fiery Server proved to be the best solution. “The integration between the Heidelberg Prinect workflow system and the Fiery server is really seamless. We prepare all jobs in Prinect and the printer queues including paper choices show up directly in the Prinect Print Manager,” says Brian T. Hansen, Fynske Medier project manager.

Fynske Medier’s strength in IT brings many benefits to the group. This includes a clear vision on what to look for when they evaluate workflow solutions and RIPs for their digital presses and large format printers.

“We now have a much higher throughput of jobs than before, which we manage with the same number of staff, or even slightly fewer than before.”

Brian T. Hansen, Project Manager, Fynske Medier

Hansen can supervise and interact with the print production workflow remotely, and see all job queues and device settings, including that of the Fiery DFEs, through the Prinect Print Manager.
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Expanding to Large Format

One of the company’s latest expansions is in large-format production. The aim is to reduce the number of different RIPs for various devices including large format. The EFI Fiery XF is a strong candidate for the growing fleet of printers.

“As far as I can see the user interface in Fiery XF is similar to that of Fiery Command WorkStation, and the features and functionalities seem to meet our needs well,” says Hansen. “But as with the other print production we will use the Prinect workflow for job preparation and setup. We often split jobs between offset and digital, and it’s critical to maintain colour accuracy between the different printing methods.

“We will continue to develop our web-to-print solutions and see if we can automate and streamline the workflow even further. We have the tools for it, I’m sure—a good IT-structure, a true client-server solution, JDF and JMF connectivity. But there is always room for improvement, and we will continue to fine-tune the processes,” adds Hansen. ☺

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How to Leverage All That Fiery Has to Offer

“How overall I’m getting a better understanding of the product I have and what it does. With this new understanding we’ll be able to make our lives easier and more productive.”

In 2014, EFI hosted nine Webinars as part of the World of Fiery Webinar Series, featuring subject-matter experts and guest speakers who provided helpful how-to tips and actionable ideas in four areas:

- Colour management
- Variable data printing
- Efficient print job preparation
- Print job management and automation

“The presenters are knowledgeable and they used real world examples.”

One guest speaker was DataPrint Initiatives founder, Dan Foster. During the session “The Business of VDP: How to Get Started and Grow Your Profits,” Foster shared how DataPrint has positioned itself ahead of the curve by creating, producing and distributing variable-data marketing campaigns through traditional and cutting-edge print channels, as well as through electronic media. DataPrint considers a total EFI integration, from the customer-facing portal through production and business systems, “a real goldmine of productivity and business benefits.”

“I learned about existing capabilities of the Fiery that I wasn’t aware of.”

If you weren’t able to attend, all of the 2014 webinars are available on demand. Listen and enjoy the free resources. They can be found at webinar.efi.com/WorldofFiery2014.

Join us in 2015

The World of Fiery Webinar Series will continue in 2015 with even more valuable content and expert speakers. Look for details in the coming weeks at webinar.efi.com/WorldofFiery2014. ☺
Graphic Label Solutions (GLS), a WBENC Certified Diversity Supplier headquartered in Columbia, Tennessee has become the first company in the United States to install EFI's Jetrion® 4950 lx LED inkjet narrow web press.

The newly installed technology has completely transformed GLS, as the label converting company has sold off its previous production equipment – including a narrow web flexographic press, a screen printing press and a roll-to-roll, solvent inkjet printer – replacing it all with the new, 33 cm-wide press from EFI.

The purchase reflects the continual, strategic steps GLS takes to refine both its market position and the strategic advantage it offers to clients. Last year, GLS’s progressive approach earned the U.S. Small Business Administration’s HUBZone Company of the Year award for the State of Tennessee. Now, GLS is fully engaged on its next significant initiative, ramping up sustainability efforts to meet corporations’ growing need for greener, environmentally friendly supply chains. The Jetrion 4950 lx press, which uses much less energy than other analogue or digital narrow web printing methods, is key to GLS’s environmental offering.

Sustainability makes good business sense with LED

“The brands we work with are all setting goals for sustainability, and they want suppliers who share that commitment,” according to GLS’s founder and president, Deb Warner. “When I first saw EFI Jetrion UV-inkjet technology a few years ago, I knew it would help us offer high quality while reducing waste. LED was the missing piece I needed to really address what our clients are looking for from a sustainability perspective.”

GLS’s new Jetrion 4950 lx LED press extends the versatile capabilities of EFI’s digital label printing systems, and gives users the ability to produce more primary applications with higher image quality. The press can also reproduce smaller type all the way down to 2-point text, which allows for creativity in the security market.

“The Jetrion 4950 lx not only offers a small environmental footprint, it has an excellent white ink and, at 720x720 dpi, it produces very crisp text and images, and allows us to run an unlimited number of colours,” said Warner.

“LED was the missing piece I needed to really address what our clients are looking for from a sustainability perspective.”

Deb Warner, Founder & President, GLS
EFI’s industry-leading “cool cure” LED inkjet curing technology gives GLS the ability to run thin and challenging stocks ranging from 0.5 mm to 30+ mm thick. The press also reduces costs with lower energy usage and LED’s significantly longer lamp life compared to traditional UV-curing lamps.

The Jetrion 4950lx LED press prints on the same substrates GLS used on conventional equipment, providing a level of flexibility that Warner can use to expand offerings in multiple new markets, with a major focus on sustainably managed, “cradle to cradle” applications.

GLS is currently developing attractive, innovative and sustainable products with its Jetrion press, including a point-of-purchase “shelf talker” tag printed on a completely biodegradable, paper-like substrate made of stone. GLS is also using the press to develop new UL- and cUL-approved OEM labels and decals. The Jetrion 4950lx press is the first Jetrion product compatible with a full range of flexible packaging and shrink sleeves substrates, which opens the door to still more new applications at GLS.

GLS’s digital converting operation now offers lower manufacturing costs and exceptional quality, using EFI’s proven inkjet imaging technology and the modular equipment installed on the press, including in-line flexo varnish and lamination, slitting and laser die-cutting systems. GLS’s press also has on-board video inspection technology from another supplier that checks for variances in colour or registration.

The press’s laser die-cutting system eliminates the costs for traditional dies, which will offer substantial savings for customers. Removing the waste associated with die-cutting make-ready processes also is compatible with GLS’s sustainability efforts.

“The benefits and features of our newest press model are a game changer in narrow web printing, creating a unique opportunity for lean manufacturing of short- and medium-run labels,” said Stephen Emery, vice president of EFI’s Jetrion and ink business operations. “As the very first EFI Jetrion 4950lx user in the country, GLS is establishing a competitive advantage for itself with LED while showing how the label and packaging industry can continue evolving along a sustainable path.”

A video of GLS’s new press installation is available on YouTube at: www.tinyurl.com/Jetrion-4950lx
Located in Bucharest, Romania, CompuGrafix serves a number of well-known companies who demand versatility as well as superior quality. As a result, the large-format printing company produces both indoor and outdoor advertising on a wide variety of materials including WhiteBack, BlueBlack paper, Backlit PVC, Frontlit, Mesh, Blockout, coloured and white adhesive. It is because of the versatility of the EFI VUTEk printers that general manager, Ion Consel has stayed with EFI since the company opened more than 10 years ago.

“With the VUTEk, we can produce indoor and outdoor projects on the same printer, on flexible or rigid materials, all with the best quality,” says Consel. Our relationship with the supplier, which proved to be very good over the years, is another reason we chose EFI. We receive good support and very fast service, and that’s refreshing.”

The company lists VUTEk Solvent, VUTEk QS, VUTEk GS among the many printers CompuGrafix has used. The most recent acquisition is a VUTEk GS2000lx.

“This new LED printer solved our problems with material deformation (PVC 0.3 – 0.5 mm) because of its cool-cure technology and fast drying,” adds Consel. “Plus, its innovative greyscale technology doubles the printing speed, a great benefit for any print provider.”

The family-owned business employs 50 skilled staff and their expertise extends beyond printing to include an assortment of finishing techniques, including framing, thermoforming and welding. For more information visit www.compugrafix.ro.

“With the VUTEk, we can produce indoor and outdoor projects on the same printer, on flexible or rigid materials, all with the best quality.”

Ion Consel, General Manager
A Partnership in Thought Leadership

**Joint conference expands educational opportunities for print providers.**

Regardless of how advanced your organization may be, there is always room for new insights, a broader perspective and more cost-effective practices. That’s exactly what EFI and NAPL had in mind when the two joined forces to bring Connect and the AMSP/NAPL/NAQP Executive Leadership Summit together.

Bringing the two events together is meant to deepen the practical and educational experience of all attendees. Both conferences are geared to keep business owners, CEOs, and management teams up to speed on the latest trends, technologies, and management skills needed to grow and thrive in an evolving industry.

Combining the AMSP/NAPL/NAQP Executive Leadership Summit with EFI Connect will give audiences for both events a richer experience with access to a broader range of resources, including several shared programs available to registrants of either conference.

The joint expertise of EFI, AMSP, NAPL and NAQP addresses every facet of industry business and technology management. This includes strategic and operational topics, as well as sales and marketing issues. Attendees will continue to benefit from each event’s highly praised networking and informational exchanges, where business owners and production managers share their valuable experiences. Now, they will be able to draw from an even wider audience.

With several thought leadership tracks and more than 200 breakout sessions, the joint event stretches from 19-23 of January 2015 in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA at the Wynn Hotel.

ASTRONOMICALLY LOWER COSTS BOOST YOUR SUCCESS

The EFI Jetrion 4950lx delivers the lowest cost per label in its class without compromise. This feature-packed modular system will literally get in line with your growing business needs. Just the type of fuel you need to accelerate your success. Enjoy the ride.

Call 0808 101 3484 or +44 (0)1246 298000 or visit jetrion.efi.com/4950LX for more information.
Berlin-based Printer Test Drives EFI Pace

The 32-person Ruksaldruck printing company is known primarily for its involvement with the visual arts. High-end art catalogues and annual reports form part of its portfolio. Among the many feathers in its cap is an annual calendar featuring works by prominent artists, which the company has been producing since 1982. An art festival associated with the calendar is extremely popular and provides a solid customer base.

High standards extend to the environment
Ruksaldruck insists on ecological processes. The 1,000-square-metre roof of the production building is used to produce solar power. “Amongst other things, this helped us win the first Green Buddy Award for Production in 2011,” said Managing Director Stefan Greinert. The award is given out annually by the Tempelhof-Schöneberg district authorities. Ruksaldruck is currently preparing for certification according to the EMAS seal of approval of the European Union, scheduled for completion in 2015. EFI Pace helps in this regard. The new MIS is able to provide essential information for specific consumption data, such as paper and ink.

When it comes to “green” Ruksaldruck doesn’t stop there. As part of an enterprise network the company is planning to introduce a courier service using electric vehicles. This means that most of Ruksaldruck’s deliveries will be emission-free. “A Service Point and Loading Station will be set up here on the factory premises,” says Greinert, explaining the sustainable service.

Printshop management with Pace
After a lengthy phase of market research, Ruksaldruck chose the EFI Pace MIS. They bought the modular system back in March 2012. “At the start, it was clear that the system was tailored to the American market,” says Greinert. “But since then, the software has been comprehensively tailored to the needs of European print service providers.”

The system is installed using virtual machines and configured via remote access. Pace can be controlled from any web browser at the user workstations. Ruksaldruck uses Google Chrome and Firefox, which cope better with the Java-based system than other web browsers.

EFI Pace is modular and can be individually configured. It provides options for all the important areas in a print shop. From costing to production management, warehouse management, including purchasing, and plant data collection right through to shipment, every step is depicted. Other options include sales management and a web-to-print solution.

Although the MIS can be set up with completely individual defaults, the information has to be entered into the system. Price tables have to be input, along with different types of paper of various weights and sizes, defaults for data handling and make-ready times, customer data, and much more.

User rights can be assigned for every single job so that each employee can call up and edit the information that relates to his or her department. Connection to existing structured databases is possible via ODBC, as is the importing and exporting of Excel data.

During implementation of the individual operating structure, EFI supports the printing company via the web communication tool WebEx with a combination of consulting and training.

At Ruksaldruck, 16 workstations were incorporated into the system during the first stage. In addition to the Sales, Accounts and Processing departments, Prepress, Production, Shipping and Storage can also access the information. Furthermore, additional plant data collection terminals are also available in the Print and Print Finishing departments.
Reaping the benefits
After just a few months, the benefits of working with the new MIS system were already evident. Amongst other things, the costing feature allows calculations for multiple products in a single quote and enables predefined standard offers, which can be selected from a list. The result is fast and accurate pricing.

Greinert has one particular item on his wish list for costing. So far you have to use a trick to accommodate various folded sections, for example, eight-page and four-page sections or mixed forms of different flyers on one printed sheet. Greinert anticipates that after EFI’s acquisition of impositions specialists Metrix, those functions will soon be integrated into Pace.

In Production, the MIS is able to automatically find the best and/or fastest production route. The system can avoid unnecessary inventory because purchasing can work on a “just-in-time” basis.

Based on the stored data, the MIS also suggests printing alternatives. In combination with modern, efficient presses and automated processes in prepress, IT-based monitoring and control is a prerequisite for an optimally set workflow.

For external DATEV financial accounting, records can be imported and exported in the appropriate format. Ruksaldruck plans to implement modules for analysis and post-costing in the medium term.

Planning for the future
“With the Pace MIS, we have a solution that is modular and extensible, and can therefore grow with our requirements. It was definitely the right decision,” says Greinert. In his experience, there is no MIS for printing companies that can be put into operation straight “out of the box”, and there never can be. Discussions he has had with colleagues in other plants have confirmed this. The requirements within each company are too varied for this to happen.

This article was originally published in Druck & Medien.
EFI’s “cool cure” technology lowers temperatures across our full line of roll-to-roll, hybrid and narrow web LED printers, enabling you to print on thinner and specialty substrates. Plus, you’ll lower energy and consumable parts costs. Pretty cool, right?

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