CHALLENGE:

“The emergence of digital printing technology, coupled with the emerging and lucrative outdoor graphics and textile markets created a fundamental shift in our business and we needed to find robust yet versatile solutions to allow us to enter these new markets.”

—Roland Niggemeyer, President

The growing demand for textile printing has been key in the development of Niggemeyer Bildproduktion in recent years. “Fashion and retail outlets have been the drivers of high-quality textile printing. Textiles give a ‘warmer’ look, and there is no better way to replicate an item of clothing than by printing on fabric itself. For example, an image of a jumper looks far better printed on polyester, rather than board or vinyl” said Roland Niggemeyer.
**SOLUTION:**
The first VUTEk® machine was installed at Niggemeyer in 1999, and today the company boasts six EFI VUTEk printers — two VUTEk 5330s, a VUTEk 3360, two VUTEk PV200s, and a VUTEk FabriVu™.

**VUTEk FabriVu**
To execute this kind of work, Niggemeyer uses the VUTEk FabriVu, a three-meter printer for dye-sublimation applications. The FabriVu prints on a wide range of fabrics, such as satin, poplin, flag, mesh and sheer, and delivers 360 dpi for crisp and detailed images. One of Niggemeyer’s most well-known customers is Karstadt, Europe’s biggest fashion retailer, for whom it regularly produces in-store graphics using the FabriVu. Recently Niggemeyer utilized their entire fleet of VUTEk printers to produce a complete 20,000 square meters indoor and outdoor campaign for the store.

Fashion retail is not the only sector in which the FabriVu excels; Niggemeyer emphasizes the growing popularity of using textile substrates in exhibition and trade fair signage. “Thanks to the dye-sublimation technology, images produced on the FabriVu are double-sided—they are ideal for hanging at events where customers will see the signage from both sides. Our customers are always very happy with the results, as the oil-based inks used in the printer give us vivid, vibrant colors, with a very wide color gamut. Because we can print on to such a wide range of materials with the FabriVu, the possibilities are endless.”

An important benefit to printing on textiles and perhaps a clue to its popularity is the ease of handling. Fabrics can be folded up and they do not crease, so they can be used time and time again, and are easy to install. Every month, Niggemeyer produces indoor banners for the electronic retailer, Expert. Banners are printed on 115g polyester flag material, and can be easily dispatched to stores and assembled quickly.

**VUTEk 3360 and 5330**
The versatility of the solvent-based 3 meter VUTEk 3360 and 5 meter VUTEk 5330 enable Niggemeyer to produce a range of products for both indoor and outdoor environments. Both machines were recently used to print banners for a shareholder meeting of RWE, the Essen-based power and electric company.

So happy is Niggemeyer with this technology that it has purchased a second VUTEk 5330.

**VUTEk PV200**
When it comes to the exhibition market, Niggemeyer has found the VUTEk FabriVu and the VUTEK PV200s to be a winning combination: not only do customers want quality textile banners; they want large banners printed on substrates such as rigid PVC with 0.7mm thickness, for back walls of exhibition halls, warehouses, and fashion companies. The PV200 is a UV-
RESULTS:
Niggemeyer’s collection of VUTEk printers enables them to undertake superwide printing of every kind, ranging from the production of the world’s largest sky banner on the VUTEk 3360, for female magazine, MYSELF, to personalized kitchen worktops, using the VUTEk PV200.

curing printer that can print onto rigid or roll-to-roll substrates, and the switchover takes less than one minute.

Demonstrating how VUTEk output options can work together, Niggemeyer recently undertook the printing work for the indoor re-launch of the famous Neanderthal Museum in Mettmann which included using the PV200 to print on aluminium boards and the FabriVu to produce banners.

Mr. Niggemeyer comments: “With our VUTEk PV200s, we totally outperform screen printers in terms of our ability to cost-effectively and efficiently produce small quantity orders. Increasingly, customers want slightly different versions of one image printed in relatively small quantities, and the set-up times and costs associated with traditional methods means that in this respect, we beat screen printers hands-down.”

Emerging Markets
In addition to the conventional sign and graphics products that form the mainstay of Niggemeyer’s business, new, emerging markets such as small businesses and homewares are proving to be lucrative.

Roland Niggemeyer cites examples of output that satisfy both these environments. “One of our customers is a small flower shop which requires one piece of printed textile to be hung on the back wall of its store. This can be changed as often as required, to reflect different moods and seasons. In fact, I use the FabriVu in a similar way to print table linens used in my home—we change every two weeks, with new images every time.”

In fact, the possibilities for personalized print in the home are endless, as demonstrated by the range of work undertaken by Niggemeyer of late. This includes children’s furniture, such as soft blocks covered in high-quality printed textile featuring illustrations and wording specifically chosen by the customer and the removable covers can be washed and changed as often as desired. All the benefits of textile printing are realized in this project.

With their ability to print on almost any substrate, Niggemeyer’s PV200s allow them to print on a wide range of rigid and flexible substrates, such as ceiling tiles and window blinds which, when closed, can depict a personalized image. These products are appropriate to both home and corporate environments. Niggemeyer recently used the PV200 to undertake the printing of a window graphic for a large building in Berlin. The print was 55 meters long, 9 meters tall, and divided in 216 pieces of individual print.

Niggemeyer has also used its VUTEk PV200s to produce products for the home on a larger scale, with the creation of personalized kitchens, including all worktops and units. Roland Niggemeyer comments: “When it comes to the home market, there really are no limits thanks to the capabilities of the VUTEk machines we have. I see the demand for these products increasing dramatically, and it is certainly an area we will focus on to build our business.”
VUTEk Quality

The range of VUTEk machines owned by Niggemeyer is the key to taking advantage of the wide range of market opportunities open to digital wide format printing. When it comes to his choice of superwide format printers, Roland Niggemeyer is adamant that no other machines on the market can compete with VUTEk.

“I looked very closely at competitive machines, especially when it came to UV roll-to-roll printers, but I found that other manufacturers promise much more than their machines can actually deliver. My feeling is that many of the alternative machines are so finely tuned, almost ‘over-engineered’, that they are constantly affected by external factors such as temperature and humidity, and so often the machines go down. What I need, in order to keep delivering and running a successful business, are robust, reliable, flexible, high-quality machines—this is exactly what I have with my VUTEk printers.”

Print to Win

EFI (www.efi.com) is the world leader in color digital print servers, superwide format printers and inks, industrial inkjet printing systems and print management, Web-to-print and proofing solutions. EFI is dedicated to giving customers a competitive edge with award-winning, scalable solutions from creation to print that maximize productivity and increase profits. EFI maintains 26 offices worldwide.