

LITHO QUALITY ON-DEMAND

With its new HP Indigo 3050 six-colour digital press, C2 DigitalPrint, a recently-launched sister company of The Image Bureau in Cape Town, is offering printing on demand with quality that's every bit as good as conventional offset litho printing, reports **GILL LOUBSER**.

THE Image Bureau in Cape Town prides itself on being a technology trailblazer. It was among the first repro houses in Cape Town to install a Screen computer-to-plate system two years ago, and now it's the first in the city to install an HP Indigo 3050 digital press.

To capitalise on this not inconsiderable investment in full-colour digital printing

technology, The Image Bureau has formed a sister company called C2 DigitalPrint, situated in a bright, spacious, air-conditioned factory in Goodwood, to offer high-quality, high-speed personalised printing.

But an important point that the owners make at the outset is that digital printing should not be viewed as a threat to the conventional offset litho printing market: it should be regarded as an adjunct, or complementary technology.

They believe there's a huge potential market for personalised printing, but that customers, particularly corporate customers, need to be educated to understand the difference between digital printing and traditional offset litho printing.

A solid prepress background and in-depth understanding of colour means that The Image Bureau has been able to get to grips with digital printing technology very quickly, especially given its considerable experience of computer-to-plate technology.

The owners are remarkably impressed with the short time that it has taken to learn to operate the new press — much faster than anticipated.

As a result they're ready to start their sales and marketing efforts much earlier than they originally deemed possible.

So where, precisely, are these efforts being directed?

Personalised direct mail has been shown to improve customer response rates, compared to traditional mail campaigns. When it's matched with print-on-demand capabilities, corporate businesses are able to decrease operational costs while delivering printed messages that speak directly to customers. And it's those corporate businesses that C2 DigitalPrint plans to target.

Proactive marketing solutions

The versatile digital colour press, installed in November 2005, is set to enable the company to provide such proactive marketing solutions.

But one lesson the new company will have to learn is that it's more a marketing operation than a printing company. While commercial offset printers have to print whatever the customer



In front of C2 DigitalPrint's recently-installed HP Indigo 3050 six-colour digital press are Bernard Hendricks, John Hendricks, Francois du Bois (Xerox Imaging Systems) and Claude Gleichmann.

wants, digital printers help to create a market — working with customers from start to finish in the one-to-one marketing concept.

Benefits of the HP Indigo press 3050 — such as reduced turnaround, seamless job changes and six-colour printing — are all expected to offer major advantages in helping C2 DigitalPrint to sell variable data. The press also saves set-up costs for short-run jobs, making it profitable to run a thousand sheets or less.

This makes it possible for any business to initiate one-to-one marketing campaigns.

The new HP Indigo 3050 digital press enables C2 DigitalPrint to reduce production costs and delivery times, while offering high-quality, sharp, vibrant colour images for customers. It can work with data from a variety of systems to create customised and personalised letters, mailers, brochures and booklets.

When the owners of C2 DigitalPrint started their search for a digital press, they looked at various offerings before selecting the HP Indigo 3050 digital press, supplied by the Cape Town branch of Kemtek Imaging Systems.

Maximising productivity

The press delivers quality that unquestionably rivals offset printing, along with high-volume capacity. Throughput speeds are up to 4 000 A4 images/hour (two up) and 16 000 single-colour A4 images/hour (two up).

To maximise productivity the press offers electronic collation, automatic duplexing and seamless job changes to allow for efficient, streamlined operation. In addition to its speed and technical reliability, a deciding factor was its ability to print spot colours, allowing C2 DigitalPrint to conform precisely to customers' specific branding or corporate colours.

This is attained thanks to HP IndiChrome technology which allows special colours to be printed on the press, to enable printing of corporate colours simulating 97% of the Pantone colour range.

The press also uses liquid HP ElectroInk technology that delivers offset quality that's not possible with dry toner technology.

Another important feature is the wide variety of substrates that can be printed — from 80g/m² right up to 300g/m² — and to prove this the operator proudly shows off stickers printed on a self-adhesive substrate, as well as high-quality printing on glassine, parchment and textured papers.

Unlike traditional offset printing with costly set-up times, digital publishing is ideal for short-run printing, on-demand services and personalisation

— increasing competitive strengths and profit-making potential.

Says Francois du Bois, director of the Cape Town branch of Kemtek Imaging Systems (local distributor of HP Indigo presses): "Digital printing and the tremendous advantages of one-to-one communication are bringing new opportunities to printers and their customers. It's rewarding to see a company such as C2 DigitalPrint embracing the full potential of HP Indigo digital printing to be the vanguard in delivering maximum value to the local market." ✕

C2 DigitalPrint

T +27 021 5927430

Kemtek Imaging Systems

T +27 021 4196962



The C2 DigitalPrint team consists of Selwyn Brown, Bernard Hendricks, Andrea Barry, John Hendricks, and Claude Gleichmann.