

Managing performance

Print & Paper Monthly reports on how Redlin Print is gaining efficiencies through good use of its MIS system.

Established in 1978, Redlin Print, based in Chelmsford, Essex has progressed to become one of the UK's fastest growing family owned printing companies

The plant list includes an impressive pre-press studio and a fleet of Heidelberg B2 five and six colour presses with on and off line finishing geared to handle anything from basic stationery and business forms including NCR work, through to brochures, reports and corporate communications. It also runs a range of digital technology including Xerox iGen, HP Indigo, and Kodak Digisource machines.

Focusing on customers

With a risk adverse business model the past decade has seen the company focus on broadening its customer base as well as its service offering. The customer list boasts national and local



The company has a fleet of Heidelberg presses, but sees digital as the technology of the future.

government, NHS trusts, educational, legal and financial, property, medical, transport, media and publishing companies, and with a turnover in the region of £5.5 million it is not surprising to learn that not one of these customers accounts for more than 9% of overall business – a fact which managing director Nick Faint puts down to the applied use of a Shuttleworth MIS system.

‘Our view is that print today is an integral part of the communication process and we work hard to develop a relationship with our customers so that we become a trusted partner. We use our MIS to properly manage our business and manage our costs. From this we can develop more powerful tools which we can use to engage with our customers to assist them in selling to their customers,’ he said.

The company has been working in partnership with Shuttleworth since 2001, some two years before Redlin's acquisitions strategy came into effect. Since then an additional half dozen companies have been absorbed into the business along with their respective technologies.

‘We recently looked at our situation and are now in the process of radically overhauling the MIS to reflect our market performance. This will include the way we use the system for a more strategic marketing approach. We are now able to

understand more about our customers and about the type of products and services that we are able to offer, which also includes the processes that we employ to produce those products,’ commented Mr Faint.

Fully integrated

Some 35% of the company's output is produced digitally and this is an area where it is working hard to improve MIS integration. Its online purchasing system is powered by Freeflow from Xerox.

‘We are 75% of the way there,’ stated Mr Faint. ‘The eventual workflow scenario will allow orders created online to fully integrate with the MIS where a job bag is automatically created using the master template system. The customer services executive is then informed that a job has been placed by the client, a job ticket is created and goes straight into production and the work is despatched, all with the minimum of human intervention.’

The company is now using Shuttleworth's Dataflow for shop floor data collection.

‘Dataflow is an incredibly powerful management tool which enables us to quickly make adjustments to our pricing because it provides a real time information loop and paints an accurate picture of our workflow capacity,’ he said. ‘It helps us to effectively manage the business and everybody understands how important real time data is to our ability to react commercially.’

Mr Faint continued, ‘We are using CRM across the company. We use it to sell to 80% of our customer base and to follow up invoices and job changes. However, we are now working to accurately report and monitor the success of our marketing campaigns and are using the system to take snap shots of how we are doing on a month by month basis and use it to conduct marketing parameters. For example, we are now generating e-shots to customers with specific needs on a frequent basis. It is a fantastic management tool that is incredibly flexible. We now have plans to work in conjunction with Shuttleworth to develop the Digital Dashboard application which will update our system quite dramatically.’

He sees digital to be the future.

‘We are not sure whether we will ever replace the presses on our shop floor like for like. In all probability they will eventually be replaced with digital production equipment. However, what we are 100% certain of is that our MIS will be managing all of our production workflow and the associated costs of production throughout the entire organisation,’ he concluded. ■

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