WALTER DIGITAL GMBH PROSPERS THANKS TO ITS INNOVATIVE PRINT SERVICES AND AN HP INDIGO PRESS 5000

Walter Digital GmbH grew out of the tradition-rich company, Walter Druck that was established in 1927. With the acquisition of its HP Indigo press 5000 in 2006, the commercial print service provider (PSP) set the future path of the family-run company. Felix and Axel Walter, representing the fourth generation of the family to manage the company, founded the company Walter Digital GmbH together with Stark Druck GmbH + Co. KG. Their objective was to further expand the fields of "new media" and combine digital and offset printing as part of a logistics and customer solution.

The introduction of a digital business unit at a relatively small family firm meant more than simply producing small digital print runs. The company established a closed system (accessible to customers only) accommodating both Web-to-Print and Print-to-Web[1] solutions. Other services characterizing a full-service PSP as well as partnerships used to provide additional modern, flexible services, have been established and have resulted in an unequalled level of success.

Unlike open portals offered by many Internet-based PSPs where anyone can generate orders, Walter Digital GmbH decided in favor of closed portals. Customers ordering their printed products in this way decide in advance which products they want to be able to order online. As well as defining the products, deciding on the editable parts (such as inserting the address of the branch office for an international customer) allows templates to be set up that observe all the company's corporate design stipulations.

A further benefit lies in the reduced workload on print purchasing departments and employees. This in turn results in cost savings for the customer. The approval process is also established in collaboration with the customer, thus producing an individual, flexible solution tailored precisely to the customer's requirements, that incorporates not only the area of ordering printed goods, but also includes communication between print customers and their employees, branch offices and their customers.

"Our customers expect more from a long-established media company," says Felix Walter, co-founder, Walter Digital GmbH. "This way enables us to create all the process structures a customer demands in order to respond successfully to the company's market requirements. For this purpose we are aligning the media platforms for our customers targeted to their requirements. This demands from us not only flexibility but also added services, some of which we realize with the help of partners as all platforms are created individually. Existing market solutions cannot offer us the flexibility that our customers require. It is worth it, however, use of Web-to-Print services is on the rise."

Closed portals, explains Felix Walter, provide the opportunity to meet the needs of all Walter Digital GmbH's customers and maintain the same high service quality that customers have come to expect.

"There is considerable competition and price pressure in the field of open portals," Felix Walter continues. "There is hardly any room for manoeuvre and I would predict that these systems will have reached their limitations very soon. The companies in this sector offer full-scale industrial production. The service and added value we offer our customers are not possible using these systems."

PROGRESSIVE PROFITABLE PRINTING

At Walter Digital GmbH, however the service extends not only to the customer portal for ordering printed goods via Web-to-Print. Customers are offered a comprehensive service ranging from creating websites (if required) to website optimization, in particular for the use of QR[2] codes and the relevant landing sites through to individually compiled print online campaigns.

"Most websites are not optimized for the use of QR codes or for viewing on mobile phones or tablets," explains Felix Walter. "In collaboration with our partners we offer this service to ensure that our customers' cross-media marketing campaigns achieve the desired level of success."

Interactive digital applications, such as generating QR codes integrated into layouts, are finding increasing levels of acceptance among users. QR codes can be used to provide applications, additional information and other data for smartphones and their users.

Other examples of Print-to-Web services at Walter GmbH are the Phantom Codes[3] that are read using a special device and that connect to pre-defined websites. In combination with variable data printing, both in the text and in the image sectors, cross-media applications increase the success rate of the marketing campaigns significantly.

"Our customers report considerably higher response rates, whilst keeping costs to a reasonable level," says Felix Walter. "Both technologies are ideal for mailings, catalogs, flyers, packaging, educational and non-fiction books, operating manuals, package inserts, leaflets, information brochures, data sheets, as well as product identifications, tickets, coupons, documents and contracts."

Depending on the nature of the job, the print is produced on the HP Indigo press 5000 or on a half-format conventional press.

"For example, excellent results are achieved with 4-up A5 [half-letter-sized] flyers on the HP Indigo press. The costs of producing those on the conventional press would be higher. At the same time, larger volumes of 8-up A4 [letter-sized] products could be produced more cost-effectively on an offset press. This is not a fixed rule, however, as various products are better suited to one printing process or another," explains Felix Walter.

For example, variable data printing can only be carried out on the HP Indigo press 5000. Both presses provide the highest quality level that customers of Walter GmbH expect for every job.

"The HP Indigo press 5000 has made a significant contribution to our growth in recent years," concludes Felix Walter. "We see further potential for growth in our collaboration with Stark Druck GmbH + Co. KG based in Pforzheim, also a family-run company. This enables us to fully exploit our own capacities, including the HP Indigo press 5000."

"Our strength lies in creating platforms for customers that ensure both the development and continuity of their corporate identity. Be it in terms of print quality, paper grade or reliability, the HP Indigo press 5000 plays an important role in this."

Felix Walter,
Co-founder, Walter Digital GmbH

AT A GLANCE

Industry sector:
General Commercial Printing

Business name:
Walter Digital GmbH

Headquarters:
Germany

Web site:
www.walterdigital.de

CHALLENGE

• Commercial print jobs have to be produced in highest quality and fast turnaround is required.

• High quality of digitally printed products.

• Production of personalized print jobs.

• Reliable production.

• Establish added value for customers.

SOLUTION

• HP Indigo press 5000

RESULTS

• Complete digital workflow with short production times.

• Introduction of Web-to-Print, cross media campaign services and eBusiness for customers, resulting in greater customer loyalty.

• Individual production of personalized print jobs.

• Introduction of Print-to-Web in the form of QR codes and Phantom Codes for interconnecting print and online media.

• Expansion of the commercial print offering.

• Complete service solutions for customers.

1 Print-to-Web enables customers or consumers using a W2P web interface to order printed or electronic output (pdf, email, HTML).
2 QR codes, or Quick Response codes are also known as 2-D bar codes because of the matrix pattern that contains the information. Data may be text, a URL reference or other form of data.
3 Phantom Codes are part of a proprietary coding system that is invisible to the naked eye and requires a specific reader.

To learn more, visit www.hp.com/go/graphicarts

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