

Vila Etiketten gains competitive edge and enters new markets with HP Indigo WS6000 and WS6600 Digital Presses



At a glance

Industry: Labels and Packaging

Business name: Vila Etiketten

Headquarters: Breda, Netherlands

Website: www.vila.nl



Challenge

- Increase digital capacity for a wide range of label jobs and achieve fast turnaround times.
- Produce a wide range of label jobs of varying sizes more cost-effectively.
- Keep up with market changes and maintain steady business growth.
- Expand into new markets to support ongoing growth goals.

Solution

- Two HP Indigo WS6000 series presses, both equipped with an Inline Priming Unit (ILP), to boost digital printing capacity and media flexibility, and support longer runs.
- HP Indigo press ws4050 for productive printing of short runs.
- HP SmartPlanner connected with in-house estimation program, to automate job estimation and order creation.
- HP SmartStream Labels and Packaging Print Server, powered by Esko.
- HP SmartStream Labels and Packaging VDP Tools, powered by Esko, for variable data printing.

Results

- With HP Indigo digital printing and expanded capacity due to recent press acquisitions, digital turnover has increased 500 percent since 2005, accounting for a major portion of company growth; 60 percent of Vila's revenues today come from digital printing.
- With the Inline Priming Unit, Vila no longer uses pre-coated materials, enabling it to pass cost-savings on to customers while maintaining the same margins.
- Ability to print on all 80 of its foil printing materials enables Vila to better meet its customers' requirements for full-color, fast-turnaround printing on varied substrates.
- Expanded media flexibility is opening the way to new fast-growing markets, including flexible packaging.

“Having two HP Indigo WS6000 Presses running with an inline priming unit is by far the best decision we’ve made because now the possibilities are enormous. We can print on every substrate you can imagine, and it opens new markets to us.”

– Robbert Vugts, co-owner, Vila Etiketten

It’s no accident that “speed” tops the list of Vila Etiketten’s guiding watchwords: speed, power, diversity, quality and service. As a label converter producing more than 800 orders a week with a promised seven-day or less delivery time, Vila handles everything from order estimation and printing to finishing and delivery with maximum speed and efficiency. Since 2005, digital printing with HP Indigo solutions has been a major ingredient in the company’s recipe for success.

Vila’s diverse customers – including healthcare, cosmetics and food companies, book and music publishers, and packaging resellers – know they can rely on Vila for responsive service. “Our philosophy is ‘what you can produce and deliver today, won’t wait until tomorrow’, and that’s what we do every day,” says Vila co-owner Robbert Vugts. “We believe you get work by being one of the fastest deliverers. That’s how we grow each year.”

Founded in 1993 as a thermal transfer label printer, the company soon added hot foil printing and built a solid business in this segment. Stocking 80-100 different colors of foil, Vila delivers a wider variety of hot foil labels than most of its competitors and delivers them faster – often within a few days.

Growing demand drives multiple HP Indigo investments

In the early 2000’s, Vila moved into digital printing by outsourcing the work to another printing company. By 2005, 25 percent of Vila’s business was going to digital, and it was time to bring the digital orders in-house.

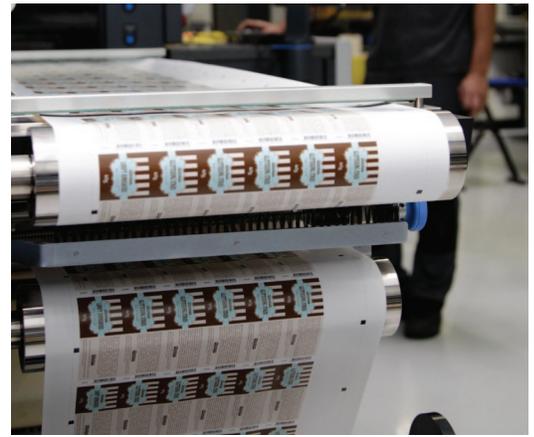
Vila invested in its first digital system, the HP Indigo press ws4050, in 2007. A couple of years later, with demand outstripping capacity, Vila added an HP Indigo press ws4500. The pattern has since repeated several times, prompting Vila to add an HP Indigo WS6000 Digital Press, and then, in 2012, to exchange its ws4500 for a top-of-the-line HP Indigo WS6600 Digital Press. At the same time, Vila upgraded its WS6000 with the capabilities of an HP Indigo WS6600 and installed an Inline Priming Unit (ILP) on each of the presses.

Vugts cites the seven-color process and white printing capabilities as the main reasons that Vila has repeatedly invested in HP Indigo systems. “HP’s investment in technology is another advantage; it has professionals who can help find a solution for almost anything,” says Vugts.

Doing more, faster

Vila’s main goal when adding the WS6000 series presses was to gain speed and capacity. “Once we bought the HP Indigo WS6000 Digital Press, our capacity leapt forward. The WS6000 series can print almost twice as fast as the ws4000 series so we could start taking on much larger volumes of work,” recalls Vugts. “The efficiency of the entire automated workflow around the HP Indigo Digital Presses, including Esko components, allows us to handle 800 orders a week and even more.”

With the capability to produce long-run variable data jobs, Vila can now take on a wide variety of large and complex jobs. For example, Vila recently produced a run of 50,000 labels that were each made up of 21 smaller labels of varying shapes with a unique QR code and ID number. It took Vila just one day to complete the job – a total of about 1 million individual labels – on one of its HP Indigo WS6000 Digital Presses.



Inline priming opens new opportunities

The ILP installed on both of HP Indigo WS6000 Series Presses dramatically improves Vila’s flexibility and competitiveness. Vila can print digitally on the full range of its foil media stock and on many other uncoated materials. “Now I can offer exactly what the customer wants instead of a material that is merely ‘close,’” says Vugts. He lists silk labels for mattresses, freezer-safe self-adhesives and hot melt adhesives as examples.

“It’s faster, and therefore, cheaper to prime materials ourselves using the ILP, so we can reduce our price to customers and still keep our margins,” says Vugts. Vila is still updating its estimation system, but Vugts expects to see the prices to customers drop about two to three percent for jobs printed on the HP Indigo WS6000 Series Presses.

The added media flexibility is opening a new market to Vila – flexible packaging. “We are testing a new flexible PET PE packaging material using the ILP. Before, I would have had to say ‘no’ to this customer, but now I can help him,” says Vugts, who sees great potential in this market. “The label market will be more competitive in the coming years, so if we can build up flexible packaging, then we can continue to meet our goal to grow 10 percent or more each year.”

Less is more for brand owners

Growing digital awareness among brand owners is also helping driving Vila’s digital growth.

Vugts explains: “They understand about variable data printing and design change possibilities, but for them, the biggest advantage of digital printing is that they don’t have to keep large stocks of printed labels. They can order a lot of varieties at the same time but in smaller quantities and have it delivered within a few days.”

Positive outlook for digital printing with HP

For Vila, this will be the continuation of a steady trend. Since 2005, Vila’s business has doubled, and the digital portion has grown to represent 60 percent of its annual turnover – a 500 percent increase. Hot foil accounts for about 30 percent of business, with the rest being mainly thermal transfer and flexo. Vugts says he sees digital becoming an even larger part of Vila’s business in the coming years, with new HP Indigo presses making digital printing viable for longer runs and larger formats.

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