

Symeta targets Ethias' customer base with customized magazine using HP digital presses to ensure success



At a glance

Industry: Direct Mail & Transactional Printing
Business name: Symeta
Headquarters: Halle, Belgium
Website: symeta.com



Business name: Ethias
Headquarters: Liège, Belgium
Website: ethias.be



Challenge

- Ethias wanted to develop a customer communication solution that would help to make new customers feel welcome and encourage them to invest in more products, while emphasizing its high-service level approach.

Solution

- Working with print specialist Symeta and content marketing agency Head Office, together the companies developed a fully personalized customer magazine that could be produced thanks to the capabilities of the HP T200 Color Inkjet Web Press and the HP T400 Color Inkjet Web Press. Symeta was able to produce over 40,000 magazines each year.

Results

- The eight page magazine is customized according to the customer's language, location, age and insurance product group, making it relevant and attractive.
- The print quality is indistinguishable from offset, making it appear professional.
- 87 percent of readers rated the content highly, while 54 percent had promised to visit the local office.
- Magazine recipients are twice as likely to request an additional quote and more than three times more likely to actually purchase additional insurance.
- By printing in specific batches, Ethias can take advantage of low postage rates.

“The HP Color Inkjet Web Presses give us the flexibility, speed and quality we need to produce fully personalized magazines for new Ethias customers, which in turn enables the company to sell more insurance.”

— Jo Van De Weghe, sales and marketing manager at Symeta

Born out of the merger of Druco printers, one-to-one specialist Mitto and Colruyt Group Services, Symeta combines the strengths of the latest printing and press techniques along with multichannel platforms. One of its customers is Ethias, a Belgian insurance company with 43 offices, which is gaining 40,000 new online clients every year.

Talking direct to new customers

Making new customers feel welcome, reducing churn and stimulating cross-selling are all challenges for any insurance business and Ethias is no exception. It wanted to develop a new communication channel that would emphasize its high service level approach while getting the attention of customers. Ethias turned to content marketing agency Head Office for advice, understanding its experience in producing personalized marketing collateral. Inspired by some of the unique projects created by Symeta over the years, Head Office chose the company for its strong reputation in data management, its variable full color printing ability and its track record in personalized marketing communications. Together, they created a customized eight-page customer magazine as the ideal way for Ethias to communicate.

“Ethias sells 80 percent of its insurance face to face in its regional offices but there are also between 2,000 and 3,000 new online customers every month,” explains Jo Van De Weghe, sales and marketing manager at Symeta. “It wanted its online customers to interact with their local agents but needed the right communication vehicle to encourage them to do so.

“We want Ethias to get to know their customers better and for them to understand more about the products. Taking out insurance is a big decision so it is important to reassure new buyers,” adds Van De Weghe. “A customized magazine seemed like the ideal way to build a personal relationship.”

A personalized communications approach

Together, Ethias and Head Office designed a magazine that would be individually titled and include content based on the customer’s language, location, age and insurance product group. For example, depending on which office was nearest the customer, the magazine would include one of 43 team pictures corresponding to that location. There are also eleven different cover versions relating to the type of purchase each customer had made and different advertorials relating to previous purchases.

“We spent 10 months pulling together the various content components which are then chosen according to which segment the customer belongs to, such as whether they have children or how old they are,” says Van De Weghe. “This means the magazine really resonates with each individual and reflects their own circumstances.”

Using a HP T200 Color Inkjet Web Press and HP T400 Color Inkjet Web Press, Symeta now prints over 40,000 of these magazines each year, every one personalized for a specific individual. The magazines are printed on Ziegler uncoated paper with a HP Bonding Agent which helps bring out the color. They are created in a specific order which enables Ethias to get the best postal rates.



“By delivering them to the post office in specified bundles, we can get a much lower cost for postage which saves Ethias money,” continues Van De Weghe. “It is the flexibility of the HP presses which allows us to dictate the print order so easily.”

A closer engagement and increased sales

Ethias engaged a market research company to assess the impact of the communications program against three primary objectives: whether the customer had visited the local office; whether they had requested a quote for additional insurance; and whether they had actually purchased additional insurance. The results were impressive and surpassed Ethias’ expectations.

“We discovered that 62 percent of recipients had read the magazine and, of those, 87 percent rated the content highly. In addition, 54 percent of readers had made a commitment to visit the regional office,” comments Van De Weghe. “What was most surprising was the fact that only 8.6 percent of typical new customers ask for an additional quote but this rises to 20 percent when they have received a magazine. Similarly cross-selling insurance only happens with 1.4 percent of new customers but this rose to 4.7 percent when the magazine was a factor.”

Such positive figures have enabled Ethias to welcome new customers and extend its relationship with them. The success of this communication program has led to it becoming a core marketing vehicle for the company.

“Ethias isn’t the only company to exploit customized print on the HP Inkjet Web Presses. More and more people are realizing that you can produce individualized prints at a quality comparable to traditional offset,” concludes Van De Weghe. “Another of our customers is producing 250,000 personalized newspapers where the cover is printed on the HP T400 Color Inkjet Web Press and the inside is printed on offset and no-one can tell the difference. Increasingly, people are realizing that inkjet technology can now produce the best result.”

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