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ROTO SMEETS FOUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Size and specialisation:
two key factors in print finishing

Time is money

The award goes to...



Size and specialisation: two key factors in print finishing

Customers demand a perfect graphic product with quick lead times at an attractive price. Roto Smeets Grafische Nabewerking in the Netherlands combines size with specialisation in response to the international trends in the print finishing market.

"Thanks to our short lead times, we can get the printed matter to its destination quickly."

Graphic finishing of mail order catalogues as thick as paving slabs is the type of work that De Wit Grafische Projecten in Eindhoven most relishes. The company belongs to Roto Smeets Grafische Nabewerking (Roto Smeets Print Finishing). Says Manager Toon Meeuwissen: "We work for the large publishers and mail order companies. Our plant is geared towards rapidly processing large runs of sizeable editions for our customers. For example magazines printed on A5 and larger with runs of 50,000 upwards. We also specialise in processing '2-up' and 'coming & going' productions. However, most of our million-plus runs are A4 in size. As for the catalogues we produce for mail-order companies, these represent at least as much production value."

Six-centimetre spine

A large part of the four binding lines with no fewer than 26 stations cuts and binds unsewn catalogues with a spine width of up to 6 centimetres. "The mail order companies use these catalogues as a shop window for their products. The catalogues are delivered to people's homes of course, but they are also sent to shops for display, so that consumers can make their selection and sometimes take the articles home there and then. Catalogues such as these can have up to 1,600 pages," says Meeuwissen.

The work comes to De Wit from printers all around Europe. The main customers are in Germany, England and France. Says Meeuwissen: "We work five days a week here, 24 hours a day. This keeps our lead times short and ensures that we can get the printed matter to its destination quickly. Our ability to seal inline - and offline too - means that we can wrap catalogues individually before they go in the post. This represents a cost benefit for

the customer, and the consumer receives a catalogue of impeccable quality. This massive production capacity allows us to meet our customers' requirements with a great deal of flexibility."

Addressing is a strong point

When asked what makes De Wit Grafische Projecten so special, Meeuwissen does not have to think about it for long: "I can name three things. Firstly, we can do both hardback and paperback. Thanks to this total package, we never have to say no to our customers. Our second strong point is that we can handle all forms of addressing. Customers can give us pre-printed information - including information printed on rolls - for their special offers for example, but, naturally, we also print Cheshire labels. We can also print addresses using the inkjet technique. And finally, we can arrange every possible form of transport for the customer. The printed matter, the distribution of which is planned down to the last detail, can either be collected or delivered to the customer's warehouse or shop door. There are no transport restrictions. Sorted by postcode, on pallets, for any destination in Europe - we can handle all the logistics. We are a strong and flexible player in the

market. Our strength lies in our specialisation in print finishing of printed products, and our international approach and the large runs we can handle are the key factors in our success."

Snapshot of Roto Smeets Grafische Nabewerking

Toon Meeuwissen is the manager of Roto Smeets Grafische Nabewerking in Eindhoven, in the south of the Netherlands. The group consists of three companies, of which the largest is De Wit Grafische Projecten. Its activities centre on perfect binding, packing and mailing.

Eindhoven is also home to Nadruk, which specialises in the cutting, gluing and folding of large format sheetfed print. Rotopack, located in Deventer, counts primarily publishers among its clientele. Its addressing and wrapping activity is a highly valued and frequently requested specialist area. Together with two assistant managers, Meeuwissen manages 170 staff at Roto Smeets Grafische Nabewerking. The company has its own sales organisation and its clientele comes from all four corners of Europe.

'Time' is money

In the space of 36 hours, a good 300,000 copies of Time magazine are printed and delivered to tens of destinations in Europe and Latin America. This is quite some feat... and it is only possible thanks to the short lead times operated at Roto Smeets Weert.

Every week, Roto Smeets Weert prints over three hundred thousand copies of Time. This edition is destined for readers in key areas of Europe, the Middle East, Africa and South America. The lead time is short, very short. The digital editorial data arrive at around 10 a.m. every Sunday. The first trucks loaded with the weekly magazine set off for their destinations at 8 p.m. of the same day.

Roto Smeets has been printing Time 32 years. The order is placed by International Magazines Services (IMS), a remarkable joint venture set up by competitors Time Inc. and Newsweek Inc. as the most efficient means of producing and spreading a number of editions of Time, Fortune and Newsweek. After all, these magazines sit next to each other at the same points of sale around the globe. IMS handles the distribution as well as the graphic process. At Roto Smeets Weert, we ensure the magazines are ready for delivery in line with the complex distribution schedules.

Quite a challenge

The editorial pages arrive in the mornings in PDF format. They are then imposed together with the advertisement pages, which are stored in a database. A final "dig-

ital blue line" check ensures that none of the pages ends up in the wrong place.

The prepress staff makes any changes needed and checks them against the publisher's proof.

The entire prepress and platemaking process is completed by 2 p.m. "The production process is very streamlined," says Jan Rietjens, head of customer services. "However, if the customer needs to make last-minute changes to the content or cover, as a result of breaking news, this calls for a certain amount of improvisation.

The challenge is then still delivering on time within the agreed tight deadlines."

Complex production

Furthermore, Time is printed in

several versions. Some advertising pages differ from country to country,

because of the legal requirements that apply there. It may still be legal, for example, to advertise tobacco in one country, but not in others.

The production order is dictated by the time set aside for distribution. Magazines carried by air-mail are the first to be printed.

These magazines set off for all kinds of destinations. Some go directly to subscribers, others directly to kiosks, and others go to further distribution points.

"The Time magazine printed here on the Sunday is on sale in the streets of Athens and Barcelona on the Monday," order manager Peter Geijbels tells us. "That calls for first class preparations at the distribution centre.

On the basis of information received from IMS, we print the labels for the bundles here. Obviously, these labels contain the destination and a barcode. Our schedule is extremely precise about which editions are required to reach which destinations at what time. Aircraft do not wait around on the runway."

What is immediately clear is that this presents a tricky logistical puzzle to solve every week. The last of the 26 trucks used in the magazine's distribution leaves the premises at 2 p.m. on Monday.

In the space of 36 hours, an edition of 300,000 copies is printed, collated, stapled, cut, bundled and delivered to its destination.

Says Jan Rietjens: "It goes without saying that the customer closely monitors and strictly evaluates our work. The work requires strict organisation by flexible people who are capable of improvising as and when circumstances dictated. These properties are part and parcel of our business culture."

High-volume periodicals

The Roto Smeets establishment in Weert employs a workforce of about 450. At Roto Smeets, one of the key responsibilities of Eugène Nijssen, Jan Rietjens and Peter Geijbels is the weekly production of Time. The European editions of Business Week, The Economist, Fortune, Newsweek and The New England Journal of Medicine also roll off these rotary offset presses. About 80% of the work involves what Rietjens refers to as high-volume periodicals. This includes domestic and international markets. The other 20% is work for the retail market.

And the award goes to...

The two Roto Smeets gravure printing plants won three awards between them at the European Publication Gravure Award of 2004.

Roto Smeets Etten actually won two Awards and in so doing obtained the largest number of Awards in Europe!

Every two years, the European Rotogravure Association, the umbrella organisation for the leading European gravure printers, assesses the quality of its members' gravure printing. The jury pays particular attention to colour density, colour register, folding quality and finish. There are five categories, essentially based on the type of paper used in the printing process.

Roto Smeets Deventer won an Award for its customer Intergamma. In the Netherlands, Intergamma delivers 6.4 million copies of the "Gammakrant"

door-to-door, printed on Improved Newspaper. Customer Services Manager Kamal Charrat explains: "Improved Newspaper is awkward to work with. For your customer you try to provide a perfect product - and this is what our specialists did. Intergamma congratulated us on the prize because they know that high-quality printed matter is an excellent means of communication."

Roto Smeets Etten won two awards. They won in the category of coated paper of 70g and higher, with their Douwe Egberts

2004 gift catalogue, while the weekly magazine "Story" scored highest in the uncoated/SC paper category.

Says Customer Services Manager Paul Eykel: "These paper types are at opposite ends of the quality spectrum. It is therefore a real challenge to get the best possible print results from both types. For us, winning the award is a welcome recognition of our printing craftsmanship. It is also a marvellous thing for our customers. It is confirmation for them that they have come to the right place for all their printing requirements."

COLUMN

As printers, we're conscious of the need to help our clients achieve two objectives: value for money in their print spend, and maximum visual impact. Over the years, the focus on cost control has led to a certain monotony of design in both catalogues and magazines, with an overwhelming number of publications being based on or around standard A4 formats. This makes it hard for publishers to achieve the sort of visual impact that would really make their publications stand out from the competition. At Roto Smeets, we have a few ideas about how to remedy this situation.

In web offset, the combination of a smaller cut-off size with the use of the maximum available web width can be used to transform the appearance of a publication, and can vastly improve the visibility of a magazine on the shelves of a newsagent. Our line-up of presses offers a choice of both long-grain, short cut-off and short-grain products, enabling publishers to choose from a much wider range of page sizes than hitherto. And gravure printing is now a viable option for many medium run catalogues and magazines, thanks to recent advances in cylinder engraving technology. Growing numbers of publishers are now benefiting from gravure's ability to deliver tailor-made page sizes without trim waste.

With long grain web offset, short grain web offset and gravure options, Roto Smeets can offer a rational solution for any desired page size. We're more than happy to be consulted by publishers at the design stage, and to help ensure a successful, eye-catching, cost-effective publication.

data · paper · inspiration

Speed. Theoretically, anyone with a 'message' is in a hurry. Once this message has been printed, you want to get it out to the target group as quickly as possible. Some want extra speed because their offers are time-limited. Others want their news to be the first in the stands or on people's doorstep. And you'll always want to be faster tomorrow. That's why Roto Smeets Weert recently decided to purchase an ultra modern, super fast 48-page press. Printing quickly is important, but so is efficient distribution. Companies can beat the competition through reliable, on-time delivery. We hear it all too often: is it still possible for today?

That's something we're more than familiar with. Roto Smeets has an excellent reputation in all areas of pre-distribution and distribution, and here as well, we've got speed on our side.

René van Werkhoven (Managing Director Roto Smeets)



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