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Webprint increases efficiency with Imaging Solutions

Future and growth with purePhoto quality

For many years now, the Dutch online-photofinisher Webprint B.V. in Hengelo has depended on real photographic paper not just to make standard photo prints but also to create lucrative picture products such as photo books and calendars. And this has led to success: The company, founded in 2004, is the fastest growing company in the Netherlands. Webprint intends to speed its rapid growth further by implementing the purePhoto workflow offered by Imaging Solutions, the global market leader for digital high-speed systems in the photofinishing industry.

Ton Marsman, the founder and CEO of the company, has a simple strategy: "The customers are primarily interested in good image quality, and this we have to offer at best price." Proof that this formula works is confirmed by Webprint's annual growth rate of 200 %, expanded activities in Belgium, Germany and Denmark, and a newly founded subsidiary in the USA.

Webprint was founded on a misconception: Ton Marsman had an eventful career in electronic business, participated in the construction of the first PCs in 1979, later introduced the German trading company Conrad Electronics in the Netherlands, and then pioneered the introduction of electrostatic printers at a printing plant in the 90s, had little experience with real photographic paper. "We wanted to produce photos on electrostatic printers and were of the opinion that it would be a good idea to print the EXIF image data on the back." remembers Webprint's CEO. "But this was, frankly spoken, a catastrophe since 30 to 40 % of the orders were returned." Photo books produced on electrostatic printers



Ton Marsman, founder and CEO of Webprint B.V.



The systems from Imaging Solutions: the digital printer widePrint is directly connected with the paper processor VSP 25-12

look good at the first glimpse, but if you cut out a picture and to look at it on its own, you will be appalled by how bad the quality really is. The customers reacted negatively and were absolutely correct that they did not intend to accept such a quality."

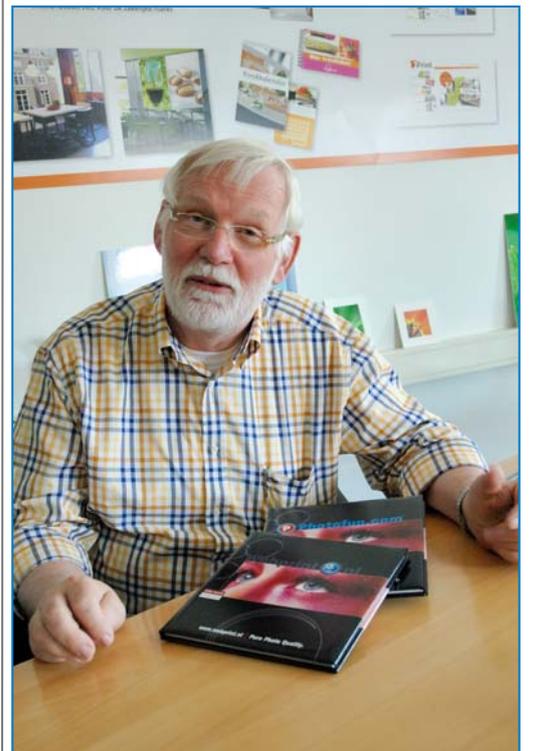
Ton Marsman reacted quickly and bought a minilab first to print standard photos, and then also photo calendars and photo books on real photographic paper in Hengelo. But the time-consuming laminating of paper webs and the manual book binding postprocessing were too expensive in the long run. "In addition to quality an efficient workflow is the essential factor for a company's success," emphasizes Ton Marsman. "It is of minor importance to bargain with a paper supplier to receive a square meter for one or two cent less. But an efficient workflow, mostly fully automated and process-oriented, is the most important precondition to be able to offer the highest quality at the best price."

Today pages for photo book and calendars are produced on the photo printer widePrint from Imaging Solutions in sizes up to full A4, 21 x 29.7 cm (8" x 12") and processed with the paper processor VSP 25-12 directly connected to widePrint. The folded photo book pages are processed to finished book blocks with a special lay-flat binding with the fastBook machine. Then they receive a cover with conventional book binding equipment. In the near future, production will be further automated with the Imaging Solutions device fastCCF from Imaging Solutions to quickly cut, crease, fold and press sheets for the book block. "As a result, we will need less manpower, become more competitive and increase quality all at the same time." comments Ton Marsman.

The decision for the Imaging Solutions systems was easy for Ton Marsman - his minilabs reached their capacity limits. With great experience in the development of individual solutions in his own company, he was planning to develop automation internally. "But then I discovered the solutions for



The station fastBook from Imaging Solutions for the automatic production of book blocks with lay-flat binding for ideal flatness



Webprint's image book, of course also in purePhoto quality

the production of photo books and photo calendars on real photographic paper at the booth of Imaging Solutions at photokina 2006." Ton Marsman says. "We immediately met with the people to discuss the workflow." At about the same time, Fujifilm launched Crystal Archive Album Paper with a thinner base especially developed for photo books. It was clear for Ton Marsman that there were no longer any technical barriers for his growth strategy. "With their inherent image quality, excellent flatness allowing even placing of a panoramic image on a double page without having the disturbing bump in the middle, the purePhoto books on real photographic paper are superior to electrostatic products in so many ways," stresses Ton Marsman. And Webprint highlights the value of these premium products before the book is even opened: all their photo book covers are produced on real photographic paper and then padded to further support the high-value impression of the purePhoto books.

Being on the road of success with sophisticated ideas

The business model of Webprint makes it easy for the customer - signing up is free of charge. Anyone registering at www.webprint.nl (non-Dutch citizens at www.photofun.com) can upload as many images he or she likes. "There is no charge for this at all, we store images for life." Ton Marsman explains, "For us, it is important first of all to have many images on our servers. Then we can motivate the customers to do something with the images, for example photo prints, photo books or calendars in real purePhoto quality." Doing this, Webprint's CEO has a modest goal "We would like to earn one cent on average with one processing of each image."

The successful business model has made major companies curious and therefore some leading photo communities and trading companies are Webprint's customers. This is further fuelled by the fact that within four years the company has



Also digitally signed articles in purePhoto quality on real photographic paper for business customers belong to Webprint's product portfolio



One of the biggest photo books in the world - produced at Webprint for a show attraction

grown from its "garage size" of only 16 square meters to a plant with 1,500 square meters production area. By this September, further expansion to a nearby production plant of the size of a football field is expected to be completed. Ton Marsman has ambitious goals: "This new production plant is not oversized: in 2011 we would like to have 2.5 per cent of the European photo market, process around 500 million pictures and reach a turnover of 100 million Euro with 70 employees. Of course to realize this plan, we would need some more purePhoto production lines from Imaging Solutions."

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About Imaging Solutions:

Imaging Solutions AG, Regensdorf, Switzerland has more than 80 employees, most of them working in research and development. Starting out from its core competence in digital high-speed printing and scanning systems, the company focuses on the innovative development of technologically leading and practice-proven digital production solutions for the production of prints and value added photo products on true photo paper. At present, a special focus point is the development of innovative concepts for the production of purePhoto products such as photo books and photo calendars. With its subsidiary Imaging Postprocessing Solutions, Imaging Solutions also offers professional postprocessing solutions. Imaging Solutions is today the market leader with its modular and robust products in the field of reliable high-speed systems for the photofinishing industry and supplies customers all over the world.

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A new construction with almost 10,000 square meters production area is expected to be completed already in September 2008

Press Release Pressemitteilung



photos: (photos can be downloaded as high-res .jpps at http://www.imagingsolutions.ch/index.php?article_id=139&clang=1)

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