

DIRECT IMAGING, GREEN IMAGING

New press investments can help print companies to improve their environmental performance. *Print & Paper Monthly* speaks to two companies that have found such a boost through DI press technology.



Anglia Print's John Popely with the Presstek 34DI and the firm's CarbonNeutral certification.

Anglia Print and Print Revolution are two companies that share a strong commitment to improving their environmental performance. East Anglia-based Anglia Print, for instance, has recently been certified as a CarbonNeutral company; Nottingham's Print Revolution, just a five-person team, offers its clients a carbon balanced paper as a house stock, belongs to the Waterless Printing Association, and makes use of eco-friendly Green Energy UK as its power supplier.

The other thing that binds them together in an environmental sense is their adherence to Presstek's DI (Direct Imaging) technology. Anglia Print invested in a Presstek 34DI four years ago, replacing eight old machines in the process – two presses and various supplementary kit. Print Revolution started 10 years ago with a Presstek 34DI, and six years later went up a format to the 52DI model when it moved to larger premises.

Both companies were attracted by the environmental advantages of DI – a waterless technology in which plates are

imaged on the press itself. Anglia Print's director John Popely said: 'We are recognised as a leader in environmentally friendly printing, and we chose the Presstek 34DI because it is chemistry free, and because there was no supplementary CTP unit that needed to be installed. We were still film platemaking at the time. The press has a very small footprint, and compared to the machines that we had before it has reduced our energy consumption by about 40%. We produce more work now with less energy consumption than we were doing before. There's also less paper waste: before it took 250 sheets to make ready; now it's 15 to 30 sheets.'

Chemistry free plate making and fewer waste sheets in make ready were among the attractive features of the press for Print Revolution also, whose director Paul Bamford related: 'When we first bought the smaller 34DI, it wasn't really for the environmental aspect. It was the workflow; getting work out of the press seemed a bit easier than a conventional system. We wanted a good print result fairly quickly, and it seemed very good for a small company.'

'We started to think about the environment about four years ago, when we switched to the 52DI. We looked at going back to conventional litho with polyester plates, but we didn't feel that the quality was as good as what we were already producing. Some customers were starting to talk about the environment and it would have been a step back for us.'

'The chem-free plate making obviously helps, and we are led to believe that DI handles vegetable-based inks better than

a conventional press would. The amount of paper used in make ready is a factor, and obviously being waterless also. We don't have to worry about disposal of any chemistry.'

Both printers have heard that DI presses can be heavier users of energy than other modern, conventional litho presses, but both have mitigated such concerns: Anglia Print can easily compare the energy outputs required for its Presstek 34DI against that of the eight machines it replaced. 'It's so much lower that it was a no-brainer,' said Mr Popely; while Print Revolution's Mr Bamford points out that if it is using more power than some presses, at least the company is offsetting this in some way by using Green Energy UK as its energy supplier.

POSITIVE IMPACT

The impact of DI technology on each business has been positive. Mr Bamford continued: 'It's really at the core of our marketing at the moment and it's proved itself this year, with 70 to 80% of the new customers we have attracted deciding to use us, all other things being equal, because they need to be seen to be using someone with environmental credentials. Environmentally-minded companies will look to use environmentally-minded suppliers. It puts us in that category, so it gives us that little bit of an edge.'

He added that stepping up from the 34DI to the 52DI had also allowed the company to grow through its increased workrate and ability to run thicker paper stocks. It's the only press that Print Revolution owns, so it has needed to be robust and reliable.

Mr Popely said that Anglia Print's turnover has increased by around 200% in the four years that it has possessed the Presstek machine. 'We can go out and pitch for more work at a much more competitive level,' he continued. 'Previously, we could offer the environmental side but we were more expensive, but now we are much more competitive. And it can turn work around quicker, there's less sheet wastage getting to colour; artwork comes in, it's checked, goes through the RIP and it's on press. The make ready is 12 minutes and it dries quickly too. If necessary we can turn jobs around the same day.' ■