



Creative touch

How HP opened up a world of new possibilities for Symeta.



Symeta
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Country: Belgium
Segment: Direct Mail

Growing from the in-plant, offset provider of print for Colruyt Group, a grocery and retail organization in Belgium, to a service offering unique print solutions in multiple nations, Symeta embodies innovation. Over the last decade, their HP PageWide Web Press T230 and HP PageWide Web Press T490 HD platforms have provided the infrastructure to grow their innovative approach to marketing collateral, using newspaper formats in addition to traditional direct marketing mailers. And their reinvention doesn't end there.

HP: Jo, Symeta started in print for grocery and retail to a major innovator in Belgium and beyond. How have the HP PageWide Web Press T230 and HP PageWide Web Press T490 HD platforms helped you find new opportunities in the last few years?

JVD: First, we've added newspaper formats to traditional direct mail. But there's so much more to it. We are printers; we are always seeking new, creative things to do with inkjet. We have so much capacity with the presses that we've opened up to custom tablecloths, clothing patterns, personalized gift bags. And we have a few little trade secrets of our own when we leverage inkjet—innovative finishing solutions and such. We can convert and finish all this either in-house or with partners. We're very nimble, and I think our success speaks to that.

HP: You have an interesting story because of your heritage in traditional print and growing the business. What is it about the HP PageWide Web Press that helps you make the sale?

JVD: Our last five big, new customers were all banks and transactional, and they all chose us for the print quality. They all say it's unbeatable. The color and sharpness matches offset, and with far less resources.

HP: Does any of that revolve around your ability to turn a job around quickly or get into the mail stream faster?

JVD: We're not the biggest and we have competitors that have more mailing lines. Let's face it, when you're in transactional, the bottleneck is not printing; we have so much printing capacity. It's mailing the ads. What really

makes us win cases is the fact that we don't have a click model. Instead, we calculate the ink on the transactional documents, and the average charge is between 10 and 16 percent for all our customers. With the T490, the last two big customers we won, they got an ink price that was practically unbeatable.

We always ask for files from the customers. We do print samples with the offers, and they all say they want to have a look at the press because they can't believe it's inkjet. We invite customers, they come see the press live, and we print in front of them, because otherwise they wouldn't believe it. We've got eight years' worth of comments from customers who say the quality of HP is far above the others.

We're seeing less and less difference between banks and other customers in transactional and direct mail now;

“When we receive files from the customers and do print samples, they all say they want to look at the press because they can't believe it's inkjet.”

they're all using color. We get files overnight, we print in the morning, get them in the mail the same day, good quality. The presses are great.

Actually, if we want to be aggressive, we can just make offers on the additional running costs, because the capital on the machine has already been paid. Sometimes we have to explain, for example to the Minister of Finance, why we are so cheap. It's because the HP equipment is so durable and the cost of ownership is so low.

HP: Symeta has the ability to take a challenge from someone and create something new. How do you decide to approach a customer who wants something different and asks, “What is the coolest new thing you can do?”

JVD: First, we explain the possibilities of using color in big volumes. For instance, a competitor of Kazoo magazine learned we had printed 75,000 posters, but they were all different. They couldn't believe we printed that many different posters on the T490 at a very good price.

We've always called ourselves evangelists. We go to retailers in banking, automotive, fashion, pharmacy, trying to convince online companies to use print in their marketing mix. And more and more, we see that print is inevitable. We do a lot of workshops with marketing departments to show the possibilities in mass communication, like if you want to include segmentation and personalization. The basic strategy of using color to touch your customer in the heart or the head stays the same. Every new customer who comes in and tries it out says yes, “it works”. And we can go a little bit further with that because of the T490.

To learn more about HP PageWide Web Presses and introducing the new HP PageWide Web Press T250 HD with HP Brilliant Ink, please visit hp.com/pagewidewebpressT250.

