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The senior executive team at Consolidated Graphics, pictured from the left, includes: Aaron Grohs, Jon Biro, Joe Davis, Paul Garner, Jim Cohen and Ric Davis.

Plowing the Digital Road Of Technology

As digital printing becomes a bigger part of its overall value proposition, Consolidated Graphics commits fully to educating customers by hosting its own conference to showcase the possibilities.

All the Right Moves

By Julie Greenbaum
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

PUTTING ALL of your eggs in one basket is rarely a good thing. But for Bob Anderson, president of Phoenix-based commercial printer Prisma Graphic, it worked out just fine. When Anderson purchased the 30-year-old, privately held company in 2000, he was faced with the daunting task of trying to save it from certain closure.

Ready for the challenge, he completely re-organized the firm's sales department, and focused on implementing new technologies—which played a key role in transforming Prisma from a boutique print shop into a full-service marketing supply chain provider with a strong online presence.

Ever since the transition, the company has experienced 10 to 15 percent annual growth, and has even been cus-

tommer-voted number one in *Ranking AZ* (a resource directory published by AZ Big Media) for the past three years. Annual sales now stand at \$24 million.

Anderson gives much of the credit to DokShop, Prisma's homegrown online ordering system that was launched in 2001. The DokShop system started out as a simple business card ordering Website and has since become an integral part of the company's business strategy.

"Our DokShop system has enabled us to service the marketing supply chain needs of almost 200 of our customers through online business-to-business storefronts, with about 40,000 users worldwide," explains Anderson. "Almost 35 percent of our business today falls outside of traditional printing, and

we fully expect the trend to continue as more and more integrated services are added."

The DokShop system can be described as a marketing asset management solution that provides clients with tools to coordinate their worldwide marketing efforts. It offers multi-location clients easy-to-use print and digital templates customizable for local efforts, shows instant PDF proofs, and has options for print, digital downloads or third-party orders. It also retains corporate control through approval processes, sends automatic status updates, can invoice by cost centers and has complete reporting functionality. The Websites can be generic or client-branded and offer various security options from open registration to complete intranet punch-out access.

Prisma recently launched a Web-to-print solution called Print Power (printpower.com). The site was initially created to compete with some of the well-known online print sites that provide small- to medium-size print projects, but is targeted more toward those seeking designer-quality for online prices. The company plans to expand service offerings as they become developed through DokShop.

Battling Online Suppliers

"Technology has become such a large part of our business today; we now employ almost as many programmers as press operators," notes Rob Steele, Prisma's marketing and e-commerce director. "Last year, we figured we were losing about 20 percent of our customers' business to online printers, so it made sense that we create our own aggregate Web-to-print solution."



Some members of the Prisma Graphic executive team pitch in to get orders out the door. Executives (from the left) include Bob Anderson, president; Alan McAbee, general manager; Steve Carlson, operations manager; Rob Steele, marketing and e-commerce director; and Victor Martinez, controller.



Prisma Graphic is housed in an 82,000-square-foot facility in Phoenix. The shop has been customer-voted number one in *Ranking AZ* for the past three years.

“It also fit perfectly with the online transactions we have been doing through DokShop for the past nine years.”

In 2005, the company moved into its current, 82,000-square-foot facility. According to Anderson, Steve Carlson, Prisma’s operations manager, played a crucial role in organizing a more streamlined workflow in the facility.

“Based on his previous experience, Steve really understood lean manufacturing before that term even became well known. He developed an online (job) ticket system to help minimize the amount of touch points necessary to move products from one station to another,” adds Anderson. “Most online orders now take less than three days to complete.”

Prisma also added a new mailing department, which made the 130-employee company one of the largest mailers in the metro Phoenix area based on the number of pieces dropped into the mail stream each month.

“We had been using local lettershops, but decided we wanted more control over our mailings to deliver on our promises to clients,” Steele points out. “Since then, our overall fulfillment business has grown. Orders get turned faster, and everybody is always on the same page.” The printer is in

the process of implementing the USPS Intelligent Mail Barcode (IMB) system to help facilitate their clients’ lead generation.

Today, Prisma is a one-stop shop, offering graphic design support, marketing analytics and database development, heatset web and sheetfed lithography, variable data digital printing, complete bindery, and in-house mailing and fulfillment services.

The company currently operates a five-color, 38” Heidelberg M-130 heatset web press; a two-color, 36” Color King web press; a five-color, Akiyama JPrint sheetfed perfecter; a six-color, 40” Akiyama sheetfed press with aqueous coater; a six-color, 28” Mitsubishi sheetfed with aqueous coater; a two-color Halm Jet perfecter envelope press; a two-color Ryobi; and a pair of two-color ABDick duplicators.

A four-color, HP Indigo 5000 press and a Konica Minolta bizhub PRO C6500 round out its digital capabilities. Bindery equipment consists of three MBO folders, a Stahl folder, a Kluge pocket folder/gluer, and three Muller Martini stitchers, along with foil and embossing equipment.

The printer produces a wide range of printed products, including annual reports, brochures, direct mailers, flyers, stationery, invitations, magazines, manuals, pocket folders, postcards, posters, press kits, programs, sales sheets and catalogs. Primary vertical markets served include restaurants, hospitality, healthcare, manufacturing, financial and banking industries.

In 2005, Prisma became the first web and sheetfed printer in Arizona to become FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certified. Other green initiatives included switching to energy-efficient lighting, utilizing an efficient air conditioning/heating system, and implementing a company-wide recycling program.

According to Carlson, despite the move into a facility more than twice its

size, Prisma’s energy consumption has remained about the same.

Recycling Clients’ Paper

Prisma is currently putting together a “Paper Back Program;” when the company’s trucks deliver jobs they will also pick up any outdated literature and waste paper from customers and bring it back to be recycled.

To celebrate Earth Day this past April, the printer partnered with Neenah Paper and xpedx to host a “Green Expo.” More than 100 designers and clients toured the company’s facility, where they received eco-friendly paper samples and learned how embracing the green movement can directly benefit their businesses, both environmentally and financially.

Prisma Graphic also regularly hosts open house events for students, as well as provides internships for students interested in entering the printing industry. “We bring in students from several colleges every semester, and also offer half-day printing 101 classes for both the students and our clients,” Anderson notes.

Moving forward, Anderson reveals plans to make DokShop even more robust by adding e-blast services, and the ability to purchase targeted mailing lists for customized direct mailers. Personalized URLs (PURLs) will also become available to help track responses, collect data and provide complete reporting capabilities. With these upgrades the company hopes to add 100 to 200 storefronts in the next two to three years.

“If you look at our definition of success, it’s really a combination of our staff and technology. The machinery is our engine, but it’s our people that drive us forward,” concludes Anderson. “Technology has allowed us to become a successful marketing supply chain provider, and we will continue to focus on enhancing that part of our business for years to come.” **PI**