Melbourne-based digital label printer New Digital Print (NDP) has seen significant growth in sales volume since installing Australia’s first Durst Tau 330 UV inkjet label press, with the company noting it can now compete with runs of up to 10,000 lineal metres.

NDP is a digital-only print shop, which has allowed it to capitalise on recent trends and legislation shaking up the label market. Following the move to “country of origin” labelling for food, the company was able to contact customers and let them know they could change label artwork over almost immediately, while international chemical labelling standards under the new GHS have proven a great source of growth.

Since installing the press, the company has added on two new staff, while all new work has been run on the press, without the decommissioning of older equipment.

Marc De Amicis, managing director, NDP, explains, “Changes in legislation, around food and industrial segments has aided our growth, especially across businesses with multiple SKUs. When it comes to things like batch numbering, we can offer that on the fly in a single pass.

“Customers with multiple SKUs in the industrial sector have realised that the quality of digital has evolved, and our presses suited their needs.”

NDP was founded by De Amicis and Nigel Gainey, the company’s operations manager, in August 2013, and upgraded its space in 2017.

De Amicis explains, “We looked at our client base, and thought the Durst Tau was the best mix. We had a toner based press already, and thought a UV press would complement that.

“We considered it to be one of the better presses in the marketplace, with a 720x1260 dpi native resolution, low migration inks, and as a seven colour press covering nearly 90 per cent of the Pantone gamut.”

The Durst Tau 330 at NDP runs CMYK plus white, violet, and orange, allowing the company to benefit from applications with white ink.

De Amicis also points to speed, noting, “Speed was also a factor for us, our previous machine was running 15 metres per minute, but this runs at 48 metres per minute. It allows us to grow with our clients, some of which have grown from 2,000-3,000 metre jobs to 10,000 metre jobs.

“Our clients range from market stall, kitchen table customers coming up with concepts, to products having runs in Coles.

“The breakeven used to be 3-4 thousand metres with digital compared to flexo, but we are now competitive at up to 10,000 metres.

“Our biggest job to date has been 18,000 metres over six SKUs. We got that out in just over nine hours.

“The press runs all day long, basically able to produce 2,400 metres per hour. We can comfortably say we produce close to 12,000 metres each day.

“I think we are at 40 per cent of capacity, as I look at industry standard as a 10-day turnaround.

“Even though we are producing everyday, all day long, we are able to have our turnaround at three to four days.

“Our bottleneck is finishing at the moment, where we will run one to one and a half shifts to...
Adding capacity: Durst Tau 330 boosts revenue

Speed, quality upgraded: Durst Tau 330 RSC

Matt Ashman, sales manager, PES, the distributors of Durst machines in ANZ, says, “For Durst, even a one per cent increase from that global market of €60bn is substantial. That is why the company has invested in the Tau platform, as it sees labels as a growing market.

“Durst first entered the label market three years ago, applying its Piezo inkjet technology to a market that was normally occupied by flexo, litho, and toner-based systems. We wanted to try and offer speed, and a quality that was not present, as well as opening up additional substrates.”

Durst has enlisted former label specialist at Fuji Xerox, previously distributing the Tau, Paul Sanelli, to grow the domestic market.

Sanelli explains, “Through the Durst partnership with Fuji Xerox, I got to know the business (Durst Group) and its people, and quickly established that the company had a focus for best of breed solutions and, just as importantly customer support. The Durst portfolio is full of leadership products, from the Tau 330 E (entry) press right through to what we call the “best of both worlds” the XJet Hybrid Press where flexo and digital inkjet work together.

Growth in inkjet

A recent study by FINAT on the value of label printing demonstrated that of the €60bn global market value, only 7.2 per cent is produced on digital presses.

The Finat Digital Label Market Study also revealed that from the people surveyed, 76 per cent already owned toner-based systems, while 24 per cent owned inkjet systems.

Speaking to those same people, 48 per cent said they will be purchasing inkjet next.

Inks proving resistant

Operating mostly in the food and industrial label markets, De Amicis has pointed to the Durst high-pigment inks as being key to its word-of-mouth based growth, as the labels are proving light fast and scratch resistant.

He explains, “We have found that labels off the press have good light fastness between 7-8 according to the blue wool scale and with high scuff resistance, and are high-wearing inks, making them appealing to the all label segments.

“They need to withstand time, direct UV sunlight, and they are hardy, and be resistant to chemicals inherent within the products themselves.

“With food packaging, there is always a barrier, but we have never had an issue with ink migration on the labels that we have produced for customers.

“We are quite impressed with the Tau, it is beyond what we thought we would be able to use it for.”

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New model launched

Sanelli’s appointment coincides with an upgraded version of the Durst label press being released in Australia, the Tau 330 RSC, which offers a print width of 330mm, and a native resolution of 1200x1200 dpi, even at full speed, 78 metres per minute.

Equipped with eight colours (CMYK + W + OVG) for the newly developed, highly pigmented specialised inks, Durst says the printer produces outstanding near-flexo print quality and achieves up to 98 per cent simulation of the Pantone colour space.

Sanelli explains, “With a drop size of two picolitres, it offers finer line and texwork, which has been the Achilles Heel for inkjet typically. It can print one to two point type, which is unheard of in inkjet, particularly in the label market.

“When you are doing solids with reversals, you get fine lines and smooth gradations. More importantly, this is the only press on the market that can complete labels at 78 metres per minute at a native resolution of 1200 x 1200 dpi.

The RSC technology incorporates a nozzle compensation system for missing jets, whereby the output of neighboring jets will be increased, to avoid white lines in the end product. This feature helps to significantly increase uptime of the press, while reducing the need for print head replacement and consequently reduce service costs.

While being compared to flexo in its print quality, Sanelli says it can operate within a flexo-supplemented system, with pre or post press modules operating inline.

He explains, “The Durst Tau 330 RSC works as a stand-alone printer, as a printing system in combination with the inline laser finishing system LFS 330, or as a hybrid solution with the addition of conventional finishing options in the Omet XFLEX-X6 series. This gives the user unlimited flexibility in terms of materials and a broad range of applications.

“It is not about competing with flexo or traditional label presses, it is about sitting with the customer, working out what their needs are, and finding a suitable solution.

“When a client has multiple SKUs for a product, they can do the base work on flexo at high speeds, then overprint the varying components on the Tau, minimising downtime, set-ups, and wastage that comes with flexo.

“When work comes in, three or four levers might decide whether work will go to a customer’s flexo or digital press, but the moment there are multiple SKUs, it makes sense to use the RSC.

“For people looking to add additional capacity, that may already have a flexo press, the Tau 330 is ideal. For printers looking to replace a flexo press with a digital press, and need that quality, at full production speed, the RSC model is better suited.”

Room to grow

New Digital Press first bought the press through Fuji Xerox this time last year, but have only been promoting the press since July.

De Amicis says, “We have seen significant growth since installing the press, with our ability to move into bigger volumes key. We mostly get new jobs through word-of-mouth from small run microbreweries and boutique wineries. So under 5000 labels on one SKU, with smaller run products, seems to be our sweet spot for growth.

“We moved to Durst because we were not coping with our existing digital press. It was not that we went from flexo to digital, we added extra digital capacity to capitalise on growth from our clients.

“When we sit down with Durst, we will be looking into the RSC. It is a matter of using the full capacity of our installed machine first though, as we are at 40 per cent currently.”

The current bottleneck for NDP is finishing, he says, “Where we will run one to one and a half shifts per week to keep up with the Durst.

“Next up for us will be digital embellishment, and we have just returned from Labelexpo in Chicago.

“We are looking into digital cold foiling, and spot varnish, with two machines in particular standing out for us. As a digital-only printer, we do not want to revert to traditional technology and have to produce plates.

“Paul Sanelli’s move gives us comfort, as he has been quite exceptional, and Fuji Xerox was professional about everything to this point.

“At the moment we are enjoying the best of both worlds, and knowing Durst, as I have met most of the senior team from them overseas, they are fully-committed to this category, and their customer base.

“That gives us a good level of confidence that when the transition goes ahead it should be just as good or better.

“Paul Sanelli will be a clear player in Tau’s success going forward.”