

Ecodesign EcoPrint — Ecopia



A Sydney printer has discovered that a focus on environmentally friendly printing practices has its rewards. Nigel Cottingham talks to ecoDesign ecoPrint.

Alcohol-free printing, vegetable-oil based inks and cleaning agents, chlorine-free paper stocks, a dilution tank, even licensed collectors to take away their chemical waste. There are few lengths that Arncliffe-based ecoDesign ecoPrint have not or will not go to in upholding the environmental standards which their name implies.

"It started out partially as a marketing tool, a means of differentiating ourselves from the competition," confesses Doug Rae, joint owner of the design and print business with Anna Marsland. "But we quickly realised that no amount of environmentally-friendly procedure or practice was actually going to carry any credibility if we didn't first match up to our competition in the print fundamentals: quality, value for money and turnaround time."

EcoDesign ecoPrint was new to the production game. Print brokers from 1992, it was three years on when they decided to offer their own graphic design service and not until 1998,

having reached a print broking turnover with \$1 million, that they invested in a second-hand Heidelberg GTO and Shinohara Fuji 66IIP to kick-start their own printing business.

Boasting clients as diverse as IBM and Greenpeace, and remarkably able to achieve totally alcohol-free print on both their four-colour Akiyama Bestech 28 (the cleanest second-hand press you'll ever see on a pressroom floor!) and their Currie supplied two-colour Shinohara, the "green" side of ecoDesign ecoPrint is no longer just a marketing gimmick but a way of life.

"We're actually running a little alcohol on our Shinohara at the moment but only three to five per cent compared with the 10 to 12 per cent average alcohol level for most sheetfed printers," confides production manager, Tony Fleming. "Whilst the fountain solution supplied by Applied Pressroom Technologies is the enabling product that essentially allows us to get down to zero alcohol without impacting on print quality, to achieve this demands an enormous amount of patience on behalf of the press operator, let alone ensuring that all potential variables are controlled".

Fleming clearly has the patience, the skill, the temperament, whatever it takes to effectively run an alcohol-free pressroom. "For most printers," he continues, "the attitude is that if there is an ink



Production manager Tony Fleming (left) and Doug Rae of ecoDesign ecoPrint: eco-friendly practices now a way of life.

and water balance problem, then up the alcohol and everything will be okay. It is getting rid of this attitude as well as addressing related chemistry problems that is the first step in running a true alcohol-free environment."

In addition to this ecoDesign ecoPrint experiments with different environmentally-friendly inks and stocks. Using Best 1 vegetable-oil based inks, Rae is constantly pestering the Japanese manufacturers to find out the exact percentages of soy, linseed, etc being used. "With regard to paper, the issue today is less about using recycled papers, as most stock comes through environmentally controlled plantations anyway," continues Rae. "It is more about the use of TCF or ECF stocks: that is Totally Chlorine-Free or Elemental Chlorine-Free."

The right "green" attitude is clearly something which shines through amongst all ecoDesign ecoPrint employees. It may have started out as a marketing gimmick, but now it is an inherent way of life for this busy printer. A way of life that has attracted environmentally concerned government organisations, charities and corporates alike. Not quite the printing equivalent of Utopia but a small corner of Ecopia nonetheless.

as seen in:
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