

Product portfolio Presses

Me & My...
Roland HiPrint 705 LV

In order to respond to rapid growth in demand, Potts Print has upped its capacity with a familiar, flexible and reliable machine **Words Tim Sheahan**

The past 18 months have been something of a whirlwind for Potts Print (UK). The Cramlington, Northumberland-based business has gone from strength to strength, rebranding, growing sales, increasing staff numbers and updating its 9,300m² Nelson Park facilities with a raft of new print kit.

The 160-staff company recorded sales of £9.6m in 2009, which increased in 2010 to £12m, and in 2011, the business expects to turn over £14m. In order to cater for this rapid growth in workload, the company invested more than £1.3m on the installation in March of this year of its third Roland press, a five-colour HiPrint 705 LV.

According to Potts managing director Shaun Johnson: "We really got to the point where we were growing and therefore needed extra B1 press capacity. Much of the work we've been taking on needed B1 press time so investing in a new press was the next logical step."

Potts is now operating its trio of Roland presses to fulfil specific individual functions. Its six-colour machine is printing packaging work, while the older five-colour model handles the weightier stocks. The new machine is printing more light-weight work.

Although the company is taking on more packaging work, it is still very much the smaller aspect of its output. According to Johnson, around 75% of the company's time is tied to commercial print, while packaging comprises around 20%, with the remainder dedicated to direct mail.

When it came to choosing a new press, the company assessed the market, but its positive relationship with Roland made the final decision an easy one.

"We already have two Roland 700s so we know how efficient they are. Since we bought the first one five years ago, these presses have seen us grow significantly," says Brian Watson, production director at the company.

A common plate size was also an important issue when it came to buying Roland. Potts were keen to have a trio of machines

Specifications	
Max sheet size	740x1,040mm
Max image area	715x1,020mm
Stock range	0.04 to 1mm
Max speed	16,000sph
Price	£1.4m
Contact	Manroland GB 020 8685 5967 www.manroland.co.uk

that would allow them to shift work around if a particular job came in late. According to Johnson, the familiarity of the company's press operators with the Roland architecture and functionality was also key.

Following three months of operation, Watson says that the press is high on positives with no drawbacks of note. "The colour management system is excellent; the coating unit is very versatile, including the quick change clamps," he says. In an ideal world, however, Watson says a touchscreen control would be a perfect addition to the press set-up.

Business back-up

Potts has also praised the level of service and support received during and since the machine's installation. "The machine has been very reliable, but when there is a problem, Roland's service and back-up provision has been superb," says Watson. "The response times and out-of-hours service are excellent, there is always someone to speak to in the service department and any breakdowns are dealt with quickly and efficiently."

Johnson adds: "Manroland have always offered a fantastic flexible service. We understand them as a company and they, in turn, understand us. They have always

"There are fewer makeready sheets required on jobs, which helps us reduce costs and customer keep prices low"

Brian Watson Potts Printers

shown a great interest in Potts and in all honestly, I can not praise UK managing director Norman Revill enough.

"He has visited us at least three or four times and has always demonstrated a great interest in how the company is doing and what work we are putting through the Roland presses. That in itself made the decision to invest further in the company."

Since its installation, a number of the machine's features and the quality of the output have impressed Watson.



"The quality is excellent, while the plate registration and colour control are superb," he says. According to Watson, the automatic plate loading ensures that any positional movements are minimal while the press's colour management software keeps the colour consistency throughout the print run "very efficiently".

Adam Robotham, commercial sales manager at Manroland, says the machine installed at Potts is one of tens of thousands worldwide and based on an established R700 design.

"The fundamentals of the R700 technology have been duplicated within the range of the latest competitor presses, but the R700 still offers benefits over its rivals. The cool-running 16-roller ink train and design allows for simple and easy alcohol-free operation and a print reproduction that is second to none," he says.

Increased manpower

And as the number of Roland 700 presses in the field has increased, so has the number of Roland operators employed by Potts. The company started running Roland presses with only two operators but that has now increased to 14 working continental shifts across the company's trio of B1 machines.

Potts' operators were given two weeks' training with further sessions after a settling-in period to iron out any issues. Thanks to the combination of skilled operators and up-to-date presses, the company has cut its makeready times by up to 25%.

Watson: "Manroland understands us"

Next week Portland Media discusses its Caslon Zip 21

Company profile

Potts Print (UK) is based in Cramlington, Northumberland. William John Potts first established the business in North Shields as WJ Potts in 1875. It was renamed JD Potts & Son to reflect changing personnel in 1930. Today, it specialises in litho print, packaging and direct mail. Last year, the company rebranded from Potts Printers to Potts Print (UK) on the back of "record" sales in 2010 with turnover set to hit the £14m mark by the end of the year.

The company, which employs 160 staff, is in the process of advertising for a number of new employees to work in its 9,300m² Nelson Park facilities, which encompasses its headquarters, press hall and logistics operations. It serves a range of clients that include blue-chip companies, NHS trusts, creative agencies and local government. The printer also operates in-house pre- and post-press departments.

Why it was bought...

To enable the company to increase its capacity in response to growing demand for B1 products.

How it has performed...

Potts has no quibbles and has been massively impressed with the press since installation.

compared to previous presses.

"Makereadies are very quick thanks to the automatic plate loading and the colour control, both of which cut times by up to 25%. Also there are fewer makeready sheets required on jobs, which helps us reduce costs and keep customer prices as low as possible," says Watson.

As a result, the firm would not hesitate to recommend the Roland 700 press to other printers and has not ruled out investing in another, should demand require it. "The machine is ideal for both packaging and any commercial work in runs long and short. It is a very versatile press and very quick and easy to change between jobs and stocks," adds Watson.

With the latest press firmly bedded in, the 160 staff business is looking to turn in another record-breaking year and hit the £14m turnover mark in the process. "We are in a good position," says Johnson. "There is the space to expand and at the rate we are going, that is very much a possibility. The last few years have been very positive and we're hoping 2011 continues in the same way."

