

Providing a platform for success

Having evolved from a company that was originally set up to produce linings for oil platform legs to its current status as a leading print service provider, Digital Sign Services has come a long way since it was first established in 1978.

The Guildford based print company, which now employs 26 people, has continuously invested in the latest equipment during the last three decades, a strategy that has enabled it to progress from the production of banners, lorry curtains and trailer covers, right up to the provision of large scale digital graphics for the outdoor advertising market and indoor promotional services for the retail and exhibition sectors.

Digital Sign Services' journey into digital printing began with the acquisition of 3m and 5m solvent printers in the 2000s and its most recent investments include two 5m wide UV printers, plus a 3.2m VUTEk QS3200 Flatbed UV printer and a complementary DYSS X7-3220C cutting machine, the latter of which was purchased from AG/CAD.

Commenting on these purchases, Gerry Howell, Director at Digital Sign Services said; "We first acquired a flatbed printer in 2008, but the downturn initially halted further investment. However, over the past two to three years the increasing demand for large scale printing onto rigid substrates made the acquisition of a flatbed cutter something of a necessity.

"Accordingly, we reviewed the equipment on offer and also visited the Sign & Digital UK 2012 exhibition to further investigate the available options. Upon visiting the AG/CAD stand, we were impressed by the level of interest and attention we were shown and also by the fact that AG/CAD was able to offer a bespoke 3.2m wide x 2m long cutter with a



conveyorised bed that was the perfect partner for our VUTEK printer."

Because it had little experience of cutting tables, Digital Sign Services invited AG/CAD to review its needs in greater detail last autumn and following this assessment, it took delivery of a DYSS X7-3220C machine that was especially configured to meet its exact requirements.

Gerry Howell continues: "Previously, we cut all of our boards by hand and although, on occasion, we still manually trim some one-off, straight edge jobs, now we primarily use the DYSS cutting table for almost all of our cutting tasks and particularly when we are working with more complex shapes. The benefits have been remarkable."

Using three cutting heads, which can be automatically changed by its KASEMAKE software, the DYSS accommodates a powerful router for thick board cutting, while the two additional tool slots also offer a wide selection of different possibilities. Digital Sign Services has elected to use the extra slots for drag knives, which it uses for cutting Foamex up to 5mm thick, together with display-boards and self adhesive vinyl, and rotating knives, for cutting polyester fabrics without fraying, reciprocating knives for processing foam cards, and even a pen tool for job marking.

However, despite the level of versatility it displays when working on thinner materials, the DYSS X7 also has the requisite solidity and power required to



cut rigid materials too, such as PVC, Dibond, and acrylic up to 25mm thick, when its powerful vacuum table holds everything securely in place.

Gerry Howell observes: "The DYSS machine has made our products more 'saleable', as we have improved both our accuracy and edge finishes. In addition, we can also produce a variety of different shapes and forms, thanks to the easy-to-use KaseMake software that links to the K-Cut Vision camera, which locates the precise position of each job to guarantee exceptional accuracy.

"In the short period since we acquired the DYSS, we have dramatically increased our capabilities, which has directly lead to a far greater influx of work from our existing customers, and also attracted new customers who are impressed by the fact that we can offer a full board printing and cutting service. In effect, it has helped us to occupy a niche position."

Gerry admits that when it comes to productivity, Digital Sign values quality over volume, but as he explains, the DYSS has helped it to become more



efficient in its deployment of labour. He says: "Previously, it took six people two to three days to cut the 3000 self-adhesive stickers required for use inside refrigerators – a job that we produce three to four times a year - but that's now a thing of the past. Nowadays, the DYSS enables us to complete the whole job within just a few hours!"

He adds: "The DYSS X7 is proving to be a fantastic investment as it will undoubtedly increase both our customer base and turnover. In fact, in terms of productivity, it's the equivalent of employing an extra member of staff but without the ongoing costs involved. We are delighted!"

For further information visit: www.digitalsignservices.co.uk and www.agcad.co.uk ■