

Flawless pre-press with Xerox help

Being the biggest producer of weekly magazines in Norway, Hjemmet Mortensen faces the need for high-speed quality results in the pre-press process. This leading media company has used Xerox technology since 1997 and is now entering their third generation of pre-press printers.



Hjemmet Mortensen (HM) is the leading Norwegian media company, producing 63 magazines. The company's head office is located in Oslo, Norway, but it also has offices in Finland and Sweden. The market share in Norway is 54% and they produce 7 of the 10 most read magazines in Norway. This makes HM the biggest producer of magazines with more than 700 employees ensuring the flow of the magazines to the Scandinavian market.

Merger brought about complete editorial responsibility

Actually HM's challenges started back in 1996 when the company was established as a result of the merger between Egmont and Orkla Media, which each own 50% of the shares. Back then the editorial offices were spread all over the city. Following the merger all of the magazines were placed in one building with the aim of creating business and logistical

synergies. Moreover, all responsibility for the complete production process - right up to press ready pages - was now placed in the hands of the individual members of the editorial staff.

Espen Christiansen, who was hired as manager of ICT and pre-press, faced several challenges especially with regards to the pre-press logistics. "One of the major needs was a simple and fast way of making proof impressions and quality was also an important issue. At that time the equipment was heavy, slow and expensive, but luckily the Xerox 5790 with Splash 1280 Rip was invented. This was actually the only printer which could manage our needs and resulted in the first step of a long and developing relationship with Xerox equipment," says Christiansen.

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Smooth pre-press process ensured quality on the final result

To be able to handle a smooth and flawless production of more than 60 magazines the technology and working processes had to be established. The complete production logistics are as follows:

- 1 All the individual editorial offices are connected to a print/file server where all storage and communications are located. Numerous Xerox DC12 with Splash G620 rips are of course connected to the same network.
- 2 The text is written by journalists, pictures are taken and the layout finally completes the magazine. Basically, the magazine is 100% completed in the editorial office, including all layout files, high resolution pictures and text.
- 3 When the editor is satisfied with the virtual result, a proof impression is printed on one of the nearby Xerox machines, giving an almost perfect result as it would be perceived by the final reader. To be able to achieve such a result, our Xerox machines are programmed with the colour profile transferred from the offset printing machine. Back in 1997 Xerox was the only company that was able to deliver such simulation technology with sufficient quality, based on a fast copying machine as an output device.
- 4 At the same time the magazine pages are digitally dispatched to the HM printing plant, which is actually located 3 km away from the editorial office. However, these two buildings are linked by 2 massive Gigabit ethernet connections, giving the impression of a local network with no delay in terms of speed. Minutes later the Creo Prinergy CTP-system automatically returns the page to the Xerox machine at the editorial office and a print of the plate-ready page is produced. Then the production assistant compares the two Xerox printed documents, ensuring a near 100% equality between them. If there is any disparity, the editor has to ensure a correction on the original layout document or detect where in the pre-press stages the error has occurred.
- 5 When all pages are accepted, the magazine is ready for platemaking and to be printed and sent out to the millions of Scandinavian readers.

Established process with evolving quality

- "Today this process is an established way of working for us. However, the faster we can work and the more alike the pre-press result is compared to the end-production, the better our products are evolving," Christiansen emphasizes.
- "We are constantly trying to minimize the possibility of errors and in fact we are now entering our third generation of Xerox printers. We are investing in the new Xerox DocuColor 3535 with Splash G3535 rip, which will give us additional advantages in our production process. The proof impressions are getting even closer to the final results. Besides increased print quality, the colour management has improved significantly. Originally we had to program the off-set colour profile to one single standard on all machines. However, today with the new Xerox equipment we can individually adjust the device colour profiles on each machine. This gives us unique control over calibrating the simulation of the end result," says Christiansen.
- "Moreover we will start using the hot-folders which will let us customize automatic printing of ads in PDF format for control before they are placed on magazine pages. Now we can even print on card paper, making it easier and cheaper to print products like business cards and so on.

Another very important usage is the printing of the digital images which we receive thousands of every week. Not all the images are printed, but for different reasons in the editorial workflow there are needs for high speed printing of digital images. Hundreds of journalists have access to the printers.

Since Hjemmet Mortensen is the biggest producer of magazines in Norway we have to rely on the technology being the best of breed. Our long relationship with Xerox is proof of the continuous evolvement of their products. Also we are relying on Xerox in the future to provide us with technology that will help us to increase the speed and quality of our work," concludes Christiansen.

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