Flexible label production saves time and costs

One of the biggest tree nurseries in Germany, zu Jeddeloh in Edewecht near Oldenburg, produces 60,000 to 90,000 plants a day on a large area of around 100 hectares. The business, established around 90 years ago, has 190 full-time employees plus seasonal workers and supplies an international market, from garden wholesale to corporate chains, such as DIY shops and plant dealerships.

Unlike most tree nurseries, zu Jeddeloh has its own marketing department that provides customers with plant labels, POS materials and advertising texts.

For the on-demand printing of the plant labels, EFI™ Fiery® JobFlow™, a print workflow automation software, was installed in the company at the end of 2017. This enables zu Jeddeloh to create several workflows specific to their needs, increasing productivity and reducing costs.

In-house individual label production

Labels are attached on the plants before leaving the company, displaying a picture of the plant and information on care. Previously, some of these labels were pre-printed with the customer's logo in 500-unit batches in offset, but this only paid off for three of zu Jeddeloh's main customers. The rest of the customers received plants with standard labels. The customised labels were laboriously selected from one of the several label warehouses. If there were no more labels available for a plant species, an A4 printer was used to print additional labels on a weather- and tear-resistant A4 paper.

One of the disadvantages of this label production method was that customised labels, such as logo changes by the customer, were quickly out of date and had to be disposed. Further, the search for suitable labels required a lot of time. In addition, Uwe Horstmann, who is responsible for labels and POS marketing at the company, explained that zu Jeddeloh

Challenge:

zu Jeddeloh's existing plant label production was unable to provide customised labelling in addition of being time-consuming.

Located in Edewecht near Oldenburg, Germany, zu Jeddeloh is one of the biggest tree nurseries in the country, producing 60,000 to 90,000 plants a day on a large area of around 100 hectares. For over 80 years they have been proving their competence in the production and distribution of nursery plants, and today it is one of the leading nurseries and full-range suppliers in Europe. As a complete service provider, zu Jeddeloh is known for quality plants from its own production, excellent local and telephone customer service, and professional marketing.

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wanted to offer customised plant labels to all their customers instead of just the three and to have the label production more flexible overall with less waste.

Own workflow for effective on-demand printing

After years of searching for a more effective and efficient production method for customised labels, EFI partner Max Müller in Bremen stepped up to the challenge and presented the EFI Fiery digital front end (DFE) along with the print workflow automation software EFI Fiery JobFlow. Together, both companies developed a special print-on-demand workflow for printing the plant labels in collaboration with zu Jeddeloh's marketing and IT departments.

Fiery JobFlow automates job preparation steps, compiling the data for printing customised plant labels from zu Jeddeloh's customer database. This involves, for example, product images, text in the desired language, customer number, item number, customer logo, and price. The workflow also creates unique barcodes. With the use of EFI imposition software, EFI Fiery Impose, the data is then prepared as a printable PDF for efficient printing.

"This is a unique solution," explains Uwe Horstmann. "According to my research, no other workflow would have been able to map this. An important element for building our workflow was that the printing labels data can easily be connected to our marketing database."

When selecting a suitable digital printing system, zu Jeddeloh opted for the Konica Minolta bizhub C71hc. The printer uses a special high-chroma toner that can display the colours of the sRGB colour space very accurately; images appear far shinier and more luminous than in four-colour digital printing. Furthermore, the ink is fade-resistant for up to 8 years, even outdoors.

The A3+ printing machine, which is housed in an air-conditioned container right in the dispatch hall, is driven by the external EFI Fiery DFE IC-308.

A print job is triggered when an employee scans the markings on the plants in the dispatch hall with a manual scanner. After generating the data via the workflow, the Konica Minolta machine prints the plant labels on both sides of the pre-perforated, weather- and tear-resistant PE label material. The employees then simply break out the finished labels from the printed sheets in stacks.

Solution:

"This is a unique solution. ...An important element for building our workflow was that the printing labels data can easily be connected to our marketing database."

UWE HORSTMANN, POS MARKETING
ZU JEDDELOH

Uwe Hostmann with the finished plant labels printed on both sides.

Elegant solution cuts costs and helps to acquire customers

The investment in the in-house workflow has paid off for zu Jeddeloh. By using EFI products and solutions, zu Jeddeloh can now print on-demand and only what is actually needed. The new automated workflow provides five major benefits for zu Jeddeloh. First, the unit cost per label is cut by one-third. Second, pre-printed labels are no longer needed. Third, label storage is now a thing of the past. Fourth, employees save time because they no longer need to look for suitable labels. And lastly, waste reduction is kept to a minimum since no outdated labels need to be disposed.

"This innovation is also very attractive for our customers because no other plant wholesaler works with such a solution," says Uwe Horstmann. "This offers us a unique selling point because we have become far more flexible in our label production and can now offer all our customers customised plant labels. This allows us to acquire more customers of all sizes. We are already receiving larger order volumes for next spring. And for our international customers, we can now supply the labels in different languages."

Service and plans

Uwe Horstmann is also highly satisfied with the after-sale service. On the rare occasion that problems do occur during printing, which may delay the tight schedule delivery at zu Jeddeloh, and thus, put delivery deadlines at risk–Max Müller is soon on site. Problems can therefore be solved directly with EFI or the manufacturer of the printing engine.

The workflow and printer are running so well that zu Jeddeloh intends to increase productivity, expand mail orders, and enlarge the dispatch hall. Now that zu Jeddeloh is gaining customers, the company is planning to acquire an additional printer to keep up with customers' demands.

Result:

"This innovation is also very attractive for our customers because no other plant wholesaler works with such a solution."

UWE HORSTMANN, POS MARKETING ZU JEDDELOH

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