

Case Study | Prime United Kingdom

Prime Group Expands its Business with DirectSmile

Prime Group, based in Nottingham, was founded in 1988 as a traditional lithographic print house. In 2003, the company invested in its first digital press and using DirectSmile software has established itself as one of the UK's leading producers of personalized items including calendars, stationery, direct mail, books, brochures and gifts.

As a long-term DirectSmile customer, Prime first invested in the software almost six years ago. Jon Tolley, managing director, Prime Group, explained, "One of the major motivations for moving into digital printing was the opportunity that it gave us to stay ahead of the competition, by offering our clients innovative, new services such as variable data printing (VDP) and image personalization. We realized that in order to move successfully into these new markets we had to invest in market leading technologies, so we purchased DirectSmile software."

Prime currently uses the scalable DirectSmile Production Edition for high-volume image and document generation, and DirectSmile Online, configured to Prime's specifications to deliver variable documents, customized images and personalized animations to its web-to-print portal and printing systems.

"DirectSmile is very user-friendly and its Online Server comes with an intuitive, optimized interface, which allows us to make customized images and documents available for sale on the Internet. This makes it much easier for people to purchase personalized, individual printed items, than in the past. People can order products delivered straight to their door, without leaving their desks," explained Tolley.

Setting new standards

Prime and DirectSmile have worked closely together to push the boundaries of what can be achieved through effective personalization.

"The team at DirectSmile are excellent to work with and are always very keen to help us devise new ways of fulfilling our customers' requirements," said Tolley.

"DirectSmile is an incredibly versatile piece of software that has been easily integrated with our existing systems, allowing us to personalize an increasingly innovative range of one off applications, such as personalized books, to win new business," explained Tolley.



Innovative applications

Since 2007, Prime has specialized in producing customized books using DirectSmile technology. People looking for a special, unique gift are able to create a personalized 'Me to You' book via Penwizard's website, www.mymagicalbook.com. This web application presents users with a range of user-friendly design templates, which allow users to choose from two different stories and to customize the illustrations.

Each user is able to enter the recipient's name; the name of the sender; a personal message and the occasion, such as Valentine's Day, a birthday, or an anniversary, online. This information is used to collect the variable data to customize the book.

Each of the 24 page books is heavily personalized, containing images that have been customized using DirectSmile Software. This enables illustrations of Tatty Teddy to include the chosen names, message and occasion selected by the user, to create an individual gift that will be treasured by its recipient.

"The 'Me to You' books are very unusual because instead of using customized photography, they feature personalized illustrations. DirectSmile's speed and ease of use is perfect for customizing one off items. It has enabled us to break into new markets by offering niche applications," commented Tolley.

Production

Web-to-print technology allows the 'Me to You' books to be produced in a flexible way. Prime is able to download the variable data needed to customize the books at a time when it is convenient, rather than being restricted by a fixed production schedule. The high-quality, gloss laminated books are produced using one of Prime's HP Indigo presses and are perfect bound and finished in-house. All orders for the books are completed within seven days.

The future

"For us, DirectSmile is much more than just personalization software and it has become integral to the way we work, its document solution tools are second to none and we use it every single day.

"We believe that it has been instrumental in the growth of our business and the success of our digital department. DirectSmile is constantly evolving, enabling us to offer a larger range of inspiring and exciting personalized items and we believe that it will play a large role in our business in the years to come," concluded Tolley.



Personalised Books and cards



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Jon Tolley, managing director, Prime



HP Indigo 7000 Digital Press



Email: sales@directsmile.de Web: www.directsmile.de