



KONICA MINOLTA



COTSWOLD LABELS ACCELERATES WITH KONICA MINOLTA

INVESTMENT IN ACCURIOLABEL 190
KEY TO GROWTH PLAN



Giving Shape to Ideas

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Situated on the edge of a designated Area of Outstanding Beauty, in Cirencester, Cotswold Labels shares its premises with sister company, South Western Tapes. The company prints labels for a variety of artisan food and drinks producers, as well as for the industrial and retail sectors. Having first entered digital production in 2011, it has now partnered with Konica Minolta to bring in an AccurioLabel 190 toner press to power up performance and increase productivity.

Cotswold Labels is on a path of expansion and digital transformation. The company supplies self-adhesive labels, mainly to local customers, printed on its narrow web flexo presses and hot foiling machines. Wanting to respond to current market trends and take on more customers, it is now expanding its capabilities and accelerating production with the investment in an AccurioLabel 190 toner press from Konica Minolta, complemented by a DC330 converting unit from GM.



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Howard Burr, Managing Director, Cotswold Labels

CHALLENGES

For managing director Howard Burr, the interest in digital printing goes back to 2009 when he first started at looking to expand the label side of his business. He had joined South Western Tapes in 1995, and the company acquired what was then Malmesbury Labels in 2008 when realising the high risk of relying on just one avenue of income in the tough economic climate that existed at the time.

After rebranding the label business to reflect the move to Cirencester, Cotswold Labels invested in a table-top water-based inkjet printer, but soon found that issues with quality and finishing were eating into profits, and therefore shelved the idea for the time being. But the desire to implement digital did not go away, and in 2011, a small four-colour digital print and finishing combo was brought in from a US supplier, with the aim of printing those shorter run jobs that the company’s flexo presses couldn’t produce profitably.

Those first stepping stones into digital provided the company with some very valuable lessons, but as demand continued to grow, the need for more capacity and consistent, high print quality became more urgent.

“We cut our teeth on those first digital investments,” explains Howard, “but we want to grow the label side of the business quite significantly over the next few years and take on more work from small brands and local producers, so we needed to invest in a reliable, industrial print solution that could truly deliver for us.”

SOLUTION

The Konica Minolta AccurioLabel 190 toner press was chosen after Cotswold Labels had surveyed the market for some time looking for that perfect combination of high quality and affordable investment. “The quality of the print was one of the main drivers for the purchase, along with the ability to print onto standard facestocks, without treatment or special

finishes. Image quality is outstanding for a machine at this price point,” says Howard.

- Ease of operation
- Low maintenance
- Reliability

The four-colour toner press prints at speeds up to 18.9m/min in a resolution of 1200dpi, on uncoated media 330mm wide. It comes with KM Label Impose software, which automates jobs, such as impositioning and step-and-repeat, and also offers support for variable data printing. Job pricing is equally straightforward as this is based on a simple click model that uses price per linear metre to calculate the final cost, which includes consumables and service.

“The impositioning software makes it very simple and efficient to run the press,” says Howard, “so we are looking to train several of our staff, because it is quite easy to learn. You don’t need a trained flexo or litho press operator. Basically, if you can use a smartphone, you can run this press. Of course, it also gives us a greater degree

of flexibility having more people who can operate it.”

To ensure a sound return on investment, understanding just how digital print fits into the mix is key. “Upping our digital capability gives us a great opportunity in the marketplace,” states Howard. “Buyers and brand owners have seen how they can be more flexible with their product packaging. They want to be able to offer seasonal variations, promotional campaigns and the opportunity to test variants on shelf at low cost, and they know that digital can give them that.

“We understand the value proposition for brand owners, who are looking to buy smaller volumes so they can react to the market quickly, and as a print supplier, we have to back up their flexibility and deliver labels just in time and in the right amount. We need to deliver a high-quality product at the right time and to specifications – the AccurioLabel press enables us to do just that.

He adds, “We are also looking to engage with other label printers of our size that have not invested in digital and help them with their requirements.”

As well as putting in a new mezzanine to make room for the new press and finisher, Cotswold Labels has also taken on new staff. Stephen Bates has joined as Print Pre-Production and Liaison Manager to head up the pre-press and digital print department, adding his long experience gained at a major digital toner press manufacturer over the past 15 years. He says, “The AccurioLabel press is a big step forward for Cotswold Labels as we now offer a complete in-house service to our customers. It allows us to tap into a market where in the past we could not compete, and combined with our hot foil machines, we can now deliver high-quality digitally printed and foiled labels.”

Partnering with the right press supplier to ensure ongoing support and future-proof its investment have been some of the main criteria for Cotswold Labels in choosing to work with Konica Minolta. Howard explains, “Konica Minolta’s long heritage

in the printing industry was key to making the decision to invest in the AccurioLabel 190. Their technology has been well proven in the sheetfed market over many years.”

He adds, “From my initial contact with Konica, they have been extremely helpful throughout the whole process of ordering and installing the press. And the service engineers are practically on our doorstep. Having that whole support network of trained engineers is also essential for me to make sure that downtime is kept to a minimum, and speaking to the maintenance guys and hearing their views has further reassured me that we have made the right choice.

“Although Konica is a new entrant to the label market, they are developing rapidly

and are looking to improve their presses in line with market requirements; something we wanted to benefit from going forward. Backed up by our existing flexo, foiling and embossing expertise, the AccurioLabel gives us a footing in a lot of camps and will be instrumental to our growth,” concludes Howard.

“It’s great to work with a company like Cotswold Labels that understands the need to get serious about digital and is looking for an experienced partner to help expand its horizons,” commented Steve Lakin, Label Press Sales Consultant for Konica Minolta Business Solutions UK. “The AccurioLabel is the ideal machine to help the Cotswold team achieve their goals and move them into new profitable areas of business.”



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Howard Burr, Managing Director, Cotswold Labels



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LET'S TALK

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