

The Print Business

The publication for decision makers in the UK's print industry

July 2006

A First City Media Publication

THREE OF A KIND

Green's light leads way for direct marketing

Nick Green is the entrepreneurial thinker behind Tangent Communications, a digital printer that in an increasingly digital age is making print a vital part of the marketing industry.

IT'S UNLIKELY THAT NICHOLAS GREEN HAS ever had to roll up his sleeves and get beneath a Heidelberg press to fix it. The joint chief executive's skills, however, have had just as transforming an impact on Tangent Communications and thinking beyond the box, as any industry entrepreneur.

For a start, he doesn't consider himself to be in the printing industry, but a part of the marketing and communications industry. This is clear when, announcing the latest figures, he says: "There is a revolution sweeping through the marketing industry. Traditional scattergun ways of communicating with customers are giving way to tailor-made messaging.

"We have been creating a business that is well placed to enable companies to send personalised messages to each and every customer, whether by print, email or mobile. The quality of our clients demonstrates our strength in this fast growing market."

The print element is driven by some of the hardest worked HP Indigos in the UK. These print highly personalised pieces for a host of blue chip companies. One of the legendary jobs, if in such a short space of time this status can be granted, is the Sainsbury's birthday card. The supermarket's Nectar card holders will receive a personalised card carrying their name on a birthday cake image with a voucher to be redeemed in the store. The response rate has been phenomenal and like DSI's TUI book, the idea has been copied several times. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, Green should feel very flattered.

It is instead evidence that the company's thinking is on the right lines, "The core point is that this shows how the print trade is adding a huge amount of value to the ideal marketing mix and is moving print up the food chain." he told the audience at PrintMedia Management

magazine's personalised direct mail conference in June.

That mix element is equally crucial. Tangent is as involved in development of targeted direct mail SMS messaging and personalised URLs as any company, thanks to massive investment in database capacity and internet knowledge and experience. This is put to good use for clients wishing both to control their brand image and to encourage entrepreneurial activity. Working for one of pub chains, the landlords are encouraged to come to the web site to personalise and order display material which is suited to their particular operation rather than sending out a blanket package of material, much of which would be wasted.

"It allows the client to continue to communicate with the local manager, maintaining brand identity by only allowing changes to be made in predetermined fields," he continued.

This kind of work has seen the business grow even with the disruption of a move of premises last year following the acquisition of Documedia. It's also become a swift operation. Where once a personalised marketing operation might take extended period to put together and test, Tangent is talking a 12 week period from concept to having something up and running.

Green explains that the company has almost 100% client retention, proof that innovative thinking does work. "Over the next two or three years digital printing will end up being the main stay of the direct mail market. It's all about 1:1 business and digital just happens to be the route market.

"Consumers are more savvy, especially the younger generation and they are not expecting to receive marketing collateral that doesn't talk to them."

