

Halewijn NV, Genscom NV



A successful business model is being expanded

About five years ago, the Belgian printing company Halewijn switched the production of a weekly newspaper from offset printing to digital printing with Hunkeler finishing technology. It was the start of a successful business model: readers and associations now had the opportunity to design their own newspapers and magazines. Halewijn has now added a second production line to its capacity.

It all began in 2013: the Belgian printing company Halewijn NV invested in new technology for the production of the church newspaper Kerk&leven (Church and Life). At the Antwerp site, the former offset process was replaced by a digital printing system and finishing technology from Hunkeler AG. Compared to the offset printing process, the production of the newspaper Kerk&leven was much easier: Halewijn was able to complete each individual newspaper copy with the national jacket and the regional section in one pass - „a logical and efficient workflow that was not possible in web offset printing“, says Stefaan Vanysacker, who is responsible for the newspaper project at Halewijn. The newspaper Kerk&leven is published once a week. Its total cir-



Visiting Hunkeler Innovationdays 2019 in Lucerne: Stefaan Vanysacker (left), CEO of Genscom, with Jurgen Geysen (right), Production Manager at Halewijn NV.

ulation is around 250.000 copies. In addition to a national section, the tabloid product (280 x 400

millimeters) contains almost 500 different regional editions nationwide with specific editorial content

and advertisements tailored to the regional readers. Several partial editions have a circulation of only 200 copies.

The brand 'Happiedays' is born

By replacing offset printing with digital printing and Hunkeler finishing technology, Halewijn not only achieved a technological paradigm shift. The new production facilities also paved the way for a new, viable business model.

The production line, with its dynamic processing principle, makes it possible to produce print products whose contents and size change from one copy to the next. Halewijn also wanted to make this unique advantage of digital printing and finishing technology available to external interest groups. Gens-

Halewijn NV, Genscom NV, Antwerp (Belgium)



The important means for a successful business model: Halewijn uses two digital printing and Hunkeler finishing systems to produce regionalised and personalised newspapers and magazines in runs up to a single copy.

com, a start-up company founded by Stefaan Vanysacker and Halewijn, subsequently developed an online portal. Readers were given the opportunity to design their own individual print product under the 'Happiedays' brand and send it to selected recipients.

Organizations produce their own newspapers

Happiedays flourished, Genscom and Halewijn expanded the business model to include organisations that wanted to design and publish their own publications as print and online editions. This project was also very well received: today, official, political and social institutions, trade unions, youth organisations and senior citizens' associations use the portal. They produce newspapers and magazines, often divided into a jacket product and a supplement, the content of which is aimed at individual groups within the respective umbrella organisation.

Second newspaper line installed

Genscom and Halewijn intend to license the online platform with the editor software to other publishing companies outside Belgium as well. The aim is to spread the business model with the individually designed newspaper product as widely as possible. „This will enable us to win additional orders for production capacities in Antwerp,” says Stefaan Vanysacker.

The strategy is proving to be the right one: new print jobs have been added and capacities have reached their limits. At the end of 2018 Halewijn ordered a second identical finishing line from Hunkeler. This, too it is configured as an offline system. The line produces from the printed roll to the newspaper copy ready for dispatch.

Error rate tends towards zero

In addition to the production of newspapers and magazines, Halewijn also provides the delivery service to the desired recipients. Thanks to the digital production line, the company is able to produce the individual copies in exactly the same order as the courier's route. As a result, Halewijn works far more efficiently than before in offset printing, as Stefaan Vanysacker says: „We have reduced the error rate in the delivery service to practically zero,” he confirms.

Huncontrol ensures quality

On the two finishing lines, the Hunkeler Control Platform, or 'Huncontrol' for short, monitors the entire production. „We were the first to use Huncontrol,” says Stefaan Vanysacker, emphasizing how strongly such a quality monitoring system influenced the investment decision: "The ability to monitor the workflow electronically was a prerequisite for Hunkeler to meet our requirements.

Huncontrol works on two levels. On one hand, the Web Inspection System checks the quality of the printed image on every document. On the other hand, a tracking system ensures that the editions of each regional edition are complete and that the correct newspaper copy is distributed to each address. Missing or incorrect newspapers are automatically reproduced. Stefan Vanysacker concludes: „The rate of repeatedly printed newspapers today is still in the per mille range.”

Arguments that count

The fact that Hunkeler was the only manufacturer able to supply a newspaper production line with integrated quality monitoring was a decisive reason why Halewijn opted for this technology more than five years ago. No less important was the argument that the Swiss company was a pioneer in the field of 'digital' newspaper production and was constantly developing and refining the finishing system. „Hunkeler's experience and great commitment to technology that serves a niche market count for much,” says Stefan Vanysacker, stressing how well he can rely on Hunkeler technology. If Halewijn has now put a second line into operation, it is because the order volume is growing encouragingly and the chosen path of digital newspaper production has proven to be the right one.