

MEETING THE DIGITALISATION CHALLENGE

Company

PostNL Billing & Document Solutions (BDS)

Founded

1977

Location

Utrecht, The Netherlands

Services

End-to-end customer communications management including transactional printing, direct mail and print-on-demand

Web

www.postnl.nl/bds



Working with Canon is not like a traditional customer-supplier relationship. We chose Canon because with them we can build towards operating in a partnership

Customer communications has changed very much over the past decade and that change is still ongoing," says Mieke Clark-Marsman, Managing Director of the Euro Mail and Billing & Document Solutions (BDS) divisions of Post NL, the premier provider of postal and parcel services in the Netherlands. Indeed, the communications and print industries have changed considerably over the 30 years that PostNL BDS has partnered with Canon and the two companies have continually worked together to find innovative new ways to meet the changing needs of PostNL BDS' customers.

For example, through this partnership PostNL BDS invested in GMC Inspire, a cloud-based, multi-channel communications software platform that PostNL tailored to offer end-to-end customer communications management incorporating print and digital communication channels.

"Print is not just about printing anymore," explains Clark-Marsman. "It is about multi channel customer communication as a holistic offering. It also means that our customers want more flexibility from print, as well as more personalisation and the ability to have smaller assignments, and all still at a reasonable price."

She adds that the Dutch market has an extremely high digitalisation rate: "As a result, we're seeing transactional printing - documents such as invoices and statements - and direct mail converging, so we have transformed into a company that excels in both."

Clark-Marsman highlights an additional trend, explaining that document logistics has evolved into multichannel customer communications, with its 'ownership' moving to marketing departments and IT departments becoming important stakeholders. "This has created new dynamics within our customers' organisations and for us too," she says,



"but our strong customer focus means that we're in an excellent position to help every stakeholder achieve their joint purpose."

"The combination of all of these developments," she explains, "made working with Canon very appealing, because inkjet technology makes that possible."

After learning about the development of the Océ VarioPrint i300 at drupa 2012, PostNL BDS joined Canon's lead customer programme. With this early insight into the sheet-fed inkjet machine's proposition, the team at PostNL BDS recognised its potential to enable greater flexibility and thus meet customers' diverse needs more easily.

According to Willem Tolenaar, Operational Manager at PostNL BDS: "We worked closely together with Canon from 2012 right up to the installation in 2015. It meant that we had the opportunity to give input throughout the development to ensure that it would be the right solution for the documents we wanted to print."

The first VarioPrint i300 in the Netherlands was installed at PostNL BDS in early 2015, joining a line-up that includes six Océ ColorStream 3500 continuous feed colour printers, eight Océ VarioPrint 6320 sheet-fed monochrome devices and seven Océ VarioStream continuous feed machines, as well as the PRISMAproduction workflow system and GMC Inspire software.

PostNL BDS' investment in the VarioPrint i300 has contributed to considerable changes in the company's production processes. "Overall, these changes mean that our investment in the VarioPrint i300 is not only delivering savings, but

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it is actually creating revenue," says Tolenaar.

He explains that PostNL BDS has been able to reduce the use of pre-printed stocks and is now printing more than half of its production on white paper, with more customers still migrating to the new process. "For customers," he says, "this means that we're able to offer even greater flexibility, deliver cost savings and eliminate the need to store pre-printed stocks."

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To illustrate, Tolenaar points to a customer whose work has already moved to the VarioPrint i300. "We made a business case for the customer, demonstrating that migrating his production from documents printed in monochrome on pre-printed colour pages to full colour production and eliminating the need for pre-printed stocks would save him about 30% on his total document logistics costs."

In addition to accelerating migration to a white paper solution, Tolenaar says

the introduction of the VarioPrint i300 has also improved efficiency and reduced waste.

For example, handling of inserts has changed. Previously, inserts were printed in offset, delivered to PostNL BDS and then inserted. "Now, with the VarioPrint i300," says Tolenaar, "we've been able to include inserts in the print files and print them all in one stream. Aside from cost savings, that has also enabled time savings, because we don't need to get the extra inserts from our warehouse or allow time for cutting inserts or inserting. Another benefit is that by including the inserts in the print file instead of inserting them separately, we've considerably reduced the margin for error."

"Working with Canon is not like a traditional customer-supplier relationship," Tolenaar continues. "We chose Canon because with them we can build towards operating in a partnership."

With the latest development in this longstanding partnership delivering savings, enabling transformation and opening up new opportunities, PostNL BDS is not only meeting the challenges of a changing communications landscape but actually expanding its capabilities to offer customers even more innovative solutions in the future.