



Boom – Verweij, The Netherlands

Optimus MIS integrated with Imp software

Company

Boom Verweij, a printing company, staffed by around 80 people has an annual turnover of 15 million Euro. Approximately 50% of their production is general commercial and 50% are labels; both are produced on sheet-fed offset.

Imp usage in label department

The labels produced are wet labels, mainly for the food and drink industry. They range from food-tin labels to luxury bottle labels. The labels are both square cut labels and die cut irregular shape labels. These labels are printed on a variety of substrates, including aluminium coated papers, in CMYK plus up-to 4 spot colours plus either aqueous or UV coating. Orders are received daily with up to 50 different order lines, each for a different label with different colours, coatings, substrates, and quantities. Although customers regularly order the same products, they never do that in the same combination of products and quantities.

Imp is used to create ganged print runs with a combination of up to 25 labels per sheet. In the past creating the gang jobs and the imposed PDF for these print jobs was a very time consuming and laborious process involving several staff members.

The old workflow

On receipt of the order, CSR in the front office would gather an example of each label, to know the size and colours of each label. Then, manually group the order lines (examples) by size, substrate, and colours. They work out which labels could be printed together on one sheet. An internally developed Excel sheet would then assist in working out what number up of each label to put on the combination sheet to best match the quantity ordered by the customer.

Once the decision on the combination sheets were made, an order was created in the MIS for each combination sheet. The Excel sheet was used to import the label product data into the MIS order resulting in a list of

product numbers per production job. This list was then given to the prepress department where the staff member responsible of the imposition work, re-keyed the product data into the prepress workflow system, located the source PDF for the product in the document archive, added the PDF to the prepress job and created the imposition, while adding colour bars and other print marks.

The new workflow with Imp software

Optimus has created a custom application that uses the Imp layout planning and imposition system through its Application Programming Interface (API) to fully automate this process. This application consists of the product database that stores all product data including the substrate, size, colours, coating, finishing and packing requirements for each product. Order lines received from the customer can be imported into the database of this application by dragging and dropping Excel sheets and CSV files. These files just contain the product number and the order quantity. Once imported, the product data is augmented with the product details from the database. This allows some global filtering on characteristics that prevent labels being combined on one sheet, notably the substrate and the type of coating.

The filtered selection (using the application programming interface of Imp) is then handed over to Imp, giving Imp the task of optimising the combination of labels on sheets, taking the quantity, size and colours of each label and the production costs of the sheets into account. This process results in one or more press sheets being constructed. The information of the press sheets is handed back to the Optimus application. With this information production estimates and books in production jobs for each sheet are automatically created. Then the application again utilises the Imp API to create an imposed PDF by adding the path to the source PDF file to the layout data, selecting a marks template and instruction Imp to create the imposed PDF. This imposed PDF, that contains all colour bars and other required marks, is submitted to the prepress system, where a proof is automatically created, and the job can be released for plate making.

Benefits

The new workflow cuts hours of manual work out of the process. Not only it is no longer required for the CSR to collect all product information and shuffle through large amounts of paperwork to create jobs, but also all the duplication of effort and the re-keying of information in the prepress department is no longer required. In fact, the entire prepress handling is completely cut out of the workflow (with the exception of releasing the job for plate making) as it is the CSR who creates the imposed PDF. In the new workflow it now takes only minutes between receiving the customer's order and having an imposed PDF ready for plate making.

Boom Verweij is saving at least an hour per job by CSR and 30 to 40 minutes per layout in prepress. Layout preparation task in prepress is completely eliminated.