



French sign production company involved in a wide range of applications

PVP strives for increased automation with HP

The HP Scitex FB7500 in full action.

By Ton Rombout

One of the favourite buzz phrases quoted by Frédéric Barbey, Managing Director of PVP, is ‘one stop shopping’. That is why his company, PVP, is based at the heart of France with easy access to many large supermarkets and stores throughout the country, and even abroad. Twenty percent of his business is based on the export of sign & display products to Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey and Dubai.

Understandably PVP strives for increased automation in order to speed up and improve its production. The company recently bought an HP Scitex FB7500 printing system capable of producing 500 m² sign & display products per hour. Two other HP Scitex machines, the XP 2700 and the FB6100, were already in place.

‘One stop shopping’

There are many other production companies in France doing similar jobs as PVP, but “none of them offer the same range of services integrated in the way we do”, Frédéric Barbey explains. “Most are based in the vicinity of larger cities such as Paris, Bordeaux or Marseille. We have adopted a different approach. We are based near major industrial regions such as Metz/Nancy, Lyon/Dijon and Orléans, but we also maintain good contacts in the Paris region. Moreover, customers such as Le Clerq and Carrefour require their promotional products at many different locations in France, another reason for being at the centre away from major city traffic.”

He adds: “Customers such as these also like to buy a wide range

of sign & display products from one company capable of producing most, or even all of them. That is why we produce so many different products and use such a wide range of equipment.”

Range of work

In fact PVP produces at two plants in Saint-Agnan, a small village near Digoin. The first site, which manufactures sign & display materials and signposting products, employs different types of equipment, including wide format printing machines, roll to roll as well as flatbed. The predominant part is done by HP machines, especially the HP Scitex FB7500. “I like the level of automation on this machine”, explains Frédéric Barbey. “For example the large inlay table and – on the other side – the large outlay table. HP did a good job thinking about production.”

The range also includes other machines such as a few larger Arizona printers, a Jeti 3300 and a Seiko 74HS, as well as laser and mechanical cutting machines and other machines for the shaping of sign & display products. Many plastic and corrugated board materials are bent, folded and assembled in this area. They are used to present and promote products in supermar-



kets and other large shops. Many other special materials and equipment are used to produce signposting items. Plastic materials are processed using quite a number of heating machines for bending, folding and other purposes.

Second plant

The second site is also located in Saint-Agnan, at a distance of approximately 1.5 km from the first. Its activities are focused mainly on the transformation of metal (in French: serrurerie), i.e. the bending, combining and assembling of metal products, but also involve wood, Plexiglas and painting. On site equipment includes sawing machines, tables for combining, cutting tables and hole and form punching machines. Frédéric Barbey concludes that there are also six integrated teams for the installation of sign & display products.

The company's Managing Director is happy to report that the company is set to move to, and integrate into, a much larger building in Digoin (approximately 15 km from Saint-Agnan) in 2012. Frédéric Barbey shows me the drawings of the new premises, where PVP will expand from 7500 m² to 11000 m².

Company with a human face

We discuss PVP's unique position in the French market. 70 % of its activities are focused on the sign & display market, especially retail and supermarkets. The company offers a wide range of printed materials on rigid or flexible media, assembled and finished in many different displays and signs and made of various materials such as wood, glass, metal, etc. The other 30 % involves signposting (signalization directionnelle). Most clients originate from local communities (villages, cities), national and departmental government organizations and industrial areas. Established in 1981 by Frédéric Barbey's father, PVP is still a company with a human face and a creative and responsive spirit, which has always been its main strength. PVP has an annual turnover of approximately 7.5 million euro and a workforce that includes nearly fifty employees.

Frédéric Barbey also recently set up a communications company that creates, develops and produces layouts for products not available to, or not produced by, clients themselves – not even the larger companies.

Operations currently proceed at 'Le champ de la maison' in Saint-Agnan, where, I can assure you, the Burgundy is also of excellent quality!



The new site in Digoin (2011)



Frédéric Barbey

