



SUCCESS STORY

Fotofabriek focuses on picture-perfect print production

“It has to be perfect. And it has to be on time. Always.”

Stephan De Vries, CEO at Fotofabriek, sets a high standard for the company and its print products — and does so to great results: it has won the largest annual independent photo book test in The Netherlands for 5 consecutive years. “We have been printing on the KODAK NEXPRESS Digital Platform since 2004, because of its superior print quality. And now having tested the new KODAK NEXFINITY Digital Press, and recently making the decision to purchase two of these presses, we are looking forward to expanding and improving the types of products we offer.”

Fotofabriek was established as an online portal for photo related applications in 2008 by Chris Russell, a full-service advertising agency in Groningen, The Netherlands. Chris Russell’s ‘full service’ includes in-house print production, so it can deliver on its promises at all times: “We need to be fast and highly flexible and at the same time be in complete control of quality. As we handle many very short run jobs, often even just one-offs, we only get one chance to do everything right: Our product has to be impeccable on arrival at our customer’s desk.”

Highly intelligent workflow

The print production site in Groningen serves both Chris Russell’s retail customers and Fotofabriek’s photo applications users, as well as the **Studentendrukwerk** portal catering to the printing needs of students. “Although we consolidate very different types of customers and markets into our one production flow, we treat all jobs to the same standard. Quality has to be perfect. And delivery must be on time. Always. To achieve that we need to have the right people, reliable equipment and a highly intelligent workflow system.”

‘Yes, we can’

At the facility, digital presses — including one KODAK NEXPRESS 2500, one NEXPRESS 3300 and one NEXFINITY — are running next to large format printers and a variety of finishing systems. But this is no ordinary printing house: “We have arranged our production flow completely differently compared to most regular print companies,” explains De Vries. “We have an average equipment utilization of only some 20 to 30 percent. This ensures there is always enough production capacity available for peak volumes or any unexpected rush jobs.”





Smart software, clever system

At the core of the production flow is smart software, developed completely in-house, managing and controlling the entire operation in Groningen. “We not only need to always know the exact location of any one print job, but we also need to have an up-to-date overview at any time of the amount of work that has been processed and the jobs that still need to be done. Throughout the facility, you see large screens that show status updates on the actual production flow — ‘21 minutes of lamination to be done,’ ‘3 hours of book covers to be done’— that we can act upon quickly. The system alerts us to any bottlenecks and allows us to quickly respond and scale up production adequately where and when it is needed. This makes scheduling the wide variety of jobs much easier and more flexible, as the system takes full advantage of available capacity at all times. Also, it enables us to produce and deliver photo books within only 3 days, where others will keep you waiting for 5 to 10 days.”

Connecting to customers

“We put a lot of effort into new ways of connecting to our customers,” notes De Vries. “For example, Fotofabriek offers customers the option to watch a video of how their individual order is being produced. Cameras inside our production systems take shots of every step in the process and show what we do. These ‘public production’ videos allow customers to also share their ‘making-of’ story on the Web.”

Global ambition with Print API

Looking for additional print volume, the company is constantly adding new products and testing new business models.



De Vries also explains how Fotofabriek plans to expand its business on a European scale and even globally: “We have decided to open up our bespoke back-office system to third parties by developing an API that connects to third parties’ apps, software and portals. Through our

‘Print API’, anyone can make use of our back-office and extensive portfolio of print products to sell their own artwork, designs and applications. **PrintAPI.io** also enables you to set up a responsive web2print editor for your own website. And it allows printers and portals from around the globe to use Fotofabriek as their European production hub or, vice versa, to sell print products from Europe to other parts of the world and have them produced locally.” **Print API** is available for free, and has already signed up 200 users — large and small — in just one year.

Next-generation NEXFINITY Press

Stephan De Vries has every intention to again excel at the next annual ‘Photo Album Test.’ By using KODAK NEXPRESS devices, we know we have the best technology on offer for photo books — nobody can beat us when it comes to quality and value for money. When we started out with our first NEXPRESS unit in 2004, Kodak was miles ahead of its competitors. We expect to see the same thing now with the NEXFINITY Press. It offers awesome quality, consistency and color uniformity that will allow even better products at more competitive pricing. With its long sheet option at 120 cm, we will be able to expand our photo offering by making beautiful lay flat albums, and with the ability to run thicker substrates we see the possibility to add new products for the retail market, like boxes and cardboard signs.”

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KODAK NEXFINITY Digital Press

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To watch a video about Fotofabriek and its KODAK NEXFINITY Digital Press, and for more information about NEXFINITY, visit www.kodak.com/go/nexfinity

