

# DRIVING NEWSPAPER SALES



## Variable imprinting with **Prosper S-Series** Imprinting Systems proves a sales booster for DC Thomson



DC Thomson, based in Dundee, Scotland, is a leading UK publisher of regional newspapers. Its contract printing arm, Discovery Print, produces 3.3 million newspapers and supplements per week for both DC Thomson and other customers. In the past year, Discovery Print has used its **Kodak Prosper S30** Imprinting System to individualise more than a million offset-printed newspaper copies, including

pioneering campaigns such as prizes within a popular comic strip, a weekly bingo card that's driving up sales of two evening newspapers, and a Christmas promotion that engaged shoppers at a local retail centre. Such cutting-edge use of digital personalisation has garnered prestigious newspaper industry awards, including «Printed Innovation of the Year» (UK and International) at the 2016 News Awards and the innovation award at the 2016 Scottish Press Awards.

### Fast, flexible quality personalisation

The **Kodak Prosper S30** head was installed on the title unit of Discovery Print's eight-tower Goss Colorliner CPS web offset newspaper press early in 2015. Guy Forester, Head of Operations (Newspapers) at DC Thomson, notes that "the installation of the **Prosper** System went extremely well. The project was complete within two days, and following numerous print tests, was first used in-paper in March 2015" to print unique numbers on *The Courier* newspaper. Mounting the digital print head on a rail allows it to be positioned

"The Prosper S30 head allows us to provide unique content that attracts both readers and advertisers... (and has) set Discovery Print apart from competitors"

– **Guy Forester,**  
Head of Operations (Newspaper)  
DC Thomson

anywhere above the moving paper web. It can print a 106 mm wide strip of variable print on up to 16 pages per publication. Its resolution is 600 x 200 dpi at up to 900 metres per minute, providing excellent quality and density while keeping up with the 90,000 copies per hour speed of the Goss press, with inkjet-printed elements that exactly match the quality of the offset print on the same paper stock.

"Personalisation has now been used across the DC Thomson newspaper portfolio and is tried and tested," says Mr Forester. "The digital print head is an exciting proposition for the business and its clients, who can combine print with web and mobile-based marketing and advertising which, in turn, allows for enhanced measurability."

# KEY ADVANTAGES

- Personalised promotions boost reader engagement and loyalty
- Increase in sales volume
- Value-added offering attracts advertisers and contract print customers
- Source of competitive differentiation



## Competitions and promotions

In July 2015 the **Kodak Prosper S30** System was used for what DC Thomson believes “to be a world first, with a digital print head printing the (comic strip) artwork on a ribbon strip,” says Mr Forester. “We had a comic strip created with two different endings. Some readers instantly won £20, while others had the chance to be entered into a prize draw. The last two frames of the cartoon were printed by the Prosper head and were therefore changeable,” with a unique reference number printed on every copy. “You couldn’t tell that the panels were printed by inkjet or offset,” says Mr Forester. “They matched the rest of the paper. From a printer’s point of view that’s a real positive.”

Another campaign promoted football-related giveaways in the *Evening Telegraph* using scores and player names from the local team, as well as a reference number unique to each copy of the paper. Winning readers phoned in, quoting their unique number in order to claim a prize.



A “Christmas Toy Chest” promotion campaign for the *Evening Telegraph* encouraged readers to visit a Dundee shopping centre where unique barcodes on each copy could be scanned by a roadshow team. The barcode would generate one of three video clips shown on a computer on the stall, informing readers whether they had won one of 200 prizes or not. “Some readers bought multiple papers and we saw an uplift of 39% in sales at the city centre road show,” says Mr Forester.



Later that month, the *Evening Telegraph* wished readers a ‘Merry Christmas’ by printing randomised names on the front page on Christmas Eve, a promotion that won the innovation award in the 2016 Scottish Press Awards. “We saw a sales increase on the previous year, and a social media buzz,” says Mr Forester.

In 2016, two DC Thomson titles—the *Evening Telegraph* and *Evening Express*—have boosted sales by printing 55,000 unique bingo cards once a week within the papers. Each “card” is actually a coupon filled with different sets numbers in each copy, plus a unique reference number. Readers keep the cards throughout the next week and fill in numbers that are printed every day. If all the numbers can be matched to the unique card, the reader rings to claim the prize. In previous years, separate bingo cards were printed and distributed just once per year, meaning that readers with a yearly card could didn’t necessarily have to buy a copy of the paper to obtain the numbers. Personalisation is proving to be a more efficient and effective approach. Mr. Forester explains, “Not only are we saving the cost of separate cards, but also ensuring that readers who want to play need to purchase at least one copy every week, as this features their game cards. Our aim is to reduce the readers per copy.”

## Taking the message to clients

Apart from boosting sales of DC Thomson’s own titles, the measurable success of these campaigns as well the high profile awards are a powerful marketing argument that can be taken to advertisers and contract print customers.

“The **Prosper S30** head allows us to provide unique content that attracts both readers and advertisers,” says Mr Forester. “Not only are we innovating with our own copies with a view to increasing sales per title, but we offer it to our advertisers and contract print clients. The digital print head allows us to set Discovery Print apart from competitors, offering additional services to current and prospective contract print clients that are relatively rare within the UK marketplace.”

Printed using **Kodak** Technology.

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