

KAS Sprint 3000



Kelleway found the 3000's hand-fed capabilities ideal for its short-run booklet work, writes **Simon Creasey**

After 15 years working for BASF, Paul Kelleway felt like a change. "I'd been watching the development of digital print technology very closely and decided that it was an opportune time to 'go it alone'."

Kelleway had identified what he believed was an untapped market for digital print and personalisation. So at the end of last year he set up Kelleway Media – with his brother Dave and another business partner – as a one-stop shop for digital print including design, marketing, print and finishing.

The firm took over a two-storey unit in Worthing, West Sussex, and set about filling it with the latest technology. The first thing to come on board was the "heart of the operation": an HP Indigo 3000 seven-colour digital press (which he intends to upgrade to a 3050).

Next on the shopping list was a high-quality bit of finishing kit. For this he turned to Watford-based Ashgate Automation. "We looked at a couple of options but Ashgate's enthusiasm for the KAS Sprint 3000 bookletmaker and the

demonstrations that they gave us of its capabilities convinced me that it was the right machine for us," explains Kelleway.

He adds that the hand-fed version of the machine was ideal for the short-run work that it undertakes and that the on-line trimmer gives a nice finish.

"It's compact, well constructed and built to take the volumes we expect to handle. Its ability to handle A4, A5 and A6 booklets is essential as we have already produced proofs of A4 annual reports and A6 CD booklets on it."

Kelleway says that the machine is quick – he can do around 100 booklets in 30 minutes – and that "when it stitches down the spine you get a really flat staple". An added bonus is that the KAS Sprint 3000 is easy to operate and that there is good access to all parts of the machine, which makes changing staples easy.

At the same time as purchasing the bookletmaker the firm also acquired a Nagano business card cutter and a hand creaser from Ashgate about whom Kelleway is keen to praise.

"Finishing is a very important part of our digital solution and Ashgate's offering met our requirements both in terms of quality and value for money," he says. By choosing one supplier for all the machinery we got the best deal and excellent support service and training."

Kelleway says that he would recommend the Sprint 3000 to anybody in the marketplace dealing with small runs and that if required he would seriously consider buying another.

In the meantime the short-term aim is to continue to grow the business through forging relationships with companies looking for "quality digital print jobs" and by securing repeat business.

"Our pricing structure is really competitive and we've got one of the best quality digital machines out there," says Kelleway.

The firm has already undertaken a number of jobs for design agencies but Kelleway bemoans the difficulty of getting the "quality" message across to customers.

"The quality of our work is excellent but the problem is that people will accept mediocre quality produced on cheaper machines."

Despite this problem he is still confident of the firm's future outlook. "There

Factfile

Strengths

- Ease of use
- Value for money
- High quality work
- Speed

Weaknesses

- None identified

Supplier's response

John Price, managing director of Ashgate Automation, says: "We are pleased that Paul came to us and we were able to come up with a good package at the right price." He adds that there are currently around 30 Sprint 3000s in operation at the moment and like all machines improvements are continually being made by the manufacturer.

"The increasing popularity of short-run work has given hand-fed machines a new lease of life," explains Price. "The KAS Sprint 3000 is targeted at digital printers and several internal function changes have been made to ensure that it won't mark sheets. The main improvements have been to the fold system which is now six to seven times quicker than the old model and has eliminated 99% of marking."

Heavier gauge of staple heads have also been added by British manufacturer KAS, which is based in Dunstable, Bedfordshire, and Price expects further improvements to reflect new market demands.

Price

KAS Sprint 3000 bookletmaker £3,395 with trimmer £7,390

Contact

Ashgate Automation 01923 711555

are currently four of us but if everything goes to plan we have people in the wings just waiting to join us." ■