



STICKY FINGERS

Sticky Business president and owner Richard Newsome shows off some of the seals, decals, sticker and labels manufactured at his Victoria facility.

Digital presses speed up production line of West Coast custom label and decal printer

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PHOTOS COURTESY OF
PRIMERA TECHNOLOGY

Contemplating a sticky business venture may sound like a dubious undertaking at first glance, but for Victoria-based Sticky Business Inc., the company's motto says it all: "It's a sticky business but someone has to do it."

Founded in 1997 by current owner and president Richard Newsome, the privately-owned company is a manufacturer of custom made labels, decals and seals for virtually every industry or market, selling some 80 per cent of its product to U.S. customers, 15 per cent within Canada, and the remainder to countries around the world.

Originally starting out as a supplier of custom wine labels for the 'brew-on-premise' industry in Canada, "We started expanding into other types of labels and sticky stuff in 1999, and then launched our first website in the autumn of 2001," Newsome told *Canadian Packaging* magazine during a recent interview.

"The aspect of Internet sales has become a huge part of our business, and has allowed the company's website to expand into the design and manufacture of every conceivable type of label, decal and embossed seal you can imagine."

Newsome adamantly believes that what sets Sticky Business apart from similar-sized competitors is its well-established presence on all major search engines on the Internet.

"It's our customer service, too," says Newsome. "Our employees are trained to answer the phone within three rings and we always ensure a real person does it—not a phone message.

"Responses to customer enquiries via email and quote requests are always fulfilled within hours, and customers are adroitly guided through the whole process to ensure they receive the most cost-effective solution to what they truly need, not what we suppose they need," he adds.

Newsome acknowledges that Internet marketing via both search engine optimization and pay-per-click campaigns have paid off, adding that Sticky Business has an entire marketing and advertising budget dedicated to Internet strategies, choosing not to promote itself any other way.

Web Presence

By jumping onto the Internet as a forum to sell its labels, Sticky Business has shown its business acumen by quickly growing its customer base, although Newsome says his company is still considered to be a small-sized company within the industry.

The eight-employee company generated revenues of \$1.2 million in 2010, while producing four-million labels, 3.5 million decals and 2.5 million seals at the tidy 2,000-square-foot facility purchased by Newsome last year.

"Within the three main categories of labels, decals and seals, Sticky Business creates custom-manufactures flexographic labels, digital labels, flexographic decals, bumper stickers, digital decals, domed decals, embossed foil seals and custom anniversary seals," notes Newsome.

"We sell to a huge crosssection of customers: from large multinational corporations to small mom-and-pop operations," he adds. "Our target is the North American small business."

In 2008, Newsome recalls, Sticky Business began

researching the types of digital label printers available on the market.

"We found the price-tag of most systems simply more than what a small company like our own could afford, with the machinery providing overkill for the types of label orders we process," explains Newsome.

"We needed a machine that catered to us and our needs rather than one that catered to ego of the equipment manufacturer," he adds.

"It was some time in 2009 when we became aware of the new digital label system offered by Primera."

Specifically, Sticky Business found the CX1200e Color Label Press and FX1200e Digital Finishing System, the latter of which consists of a digital diecutter, laminator, weeder and finisher manufactured by Primera Technology, Inc., a Plymouth, Minn.-based global designer and manufacturer of specialty printing equipment.

"Although this particular Primera system does not come with all of the bells and whistles of the larger digital label presses offered by its competitors, this digital label printing system was perfect for our niche market of short runs of 15,000 labels or fewer, and at \$50,000 it had a very attractive price-tag," recounts Newsome.

"It's fast, reliable and provides us with high-quality labels," he states.

A high-quality image is guaranteed thanks to the 1,200-dpi (dots per inch) resolution of the CX1200e, while a print speed of five meters (16.25 feet) per minute can process up to 381 meters (1,250-feet) of label stock at a time.

The press comes with Primera's easy-to-use PTPrint 8.0 for Windows production software that



The Prima Technology CX1200e Color Label Press (left) provides high quality print quality, while the FX1200e Digital Finishing System cuts labels, decals, seals and tags down to the perfect size and shape.



Some 10 million labels, decals and seal were produced by Sticky Business in 2010, chiefly through Internet sales.

examines the layout of the print job and determines the best classification for maximum web occupation.

Capable of generating an instant proof for customer approval, the system provides the printer with the exact production cost per label for a predictable price calculation.

Also included with the CX1200e press is Prima Technology's IntelliTourque tensioning control system, which constantly monitors tension across the web and applies the information to adjust the tourque on the rewind material—providing Sticky Business with tightly wound rolls with every job.

The FX1200e digitally cuts labels to any size or shape without dies while also laminating, slitting and rewinding, notes Newsome.

The finishing speeds of 6.1 meters (20 feet) per minute are achieved with Prima's QuadraCut technology, which can use up to four blades at a time across the web to increase throughput.

"We also love the fact that for the FX1200e, we can use a touchscreen PC monitor to help make the set-up of jobs even quicker," shares Newsome. "We can even adjust job parameters on the fly."

According to Prima Technology, the CX1200e toner-based press and the FX1200e are perfectly suited for automatic production of short-run jobs, and Sticky Business agrees.

"We're very happy with these machines," states Newsome.

Up to Speed

"They have enabled us to redirect all of our short-run label orders from our flexo presses to the Prima CX1200e, which has allowed us to speed up our production of these types of smaller orders of 500 to 15,000 labels.

"By moving the jobs to this press," he adds, "we have eliminated the need to purchase flexographic plates and negatives—savings that we are able to pass on to our customers."

Newsome says he is also impressed with the service provided by Prima, noting that while there have yet to be any mechanical breakdowns or software issues with the press, "their technical support has been great.

"They have been quick to respond to all our inquiries, and their ability to fulfill our requests

for supplies is a big benefit to us.

"I was also highly impressed by the onsite training they provided my operators," Newsome notes. "It was thorough and efficient."

Along with the Prima Technology digital label press, Sticky Business utilizes flexographic presses and finishers, embossed seal presses, wide-format digital printer/cutters, digital cutter/finishers, polyurethane doming machines and cold laminators in the production of its custom label, decal and embossed seal products.

Despite being a company that has been able to capitalize on the Internet, Sticky Business knows it cannot rest on its laurels as the online label business is becoming more and more competitive, according to Newsome. It's why customer service is key to future growth.

Newsome adds that his company has some very stringent hiring policies to ensure everyone is a team player, and backs it up by providing a competitive salary and benefits package, a profit-sharing program, and a healthy work environment.

Moreover, all staff are cross-trained in most of the company's functions, and have implemented strong systems and procedures along every step of the way to ensure every customer's job is a Quality One execution.

"What makes Sticky Business stand out is its dedication to creating quality label, decal and embossed seal products and our 100-percent guarantee to back-up the quality of our products," sums up Newsome.

"Our customer service is second to none and literally hundreds and hundreds of testimonials that we have received from our clients will testify to this.

"I also think that our dedication to finding the best equipment, like the Prima Technology digital press, to produce these labels ties in quite nicely with our overall philosophy to provide a high-quality product at an economical price." 



Sticky Business press operator Mike Reid preps the Prima Technology FX1200e Digital Finishing system comprising a die-cutter, laminator, weeder and finisher.

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