



## **Interview with Max Rubens, Head of Press International**

Berne, March 2012.

Different shipping requirements in the individual countries pose enormous challenges for publishers. Press International thus specializes in removing these obstacles and offers companies solutions and services specifically tailored to their individual needs.

**"The international dispatch of newspapers and magazines is a science in its own right."**

**Mr. Rubens, in Switzerland, more and more publications are being taken over by other publishers or cancelled altogether. Titles are also disappearing in many other countries.**

**What does this mean for Press International?**

Ongoing consolidation, particularly in the press market, is forcing us to come up with new and innovative services for international business. Services which help publishers on one hand to cut costs so that they can concentrate on their core business and which on the other hand generate additional earnings. We don't expect the advertising markets to make a sustainable recovery in the short-term.

**What other services do you offer publishers?**

Most media companies generate only a small portion of their sales abroad. This means that it's not worth companies investing separately in special packaging machines, for example. This is where we give publishers professional support. With "Packing &

Addressing", we ensure, for example, that the shipping and address requirements for each country are satisfied, that the appropriate packaging or the right envelope is used and that the newspapers and magazines reach their destination undamaged. We also take on responsibility for end-to-end publications management. This ranges from subscription management, acquisition and distribution, all the way through to newsstand distribution. In addition to international shipping and delivery, our goal is to offer all of these services professionally from a single source.

**From which countries do you offer these export services?**

From pretty much every country in which we are represented. In certain countries, we also offer solutions tailored to the respective national market (e.g. alternative delivery services and a nationwide press distribution service for publishers in Germany, support by our own sales team for newsstands in German speaking Switzerland).

**Mr. Rubens, you are offering more and more services and added value to publishers. Are you neglecting your own core competencies as a result?**

No, absolutely not. We are continuing to expand our core competency in international shipping of newspapers and magazines along with customer and employee magazines. We are continually optimizing our distribution channels through international partnerships and alliances in the Swiss Post International distribution network and good contacts to other postal companies. We select the best possible delivery channel depending on the priority, for example, the delivery time, quantity, price, size or weight of the shipment.

**You have also been offering digitally printed publications for some time now. What is the idea behind this?**

With digital printing, it is possible to significantly reduce the delivery times of newspapers and to supply readers in far-off regions on the day of publication. In Switzerland, Press International offers this service together with PostMail. The editorial content is transmitted electronically and the publications are printed locally. The technology has reached the point that digitally printed newspapers can barely be distinguished from those produced using conventional printing processes in terms of quality. Digital printing thus ensures the "look and feel" of a newspaper printed using

conventional means.

**In your opinion, what potential does the new technology have?**

The digital printing process is also perfectly suited to personalizing and individualizing publications of all kinds. It would be conceivable for readers to select their favorite categories at their PC and subscribe to them. We then supply this combination as a printed newspaper. This creates a world of opportunity for company advertising in the future. Simply consider the possibilities for individually tailoring and personalizing advertising to the reader or creating offers that correspond precisely to his/her needs.

**Your parent group, Swiss Post, launched the personalised daily newspaper “My Newspaper” at the end of November 2011 in Germany. Was Press International involved in this project?**

Yes, we were involved in this project. Swiss Post already tested the personalised paper successfully in 2009 under the name PersonalNews. This model is particularly interesting for publishers working internationally in combination with digital printing. After all, there will still be people in the future who attach importance to a printed newspaper and don't want to read everything on screen.

**Did the digital printing of the daily newspapers “NZZ” and “Blick” for Cyprus and Malta start in 2011? What exactly does this service include?**

Swiss Post's new business model for distributing printed matter is geared specifically to the requirements of publishing houses which want to adapt the delivery of newspapers during the holiday season and other important periods in line with the demand of a specific destination. Since mid of 2011, the international editions of Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Blick and SonntagsBlick have been delivered electronically to printers in Cyprus and Malta, where they are printed on newsprint and distributed to newsstands, hotels and shops. Thanks to the digital transmission of data, delivery by plane is no longer required. This is better for the environment and saves publishers the high carriage charges incurred by international shipments.

**What will be the focus of your work in the future?**

We will continue to expand our mailing solutions, particularly in Germany, Austria, the UK, Asia and the USA and to push our publication management services. We will also

continue to develop new or additional distribution channels and sources of revenue for publishers. This includes, for example, the online Press Shop International, which gives publishers the opportunity to enhance the name recognition of their titles internationally and boost their image. Our services in the area of reader acquisition and support on behalf of the publishers will be refined. Additionally, we will focus on the electronic distribution of press contents (Editing as well as marketing and sales of digital issues or content).

**Mr. Rubens, thank you for this interview.**

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