

Archant's paper prize

A number of major UK publishers have been using the Paperman paper management system to improve control of their paper sourcing. Regional media group Archant has joined the list

Paperman has a new convert, and for all production professionals accustomed to the wrath of the finance department, this example provides an encouraging twist.

Archant has become the latest publisher to adopt the paper management system, using it to provide greater control over more than 5,000 tonnes of paper used on 50 of the regional media company's magazine titles.

However, while it's usually the production department that accrues the benefits of a paper management system such as Paperman, for Archant the driver came from the accounting function. It was Steve Wallace, the publisher's head of accounting & payable, that first approached Paperman, and not the director of production, John Ford.

"The main reason we looked at Paperman was that we were having difficulty reconciling stock figures for our paper," says Wallace. "It was being done on a spreadsheet and it was complicated – especially with there being lots of types of paper and regular changes in prices. We found Paperman through research online and then we spoke to some other customers to get their feedback. It has a lot of functionality for production but essentially we're using it to get our accounting right first."

Numerous leading UK publishers, such as The Economist, Titan Publishing, Haymarket and Bauer already use Paperman to manage their paper. It can effectively allow production staff to track usage of paper, make forecasts, ensure stocks are available, and help publishers and printers manage the process of achieving FSC and PEFC Chains of Custody. Many publishers have their printers upload usage and waste figures to Paperman. The web-based system can also handle Papinet invoices, the industry standard format for transmission of business transactions in the wood and



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paper industries.

Archant's usage is limited to the accounting aspect currently, with deliveries and usage being tracked in Paperman, and it has already shown its worth since being implemented last August.

Wallace continues: "Getting the figures right for paper was okay when the paper prices were static, but as that changed the previous system became quite unwieldy, and I was spending a lot of time on activity that added nothing to the business. This has saved me a lot of time. I can get answers quickly and any issues are flagged up earlier."

Wallace admits that he knew little about the complexities of paper management before, but with Paperman's help is learning quickly. Paper is managed on a first in, first out basis, which was hard to do on a spreadsheet. Usage of paper is charged to individual magazine titles on a monthly basis and this has been hugely simplified through Paperman, which gives Wallace a single schedule that can be worked

Archant prints more than 50 magazine titles

into the accounting system. It has also seen the publisher benefit from prompt payment discounts from paper suppliers, because the publisher is not having to wait for information from its supply chain, says Wallace.

From a production point of view, Archant's usage has plenty of scope to grow. Its printers, for example, have not yet been integrated with Paperman. Nor is Papinet being made use of at Archant yet, and the system has not yet been used by production to forecast print runs.

"I like the transparency and the information it gives me," he continues. "It saves a lot of time with something that does not add value to the business. We can start to control our paper better and look at issues as they arise. We are more in control of the process and the process is more transparent. The cost and time saving cannot be under-estimated."

So at Archant, Steve Wallace is a happy finance man, and for production managers everywhere that's a situation well worth encouraging.

• www.paperman.net