

Reductive and proactive

Time is at a premium for everyone in business – but Reductive Media Group's Gary Smith found a way to free up time to launch a new business division, through more efficient paper management

Gary Smith has saved so much time from using paper management software that he has been able to launch a print management offering for his publishing employer, Reductive Media Group, on top of all his other responsibilities as procurement and operations manager.

That's no trifling matter either; it's a very definite benefit to the business. Smith points out: "When you're trying to reconcile paper over-usage manually with spreadsheets it takes you out of doing anything else for a week. I would not have had time to launch the print management division without Paperman. It allows me to gather information very quickly, so that I can be more effective elsewhere in the business."

Reductive is a contract publisher of around 20 magazine titles, mostly membership titles for such customers as the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. It spends around £2 million on more than a thousand tonnes of paper per year – from 70 gsm LWC grades up to 250 gsm woodfree, and "everything in between", says Smith. Two paper merchants, Denmaur and Gould (previously called Salehurst P3), supply the paper.

The publisher started using Paperman for its paper management around two and a half years ago. Smith continues: "It was taking about a month of my time every year to manage the paper and produce all the usage statements. I'm all for automated systems when they work and when I saw a demo of Paperman I immediately saw how much time it could save me, to look at other areas of the business, so it pays for itself really.

"I had seen some other systems that were quite capable, which were owned by mills or merchants. What is unique about Paperman is it is totally independent."

That independence has an important



Reductive publishes about 20 contract magazines

implication for any user, should they switch between paper suppliers, because the historical data of usage is not lost, but continues seamlessly. For Reductive, the paper merchants, and print suppliers such as Southernprint, are now inputting paper usage data directly, or via Denmaur's own system in the case of that merchant. The Paperman system, which can be used for producing Papinet invoices, the global paper transaction standard (though Reductive is not using this feature), is increasingly finding acceptance amongst these types of suppliers. Smith hopes that more will follow.

"Ultimately, I hope that every web offset and magazine printer in the UK will pick it up," he says. "It certainly makes paper management easier and it seems to be becoming more of a defacto system to use. There are some really good key features like quick tonnage calculation. If I'm doing a re-tender I can get the tonnage information from the printer, feed it through the merchants and see whether the deal is worth doing. Being a contract publisher we have to

give monthly accounts to clients, and Paperman allows us to show the true cost."

Smith has also found Paperman to be most helpful in the management of Reductive's PEFC accreditation. Again, the benefits are in time saving through not having to manually work with spreadsheets. As long as the information is being input correctly by merchants and printers, Smith can pull a report out from Paperman that is acceptable for the environmental auditor.

For the future, Smith believes that improvements can be made to the Paperman system. In particular, he notes the high level of features within it, and suggests that a Lite version of Paperman might be attractive to some publishers, while a fully web-based system, as opposed to a desktop application, would enhance the user experience, since access could therefore be gained from any web browser.

"It's a very full on system for less experienced paper buyers and smaller publishers," he says. "It has got everything you need for professional paper management, and you can use all of that or just the parts you need. It would be interesting to see a Lite version with certain features. But it's a very capable system, and with a little bit of training and regular use you pick things up. I'm still learning things on it after two and a half years."

To these observations, John Stephens of Paperman responded to PMM as follows: "Gary Smith has been one of our more forward looking customers in terms of exploiting the power of Paperman, especially in the area of PEFC and in utilising his paper merchants' services. Indeed we already have customers like Gary producing wish lists which we will always respond to. Paperman is a constantly changing product and will, I am sure, incorporate the improvements Gary is looking for in the future."

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