

Mercia Image Print, the Little Eaton based Printers, are another Derby success story endorsing once more the talent that is emerging from the region.

Without doubt, the print industry suffered through the recession, but Mercia not only weathered the storm, they've come through it like a blaze of sunshine making another major investment into the business to further enhance their business offering and consolidating their position as Derbyshire's leading print manufacturer.

Following a major investment, of circa £1.1m, into new machinery and purpose built premises back in 2008, Mercia have just invested well over £100,000 to complete Phase 2 of their development programme. This new investment sees the purchase of three addition pieces of machinery that will make the business more efficient, more profitable and more competitive.

The new, state of the art, fully automated B2 Foliant Laminator will increase the company's capacity for in-house laminating significantly. The high speed, latest technology driven machine can laminate nearly 24,000 A4 sheets per hour. This application will allow Mercia even more control and efficiency of all in-house lamination, to meet the tight deadlines their customers demand.

In addition to this, Mercia's next acquisition is a Pitney Bowes Inkjet Addressing System and Mail Crafter. Personalisation and Direct Mail are an integral part of Mercia's business and over the past few years have seen great growth. Although personalisation has always been done in-house, mail folding, stuffing and stamping had to be out sourced. This new equipment will ensure Mercia offer a full in-house service printing and mailing out for all their current and future clients.

For those who know the print industry, 'plate making' is a timely and costly process. Aluminium plates are created for every colour process and four are needed for printing in full colour! The new AGFA, fully automated plate maker, makes plates and loads them, 100 at a time, which not only speeds the process but also the thermal imaging produces an enhanced higher definition finish. The plate making process is environmentally amazing as it eliminates the need for hazardous chemicals, which also gives consistent imaging also reduces the number of production steps, helping to streamline workflow, thus making it more cost effective for customers.

The new additions to an already impressive portfolio will help steer Mercia to achieving their ambitious objectives.

Amanda Strong, Mercia's Managing Director, said "we are already on target to hit budget increases of nearly 20%, so we expect this investment to really put the icing on the cake. Our customers know that we already provide a premium service but with the enhancements and the efficiencies in time and money our customers will benefit all the way".

Amanda has been at the helm through the tough times and knows she is well prepared to drive the business forward as the country begins to recover.

Over the past twelve months staff levels have increased by 20% and Mercia have made a huge commitment to the apprenticeship scheme, both internally and externally. They have appointed apprentices, one of whom was runner up in the recent Chamber of Commerce Young Business Person of the Year award, and they invested significantly in the 'When I am' programme with Derby College.

Amanda continues "our commitment to our staff is very apparent. The majority of our senior staff has been with us for the majority of our 25 years in business. We are hoping that our investment into youth also pays off and we get more and more younger people into the industry."

Mercia certainly knows where they are going. This new phase of their development is exciting, if not scary, but, with confidence in their own ability, these investments should help Mercia Print over the next 25 years.