Gamechanger

Nyala has helped to achieve a turnaround.

Vinehall Displays, Ireland. This family-run conference, exhibition and event production company with a 32-year pedigree specialises in the design, build and delivery of promotional materials for a broad range of blue-chip, multinational companies. These include leading supermarket chains, phone companies, confectionery brands, soft drink companies, banks, insurance companies and major sporting and government agencies.



Up until 2019, all in-house print production was handled by two solvent roll to roll inkjet printers, but after an extensive four-year search Vinehall Displays became the first company in Ireland to invest in a swissQprint Nyala 3 flatbed printer, as company director Gerard McElhinney explains.

UV LED to replace solvent printers

“We got the first wide-format printer over ten years ago,” he says. Up until then, the company was outsourcing all of their printing so it made good economic sense to bring production in-house. A few years later, they added another solvent printer to further increase production capacity, and this worked out very well as the workflow was based around printing and laminating vinyls onto a wide range of board based materials. However, with the advent of UV LED flatbed printers, it became apparent that Vinehall Displays could upscale productivity

while at the same time reduce the cost of manufacturing by printing directly onto the substrates. “This meant we could eliminate the cost of the vinyl as well as the time it took to apply it to the display boards,” Gerard sums up.

Searching versatility and ease of use

When it came to his research criteria, Gerard was specific that any new flatbed printing technology must provide photo quality results on various material types including paper, vinyl, acrylic, wood, metal and glass and produce anything from mesh wraps and staging to high-end point-of-sale materials and even personalised giftware. It must also be very user friendly as well as easy to operate.

Convincing features

swissQprint’s Nyala 3 ticked all the boxes on my shopping list,” Gerard reports. “It is very easy to use and even more straightforward to maintain. The quality of the output is stunning and because it is a hybrid machine it can print directly to rigid substrates as well as roll materials.” He was even more impressed by the dual roll option that enables printing onto two rolls at the same time and thereby doubling output productivity.

The roll to roll option converts the Nyala 3 into a roll printer. It reliably unwinds and rewinds rolls up to 180 kg (397 lb) and 360 mm (14.2") in diameter. An integrated controller monitors and regulates the traction force for a flawless print image. When the dual roll option is selected, the system moves the widths of each roll smoothly over the print bed, feeding material via differential shafts that compensate for any minor winding unevenness.

Longevity and reliable service

“swissQprint printers are very much considered to be the ‘Rolls-Royces’ of the printing industry. When you go to buy a Rolls-Royce you don’t inquire about breakdown cover because they rarely ever go wrong and swissQprint take the same approach,” Gerard knows. swissQprint were able to guarantee that if Vinehall Displays were to encounter a problem and it could not be rectified immediately by the local support, they would fly an engineer out from Switzerland to rectify the problem within three days. Gerard took this as having incredible confidence in their product and it was on this basis that he was confident to move forward and order a brand new swissQprint flatbed printer. “And I am so glad we did,” he says with a smile. Vinehall Display’s Nyala 3 flatbed printer was installed in the late summer of 2019.

Overnight success

“Having the flatbed changed everything – almost overnight,” reports Gerard. “The ability to print direct to substrate on the Nyala 3 changed the way we approached the production of large format digital printing, especially now that we could produce one-piece office wall branding and graphics for event production.” Existing clients loved it and could see how well Vinehall Displays could achieve even better results for their next POS stand, pop up stand or pull up banner, exhibition stand or conference backdrops. The company was also winning lots of new residual business because they had the technology at their fingertips to unlock new doors to markets where they had only previously been knocking.

Gerard says the company became an almost overnight sensation on social media thanks to its new-found ability to produce lenticular images using its Nyala 3. This was thanks to an outstanding lenticular test piece the team designed and produced using the Nyala 3 machine. It featured the Joker character from the DC Comics movie and a short video clip of it in action generated more than 10,000 views on LinkedIn. “Suddenly everybody wanted to know about lenticular printing.”

Facing the Corona crisis

What Gerard could not have predicted during the winter of 2019 was how significant his company’s investment in the Nyala 3 would become when, without warning, the Coronavirus would sweep across the world and drive individuals into their homes as social distancing measures were implemented across the world.

During the early stages of the Irish lockdown, the management at Vinehall Displays had a choice. It could either shut its doors and hope for events to restart soon, or use its manufacturing strength and highly skilled workforce to move into new markets. The latter approach, also known as ‘pivoting’ often involves meeting a crisis-related demand and can include essential supplies, medical-related goods, or technologies and services that assist remote working.

Work from Home range

The company’s response was to create a range of cost-effective workstation solutions for people who were faced with suddenly having to work from home. “Our view was that this shift towards having a ‘home office’ would become the new way of working for a while, and it became increasingly clear that many of us aren’t properly equipped to do so,” he says. They then set about designing and building several products such as a laptop stand, a simple lap desk, or even a sturdy flat pack workstation that could be sold online via a storefront that was added to the company website.

“We gained an immediate amount of social media traction with one of our laptop stands,” Gerard explains. “A social media influencer ordered one and liked it so much that he shared it on Twitter. We subsequently picked up 150 orders from that single engagement.”

Crisis used as gamechanger

The Vinehall Displays online store was born out of the necessity for change and innovation during the Covid-19 pandemic. It has meant that the company has been able to keep the doors open during lockdown and to keep all of the skilled workforce in employment. “None of this would have been possible had we not invested in the equipment necessary to secure the economic future of our company,” concludes Gerard. Thanks to the swissQprint Nyala 3 the business has been catapulted ahead to a future Vinehall Displays could not have imagined even a year before. This goes to show that with careful and considerate economic planning, manufacturers everywhere can gain momentum and find success from identifying opportunities to diversify into new products or services, even in the face of economic adversity.

VINEHALL DISPLAYS

Company	Vinehall Displays, Dublin, Ireland
Website	www.vinehall.ie
Segment	Signage and Displays
Established	1988
Employees	20
Printer	Nyala 3
References	Promotional materials for supermarket chains, phone companies, confectionery brands, soft drink companies, banks, insurance companies, major sporting & government agencies