Finding the balance

Analogue versus digital. The company's twin mainstays mirror the customer profile.

Oschatz Visuelle Medien, Niedernhausen, Germany. A print services provider with roots in the photographic business skilfully straddles the digital and analogue worlds. Their comprehensive online tool developed in-house automatically processes thousands of everyday jobs, freeing up capacity for business areas that are heavy on consulting advice. A swissQprint Nyala LED contributes to the company's output.

Anyone who has been raised in the world of photography cannot help but make high demands on image reproduction. And so it is with the Oschatz brothers. Daniel, a trained photographer, entered his father's photographic business in the 1980s and developed films on a piecework basis. Today, he is business and marketing manager of Oschatz Visuelle Medien, which still houses a darkroom. Joel, a technically minded photo engineer, joined the company in 1992 and, as co-CEO, is responsible for business operations. Back in the day, it was he who initiated the company's first-ever investment in a flatbed printer: a Xerox Cactus that printed at 300 dpi resolution – sensational for its time. "The agencies had been waiting for large format," asserts Joel, "and printing text together with images in one go was new and groundbreaking." He remembers with a smile: "Small parties were regularly held around the printers when the first poster emerged."

The boss does the testing

When a new printer arrives at Oschatz Visuelle Medien, Joel wears the operator's hat for the first few weeks. "That way I get to know the strengths and limits of the system, can set it up optimally and will know what my colleagues are talking about later," he explains. Thus, in February 2018, he put a Nyala LED into operation. He points out: "We were lacking a true flatbed printer with accurate register for both single and double-sided printing and a powerful vacuum." And that is exactly what swissQprint offers. What Joel also appreciates: "Daily maintenance of the eight print heads is accomplished in just four minutes – absolutely no hassle." Another pleasant thing is that the Nyala LED is exceptionally quiet in operation. Decisive factors in the evaluation were the top resolution and the quality with which Nyala LED can print varnish. "In our order pipeline was a large wallpaper job with multi-layer printing and a varnish topcoat," explains Joel. Nyala LED produced exactly the 3D visual effect that the customer wanted. Joel concludes: "Engineering, handling and ease of maintenance are all sensational and swissQprint are a really likeable bunch to work with."

Fully automated workflow

The two brothers have always had clear visions and a nose for promising developments. Hard work and a healthy dose of courage are the cornerstones of their success. "Of course we were and still are lucky," says Daniel with a grin. Oschatz Visuelle Medien offers retail and industrial customers a unique solution with the company's online ordering and production tool, the outcome of ten years' development. Customers' print data is held centrally at Oschatz, from where they can call up posters, backlits, stand-up displays, etc., for any number of stores as and when required. Once the order has been submitted, a QR code accompanies and controls the process, which is fully automatic from start to finish: first, the assignment of material and a printer. Then the cutter, post-print processing and fabrication. And finally, automated packaging and logistics coordination. A short while ago, Oschatz also started offering a nationwide visual merchandising service via a digitally integrated partner network. Now customers can track orders from source to delivery point and know exactly when and where a given POS element is deployed.

Plainly, the internal process at Oschatz is extremely lean. "Although a job jacket accompanies every item, in actual fact we can rely fully on the QR code," explains Joel. The online tool automatically processes 150,000 orders a year, complementing the company's second line of business that involves a lot of consulting advice.

Oschatz Visuelle Medien has supplied more than 6000 separate POS items for 400 Douglas stores in Germany as part of the cosmetics retailer's repositioning. Star photographer Peter Lindbergh pictured high-profile models for the campaign.

Lindbergh campaign for Douglas

In 2018, cosmetics retailer Douglas was in the midst of a rebranding project supported by Oschatz Visuelle Medien. The first wave, a total redesign of 400 stores, had reached its final phase. Star photographer Peter Lindbergh supplied the campaign images that formed part of Douglas' repositioning.

Production of more than 6000 POS elements was apportioned across the entire machinery pool, which included a swissQprint Nyala LED flatbed printer, several Durst and Canon roll printers and two Zünd cutters.

"When an order load is distributed this widely, profiling is a must," emphasises Joel. "Colour deviations are unacceptable." Oschatz Visuelle Medien has an employee who profiles every material for every machine. "In addition, we systematically run transmitted light tests," adds Joel. Daniel lets on: "Douglas is about to start the second wave – introducing the new logo." Oschatz Visuelle Medien is also on board with this project, while the company continues to support the Lindbergh campaign. The order situation is good and volume has doubled over the past five years, as has the number of employees.

20 – 30 exhibition jobs

The Nyala LED isn't short of work either. The autumn exhibition season is around the corner, and time and again there are samples to be made. Oschatz is also helping to create a new visitors' centre for motorcycle manufacturer KTM in Austria. Daniel reports that every year brings 20 to 30 jobs from museums and exhibitions.

"This is where we develop solutions together with the customer." Nyala LED is his printer of choice here, because he is regularly given quite challenging materials to work with. He mentions wood, veneer, metals, fabrics, leather, glass, even flooring and window blinds. Laughing, he remarks: "We have already printed everything that's possible to print on."

The right mix is crucial

The two pillars of the company, the digital tool for commerce and industry and the analogue exhibition world, reflect how Daniel and Joel Oschatz see their customers: "The customer is a hybrid." They are absolutely sure of the need for successful service providers to adapt to

this culture. “We are experiencing digitalisation in a broader sense,” Daniel notes. Oschatz Visuelle Medien fitted itself into this groove long ago.

Company	Oschatz Visuelle Medien, Niedernhausen, Germany
Website	www.oschatz.de
Segment	digital printing
Established	early 1960s
Employees	60
Printer	Nyala LED
References	Shop interiors, POS items for the cosmetics industry (e.g. Douglas), industry and commerce (e.g. a major German discounter) Exhibits, information systems, signage and decorations for museums and exhibitions (e.g. Historisches Museum Frankfurt, Weltmuseum Wien, Karl Marx Exhibition Trier, Konrad Adenauer Haus Bonn) Indoor architectural elements for hotels (e.g. Hyatt Regency in Jedda, Saudi Arabia; Hilton in Mainz)