

INTERVIEW with Smyth Companies

Smyth Companies was founded in 1877 in St. Paul, Minnesota. Originally established to help local businesses with their commercial printing needs, the company eventually turned its focus to the production of labels for consumer product goods packaging. We visited with Smyth to discuss their business and why they chose Domino and the N610i digital UV inkjet label press for their new Green Bay, Wisconsin facility.

Interviewed:

Scott Fisher, President

Glen Herlitz, General Manager

Roxanne Beth, Marketing Manager

Kristin Helms, Color Mgmt. / Press Operator

"We chose the Domino because of the opacity of the white, the brightness and expanded gamut of all of the colors, the high-definition print quality, the speed of the press, and a lower consumable cost resulting in a lower total cost of ownership."

- Scott Fisher, President of Smyth Companies



Proudly standing in front of their Domino N610i in Green Bay, Wisconsin...
Kristin Helms, Shane Magle, Roxanne Beth, Allen Hallberg, Glen Herlitz,
and Scott Fisher of Smyth Companies



Tell me about Smyth Companies

Scott: Smyth was established in 1877. It's the fourth-generation family that is running the business today. We have 9 manufacturing sites and just over 500 employees. We are in many markets and a major player in Cut-and-Stack, Flexographic (both UV and water-based), Flexible Packaging, Promotional and Commercial business. We cover the gamut in labeling.



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Tell me about your roles at Smyth

Glen: I'm the General Manager at the Green Bay facility, which we opened in January 2015. I have been with Smyth since May 2015, and I've been in the Graphic Arts industry for 40 years. There is another gentleman, Allen Hallberg, our VP of Continuous Improvement who was greatly involved with the vetting process of Domino before I came on board, so I just want to mention his name as well.

Kristin: I'm the Press Operator at the Green Bay facility and I've been here since this facility opened. I've been fortunate enough to be running the Domino from the day it was installed. My strength and background is in color management.

Roxanne: I'm in Marketing and Digital Business Development. I've been with Smyth for almost 2 years. I have a strong graphic background and have been working in the printing industry for over 20 years.

Scott: I'm the President of the organization and I've been with Smyth a total of 11 years. Each of us has our focus within various aspects of the business and I have to say it has been a great team effort. I look at Glen as the manager of the facility who can speak to the role the technology plays in building the business. Kristin from an operator standpoint who can speak to the user friendliness of the Domino press...its ease of use and color management. Roxanne, from the Marketing standpoint to demonstrate and launch the new technology we now have available to our customers. She also works side-by-side with Kristin on the color management. And of course many others like Allen Hallberg, our VP of Operations, who provides support and plays the role of why this technology is important to our business and growth strategy. Allen built a very strong relationship with Domino during the implementation and training.

Tell me about the types of labels or industries that you serve.

Roxanne: We serve the health & beauty, food, beverage, household, industrial, and promotional markets.

Scott: We produce over 4 billion labels annually across a wide variety of substrates and technologies. Based on total sales, about 63% of our business is pressure-sensitive labels.

Tell me about your customers' expectations and their labeling needs and requirements.

Roxanne: Customers today want to have a lot of material options to choose from. The clear materials are very big today in the markets we serve.

Glen: Speed-to-market, quick turnaround is important to our customers.

Scott: Today's customers are looking for flexibility and nimbleness and responsiveness. The elimination of having to sit on any kind of inventory. Good color management. They bring projects with multiple SKUs and versions, and the need for printing white. **And that's one of the areas where Domino really excels is in the ability to print a high-opacity white.**

Why is White so important to your business?

Roxanne: Based on our customers' needs and the label jobs we produce, printing in white is critical to our business. We have received a lot of positive feedback on the white from the Domino press.

Glen: From the label manufacturer standpoint, we believe that the Domino white is better than what we are printing using flexography. The white has given us a competitive advantage above everything else. The white from the Domino is better than any of their competitors.

Was the White a main criteria when you vetted a new digital press?

Scott: Yes, absolutely. It was high on the list of criteria.

What were some of the drivers for adding a new digital press?

Scott: **There was a completely different market strategy with adding this press. We developed a strategy specifically around the mid-market and we felt that the Domino digital press, coupled with the great opacity white, the operator friendliness, the speed, etc. were very critical to help us achieve our objectives. I think in the end, the overall consumable cost of operation was a huge driver.**

Putting the new press in the Green Bay facility was for all-new growth. We really haven't transitioned any business from another facility to Green Bay. We have some Cut-and-Stack business than transitioned to Pressure Sensitive at Green Bay, but for the most part, the Green Bay facility is really for new business. It was a completely different business model than what we had at any other Smyth facility.

Why was the Domino N610i considered?

Scott: We wanted a differentiator. We wanted technology that was going to be different. When we talked about digital, we also talked about the front end. How can we accelerate? We wanted to make the process easy for our clients.

Glen: We have both technologies, HP and Domino. If you look under the hood of the Domino, it has a very simple web path. It is a very user-friendly model to operate. Our operator had very little press experience and is doing a fantastic job using the Domino in a very short period of time.

Scott: When it came to the choice of technology for the new press we were adding, we looked at the ease of operation, both for our clients and ease of operation internally.

How and when did you find out about Domino?

Scott: We found out about Domino from the industry publications, as well as the Domino Account Manager calling on us. Domino approached us as a viable partner because of our digital knowledge. We have been in the digital market for many years and what was truly very important to us was the total consumable cost and cost of operation.

Explain the vetting process that you went through, and why the Domino was chosen.

Scott: We ran initial trials a year in advance of purchasing the Domino. In terms of making a decision to go with Domino, there were two key components. First, it's like anything else, we ran through a standard

ROI model. We looked to make sure that we could generate the right return, from a value creation standpoint. We asked ourselves, 'can we be competitive in the market?' But more importantly, when it came time to choosing a new digital press, there was one key factor that took us to Domino...and that was the white.

When we started the process, we sent out a file that had some very complex pictures in it with vignettes and gradations. This is when the original trial was run. We asked that the file be run at this speed and at that speed, and that was really the catalyst for us taking a closer look at Domino. Samples were run at 165 fpm. When we compared those to our Flexo samples we saw little, if any, variation. With the Domino, the color was better than we anticipated with drop-on-demand technology. So immediately, there was some credibility in the Domino technology in how it could replicate the files that were being provided to it. And at the time, I don't think there were even any curves provided, I think it was just a raw file.

A team of us traveled around and we looked at all of the competing technologies...we looked at five or six manufacturers of digital presses. There were several criteria we had.

We chose the Domino because of the opacity of the white, the brightness and expanded gamut of all of the colors, the high-definition print quality, the speed of the press, and a lower consumable cost resulting in a lower total cost of ownership.

Talk about your visit to Domino and that experience.

Scott: There was a team that went to visit Domino in Gurnee, Illinois. It included our EVP of Sales & Marketing, our EVP of Operations, and Research & Development.

Glen: All of our staff have visited at least one time and Domino has been very accommodating. Kristin and I were talking about this previously. She was blown away with what she saw at the Domino demo facility.

What are some of the key benefits that you are seeing from the Domino N610i?

Glen: The resolution on the Domino is beyond expectation. We are printing 4-point type and it's crisp and clear. Whatever the Domino engineers have done to get that type of print quality...it's amazing.



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The Domino has just has one speed...FAST! The feet per minute is quick. The color is consistent. Expectation for good print quality is there. But the key differentiator has been our ability to Service our customers. We have received some great feedback from customers on how quickly we have been able to respond. We've delivered labels in 24 hours. That was something that we didn't have the capacity to do previously. So you know if we're getting that positive feedback, there are other customers experiencing the same thing. We are very excited about the potential of our Service levels with our customers.

Roxanne: The Domino has such an expanded color gamut, I even have had some customers tell us the colors are *too* vibrant (laughing). Customers have been used to seeing certain colors the same way for years. And now they are seeing colors that they haven't experienced before. In my opinion, it has really exceeded customer expectations.

Kristin: From not having any digital experience at all, or Press Operator experience, I have been running the Domino and it has been easy-to-use and predictable.

What do you foresee moving forward in how Domino plays a key role in your label printing operation?

Scott: Domino is playing a large role and we are seeing a lot of opportunities. Many customer inquiries, samples, and client visits. For a site in Green Bay which has only been open for one year, we've been seeing a lot of customer visits.

Glen: Four major customers have been in here and the feedback has been very positive, and we have turned those visits into work. We have also had internal successes in which we took Cut-and-Stack and converted it to Pressure Sensitive and we're running that on the Domino. Lots of opportunities with the Domino.