

Printing NEWS

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A Fresh, New Start for Enterprise Press

By Jeanette Clinkunbroomer

In 1999, just as the print industry's consolidation trend was peaking, Colorado-based Mail-Well Inc. entered the New York City print market with the acquisition of Enterprise Press, which had been owned and operated by the Hort family since it was founded in 1915. As part of Mail-Well, the Hort family would continue to manage the business in its day-to-day operations. Though the transaction seemed like a good idea at the time, only three years later, Mail-Well announced a reorganization plan that included the divestiture and/or shut-down of some of its assets. Enterprise Press was slated for closure at the end of 2002.

"They bought a company that had been extremely profitable and proceeded to lose enormous sums of money over the next couple of years for a variety of reasons," said Robert Hort, former chairman of Enterprise Press, and now an adviser to the company. "They decided they were going to close it, which broke my heart."

Mr. Hort and his sons, Benjamin and Daniel, bought back the company, closing the deal on January 21, and have since reopened the business at its long-time location on Greenwich Street in Manhattan.

In 1998, Enterprise Press had sales of approximately \$29 million, and Mr. Hort stated that the company, "at its height," employed about 120 people. As the firm relaunches, it has about 45 employees as well as the diversified printing and bindery capabilities always offered, including two- and six-color Heidelberg presses with aqueous coating, digital printing, prepress, proofing, mailing and an in-house bindery.

In addition, Enterprise operates the only heated web press in Manhattan, a six-color Harris M-110 with inline finishing, scratch-off coatings, pattern perforation, and pattern gluing.



They may love New York, but they don't miss being on Wall Street—standing in front of the now-privately owned Enterprise are Barry Heyman, Dan Hort, Ben Hort, and Robert Hort.

Benjamin Hort is now president of Enterprise Press, Daniel Hort is chairman, and June Zolo serves as general manager. Barry Heyman, once regional vice president of Mail-Well with responsibility for seven east coast facilities, and the former leader of the John D. Lucas Printing Co. of Baltimore, recently has been named senior vice president of Enterprise Press. Based in Maryland, Mr. Heyman will head up a new sales office for Enterprise in the mid-Atlantic area.



From left: Enterprise's Milton Palenbaum, June Zolo, Marie Mitchell, Jim Larkin, Dan Hort, Steve Zappola, Bill Bianco, John Sangemino, Dan Shapiro, and Ursula Charko.



The Enterprise sales staff: Vincent Arena, Arnold Kohn, Dan Hort, Barry Heyman, Delores Scroggins, Ben Hort, and Bob Dona.

Starting Over

Enterprise's plant had been closed for about one month when Mr. Hort and his sons purchased the company. "There definitely was some dust and grime," he said. "The presses had been ignored for a while. For the first couple of weeks, we rolled up our sleeves and were washing and scouring. But it did not prevent the presses from running. Within the first two weeks after we took over, we were printing jobs."

"We are certainly building our staff back," he added. "Most of our people now are alumni. They'd been with the company for a number of years, and had stayed with it while Mail-Well owned it."



From left to right: Earl Saunders, Steve Zappola, Anthony Marzella, and Saul Avila in the revamped prepress department.



Between them Milton Palenbaum, Tony Torres, Russell Guttaduro, and Frank Wooten have over 130 years of printing experience at Enterprise.

Though a shutdown surely takes a toll on accounts, Mr. Hort noted, "We've been blessed and very fortunate that our accounts have been so loyal. It's gratifying to see the loyalty of people who have been our clients for many, many years."

"We expect to grow in several ways," added Mr. Hort. "One way is by adding sales and sales people, and if that requires the addition of new equipment, we will probably add another six-color sheetfed press. We're also expanding into digital printing technology and into growing our prepress area to do more media work. We have very aggressive plans, but we're just starting out."

Expanding the Territory

Enterprise is proud of having been part of the New York City printing industry for nearly a century, and the firm will continue to focus on its clients here, even as the company extends its scope along the eastern seaboard.

"Our specialty is quality color," Mr. Hort said. "We run the gamut from big jobs to small, for clients who know the difference between good quality and not-so-good."

The jobs Enterprise takes on range from advertising agency work, to printing for the fashion and cosmetics industry, to serving non-profit organizations. As the company adds customers farther from home with the help of Mr. Heyman's mid-Atlantic sales effort, this mix may become even broader to satisfy market demands. Barry Heyman, senior vice president at Enterprise, heads the Baltimore sales office.

"I didn't know Barry Heyman before we became part of Mail-Well," Mr. Hort noted. "We worked together and became friends. When my sons and I bought Enterprise back, we were very anxious and happy that Barry was able to join us. We're looking for Barry to play a significant role in shaping the company in terms of building sales."

At Mail-Well, Mr. Heyman oversaw Enterprise's operations, as well as the operations of several other East Coast commercial printing plants the company owned.

Certainly Mail-Well, like other consolidators, has been affected by a slowing economy and too much collective capacity. The company was in position to reshuffle its capabilities and keep only those operations that best fit within its overall organization. That did not include Enterprise, and so the worst aspects of consolidation appear to be in the past for the Hort family.

Now, Enterprise is looking at tomorrow with considerable optimism and even a sense of excitement. Said Mr. Hort, "Our future is still ahead of us, but good things are happening."