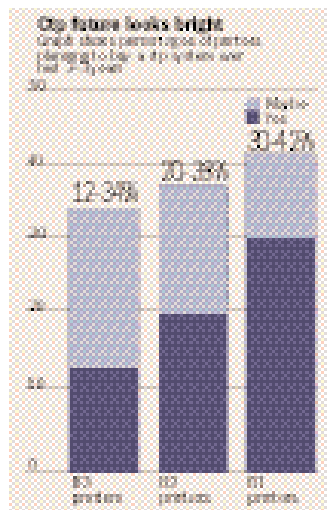


Ctp set to rise

Despite the US economic slowdown, ctp sales should still grow in the next few years, according to new research.

The survey of more than 300 US printers by State Street Consultants showed that although only 3% of B3 printers have ctp already,



another 12% intend to install it in the next year.

Some 38% of B2 printers and 42% of B1 printers intend to install ctp in the next few years, showing that this market is still not yet mature.

The installation of ctp is now rising fastest among printers with between 50 and 100 employees however, now that many larger companies have already installed ctp.

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Report delayed

Xerox has delayed filing of its annual report with the American Securities & Exchange Commission, last Monday, after auditors from KPMG called for a more thorough review of the figures.

The loss-making Xerox was hit by a \$120m charge from its Mexican unit, where accounting irregu-

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NUR to barely break even

By Alex Grant

NUR Macroprinters has warned that first quarter profits will be negligible because of a big fall in sales in North America and \$2.5m in one-off restructuring costs.

Although first quarter worldwide sales are expected to rise from \$21.5m to \$31m, the Israeli manufacturer should barely break even, and will make a loss in real terms.

The company made a profit of 18 cents per share

in the first quarter of 2000 and continued to increase its profits in the second quarter, before it was hit by one-off costs from its takeover of US competitor Salsa Digital in the third.

But NUR then went on to make record profits of \$6.1m in the final quarter of 2000. Sales grew by 100% over the year, and grew organically in all parts of the year.

"Our sales in the US have been strongly affected by the current economic

uncertainty," says NUR president and chief executive Erez Shachar.

"However, we believe that this situation is only temporary and does not reflect a structural change in our industry."

NUR still expects wide-format digital to make inroads into screenprinting and recently launched two new presses, the Fresco 3200 and a beefed-up Salsa Ultima range.

NUR has already restructured to cut costs, merging

Dotcom merger

Printbynet.com is merging with its parent ControlP.com, as its partner ImageX.com becomes the latest US dotcom to warn of poor results and cut back on staffing. Printbynet.com in Leeds is 80% owned by ControlP.com, located in Tower 42 in London.

Online operations will now be concentrated in Leeds with the London offices used for the software side of the business. However, the merger of the two operations is said to have been planned for some time, and no jobs are being lost. Sales are growing, although neither Printbynet.com nor ControlP.com will say if they are breaking even yet or not.

Printbynet.com concentrates on print buyers in ad agencies and design houses with ControlP.com dealing with small companies and large corporate customers through its software.

But now the two pricing structures are to be merged and greater economies of scale sought by using the same printer for different

jobs, although both websites will survive with their current names. They will, however, share a managing director, David Howarth of Printbynet.com.

ImageX.com in the US is in a much worse plight. The company has said that first-quarter results should show a loss of around \$10m on sales of between \$14m and \$15m, and that staffing will be cut by 17% in the next few months. The loss had previously been expected to be between \$7m and \$8m.

In February, ImageX.com decided to pull the plug on Printbid.com, one of the first print buying websites ever to be established. ImageX.com has a partnership with ControlP.com in the UK, which says that the cutbacks will bring no adverse consequences as ImageX.com's difficulties are in the North American market, not Europe.

"In effect, we're handling ImageX.com's European sales and we're certainly not cutting back," says ControlP.com chairman Warren Taylor.

● Banta Corporation, which

All not well at Mail-Well

Mail-Well, the US label and commercial printer, has warned that first quarter earnings will be even lower than expected because American buyers are delaying advertising campaigns and catalogue print runs.

Last year, profits fell from \$29.7m to just \$10.9m in the third quarter. Mail-Well has yet to report its final full-year results, but is already warning that first quarter earnings per share, due to be announced in May, will be between 7c and 9c, not the 25c that Wall Street was expecting.

"In this economic environment, our businesses are reacting as we would expect," says president and chief executive officer Paul Reilly.

Mail-Well owns label printer Double S, Stampiton and Customark in the UK. Although it has launched a full review of its operations the firm has signalled that its UK operations are bringing in reasonable returns and are probably

Guiton up by 13%

Guiton Group, the Channel Islands printer that publishes the *Jersey Evening Post*, has increased its operating profits by 13% to £5.8m despite a 2% fall in sales with the sell-off of loss-making Sutton Publishing to Haynes. Guiton acquired the Guernsey Press in 1998, and the Itex software company last year in a bid to diversify from print.

Loot may scoot

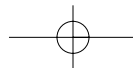
Scoot.com, the online directory service, could be about to sell the Loot free-ads paper just ten months after it bought it. Scoot, which made a pretax loss of £71.5m last year, has launched a "strategic review" of all its businesses. Trader.com, a French rival of Scoot's, is one possible buyer.

DuPont job cuts

DuPont, the US chemical company which makes Cromalin film, Cyrel plates, papers, ink and inkjet systems, has announced 4,000 job cuts around the world, many of them in its nylon and polyester businesses, which make packaging materials. After one-off costs, the company will save \$400m a year from its payroll.

In buying mood

Hewlett Packard could continue its march into the consulting business with the possible takeover of Internet consultancy Scient Corp. HP has wanted to buy into this area after its attempted purchase of Pricewaterhouse-Coopers' consulting arm fell through last year.



Business GROW-HOW



From Paul Holohan & the team at
Richmond Capital Partners Limited

COMPETITOR ANALYSIS

I have been working with a business advisor on a marketing plan. He strongly recommends that we should monitor our main competitors – how necessary is this?

In the last three months, Quebecor's share price has fallen from more than \$25 to \$20. It can often be latent competitors. An example of this would be Kodak who worried about the rise of Fuji in the film business. But Kodak faced a much higher threat from the "filmless camera" technology.

In brief

● Quebecor reviews 2000

Remember a company's closest competitor is the one which pursues the same strategy so it is important to determine your own broad strategy (what business will we be in?) and compare it to rivals. You should remain alert to changes in how your competitors are revising their strategies in response to their customers' needs.

Keep an eye open for new competitors entering your arena as well as existing ones and be aware of their activities in the marketplace.

Identifying your competitors' strengths and weaknesses is the next step. First gather recent data on each such as:-

- Sales
- Market share, growth
- Profit margin (gross, operating and net profit margins)
- Return on investment (ROI)
- Gearing
- Capacity utilisation
- Cash flow
- Fixed asset turnover
- Sales per employee

You then need to determine which competitors to confront and which to avoid. This is a critical choice. Never aim to "destroy" a competitor – this can be counterproductive. It can be argued that there are "good competitors" and "bad competitors". Good competitors play by the rules, set prices at reasonable levels and favour a healthy industry. Bad competitors violate the rules, buy market share rather than earn it and take risks – often by investing in over-capacity. Bad competitors upset the industry equilibrium.

"Good" competitors should be supported because you will benefit from them whereas bad competitors should be attacked. Similarly weak competitors can be attacked but often this does not add to your competitive advantage.

Is it possible to spend too much time and energy tracking competitors? The answer is certainly yes! There is a danger that a company can become so **competitor focused** that it loses **customer focus**. Balance is the key.

Companies that manage a good balance of customer and competitor considerations are practising true market orientation. Don't be frightened of competitors but do be aware of their activities in your market.

"Attack" through your own strengths and by working on your weaknesses – this is the best form of "defence".

Congratulations on your approach to the marketing plan!

The author accepts no legal responsibility for the advice given. Comments and advice given in this column do not necessarily represent the views of Printing World.

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Quebecor success stories

By Fiona Fraser

Quebecor World last week held its annual meeting to review a successful 2000.

Last year marked the 12th year of record results for the Canadian company – said to be the world's largest – with revenue nearly doubling in two years to reach \$6.5bn.

In March this year, Quebecor managed to repay bank borrowings for the acquisition of World Color Press in 1999.

President and chief executive officer Charles Cavell, says: "We have kept our focus on integrat-

ing our business. We have achieved industry-leading double-digit margins."

Cost savings are expected to reach \$110m by the end of next year.

Mr Cavell says: "By not making a single acquisition in almost two years, concentrating on the business and improving internal efficiencies, we have managed to return to our pre-acquisition capital structure."

"We are now in a position to continue our role as the industry's global consolidator."

The company recently purchased a controlling

interest in Spanish pre-press company Espacio y Punto and Brazilian printer Grafica Melhoramentos.

However, Quebecor World is buying back 10% of its shares in a bid to bolster its stagnant share price. The Canadian printing company is buying 8.8 million of its own shares this month.

"Shares have been trading at a price range that does not adequately reflect their value in relation to the Corporation's assets, business and future business prospects," a company statement explains.

Legal notices

Compulsory winding up

The following cases are due to be heard at the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London

WC2A 2LL

● **Waveney Screenrepro Ltd** 72 B Wollaton Road, Beeston, Nottingham,

Nottinghamshire NG9 2NZ on April 4 at 10.30am. Petition by Litho Supplies (UK) Ltd

● **Pride Magazine Ltd** 17 Hanover Square, London W1R 9AJ on April 11 at 10.30am. Petition by Inland Revenue

The following case is due to be heard at Liverpool District Registry, Queen Elizabeth II Law Courts, Derby Square, Liverpool, Merseyside L2 1XA

● **Pentagon Print & Design Ltd** Unit 11 Gibraltar Row, King Edward Industrial Estate, Liverpool L3 7HJ on April 23 at 10am. Petition by Paragon Print Services

The following case is due to be heard at Leeds District Registry, The Courthouse, Oxford Row, Leeds LS1 1BG

● **Unique Screenprint Ltd** Wakefield Commercial Park, Bridge Road, Horbury, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF4 5NW on April 26 at 10.30am. Petition by Customs &

Excise

Road, Southend-on-Sea, Essex SS1 2EG

Appointment of liquidators

● **Travel in Print Ltd** Printing for the travel industry. Liquidator: MT Coyne, Poppleton & Appleby, 141 Great Charles Street, Birmingham B3 3LG

● **Bellew Publishing Co Ltd** Publisher. Liquidators: B Hoffman, Gerald Edelman Business Recovery, 25 Harley Street, London W1G 9BR and K Gordfarb, 33 St George's Drive, London SW1V 4DG

● **Pauton Press Ltd** Printer. Liquidator: M Bowell, Burdale Turnaround Associates, Brambledene House, Heath View, East Horsley, Near Leatherhead KT24 5EE

● **MediaWeb Offset Ltd** Printer. Liquidator: CD Faulds, Radfords, 12 Portland Street, Southampton SO14 7EB

● **Southern Converters Ltd** Stationery wholesaler. Liquidator: T Papanicola, Langley & Partners, Langley House, Park Road, London N2 8EX

● **Light on Ltd** Trading name: **Lightning Graphics** Printer. Liquidator: MR Fry, Begbies Traynor, The Old Exchange, 234 Southchurch

● **Hamilton & Co Publishers Ltd** at Royd House, 286 Manningham Lane, Bradford BD8 7BP on April 19 at 10.30am

● **Levinson Books Ltd** at Leonard Curtis & Co, 1 Great Cumberland Place, London W1H 7LW on May 8 at 10am for members and at 10.15am for creditors

● **The Newdawn Print Co Ltd** at Elliot, Woolfe & Rose, Premier House, 112 Station Road, Edgware, Middlesex HA8 7TT on April 30 at 11am for

● **A&C Printing Ltd** at Begbies Traynor, 1 Winckley Court, Chapel Street, Preston PR1 8BU on April 3

● **KWA Graphics & Design Ltd** at Tudor Cottages, Footscray High Street, Footscray, Sidcup, Kent DA14 5HN on April 10 at 10.10am

● **Impress Printing Services Ltd** at 42-44 Mosley Street, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 1DF on April 10 at 11am

● **PJ Print Ltd** at 24 Wellington Street, St John's, Blackburn BB1 8AF on April 12 at 10.15am

● **Meetings of creditors**

Final meetings

● **Levinson Books Ltd** at Leonard Curtis & Co, 1 Great Cumberland Place, London W1H 7LW on May 8 at 10am for members and at 10.15am for creditors

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