

## A Greener 3D World for JKN...

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Well-known not only in its local area around Preston and the north-west of the country, JKN Digital has also become established as a supplier of environmentally-friendly high quality displays and signs throughout the country, often tackling jobs which other companies are not so keen to take on. Increasingly, the business has honed the technologies it uses, with innovative and complex cardboard engineering skills being complemented by UV-curable ink-jet printing and, today, it has also become renowned for its expertise for three-dimensional applications and its successful drive to become a greener solutions' provider.

JKN Digital was formed in 1988, specialising in the production of all types of signs and displays, and moving forward with the different technologies as they became available. The company's use during the past few years of wide-format digital ink-jet printers has also evolved from the demand to enhance the types of work which it wanted to output and it was inevitable that a move into UV-curable flat-bed output would follow its previous investments.

As an early adopter of this technology, UV-curable output is now proving to play the major role in JKN's portfolio of capabilities. But the company has progressed steadily on its upgrade path to make sure that the solution it invests in is the right one for its customers and the varying types of applications which are produced. One of the potential benefits recognised and sought by JKN was the ability to print with white ink, thus enabling it to work with non-white and clear materials as well as more standard substrates used within the display industry. Addressing the need to print direct to many of the substrates applicable to the packaging and point-of-sale markets meant that not only was the white important but, also, as vital was the ability to handle corrugateds and boards as well as more conventional display products.

When a new machine was being considered to increase production capacity, JKN was all too aware that reliability and quality were essential as well as increased environmental awareness. Today there are several wide-format printers available which tick the boxes in many ways, but the company also wanted to make sure it was dealing with a distributor which understood the market thoroughly and offered more than merely a sales service.

As a result, JKN turned to specialist UK distributor CMYUK Digital who not only was able to supply the printer required but was also offering a full technical service to make sure that the machine was able to do exactly what was required of it. Having followed market developments closely before making its next investment, the company opted for an EFI-VUTEK QS2000 which, with its six colours and white, has been able to satisfy the versatility, speed and quality demands needed.

Now well-established within the display sector, the EFI-VUTEK QS2000 is a 2m wide, six-colour plus white ink, flat-bed and roll-fed printer which uses UV-curable inks to provide a tough, instant dry finish across virtually all materials. Durability is an essential pre-requisite for JKN Digital for whom many of its applications are for installation in harsh environments. For example, the sea-front in Blackpool is also subjected to salt water as well as fumes and daily grime and a quality, long-life finish is essential when producing signs and displays for locations such as this.



**The EFI-VUTEK QS2000 enabled us to enhance our green ethos and broaden the types of applications we can produce whilst ensuring that we can maintain our reputation for the fast turn-round of high quality, durable jobs.**

Additionally, for the increasing number of interior jobs now being output on the QS2000, high standards including the clarity of small text were also essential. As a result, JKN needed a machine which could cater for all types of indoor and outdoor applications across a wide range of different materials, both rigid and flexible. Another advantage with this printer's inks is with its environmental benefits; prints produced on this system do not emit VOCs (volatile organic compounds) or other hazardous emissions, and an increasing number of end customers are now demanding more eco-aware displays and signs.

Typical jobs include back-lit and front-lit graphics, exhibition displays and pop-ups, posters and billboards, vehicle liveries, banners and signs plus specialist window and floor graphics. But of greater importance, and an area which separates JKN out from the competition, lies with the design and production of three-dimensional point-of-sale products. The company has a strong team of cardboard engineering experts who can create and produce a wide range of bespoke ideas for a growing number of end uses. So successful is this side of the business that JKN now produces cleverly folded and die-cut products for a range of end users, including other display producers, using its duo of wide-format Zünd flat-bed cutters and its UV-curable printing processes.

JKN has acknowledged that, today, there has been a noticeable shift away from traditional sign manufacturing processes, such as computer cut vinyl graphics, and this is reflected in the increase in applications where full-colour output is now provided. Also of considerable importance is the additional pressure on all industries to adopt more eco-friendly policies and, with its Greensolutions division, the company now concentrates on manufacturing products which respect the environment.

Managing director of JKN Digital, Peter Nicholls, comments: "The addition of the EFI-VUTEK QS2000 has enabled us to enhance our green ethos and broaden the types of applications we can produce whilst making sure that we can maintain our reputation for fast turn-round of high quality, durable jobs. Since the company was formed more than 20 years ago we have seen many changes in the display industry and have gained experience of what we can expect from our digital printing machines.

"We needed to make sure that our latest investment in a flat-bed UV-curable printer was going to perform to the high standards that we expect," Nicholls continues. "We need to give our customers a cost-effective service, there is no margin for error, and it was vital that the machine we chose would do the job we required from it first time, and every time. We also needed to make sure our printed output matched our cardboard engineering capabilities as well as our environmental principles."

The EFI-VUTEK QS2000 was delivered and installed at JKN Digital twelve months ago. Since day one it has been up and running, proving to be a tough and reliable work-horse which handles the company's broad print requirements and matches its needs in terms of quality and speed.



Printer showcased in this study:  
**EFI-VUTEK QS2000**

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