



Nikkan Pro Sports boosts newspaper production with TecnaU NewsReady

Nikkan Pro Sports Newspaper Co., Ltd. launched the first sport newspaper in Japan in 1947. Since then, the company has been focused on publishing and selling track cycling newspapers and later on by also providing the same information to the web.

The group has grown over the years and it counted 64 employees in 2014 with the main headquarters located in Tokyo. The Nikkan mission is to provide information to readers in the shortest time possible to keep them updated on the latest news. The company has always been publishing specific forecast newspapers for bicycle races which soon became very popular among the fans.

"With races being held every day of the year, our company publishes prediction newspapers non-stop 24/7 and delivers them to the race-track. In recent years, we made use of corner stores and the internet to expand this circulation, but readers still prefer printed publications. With increased demand, we faced a real time-to-market challenge," explained Mr Takeuchi, CEO at Nikkan Pro Sports.

The company publishes two types of newspapers, one delivered daily to the readers and the other once a week. The daily newspaper started out originally being called "Keirin Shinbun" which means "track cycling newspaper", but it had its name changed soon after. The red lettering used for the title made a huge impression on the fans, who called it newspaper "Akakei" from the very beginning ("aka" means red in Japanese). For this reason, the name was officially changed. Among other track cycling prediction newspapers, the advantage of the Akakei is its easy accessibility, purchasable over the internet and in the ubiquitous convenience stores.

The weekly newspaper, called "Pro Sports", is a 16-page folded booklet published on Wednesdays. It mainly consists of predictions about races taking place one week to 10 days from publication. Included inside are also visitor attendance counts, profits per race, and statistics of top cyclists based on a "leg strength index" which is a specific Nikkan Pro Sports calculation method.

At Nikkan, newspapers must be published and delivered within a limited time frame. For this compelling reason, the company decided to speed up and streamline the production process by minimizing paper handling and operations.

To achieve this goal, Nikkan installed a digital finishing TecnaU NewReady™ solution inline to a Screen TruePress Jet520HD Series High-Definition Inkjet Web Press inside the factory in Tokyo. "This efficient solution produces finished applications in a single process from white paper rolls to printed multi-page folded booklets" says Thomas Olofsson, Area Manager for Asia Pacific and Nordic Europe



at TecnaU. “Compared to the offset printer previously used, the customer is now able to print all the pages in full color and has been able to reduce production time and labor”.

TecnaU NewsReady cuts and accumulates the printed web into sheets that are folded once or twice before being ready for delivery. Depending on the application requested, the solution can be configured in seconds to create single folded sheets (twice or z-folded) or multiple sheets folded once. The NewsReady solution at Nikkan Pro Sports also allows 1-up or 2-up stacks, with or without offset, to be sent to a 90° conveyor for other commercial print or book-block production purposes.

“It all started when our staff saw the Truepress JET520HD at an exhibition; by September of the same year we decided on the purchase. We chose this model because our corporate red color was beautifully printed on paper. Previously our daily newspaper was only partially in color, but now the full-color publication is very well appreciated by our followers. They also find the photos inside the weekly newspaper to be more vivid and better printed than before. Full color printing has boosted the overall value, including the advertising value, of our publications,” says Mr. Tsukioka, Senior Vice President at Nikkan Pro Sports.

“The 55 gsm lightweight paper used in newspaper production is always a real challenge for any printer,” continued Mr. Tsukioka. “Jams easily occur with consequent stoppages wasting time and paper. However, the Truepress NIR dryer technology reduces the cockling often associated with traditional inkjet and improves print quality and graphics. This special feature applied to our lightweight full color printed stocks achieves great results. After the printer, the web is neat, and the sheets cut on the TecnaU NewsReady system are accurate and extremely flat. This is a big advantage for the following stages of production where sheets are precisely accumulated and folded for a high-quality result.”

“In the end, you might wonder why we have chosen to adopt the latest digital printing systems for a market like track cycling which shows signs of decline” added Mr. Takeuchi. “But the answer is simple: we are still confident that our business has an extremely high profitability. And by adopting the latest technologies available, we have increased the value of our newspapers to provide the best possible product to our readers. We are also looking ahead for the Tokyo Olympic Games, which will be featuring track cycling competitions, where we would like to contribute in one way or another.”

The complete TecnaU NewsReady and Screen TruePress series solution was installed in the shortest time possible with the aid of Boewe Systec Japan, who also provides the customer a continuous service contract for assistance and maintenance to keep production consistent and stable.

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About TecnaU

TecnaU offers a complete product portfolio dedicated to paper handling, monitoring, processing and finishing for the digital printing industry. We are devoted to providing integrated solutions to support the broadest



TECNAU

array of applications for Transactional Printing, TransPromo, Direct Mail, Publishing, Graphic Arts, Book on Demand and Short Run. Global service and around-the-clock support help ensure our reputation as the industry's reliability leader. Our products increase productivity, cut labor and paper costs, and even make new applications possible - TecnaU solutions truly empower digital print to help you do more with less.