

# DIRECT WINES

## Improving the flow

Direct Wines improved their speed of operations by moving to an integrated solution that has enhanced overall workflow and reduced task times.

Direct Wines has been in business for over 30 years and has grown to be the world's leading home delivery wine merchant. Alongside home brand of Laithwaites, they also run wine clubs for blue chip organisations such as The Sunday Times, NatWest, MBNA and The National Trust. The company has a turnover of over £230 million a year. Direct Wines has grown significantly in the last few years, even faster than the market for wine, and distributes around 500,000 mailings per month.

As the Design Manager at Direct Wines, Edel Keogh is responsible for a team of nine designers and artworkers. The design team, part of a larger mailings team including ten copywriters and eight production staff, produces 16 mail packs a year for existing customers, alongside four major direct mail campaigns a year for new customers as well as advertising in The Sunday Times for the Sunday Times Wine Club. Being responsible for the creative aspect of every campaign Edel must ensure that the appropriate brand values are at the core of each design and that customer offers are clear and enticing.

## Challenge

The mailings team had grown dramatically and consistently over the previous six years resulting in a large number of people working on different specification machines. The organisation was using Quark XPress but there were many versions in use, from 4.05 to 5 running on OS9. Given the need to expand and finding they could no longer purchase OS9 machines Direct Wines decided to make the move to OSX making it an ideal time to consider whether staying with Quark or changing to Adobe® InDesign® was best for them going forward. In addition the company server was beginning to run at quite a slow speed for basic operations like opening and closing files, and it was recognised that increased disk capacity and a faster network was also needed.

## Solution

The business started considering a change, and it went live with OSX and Adobe Creative Suite within 6 months. Time was initially spent consulting with key suppliers, who had already changed from Quark XPress to Adobe InDesign, to solicit their feedback on how they felt about working with each application. Direct Wines also wanted to anticipate what application would be dominant in the market place going forward and thus provide them with greater functionality in the long term. It was decided within a month that Adobe InDesign was the right package for Direct Wines.

“Adobe InDesign was already being used by several of our external design agencies, it was also well supported by the majority of our print suppliers. Adobe Creative Suite also seemed to make sense in terms of work flow. We were already heavy users of Adobe® Illustrator® and Photoshop® and the workflow between these and Adobe InDesign was compelling. In addition we had already begun to supply files for press as high resolution PDFs. The way Adobe InDesign creates PDFs just seemed so easy,” said Edel Keogh, Design Manager, Direct Wines.

The team spent time testing how their complex series of design templates, style sheets and master pages would transfer across to Adobe InDesign. It was important to get this right, as they were unable to accommodate any downtime. Initially Edel Keogh replaced her machine with a test OSX Apple Mac running Creative Suite as well as Quark XPress 6. She then flipped between the two packages to make an assessment of what level of training people would need.

Ease of transfer to Adobe InDesign was important as a large quantity of literature is produced by a large number of people. Edel Keogh put together two tightly specified training plans, one specifically for writers and the other focusing on the designers and artworkers. Both had quite different user needs. Writers had half a days training and the designers/artworkers had a full day.

The trainer was on site for the first few days of roll out which proved invaluable and ironed out a lot of everyday issues very early on. Edel also supplied the training organisation with some examples of the teams work in advance. This ensured the training was precisely relevant to the Direct Wines team with the main objective to transfer smoothly to Adobe InDesign. These expectations were very quickly exceeded and with Rubicon’s help they were soon exploring further Adobe Creative Suite functionality to improve workflow and creativity.

“Everyone came away from the training feeling positive and motivated, ready to change to InDesign. In our extremely busy work schedule changing our operating system and main application was initially a daunting prospect, but within the first few days we could see the benefits and had a motivated team ready to take on all the extra functions that InDesign can offer,” said Edel Keogh.

**“Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign are an integral part of our daily business”**

Edel Keogh, Design Manager, Direct Wines.

“Adobe Creative Suite made sense in terms of work flow. We were already heavy users of Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop and the workflow between these and Adobe InDesign was compelling. The way Adobe InDesign creates PDFs is so easy,”

Edel Keogh, Design Manager, Direct Wines.

## Results

All the machines were replaced over one weekend. The transfer from OS9 to OSX and from Quark XPress to Adobe InDesign was done without causing any disruption to the production schedules. As a contingency plan a backup artwork agency was put on standby, but never used and five machines continued to run the old system but were phased out after a couple of weeks.

Moving over to Creative Suite has brought time and cost saving benefits to the business. The team can now easily produce high resolution PDFs, and combined with using FTP, they no longer need to burn CDs and therefore have no courier costs. Proof amendment costs have also been reduced as amendments are made at Direct Wines and then re-supplied to printers as HiRes PDFs. The team is also considering the potential to radically change and improve the workflow process through the production of high resolution PDFs with Adobe Acrobat Professional. For example, a script could be written to enable batch processing of PDFs, to eliminate what is at present a manual repetitive task.

In addition Adobe Acrobat Professional allows the team to mark up feedback on photographs, providing instructions quickly and clearly to photographers, reducing the potential for misunderstanding and errors, reducing the time to complete work. Adobe Acrobat also provides the ability to create low resolution PDFs that can be circulated at the click of a mouse, for commenting and approvals.

The pre-flighting function within Adobe InDesign has helped writers, who are not always artwork proficient. They supply their files to print in a superior format, which has decreased both mistakes and proofing costs. The bridge function has made it easier to view images in progress, speeding up the creative process. Time savings have also been generated through the use of instant vignettes and shadows, dragging and dropping images, using Adobe Photoshop files direct into Adobe InDesign - instead of making jpeg versions and creating die-cuts directly in Adobe InDesign rather than in Adobe Illustrator and then importing. This functionality has radically reduced the time taken to perform every day operations.

“The Adobe solution is a core part of our job. We could not function without it,” said Edel Keogh.

## Summing up

The easy integration between all the Adobe applications provides improved workflow and increased efficiencies in terms of time and costs. As an integral part of daily business Adobe’s solution enables Direct Wines to deliver creative marketing campaigns to their customers quickly and efficiently.

### Company

Direct Wines, Reading, UK

### Challenge

- Ensuring consistency of technology across all users.
- Moving to the OSX operating system.
- Processes and workflow needed to be more efficient.
- Accommodating the impact of the industry’s move to Adobe.

### Solution

Adobe® Creative Suite 2

### Benefits

- Time taken to perform every day operations reduced
- Improved workflow through integration between the Adobe applications.
- Ease of use of PDF
- Tangible cost savings from proofing process and a reduction in courier costs.

### Tool Kit

Adobe® Creative Suite 2, including

- Adobe® InDesign®
- Adobe® Photoshop®
- Adobe® Illustrator®
- Adobe® Acrobat® Professional