



ink, INC.



Quality, Price and Service Drive InkJet, Inc.'s Success

As consumers are well aware, the cost of replacement ink and parts for printers is relatively high compared to the cost of the actual printer itself. For companies that rely on printers for their business, that extra cost is amplified.

While he was at Videojet, Thomas Quinlan saw an opportunity to develop a company that could provide improved value to ink jet users. As a result, Mr. Quinlan founded InkJet, Inc., a Willis, TX-based manufacturer of ink jet inks, make-up fluids and parts for continuous ink jet (CIJ) printers in the high-speed coding industry.

Since its start in 1990, InkJet, Inc. has successfully supplied this market, carving out annual sales of more than \$10 million in a segment dominated by OEMs such as Videojet, Imaje and Domino. The company has grown to 100 employees who serve more than 3,000 customers located worldwide. Its products are used in a wide variety of coding applications ranging from soda cans to bottled water, and from PVC piping to car components. InkJet, Inc. inks are used to create unique product identification information such as production date and batch numbers for traceability and length marks on wire and cable.

The company also manufactures drop on demand (DOD) large character inks for the secondary packaging market.

"We're seeing good growth even in this economic climate," said Dr. John Craven, InkJet, Inc.'s director of R&D. "We are able to significantly increase revenues due to our focus on quality, price and service. As compared to the OEMs, our level of service is much higher and our quality is as good as or better. We also save our customers money, and that's very important, especially in this economy."

A company has to provide excellent service and products to succeed in any business, and Dr. Craven said InkJet, Inc.'s record in both aspects is stellar.

"It's quite a high-tech industry," Dr. Craven said. "We have a network of 30 service engineers throughout the U.S. who provide on-site preventive maintenance, replacement parts and technical training."

In order to meet customer demands, InkJet Inc.'s R&D team develops products that meet specific application requirements.

For example, InkJet, Inc.'s new 30 ink is a fast drying black, ketone-based product which exhibits superior alcohol rub resistance and adhesion on a wide range of plastic, metal and glass substrates, according to the company. Its target industries are pharmaceutical, cosmetic, electronics,

wine and spirits bottling, wire, pipe and cable.

The 30 ink exhibits overall enhanced chemical resistance to soaps and lubricants, and will dry within half to one and a half seconds, depending upon the substrate and environment.

The company's new 31 ink is a black ethanol-based specialty coding ink which is MEK-free but still has excellent adhesion on glass, aluminum and plastic products that are subjected to alcohol overspill. These applications include beer and wine bottling, distilled spirits bottling, perfume and cologne packaging and pharmaceutical product packaging such as rubbing alcohol.

The 31 ink will typically dry in two to four seconds, depending upon the substrate and environmental conditions. Due to its ethanol base, the 31 ink does not have the handling and odor considerations often associated with a ketone-based product, according to the company.

"We've been able to come up with inks that meet our customers' unique requirements," Dr. Craven said. "Our R&D develops the chemical resistance, abrasion and dry time properties that the application requires. A lot of CIJ inks are MEK-based, and environmental issues are sometimes a concern. IJI's 31 ink is ethanol-based. Both products are InkJet, Inc. innovations, and there's nothing quite like them in the field today."

InkJet, Inc.'s commitment to customers also shows in its development of parts, such as its new EZ JET nozzle.

"Customers requested this and we were able to work with a partner to create it," Dr. Craven said. "Our EZ JET nozzle is field serviceable, which is a huge advantage. An OEM printer nozzle is typically an expensive item, approximately \$500. InkJet, Inc.'s EZ JET Nozzle can be taken out of the print head, cleaned and put back in, rather than having to be completely replaced or shipped back to the factory. This allows InkJet customers

to reduce their inventory of expensive OEM nozzles, and free up cash for other business opportunities. The EZ JET Nozzle has been successfully performing on production line printers for more than six months, and we've had excellent customer feedback."

Given InkJet, Inc.'s commitment and customer-focused approach, the company should continue to flourish in the coming years.

— David Savastano



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