

# Business Using “OMNIUS”

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### About Seiko

Seiko Company Limited is an Osaka-based company that provides packaging products based on film printing, film slitting, and film processing. We are the leading provider in Japan for farm product film packaging.

We have been pioneering a new business area using OMNIUS, which is a digital on-demand printing press.

### Fateful Encounter With OMNIUS

We got our first OMNIUS digital printing press just after Drupa 2000. Our company president had seen an OMNIUS there and realized the potential of plate-less color printing. He felt intuitively that the era of digital printing would also arrive in the film printing industry. His intuition was the main factor that led us to start working with an OMNIUS.

Starting out with the OMNIUS was not trouble-free. The biggest problem was its 300 mm width image area. At that time, the narrowest image area width that our company had been using to print on package films for farm products was 500 mm, and the width we used with regular film printing for our main products was about 900 mm. It was clear that it would take several years for OMNIUS to be able to cope with the image area problem. In this regard we can say that we might have introduced OMNIUS too early.

### How We Set Out Making PET Bottle Samples

Our company discussed a range of ideas about business areas that could be pursued with a printing machine that had such capabilities. From these discussions came the idea of creating business based on making sample packages. This is the idea that will be presented here.

In Japan, package design is a crucial factor that can greatly influence the sales of drinks, foods, cosmetics, and other products. It is not too much of an exaggeration to say that a product's design determines its sales. Consumers are not able to take out and examine the contents out of a package to ascertain elements such as the product's taste or performance, although of course samples are provided for some products. However, we were more than aware that in very many cases, consumers chose certain products solely because of the appeal of the design of the product's packaging. We extended this idea and started offering new package samples to food manufacturers when they were developing their new products. The samples are just the

same as real packages. Another strong selling point is that we can make and deliver them very quickly.

Previously, the main methods of producing these kinds of package samples included printing on paper, which was then cut and pasted to make samples, or drawing directly on the film. But with OMNIUS, we were able to print out computer-made designs directly onto packaging films. And these samples came out the same as the actual package samples our company offered, because OMNIUS is able to print a very clear packaging-style white. We believe this is a revolutionary method for making samples.

Initially we were only printing on film for the early stages of sample-making, but this soon developed further to involve more finishing work for final products. We were also able to make better use of our bag-making machine. We got a lot of positive feedback from our customers and a greater number of inquiries. Before long, a solid momentum had built up behind the number of orders we were receiving.

However, all these new orders naturally brought a number of new challenges that we had to face. Perhaps the biggest challenge was with shrink films. As they require the application of heat in order to shrink, these films were quite problematical.

Our operators really came through for us in this area. They offered a lot of ideas and, with their skills, we have been able to overcome virtually all of the problems we were having with shrink films, even to the extent that this area has expanded to the same level as our other package products. We have received many orders from a range of beverage manufacturers who want to use shrink films for new PET bottle designs. PET bottles are the mainstream form of drink container in Japan nowadays.

We found that there was also a lot of demand for printing on sheets of PET materials. Fortunately, with OMNIUS, printing on transparent sheets of PET materials is very easy. The only problem we encountered was with die-cutting, with which we had very little experience of our own. However, since most of the jobs were short-run jobs, we were able to outsource die-cutting and concentrate on what we do best.

We have no doubt that there is a wide range of other ways to extend and develop the sample-making business. This is possible not only by meeting customer requirements, but by offering something better than the customer's current requirements.

### Other Successes with OMNIUS

OMNIUS has been a success for us in other areas besides sample-making. Our company specializes in being able

to offer a wide variety of bags, and related products, in small lots. For example, D.I.Y. stores have become very popular in recent years, with stores opening up all over Japan. These stores sell a lot of items like nails and screws. And since there are as many as 200 to 300 kinds of these items being displayed, there is a need for many different types of display pouches in small lots.

### **Conclusion**

Having this flexibility in being able to produce a range of different packaging types in small lots is central to our company's plans for expanding into new areas. We believe we can continue to drive demand for new types

of packaging by offering small lots of package products with superior responsiveness and versatility.

### **Biography**

**Masaki Hayashi** majored in landscape design at the Environmental Planning Department of Osaka University of Arts. He has also studied Mandarin Chinese at the Center for Chinese Language and Culture Studies (Mandarin Training Center) National Taiwan Normal University. He joined Seiko in 2000 and was assigned to the digital printing department of the Tokyo branch. He is currently Seiko's digital printing sales promotion manager.