

SOUTHWEST *Graphics*

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of Prisma
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Inside **FULFILLMENT FROM BOTH SIDES**

with Prisma Graphic's President and DokShop.com

By Cyd Peroni

If he'd followed his initial response to turn down one client's business card printing, Bob Anderson, president of Prisma Graphic in Phoenix, Arizona, may have missed the impetus that spawned the company's innovative digital commerce solution, DokShop.com.

"Sometimes in life I've been pushed into things. You've got to keep your eyes open and your blinders off," advises Anderson.

Business card work is typically low profit and labor intensive. In the hands of Anderson's IT Development Director John Thelen and the

prepress department, the company developed a proprietary online ordering system over a six-month period. The first live order was placed in March 2001 and has grown to serve over 125 clients nationwide, contributing (along with digital printing services) about 20 percent to Prisma's 2005 expected sales of \$15,000,000.

While standard programs and providers were available, Prisma decided to write, host and maintain its own parameter-driven site. The keys to profitability were reducing process touch points and implementing a



F U L F I L L M E N T FROM BOTH SIDES

separate workflow internally. From the client side, advantages are remote PDF proofs showing exact fonts, images, colors and placement; the ability to define and control corporate branding styles; a sophisticated cost-accounting mechanism; and an extensive reporting module capable of receiving and generating customized Crystal Reports. At the end of July, Thelen was integrating FedEx into DokShop's back end. The program continues to evolve to meet clients' changing needs.

"There's never a day we're not tweaking the business," says Anderson, "whether it's DokShop or the pressroom or accounting or shipping."

When Anderson bought Prisma Graphic from Don and Sally Frank in 2000, the print industry was beginning a slide into one of its worst economic cycles. Today, there are many who portend that print is dead.

"Print isn't dead, it's just being done in a different way. There's going to be a big resurgence of print in the next two to five years," says Anderson.

He believes that with the decrease in phone solicitations, technologies like TiVo®, and television and radio shifting into multiple stations and channels covering specialized market segments, the importance of print — particularly small run variable data — is on the rise. Anderson expects that regulations on Spam will be enacted along with a continued demand for printers to be one-stop information-handling partners. He feels the industry's biggest challenge will be recruiting and training the next generation's workforce.

Prisma's president keeps on top of business by reading,

particularly how other companies do things. He walks around the shop and talks to his people, who are eager to share their ideas for being more productive. He spends time with customers and goes on at least one sales call a day with an account rep.

"I do better when I'm out there selling than when I'm in here. I have too much fun with that part if it. It's really where I belong."

When asked what surprised him most during his transition from salesperson to business owner, he quips, "How gray my

hair got so quickly! No really, I thought I might have to bring people in from everywhere to get the business moving, but once I got to know the folks I had, I realized that people are people. They just want to do a good job. As long as I knew where I was going, they knew where they were going and vice versa. And so we all just cut this trail and followed the path as a group."

There always seems to be buzz about what that group (in particular, Anderson) does, but he responds to the talk this way, "I really don't worry about my printing peers, but

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I really do care that they think I'm fair and that I'm ethical and do what's best for my people and for the clients we have."

At 45, Anderson has no plans to retire, and can envision an expansion of the company into different cities in Arizona. He intends to remain a working president ready to capitalize on his next "lucky break."

"I'm one of my workers," he explains, "and one of the luckiest guys in the world." >

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