

In recent months I have been travelling the world working with a vast range of printers and printing companies; East West North South the problems are the same. Low margins, competition and the Environment. There are some advantages as printers in some of the more welcoming nations provide excellent cultural exchanges. As can be seen on this page where the new PDS Consulting representative for Asia is seen demonstrating our new company uniform.

**PDS CONSULTING REPRESENTATIVE IN ASIA**



Notice the wool swatches for testing light fastness of colours and the excellent textile printing on the bodice. We are always happy to interview any other likely candidates for other continents. No experience necessary as a complete skill enhancement program is provided. For basic requirements see illustration.

One of the countries included in my itinerary was Thailand, the first thing you notice when you arrive in this wonderful country is the roadside advertising (yes I know I'm sad.) vast scaffolding structures with banners up to 50 metres in length some 100 metres.

SIGNS AT NIGHT



The next thing you notice are the massive shrines to the Thai Royal family, this is a country that holds its royalty in very high esteem. In most public places, every home, every shop and many websites have images of the Royal Family past and present.

ROYAL SHRINE



This is a country that believes in using the printed image at every opportunity.

I was in Thailand presenting seminars at the FESPA Asian Summit and was fortunate to be a guest of the Thai Screen Printing & Graphic Imaging Association (TSGA) whose friendship and hospitality was a joy. Amongst their number was Chalermchai Poomnak who invited me to visit his company Scan Printworks Co.,Ltd. This was a real eye opener.

SCAN PRINTWORKS



This was a company who specialised in large format screen Printing. to give you some idea the stencil shown below was not their largest.

### MASSIVE STENCIL



One of the jobs they were running whilst I was on site was a 10,000 run of banners. They use single colour semi-automatic machines in tandem with large jet dryers. Yes, solvent based inks with ambient temperatures of over 40°C with a relative humidity sometimes up to 90%. This is like screen printing in a greenhouse. How they managed under these circumstances is amazing.

### SEMI AUTOMATIC PRINTER



With many large format machines this print shop would never have enough conveyor dryers and rather than racking prints where laid on a spotless floor to dry.

### DRYING ON FLOOR



You may get the impression from what I have written so far that this company was unsophisticated far from it, their CST direct to screen imaging device was the first in Asia and the automatic coater simply the largest I have ever seen. It was so big that they had to dig a hole to fit it under the roof.

### GIANT COATER



The driving force behind this company employing 150+ staff was Chalermchai Poomnak and his wife. Chalermchai is an artist a visionary and a very shrewd business man who located his plant one and a half hours outside Bangkok where the air is clean and overheads are reduced. Chalermchai has wide format digital printers but he considers the quality is inferior and the prices he can get for the work prohibitively low. In Thailand digital printing is considered a low cost low quality process and the inks are dirt cheap.

One of the biggest concerns that every printer and business man I met had was "The China Effect." Insanely low prices were challenging even the immensely innovative Thai economy. On the local CNN channel a Chinese business man was complaining that his manufacturing costs in China were too high and he had to move to Vietnam and Cambodia for cheaper labour. Is the world going completely mad, where is the end of this urge to reduce production costs anthropomorphic ants!

Chalermchai sees China as an opportunity he has used his design skills and print expertise to supply decorated rubber tyres to the cycle industry in China. He screen

prints specialised transfers for rubber that are moulded into the tyre when they are produced. His minimum order for the tyres is 4000. Now that is innovation!

#### DECORATED TYRES



Not satisfied with running a very successful company Chalermchai has designed and built his own house and gardens in the grounds of the factory. He has used traditional materials, traditional design concepts and produced an exquisite house and garden.

In Thailand screen printers have adopted digital printing but worked on making screen printing an even more effective process, everything we in the West should be doing. For them the monolithic Chinese economy is on their doorstep yet they compete and succeed. Print company owners have a lifestyle that most of us can only dream about. They don't fight wars, don't want to take over the world, have an interesting political system and a revered Head of State. In a very hot climate they certainly know how to chill out.

THE AUTHOR WITH CHALERMCHAI



So how do they do it, they work their socks off and aim to continuously improve every aspect of their business. Their secret ingredient is that each company is a team that pulls together and individual companies talk to each other, work together and share ideas.

When they stop working they relaaaaax.