



David McGinlay

We Cannot Close Ourselves off to the Digital Transformation

Since last November, Muller Martini has been a Premium Partner at the [Printing Expo Virtual Exhibition](#), the graphic arts industry's first 24-hour virtual exhibition, with its own [online showroom](#). „For me, the showroom is another excellent tool to use in contact with my customers and there is only positive feedback,“ says David McGinlay, Sales Manager Muller Martini UK, in the following blog.

I know self-praise is no honour, nevertheless, I rate our online showroom as „Best in Class“. As far as I can see, there is nothing comparable in the graphic arts industry. As a member of several large graphic arts organisations in the UK, I hear different opinions about digital transformation in our industry when I attend industry meetings. However, I am convinced that our particular – not to say strange – times require new and, above all, innovative ways of working. That's why I'm proud to be part of the pioneering partnership between Muller Martini and Printing Expo Online.

Regular customer tours via Skype/Teams/Zoom

During the corona-related home office days, I invested a lot of time learning how to logically, walk through the entire showroom, because for me, the showroom is another great tool to use when interacting with my clients. When you open the information links, it's great to be able to show the presentations, animations and videos we have embedded. I therefore regularly do client tours – either in a client meeting room or virtually via Skype/Teams/Zoom. I'm happy that the content of the showroom is growing organically and we are constantly improving and bringing in innovations.

Of course, people, printed products and machines are analogue. But sooner or later, we – meaning Muller Martini and our customers – will not be able to ignore the digital transformation. The Covid virus accelerated the process sooner than we had all thought. The corona pandemic was and is, a major challenge for everyone, requiring new ways of communication, meaningful dialogue and ways of raising awareness. Muller Martini, as the market leader in print finishing, took up this challenge and, with our online showroom, we offer graphic arts companies worldwide, the opportunity to keep up to date with our innovative solutions in saddle stitching, softcover and hardcover production, as well as digital book and magazine production – without having to travel.

Coffee and cake are nice, but...

One thing is clear, nothing replaces a live demo, either in our training centre, or at a customer's premises who already has a new installation and is willing to share their experience with other interested parties. But: we can make optimal use of the virtual showroom to present new machines and launch new projects, before we offer our customers – and those who want to become customers – a detailed online demo from the Muller Martini Print Finishing Centre in Zofingen (Switzerland) and/or the Blue Saloon in Rahden (Germany). We need to think outside the box using every possible platform and tool. Without underestimating the value of customer contact for both sides: driving across the country for a coffee and cake with customers is very nice, but the focus is increasingly on return on investment and high cost awareness for our customers, especially in these challenging times.

I think that will remain the case in the post-corona era. I have no doubt that we have all become accustomed to – and also learned – to work successfully virtually from home. For example, I have even conducted high value contract negotiations without a face to face. I currently have five hot projects close to completion. Three of them were initiated in the online showroom. This valuable tool will therefore continue to have a firm place in the future – even though I am convinced that physical demonstrations in a training centre will remain an important part of our sales process when people can travel freely again.

Trade fairs are getting smaller, but remain important

At the moment, however, not many customers feel like travelling. I also assume – keyword travel – the well-known trade fairs in our industry will become smaller in the future. Nevertheless, I think they will remain important because there is nothing better than personal relationships. Meeting new contacts is also one of the great advantages of physical trade fairs. On the one hand at the stand, but also in a relaxed evening when you escape the hustle and bustle and the intense atmosphere of a trade fair. I notice time and again, the customer also needs some relaxation, time to think and appreciates when we understand his goals. This is how you build a long-term bond and partnership, based on trust and understanding.

However, the advantages of a virtual showroom compared to a physical show are obvious: no travel costs, no travel obstacles such as quarantine and isolation, a safe environment, the possibility to walk through with my clients, in their own office environment and always being able to present our current portfolio. I consider the disadvantages to be less: we can't demonstrate live production with client materials, we can't talk face to face and we can't spend time in company.

Exclusively positive feedback

For my daily work as a sales manager, the online showroom brings several advantages as an important tool to understand clients' needs and expectations. I have only received positive feedback from my clients so far. This allows me to offer guided tours of the online showroom

in the client's office. By using the content behind the individual information buttons – especially all the important data sheets – I can advise customers even better. The online showroom will undoubtedly remain an important part of my sales process in the future.

I have also tried offering tours from a distance via Skype, but how well that works depends on a reliable broadband connection. There can be delays when showing videos or presentations, it's not really ideal when I'm talking about slide 3, but the client is seeing slide 1...

VBA, Vareo PRO and InfiniTrim as favourites

In the course of the last few months, I have presented all the machines represented in the showroom several times. The end paper feeder VBA, the perfect binder [Vareo PRO](#) and the three-knife trimmer [InfiniTrim](#) have emerged as real favourites – closely followed by the perfect binder [Alegro Digital](#) and the bookline [Diamant MC](#).

In addition to the online showroom, I have been using various other virtual tools to remain in contact with my customers since the outbreak of the corona pandemic. For example, Muller Martini offers online machine demos, via various platforms, or I present with videos that we have made in the factory during tests or a demo. I use Skype internally and externally every day. Teams is the most popular platform with customers and works really well. However, there are also clients who use Zoom, also an excellent platform.

It is important to utilise all of these platforms. However, success depends mainly on both sides having excellent internet broadband. During the lockdown, broadband connections were stretched to the limit on some days. Embrace all of the new mediums!

Playing the social media keyboard

For me, digital transformation does not only mean offering our customers online demos of machines. It also means playing the social media keyboard. This plays a central role in my job as Sales Manager as the UK is a large territory. That's why I've been using [LinkedIn](#) for years to keep communication and dialogue with my customers up to date via [blogs, news and stories](#) from the Muller Martini website. I have already had over 11,000 hits on a few posts. By the way, I have linked [Twitter](#) directly to my LinkedIn, so I get two posts for the price of one.

I also regularly post videos from the [Muller Martini YouTube channel](#) – which for me is one of my favourite ways to support our customers and let them know what we have to offer. I'm also in close contact with the UK trade press via social media, who kindly share and like my posts. It all helps to keep the Muller Martini brand in focus – and of course to remind my customers that I'm still alive and that Muller Martini is still your strong partner.

Let social media work for you

I'm not a social media expert by any means, but when I see the big brands are using digital channels to attract (new) target groups and data and to increase sales, they can't all be wrong. I am therefore convinced that LinkedIn, Twitter etc. will continue to gain importance in our – inherently analogue – industry.

Therefore, I can only strongly recommend to all of my colleagues around the world to consistently use the digital channels as a more efficient way of working, for maintaining modern customer relationships. Let social media work for you. Join in or you will soon be out of the game (take part or drop out is my advice).

Your

David McGinlay

Sales Manager Muller Martini Great Britain