



Bringing something different to print

After 20 years in business, **Jo Golding** speaks to **David Davis**, chairman of Mode Print Solutions, about setting up your own business and how they strive to offer something a little bit different



While this Ahead of the Curve section of the magazine usually focuses on print-service-providers and what they are producing, after celebrating its 20th year in business and donating generous sums of money to charity, I decided to shine a light on a company in the managed print services sector this month.

Mode Print Solutions celebrated 20 years in business on March 6th 2015 with a reception consisting of staff members, customers, local MP Sir Oliver Heald QC, the mayor of Ware Cllr Rosalje Standley, as well as representatives from the charities it supports. At the event, Mode Print Solutions presented Marie Curie Cancer Care, The Blue Cross, and Together for Short Lives with its fundraising donations, which totalled £15,500.



Pictured top row: Michael Davis, sales director of Mode Print Solutions; Rob Clarke, managing director of Mode Print Solutions; Cllr Rosalje Standley, Mayor of Ware; Sir Oliver Heald MP; and David Davis, chairman of Mode Print Solutions. Bottom row: Representatives from Marie Curie, Together for Short Lives, and Blue Cross

doing a good job on the selling but the back-up that the businesses were giving the customers wasn't always fantastic."

Instead of continuing down this path, Davis realised the best thing to do was set up his own business and provide the support to customers that was so desperately needed—and Mode Print Solutions started up in 1995. He says: "From the beginning of our business, it's all been about the customer always being right and the service being everything it should be.

"We concentrate heavily on how quickly we can attend service calls, the quality of our engineers—all of our engineers are dressed very smartly, which is something that is important because they're going into business environments, mainly in London—as a result of that we have retained most of our customers. Obviously we do lose customers, everybody does, but I think you'll find we don't lose them at quite the same rate because of the service we offer."

Learning the trade

Davis places heavy importance on training up younger people and developing them into professionals that

1995 Year company founded

are ready for the working world: "The big thing for us is the sales academy that we have set up; we're all about young talent and teaching young people how to sell properly. We have set up the Mode Academy to do that."

He recognises the significance of their success in what, at times, has been a difficult market, and still is: "We're very successful and we're growing and expanding through new business in a market where new business is very difficult. A lot of our competitors are struggling in that sense. A lot of growth



David Davis, chairman of Mode Print Solutions, who founded the business in 1995

Mode Print Solutions' aim is to provide 'the best printing and digital solutions' for businesses, and they sell machinery from the likes of Xerox, Ricoh, Lexmark, and Toshiba. Their managed print services part of the business also offers tools to help companies analyse and optimise their printing.

Interestingly, the chairman of this managed print services company, David Davis, did not start off in a traditional print background. He explains: "When I left college I worked in a bank, as a lot of people did in those days, on an accelerated management programme. I realised the rigidity of that environment wasn't for me and therefore went into sales.

"Like a lot of people, I worked various businesses on the sales side in office equipment. I found that I was

and expansion that you see elsewhere is through acquisition and companies merging. We haven't done that, we have our sales academy instead, which is unique in my opinion."

A second factor Davis says is key to Mode Print Solutions is 'Simple'—the company's unique agreement. He

£15,500 Charity donations on March 6th

explains: "Our USP is our unique agreement that we call 'Simple', that's for the provision of our goods and services, and we operate that in-house by ourselves.

"In other words, if you want to do a deal with us, it goes on our agreement that's tailored by us and you put that business through us. The customer directly pays us rather than acquiring the equipment and paying the leasing company. There is one payment to us, one phone number to us, and it makes it very simple, which is why it has its name."

Davis cites this business model as one of the reasons why Mode stands out from other machinery and print service suppliers: "What other people have done is that if they want to sell some goods, they lease the goods, and that leasing company receives the profit up front. With us it works differently, I will supply the goods to you, then you'll have a contract to pay me, so I've got that ongoing income."

Plan to succeed

From the very beginning, Davis had a strong vision of the outcome he wanted to achieve. He says: "When we started the business, we funded through leasing companies, but that's not where I wanted to be.



Mode Print Solutions presented representatives from three of the charities it supports with their latest fundraising donations totalling £15,500

“We're very successful and we're growing and expanding through new business in a market where new business is very difficult”

Mode Print Solutions' management team have developed a wide array of products and services, making it something of a one-stop-shop when it comes to managed print services

"With the academy, on day one you can afford maybe a trainee and you work with them, then you can afford two, improve your approach, until today we have twelve trainees in the Mode Academy. It is a continual programme of assessment, development, and learning. We are able to take someone after school and over twelve months develop them into somebody you can follow a high quality process and achieve an outcome."

Davis goes on to say that, even though it has taken them 20 years to perfect the business, there is always room for improvement. He adds that, 'what makes the Mode Academy worthwhile' is seeing someone transform from not knowing how to dress for an interview, to managing their own team.

Listening to Davis, there is a reserved yet strong confidence that seems to underpin his vision for the firm. Key to this seems to be an understanding that if you want something doing properly, you need to do it yourself: "Our overall product is

successful for several key reasons, but there is a very important aspect that I think underpins the advantage it gives us. Rather than you signing a lease with a leasing company and a service agreement with a dealer, you will sign a contract for all the goods and services with us—everything's with us."

What makes Mode Print Solutions an ideal candidate for Ahead of the

20 Years in business

Curve is that Davis and the top management team, that includes sales director Michael Davis and managing director Rob Clarke, have an outlook that is just that. Indeed, the promotion of youth talent and steady recruitment, a product and service strategy that breaks the mould of this sector, and a commitment to supporting its local community all come together to make a firm that is indeed, ahead of the curve.