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Dario Designs sets Wall Street Journal on course for more color



**Dow Jones expands
16 printing facilities
all at once**

By Kevin Juhász
Editor

Before USA Today, a newspaper with color was merely an occasional thing — now it's quite the opposite.

Newspapers are now facing demands from advertisers and readers to keep adding more color. Even The New York Times, formerly known as "The Gray Lady," was unable to avoid reader demands for color.

Now The Wall Street Journal, owned by Dow Jones and Co., is putting more CMYK into its paper. The company is installing new presses to allow it to increase page counts up to 96 from 80 and triple the number of pages printing color to 24.

The project was an ambitious one for Dow Jones, which has 16 facilities across the United States printing its business daily. Dow Jones wanted to have all the facilities move to color at the same time — and in a short period of time. Dow Jones planned to have the project completed and on-edition in the first quarter of 2002. The project is now expected to be complete in the fourth quarter of this year.

The newspaper went to Dario Designs to help coordinate the conversion of 13 of the 16 plants, which required the expansion of buildings and press lines.

"They are trying to increase their color capacity, as well as page counts, simultaneously at all of their locations around the country," said David Hogan, vice president at Dario Designs, who was project manager for the 13 sites the Dario team worked on. "I think that is an undertaking that is pretty bold of them, especially given the schedule they are trying to implement. Essentially, they have achieved it at this point. In the past three years, we've gone from ground zero — just a concept — to finished construction. At



Photo courtesy of Dario Designs

Construction workers assemble the newsprint receiving dock, emergency generator room, and compressor room at Dow Jones' print facility in Beaumont, Texas.

this point, we are 99-percent done with construction, and they are 85-percent done with all their press installations. Everything is on schedule."

The remaining plants are expected to be complete within the next three months.

As the architect for the job, Dario Designs was responsible for working in conjunction with Dow Jones, helping the newspaper company bracket the project budgets and producing the documents necessary to get competitive construction bids. In addition, Dario Designs was also responsible for hiring all the electrical, civil and mechanical engineers needed for 13 simultaneous jobs, implementing the entire project and monitoring its progress.

"At the height of the project, our office was getting 13 monthly applications for payment by 13 contractors all around the country, and working with 13 civil engineers in 13 municipalities,"

Hogan said. "I think the thing that characterized the job more than anything was that everything was happening at once. It was a monumental coordination effort."

One project, 13 times

The project started in late 1998 with a meeting at Dow Jones' corporate headquarters between Jack Conboy, who was handling Dow Jones' part of the project, Dario DiMare, president of Dario Designs, and Hogan.

"We spent two 12-hour days in a conference room, getting out plan after plan of each facility, reviewing them relative to the proposed press layouts, and making our best guess at what the building modifications would have to be," Hogan said.

The three came up with a general scope for each project, and then went on a nationwide tour of the 13 facilities

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with plans for each project in hand. At each stop, Conboy, DiMare and Hogan met with production managers, took measurements of the facility, and firmed up the project plans to help define a scope of work.

The next move was for Hogan to assess the amount of time needed for each job, and hire consultants appropriate for each job. After that, Dario Designs then had to produce proposed designs and a construction schedule, and mesh those two items together.

At that time, Dario Designs also got support from engineers and architects to help produce the large amount of work under Dow Jones' required time frame. The schedule that Dario Designs created then had to be blended with the schedule Dow Jones had created for press installations.

"We had a sequence and time frame for each project, and we just attacked them one by one," Hogan said. "We went through the initial stages of design, showed them to Dow Jones, got them approved, and developed them until they were ready to be put on the street for competitive bidding."

Dario Designs then identified and interviewed potential contractors, put the projects out to bid, met with bidders and discussed the projects, selected contractors and got the projects underway.

"This was all happening in this orchestrated manner," said Hogan. "As one project was getting ready for construction, we were turning documents on three others."

Construction on the sites ran for anywhere from nine months to 12 months for each site, depending on the requirements. Despite the similarities of the buildings, each one had its own unique challenges.

"There are some similarities in some of them, but I would say that each one of them is unique in its construction, as well as the personalities involved," Hogan said.

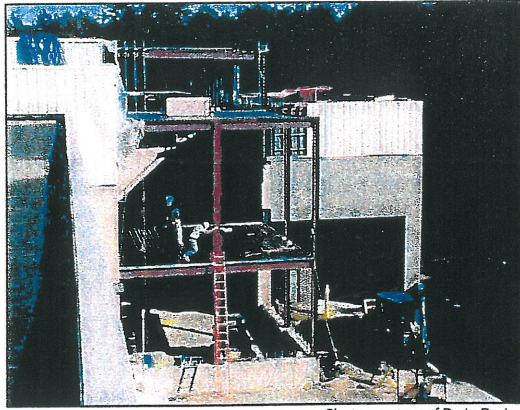


Photo courtesy of Dario Designs

Workers expand the newsprint dock and electrical room at Dow Jones' print facility in Charlotte, N.C.

Many of the 13 facilities had not been constructed with expansion in mind, a common problem with many early newspaper production facilities. Most of the Dow Jones' facilities had to be expanded both longer and taller.

"We had to expand the press hall at both ends, which sounds like a relatively simple thing, but at either end of the presses were the main switchgear for the plant, the HVAC units, and lots of really mission-critical stuff," Hogan explained. "It all had to be moved out of the way of construction. You had to duplicate it, then demolish and then move it back in without the newspapers missing a beat."

The fact that the facilities had to continue to use the presses for daily production of The Wall Street Journal during construction also presented a challenge for Dario Designs.

"We had to make contractors understand the time-sensitive nature of this industry," Hogan said.

Dow Jones' vital contribution

Hogan credits a large portion of the project's success with Dow Jones, The Wall Street Journal, the personnel at the 13 facilities and especially Jack Conboy, who handled coordination on

the press expansions.

"I can't imagine anyone else but [Dow Jones] taking on the coordination burden that they did," Hogan said. "Jack took it upon himself to make sure everything was in place, to organize crews of his own choosing to do the rigging, and to mesh his schedule for installation with our construction schedule."

Hogan added that Dow Jones' contribution was very helpful in getting the project completed within the tight time frame set by the newspaper company. He said that if someone had asked him at the beginning of the project if the schedule was realistic, he would

have told them no.

"I could not have worked with a better group of people to get this project done," Hogan stated.

Hogan also gave credit to the production managers at each of the facilities.

"There was a pretty serious burden of responsibility placed on each production manager at the Dow Jones plants," he said. "Those folks really had their plates full."

Hogan said that the people involved in all areas of the project were able to coordinate and get all of the work done on schedule.

"Each one of these projects, because of the disruption in the building and the need to keep [the facilities] up and running, was a challenge in itself, but not one that is that unusual. It's pretty common for us to do an addition," Hogan said. "I think the real challenge was in the coordination and maintaining a national schedule with so many players involved. I think coordination was the biggest challenge anyone faced on this project." ▲

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