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New era for Naples Daily News

BY CHUCK MOOZAKIS EDITOR IN CHIEF

NAPLES, Fla. — The Sept. 9 opening of the Naples Daily News' headquarters building represented more than just the completion of a two-year project for the southwest Florida newspaper.

The facility also ushered in an entirely new business philosophy.

"This is a true multimedia facility," said Tom Sewall, the Daily News' director of operations. "Even in the lobby you can see the change in culture, and this new working and operating environment has been one of the key benefits of the new facility."

E.W. Scripps Co. spent some \$95 million to construct the new building, which houses the entity now formally known as the Naples News Media Group. The 186,000-square-foot building, designed by Dario Designs Inc., contains the Daily News' production, executive, editorial and administrative offices. The North Naples facility replaces a cramped downtown building in which the paper (daily, 42,002; Sunday, 49,120) operated for 40 years.

To that end, the building was plumbed with a sophisticated mix of communications, connectivity and technology systems, said President and Publisher Chris Doyle.

"We made sure that we invested in the production side of the business, and we believe we are the envy of everyone out there," he said. "But we also invested in technology, giving us the flexibility, durability and redundancy we need to operate more efficiently."

Beefed-up communications

For example, the building was wired with fiber optic cable, which not only

gives employees enough bandwidth to download information, but also provides a crucial link to its sister entity, Treasure Coast Newspapers, in southeast Florida.

TCN acts as a backup to the Naples facility, and also handles the Daily News' photo toning under a shared services plan

E.W. Scripps rolled out in 2008.

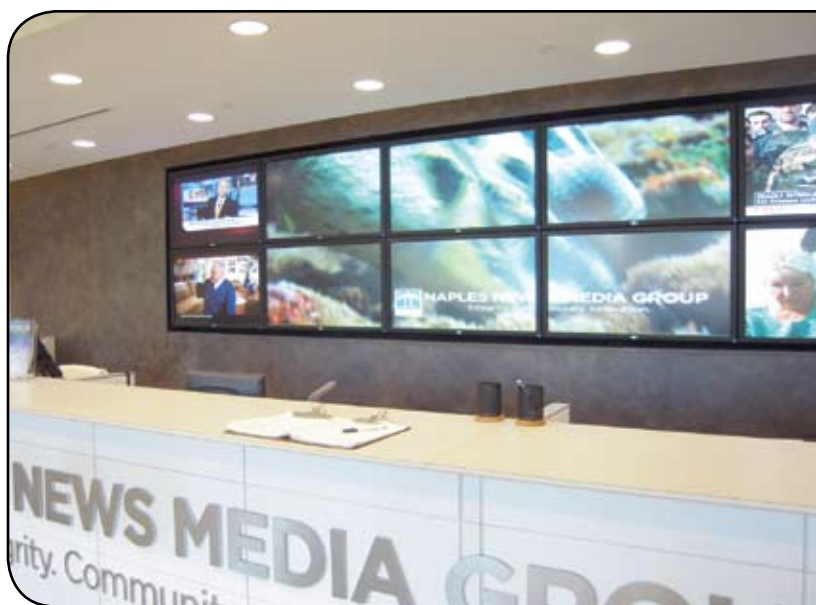
"And we have the ability to grow as the business grows," Doyle said. "If you are going to set up an interactive operation, you have to be able to operate 24/7."

"But the key benefit is the way the systems allow us to collaborate. There are no walls between departments."

Still, the path from old to new wasn't without a few detours. Scripps and Daily News executives first began examining what to do with their existing downtown plant in 2004, when the southwest Florida market was booming and the economy still chugging along.

Initially, the Daily News investigated expanding the Central Avenue facility, but was unable to do so because of building and zoning limitations.

That led execs to look at other sites, and in 2006 they set their sights on an 18-acre parcel of land in the northern



part of the city. After a see-saw administrative battle that saw Collier County commissioners first reject, and then approve, the Daily News' rezoning request, the first shovelful of dirt was removed in February 2008.

"We knew it would be a long process, but Naples is a wonderful town," Sewall said, referring to the legal maneuverings. "We knew it would eventually work out."

Committed through downturn

For its part, Scripps remained committed to the project, even as the industry overall began to suffer through the worst recession in 70 years. "Scripps is a forward-looking company," Sewall said. "It had the foresight to invest in the future."

And that future, at least as envisioned by the design of the facility,

remains newspaper production. Fully 70 percent of the building is devoted to press and packaging operations, and Scripps cloaked the plant with a technological infrastructure that promises great flexibility and efficiency, Sewall said.

The plant is anchored by a doublewide WIFAG evolution 371 press, configured as one line, with six four-high towers, six reelstands and two jaw folders with balloon formers. The press, engineered with a 20-inch cutoff and variable web width, can be independently operated as two separate lines as needed. It's the first 20-inch cutoff newspaper press put in operation in the United States. The (New York) Daily News will have a similar cutoff when its Koenig & Bauer AG presses go into operation next year.

For commercial work, the 90,000-copy-per-hour press is equipped

with a Tolerans stitcher, and one of the folders sports a variable web width former to accommodate special orders.

Image-based closed-loop controls govern both cutoff and registration.

Technotrans supplied the spray dampening system, and the firm also engineered the ink farm, stocked with color and black ink from US Ink.

It's the second 371 press installed in the United States, following the 2006 commissioning of a similar machine by North Jersey Media Group (see *News & Tech*, September 2006).

Full color

Most importantly to the Daily News, the machine provides the color — up to 48 pages straight and 96 collect — and print capacity the paper needs to compete in the Naples marketplace. The paper no longer has to farm out work to Treasure Coast, and the machine will also allow the Daily News to court commercial clients, Sewall said.

In addition to the Daily News, NNMG produces about 20 other publications, including the Bonita Daily News, the Banner, the Marco Eagle, Naples Sun-Times, Collier Citizen and Vista Semanal, its Spanish-language newspaper.

"Commercial printing is definitely part of our future," Sewall said.

Although the plant doesn't use AGVs to funnel newsprint to the press, WIFAG worked with NNMG to fashion a system that automatically loads up to four rolls onto the press. The rolls can be mixed and matched to accommodate differently sized production runs without operator intervention, Sewall said.

The Daily News underwent a redesign in conjunction with the new press, narrowing its web width from 50 inches to 44 and dropping in height more than 3 inches, Sewall said.

On the controls side, ABB installed four press consoles, each equipped with the firm's MPS production software. The software integrates with the ProImage NewsWay app the Daily News uses to orchestrate workflow, providing additional automation.

'Data driven'

"We want to be data driven," Sewall said



The Daily News uses the Schur palletizers as a buffering system.



Two MMMS SLS 3000 XL inserters anchor postpress.

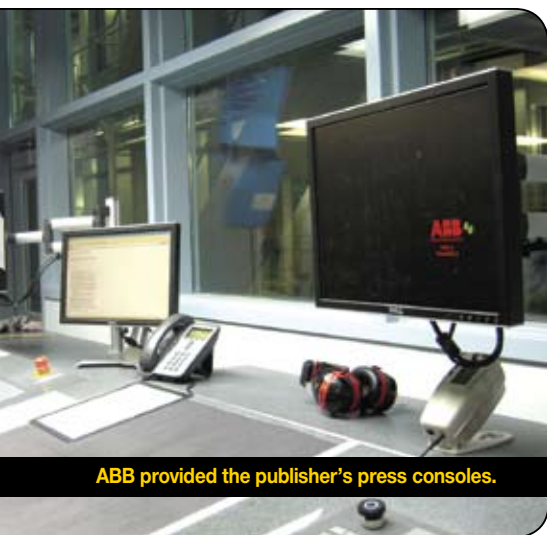
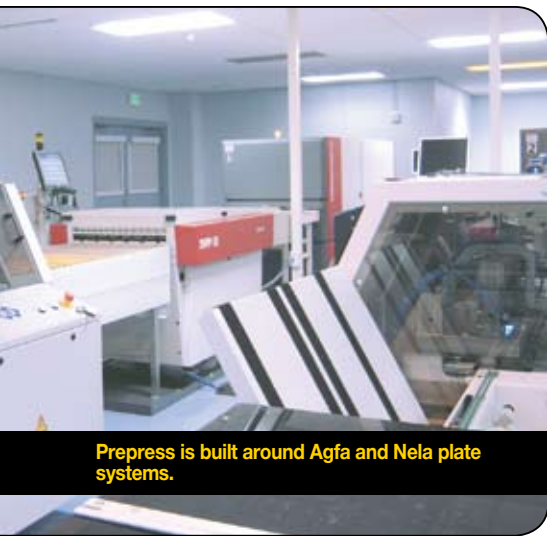


ABB provided the publisher's press consoles.



Prepress is built around Agfa and Nela plate systems.

about the integrated apps, which also envelope data generated by the Daily News' totalizing system.

Rick Shafranek, ProImage's vice president of sales and marketing, said the Daily News' implementation is built around tight integration between NewsWay and MPS. MPS software is embedded within ProImage, which allows users to access both platforms with a single data entry.

"In other press control platforms, information is bi-directional, but with ABB it's not an interface; it's integrated," he said. "We have years of co-development with ABB where we actually read the data right from the database to obtain page and press data; it's automatically mapped out, and if an operator makes a change, that information goes to both apps, automatically."

Only one other U.S. paper, the Rich-



The paper's WIFAG press is engineered with a 20-inch cutoff.



E.W. Scripps spent almost \$100 million to construct the paper's new facility.

mond (Va.) Times-Dispatch, has a similar system, Shafranek said.

Blended rooms

Sewall commingled the quiet room with prepress, housing the consoles with two Agfa Advantage violet computer-to-plate systems, tied to a Nela optical bender and plate management system. Combining the press management and prepress systems not only optimizes space, but the strategy also supports the publisher's cross-training philosophy. "There are no walls between operations," Sewall said. Operators, he said, can either monitor the press or CTP, as needed.

Postpress is anchored by two SLS-3000 XL inserters from Muller Martini Mailroom Systems, stackers from Quipp Systems Inc. and palletizers from Schur Packaging Systems.

The Daily News was the first U.S. newspaper to purchase the inserting platform, which features such components as variable pockets, allowing users quick changeover as they package differently sized products.

Sewall said the Daily News is currently testing the variable pocket technology to see how it will mesh with its overall goals. The systems — one configured 32:1 the other 22:1 — are rated at 32,000 packages per hour and can easily accom-

modate the flow of papers coming from the press. Quipp provided 10 model 501 stackers.

Palletizers as buffer

Schur, meantime, installed four Winrob III palletizers and two PSW stretch wrappers to handle the completed papers.

The postpress systems are overseen by MMMS' SAM Plans software.

Sewall said the Schur palletizers act as a buffer, allowing production to maintain a constant flow of papers from press through postpress. The flexibility to dynamically adjust and apportion output becomes especially handy during the winter months, when the Daily News' press runs spike.

"It's boom or bust," Sewall said, citing winter press runs that can easily be 20,000 to 25,000 copies a day higher than their mid-August counterparts, according to the Audit Bureau of Circulations.

"It's truly a sense of teamwork that's made this plant happen," Sewall said. "Each department is working together to gain the efficiencies we need to thrive in this challenging market." ▲