



# The medium is part of the message

The retail business in Australia is witnessing rapid changes – especially in the way brands are marketing their products – and the paper industry is at the heart of the ongoing tumult. The growing demand for innovation and new paper products is driving closer cooperation between paper suppliers, printers and publishers.

Text **Pekka Lehtinen** | Photos **Hannanprint, Australasian Catalogue Association**

As one of the wealthiest nations and largest economies in the world, Australia is an attractive market for businesses in both the B2B and B2C sectors. Many of the continent's countless retailers have adopted the print catalogue as their go-to marketing tool, which in part has helped make the market appealing for paper companies as well.

Stora Enso has a long history in Australia. Over the years the company has gained a notable share of the country's supercalendered (SC) and lightweight uncoated (LWU) paper market.

"The overall market situation in Australia has been quite challenging in the past few years, yet we've managed to keep our volumes constant. This is by no means a small feat," says Area Sales Director **David Mandile** from Stora Enso Australia.

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## “A superior paper communicates a superior brand.”

“All the credit goes to our fantastic team. We’re operating with a small crew with a great fighting spirit and winning attitude, and we’re backed by excellent resources from our global organisation.”

The Australian market has recently seen increasing demand for specialty papers for catalogues. Stora Enso has responded to this trend with popular new paper brands in the SC and LWU categories, including PrimaPress and PubliPress, which are primarily used in retail catalogues, magazines and supplements.

“Retail catalogues in particular play a central role in Australia. Data gathered by research agencies, such as Nielsen, shows that catalogues have a considerable impact on the number of barcode scans at the checkout counters and the amount of foot traffic through stores,” Mandile points out.

### REINVENTING THE CATALOGUE

According to Executive Director **Kellie Northwood** from the Australasian Catalogue Association, the rising demand for specialty papers is connected to an interesting new development in the retail business:

“The strongest trend we’ve seen over the past year is the rise of brandzines or magalogues that introduce stories and captivating editorial content into the context of the traditional catalogue,” Northwood says.

“Our major department stores and leading fashion retailers, for instance, are producing their own style guides and look books that cover the store’s entire product range. Similarly, major supermarkets offer recipes that incorporate their products. The product offerings are interwoven with engaging commentary from widely recognised fashion designers, chefs and product experts.”

The use of catalogues has also increased considerably among online retailers in Australia. This may sound illogical or confusing at first, but once you look at it from the retailers’ perspective, it all makes perfect sense.

“Whether they operate out of a brick and mortar store or online, retailers always aim to sell their products and they will simply use the most effective media to do so. And catalogues certainly are an effective way to drive traffic into online stores as well,” Northwood says.

What matters is how the catalogue itself is done. Historically, catalogues have been produced

on cheap, lightweight, almost newsprint papers. Northwood sees a definite change in this trend.

“Retailers are realising that catalogues are more than a ‘buy me now’ device, and the brand awareness and engagement behind catalogues is very important in the messaging. This includes raising the bar and investing in quality papers,” she says.

“A superior paper will communicate a superior brand. Prestige brands are well aware of this and choose paper accordingly. I always recommend that retailers hold the paper and imagine they are pulling a handful of catalogues from their letterboxes. When I ask them which one would physically stand out enough to make me look at it, it is invariably the one of different paper.”

### INNOVATION IN HIGH DEMAND

Stora Enso’s customers in Australia include Hannanprint, an award-winning web-offset printer. Hannanprint’s core business encompasses printing catalogues, magazines and weekly newspapers with highly advanced prepress, printing and finishing equipment as well as national delivery and mailing services.

Hannanprint’s General Manager **Adrian O’Connor** emphasises the importance of innovation across the paper industry now more than ever.

“It is vital for suppliers today to regularly come up with new paper products. Printing as a medium faces intense competitive pressure from other channels, so it’s critical that printing and paper continue to innovate to provide a point of difference in the market,” O’Connor says.

“Our customers are some of the largest publishers and retailers in Australia. They value the importance of environmentally responsible paper sources, and we are happy to oblige. All paper sourced by Hannanprint is either PEFC Chain of Custody certified or FSC certified.”

Australian publishers are currently adapting to rising mailing and distribution costs. Especially the demand for affordable lightweight papers with good printing characteristics has been increasing over the past few years.

“We are always working closely with our suppliers to develop new grades of paper for our customers. In 2012 we partnered with Stora Enso in developing PrimaPress with months of live press trials, performance monitoring and feedback to the paper mills. This has resulted in a groundbreaking cost-effective paper with properties, such as



“Brandzines or magalogues that combine editorial content and traditional catalogue are the strongest trend,” says Kellie Northwood.



Hannanprint partnered with Stora Enso in developing PrimaPress.



opacity, brightness and gloss, that exceed what is seen in many traditional lightweight coated stocks," O'Connor praises.

The cooperation between Stora Enso and Hannanprint has been immensely beneficial for both companies. At Stora Enso, opportunities like this are embraced as a valuable means to develop close ties with customers and to differentiate from the competition through exceptional service.

"We strive to have a close working relationship with our customers. They benefit from working with us by getting a guarantee that we will always deliver what is promised. We go out of our way to make our customers happy, as it is the service and paper that we deliver that make a difference. So in simple terms, we serve to make a difference, and by all accounts we are quite successful at that," David Mandile adds. ■

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*– Adrian O'Connor*

