

# Dscoop Expands Internationally

### New Indian Member ComartXpress Shares their Challenges and Predicts Regional Trends

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Following the trip to Israel, Dscoop took the opportunity to cross the Arabian Sea and reach out to some of our newest members in Mumbai, India. The primary reason to visit Mumbai was to participate in an InfoTrends and HP Indigo customer event, as well as exhibit at IPEX South Asia, a print industry show that happens every other year throughout the Indian sub-continent. The trip offered Dscoop the chance to meet with more than 150 Indian members and 50 exhibitors, learn about their challenges and offer solutions. With the recent expansion of Dscoop into the Asia-Pacific region, we were able to reassess our offerings and learn about the challenges that Indian customers face.

For reference, India is the seventh largest country in the world, covering more than 1.8 million square miles with a population of more than 1.1 billion. More than 18 major languages and more than 1,000 minor languages are spoken; however, English is taught in all schools and

readily used throughout the business community. From a printing perspective, India produces 4,700 daily papers and 39,000 journals and weeklies in more than 300 languages. To say that India—with its massive geographic size, immense population and cultural diversity—presents a unique challenge to a print service provider is a drastic understatement.

While in India, I had the additional benefit of visiting Comart, a Dscoop member. The company is family-owned and specializes in color management. It is overseen by Fred Poonawala, and has 400 employees in three locations in India. In a tour of the shop, we saw more than 60 employees working on pre-press jobs from around the world. Even more interesting is that there are many days when their pre-press employees work three shifts.

Comart purchased an HP Indigo 3050 and numerous large-format presses in an effort to serve as digital print ambassadors in the region. They developed a division of Comart called ComartXpress, which focuses exclusively on digital with Prashant Devatraj serving as the primary manager of the digital business. ComartXpress can help grow their existing customers from pre-press to on-demand printing to large-format solutions.

In an interview with Poonawala and Devatraj, they offered surprising takes on the value they see from digital print in India. It might come as a surprise that Indian print service providers (PSPs) find some of their largest struggles implementing items that we take for granted in the U.S. Take

for example the Web-to-print situation in India. Indian PSPs see the applications as a price that they can't justify passing on to their customers. Devatraj explained, "Our customers love the value, but it all comes down to cost." The company is fortunate that many customers are beginning to focus on quality, especially when it comes to branding. With their expertise on color management and the use of their HP Indigo, ComartXpress guarantees color and print management for their customers.

Furthermore, the value that they place on automation is distinctly different. The primary reason is that labor in India is significantly less expensive, and the power of automation has been marginalized. As always with print on demand, time is of the essence. But with cost being king, it can be just as easy to hire temporary staff to cut expenses while still being able to drive value.

Despite those differences, it became clear to me that using variable data will rise to the forefront in the next few years. "In India, versioning will be increasingly important," Devatraj said. "There are several languages—in many cases each state has their own language. Utilizing variable data and versioning would help their customers' sales and marketing people speak to different market segments within the country. We are seeing companies looking to localize their marketing and rather than print 10,000 copies of an existing document, they are looking to print 1,000 versions in 10 regions to increase the return on investment."

With clients in the telecommunications, hotel and publication industries, ComartXpress is primed to deliver digital success to their customers. Poonawala and Devatraj's most pressing challenge is continuing on the forefront of industry knowledge—something Dscoop has delivered on already. Poonawala said he was lucky to have attended Dscoop4 last year in Orlando. "It is a must for every digital

printer to visit the Dscoop Annual Conference to catch up, mix and understand other

marketplaces. The combination of meeting other users from around the world and learning from the gurus of printing is a vital investment served as a look into the future of where Comart should be heading." ☞



Prashant Devatraj (left) and Fred Poonawala

