

## Case study

# Nanogruppe launched as a digital flexible packaging company in Mexico



HP Indigo 20000 Digital Press drives innovative short-run, fast-turnaround packaging in rapidly expanding market

### Challenge

- Establish a new business to respond to a gap for short-run, fast turn-around flexible packaging in the Mexican market
- Install the right combination of equipment to meet high print quality standards and provide the potential for product development
- Build a profitable market for digital flexible packaging where the technology was largely a new concept

### Solution

- Install the HP Indigo 20000 Digital Press with a near-line Digicon 3000 finishing system
- Work with partner companies to manage longer runs for customers
- A complementary thermoforming business to provide a broader range innovative packaging solutions

### Results

- Rapid business development with the addition of a second shift within a year
- Customer base of market leading meat and cheese suppliers
- Customer recognition of the benefits of digital printing and streamlined logistics



**“We do a lot of top seal and easy peel packaging for fresh meat and cheese using thermoforming packaging machines. With the HP Indigo 20000 Digital Press we can print a high standard of color graphics and fine print that make it ideal for promotional packaging and short runs.”**

– Arndt Pechthold, managing director and partner, Nanogruppe



Within a matter of months, Nanogruppe, a German investment, established itself as a supplier of digitally printed flexible packaging and thermoformed products. By supplementing digital printing with processing orders for long-run flexo and gravure for its customers, it leveraged the digital advantage of its HP Indigo 20000 Digital Press and near-line Digicon 3000 finishing system.

“There are many sustainability advantages to digitally printed flexible packaging. No flexo plates, cylinders and low substrate waste make production with the HP Indigo 20000 Digital Press very attractive to our customers, especially the big brands.”

—Arndt Pechthold, managing director and partner, Nanogruppe

**Industry:**

Flexible packaging

**Company name:**

Nanogruppe

**Location:**

Ocoyoacac, Mexico

**HP equipment:**

HP Indigo 20000 Digital Press

**Website:**

[nanogruppe.com](http://nanogruppe.com)



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## Challenge

### Starting from scratch

Nanogruppe is the product of a vision. That vision was to open a fully digital flexible packaging company in Mexico to meet the rising demand for short-run, fast-turnaround flexible packaging printing that could also add value to its product offering.

“To make our proposition as a new company as attractive as possible, we also produce thermoformed food trays, and have close association with partners that print flexible packaging conventionally with flexo and gravure,” says Arndt Pechthold, managing director and partner, Nanogruppe. “The idea was that this would make introducing digitally printed flexible packaging easier, and that customers could treat us as their main point of contact for flexible packaging.”

The product range developed by Nanogruppe includes bags, pouches, top lidding films, shrink sleeves and other specialist packaging on PET and PP films.

“Having identified a market and products for that market, the final piece was to ensure we chose the right equipment to make the vision a reality,” Pechthold continues. “We saw the HP Indigo 20000 Digital Press at InterPack and were impressed with its speed and print quality. However, the most important factor for us was the 30-inch web width which is ideal for the applications we were planning.”

A versatile finishing solution was also needed, and the Digicon 3000, developed by HP finishing partners, Edale and A. B. Graphic International, had the same web width of the press and could be configured to meet Nanogruppe’s requirements.

## Solution

### Building the market

“The HP Indigo 20000 Digital Press was installed in May and the Digicon 3000 in August,” Pechthold says. “In September, we finalized the ramp up and began operation.”

“We had secured business from about 10 customers, including the top cheese producer and four of the five top meat producers,” he adds.

Digital production runs at Nanogruppe are from one to five rolls per SKU, compared to the minimum seven to ten required for conventional production to make it cost-effective.

“Hygiene and quality control are very important in food packaging, along with the timely delivery of materials,” Pechthold says. “We’re adding value, too: we can provide laminated or unlaminated films or UV-coatings, and because of the short-runs, we can print the label information directly on to the lidding films, saving the additional step of adding labels. The print quality and clear, small type sizes possible on the HP Indigo press means that all the required information can be legibly provided.”

Turnaround times are cut to 3–4 days if the films have to be laminated and require curing time, or less if the substrate isn’t laminated, dramatically cutting time to market.

“It’s exciting to see the prepress process cut from the four hours needed for an approval proof using flexo to half an hour with digital,” he says. “It was an easy process to learn because the digital workflow is similar to the conventional one with the exception that there is no separate proofing or production, so it can be as little as a few minutes before we have the first print. That’s fantastic for us and our customers.”

## Results

### Expanding horizons

“In September, we had two operators for the HP Indigo press and two for the Edale finishing line,” says Pechthold. “We’re doubling that by adding a second shift in December as our customer base has grown, and the marketing advantages of short-runs and fast turnarounds become more widely appreciated.

“The savings possible are considerable,” he explains. “Ordering conventionally printed flexible packaging, customers get about 10,000 linear meters. This would typically last eight to ten months. Since most designs, or required regulatory information are changed every six months, that’s up to four months’ packaging – or 40% – that’s destroyed.

“Printing what you want, when you need it saves that waste, cuts logistics costs and warehousing, and enables greater creativity for the brands,” Pechthold says.

As a result of the rapid growth of its business, Nanogruppe is evaluating the decision to install a second HP Indigo 20000 Digital Press.

“This would be a very exciting development for us because it will enable us to expand our business in two directions,” Pechthold says. “First, it will enable us to work for more of the large international brands who insist on production redundancy as they cannot have their supply chains interrupted, so the two presses will effectively back up each other. Secondly, the additional capacity will make it viable for us to approach smaller companies with smaller orders and print them profitably.

“Throughout the development, installation, ramp-up and training period, HP has been an excellent partner,” Pechthold concludes. “I can say that every day is fun since we are having new ideas and solutions popping up based on our customers’ and our ideas. The HP Indigo 20000 Digital Press is a real solution for creativity, quality, speed and precision.”

Learn more at  
[hp.com/go/indigo](http://hp.com/go/indigo)

