

Talking pens



the
pen 
warehouse

ISSUE 3
December 2013

Introducing



System Range



**First Place
Awards 2013**

**Meet the
team!**

**We'll be at PSI on 8-10 January
& Trade Only on 22-23 January**

**See inside for details & our
trade show focus competition**



Trade Show Focus

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PenWarehouse



penwarehouse



Welcome to our final newsletter of 2013, which coincides with a new and exciting phase of both service and product development.



➔ After eighteen months in the making, we are now in a position to launch three entirely new pens for full colour 360 degree wrap (see page 3) which will be available from as little as a single piece through our Web to Print facility www.no-minimum.co.uk. These pens will form the basis of a much larger system that will be rolled out at PSI and Trade Only and throughout 2014.

I am passionate about our current direction in both product and service development because I believe that our new initiatives will empower distributors to compete with new threats to our industry from the likes of Vistaprint, Moonpig and many others. Searching the term 'promotional pens' on Google now returns three suppliers on the top page which sell directly to the end user through their web portal. Over the coming years we expect that number to continue growing and only the largest and most profitable distributors will be able to maintain a presence on that page.

We will be exhibiting at PSI in Dusseldorf on 8-10 January (stand C04, Hall 9) and at Trade Only at The Ricoh Centre (stand C10) on 22-23 January where our team will be happy to explain how you can exploit the full potential of our latest systems. You can schedule in a timed appointment with one of our sales team at the shows by contacting Becky Thorne on 01252 400270 or email becky.thorne@pens.co.uk.

Trade Show Focus

PSI 2014

Although Christmas is just around the corner, we're already looking ahead to the PSI 2014 trade show at the Dusseldorf Exhibition Centre on 8-10 January. The show brings together suppliers and distributors and presents the latest developments in the promotional product industry. As Europe's largest trade show, PSI last year welcomed over 13,500 visitors through the doors and into 65,000m² of innovations, trends and new features.

The Pen Warehouse will be showcasing a number of exciting new products and services on **stand C04** in Hall 9 including the **latest phase of our No-Minimum web to print technology**. Recognising the challenge to the industry posed by online retailers such as Vistaprint (see the article on page 3 to find out how this could affect you), The Pen Warehouse and Snap Products have developed a new tool designed for distributors to enable them to boost orders from small businesses and individual consumers.

Visit us in Hall 9 Stand C04

Our 28m² stand will of course feature some of our exclusive products such as the **Contour Digital Ballpen**, launched earlier this year. Designed here at The Pen Warehouse, the Contour Digital offers the largest print area in the industry thanks to its patent pending barrel shape. Its unique styling maximises the potential of vibrant photo-quality images produced by digital printing.

As well as the Contour Digital, we'll also be on hand to tell you more about our range of 600 products and show you examples of our unsurpassed print quality. We'll have samples for you to take away and there'll be an opportunity to win a case of wine in our business card prize draw too.

To register for your free tickets for PSI, visit www.psi-messe.com/tickets



Trade Only National Show

No sooner than we've dusted off from Dusseldorf, The Pen Warehouse team will be back on the road for the Trade Only National Show at the Ricoh Arena in Coventry. Taking place between 22-23 January, the Trade Only National Show presents **two days of networking opportunities, product launches and opportunities to source new lines.**

Visit us on Stand C10

With over 55m² of stand space, The Pen Warehouse will be showcasing a host of products from our Pens Galore catalogue, including best-sellers such as the Contour Ballpens and new ranges such as the **System range** - the first premium pen range available with a full colour transfer wrap 360 degrees around the barrel (see the article on page 3 for more details).

As we explain in this issue, Vistaprint now sells an increasing range of promotional products in low quantities which poses a real threat to the industry. We'll be revealing more at the show about how we're developing the **No-Minimum website**, to equip distributors with an additional tool with which to compete against online retailers such as Vistaprint and Moonpig. Visit us at **stand C10** to find out how this will help to boost orders from small businesses and individual consumers and make a real difference to your bottom line.

You can also pick up information and samples for some of our ranges and there'll be a chance for you to win a case of wine in our business card prize draw as well.

Visit www.tradeonly.co.uk to register for your free tickets and find out how to claim travel and hotel vouchers.





No-Minimum



Hundreds of customers are discovering the benefits of www.no-minimum.co.uk and are using it to expand into new markets.

Developed by The Pen Warehouse and Snap Products using their specialist industry knowledge, No-Minimum offers an extensive range of promotional business gifts for personalisation or for very small, targeted promotions by micro businesses, franchise owners and independent traders. Now Business Gift Houses also have an effective weapon in the fight against the rising threat of on-line retailers such as Vistaprint, which offers an increasing range of promotional items in low quantities.

18 months in development, No-Minimum ensures speed and efficiency as the entire order process is completed online. By enabling customers to send their orders directly to our printing machines, we have reduced administration costs and passed this saving onto distributors. Now distributors who complete their entire order online can benefit from reduced origination costs, typically £15 rather than the standard origination cost of £30. A live 24 hour chat service is available to answer queries.



Neil Cleere, Managing Director of The Pen Warehouse said: "Vistaprint no longer offers just business cards and leaflets. Their product range has increased to include a number of promotional products and they now appear on the first page of Google when searching for 'promotional products' or 'promotional pens'. Distributors are at increasing risk of losing custom to this online giant, which also has a large marketing and TV advertising budget to raise its profile to end-users. No-Minimum aims to counter that threat to our industry, by providing an effective solution for distributors to enable them to respond positively to enquiries they would previously have had to turn away."

The Pen Warehouse will soon launch the second phase of its web to print technology, which will feature a new tool designed to help distributors to attract new customers.



Be the first to know by visiting stand C04 in Hall 9 at the PSI show in Dusseldorf on 8-10 January and the Trade Only Show in Coventry on 22-23 January, stand C10.

The digital revolution continues with the new System range

Exclusive to The Pen Warehouse, the new System range offers pens with near photographic quality print 360° around the barrel at up to 40% cheaper than similar models

Following £700,000 of investment, The Pen Warehouse has developed three unique models to enable distributors to offer wider product choice and no minimum order quantities when placing orders through www.no-minimum.co.uk.

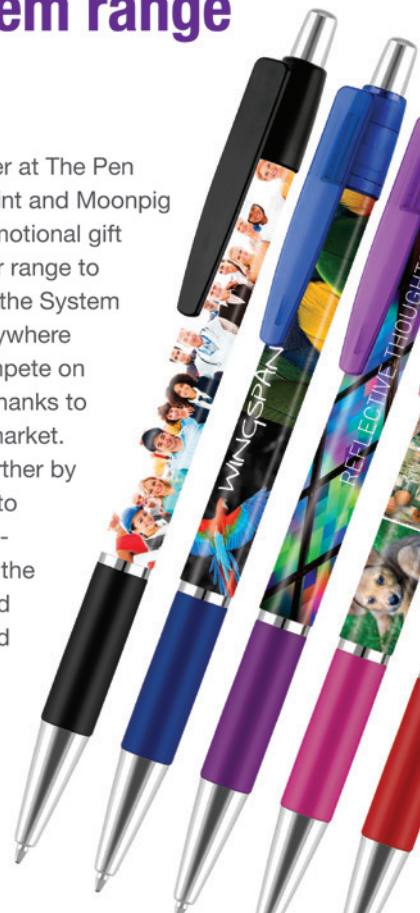
The innovative design of the System 60 Ballpen has created a full colour wrap product with the appearance of a metal pen. This allows distributors to offer an executive style gift at a far from premium price, as the System 60 starts at just £0.35 per unit for orders of 500 pieces.

Technological advances pioneered by The Pen Warehouse have enabled the company to cut lead times to just five days and to offer the **cheapest prices on the market** on the rest of the range too: The System 10 Ballpen starts at £0.20 per unit and the System 34 Ballpen starts at £0.30 per unit for orders of 500 pieces. All prices include a full colour transfer.

The Pen Warehouse will be launching a series of pens for transfer printing over the course of 2014 and 2015.



Rob Hayes, Marketing Manager at The Pen Warehouse said: "With Vistaprint and Moonpig taking a larger slice of the promotional gift market, we have expanded our range to include new products such as the System pens which are unavailable anywhere else. Distributors can now compete on product choice and on price, thanks to the lowest price point on the market. Costs can be reduced even further by ordering online using our web to print ordering system, www.no-minimum.co.uk. We recognise the challenge to our industry posed by internet based suppliers and will continue to innovate and develop to support Business Gift Houses."



Pen to Paper

Continuing our series of illuminating features which bring a new perspective on pens and the promotions industry, this Pen2Paper looks at the history of the book.

It is estimated that by 2017, the European ebook market will be worth \$19 billion. Whilst the digital age has had a dramatic impact on the way we read, it is clear that reading and books are still a very important part of daily life and society.

The earliest known example of a 'book' was discovered on the Red Sea coast in 2012 and dates from ca. 2560BC. It consists of a papyrus scroll which was the most popular writing surface and format, suited to the dry climates where many of the earliest writing systems evolved. Later, the increased use of parchment made it easier for the transition to the codex book form from the scroll. This began with the early Christian writers in the 1st and 2nd century AD and this form, made from folded sheets roughly sewn together, was used for the first Bibles.

In the 1450s, Gutenberg invented his printing press and the book boom began. People now began to develop an interest in learning about the world for themselves and access to affordable books, increasingly printed in their own languages, assisted this renaissance.

Until the 19th century, the printing process remained virtually unchanged. The Industrial Revolution allowed for the introduction of steam-powered paper mills and printing presses to vastly increase the speed at which printed pages could be produced.

The history of the book shows its endurance in the face of great adversity, whether its purpose is for entertainment or the passing on of important truths from one generation to the next.

To read the full version of this and other articles, visit www.pens.co.uk/pen2paper



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Technology

Is the industry's print quality falling to 'bits'?



The latest methods for the decoration of promotional gifts tend to be heavily biased towards digital technology by either direct or transfer methods, particularly where full colour printing is concerned. Like most emerging technologies it is expensive, relatively slow and of varying quality. This article explains the choices open to printers of promotional gifts.

Firstly you need to understand what a 'bit' is. It refers to a 0 or 1 in a binary code. The binary number 1001 is a 4-bit number as it has four binary elements to the string. The number of possible shades in any system (CMYK for print, RGB for viewing) will depend on the number of bits in that string. The higher the number of bits, the higher the range of colours in the image.

The human eye is supposed to be able to distinguish about one million different colours. But the gradation of printed images (CMYK) in practice fall well below that of a jpeg image as viewed on a good quality monitor, even though a CMYK system has an extra channel compared to RGB. For this reason, digital printer manufacturers can make printers of a commercial quality with bit depths as low as three. As a 3-bit system will require much less data to represent an image than a 6-bit system, it can print much faster. So there is a trade off between speed and quality. The fastest systems currently in the market use 3-bit technology but this quality is questionable for the promotional gift sector. Although high speed pen printing (peripheral printing) machines are now available from a number of manufacturers, The Pen Warehouse believes that this level of quality is uninvestable at the moment.

We believe that nothing short of near photographic quality is acceptable for the promotional gift market. That's why all parts of our manufacturing, from origination and printing to final assembly, is carried out in-house. By investing heavily in our own technology we can ensure a very high level of print reproduction, which we believe is currently the only viable option and future proofs our business for the next two to three years.

Find out more about how we can supply products with high quality print at prices never seen before in the industry, by visiting stand C04 in Hall 9 at the PSI show in Dusseldorf on 8-10 January and the Trade Only Show in Coventry on 22-23 January, stand C10.



A WINNING TEAM

In this issue of Talking Pens, we catch up with Account Managers Tasmin Woodward (right) and Emma Meilack (left) who are part of The Pen Warehouse's award winning customer service team.

Talking Pens: What do you like best about your job?

Emma: We both really enjoy working closely with our customers and building relationships by speaking to them on a daily basis.

Talking Pens: Why should customers choose The Pen Warehouse?

Tasmin: We have an extensive portfolio of over 600 products, 92 of which are our own exclusive designs. Our breadth of product range and printing processes mean that we can provide an unsurpassable combination of pens and print applications for our customers.

Talking Pens: What's your favourite product?

Emma: It's easy to see why the Contour Digital Ballpen which was launched earlier this year is already a winner. It offers the largest print area in the industry and, as it was designed here at The Pen Warehouse, it's an exclusive product.

Quick Fire Round

What would you save in a fire?

Tasmin: I probably wouldn't have enough time to save all my clothes, so it would be my photos.

Emma: My son, my partner and my Yorkshire terrier.

Last place you went on holiday?

Emma: The Lake District

Tasmin: Boston in America - I have family that live out there.

If you won the lottery, what would you spend the money on?

Tasmin: A house and a new Mini

Emma: A house, a new car and a holiday somewhere nice and hot!

I bet you didn't know that...

Tasmin: Has a phobia of pears!

Emma: Has a Yorkshire Terrier called Lexi, who has her own wardrobe of clothes.

A new face at The Pen Warehouse

The Pen Warehouse would like to introduce Neil Corkill as a new member of the sales team. Neil will join Nick Clewlow as a field based Sales Manager, visiting distributors in the South of England.

Welcoming Neil to The Pen Warehouse, Managing Director Neil Cleere said: "We are extremely pleased to welcome Neil to The Pen Warehouse. Expanding our sales team reflects the continued growth of the company into new areas such as web to print technology, with the No-Minimum website."

Neil Corkill added: "The Pen Warehouse has a well-earned reputation as an innovator. I'm looking forward to meeting distributors to explain more about exclusive products such as the Contour Digital, the Full Colour Transfer Wrap range and the benefits of ordering through the No-Minimum website."



To contact Neil, email neil.corkill@pens.co.uk or meet him at the Trade Only Show in Coventry on 22-23 January on stand C10.

Competition Winner!

Absolute madness!

In August we launched a competition offering a £250 contribution towards an office Christmas party, for the company which placed the most orders for the Absolute Ballpen by Friday 29 November 2013. We had a fantastic response and can now reveal the final leader board. Congratulations to Everything Branded who received a cheque for £250 to spend on their Christmas party. Our runners-up, Compugift and Boosters each received a bottle of wine. Thank you to everyone who took part.

Everything Branded

Compugift

Boosters Ltd



Season's Greetings



The Pen Warehouse would like to wish all of our customers a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Our offices will close on Friday 20 December 2013 and re-open on Thursday 2 January 2014.

The Pen Warehouse scores at Wembley event

The Pen Warehouse fielded a full sales team at the BTC Group's Promotional Merchandise and Corporate Clothing event at Wembley Stadium on Thursday 24 October. Nick Clewlow, Peter Brooks and Neil Corkill met a number of distributors who were able to see new products, learn about special promotions and keep up to date with the latest technological developments.

Speaking about the event, Neil Corkill said: "Trade shows are always a great opportunity to demonstrate new products and discuss their features more fully. We also used the event to raise awareness of the No-Minimum website and explain to distributors how they can benefit from better margins through savings in origination costs. It also allows them to take advantage of a much larger slice of the personalised gifts market by offering a more extensive range of products at competitive prices."



The Pen Warehouse team are looking forward to meeting distributors at Stand C04 in Hall 9 at the PSI show in Dusseldorf on 8-10 January and at the Trade Only Show in Coventry on 22-23 January on stand C10

Sourcing City
Awards 2013



Congratulations! Supplier Award Winners

Sourcing City Awards name The Pen Warehouse as Best Specialist Supplier

Following The Pen Warehouse's recent success at the PAGE Awards and the Promotional Union Awards, the company's winning streak continued when it was named Specialist Supplier of the Year in the Sourcing City Awards 2013.

259 distributors voted for the best specialist supplier in the promotional business gift industry based on product range and customer service. Representatives of The Pen Warehouse will collect the award at Sourcing City's presentation event in Guildford on Tuesday 14 January 2014.

Speaking about the award, Managing Director Neil Cleere said: "We're delighted to win this prestigious industry award. It reflects a high level of customer satisfaction which is due to the diligence and commitment of our staff. We will continue to support distributors with the introduction of exclusive new products and innovative services in 2014."

The Pen Warehouse was also recently Highly Commended as a finalist in the Best Large Business Category at the East Hants Business Awards. Customer Services Manager Terri Baker and colleagues attended the event in October and collected our award.



Every little helps!

Encouraging staff in their volunteering and fundraising efforts is one of many ways in which we show our support for our employees. Led by Customer Services Manager, Terri Baker, our staff have been busy recently raising funds for MacMillan Cancer Care, Breast Cancer Awareness, Jeans for Genes and Where There's a Need, a small charity which distributes Christmas gifts to orphans and poor families in Europe. The Pen Warehouse is also arranging a shipment of pens and pencils to Pens for Kids, which aims to help children around the world by removing one of the hurdles on their way to an education – the cost of a pen. You can keep up to date with our fundraising efforts by liking our Facebook page.



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