

# CSQ offers flexible digital printing solutions to newspaper publishers



## At a glance

**Industry:** Publishing  
**Business name:** Centro Stampa Quotidiani (CSQ)  
**Headquarters:** Lombardy, Italy  
**Website:** csqspa.it



Centro Stampa Quotidiani

## Challenge

- Develop a strategy and install an equipment base that enables a dynamic response in a contracting market.
- Offer a high-quality, versatile printing service to newspaper publishers.
- Provide a cost-effective digital option for short-run newspapers and supplements.
- Identify gaps in the market that can be filled with innovative products printed digitally.

## Solution

- The HP T230 Color Inkjet Web Press with near-line finishing from HP Finishing Partner Hunkeler for producing newspapers, covers and flyers.

## Results

- Production of 10 regular digitally-printed publications, including three daily and three weekly titles as well as seasonal newspapers and supplements.
- A strategy and technology base that offers production flexibility and a strong defense to the current economic situation.
- A waste-saving solution for publishers of shorter-run newspapers and for foreign newspapers.
- Localized supplements open up new opportunities for potential advertisers.

“We’ve seen newspapers that we print conventionally move to digital because of falling run lengths, and we’re seeing growth in publications that began digitally, about ready to move to conventional production. Without the HP T230 Color Inkjet Web Press, we wouldn’t have those options.”

– Dario De Cian,  
general manager, CSQ



There is growing optimism in the newspaper industry that the combination of new business models and digital production may walk hand-in-hand with traditional production techniques to give newspaper printers additional revenue. In Italy, where the consequences of the recession have been keenly felt, newspaper printer Centro Stampa Quotidiani (CSQ) applied creative thinking and an investment in digital production equipment to give its publishers the benefits of its technologies and experience.

Established in 2000, CSQ is a joint venture between two newspaper publishers, L'Eco di Bergamo and Giornale di Brescia.

“Today it is not unusual to hear of two or more publishers establishing a joint venture company to print their newspapers, but in 2000, this was an innovative – even revolutionary – idea,” says Dario De Cian, general manager, CSQ. “As such, it has provided a platform of stability that many newspaper printers do not enjoy.”

### Carving a niche for digital newspapers

At the beginning of 2013, CSQ installed an HP T230 Color Inkjet Web Press – the first HP Inkjet Web Press technology dedicated to newspaper production.

CSQ had identified a niche that digital printing could fill using its HP T230 Color Inkjet Web Press: during the summer months, the company printed several foreign newspapers for distribution to Mediterranean resorts. While summer volumes justified using the company's offset presses, outside the tourist season, printing and distribution ceased because the print volumes weren't viable. With the addition of the HP T230 Color Inkjet Web Press, CSQ can not only print these same titles in smaller volumes in the off season, but they bring the added value of printing for same-day delivery of the news to the ex-pat community and tourists.

“We have always adopted cutting-edge technology right from the start of our business,” says De Cian. “Now we are adopting the latest digital technology so we can offer a year-round solution to our customers.”

De Cian says that the ability of the HP T230 press to print on the same newsprint substrate (typically 45g/m<sup>2</sup>) and at the same quality as the offset edition on the same day were among the key criteria in the choice of the HP T230 Color Inkjet Web Press.

“HP Bonding Agent technology eliminates show-through so the press can be used for newsprint as well as heavier coated stocks,” De Cian continues. “It also means that we can switch between offset and inkjet production without readers noticing.”

The digital capability makes printing local versions, supplements, special editions and specialist publications possible, opening another new market opportunity.

“The idea that you can produce localized supplements, tailoring advertising to specific locations, and attract a whole new class of advertiser through digital print is a very attractive proposition.”

— Dario De Cian,  
general manager, CSQ



In June, CSQ printed a special Cannes Film Festival edition of the Parisian magazine La Paulette. La Gazette Paulette was written in Cannes and the PDFs were sent to CSQ. They were then printed and delivered to Cannes with the other foreign newspapers and distributed during the festival.

“We’ve done work for other events too,” De Cian explains. “For example, a big concert might have an eight-page supplement in one of our offset newspapers. We can use the same PDF files – resizing them if necessary – and re-print the supplement on better quality paper on the HP T230 Color Inkjet Web Press and use them as independent promotional materials to be distributed through tourist offices, hotels and restaurants.”

While the HP T230 Color Inkjet Web Press has enabled CSQ to develop the foreign newspaper market and other shorter-run publications, De Cian points out that run length is not the sole criterion for printing a job digitally.

“There are a number of other variables,” he says. “While run length is an indicator, pagination is another. The amount of time it takes to print a job is a big factor, too. Printing 500 copies of an 80- or 96-page publication with offset can be viable based on time, as can digitally printing 5,000 copies with a low pagination. As a result, the cross-over point on our HP T230 Color Inkjet Web Press can be different each day.”

### Introducing digital printing to newspaper markets

The challenges faced by CSQ in the newspaper sector are essentially the same as those that were faced by the early adopters of commercial digital printing.

“We’re offset printers,” De Cian says. “At present, only a very small percentage of our work is printed digitally. We’re also very new at this with just nine months’ experience.”

Introducing a new publishing concept – at a time when newspaper circulations are contracting and revenues falling – requires special strategies and an imaginative approach to business growth.

“Advertising revenues have contracted 25 percent this year, and 25 percent last year,” says De Cian. “At the same time, circulations are falling. Our production volumes have fallen 20 percent in the last five years. We’ve also seen the disappearance of free newspapers in this region – they simply cannot attract the revenue.”

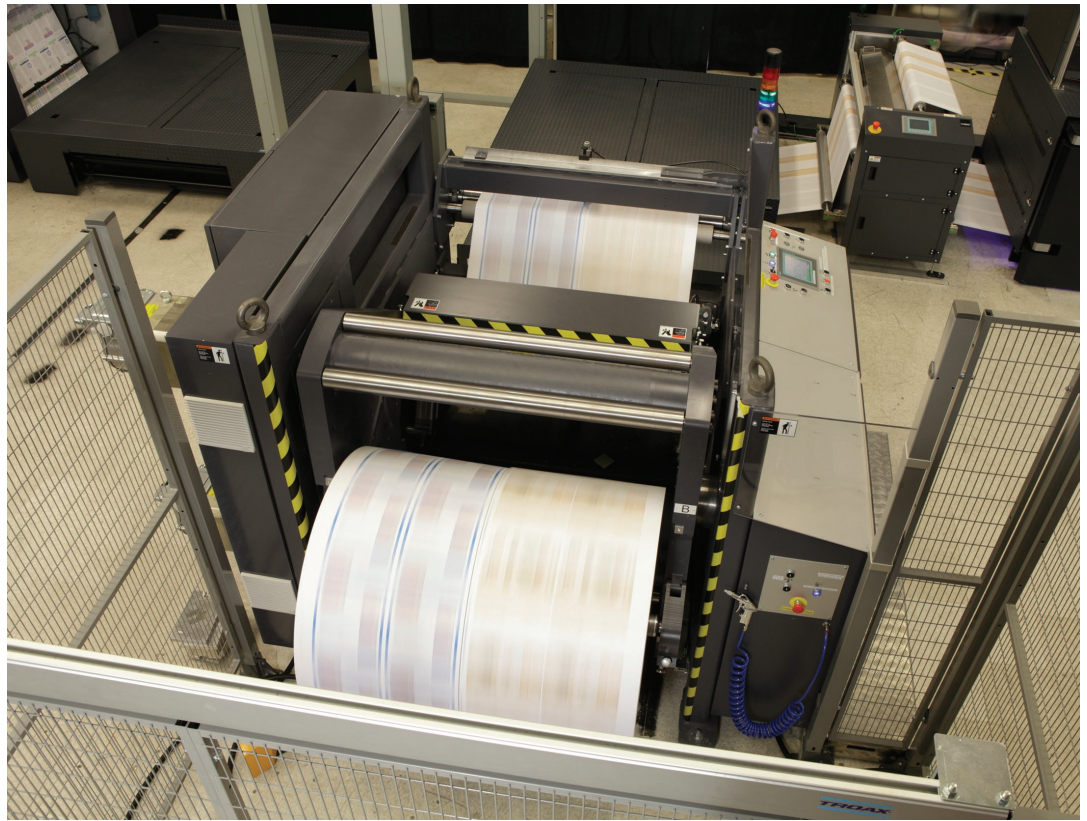
These conditions make selling advertising and print extremely difficult. As was the case in the early days of commercial digital printing, selling digital print is different to selling conventional print.

“The idea that you can produce localized supplements, tailoring advertising to specific locations, and attract a whole new class of advertisers through digital print is a very attractive proposition,” says De Cian. “It opens the market to hundreds of potential advertisers. The challenge is that you need to sell many of these lower value advertisements to earn the revenue of one big one. That takes resources, which most publishers currently do not have.”

De Cian says the same applies to localized versions of editorial: “More versions mean more editorial, but at present, titles are laying off journalists, not hiring them,” he says. “The production part is easy; the editorial is the hard part.”

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Digitally printed newspapers require another mind-shift on the part of publishers. As in the commercial market, the old minimum order (unit cost) concept no longer applies.

“When printing conventionally, many newspaper printers would have a minimum order of, say 5,000 copies, even though only 1,000 were needed,” De Cian explains. “These extra copies would be collected by distributors only to be returned for recycling. This is expensive and wasteful. With digital printing, you print only what you need, so the impact on printing and distribution costs is considerable.

“The HP T230 Color Inkjet Web Press also allows ink densities to be addressed,” De Cian continues. “By reducing the ink density on some publications where print quality is less critical, cost-savings can be achieved for publishers. It is also possible to choose not to use the HP Bonding Agent at lower densities, which can also have an impact on price. Having these options adds flexibility, is attractive to customers and a good sales tool.”

Another part of CSQ’s offering is that all its presses use VOC-free inks.

“This not only makes the press room a more pleasant place to work, but appeals to our environmentally aware customers,” says De Cian. “The HP T230 Color Inkjet Web Press uses water-based ink,<sup>1</sup> so we were able to install it alongside our conventional presses and continue our VOC-free policy.”

## Investment and strategy

Despite the challenges within the industry as a whole, De Cian remains positive.

“Ultimately, to survive, companies need to continue to invest; you cannot be left behind,” he says. “We are lucky at CSQ because our owners continue to invest in new technology every year: a press, a finishing unit, a new software system. You need to keep up and remain competitive.

“The HP T230 press’s capabilities are real; the technology is real,” De Cian concludes. “This digital printing capability for newspapers is a valuable tool in helping us offer customers a uniquely competitive, flexible service model with options and products that enable us to help them address some of the issues in the market.”

1) Water-based HP inks—no hazard warning labels; no HAPs intentionally added, non-flammable and non-combustible. (Hazardous Air Pollutants (HAPs) may be present at extremely low levels (< 0.1%) according to EPA Method 311.) Water-based HP inks have very low VOC emissions. (Actual results may vary depending on operating conditions. Consult local authorities regarding Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) regulations in your area.)

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