Managing Directors of Imprimérie SNEL

From left to right: Stéphane de Beni, Roland Soubras, Flavio de Beni.
Background
Introduction

Imprimérie SNEL (Fig. 1.1) has its origins in the 1950s when architecture editor, Mr. Pierre Mardaga, founded l’Imprimérie Soledi which was sold in 1991 to the Masson group (Elsevier Masson), world-leader in the field of francophone medical books. Masson, bought by Vivendi group, was eventually sold to Mr. Roland Soubras and Mr. Flavio de Beni in 1996. It is under Mr. Soubras and Mr. de Beni that modern operations as Imprimérie SNEL began.

Imprimérie SNEL is a modern sheet fed offset operation with a work force of approximately 75 people located in Vottem, Belgium. The range of services alongside offset printing activities (books, catalogues, brochures, annual reports magazines, art books) includes prepress and post-press. Prepress is equipped with Kodak and PRINERGY workflow. The link between the prepress and the press environment is made by PCC. PCC creates the Ink Profiles from the images to be printed. For data management SNEL uses INSITE Technology on 15 servers with a total overall capacity of 23 terabytes.

The press room features different presses from Komori: LS 840P, LS 529, L 440 P, L 540, L II 40. The machine console systems are equipped with KMS and supervised by Komori K-Station. The MIS controlling the company’s technical operations is GamSys. The post-press features MBO and Stahl folding devices, a Muller Martini stitching machine and a completely automatic Kolbus Publica chain.

The market for Imprimérie SNEL is comprised of Belgium (50%) and France (50%).

Fig. 1.1: Imprimérie SNEL.
Workflow prior to JDF implementation

Since its creation, Imprimérie SNEL commissioned the information management to GamSys (MIS). Before JDF, the technical and print operations were not networked and therefore the information was not always readily available to all the parts of the operation (Fig. 1.2).

The centre of the operations is the MIS GamSys. The order requests are manually created in the MIS and sent on a paper order form to each department. This in turn causes many paper forms to be created and routed to different departments.

First, an order is created manually on a paper form, and then sent to the prepress. The manual process continues as the prepress responds with a different paper form and sends the order to the press. The press responds and sends the order to the post-press. The post-press responds and sends the order to be shipped. The order is then finished. The whole process is centralized in the MIS and the interface to each department is manual and paper-based.

Fig. 1.2 Workflow prior to JDF Implementation.

Networking between the different departments was done manually. This caused many issues:

- Extra internal communication was required in order to make the transitions between different departments smoother. This is an expensive process and the reason of multiple mistakes and delays.
The utilization of the resources was filled in manually by the operator. This resulted in a labour-intensive and tedious process and, more importantly, in an unclear understanding of the use of resources. The operators basically matched the used quantity with the requested quantity losing all information on the waste of resources.

The management had no clear overview, insight or control of processes and performance within the company.

Objectives
Imprimérie SNEL sought a method to have centralized data handling without manual intervention – technology that is expandable and highly scalable. The company management was concerned about how much the company was spending and how much profit it is making at every moment of the production chain.

Imprimérie SNEL decided to upgrade to the latest machinery, but realized that having the best machinery is just the beginning as the machinery still needs to be exploited to get the best performance out of it. The only way to achieve this is through JDF technology. Imprimérie SNEL was the first site worldwide to implement the JDF technology in order to connect the press and the prepress to a unique workflow.

Kodak chose Imprimérie SNEL as a beta site to test and implement its PRINERGY 4 workflow in a live environment.

Methodology
Initially, GamSys (MIS) software was installed in 1998 and it was used to produce quotes for the clients of Imprimérie SNEL. Soon Imprimérie SNEL had another goal: comparing estimated price with real-time information from production. To achieve this goal, Imprimérie SNEL implemented a full network for data collection. Operators provide all production information to the system: who am I, on which job am I working, what am I doing and, if applicable, used material (sheet, plate, paper...).

Imprimérie SNEL needed the different departments (prepress and press mainly) to be able to speak the same language. JDF is this language. This is the reason for seeking a global platform such as JDF.

The JDF implementation at Imprimérie SNEL started in 2006 and consisted of the following technology providers: GamSys, Kodak PRINERGY, Kodak InSite and PCC, KMS and K-station for Komori.

Reasons and deciding factors for prepress

PRINERGY (Kodak) – fits the size of the company and the production of the company. Furthermore it demonstrates trustworthiness and stability – two qualities that Imprimérie SNEL wants to align for themselves.
The main features of PRINERGY favoured by the company are:

- The regional versioning (same job to be printed in different languages)
- Rules-Based Automation (RBA)
- Load balancing and failover
- Replication of data in case of failure.

**Reasons and deciding factors for InSite (Kodak integrated product):**

Imprimérie SNEL has much of its customer base abroad, mainly in France. Because of the physical distance between the plant and the customer, it was decided to invest in a web portal where customers could easily do page approvals. Another key point is the direct link with PRINERGY workflow and the reliability of the system.

**Reasons and deciding factors for Komori software:**

In order to network the Komori presses with JDF, the KMS software was installed on each press. KMS manages the jobs on the press as well as the job activities, the maintenance of the press and the shifts of the press operators. KMS directly links the press to K-Station.

K-Station is the JDF gateway to the MIS. K-Station is managing and monitoring the different presses through the KMS.

The link between the prepress and the press concerning the ink profiles is made by the PCC software. PCC is creating the ink profile from the image to be printed and these ink profiles, imported into K-Station, are linked to the job ticket.

**Conclusion:**

JDF is the technology which makes communications between all of the different departments of Imprimérie SNEL possible. JDF was chosen to make the communications solid and understandable between all parts of the company.
Implementation Story
The JDF implementation at Imprimérie SNEL started in 2005 and progressed in several steps. Today Imprimérie SNEL profits from an integrated workflow controlled by the GamSys MIS between Kodak PRINERGY Workflow System and the Komori presses.

2005 – Concept

The implementation began with auditing the presses to establish what kind of interface was needed between the presses and JDF.

2006 – Beginning

Everything has to be connected to GamSys. The prepress and press environment have to be connected to the MIS. PRINERGY has to be connected to GamSys and Komori presses have to be connected to GamSys (via the K-Station and KMS).

1. Implementation of GamSys MIS - Start: June 2006

GamSys MIS was already managing many technical aspects of the company including accounting, planning, order processing and data collection which was manual from the presses before

- 2007: Maturity of Implementation. The MIS kept all the original tasks while the new system/functionality was implemented. Due to the fact that PRINERGY and K-Station are CIP4 compatible, these could be integrated with the MIS which is also CIP4 compatible.

Because JDF implementation is not a small undertaking, Imprimérie SNEL and its partners in the task took over one year to consolidate all processes.

The implementation of the GamSys JDF connector progressed quickly and smoothly. This reflects Imprimérie SNEL’s general mindset: a positive attitude toward technical and administrative innovation. JDF is the key to exploit this new technology and innovation and it played the primary role in the smooth implementation of the GamSys MIS.
2. Implementation of JDF connectivity to Komori Press

The JDF connector for the Komori presses is Komori K-Station (Fig. 4.2 and Fig. 4.3). All the Komori presses were ready to be connected to the K-Station via the KMS (Fig. 4.4) except for the L II 40. Komori International Europe developed a special USB interface for this specific type of press. The implementation lasted 3 months for the testing and 3 months for the production implementation for a total of 6 months.

The link between the prepress and the press environment concerning the ink profiles was made by the installation of PCC (Fig. 4.5). This software is responsible for the creation of ink profiles to be added to the electronic job ticket.
Fig. 4.2 K-Station main screen. Job list on the top left, Maintenance schedule on the top right, press schedule and press efficiency on the lower side.
Fig. 4.3 Job ticket from K-Station. Ink profiles and job preview are integrated.
Fig. 4.4 KMS Main screen. Job lists, ink profiles and job preview.
3. Implementation of JDF connectivity to Kodak PRINERGY (Fig 4.6). PRINERGY makes the creation of the jobs in the prepress environment. The JDF link is business link v. 3.0.0. The implementation of PRINERGY was very smooth and straightforward.
4. Implementation of JDF connectivity to InSite (Fig 4.7). InSite provides a Web interface for customers of Imprimérie SNEL to view their print jobs online. This enables customers to assess and approve the jobs, thereby saving time and cutting costs. InSite utilizes JDF technology to provide this innovative interface for Imprimérie SNEL’s customers.

![InSite's web interface for Imprimérie SNEL.](image-url)
Resulting Workflow/Processes

The resulting workflow after the JDF implementation (Fig. 5.1) is the evolution of Fig. 1.2 (original workflow). Now all the departments are interconnected and centralized by the MIS. All the manual steps and manual interventions have been removed and the communications between the different departments is fully automated and controlled by GamSys. The job ticket is now electronic and contains all the information about the print job. The advantages of this are:

- High level of automation
  - Order Numbers
  - Time registration
  - Status of the presses

- More efficiency
  - MIS controls all processes
  - E-tickets are more easily processed (fewer mistakes)
  - Workflow is smoother
  - The whole job is sent to the press

![Workflow Diagram](image)

*Fig. 5.1 Workflow at Imprimérie SNEL after JDF implementation. JDF is the common language of all departments.*
Innovation

Imprimérie SNEL is a printing company with an estimable reputation, and when deciding to upgrade its facilities and machinery, it was clear that a solution that would give Imprimérie SNEL the competitive edge amongst its competitors was what was needed. Imprimérie SNEL needed the latest equipment and the latest technology in order to help it maintain its position as the premiere offset printing site for the many fashion houses of Paris. JDF was the technology it chose, along with InSite, PRINERGY and K-Station, which all utilize JDF technology for seamless print operations.

The implementation of JDF technology was highly innovative for Imprimérie SNEL and enabled them to achieve higher goals, serve its customers better and attain an edge in the marketplace unlike ever before.

JDF is the common language between InSite, PRINERGY and K-Station – and all of these are controlled by the MIS GamSys. It is JDF which enabled Imprimérie SNEL to take advantage of all of the technological advantages offered by these providers and to change the way it does business.

The GamSys MIS is now the place where all data is consolidated. The electronic job ticket contains all information regarding the print job and the ticket is unique to each print job. This is very new to the operations at Imprimérie SNEL who previously used a separate paper order form for each part of the print process and no “ticket” was unique to a job. JDF enabled the unique electronic job ticket which has allowed Imprimérie SNEL to maintain strict control of its processes, its inventory, its systems and the resulting print jobs.

Also thanks to JDF, job creation is now automatic in Kodak PRINERGY. This allows a saving of 15 minutes per print job. This is a huge savings for Imprimérie SNEL’s productivity and has allowed Imprimérie SNEL to increase its production by more than 25%.

The implementation of InSite, also using JDF, has allowed customer service to take a new position at the top of Imprimérie SNEL’s offerings. The web interface of InSite allows Imprimérie SNEL’s customers to go online to check the status of print jobs, to approve print jobs online and to communicate with Imprimérie SNEL in a fast and automated fashion. Customers also receive automatic emails from the system to alert them of the status of each print job. This ongoing automated communication between Imprimérie SNEL and its customers keeps the customer happy and allows Imprimérie SNEL to focus on what it does best: high quality printing.

Imprimérie SNEL was selected as the première mondiale for the implementation of Kodak PRINERGY because of its innovation. Additionally it was one of the first JDF sites of Komori. The JDF implementation and automation at Imprimérie SNEL has very unique and innovative aspects on many levels: customer care and customer service, management of the company and the welfare of the employees.
Since the JDF implementation, satisfaction for both the company management and the employees at Imprimérie SNEL has increased dramatically. The management now has complete control over production: there are fewer errors on the job tickets, better cost tracking and better resource management. The customers are an integral part of the print process and customer service is something Imprimérie SNEL is very proud to have on offer. The employees have increased job satisfaction due to the fewer manual and repetitive tasks associated with each print job. They can now be more creative in their work, and this innovation is most satisfactory for Imprimérie SNEL’s employees, management and customers alike.

Highlight of Innovative results

- MIS is now the place where ALL DATA is consolidated (electronic ticket contains all information and is unique to each job)
- Job creation is now automatic in PRINERGY = 15 minutes less per job
- Web interface – InSite allows customers to control status of a print job online
- Better material tracking (precise information on number of sheets that have been used)
- Better global overview of production
- Better cost tracking
- Fewer people involved for repetitive, manual tasks