

Sterling Solutions recognises that the richness of the Tharstern generated JDF is critical to the success of their integrated workflow and they have made admirable progress on this front. However, the company has also recognised that without some feedback from the production processes they are effectively 'flying blind' from a management information standpoint and have made great strides with JMF (Job Messaging Format).

To explain, JMF is the data that flows from Heidelberg and Roland into their Tharstern MIS and tells them what

is really going on. JMF informs the management system of every key event and facilitates job tracking, efficiency analysis and ultimately the profits generated throughout the business. When things go wrong, JMF also gathers this data so senior management have the information they need to eliminate waste and inefficiency from the production process.

Despite the amazing progress that has been made at Sterling Solutions there is no sense of a job well done from Mr Fovargue. Instead, there is recognition that to progress further



they must continue to invest in new technology, remain open to new ideas and carry on their ethos of pushing the boundaries of accepted practice.

To find out more about Tharstern MIS & JDF email info@tharstern.com

EXPOS

Kodak
Kodak Showroom, Watford
31st January 2008
at 10am & 2pm

Using MIS to integrate and automate your Digital Workflow.

- JDF workflow demonstration with TharsternSQL™ & Kodak.
- Kodak demonstration.
- Introduction to the latest features of TharsternSQL™ v3.
- Network with Printers and Tharstern users.
- Meet the Tharstern and Kodak Team.



Why not join us at the following events to find out more about Tharstern MIS:

EXHIBITIONS



Screenprint, Sign & Digital UK
22nd – 24th April 2008
NEC Birmingham – Stand G15



Total Print
14th – 16th October 2008
Earls Court 2, 14th – Stand 241



Drupa 29th May - 11th June 2008
Messe Düsseldorf
Stand 05 A43

Workshop 08
4th – 6th November 2008
Komori Showroom, Leeds



MIS show 2008
TBC November 2008
TBC

More events and dates for 2008 to come...

To register for any of our events visit www.tharstern.com/events

Tharstern News

UK Print MIS News Presented by THARSTERN



2007 was a very competitive year for us but we have still managed to achieve one of our most successful years to date, having installed 82 new systems as well as over 65% of existing customers

upgraded to TharsternSQL™ v3. The introduction of TharsternSQL™ v3 and SmallPrint™ plus our JDF developments has certainly contributed to our performance, re-affirming our belief that our MIS solutions are in sync with the industry needs.

To support our growth, as ever, we are continuing to reinvest, not just in development and technologies, but in resources to support the ever increasing number of Tharstern customers. We have in fact added 22 new staff over the year; in particular, doubling our team of Consultants and increasing the size of the Tharstern support team.

With 2008 already underway we are looking forward to the year ahead. The recent opening of our Training Academy and Drupa is on the horizon at which we shall be unveiling some exciting new developments. For those of you who aren't aware we have recently opened a branch office in

Mumbai, India providing local services and support to a target audience of some 75000 printers. The official launch of our Indian operation took place at the IPEX South Asia in October last year. We are also attending and hosting a wide range of events throughout 2008 and do hope we get the chance meet or catch up at one of them.

On behalf of all at Tharstern may I take this opportunity to wish all customers and the Industry a belated Happy and Prosperous New Year!

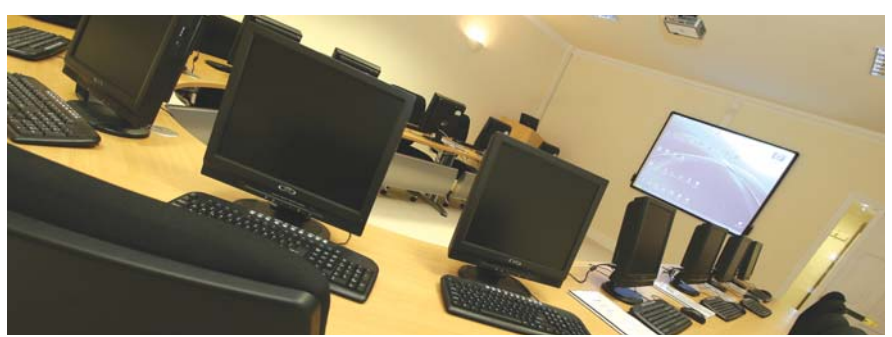
Regards
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Tharstern Launches Training Academy

Tharstern have added a new arm to their operation with the opening of the Tharstern Training Academy and launch of a range of courses for 2008.

The new State-of-the-art training facility is based at their head office in Colne and offers a wide range of Tharstern MIS, Print and general Business Skills courses. The doors opened to the Academy September of last year when Tharstern piloted several courses including 'Improving Print Estimating', 'Getting the most out of your MIS' and 'An Introduction to PRINCE2™ Project Management.'

Sue Atherton joined Tharstern mid 2006 as a Training Manager and headed up the project. Sue commented. "We hosted a selection of courses from September last year and



as soon as we made an announcement to our customers quite a few of the dates became fully booked, encouraging us to offer more dates."

Sue continued: "We heavily invested in developing the right surroundings and technology and have created an ideal learning environment. The feedback from the delegates who attended the training was very positive which further confirmed

our belief that there was a need for such a facility."

There are a wide range of courses on offer for 2008 helping users to refresh, review and improve their current use of Tharstern. The prices of the courses are attractively priced starting from £150 up to £325 per

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delegate for 1 day events and from £750 for 2 day events with discounts for additional delegates. Some of the courses on available include:

- 'Using Tharstern to calculate your cost rates'
- 'Advanced Datafile configuration for Tharstern'
- 'Scheduling and Production planning with Tharstern'
- 'TharsternSQL™ for Network Administrators'

2008 will also see the return of popular courses such as 'Getting the most out of your MIS' and 'Improving print

Estimating' in addition to non-Tharstern courses for topics such as 'Diary and email management with Outlook', 'Presentations with PowerPoint' and using 'Excel to analyse data'.

Sue added. "We offered a small selection of general business skills courses last year and were pleasantly surprised by the uptake and number of printers wanting to acquire these sorts of skills."

The Academy is ideally situated just off the M65 at Tharstern's head office in Colne, Lancashire allowing delegates to get away from the office and learn in a comfortable and un-interrupted environment.

The facilities cater for up to 14 delegates and include a state-of-the-art interactive whiteboard, hi-performance PC's and ample free parking.

In addition to the Tharstern MIS range of courses there will also be a range of other Print, I.T and Business Skills courses on offer. The venue is also available to customers, external agencies and organisations to hire or alternatively tailored courses can be created for businesses and groups to help achieve specific goals.

Visit www.tharstern.com/academy for course details, prices and to book your places

Tharstern Supplier on-line

More and more Tharstern users are benefiting from streamlined paper ordering with the Supplier On-line (TSO) feature of the Purchase Order Processing module.

TSO integrates directly with Paperlinx group's on-line procurement system, more popularly known as BITE (Business Internet Trading Engine); providing a mechanism to continuously and automatically update the latest

product catalogue from Howard Smith Paper and the Robert Horne Group in a matter of moments. A catalogue is automatically created and updated for each individual printer and contains their agreed special buying rates. This process alone helps to quickly and

simply manage product and price updates and eliminates the need to manually update each product individually or key in new product lines. The number of customers making use of this feature has rapidly grown since it's launch in September 2004 advised Rob Botterill of Howard Smith Paper, although there are still plenty more users who could benefit.

Rob added. "There is no extra cost

benefits to both the Estimating and Purchase Ordering Processes. By being able to download paper prices directly into your Tharstern system at the touch of a button you can be assured that you are working on 100% accurate pricing information, helping you get your estimates right first time round. TSO will also give you time saving benefits when raising purchase orders for your paper requirements. TSO will deliver your purchase order directly to Howard Smith's main distribution warehouse and instantly confirm on screen stock availability, additional cutting charges, expected delivery date and that your order has been placed successfully. This will prevent the need to wait around for confirmations and give you more time to spend on other tasks. A confirmation email can also be sent to you as well."

To take advantage of TSO's benefits, all you need to do is contact your Howard Smith or Robert Horne Group Account Manager who will provide a username and password and liaise with Tharstern on your behalf to activate the feature.

in using this service, as long as the customer has Tharstern Purchase Ordering module in place it is easy to set-up by just contacting your Howard Smith Paper or Robert Horne Group Account Manager."

"Using TSO provides real tangible



product catalogue from Howard Smith Paper and the Robert Horne Group in a matter of moments. A catalogue is automatically created and updated for each individual printer and contains their agreed special buying rates. This process alone helps to quickly and

Tharstern MIS in Practice



If it ain't broke, break it! That is the dominant philosophy of Lettering communication and printing group, Sterling Solutions. Since its launch in 1990, Sterling's senior management has consistently challenged every process, system and protocol that many other companies might consider unchallengeable and the result is a successful and dynamic business model that redefines the overused phrase 'lean and mean'.

Sterling's purpose built 60,000 sq ft production facility is the first demonstration of their commitment to investment and growth. Inside, you will find state-of-the-art printing equipment providing clients with a turnkey design, print and despatch solution.

However, this in itself is not the unique quality of the business. What sets Sterling apart is the way in which they have linked every production process into one cohesive and fully integrated workflow with their Tharstern MIS at the heart.

Sterling instinctively grasped the potential for Tharstern to utilise JDF (Job Definition Format) connectivity to link all the production processes. It was this progressive attitude coupled with the expertise of their staff that allowed them to redefine how jobs are handled. Rather than adopt the traditional and sometimes cumbersome estimate-job-invoice cycle, Sterling have used Tharstern to strip the entire administrative process to its bare



essentials; in their case, the bulk of their order book is handled by just three account managers.

This revolutionary approach blurs the traditional lines between administration, pre-press and production bringing about improvements in consistency, accuracy, customer service and cost efficiency. In the words of account manager and systems administrator Nigel Fovargue,

"Tharstern gives us the tools we need to manage the entire lifecycle of the job. Our account management team will estimate the costs, liaise with our customers and when the orders come in we can create the works documentation, handle raw material issues and purchasing, attach the input files when available, assign Heidelberg SignaStation impositions and submit the job to Heidelberg Print Ready/Signastation via JDF."

Watching this procedure in action, it is difficult to see where the traditional role of an estimator ends and the role of the pre-press operative begins. These two 'black-arts' are fast becoming one in the eyes of Sterling Solutions and in turn creating a new breed of account manager.

Fovargue explains, "Ask a handful of estimators to describe a simple 8pp

A4 section and you can expect to receive five different interpretations."

However, if you intend to adopt true JDF connectivity in your workflow, there is no room for variety.

As Fovargue continues, "Our customers demand consistency of quality, accuracy and price so we must eliminate unnecessary variables from the production cycle. Our account managers bring a broad spectrum of expertise to the process and know how to make best use of our JDF tools from Tharstern, Heidelberg and Roland."

Of course, not everything goes exactly to plan and Sterling have once again become a template for how best to utilise the investments they have made in technology and, in particular, their Tharstern MIS. In a market where customers demand fast response times and total flexibility, the successful printing operations will be up to the task.

"If there are modifications or amendments to jobs that will affect its critical path, it is our practice to start the cycle again and to re-assess the cost and direction of the job. This brings greater control to the production process and crucially, allows us to effectively manage costs."