

[INTRODUCTION]

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Hey, everybody. Welcome to Podcasts From the Printerverse. This is Deborah Corn, your Intergalactic Ambassador. We are coming to you live from the HP booth at LabelExpo Americas 2024, and I have a special guest with me. His name is Mike Meshkati. He is the President of SinaLite. They serve North America. SinaLite is a B2B wholesale print service provider exclusively catering to the needs of trade customers and resellers such as printers, print brokers, sign shops, and more. Their focus is simple. Deliver the highest industry standard print products with dedicated customer service.

Welcome back to the podcast, Mike.

[00:01:36] MM: Hi, Deborah. Thanks for having me on. Great to see you.

[00:01:40] DC: Yes. This is actually your second time on the podcast. Last time we sat down for an interview, we did a deep dive into your e-commerce platform. There has been a pandemic since then, so I want to check in on you with that first. How are things today, and how handy was that robust e-commerce platform during the COVID?

[00:02:05] MM: Definitely. I think the pandemic was hard on all printers, and I think it was hard generally on everyone. I think it was May 2020 when the whole pandemic happened. In our

plants, we had to close up, and we were all worried. What's going to happen with all the customers' jobs that we have in these facilities?

Luckily, we were all able to be open, and we started running. The biggest challenge we had was I remember the first week of those news elements. We actually had a couple of COVID cases. The whole team was all scared of working in the facilities. It was definitely challenging. Then all of a sudden, we lost 60% of our work over about two months. We had to go to the drawing boards to figure out, "Okay, we just lost a crap load of business. What do we do?"

The team was great. They came together. We figured out how to do a lot of collaterals around COVID. I don't know if you remember. I think us humans forget really fast. We used to go to the grocery stores. There was social distancing.

[00:03:14] DC: The acrylic things.

[00:03:15] MM: Yes.

[00:03:16] DC: I was thinking about that the other day when someone handed me something. I was like, "You're touching me."

[00:03:20] MM: Yes. We got creative. In about six, seven months, we got back the revenue that we lost. We got into a lot of new lines of businesses. But I think COVID in a sense was really good for us because we're e-commerce. We're available 24/7. You really don't need to walk into a facility to hand us an order. It worked out really well. A lot of people, I think, got used to that whole e-commerce because before, our industry was a little bit behind when it came to online ordering. But I think COVID made that whole aspect go away.

[00:03:59] DC: Yes. The reason why I'm specifically asking you this question is because you were actually ahead of everybody else when we first spoke. It was like 2018 or something like that. Yes.

[00:04:09] MM: It was. Yes, yes.

[00:04:10] DC: That was much before.

[00:04:12] MM: We got into the online e-commerce space 2008. I don't know if you remember. There was that big financial crisis.

[00:04:19] DC: Yes. The recession.

[00:04:21] MM: Totally. It was a big one, and we lost a lot of business at that time. We had to get creative again. I think at hard moments, we have to figure out, how do we be creative? The e-commerce was, "Let's get into it right, and let's start getting business from the online platform."

[00:04:39] DC: Okay. I'm really interested in that. I want to ask you the question that I prepared for you. But then I might ask you a follow-up about what you just said. But you actually might cover it in this one. One of the biggest lessons that we've all learned from the pandemic is that online ordering must be user-friendly and a simple process for customers to order. Printing is not always a simple user-friendly process. Not the actual manufacturing of it but if you don't understand what you want or a printer is using terms that you don't understand, then you don't actually know what you can buy. You might just keep buying the thing you know, not knowing that something could be better for you because you don't know what it is.

[00:05:21] MM: Correct.

[00:05:22] DC: Now, in your situation, customers might require that education and information, and they're not going to call and speak to a salesperson. We could call that the Amazon effect, although it has happened way before the pandemic. But after, at this point in time now, so many people are buying things online, and there's a new system on how to be the answer when someone's looking for something, right?

[00:05:48] MM: Definitely.

[00:05:49] DC: But that also means that the purchasing decision and the process has to be smooth and along the line. I believe, at least, that you have to spend some time to at least

provide education for customers if they don't know what something is. How do you keep your customers educated and informed on your offerings, introduce new products, which I went to your website and I saw that you have a whole bunch of them, and keep the customer experience in a friend zone? That's a three-part question. I'll sit back for a while.

[00:06:24] MM: I love all the questions you just asked. First, you mentioned about how printing is a very complicated product, and it's all customized. It's not like you could go out there and, I don't know, order a pen, and you're going to get this pen. Everything is fully customized. We are in the custom manufacturing space, which causes its own challenges. How we tackled it? I think right now, since 2008 to today, we're at two million SKUs. We offer a lot of SKUs. But it's information overload for an average individual to digest that.

[00:07:01] DC: I call them civilians.

[00:07:03] MM: Another fortunate part about us, because we're a wholesaler and we're selling to the trade, our customers know what they want to a degree. But education, as you mentioned, is essential. What we do is we have teams, obviously, of developers and people in marketing that their whole job is to make sure the user experience, it's proper. It's not like we have a website that we created in 2008, and it's still rolling with the same thing. There is multiple version upgrades during the year. How we go through those version upgrades is through the consumer.

Our clients, when they send a ticket, when they talk to our customer service, we actually take that feedback, and we give it to the marketing team or the website development team, and we say, "Can you make their lives easier?" Okay?

The other thing that we've done is we've categorized it. Even though on the website you might not know what you want, when you hit our landing pages – I'm going to say business cards because we all order business cards. I think, currently, we're offering 24 different variations of business cards, anywhere from a 14-point to a matte lam plus a spot UV. There's a lot of different variations. You asked about how do you educate the customer.

[00:08:27] DC: I mean, you just said a matte lam with a spot UV, right?

[00:08:29] MM: Exactly.

[00:08:30] DC: There are a lot of people not in the printing industry that have no idea what that is.

[00:08:34] MM: Exactly. How it goes is we try to make those landing pages for those products in a way that an average customer that doesn't know even what they want to go and learn about it and understand it.

Now, you mentioned the Amazon. I think the only beef I have with Amazon is their customer service. If you ever want customer service, they make it extremely difficult for us to find customer service.

[00:09:00] DC: They actually buried it even deeper now. Because I had a problem and I actually wanted to speak to them. I got a package addressed to me from Amazon, and I did not order any of that stuff and the thing. I was freaking out that someone had my credit card and was charging things. But I didn't see it on my end. I didn't see it on my American Express card. I didn't see anything in my order history. I was like, "This is a human. I need a human now because I'm panicking."

[00:09:26] MM: Sure. Yes.

[00:09:27] DC: I'm thinking identity theft. There used to actually be a way that they would call you. I don't know if that was a little while back. Now, I had to actually search on Google how do you get customer service on Amazon, and it told me where to find it.

[00:09:40] MM: Exactly. Yes. How we tackled that – because I told you, A, identity theft is crazy. It's happening daily basis. But the way that we came and tackled the customer service because we know that some of the challenges with ordering online is not being able to get a hold of anyone. We got about 22 customer service agents that are available from 7 Eastern Time to roughly around 10 PM Eastern Time. There's a good coverage that they're handling –

[00:10:11] DC: That covers the entire North America, just like you do. Yes.

[00:10:13] MM: North America. Yes. Exactly. Our customers are able to do live chat, which we recommended.

[00:10:20] DC: I love live chat.

[00:10:20] MM: Live chat is awesome. I'm a big believer in it.

[00:10:22] DC: As long as you don't get a bot. But you don't have a bot. Or does a bot qualify in that regard?

[00:10:28] MM: There is. Yes. We launched our bot about two years ago. It's becoming smarter and smarter. But as soon as it doesn't know an answer, it automatically sends it to an agent, and an agent responds to it. Also, we have a telephone. Some people like calling and, obviously, tickets, which you send a request. We firmly believe in our customer service, and that's one of our core values, customer success, essentially. It's a key element of our business growth and how we're moving forward basically.

[00:10:59] DC: Especially when you order online. Because there is going to be a moment there where you're like, "Am I going to get what I wanted?" Usually, it's when you're opening that box. When someone opens that box and they're relieved, you've got a customer for life.

[00:11:19] MM: Yes. I hope that's only the first time that they order with us because after the fact, we want to make sure that they know our service and they know that we're able to deliver it to them.

[00:11:31] DC: I think that that does. A couple of times, they get that order, and then they start recommending you to everybody else. Yes.

[00:11:36] MM: Oh, yes. We see that. I think the biggest thing for a new customer is that if you're not sure about something, ask. That's why we have the live agents available, the telephone, and the email. It's ask. We're here to support you, basically.

[00:11:49] DC: Right. Do you have any actual salespeople who go after new business as well? Or does all your ordering come through online?

[00:11:56] MM: Ordering comes all online. What we offer is just a great customer service team, and we're really active on social media. I think you asked, "Where do customers learn?" You have a great social media presence.

[00:12:11] DC: Thank you so much.

[00:12:11] MM: Oh, no problem. I think we're following the same steps as yourself, and we do a lot of product launches on our social media. If they follow us on our LinkedIn, our Facebook, that's where we pump a lot of information. We also have a great email newsletter as well. We try to pump as much as information on our blog as well. We're socially available for education.

[BREAK]

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[INTERVIEW CONTINUED]

[00:13:39] DC: Everything you just mentioned relies on one important factor, which is that people know you already.

[00:13:45] MM: Correct.

[00:13:46] DC: Or someone else likes something, and it shows up in their “for you” feed or anything like that. How do you try to connect with people you don't know? Do you invest in Google, AdWords, and stuff like that?

[00:14:00] MM: Yes, yes. Google Ads is essential to our business.

[00:14:03] DC: Not AdWords. Ads. Yes.

[00:14:04] MM: Yes. Also Facebook or Meta. That could be on Instagram, on Facebook, LinkedIn. It's a great resource. But in this day and age, you have to do marketing. Online marketing is essential.

[00:14:16] DC: Yes. I agree with you. Facebook is, unfortunately, the gift that keeps on giving with their advertising. They really do let you target exactly who you want.

[00:14:25] MM: They do.

[00:14:26] DC: It's relatively inexpensive for the return that you can get.

[00:14:30] MM: You're correct.

[00:14:31] DC: LinkedIn is very expensive.

[00:14:33] MM: It's very hard.

[00:14:35] DC: It's an almost impossible process. I've tried to do it a few times, and I'm like, "I need an IT person. I don't even understand half the things." Can you talk a little bit more about that? I'm very curious.

[00:14:46] MM: Yes, for sure. Yes.

[00:14:49] DC: I hope other people are.

[00:14:49] MM: No. I think LinkedIn, on their ad side, it is difficult and it is expensive. But you have to be present. Your content that you generate on your LinkedIn, I think it's essential. As long as people are seeing your content and you have relevant content, it's important for you to be present. I usually find LinkedIn really good for making the connections. I think it's a great platform for connection. I'm not a marketer myself. Our marketing team are trying ads and everything on LinkedIn. I have to follow up to see how they're doing it and how successful. But it is the most expensive platform for us as well.

[00:15:27] DC: Would you be targeting printers, other printers and marketing agencies or?

[00:15:30] MM: Yes. Like a photocopy shop, a marketing agency, a graphic designer, a sign shop, an apparel printer. Yes. Those would be our verticals.

[00:15:40] DC: Right. Oh, because you have so many opportunities. I love the way that you divide up your website, so I know exactly what I want. Everything is in each section. It makes it very clear. Last question about LinkedIn, have you ever done an AB test maybe of sending out the same post only using relevant hashtags to see if people interact with them?

[00:15:59] MM: I think our marketing team did that. Again, because I think the challenge with LinkedIn that we faced, you don't see that much traffic. I'm comparing it to like Meta or Facebook, for example. It's a totally – and the more data points you have, the more decision-making capabilities you have.

[00:16:16] DC: Yes. Well, the targets are the best targets on LinkedIn. I mean, it's exactly who you need. Of course, you could just do a search and find all the printers that there are out there and try to connect with them. But I agree with your approach of you're going to put it in their face, but it's still going to be organic. They're still going to make a decision whether they want to click in and what you're sharing is interesting enough. You're not an aggressive guy. Especially, I think that's super important online. You can feel that aggression coming from those posts when they're sales posts.

[00:16:48] MM: Exactly. Yes. Especially, you get these sales posts, and then they hit your mailbox. You know what I mean? Then you're like, "I'm not even looking at this anymore."

[00:16:57] DC: Totally. Tell me about – I want to focus on introducing new products. I know that you said you use your social channels and things like that. Do you target verticals? For example, we're at LabelExpo, so let's talk about labels and packaging.

[00:17:12] MM: For sure. Yes.

[00:17:12] DC: Okay. Now, there's labels in food and beverage. There's labels in cannabis. There's labels in pharmaceuticals. Are you even breaking down your outreaches by verticals? Or are you just saying, "Hey, we do labels and packaging now." Or a little both?

[00:17:28] MM: I got you. Yes. A little bit about labels and packaging. About five years ago, we decided to get into the whole label side of the business, and it was challenging. Coming from the commercial printing background, trying to learn a full new vertical, it was a lot of hours and us screwing up until we finally, after 18 months, figured out how to properly produce labels and convert them.

How we tackle typically product launches is we go through a whole industry. I'll pick labels as an example. On that vertical, we understood what are the top three to five different verticals, for example, on the label side of it. It could be food. It could be beverage. It could be cannabis, as an example of the three.

[00:18:18] DC: Yes. Pharmaceuticals. I mean, there's a zillion.

[00:18:21] MM: Yes. Then figure out, we start serving –

[00:18:24] DC: I'm just laughing because we're sitting in front of like 9,000 examples of labels, and we're trying to think of two. There's like 25,000 here.

[00:18:32] MM: Exactly. Then we survey our customers. We have about 25,000 customers on our platform that order from us annually. We survey them and we say, "Hey, these are what

offerings we have based on these verticals. Are you interested or not?" We take a lot of feedback.

I've got to admit, our customers give us great feedback. They say, "Yes, we like it. We're interested into it." Then we deep dive, and we start learning about those verticals because our main objective is to be able to educate our customers to be able to go sell those to their clients and order it from us.

[00:19:07] DC: Yes. What originally made you say, "Huh, we should get into labels and packaging." Do you consider labels and packaging two completely different things?

[00:19:20] MM: I don't. If you go on our website, we have a category called packaging. Packaging is a beautiful space to be in. It's very consistent, compared to the commercial sector. It is growing rapidly instead of shrinking. It's a healthy vertical to be in. Obviously, like all companies, we need to grow our revenues. We decided which verticals for us to be in.

I actually came to the Labelexpo. I started touring it, and I realized it's a very healthy industry. Then they have seminars. They have panels. I sat on to those, and I educated myself, and I said, "Hey, this is good." Now, how much equipment do we need to go buy to start producing?

I think this is a beautiful thing about our organization is that we're doing all the heavy lifting on the capital purchases. I always tell this to our customers. "Hey, allow us to spend a couple million dollars on equipment. Jump on our platform. When you build a nice healthy business in that vertical, create your own. Go buy your own equipment. Or if you don't want to get into the equipment business, we're more than happy to do the fulfillment for you." That kind of got us into the whole label side of the business.

Within the past year, we got into folding cartons. Now, we're offering folding carton products. We offer cut-and-stack products. I'd like to share, past 18 months, our main focus has been the packaging vertical. I think the commercial has matured up. There are new ways of creating revenue, especially for the commercial printer sign shop. Look at the packaging side of the world, basically.

[00:21:04] DC: Right. Folding carton, not yet flexible packaging. Or is that what you're here sort of investigating?

[00:21:11] MM: This is why I'm here right now. It is a hot space. I think they have a whole flex-pack section now at LabelExpo, which they never had it. HP is pushing it hard, and I think they have a good reason to push it hard because it's growing at 20x.

[00:21:28] DC: Yes. This machine right in front of us does flexible packaging and labels. You just switch them out.

[00:21:33] MM: Yes. It's a nice machine. They're 200k. It offers both. You could do PS or pressure-sensitive. You could also do flexible. You could also do shrink on it.

[00:21:44] DC: Oh, I didn't know that.

[00:21:45] MM: Yes. It's like their 6000 series but just much bigger and wider, basically. It is a healthy industry based on what we're seeing. Hanging out at the flex pack, which I think I ran into yesterday as well, I saw a lot of big players watching all those seminars about flex pack. It is something for everyone to be looking at.

[BREAK]

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[INTERVIEW RESUMED]

[00:23:01] DC: I jumped on this flexible packaging thing last year at LabelExpo. I spoke to one of the HP customers. We were doing a podcast. His name is Frank from LABELISTEN. Shout out. He developed a very successful flexible packaging business, and he also shared his sustainability story about it. I was like, “Frank, it's plastic.” He's like, “Girl, that's so much easier to deal with in the recycling plants than somebody who puts maybe a coating on a box, and they don't know what to do with it, and it could be reused.” I was like, “Wow. I never even thought about it.”

Then I started noticing more and more in my grocery store. It started there. I'm like, “There's fruit in pouches now. There's salad in pouches now.” I just bought cucumbers in pouches.

[00:23:52] MM: Oh, amazing. Yes.

[00:23:52] DC: I did.

[00:23:53] MM: Yes, yes.

[00:23:54] DC: The other option was plastic wrap around it.

[00:23:56] MM: Yes. I know exactly what you mean. Yes, yes. The English –

[00:23:58] DC: The English cucumbers they –

[00:23:59] MM: Yes, yes. Exactly, yes.

[00:24:00] DC: There were five little mini cucumbers in a little pouch, and I'm like, “This is just – it changes so many things. It makes it so much easier.” Think about the retailers, right? Half the weight is gone. Half the – you can use more shelf space. For the shippers, you could put more stuff in the truck. I mean, you could send more stuff out. If you only had 10 items in like a cereal box and now it's in a pouch and I can have 20, hello. Let's talk about a sustainability story. That's less trucks and things like that.

[00:24:32] MM: It is.

[00:24:33] DC: Tell me about what are your biggest takeaways about flexible packaging. Then I want to know how much research you're doing about the substrates and the food barriers because that seems like a little bit of an obstacle to me.

[00:24:45] MM: It is. Again, like you mentioned, sustainability is a good factor. I know that the whole flexible side of the business, it's looking to be more sustainable. I think the worlds of the HPs and substrate manufacturers are pushing that drive. I think that drive is mainly going to come from the brand owners. I think when they demand it from the converters, in reality they're going to start producing it because it's much more expensive to produce the material and also printing it, et cetera.

What I've learned about this whole flexible, because this past two days for me, it's all been around flexible packaging, is that, obviously, I'm looking at it mainly on the manufacturing side of it because, again, we do the heavy lifting for our customers to bring their – to purchase the capital expenditure. It is an expensive venture to get into. It's like I think around four to five million-dollar capital investment when you're looking at the full line. But we see the growth opportunities, and we're like, “Okay, this could be – let's say two, three years down the line, it could be even much more because more people are getting on it.”

We are seeing a lot of small food manufacturers popping up, especially if you walk around, for example, Whole Foods. I'll give you an example. They have a lot of small local players that need to put their products into a package. What's happening is more of them are putting it in flexible packaging because you just have one container.

[00:26:19] DC: And it's resealable. I'm just saying it's very convenient.

[00:26:22] MM: It is. Yes. If you pick the route up the sustainability angle of it, well, it's going to be 100% recyclable. You're helping the environment, and you're reducing your packaging cost at the end of the day.

[00:26:34] DC: I just want to make a little disclaimer on the 100% thing, only because you can still add some specialty effects to flexible packaging, and that might skew it into not recyclable.

[00:26:47] MM: You're correct.

[00:26:48] DC: Otherwise, 100% I agree with you.

[00:26:50] MM: I don't know. I'm still learning. I think if any product is 92% recyclable, I think they consider it 100% recyclable or something.

[00:26:59] DC: I love it. I mean, at first, I was like, "What?" I'm like, "Oh, my God. You're totally right."

[00:27:04] MM: Exactly, exactly. For us, you asked a question about the material side and –

[00:27:11] DC: And the food barrier.

[00:27:12] MM: And the food barrier. I think that's the main thing that we're trying to get our head around right now because I had a great example from a vendor. They basically put – let's say chips. They had a local manufacturer of potato chips, and they made this pouch for them. They forgot to ask where is the altitude of this product when you're putting it onto the shelves. It was going to Colorado. As soon as it went up the mountain, all the bags started popping.

[00:27:44] DC: Oh, my God.

[00:27:46] MM: This is a great example of knowing –

[00:27:47] DC: Yes, and it makes total sense because I take so many planes and my – whenever I get chips, they're always like puffed out. Yes.

[00:27:52] MM: Or if you go on an airplane.

[00:27:54] DC: That's what I mean. Yes.

[00:27:54] MM: Because your altitude goes up.

[00:27:56] DC: Oh, my God. I never thought about –

[00:27:57] MM: Exactly. There's a lot of thinking that you got to do regarding how you're creating that material.

[00:28:05] DC: I didn't even realize that. Now, you're freaking me out. There must be also different strengths of the –

[00:28:10] MM: Strength.

[00:28:10] DC: Is it the strip? What do they call that?

[00:28:11] MM: Yes. Oh, you're talking about the zippers?

[00:28:14] DC: Yes, the zippers. There must be different strengths, right?

[00:28:16] MM: There are different strengths of zippers.

[00:28:17] DC: Really?

[00:28:18] MM: Child-resistant. If you're doing a cannabis pouch, for example, well, it needs to be child-resistant, right?

[00:28:25] DC: I know. But they've gotten really good at that. I just use scissors at this point. I'm like, "I can't open them up."

[00:28:30] MM: I know. They get too heavy. Yes.

[00:28:31] DC: It's very – by the way, for the intended purposes with people who use it for medical purposes, you have Parkinson's disease. I don't understand how you can open that. I really don't.

[00:28:42] MM: Exactly. No, it's really hard.

[00:28:43] DC: There's got to be a better solution. Or I hope they do what I do and just say, "Screw it" and use a scissor.

[00:28:47] MM: Scissor it.

[00:28:49] DC: But if I had children in my house, I couldn't do that because I couldn't close it back up.

[00:28:52] MM: Exactly.

[00:28:53] DC: It's complicated. Did you happen to see the RFID presentation that they were doing here?

[00:29:00] MM: This year, I wasn't really focused on the RFID because my main focus was around pouches because there was the master class for both of them.

[00:29:08] DC: Yes. Oh, those?

[00:29:09] MM: Yes. There was an RFID one and for flexible packaging. The master class for RFID was all booked. We couldn't get into it. I think it's a big thing to be in.

[BREAK]

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[INTERVIEW RESUMED]

[00:29:57] DC: It was very interesting. There's a – Avery Dennison was spearheading it. Anybody can find Avery Dennison and figure out what was going on there. But they actually offer a service where they'll make the RFID chips for you and then send you the chips in a roll. Then you have to marry them with the labels you want to put them on, which is kind of cool.

[00:30:19] MM: It is cool. Yes.

[00:30:20] DC: Then they also have something if you have, I guess, a rotary press it's called. They have a component that can fit in there, and you can print the chips yourself.

[00:30:28] MM: Oh, amazing.

[00:30:29] DC: But it's –

[00:30:30] MM: It's a different ball game. Yes.

[00:30:30] DC: Not a simple process and even if you're marrying the chips to the labels. I was speaking to a printer who was helping interpret for me what was going on in the presentation. He was like, "The registration can't be off by a miller anything, or it doesn't." He's like, "It's complicated. But if you can figure out how to do it, it is so lucrative." Walmart is actually the one that pushed this in the market.

[00:30:56] MM: Amazing.

[00:30:56] DC: I'm not sure if you know. It's actually something else I didn't know is that it wasn't a consumer application. It's for inventory management and supply chain.

[00:31:06] MM: And theft maybe. Yes.

[00:31:07] DC: And theft. Exactly. I have to say of all the things I've seen at this show, except for some of the stuff that's in this booth, that seems like a crazy opportunity. But you have to have those big-box clients or retailers or things like that. Okay, we digressed a little.

[00:31:27] MM: I know.

[00:31:27] DC: But I can talk to you –

[00:31:27] MM: It's great conversation. Yes.

[00:31:28] DC: I can talk to you all day long. But we are sitting in the HP booth, so let's talk about them for a little while.

[00:31:34] MM: For sure.

[00:31:35] DC: How has HP contributed to your label and packaging offerings?

[00:31:41] MM: HP is a great partner for us. We appreciate everything they've done for us. Initially, when we went on the label side, we didn't go HP. We went with another vendor. I don't like to name vendors or anything. But about 12 months after the business was up and running, we decided to scrap the old vendor's machine and get an HP6000 series machine. The main reason why we did that was mainly for color consistency. We take pride for color, and we wanted to make sure if someone is ordering something, let's say on a commercial side, it kind of matches our label side, and it matches our signage side.

We partner up with HP, and they shipped us a press fairly quickly. As soon as we did that installation and we were able to prove to our clients how our color is, how our quality is, and how our turnaround is, especially comparing it with Flexo, because in the label world, the majority of the converters are running Flexo presses, so colors have to be really close for those longer runs. Then we saw our business ramping up. Now, we're doing an extended gamut with them as well.

If you need a brand color to be matched, I'm going to say Home Depot orange because all printers, we know Home Depot orange basically. You are able to do an expanded gamut. Their expanded gamut is good. It's like 92% accurate. Another good thing about it, if Home Depot, for example, comes to you and says, "Hey, I'm not happy about the expanded gamut," you could

actually buy HP PANTONE inks that will match that brand color for you. They are a great partner, and they've helped our business grow.

[00:33:31] DC: Excellent. I want to go back to something you said in the beginning of the podcast which actually made me a little nervous because you were like, “It took us nine months to get our press working.” But that wasn't the HP press, right? That was the other press.

[00:33:44] MM: It was. Yes.

[00:33:46] DC: Compare those two experiences. Once you got the HP press, was it another six months, nine months of getting –

[00:33:53] MM: I think with any new installation, there is going to be some hiccups. Nothing in the manufacturing space doesn't come without a hiccup. But I think where you find the advantage with, for example, HP is service. If they're able to provide you the service to get over that hiccup, I think they've done a good job.

Another big thing that we look at when partnering with vendors and particularly on HP is productivity. I know that it's important for us printers to be as productive as possible these days because margins are getting lower. If they could offer us a platform that gives us that productivity, I think we should all jump all over it, and that's what we've done. But that comes with our side of it as well.

I talked to some printers, and they say, “Hey, we're not able to get our press up and running this quickly.” My question is, “How much maintenance are you doing?” They say, “We do maintenance once every other day.” It's like, “Okay. Let's first make sure that you're doing all your maintenance application and then look at productivity.” A lot comes with the operation as well.

[00:35:02] DC: Excellent. Well, it is always a pleasure.

[00:35:05] MM: Likewise, Deborah.

[00:35:06] DC: Speaking with you. I'm so glad I saw you again. You're my first repeat podcast customer.

[00:35:11] MM: Oh, amazing. Wow. I'm honored.

[00:35:13] DC: I'm honored, too. They were like, "Mike from SinaLite." I'm like, "I know him." I'm like, "I've interviewed him." I'm like, "We got this under. We've got this." I was like, "We can talk all day long."

[00:35:23] MM: Oh, I know. Tell me about it.

[00:35:24] DC: I'm really glad that it was you that was the person.

[00:35:27] MM: Oh, thank you.

[00:35:29] DC: Everything you need to get in touch with Mike is in the show notes of this podcast. If you're a printer and you need some support or you want to test out a different vertical or you want to just talk to someone really cool, connect with Mike. Connect with SinaLite. Really, let them help your business grow until Mike said, until the point where you don't need them anymore.

[00:35:49] MM: Definitely.

[00:35:50] DC: As far as he's concerned, that's a happy customer experience.

[00:35:53] MM: It is a happy customer experience for us. Again, Deborah, thank you so much for having me on. I really enjoy your LinkedIn post, and keep this going.

[00:36:02] DC: Thank you so much, Sir. Until next time, everybody, label long and prosper.

[END OF INTERVIEW]

[00:36:10] DC: Thanks for listening to Podcasts From the Printerverse. Please subscribe, click some stars, and leave us a review. Connect with us through printmediacentr.com, we'd love to hear your feedback on our shows and topics that are of interest for future broadcasts. Until next time, thanks for joining us. Print long and prosper.

[END]

Mentioned in This Episode:

Mike Meshkati: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/mike-meshkati/>

SinaLite: <https://sinalite.com/>

Labelexpo Americas 2024: <https://www.labelexpo-americas.com/>

'Outsourcing Your Options with Mike Meshkati, SinaLite.com live from #PrintingUnited': <https://podcastsfromtheprinterverse.com/outsourcing-your-options-with-mike-meshkati-sinalite-com-live-from-printingunited/>

'LIVE from Labelexpo Europe: Frank Plechschmidt, LABELISTEN': <https://podcastsfromtheprinterverse.com/live-from-labelexpo-europe-frank-plechschmidt-labelisten/>

Frank Plechschmidt: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/frank-plechschmidt-b461b018/>

HP: <https://www.hp.com>

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