A Lever to Obtain King-Size Deals

TripleArc is one of Britain's high-flying technology companies. By winning mega-brand customers they have more than trebled their growth-rate every year. Northmann's system is a growing part of the success story.

By Anette Schulin-Zeuthen

Having stepped up from the car park under London's Marble Arch; zigzagged your way through all of the dark suits, and catching your first glimpse of TripleArc's stylish offices; you begin to understand the kind of business TripleArc is in. They are in Big Business.

London City is one of Triple Arc's locations

Great Technology

The company was established in 2000 as a technology company to deliver systems which would completely automate the print ordering and production process. This process normally involves a customer placing a print order with a print broker. The broker then gets the print supplier's quotes; compares and chooses the best price and supplies the quote back to the customer. The customer then places an order with that particular printer. TripleArc have developed a system that completely automates this process and makes it much easier for customers to find competitive pricing from printers from all over the UK, Europe or the world. The system is called the Collaborative Work System (CWS.)

From Zero to 70 Million

From 2000 to 2004 TripleArc massively increased their turnover. The growth has been driven by a combination of acquisition and organic growth. On the one hand TripleArc have been winning a lot of very big print management contracts (e.g. Virgin Mobile, Virgin Retail, BMI Healthcare, Citibank etc.), due to their unique concept of balancing print management and technology. On the other hand they have bought up a range of companies, each with a substantial stock of customers and with the ability to improve the group's logistical infrastructure. Altogether, this strategy has seen them grow from 16 people and zero turnover in 2000 to over 350 staff and £70 million turnover today. "The key thing to take away from this complex growth is that it is driven by technology. It has been a process of a much smaller technology company taking over much larger print management companies and revolutionising the way they do business. This is still the philosophy of the company" explains Andrew Dorward, Business Development Director of TripleArc Limited.

More than Print

TripleArc, and their subsidiary Access Plus, have specialized in print management, i.e. in controlling every piece of a client's print output. When TripleArc deal with large customers they are aware that these customers not only communicate with their external clients through the medium of print. They need to communicate the same message via several other sources such as Internet, SMS, call centres, audio- and video files etc. For this they need extremely good data - both accurate and up to date. They also need systems which store the messages and all of the elements that go into each message: This can be images, audio files, video files and text. This is where Northmann's system comes to the fore. "What Northmann enables us to do is to offer our customers a much better service for all of the processes that take

place before they have a message ready for publishing. It enables all of our customers to efficiently manage all of the data assets they have" explains Andrew Dorward.

*Andrew Dorward, Business Development Director of TripleArc*

Consistent Information across Media.

Consequently, it is very important for TripleArc to have the tools for re-purposing images in their toolbox. If for instance a retail customer is using an image of a CD cover for their stores, they may also want to put that out on a piece of direct mail or into a catalogue or even on a point of sales material. Furthermore, they send it out as an e-mail to people interested in that type of music or product. All of the images held in a Northmann system can be used for all of these different media, in different formats, from only one digital original.

Enterprise Communication
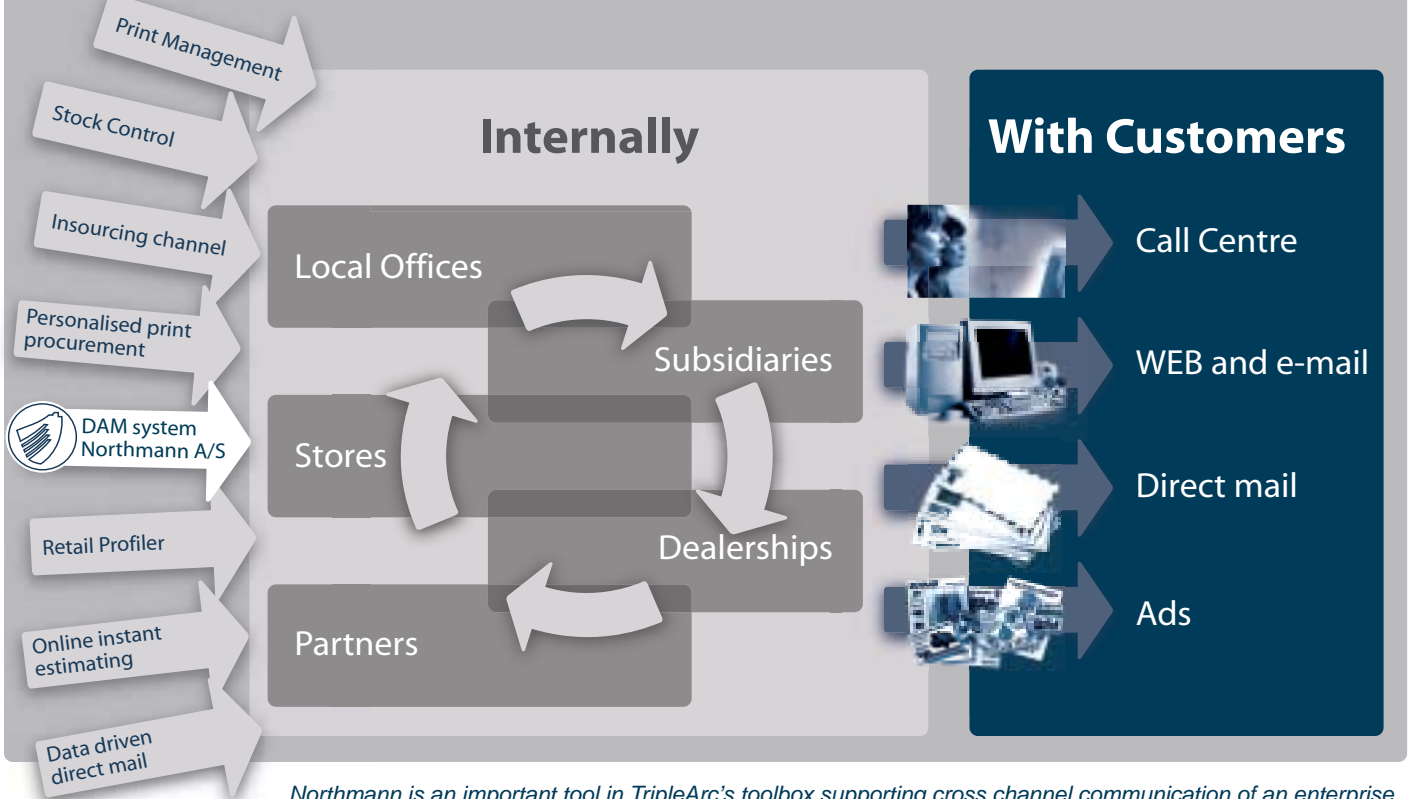
Northmann is an important tool in TripleArc's toolbox supporting cross channel communication of an enterprise

Bought on Virgin and BAA's requirements

Northmann's system has been a prerequisite for clients and in particular one customer: British Airports Authority. BAA have entered a contract with TripleArc on the basis that this included the provision of a digital asset management system. TripleArc then went through a rigorous process of finding the most suitable system. "New clients have a particular set of requirements and we realised we needed a world-class asset management system. We needed something that could handle multiple file formats and which would enable us to hold fairly complex metadata. Also, something with a very good digital workflow. Thus, we can see when assets are signed in and signed out and what people have done with these assets. Obviously, we also needed something that was internet based because all of our clients have distributed offices, agency partners and outlets. Finally, it had to be cost-effective" says Andrew Dorward. After three months of doing very intense due diligence on all of the major DAM suppliers, Northmann were selected as the best guys on the block. TripleArc found that the Northmann MediaServer6 had all the functionality they required and they found the company much more responsive than the larger organizations. Both companies are technology based with the same business ethos of good service and innovative solutions.

Stars All the Way Across

Being asked exactly why TripleArc chose Northmann among some of the world's most recognised DAM providers, Andrew Dorward explains: "We went through all of the specification spreadsheets with all of the different functionalities. What we were seeing was that with Northmann's competitors we had a missing list of different functions that we needed and required. Then we rated people according to the price per user license or seat and the scalability of the system: Finding that the only one who had stars all the way across was actually Northmann. It was a lot more feature-complete than any of the competitors and a lot more cost effective".

A Lever

TripleArc plan to integrate the Northmann system further as the image repository to other TripleArc systems: Both to their Edit2Print System, which is used by people all over the world, and to their Online Stock and Ordering System (OSCOS) which is used by the very largest companies to monitor stock levels in their warehouses. The OSCOS system enables the user to have a PDF image of the stock item. So when a customer orders an item he or she will be able to see an image of the thing they are going to order. Finally, Stream, TripleArc's division responsible for data driven direct mails are also in need of an image repository. "Having a good DAM system is important. In the last four or five proposals I have made, Northmann has been a major component. In this way the Northmann system becomes a lever to do very significant deals" Andrew Dorward concludes.

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