

Plymouth printer marks 20th anniversary in style

BY BRAD KADRICH
STAFF WRITER

For Brian Marr, it's all about the niche.

Marr, the owner of National Wholesale Printing in Plymouth, saw a glut of big-time printers who could handle large-scale jobs. And he saw the number of small companies who dealt primarily with little jobs.

But Marr, who's been in the printing business for all of his adult life, saw for himself a nice little hole somewhere right smack dab in the middle.

For 20 years now, that's where he's put National Wholesale Printing.

"We've positioned ourselves

between the small companies and the big ones," said the 44-year-old Marr. "A lot of clients wanted someone to do brochures and things like that, but also to do their smaller products."

It was work Marr knew how to do, because he'd started doing it in high school. While attending Clarenceville Public Schools, Marr worked as a press operator at The Print Shoppe, a small, family-owned operation in Farmington Hills.

Marr spent two years in the graphic arts school at Southwest Oakland Vocational Education Center (now the Oakland Tech Center). He landed a job at Adistra Corp., in Plymouth in 1977, working as a

press operator. Two years later, he was managing the in-house printing department at Mercy College of Detroit.

In 1980, he was managing an American Speedy Printing shop and, three years after that, went into business for himself.

"I got started real young and stuck with it," said Marr. "I like the variety of jobs we do, and I love the people we work with."

National Wholesale started out as a small firm in 1983, operating out of an 800-square-foot building in Dearborn Heights. Five years later, as the company was growing, Marr moved it into a 2,500-square-foot space in Redford.

By 1995, with a burgeoning client list, Marr needed more room, and moved to the 7,500-square-foot building the company now occupies.

Good news travels fast, and Marr said most of his business is built up by referral or word-of-mouth.

He said the reason for the success might be corny, but it's true.

"It sounds like a cliché, but service to the customer is very important," Marr said. "We get to know our clients real well, and they know they can come to us if there's a question or concern. They feel good about referring other people to us."

Marr said he's added technology in an effort to keep up with the times — and the workload. A new, five-color press is the biggest addition. Through the years, National Wholesale has also added digital technology and focused on design and



Head pressman Dean Davis, who has been with National Wholesale for 12 years, adds yellow ink on the Heidelberg press, the firm's new five-color press.