



Aaron Alderton in the print finishing department.



Di Smith in the print finishing and packaging department.

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NICK SMITH

“I do think that’s the hardest part of the job though – telling people that this is more than just pressing a button, because it is a lot of manual work and it is quite hard, but there’s no point in having a million dollar machine if you’re not going to keep the work up.

“I guess for us it’s as much about the machinery in the joint as it is making sure we have really good roots in the community. We have a great connection with Fossey’s and we were on the hustings with Ali Cupper, and we also do a lot of work with Arts Mildura and local sporting and community clubs too. For example, we were and technically still are the longest running sponsor in Harness Racing Victoria’s history.

“At the end of the day it’s just getting on well with people, and it might sound cliché but there’s no point in being a business if you’re not going to integrate into and support your community.” ■



A MATTER OF FAMILY PRIDE

There are a number of reasons why Nick is dedicated to his craft. Originally wanting to become a graphic designer, his eye for detail meshed well with the practical demands of the printing business. He has also taken a yearly pilgrimage to a Newton courthouse since the tender age of five to see the coasters his business creates in action. But there’s another reason which overrides them all. Park Douglas Printing is a dynasty.

Founded by Nick’s father Shane Douglas Smith, and his cousin Steven Park Smith, family has been the bond of the business since the very beginning.

Though still co-owned by Shane and wife Maxine, Nick and his brother Chris have taken the reigns as production manager and general manager respectively, and are intent on putting their own brand on the six-person operation.

“I think it’s really important that Chris and I have the opportunity to have a look at the printing industry from where we’re at as young people and take it on,” Nick says.

But just as it can have its benefits, the family aspect of business undeniably has its challenges, though they lie more in sentiment than in frustration.

“You have to remember the boundary between family and business, and I think we have that down pat now whereas before we didn’t,” Nick says.

“It was very hard to say ‘guys you can do better than that’ or things like that. But I think that’s important in a business – you’ve got to be honest with yourself.

“At the end of the day it’s a piece of paper, it’s not heart surgery or rocket science but there’s no point in doing something if you’re not going to have your heart in it.

“And I guess that’s always the challenge of being a family business – the fact that you’ve always got your heart in it. If you print a bad job, you take that personally.

“I think it’s important that you have some emotional attachment to what you do, and to be surrounded by people who want you to succeed.

“I don’t think anyone is just here for a paycheck, it’s very much a sentimental kind of business.”