

## Print Refinery fuels specialist growth

August 19, 2016

The Print Refinery (Pr) retailing concept, launched at the 34th annual International Print and Imaging Conference (IPIIC), in July, becomes reality with the opening this month of the first two Print Refinery outlets in the US.



- The Print Refinery pop-up store was a star of the IPIIC trade show, with close to 40 'prospects' among retailers attending. IPI Member Network director TK Broecker (second from left, with wife Shari) will re-launch his store as the first Print Refinery outlet in October.

The Print Refinery is IPI's breakthrough licensed business model, fusing high-tech printing options with creative storytelling to create sophisticated print and photo solutions for archiving, décor, gift giving, graphics and commercial applications.

The Print Refinery was demonstrated in a pop-up shop on the trade show floor. Before the conference concluded, around 40 members expressed interest in becoming licensees. They are currently being evaluated for priority based upon individual needs.

It's an extraordinarily comprehensive package, starting with branding, store design and merchandising fittings, store furniture, through to templates for core products and services, packaging, materials for classes and events, retail and commercial sales training, a global website and preferred outsourced providers where required.



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'The Print Refinery initiative is an inventive business model for anyone entering the imaging industry, or for those who want to reinvent their photo print business,' said Bruno Polito, marketing manager, Independent Photo (IPS), the local partner for IPI Member Network.

'It's focused on photo services, and not cameras, it is a fresh and innovative mash-up of: mobile, digital photo, video, signage, home and office décor, B2B solutions, and traditional photo printing, both in store and online.

'It's the next step in the evolution of IPI and the member benefits it encompasses, through its Marketing Support Program and Managed Marketing Services. All the branding, marketing, managed/automated social media, is all provided.

'It lets you maintain your independence, and are not tied to any "chain" brand, or multinational supplier. Quite simply, it is the photo imaging business model, not just reinvigorated, but reimagined,' he said, adding that if we want to attract younger entrepreneurs and staff into the photo specialist channel, we need new and contemporary approaches like this.

As Bruno noted, the Print Refinery, folds into the existing IPI Marketing Solutions Program (MSP) toolkit and Managed Marketing Services (online marketing content, promotions and templates).

The Print Refinery distinguishes itself from other photo store concepts by incorporating purpose-designed areas for commercial, B2B opportunities. This then becomes an integral part of the business rather than a 'good intention'.

For consumer customers, Pr also focusses on the need to preserve family memories, a key message if photo printing service providers are to prosper in the digital age.

It's being offered to IPI members in a range of options including a 'store-within-a-store' alternative.

The official grand opening at the first location will be live broadcast to the public from the first location (also to be used for testing and training) in Louisville, Kentucky on Wednesday, October 5.



IPI also unveiled its newest solutions for members, including 'The Gather Box', as well as a 'Locally Inspired' product line, and the 'History Wall' commercial installation toolkit. The Gather Box has actually been a component of the MSP for a while, but has been re-emphasised in the Print Refinery context.

It's a cardboard box with simple instructions in which customers gather together memorabilia, prints, slides and home movies and drop them off at the store where the components will be transformed into digital format.

An enhancement to the Gather Box concept is the new association between IPI Member Network and M-Disc, developer of the patented 1000-year archival 'etched in stone' optical disc media.

Supplying Partners played a large role in the success of IPIC, providing valuable education, partnership opportunities and solutions. As noted previously, Fujifilm in the US is a great champion of the photo specialty channel, and this year sponsored the first IPIC InstaxWalk, a fun photo scavenger hunt on the Las Vegas Strip using Instax cameras. Following the event, cameras were then donated by Fujifilm to the 'Make a Wish' charity.

Nearly 400 people from five countries, including around 10 from Australia – dedicated themselves to 'Fearless Reinvention' by participating in the four-day conference, which featured 70 educational sessions, 60 booths on the trade

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show floor, numerous networking activities and multiple launches of new product lines and business solutions.

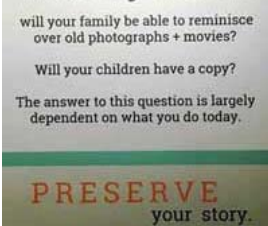
IPIC 2017 is scheduled to take place July 10-13, 2017 at the M Resort in Las Vegas.

#### Local plans

*PhotoCounter* asked IPS what the approach would be in making these initiatives available in Australia. Managing director Stuart Holmes responded: 'Independent Photo (IPS) see our role as the southern hemisphere photo industry advocate that brought International Memberships of IPI Member Network to Australian and New Zealand photo specialty retailers and professional labs.

'All of us at IPS as the supplier of the 'Best Brands in Imaging' feel passionately about being the 'enablers' to our customers' success in the professional marketing of photo specialty services to differentiate themselves from the mass merchant and supermarket commoditisation of photo products.

'As such, we don't believe that IPS needs to attempt to 'tie up' these products, services or ideas as exclusive IPS sales lines, but simply to ensure that our local IPI Member Network customers can freely pick up great ideas such as Print Refinery, Gather Boxes, Shoe Box Scanning, 1000 year M-Disc's etc, as well as a myriad of other great ideas presented by US manufacturers and distributors at IPIC in Las Vegas and run with them, and benefit from them on the basis that their own success will ultimately be our success.'



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