

# Danish Printer Finds Digital Book Sweet Spot

LaserTryk attracts 15 of Denmark's top 20 book publishers for short-run digital book manufacturing, helping to fuel double-digit growth. LaserTryk.dk, based in Denmark's second largest city, Århus, has a knack for finding success by turning conventional printing-industry wisdom on its ear ... by Jo Oliphant

Many experts advise digital print providers to develop marketing services for more profitable growth. While LaserTryk's main business is printing marketing materials, the firm offers no marketing services, has no sales representatives and invites commoditization on its Web site by declaring it can "beat any price." Yet LaserTryk has achieved double-digit annual growth even in the economic downturn.



LaserTryk Book Production Manager Lasse Mortensen displays books produced on the Xerox® 1300® Continuous Feed Printer at LaserTryk.

In 2009, the firm brought some of this philosophy to Denmark's book publishing industry and now counts 15 of the top 20 Danish publishers as customers. Books now account for 15 percent of LaserTryk's \$17 million (100 million kroner) annual revenues, and management expects that will double in the next two years.

Esben Mols Kabell, chief executive officer and president, LaserTryk, explains the company's success: "We've been very focused on making it easy for customers to buy printing. Some say connect with your customers and make it a big deal. We make buying print as easy as buying pens and light bulbs."

## Targeting Short Run Books

LaserTryk was founded in 2000—the two partners were promoting discotheque events and bought a color copier to produce posters and flyers more cost-effectively. To fill extra capacity, they sent mailers to other clubs, offering printing services. Strong demand led them to upgrade their copier, beginning a rapid growth cycle as they sent targeted mailers to other small- and medium-sized businesses.

Today LaserTryk has 70 employees, a dozen printing devices—including wide format printers, offset presses and four Xerox® digital presses—and a range of finishing equipment. Ninety-nine percent of its jobs are submitted via an easy-to-use Web storefront, which lists print prices menu style.

Over the years, LaserTryk has introduced many new print offerings, but books were problematic. Pages curled as paper dried out from heat generated during laser printing. Then at drupa 2008, Kabell saw the Xerox® 1300® Continuous Feed Printer, which uses flash fusing technology to heat just the toner, not the paper, thereby avoiding the curling problem.

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Recognizing an opportunity, Kabell called on Denmark's major publishers with book samples provided by Xerox and a plan to lower their costs. "I told the publishers to think of an alternate way of managing their stock," he said. "When they run out of a title, they should see what else is low. If they order multiple titles using the same paper and format, I can give them a lower price."

Most signed on. A highly automated workflow now drives cost efficiencies. Job files are checked once to ensure the file matches the order and are not touched again until book blocks are loaded for hardcover or softcover binding. Critical automation is delivered by Xerox® FreeFlow Process Manager®, which automates pre-press functions and delivers print-ready files to the right print queues. Lasermax Roll Systems unwinder

and cut-and-stacker solutions automate much post-processing. Color covers are printed on offset presses or one of the firm's two Xerox® iGen3® 110 Digital Production Presses.

LaserTryk soon found its sweet spot. "At fewer than 200 copies, sheet-fed competes," Kabell said. "At more than 800, offset competes. But between 200 and 800, no one competes—not in Eastern Europe, not in China. No one."

## Publishers Are Pleased

Books can be ordered easily on LaserTryk's Web site, but Kabell also offers personal support. His customers are thrilled. One brought champagne and chocolates after the first few runs. "She said we basically saved her business, because our solution gave her pricing that allowed her to make a profit from small sales volumes," Kabell said.



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– Esben Mols Kabell  
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LaserTryk

Larger publishers have also benefited. Danish law requires that publishers must keep all titles by contracted authors available, a task made much more practical with LaserTryk's production options, limiting costly warehouse storage.

Further validation of the book offering came when it won a 2010 "Best of the Best" award from the Xerox Premier Partners Global Network of leading print providers. LaserTryk is one of two members in Denmark.

Last year, LaserTryk expanded the book business into Norway and Sweden, and plans to enter Finland, Great Britain and Germany in 2011. Even growth in electronic books bode well for the business, Kabell said. "In Denmark, the average run length is 1,200 copies. Sell more electronic books and the lower number of printed books will move publishers into our business. We started on the notion that the number of copies of printed books is going down. That's my gamble."

So far, the gamble is paying off.