

New Plant: Guadalajara, Mexico

Hello and Welcome to the October edition of the Ideal Almanac.

The final decision happened two months ago. I had been making sales calls in Guadalajara with Paulina Vallejo, general manager of Ideal Jacobs Mexico. It had become apparent that the amount of business generated in Mexico had greatly increased and we needed to expand our distribution center to a full manufacturing plant. Preparations began immediately and we started to look for space. Our original plan was for a 7,000 square-foot facility that would augment our plants here in New Jersey, China, and Malaysia. However, we soon realized we had to go bigger, so we leased a 15,000 square-foot space in a very nice, idyllic office park within the city.

Our first purchase was a new laser that could cut plastic and metal sheets suitable for gaskets, insulators, and multiple types of label material. Then I made a phone call to an old friend in the screen printing equipment business, Mike Green of AWT. He had told us about a modified circular turret press that could print six colors simultaneously and is suitable for long runs. It turned out that Mike knew of a turret press in Ottawa, Canada, whose owner was going out of the printing business. He brokered the deal, and within two weeks of negotiations, the press was broken down and palleted by a team led by Vincent Santoro, our Global VP of manufacturing, assisted by Tin-Wei O’Boyle and Jason Bucci from IJ US, Don Lem from IJ Canada, his brother Ed, plus one of Mike Green’s people, Hans Bense.

The two trucks left Canada and are now in the US. Once the press is delivered, the electricity hooked up, and various other support systems are set-up,

we will be ready to start testing and getting ready to print. If all goes well, we will be Underwriter Laboratories and Canadian Standards approved by February, which means that the plant can be fully operational and ready to print, laser and die-cut orders by March. This would have been considered incredibly fast in pre-pandemic and supply chain issues times, but to do it now is a testament to our incredible team.

In a combination of very fast decisions, I have once again put our company into debt. Being debt-free is a luxury that most entrepreneurs seem to not enjoy too frequently. As always, I won’t know whether the gamble will pay off for months or even years. In this case, since we are already set-up in Mexico and have a good team there, the risks would seem to be less than starting from scratch somewhere else. Our experience, knowledge, and my gut are the best we have to go by. The responsibility for negative results in any way is always mine. And all success rightfully belongs to our teams around the world. A constant reminder that I try to never forget and that it is a privilege and honor to have my job.



from left to right: Hans, Tin, Jason, Vinnie, and Don

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