

"Investing to become competitive: Manugraph - a sure winner"

An interview with Mr. Sam Shollei, CEO & Managing Director,
Mwananchi Communications Ltd., Tanzania

1. A brief on the company, vision, expansion plans and publications.

Mwananchi Communications Limited was founded in late 1999 and commenced operations in 2000. The company publishes 3 newspapers and its publications reach more than 2 million readers which is far higher than what any other media company in Tanzania does. The flagship publication "Mwananchi" circulates 35,000 copies daily, while "The Citizen" circulates 10,000 copies and "Mwanaspoti" the bi-weekly sports paper circulates an average of 70,000 copies.

The company plans to start another daily paper and three weekly papers to its current bouquet.

The vision of the company is to become the publisher with the most authoritative source of news for Tanzania

2. What is the configuration of the machines installed?

We acquired a 45,000 cph Hiline pressline from Manugraph, with 5 4 -High towers, 5 automatic reel stands and 2 folders. The machine is thus capable of printing 40 page tabloid products. However, its 2 independent folders afford us the flexibility of printing 2 different products also simultaneously, but independently.

3. How does it really feel to own Manugraph machines?

We are extremely excited to own this press which has more advanced features than any other press in the country. We are able to print deadline oriented daily newspapers well in time in full color and high print quality. It gives us capability to provide superior printing services and to offer readers and advertisers better products and services

4. How did Manugraph score over the other available options? Why was the bold decision to own a Manugraph machine taken when there are a lot of international players in the segment?

We were more than satisfied with the quality of the Manugraph press. We compared its features with those of other competitors and were convinced that comparatively Manugraph Hiline had superior features and despite its technical superiority its pricing was significantly better , a factor that was important in our decision making process.

5. Is there any business growth after the Manugraph machine installation?

Yes, indeed. The quality of our products has improved significantly and we have consequently received more color advertisements thereby increasing our revenue.

6. How were the interaction/ communication with Manugraph from start?

We initially corresponded by mail and subsequently discussed with the East African country manager of Manugraph for our printing requirements. This was followed by visits to the printers who use the Manugraph machines and a final visit to the corporate office at Mumbai for finalizing the order. Manugraph was very co-operative throughout and the entire interaction very pleasant.

7. How was the visit to the factory? How has the interaction with the business partners been?

The visit to the factory was inspiring and insightful to our technical team. And the interaction, as I said was always excellent.

8. After installation what is your Overall experience

The first phase of installation was completed in early September. The daily operations have been smooth and the presses are very flexible

and easy to operate. The processes since then have been cordial and are assuring.

9. Insight on the industry progress and the required technical growth in this front?

The publishing of papers is a fairly recent effort in Tanzania - Private press was allowed from early 1990s. Readership of newspapers is not as widespread as in other countries but is expected to grow.

10. Considering future Trend & demand what is the suggestion you have for Manugraph to meet further requirements?

Competition from the internet means that publishers of newspapers are wary about heavy commitments in capital expenditure in presses. Pricing of the press is crucial in decision making. In addition design should simplify ease of handling by operators and offer high flexibility. Automation of quality enhancing features is necessary to give necessary high quality outputs.