

# WHAT LIES BENEATH

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In Adelaide, printing company Openbook Howden is taking surefooted steps into the future. It recognised a long time ago that in order to survive in this increasingly competitive industry, it would have to be alert to, and quickly exploit, new technologies.

Now among only a handful of early adopters, augmented reality has become an area of expertise for this busy company, thanks largely to the efforts of in-house graphic designer, Wil Stevens.

## Digital gateway

Wil is a keen advocate of this exciting technology because it bridges print and digital platforms – it can turn a flat printed page into a digital wonderland where anything is possible.

'Photo galleries, video, web links, contact information, even games can be linked with a physical object. A street poster for a film can contain the trailer within it, and one day, billboards could retrieve customised information applicable to one passerby, then immediately offer altered messaging unique to another pedestrian,' Wil said.

'You can even display a video biography, business narrative and have contact links on your business card, he said.

'All it requires is for a viewer/reader to enable an app on their smartphone. We use Blippar,' Wil told fellow Media Super member John Dickson. 'Allow Blippar to scan an image on a page, poster or billboard, or a three-dimensional object such as the Eiffel Tower, and a whole new world can be revealed.'

The app scans and recognises the image, then retrieves appropriate digital content created by the author/designer, and displays it on your smartphone.

## Your turn

This year, Media Super chose Openbook Howden to use this technology to add another dimension to our annual report, Yearbook '15. If you allow Blippar to scan the images sporting the tiny grey logo, you will discover five opportunities to further interact with your super fund.



### **Future is bright**

Wil said it was this type of interaction between printed objects and the digital world that invigorates this essential communication form and demonstrates its relevance for a long time to come.

'Because you can edit the digital communications, printed objects continually gain new lives. Provided participants pay attention to change, communication through print remains robust and will continue to be so,' he said.

### **A leader**

Having won the 2014 Media Super Future Leader Award for South Australia, Wil went on to represent the state at the 2015 Media Super National Print Awards in the Young Executive of the Year category.

'The awards ceremony was held in Sydney at the same time as the print industry exhibition, - Printex15. It was a great opportunity to immerse yourself in the cutting edge of the print industry and talk to the experts,' Wil said.

And to complete an exciting year, Wil was recognised by his own company when he received Openbook Howden's Innovator of the Year award for his work with augmented reality.

### **Family culture**

Openbook Howden was born in 2006 when family-owned business Howden Printing took over Openbook Australia, formerly owned by the Lutheran Church.

General Manager, Sarah Leo said the synergies in the two cultures allowed a considerable expansion of market opportunities. In fact, the company practically doubled in size.

'Because Howden was a family company, and Openbook a product of a faith-based organisation it fed straight into our workplace culture which nurtures its employees, constantly monitoring opportunities for personal growth and improving processes.

'Openbook Howden even offers staff cultural activities on a weekly basis,' Sarah said.

### **Can do it all**

The company devotes its wide experience to printing communications for not-for-profits, religious organisations, the education industry, food labeling and healthcare.

It also provides a haven for small-run self-publishers, offering plenty of sympathetic advice from printing techniques to marketing.

'Our strength lies in our ability to offer clients a holistic solution. We offer up-to-the-minute print technology and processes right across the organisation, we provide services from graphic design to inventory management and we do it all in-house,' she said.

As to the future, Sarah is convinced that Openbook Howden's niche offer and dynamic attention to innovation will stand it in good stead for years to come.