

Providencia

When taking risks brings rewards

When the pandemic struck Mexico in March, digital print group Providencia saw business fall away. But instead of battenning down the hatches and retreating from the storm, Providencia did what it always does – it took a risk. The company innovated a new product and opened a new division, and in the six months that followed it has printed more than 50 million anti-viral facemasks. In the words of Jose Antonio Torre Lamuño Providencia's CEO, "We were brave, and I think that's part of the success of Providencia."

Building up – a vertical strategy

When Providencia opened its doors some 62 years ago, it made one product from one fabric – acrylic blankets. The company was launched in 1958 by Jose Antonio's grandparents. "My father was President of the company after my grandfather," he says. "He was an incredible visionary and expanded the group. And now, I'm the third generation."

Jose Antonio joined the family firm after completing his studies in 2002. However, he'd already had work experience with the company. "I was already participating in projects while I was a student – I loved what my family did. Then, when I joined properly, I wanted to bring in new ideas, new products. The world was changing at that time – acrylic prices went up and we made the decision to transform our business to be able to print on polyester. Changing from acrylic to polyester meant changing the temperatures and printing parameters – even the size of the yarn was different. But we took this risk, rather than making our factory into a warehouse for products from China."

This substitute opened the door on a huge range of options as the company was able to expand its product line and become more innovative with the new material. "It was a huge challenge, as it meant adapting the whole factory and reinventing ourselves – but since the very beginning, we've been a vertical company. We try to integrate as much as we can so that all of the products and processes are under our control." The company now develops its own fabrics and inks, prints, cuts and manufactures and runs its own logistics.

The future was digital

With a new way of producing and a license to print Disney, Marvel and Star Wars characters granted by Disney, the stage was set for Providencia to expand operations. First came 10 new dye sub printers for printing blankets, then a series of machines that could print directly. This truly was a new departure, because with a high pile, printing directly onto blankets was a big challenge and risky to the printheads.

"The answer for us," says Jose Antonio, "was to create a blanket without a pile, on which we could print directly, and after this development we opened new division producing pillows, sheets and other textiles. Solving the challenge with the blankets enabled us to innovate new products, increasing our portfolio and enabling us to grow the company. The blankets had always been a seasonal winter product, but now we were producing items that would sell all year around."

When expertise becomes the product

Providencia continued to invest in new machines as the business grew, and they developed an unmatched expertise in printing directly onto fabrics. From this came another innovation – the launching of ProvidenciaPrints to provide a vertical digital printing service for external customers. As one of the most advanced digital printing companies in the Americas, Providencia had the technology, innovation and human resources to create a unique offering – a full range of solutions for printing on both synthetic and natural fibres.

"At this point we were ready to buy our most important machine yet – the MS LaRIO," explains Jose Antonio. "This put us in a unique position as we had the first LaRIO on the continent."

The MS LaRIO is the world's first single-pass digital machine and when it launched in 2010 it changed the paradigm of digital textile printing. It can print at speeds of up to 120m per minute and is the ideal choice for companies needing a combination of volume and quality results.

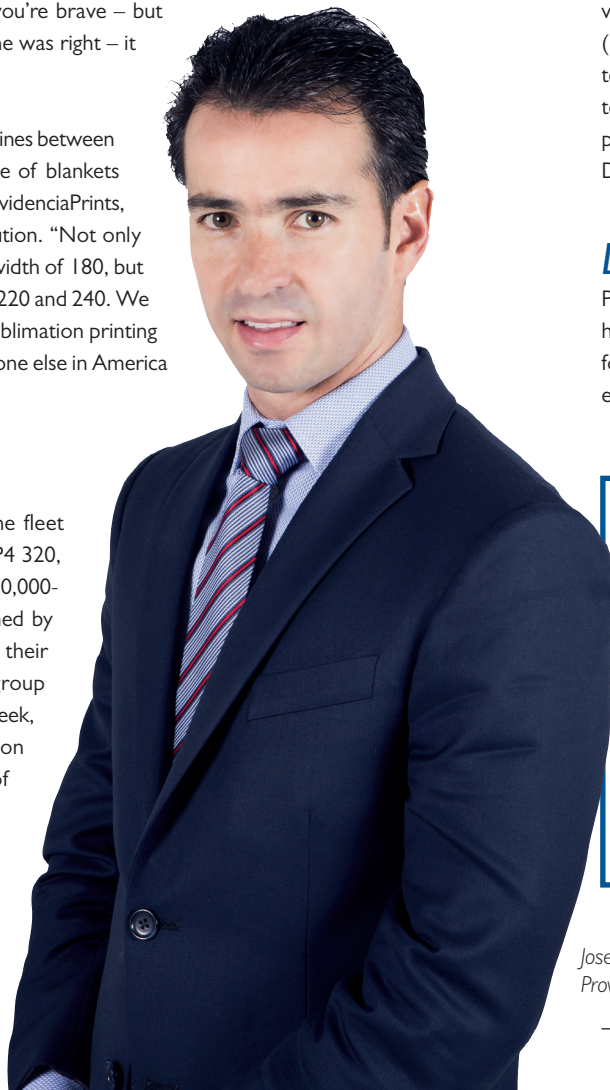
It was Providencia's biggest risk so far. According to Jose Antonio, "Luigi Milini of MS came to see us and said, 'It's fantastic that you're having the LaRIO, but what are you going to use it for?' We explained the project to him, and he said, 'Oh my God, you're brave – but you're going to be successful!' And he was right – it was the right decision."

The company divided its fleet of machines between Providencia, printing their own range of blankets and other household textiles, and ProvidenciaPrints, offering an entire digital printing solution. "Not only did we have the LaRIO, which has a width of 180, but we also offered printing at widths of 220 and 240. We were able to offer both direct and sublimation printing on a wide range of fabrics, which no one else in America could do at that time."

Thinking big

With the LaRIO and the rest of the fleet which includes two MS JP4s and a JP4 320, ProvidenciaPrints has a capacity of 750,000-line meters per week. This is matched by a further 750,000-line meters from their own operation, meaning that the group can produce 1.5 million meters per week, making it the biggest print operation on the American continent and one of the biggest worldwide.

The Providencia team are experts in digital printing and the company is



continuing to grow, having just bought a 320 width Mini Lario. "This offers us the choice of printing at the full width or printing at 2 x 160 widths – giving us a huge number of meters each day. And that's where we are now."

One of the things Jose Antonio appreciates about working with MS is the level of service. "Of course, we have printers from other providers but the service we get from MS is fantastic compared to other companies – I think it's part of the MS DNA. And the machines are also amazing – ready to print 40, 50, 60 thousand-line meters a day – you can't do that with any other machine." Despite the industry wide challenges in terms of sales & volumes arising from COVID pandemic, MS and the Dover Digital Printing (DDP) have held steady in their service levels. "Dover's strategy is long term. Despite the short-term challenges in the market, Dover is continuing to support investments and expanding resources and capabilities in digital printing platform and customer service" says Abhi Agrawal, President of Dover Digital Printing.

Looking to the future

ProvidenciaPrints can produce fashion, activewear, underwear, footwear, home fabrics, swimwear, accessories and more for its clients and is at the forefront of direct-to-garment printing and the development of new and exciting inks and finishes.

With the pandemic has come their latest innovation – the development of anti-viral thermo seal masks using bio nano technology. In seven months, they've printed 50 million and are the biggest supplier of corporate, fashion and Disney-themed masks in America. "We are very proud of this product" says Jose Antonio, "and we are the first company that Disney has trusted for masks – due to our digital printing capacity, technology and accuracy. These things combined make a fantastic product, and this new division has enabled us to continue to expand even during the pandemic."

When it comes to the future, Jose Antonio is optimistic. "The markets are changing, and people like us who focus on creating products with added value, differentiation and innovation, these are the people who will succeed. The fact that we are 100% vertically integrated gives us a huge advantage and makes us unique. It allows us to be closer to our final clients and to offer a more flexible service. I think people will be cautious about buying huge runs from overseas. We're just seven hours by truck from the US border and we can offer short runs with lots of product variety. Most importantly, we have a fantastic team of 2,000 people working for the group – innovators and print pioneers, all very committed to making Providencia successful. We're never satisfied and always moving forward." quatis aut di a verciure estrumqui dendis entur, unt quation sequaspero maximodigeni naturi blaut aut pra pra quos aligniet aut quis aut harum



A long family history now reaching its 4th generation, full of experience and passion.

Tradition is very important for MS and with this deep knowledge of our industry, we strongly believe in the success of innovation. The MS knowledge and experience allows us to develop innovative products for the demanding and ever-changing market of digital textile printing. Our modern technologies allow us to improve any aspect of textile printing, starting from performance and up to including the important environmental issues. The versatility of these digital technologies also opens the way to different printed applications such as paper and plastic substrates.



Dover is a diversified global manufacturer and solutions provider with annual revenue of approximately \$7 billion. We deliver innovative equipment and components, consumable supplies, aftermarket parts, software and digital solutions, and support services through five operating segments: Engineered Products, Fueling Solutions, Imaging & Identification, Pumps & Process Solutions and Refrigeration & Food Equipment. Dover combines global scale, operational agility, world-class engineering capability and customer intimacy to lead the markets we serve. Recognized for our entrepreneurial approach for over 60 years, our team of over 23,000 employees takes an ownership mindset, collaborating with customers to redefine what's possible. Headquartered in Downers Grove, Illinois, Dover trades on the New York Stock Exchange under "DOV." Additional information is available at dovercorporation.com.

Jose Antonio Torre Lamuño
Providencia's CEO