

**Louisville, KY** - Four Colour Imports, Ltd., specializing in manufacturing high-quality illustrated books overseas since 1985, has changed their name to Four Colour Print Group.

“While our exclusive USA representation agreement with Everbest Printing Company in China remains intact, we’ve forged new partnerships with several book manufacturers here in the USA as market conditions change,” said George Dick, company president.

“2007 marked the end of a 20-year relationship with Friesen Printers in Canada,” Dick continued. “Friesens brought in new management who felt uneasy with Four Colour's dual representation. From our perspective, printing in Canada was no longer the bargain it once was. Today, the Canadian dollar is more expensive than the U.S. greenback and likely to strengthen further; in 1985 it was only 65 cents.”

Currency changes matter in the world of international printing. “No doubt this has contributed to bankruptcy of Canadian based printing giant Quebecor World in January 2008, and just last month Butler and Tanner in the U.K. folded their tent. When I first started Four Colour, our main competitors were based in Japan and Italy. Now they are no longer a significant factor,” Dick said. At the same time, prices in China have started to rise, due to a combination of rising labor costs, tightening paper supplies, and a slow rise in the value of the Chinese Yuan.

The economic pendulum is swinging manufacturing back to America. “Just look at the new investment by Japanese and European auto manufacturers in the USA, especially here in the South,” Dick said. Finding American book manufacturers capable of producing the high-quality color printing & binding which the customers of Four Colour had come to expect proved a challenge. During 2007, Dick traveled the country searching for U.S. companies who could do the job – and at prices American publishers can afford to pay.

As fate would have it, Lifetouch Production Inc., with plants near Chicago and Kansas City had decided to more aggressively pursue adding new business outside the yearbook production months of April/ May. With a sales force comprised only of Yearbook reps, Lifetouch seized an opportunity to forge a strategic partnership with Four Colour. Similar to Everbest, Lifetouch would handle manufacturing while Four Colour manages the marketing, sales, and prepress operations. Working together closely, Lifetouch and Four Colour have overcome the challenges presented by trade publishers' stricter quality standards.

“In addition to Lifetouch, we also found some gold right in our backyard. Roswell Printing in Phoenix prints all titles using Creo Staccato; Merrick Printing in Louisville features both softcover binding in-house and short run digital book printing. Both companies have won numerous PIA awards. The secret behind producing great color printing rests with our highly acclaimed prepress company, FCI Digital. ”

Based outside Dayton, Ohio, FCI Digital operates a Hell 3400 drum scanner, creates printer-ready PDFs, and outputs color calibrated contract digital proofs for all print partners. With tech support available by phone, proofs turned in 48 hours, and pricing that matches Asia, FCI Digital offers unique value to publishers no available anywhere else. “We’ve produced books for some of America’s foremost photographers, including Tom Till and Jack Dykinga, which really bedazzle the eyes.”

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