

They AllM to please



AIIM co-founders Frank Giorgio, President, and Mario Giorgio (CEO & Chairman).

Giorgio Brothers' Avant Imaging & Information Management Inc. (AIIM) takes printing, marketing, customer service (and just about everything else) to the next level

Pisticci is a small, quiet city of just under 18 000 situated in the province of Matera in the picturesque region of Basilicata in southern Italy. About 6300 families live there.

The town of Aurora, north of Toronto, is also quiet and picturesque, with a population of 50 000. About 9500 families live there.

What do they have in common, other than their natural beauty?

How about Frank (President) and Mario (CEO & Chairman) Giorgio, co-founders of Avant Imaging & Information Management Inc. (AIIM), headquartered in Aurora, Ontario.

Granted, southern Italy and their hometown of Pisticci might be a long walk from Aurora, but these two brothers undoubtedly brought with them the standard, old-fashioned Italian values—common sense, hard work, ingenuity, friendliness, and a sense of giving back to the community—when they came to Canada in 1956.

Today, their company is an industry leader in commercial printing, having both adapted and adopted—adapted to the changing marketplace and adopted innovative ways to keep customers happy and the presses running.

Sometimes, say the brothers, companies are too preoccupied with the latter.

AIIM employs over 100 staff and emphasizes helping those who live and work within their community. In other words, their

corporate goals may be big-city big-time, but their management approach is definitely low-key and small-town friendly.

In fact, each year, employees commit time and money to support two charities designed to help local kids—The Yellow Brick House and the Children's Aid Society Toy Drive.

"My brother and I go back to the days of hot metal," said Mario. "We've seen amazing changes in this industry even before we set up shop here in 1990. When computers rose to prominence, many in our industry were taken aback. We, on the other hand, embraced the new technology, knowing it would be the way of the future."

The company's primary business is commercial print-

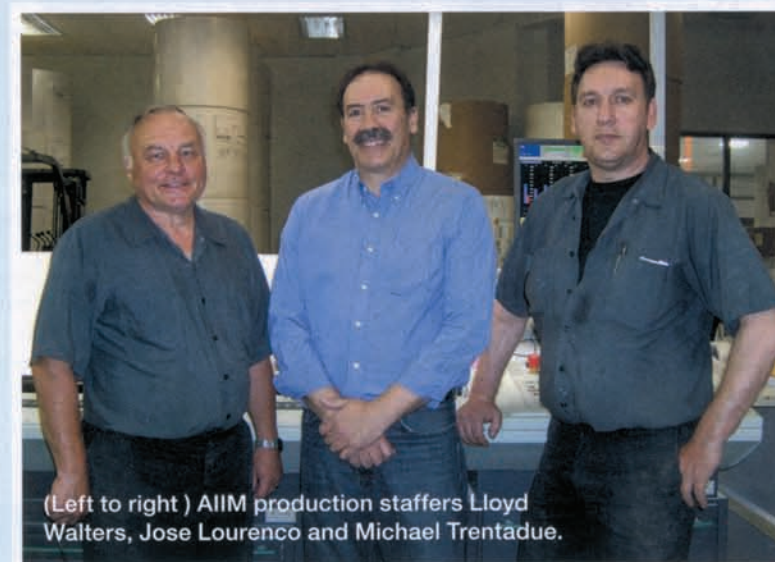
ing, offset lithography, bindery and finishing, creative and graphic design, fulfillment and distribution. Business expanded in 2004 to include digital printing, total variable and personalized printing, data analytics and direct-mail management. More recently, that impressive list expanded to include e-mail marketing services. The company currently occupies a spacious 100 000 sq. ft., including offices. They also own the building and property and rent office space.

AIIM•CONNECT LEADS THE WAY

Arguably, one of the most important and well-received new services is their aim•CONNECT, a Web-to-Print Marketing Portal, set up to help customers manage their print and direct-mail requirements online. This integrated e-commerce solution centralizes isolated print and direct mail components within one common internet-based application.

The benefits to customers are many:

- Reduces meeting time by 50% (by collaborating online)
- Reduces print management and creative costs
- Improves expense management (all projects are tracked online)
- Monitors project status (ideal for executing multiple campaigns)
- Centralizes information (no searching for artwork or images)
- Ensures brand consistency and integrity in the marketplace
- Improves marketing return on investment



(Left to right) AIIM production staffers Lloyd Walters, Jose Lourenco and Michael Trentadue.

The innovative program can assist and streamline virtually every phase of the printing process—from e-procurement to digital asset management to self-

serve publishing. Programs can be used as stand-alone applications, or be fully integrated, depending on a customer's operating requirements. This flexibility permits clients to use the software modules that will best support their business strategies and environment.

But the company also boasts a host of other key services that it feels are a must in today's competitive environment. These include on-demand printing, direct-mail services, print management services, personalized one-to-one marketing, customer relationship management, advanced data services (analytics) and distribution and fulfillment.

Obviously, AIIM has evolved into a printing and marketing company. They simply had to.

MAN ROLAND A KEY ALLY

"Without a doubt, our business is customer-driven," says Frank. "Three years ago we purchased a MAN Roland 700 10-colour. The results were more than we hoped for. Initially, we justified the purchase, knowing our five-colour business would grow quickly.

"What eventually happened was a huge reduction in waste because of the roll-to-sheet feeder. We decided to pass these savings along to our customers. So, when it came to quoting on yearly contracts, or developing new estimates, we could offer a reduced price just about every time. This was an added bonus. Of course, the MAN Roland quality has remained superb, as has its back-up service."

Today, AIIM remains very strong in servicing finance, insurance, automotive, health care, retail and not-for-profit.

"We have a long list of loyal customers who've been with us for 10 to 15 years" says Mario, "and our commitment to helping them do more every day will remain strong."

With this kind of attitude, it's no wonder that AIIM was chosen in 2003 and 2005 as one of the best managed companies in Canada. With Deloitte, CIBC, National Post and Queen's School of Business doing the judging, AIIM was one of 200 finalists out of 12,000 participating companies during those two years.

AIIM has also earned over 240 national and international awards for quality and service excellence.

After sipping an espresso, chatting with them, checking out their plant and offices, seeing samples of their work and reading about their community efforts, I couldn't help wondering what their friends and relatives back in Pisticci would say if they were here.

For more information, please visit www.aiim.com.