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A Prosperous T★ur in the USA

In mid-March, Edward Yeung, our 1st Vice-Chairman, Derek Yip, our Honourable Chairman, and I visited several famous organizations in the U.S.A. In chronological order of our trip, they are NAPL, PIA/GATF, CSULA, PIASC and Adobe. It was a great tour regarding to our goal of academic exchange. At the same time we shared views with them on industrial standards in the graphic arts industry, and received opinions from them on the content of our work – **Hong Kong Sheet-fed Offset Printing Technical Reference Manual**. With inadequate rest or sleeping times in the tour, our bodies and minds were exhausted. However, we got reward in return of invaluable experience.

The 1st Stop - NAPL



Honourable Chairman, Mr. Derek Yip (middle), and Vice Chairman, Mr. Edward Yeung (right) having a chat with Mr. Joseph Truncale, the President & CEO of NAPL.

NAPL(the Trade Association for Excellence in Graphic Communications Management) is our first stop in the tour. She is situated at Paramus in New Jersey. The short name, NAPL, has been used for 74 years. The original name was called National Association of Photo-Lithographers, founded in 1933, to help members in the photolithographic business. In the early 1970s, the letterpress became popular and a competitor to the photolithography, hence NAPL changed

the name to National Association of Printers and Lithographers in 1971. In the 20th century, computer technologies and digital workflow revolutionized the traditional operations. NAPL again changed its name to National Association for Printing Leadership in 1999. Today NAPL emphasizes that she is the trade association for excellence in graphic communications management, she has the slogan with 3 words – Insight•Strategies•Guidance, simply and clearly expressed the association's goals or services for



Photographed with Mr. Joseph Truncale and Mr. Timothy Fischer, the COO of NAPL. Background is a re-enforced wall decorated with the litho-stones representing the sponsors.

her members – the management’s insight, the company strategies and the professional guidance, all these fundamental elements to business success are offered by NAPL.

We are very pleased to have reception from NAPL’s management – Joseph Truncale, the President & CEO, and Timothy Fischer, the COO. They introduced NAPL’s development and services to us. As a technical guy, I am not good in business or management, and had no idea of this association before. After meeting them, I learnt what the management means. Marketing and management are their strengths. They took over a market research company a few years ago and now they can do professional market analysis themselves. As they have very long-term and good relationship with their members, they are very confident in the accuracy and validity of their data collected from their members. In order to let you easily understand more about NAPL, here is the list of their activities or services:

1. Founded in 1933, one of the most prestigious associations in the U.S.A.
2. More than 40 regular full-time staff doing clerical or technical works.
3. More than 3,000 corporate members.
4. Many publications and reports are published every year, many are sponsored by well-known companies like Heidelberg, Kodak, SAPPI, etc.
5. The bi-monthly, NAPL Business Review, covers a wide scope of topics written by several experts in the industry.
6. The annual report, State of the Industry Report, is composed of data collected from more than 700 corporations.
7. All reports are updated half-yearly in order to ensure validity of the information.
8. Long-Run Growth Leaders, another good program, indicates company performance.
9. NAPL Performance Indicators, a special program, offers skills to the printers to perform and compete in the markets.
10. NAPL Management Plus, another program, assists the printers to objectively judge themselves in management performance in 9 areas, e.g. financial performance, human resources, company strategies, etc.
11. Management Plus Awards, more than 30 years in history, one of the most prestigious awards to display company or individual accomplishment.
12. NAPL website with member and non-member areas
13. A rich bookstore with publications covering a wide scope of knowledge
14. Conferences and seminars are hosted every year.
15. Welcome other associations to become affiliates or partners, e.g. NAQP (National Association of Quick Printers)
16. Membership in 9 categories, based on requirement of services instead of company size.

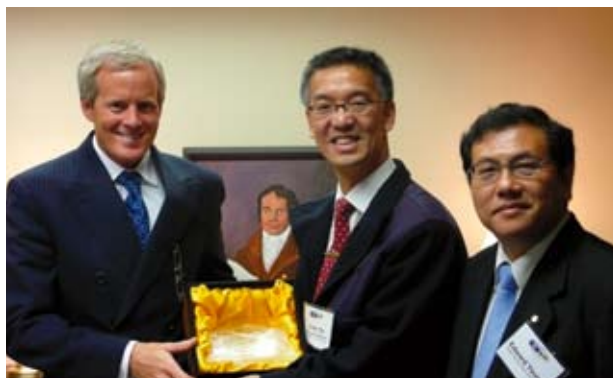
The 2nd Stop - PIA/GATF

PIA and GATF has recently merged together, and become the world’s largest association in the graphic arts industry. She now covers a very wide scope of professional services. In 2003, I attended a training in the GATF headquarters in Pittsburg. Now the name of the sign in the main entrance has changed to PIA/GATF. When we reached the headquarters, Ricardo, the Manager of Internet Communications, guided us to their beautiful conference room with photos of their former chairmen on the wall. Gerri, the National Membership Manager, and two experts, Dan & Kenneth, came to meet us in the room. Soon their President & CEO, Mr. Michael Makin, also joined



Photographed in the main entrance of the PIA/GATF headquarters.

us in the meeting. After exchanging business cards, he started to introduce Dan, Kenneth and some of their staff to us. Before he left after the short brief, we exchanged souvenirs each other. Mr. Makin returned to his work in the busy morning. Then Gerri introduced us their membership and services in details. Traditionally GATF concentrated on technical research and academic training works. After the merger, they have more resources and now also covers subjects beyond academic and technical services, e.g. political involvement, research on economics, labour market analysis, etc.



Exchanged souvenirs with Mr. Michael Makin, the President & CEO of PIA/GATF.



The factory in the Pittsburg headquarters of PIA/GATF has very rich facilities.

Gerri explained their membership classification, services as well as possibilities of cooperation with overseas associations. She also told us about their Premier/Benny Awards as well as their new information service – RSS Feed. Afterwards Dan & Kenneth discussed with us on industrial standards in the printing industry, such as ISO, GRACoL and the new version – G7. They expressed that they didn't incline to any specifications. Instead they can provide the training or service of any industrial standards mentioned here. Dan also kindly presented us a topic on process controls. In our turn, we introduced our association as well as our testing laboratory and projects to them. One of our most important tasks is to have their opinion on our project "Hong Kong Sheet-fed Offset Technical Reference Manual". Dan & Kenneth listened to us patiently and read the manual seriously. They questioned us when they found queries. Although the discussion was short, they did give us very professional comment. After a quick meal and a short break in the conference room, Dan & Kenneth showed us their factory, testing laboratory and prepress facilities. Their facilities are richer than most printers. They have 4 different sets of pre-press workflow and proofing systems. They have presses covering from the conventional to the digital types. The conventional presses include the 6-colour Komori Lithrone 28, the 4-colour Heidelberg SP-102, and web-offset Man Roland Rotoman. The digital presses include Agfa Chromapress, Heidelberg DI-46 and Xerox iGen3, etc. We hardly find such a wide scope of pre-press systems and press types in a commercial printing factory in Hong Kong or anywhere. Here is the list illustrating PIA/GATF's main services below:

1. PIA's full name is Printing Industries of America, founded in 1887 in Chicago, 120 years in history, the earliest name in the history of printing associations in the U.S.A.
2. GATF's full name is Graphic Arts Technical Foundation, founded in 1924, a well-known academic research and vocational training centre.
3. They started to merge in 1999. The merger and re-construction has completed recently. It becomes the largest graphic arts association in the world.
4. She offers a wide scope of training in graphic arts, hosts seminars & conferences from small to large scale.
5. Recently a new information service, RSS Feed, is added to her members.
6. A new management program, Lean Manufacturing, is also added.
7. Internationally well-known Premier/Benny Awards received about 5,500 pieces of works from 19 countries last year.
8. Another well-known award, InterTech, has always received many support from the industry.
9. She offers various subjects of training and consultation supported by a large team of experts.
10. Possibly the biggest publisher with the richest bookstore in the subjects of graphic arts.
11. Besides publications in print media, PDF, CD-ROM and online media are also available.
12. Besides training and consultation services, she also participates in legislation, economics & politics.
13. Reports & ratios of different subjects from graphic technologies to economics are published each year.
14. Members get discounts on her products, mailing, insurance and purchases of equipment.
15. The bi-monthly magazine, GATFWorld, always give most updated information and knowledge in the industry. "PIA/GATF Forecast: Technology, Trends, Tactics" is included in the first issue each year.
16. The headquarters in Pittsburg also includes a print material testing laboratory, similar to the laboratory of the Graphic Arts Association of Hong Kong.



Photographed with the expert, Mr. Dan Remaley, in front of the Man Roland Rotoman.

The 3rd Stop - CSULA

The 3rd visit in the tour was the California State University, Los Angeles. Professor Lee arranged the programs for us. He is also the Associate Dean for the College of Engineering, Computer Science, and Technology. He guided us to walk around the faculty including the print media division and a lecture room with the equipment for live video conference. Professor Lee gave us a speech on the graphic communications in the 21st century. It has widened our views in the future of graphic communications. The program was tight as we had another visit in the afternoon on the same day.



Photographed with Professor Lee (2nd right) in CSULA.

The 4th Stop - PIASC

After lunch in CSULA's staff canteen, Professor Lee gave us a ride to another program – the Printing Industries Association, Inc. of Southern California. Thanks to him again for this afternoon program. Professor Lee has very good relationship with this association. When we reached the building, Ms. Ara Izquierdo, the Vice President in Industry Relations, was waiting for us in the reception. She brought us to meet Mr. Gerald Bonetto, the Vice President in Government Affairs. We were guided to a conference room. Then we exchanged our business cards. They were very kind and we shared our current business conditions in our regions. Actually the graphic arts industry in the U.S.A. faces similar issues in some ways as we do in Hong Kong. PIASC is like a regional branch of the PIA/GATF that is a nation-wide organization. Although PIASC is a smaller scale but her expertise is no less than PIA/GATF. Here is a few of her main information and services:

1. PIASC's full name is Printing Industries Association, Inc. of South California, founded in 1935.
2. An affiliate of PIA/GATF.
3. She offers more or less similar services as PIA/GATF to her members.



Photographed with Mr. Gerald Bonetto (2nd left) and Ms. Ara Izquierdo (4th left) in PIASC.

4. On her website there is the Print Access, an online search engine for anyone to find services in graphic arts in the region easily.
5. Members get discounts on her products and services as well as discounts on loan, insurance and taxes.



The Print Access search engine on the website of PIASC.

The 5th & Ultimate Stop - Adobe

Our ultimate stop in the tour is Adobe, one of the most important visiting programs. Through the arrangement and contact of her Hong Kong office, finally the visit of the Adobe headquarters was confirmed. She is situated at San Jose, or Silicon Valley, the legendary name. Meeting us were Lonn Lorenz and Dov Issacs, the former is CS Product Manager while the latter is the Principal Scientist. Actually I met

Dov in the printing show, IPEX 2006, last year. First we introduced to them our association, our laboratory and finally one of our significant projects – the **Hong Kong Sheed-fed Offset Printing Technical Reference Manual**. We also expressed our interest to have close relationship together. We tried to explore the possibilities to add our ICC profiles to their software products, and to host seminars together in the future. They didn't deny the possibilities. They gave us a few suggestions on our works and development. Also they told us a few of their coming activities. Below is a list of the information from the two experts:

1. Creative Suite 3 (CS3) will be launched in many regions simultaneously in the end of April. After that there will be a series of training and seminars all over the world.
2. PDF Print Engine will be embedded in many pre-press or workflow systems as the core technology in the future. It will be the main renderer challenging the position of the current PostScript RIP technology. However Adobe will continue to support PostScript users.
3. PDF Print Engine and Adobe CS3 employ the same imaging technology. They will be launched together in the same pace in order to solve the compatibility issue.
4. PDF Print Engine can process the complex content in a PDF document. It surpasses the PostScript RIP that requires other modules in front of it to handle difficult objects like transparency and layers.
5. Dov is participating ISO and PDF/X conferences actively. If everything is smooth, two new specifications, PDF/X-4 and PDF/X-5, will be launched this year. It also matches the new PDF concept and workflow supported by Adobe.

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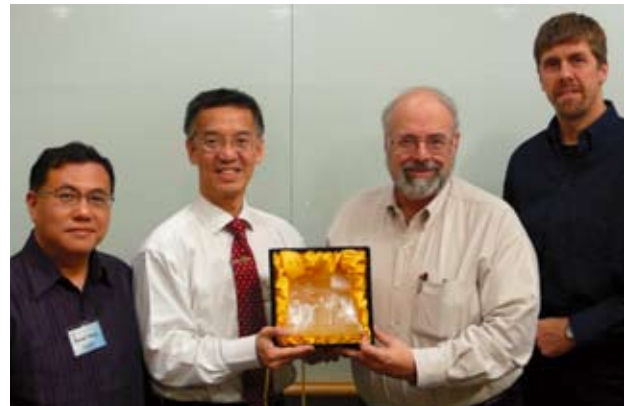
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Summary

We have widened our views after the tour by understanding more the operations of the graphic arts associations in the U.S.A. and the local business conditions. When it is necessary, we will continue to visit overseas bodies and seek cooperation opportunities in order to provide more services and information to our members in Hong Kong and China.



Adobe headquarters in the legendary Silicon Valley (San Jose).



Presented our souvenir to Mr. Dov Issacs (2nd right) and Mr. Lonn Lorenz.



Discussing graphic arts technologies and development with the two Adobe experts.