PP Graphics: More than a decade of process, information and continuous improvement with Optimus

As PP Graphics enters a new era of investment and growth, a relationship with Optimus that began under the GBM name in 2015 continues to evolve with Flexi Planner bringing new levels of production visibility and control.



Manchester-based **PP Graphics** brings together **more than 40 years of print and reprographics heritage**. Today, the company specialises in large-format branding and graphics for retail, events and exhibitions, museums and attractions, construction and commercial environments — combining creativity and production expertise to deliver high-quality graphics projects across the UK.

The business can trace its roots back to GBM, originally established in reprographics before evolving into digital print and wide-format production as technology and customer requirements changed.

The business subsequently traded under the distinctive Psycho Peacock identity, before entering its latest chapter as PP Graphics in February 2026. While the identity has changed, much of the experience behind it has remained — with a long-serving team combining deep knowledge of print production with continued investment in technology, processes and automation.

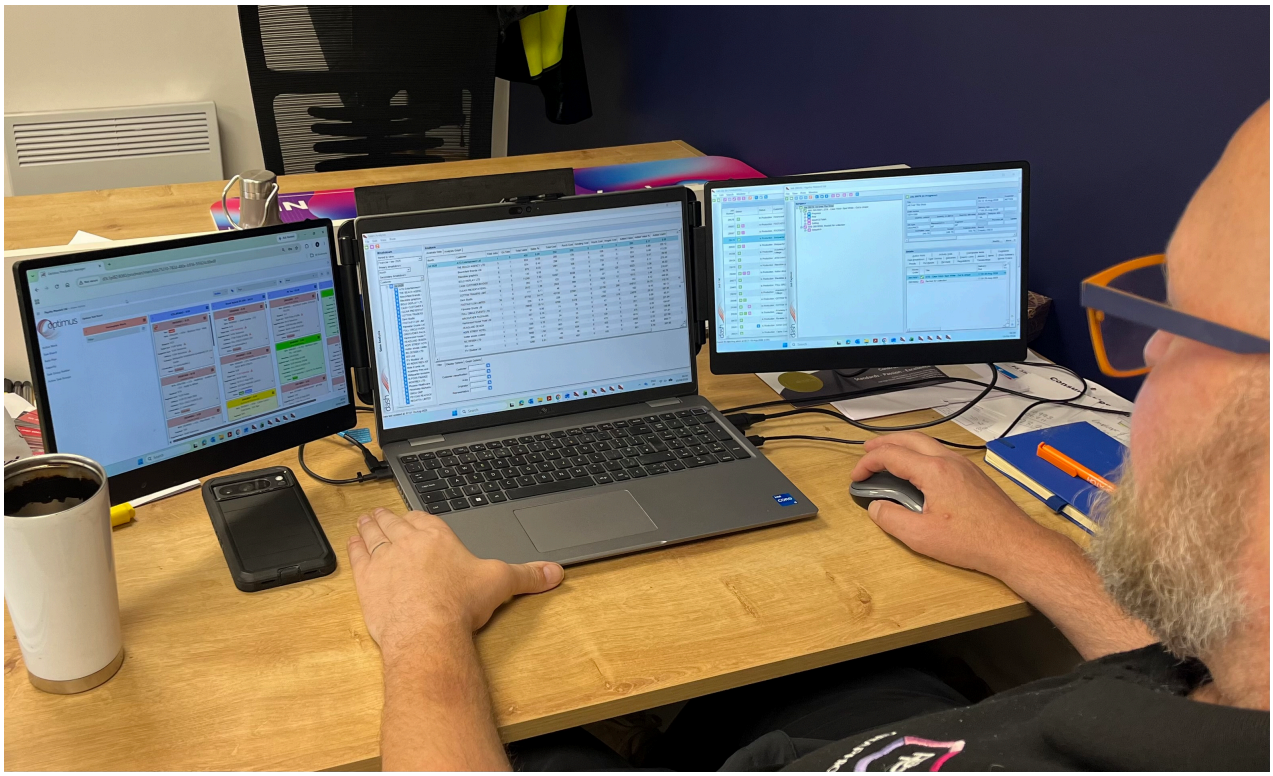
General Manager **Andy McIntyre** has his own long history with the company, having originally joined GBM around 1999. While technology has transformed print production during that time, Andy believes the underlying knowledge and experience of the people behind it remain just as important.

His relationship with Optimus began when GBM selected the MIS in 2015. Following a management buyout in 2024 and the subsequent move to the

PP Graphics identity, the business has entered another period of investment and development — with Optimus continuing to play a central role.

A relationship that began in 2015

Andy was closely involved in evaluating a replacement MIS for GBM. The existing environment had become increasingly restrictive, with limited reporting and scheduling capabilities and spreadsheets playing a significant role in managing information across the business.



GBM needed something capable of bringing those processes together while reflecting the realities of a specialist digital and wide-format production environment.

At the time, many of the MIS options GBM considered were still geared towards more conventional print production routes that didn't readily reflect the specialist nature of its digital and wide-format work. GBM needed to estimate and manufacture across a diverse range of **substrates, processes, machines and finishing requirements**, often combining several within the same project.

For Andy, this was where Optimus dash stood out.

Its highly configurable, rules-driven approach meant GBM could model the substrates and production processes it actually used, based around its own manufacturing logic. Rather than being constrained by predefined production routes more relevant to conventional print, **dash could be configured around the specialist nature of GBM's digital and wide-format operation.**

The company also looked at what could be achieved elsewhere in the industry. **Swedish wide-format specialist and Optimus customer Storbildsbolaget provided an important point of reference and inspiration**, while Andy and colleagues also visited a **well-established UK Optimus customer** to see the system operating in a live production environment.

Ease of navigation, strong stock control and reporting were important, but the ability to make **Optimus dash reflect the way GBM actually manufactured its work** became a significant differentiator.

The objective was straightforward: **get the fundamentals right.**

Estimating, job creation, stock control and invoicing would provide the foundation, with automation reducing unnecessary administration and accurate operational information supporting analysis and future development.

More than £42,000 invested — and a return within the first year

Choosing Optimus represented a significant financial commitment for GBM. The initial software investment, together with the first year's annual maintenance, took the **year-one investment to more than £42,000**.

That puts Andy's assessment of the return into perspective.

More than a decade later, when asked whether he believed Optimus had delivered a return equivalent to that initial investment within its first 12 months, he doesn't hesitate:

“Easy. Easy.”

In Andy's assessment, **a £42,000+ first-year investment had already delivered an equivalent return within year one.**

The return wasn't dependent on one isolated saving. Information captured during estimating could flow into fully specified production jobs without repeatedly being re-keyed, while stock, purchasing, production, invoicing and reporting became part of a connected workflow.

That efficiency is particularly important because PP Graphics isn't producing a repetitive range of straightforward print products. Its specialist wide-format work can involve complex, multi-line quotations incorporating different materials, production processes, finishing requirements and individual components within the same project.

Optimus allows those requirements to be modelled using PP Graphics' own estimating rules, with information captured at quotation stage continuing into production rather than having to be recreated.





“Information”

Ask Andy to identify the single biggest benefit Optimus has brought to the business and his answer isn't estimating, stock control or scheduling.

“Information.”

More specifically, it is the ability to work from **trusted information — accurate, accessible and visible across the operation — that gives PP Graphics the confidence to make better-informed decisions.**

From the original enquiry and quotation through production, materials, delivery and subsequent analysis, Optimus provides a common thread through the operation.

“I believe Optimus is in every single step.”

For Andy, the value comes from knowing what is happening and being able to act on it.

“You'll never not know where that job is.”

Optimus Alerts add another layer of visibility and transparency. Personalised Alerts can bring important exceptions directly to the attention of the relevant people rather than relying on someone to continually search the MIS for potential problems.

Andy describes being able to see, for example, that several jobs could potentially be late and immediately investigate why. For PP Graphics, that means the MIS doesn't simply provide somewhere to find information — it can proactively highlight where attention may be required.

That information isn't simply for management. Accurate shop-floor data also helps PP Graphics understand why something may have taken longer than expected, whether assumptions need changing and where processes can be improved.

The result is a continuous feedback loop: better information enables better decisions, which in turn helps PP Graphics refine the way work is estimated and produced.

An MIS that continues to evolve

After spending time away from the company, Andy returned and saw an opportunity to develop the Optimus installation further.

He took renewed ownership of the system, refining how products and processes were modelled and bringing greater discipline to the information behind the MIS.

It reinforced an important principle:

An MIS cannot simply be implemented and then left unchanged.

Machines, costs, products and processes change. The MIS has to evolve with them.

As PP Graphics entered its latest period of investment and development, that same philosophy brought renewed focus to an area that had been important since the original Optimus implementation: **production planning.**

A planning ambition more than a decade in the making

Production planning and capacity were already part of Andy's thinking when GBM first invested in Optimus. At that stage, Task Diary with enhanced Capacity Planning provided an appropriate starting point for the company's specialist digital production environment.

More than a decade later, both the business and its planning requirements have moved on.

Andy identified three things he particularly wanted from the next generation of planning: **a highly visual production board, clear capacity visibility and the ability to intelligently build and group production tasks.**

His assessment of Flexi Planner?

“Tick, tick, tick.”

For PP Graphics, Flexi Planner provides the ability to see and respond to a production environment that can change continually. New work arrives, artwork is approved, priorities move, machines become unavailable and jobs take longer or shorter than expected.

A static production plan can therefore become outdated remarkably quickly.

Flexi Planner's Auto-Plan functionality provides an optimised starting point based on the work, resources and planning rules available, while experienced production people retain the ability to make informed manual adjustments. Andy describes the plan being refreshed several times throughout the working day as the production picture changes.

That visibility now extends beyond production planning itself. **Urgent jobs can be prioritised, with priorities and tags following the work through the workflow from pre-press into print and subsequent production stages.** It gives the team a clearer picture of what is committed, what requires immediate attention and where capacity remains available.

That becomes commercially important when an existing or prospective customer asks whether PP Graphics can accommodate new work against a particular deadline. With a clearer view of existing priorities and available capacity, the team is better equipped to make an informed decision about **what can realistically be produced and when**.

For Andy, that responsiveness is fundamental to succeeding in wide-format. Getting test work right first time and delivering on time are important factors in winning new business — making this visibility commercially valuable as well as operationally useful.

The visual nature of the plan is also changing how production teams interact with the workload.

“You're the hunters. You need to hunt for your jobs. You cannot sit and wait.”

Rather than waiting to be told what comes next, production teams can see the work approaching their area and identify what is ready.

Task Builder can also group compatible work using common materials or production resources, helping reduce unnecessary changes and improve utilisation.

Technology provides the information. Experienced people use it to make better decisions.

When the unexpected happens

That visibility becomes particularly valuable when production doesn't go to plan.

Asked for an example of Optimus helping PP Graphics deal with a difficult production situation, Andy's response was telling:

“It happens all the time.”

He recalls one occasion when a major production machine became unavailable with significant customer work approaching its despatch deadline.

The immediate questions were clear: which jobs were affected, what still needed producing and what alternative capacity was available?

Rather than manually piecing the production picture together, the team could identify the affected workload and begin replanning.

In an exhibition and wide-format environment, where deadlines can be immovable and artwork can arrive relatively late, being able to see the consequences of disruption and respond quickly is particularly valuable.

Extending the same intelligence into web-to-print

PP Graphics' next stage is already taking shape.

Alongside Flexi Planner, the company has invested in **XMPie**, a fully featured web-to-print platform with a **well-established and proven integration with Optimus, built on a relationship between the two companies that spans more than a decade.**

For PP Graphics, the opportunity goes considerably further than simply creating an online storefront.







The company has developed sophisticated estimating rules within Optimus dash that reflect its products, substrates, processes and manufacturing logic. Through the established XMPie integration, those same rules can also drive the web-to-print environment.

Instead of maintaining two independent pricing environments — one within the MIS and another within web-to-print — PP Graphics can work from the **same underlying estimating intelligence, driven by the Optimus dash calculation engine.**

Changes to substrates, processes, costs or production logic can therefore be maintained within Optimus rather than duplicated across separate pricing systems, improving consistency, reducing administration and significantly reducing the potential for pricing errors.

It extends a principle that has been part of the PP Graphics Optimus journey from the beginning:

Capture information once and allow it to flow through the business.

As PP Graphics develops its web-to-print capability, customer orders can become part of an increasingly connected workflow, using the estimating intelligence already established within Optimus and carrying accurate information forward towards production.

Still evolving after more than a decade

More than a decade after the original implementation, the foundations remain, but PP Graphics continues to build on them.

Flexi Planner applies the information already within Optimus to increasingly dynamic production planning. XMPie extends the same estimating intelligence towards the customer and online ordering.

Perhaps that is the strongest measure of the relationship.

Not simply that PP Graphics has used Optimus for more than a decade, but that **eleven years later it is still investing in what Optimus can help the business do next.**

And the journey is not finished. As PP Graphics continues to develop, the team is already considering where Optimus could support the next stage of its operation — building further on the foundations established over the past decade.

Asked whether he would recommend Optimus to another graphics business, Andy's response is unequivocal:

“Without a shadow of a doubt.”

Discover PP Graphics

From retail and events to museums, visitor attractions, construction and commercial environments, **PP Graphics specialises in large-format branding and graphics**, combining production expertise, creativity and knowledge to deliver projects from its Manchester operation.

Visit PP Graphics → https://ppgraphics.co.uk/

Contact Andy McIntyre → andrew.mcintyre@ppgraphics.co.uk