



The Park Douglas Printing team from left, Shane and Maxine Smith, Nick Smith, Chris Smith, Aaron Alderton and Di Smith.

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“It’s not just printing – you’ve also got to watch to make sure there’s balance so you’re getting the same density on each sheet, so that in 50 sheets’ time there’s still going to be consistency.”

Once satisfied with the run, the coasters are then left to dry before they are passed over to print finishers Aaron and Nick’s sister Di.

“Their job is to die-cut and package, shrink wrap and box the coasters before they’re freighted off to their destination,” Nick explains.

“So the machine Aaron runs is basically just like a big cookie cutter, which gives the coasters their shape.

“They also do any bindery we might need completed for any tax invoice books or booklets we’ve made.”

Nick then completes other jobs, such as printing coasters which couldn’t be “ganged up” for the first run, or using another industrial scale printer to print off sign-in books or letterheads, before they’re stamped by what he refers to as the Volkswagen of the printing world, the 1930s Heidelberg Platen.

“You know when you go to a club and you have to use a book

to sign in? We’re also one of Australia’s biggest printers of those – we do about a million a month,” he says.

“So that’s not as exciting as coasters, but it’s still definitely a good job to have.”

From there he begins the clean-up on his printing press, which takes about two hours to wash.

“I’ll get the ink out of the ink ducts and then I’ll wash the rollers with a special chemical,” Nick explains.

“It’s a very messy business, and newer machines do have a lot of automated processes in terms of that.”

With such a big operation, one does wonder why Park Douglas still heroes machines that are older than the business itself.

But the challenge they provide is something Nick says keeps the business pursuing a better product, and that there are more important ways of building a greater business.

“I think everyone would like a brand new, state-of-the-art machine because that’s just how business is now,” he says.

“But we do the best with the machinery we’ve got and we’re always wondering how we can improve irrespective of that.