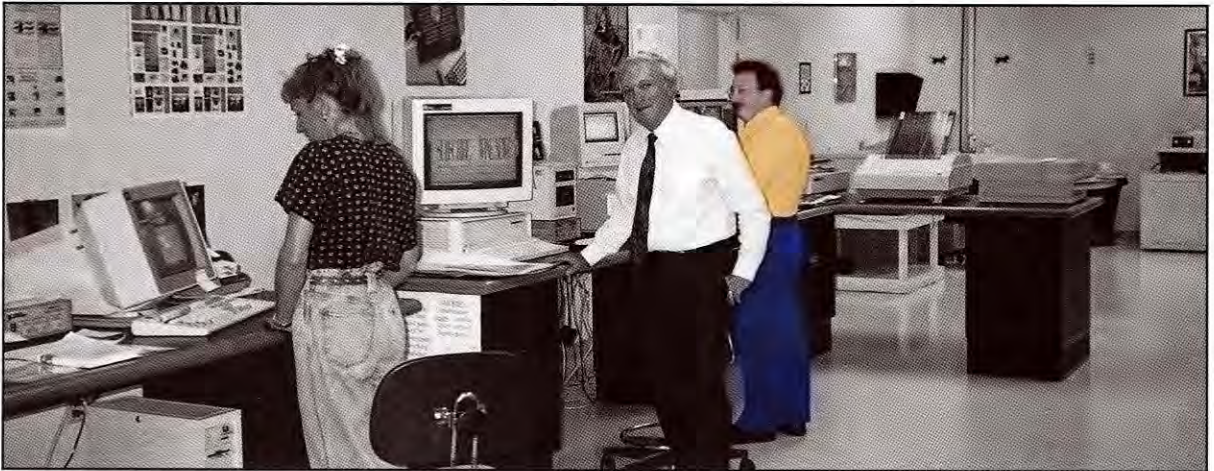


SUNRISE FIRM SHINES IN COLOR PROCESSING



JOE RIMKUS JR. / Miami Herald Staff

Graphics Master: Rex Three Inc. founder Julius Miller amid tools of the color-separating trade.

Work attracts national clients

By Hortense Leon
Special to the Herald

ABOUT 10 years ago, an Israel-based manufacturer called Scitex developed a way to use a computer for color separating, stripping and retouching — processes that precede color printing.

The new technology not only made everything quicker and less costly, but afforded greater flexibility in pre-press work.

In the past, the processes were more intricate, because they involved cutting and manipulating film. Now, film images can be altered on a video monitor by pressing the right buttons.

In South Florida, the first company to use the equipment was Rex Three Inc., which moved to Sunrise from Miami in 1990.

Founded in 1957 by Julius Miller, the company's chairman of the board, Rex Three was named the top color separator in Florida in late 1990 by *Printing Impressions* magazine, one of the industry's most influential trade journals.

The distinction is based on sales figures. In 1990, 70 percent of the company's \$16.5 million in sales represented color separation work, Miller said.

Manny Abrams, former president of Miami-based Printing Industry of South Florida, said Rex Three made the right decision to buy into a process that has revolutionized the printing industry.

"They have always been farsighted," Abrams said. "They made a heavy investment in a technology, which at the time was unproven."

As a result of the company's pioneering spirit, Abrams said, it has been able to build an outstanding client list. It includes American Express, Straight Arrow Publishers, which prints *Rolling Stone* magazine, and Avon Products Inc.

About 25 percent of the company's client roster consists of national accounts, said Stephen Miller, Rex Three's president and Julius Miller's son. Major local accounts include Beber Silverstein & Partners and Crispin & Porter, both advertising agencies.

Kevin Mullan, director of manufacturing and distribution for Straight Arrow, based in New York, said he usually relies on Rex Three for jobs that require special handling.

He said that in early 1990, he used the company's graphic artists to enhance a cover featuring rock star Paul McCartney.

"The problem was that there was an ugly water tower in the background and we wanted another building," Mullan said. "The people at Rex Three cloned and re-designed the background."

Mullan said that it would be easier for his company to get the work done in New York, but Rex Three is faster, more artistic and more accurate.

"Anyone can buy the equipment," Mullan said. "It is easy to push the buttons, but interpreting is hard."

He said price is a lesser factor.

"Price is not a particularly important reason to use a Florida company anymore," he said. "Yes, they are a bit lower than the others, but in this competitive market, you can almost dictate price, so that is not the issue."

Importance of equipment

Rex Three probably has more Scitex equipment than any other company in South Florida, Julius Miller said.

But Bill Decherniss, the company's general manager, said that distinction isn't the only thing that makes the company stand out.

"We were the first in the area to install desktop publishing equipment two and a half years ago," he said. "We recognized the influence that it would have on the industry early on."

Still another weapon in the company's marketing arsenal is a new inking system called PerfectScan, developed by the graphic arts division of DuPont Inc.

Described simply, the process delivers more ink to a page than most other systems, without losing clarity. The result is more brilliant color.

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Experimental process

The process was developed about 18 months ago. Rex Three has been experimenting with it since February. In the last month, the company has made it available to customers.

The move to Sunrise last summer has made a big difference to Rex Three, Stephen Miller said.

The company invested \$650,000 in new equipment and added much more space in the new location. The Miami plant had only 33,000 square feet, compared with 55,000 square feet in Sunrise.

The company's \$3.2 million building sits on five acres of land and could accommodate another 100,000 square feet.

"The building is designed with pop-out walls, which makes expansion easy," Stephen Miller said. "Sometime in 1992, we will break ground to enlarge the plant by 25,000 square feet."