

Henry Ching

DPI MEDIA GROUP,
SCARBOROUGH, ONTARIO

BY DOUG PICKLYK

“I’ve been lucky,” repeats Henry Ching as he navigates his way around large rolls of newsprint waiting to be fed into the rumbling Goss Community press at the back of his 30,000 square-foot plant in Scarborough, Ontario. Ching, 59, leads DPI Media Group Ltd., a \$7.6 million sheetfed and web printing operation that has grown substantially from the small shop he founded in the early ‘90s, and although he credits luck for much of his business success, there’s definitely more to the story.

Born and raised in Hong Kong, Ching moved to Canada as a child, attending high school in Kingston, Ontario and then earning a computer science degree from the University of Waterloo in 1976. Then, after two years at a government desk job in downtown Toronto, his fortunes changed. A conversation with an older businessman who bought and sold original paintings inspired Ching to strike out on his own. Soon he was importing and wholesaling art from Hong Kong, and before long he was earning far more than his nine-to-five job could deliver. He’s never turned back.

Ching eventually branched out into his own retail business selling stationery. Customer demand for various print products led him to brokering larger jobs, and by the early ‘90s he recognized the potential the printing industry possessed. He soon started up his own operation with a small AB Dick, producing letterhead and business cards.

After a decade growing his sheetfed business and creating strong customer relationships, especially in the local Chinese community, Ching turned his attention to publishing.

He saw prime opportunities to better serve the Asian business community in the Greater Toronto Area—an area home to some 500,000 people of Chinese descent. In 2001 he launched Asian E-Tel, a Chinese-language yellow pages and companion online portal. He followed that up with a glossy magazine, *Asian Gourmet*, Canada’s Asian Food magazine, and subsequently a Chinese-language Golf



instruction/coupon book. In the case of both the magazine and coupon book, the ventures contributed proceeds to community clubs and charities. He has since successfully sold off all of the publications.

During his venture into publishing Ching was also expanding his printing business, and in 2003 he made the bold move to add newspaper production to the sheetfed operation. His ability to print and stitch glossy sheetfed covers onto web-printed newsprint sections, all under one roof, has set him apart. Lately the company has experienced steady growth of at least 10 percent a year, and about 60 percent of his business today is newspaper printing, specializing in ethnic community papers—a sector that has remained strong during the current economic decline. “If I didn’t have the newsprint business I’d be in big trouble,” says Ching, citing the stiff competition in the sheetfed offset market.

“Nothing comes easy,” he insists, and it’s clear that his personal work ethic and dedication to customer service have been core to his success.

Often working seven days a week, most nights Ching is at the plant between midnight and 3 a.m. to ensure his clients’ newspapers are ready for delivery. “Our work is always on time,” he confirms with conviction, adding, “You have to work hard no matter how old you are,” a lesson he learned early from the elderly art dealer.

Ching’s knack for recognizing opportunities, combined with his determined work ethic, prove there’s much more to his success in the printing industry than luck. **CP**