Ying Shi is a professional photographer and the owner of the high street photographic store Caterham Digital, based in Caterham. Her photo shop also serves as a photo studio and a post office. She has been in the photo business for over 12 years, always partnering with Dupli for her equipment and consumable supplies. Photo printing is one of the core businesses of Caterham Digital. Last year, Ying made the decision to replace her old Minilab system with the DNP DS-PRO1 Minilab solution. Ying kindly accepted to share her experience of the new DNP system with us.

How important is photo printing to your business?

Before the pandemic, the UK Post Office gave us the opportunity to offer their services in our store. This was definitively the right decision since it is generating additional traffic into the store. People coming to us for mail services have now become aware of our photo shop and the other services we offer. This has brought new customers to us.

Passport photos make up a large proportion of our photo printing business and the post office has increased the amount we do. Every day we take between 20-30 passport photos. The majority are now digital versions using the UK E passport codes which are on the DNP system. This is something we couldn't offer on our old system as it only allowed us to print hard copies.

Photo printing contributes to 50% or more of our total revenue, and it is our core business that generates the highest profit.
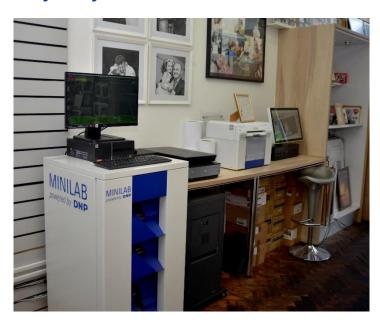
What is the competitive environment of your photo printing business?

We have a very strong position in our area because we are the only professional photo shop within a 10-15 miles radius. We pride ourselves on offering the best customer service and this has meant we have created a loyal customer base over the years, getting a lot of repeat business.

What is the profile of your customers?

In the city of Caterham, we have about 22,000 residents. We have been pleased to see that since upgrading to new equipment and advertising how easily customers can print from their phones, we are attracting younger generations to start printing on top of our existing older customer base.

Why did you choose the DNP DS-Pro1 minilab?

We had our old minilab system for 12 years and although it served us well it was becoming very expensive to maintain. It was also causing our customers a lot of issues when they were trying to send images from their mobile phones (especially photos stored on the cloud).

Better print quality was a priority in our decision making as this is the most important thing to build up customer loyalty and make sure that they come back to the shop. I am also a professional photographer, so I want to ensure I am giving my customers prints that I deem are very good quality.

What is the feedback from your customers?

The DNP system is easy to use, and customers love it. We show them how it works once and after that they can use it and print on their own. They especially like the wireless connectivity with mobile phones and the simplicity of just having to scan 2 QR codes to send their images.

Offering this great user experience is important because we have around 50% of new customers coming every week.

In conclusion, would you recommend the DNP DS-Pro1 Minilab to other photo shops?

I would definitely recommend the DNP Minilab to others photo shops. It has been 100% reliable and feedback we have received from our customers is great.

Adding new equipment to our business has allowed us to offer new services such as digital ID photos which has increased our turnover.

Most of all, we keep customers happy, this is the main thing. Offering a great user experience is what will keep customers coming back.

Within a few words the DNP Minilab solution is:

- Cost effective
- Easy to operate
- Reliable
- Compact design