



EFI OneFlow Gives Digital Color Graphics Big Gains in Speed and Productivity



Company Profile

Digital Color Graphics, an offset print operation in Southampton, PA, delivers high-end products quickly and cost-effectively – with amazing offset color quality. “We are the Mercedes of the short-run industry,” says Vice President Jim Rosenthal. Founded in 1997 by Jim and partner John Rosenthal, president, the company boasts \$2 million in annual revenue and offers services from graphic design to website design and hosting. It turns out signs, banners and premium promotional items while its computer-to-plate print production department produces everything from corporate literature, post cards and direct mail pieces to elegant short-run catalogues – in a vast array of stocks and finishes – for local Fortune 500 companies and international firms.

Challenge


The computer-to-plate operation needed a solution that would reduce time-consuming, error-prone, manual manipulation of customer files, decrease job turnaround time, and ensure exceptional document quality. It had to be cost-effective for a small 12-person shop, cut production costs and yield the kind of gains in efficiency and productivity that would give the owners more time to develop new business.

Solution

Digital Color Graphics chose EFI OneFlow™ software.

Results

EFI OneFlow automated prepress functions, reduced errors from manual file manipulation, significantly cut job turnaround time and increased staffing flexibility. It delivered productivity gains of 25 percent, providing efficiencies of a big press operation at an affordable price and giving the owners more time to focus on new business.



The need for speed and quality in a cost-conscious market

Partners Jim and John Rosenthal studied prepress solutions from a variety of companies and considered piecing together their own solution before discovering EFI OneFlow at the Print-On Demand show in New York in April 2003. They began using OneFlow in May. “We like to be out ahead on technology,” Jim says.


In the print production department, OneFlow software drives a Mitsubishi platesetter and Epson Stylus® Pro 9600 proofing device. Job plates are then used on Heidelberg and Ryobi 4-color presses. With OneFlow, Jim says, the configuration ensures speed, accuracy and continuity from proof to plate to final output.

“Right now,” he explains, “the market is driven by speed and price. At the same time quality is critical to the clients we serve. That’s what excited us about EFI OneFlow. When you’re in a rush, you’ve got to get it right the first time. What customers get from the press has got to be exactly what they saw on the proof. OneFlow gives us a true RIP once, print many workflow. The same file we RIP is the same file we use to generate the proof and it’s the exact same file that we use to generate a plate. That allows us to maintain the high level of integrity we need.”

Convenient, automated PDF workflow

OneFlow conveniently processes more file types, including the latest Adobe® PDF and PostScript™ files, along with Microsoft® Word and Publisher files – “a godsend,” Jim says.

OneFlow easily converts files to PDF and provides complete workflow automation by linking automated prepress functions like preflight, correct, trap, impose,



attributes, approve and RIP. Technicians at Digital Color Graphics use a simple drag-and-drop, icon-based interface to create, view and edit customized workflows. They manage jobs with functions that track job progress and enable e-mail approvals and archiving of files. They make corrections easily at critical stages in the workflow. “OneFlow really shines on problem files,” Jim says.

“There are always preflight issues with files, trapping issues, font issues, color correction issues, layout issues. In a manual system making corrections is time-consuming and prone to error. OneFlow automates a lot of those tasks, reducing errors and the time we have to spend preparing a file. In terms of efficiency, it puts us where we need to be.”

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– John Rosenthal, President, Digital Color Graphics

**“We like the solution.
OneFlow is putting us
where we want to be.”**

—Jim Rosenthal, Vice President, Digital
Color Graphics

Jim ticks off multiple examples of savings. There's the monthly newsletter from a car dealership with a tight turnaround. “They're not graphic designers, not high tech people. They may submit QuarkXPress™ or PDF files, and they don't necessarily know how to create a PDF file properly. We use OneFlow's auto imposition templates to impose. Everything is properly converted from RGB to CMYK; everything is properly trapped. Prior to installing OneFlow, we had to open the files and make corrections manually. We struggled with that car dealership newsletter for two or three hours to get something to work. Yesterday, from the time we dropped that job into OneFlow to the time we had the job plated was less than a half hour.”

OneFlow's soft proofing application, View, has allowed the shop's staff to reduce expensive hard copy proofing. “We're not generating additional laser separations to see if files separate properly, with OneFlow we can preview this.” Meanwhile, the production department's workflows are set up to generate PDFs that are sent directly to customers. “These are the same files used to generate the plate data, which gives us a level of consistency and confidence with our files.” Finally, the department is selling more OneFlow contract proofs to clients, further increasing revenue.

Improved productivity and savings

“OneFlow improves the overall performance of our print production department by 25 percent... or more,” Jim says. John agrees: “That's a lot of money. In fact, that's the equivalent of paying for an additional employee.”

Or, looking at it another way, Jim says, “A 25 percent increase in productivity is probably a 30 to 40 percent increase in the number of jobs we can put on press.”

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OneFlow's automated features also free staff to work on other projects. “For example, we save about an hour a day because someone can send a file to be RIPped and work on something else.” These hours add up, saving up to \$8,000 a year, Jim says. And OneFlow has eliminated the department's big bottleneck – the continuous rechecking of proofs, including checks to ensure that plates match proofs. The person once dedicated to that task now spreads his time over production, customer service and operations. “With OneFlow, we know the plates are correct. Dropping this check probably saves us another \$3,000 to \$5,000 a year and decreases plate wastage.”

EFI OneFlow is even beginning to free up some of the president's time. “John's strength is in business development and sales,” Jim says. “The less time we can spend worrying about production issues, the more time we can spend developing business.”

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A competitive advantage

Their small shop sometimes competes with larger printing companies, John says. "They're spending a half million dollars on their systems. Little shops can't compete at that level. OneFlow helps us compete by having the same processes in place but not at the same cost. It allows us to do the same things, affordably, that the large shops do."

Such capabilities aren't common in small shops, Jim says. "When you couple OneFlow with a platesetter or inkjet printer, you get a very potent combination for the small printer, especially in the color market – the fastest growing market segment. OneFlow is an integrated solution with a lot of power. It layers a level of production sophistication on top of what you already have. Small printers can keep their existing technology and have a much more affordable approach to handling new digital file formats and compete effectively in a short-run environment. We like the solution. OneFlow is putting us where we want to be."

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**– Jim Rosenthal, Vice President,
Digital Color Graphics**

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