

EFI Fiery JobFlow drives profitable automation at ZenPrint

In 2006, J. D. Gardner and Nate Jensen had a problem. The pair was working with a Mexican restaurant franchise that needed business cards, banners, menus, signage, and more branded materials at each location. But with each general manager crafting these materials locally, it was next to impossible to maintain brand integrity. They asked themselves: What if we built a web-to-print solution that allows us to upload our brand templates, including areas of locked-down content, giving our general managers the ability to customise materials within brand guidelines? That's exactly what they set out to do.

The platform was so successful that the company began to offer it to other customers. The next challenge for the pair was finding reliable printing partners to produce the entire gamut of printed materials they required. "The companies we were working with didn't want to manage a stable of print vendors," explains Justin Biggs, President and COO. "And we had trouble finding a printer that exactly met our needs. So we decided to get into the printing business ourselves through acquisitions."

In 2008, ZenPrint acquired a Salt Lake City offset printer and converted the operation to digital printing with Xerox iGen presses. "We chose the EFI™ Fiery® digital front end for those presses," Biggs adds. "In addition to delivering great quality, it enabled us to control multiple printers from a single interface and take advantage of built-in applications for imposition, colour management, job editing, and more."

In 2011, ZenPrint acquired a Provo, Utah-based printing company with a larger facility and combined the operations. Today, the company operates with two Xerox iGen 150 presses, a RICOH Pro C9110, and two RICOH Pro C7100 presses. "The beauty of the EFI Fiery platform is the ability to manage all of those printers from a single, familiar interface, Fiery Command WorkStation," Biggs continues. "As we moved into a multi-vendor environment, we needed a solution that



Challenge:

"As we moved into a multi-vendor environment, we needed a solution that was as vendor agnostic as possible."

JUSTIN BIGGS, PRESIDENT AND COO
ZENPRINT



ZenPrint's mission is to be the easiest and most intuitive on-demand printing platform in the world. The company, which was founded in 2006 as a web-to-print platform to solve a business problem for a Mexican restaurant franchise, added printing in 2008 to have more control over the entire process. Its full-service platform handles ordering, printing, fulfillment, and customer support for print, marketing, and photo products.

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EFI Fiery JobFlow helps Kenny Jimenez and other ZenPrint team members streamline the process needed to produce a wide variety of high-quality print-on-demand collateral on Xerox and Ricoh digital presses.

was as vendor agnostic as possible, and in hindsight, Fiery digital front ends were the best possible choice.”

Now, as a one-stop shop for branding needs, ZenPrint grew quickly. “We manufacture more than 100 print-on-demand products here,” Biggs says, “including photobooks, banners, canvas prints, metal prints, and traditional business products in various quantities. We realised early on that we couldn’t have a press operator sitting there opening files, checking for missing assets, and queuing them for printing. That’s where Fiery JobFlow™ came to the rescue.”

Biggs explained that as orders come in through the ZenPrint web-to-print job manager, they are automatically grouped into different batches that can be released to JobFlow with the click of a button. Upon their release, a CSV file is submitted to a JobFlow workflow, where files are pulled down, preflighted, combined, imposed, and sent to the press. “The operator doesn’t have to do any imposition,” he says. “He or she just queues up the jobs. As he releases each job, a label printer near the press prints out a small label that acts as a batch record for the press operator.”

Solution:

“EFI JobFlow is awesome. You just set it and forget it.”

JUSTIN BIGGS, PRESIDENT AND COO
ZENPRINT



An EFI Fiery DFE digital production system gave ZenPrint's Tatiana Haynes more efficiency and automated queue management to handle growing volumes when the company built a new pressroom for its Xerox iGen 150 digital presses.

Streamlined access to network storage

Biggs reported that in the past, the company commonly had problems with files that were not flattened, were missing fonts, or had other issues. "That might be one file out of 20 being ganged," he says, "but that one job would cause the entire batch to fail or to print with errors that required reprinting the entire batch. With JobFlow, we can take advantage of the Enfocore PitStop preflight functions to automatically make sure files are printable before they reach the press. JobFlow has also allowed us to leverage our network-attached storage systems. We process thousands of PDFs every day, and that can exceed the print server's storage capacity. So we use our more than 80 terabytes of network-attached storage to store imposed files for retrieval as needed instead of being limited to the space restrictions on the imposition server."

Now, instead of spending two to three hours each morning processing jobs, staff walk in to pre-processed, queued jobs that are ready to go. "This has significantly reduced reprints," Biggs explains. "Basically, the only time we ever reprint a job is if a human messes up."

JobFlow is also used to manage some of the company's wide-format work, including placing registration marks to guide cutting of canvases and other materials as well as guides for stretching finished products around gallery stretcher bars so they are centered properly.

"We simply use JobFlow to add those extra marks," Biggs says, "then drop the PDFs onto the computer connected to the printer for printing. We also use JobFlow to preflight files for our Graphtec decal cutter. For all of these activities, it gives us a way to set it and forget it. It is a smooth and integrated workflow regardless of which printer we use."

Result:

"We used to spend two to three hours each morning queuing up batches. Now with Fiery JobFlow, jobs are already queued when we arrive in the morning, and we don't have to worry about whether there will be issues."

JUSTIN BIGGS,
PRESIDENT AND COO
ZENPRINT

Command WorkStation for faster, more-accurate decisions

Central management of presses is also a boon for ZenPrint. “These presses are big machines,” notes Biggs. “Two years ago, we built out an additional pressroom to support the Xerox iGen 150 presses. They are tall and need special environmental conditions. With two pressrooms and a single management interface with Fiery Command WorkStation, a press operator can divvy out the work to different machines from multiple manufacturers without having to walk around. He can be much more productive and make real-time decisions. Moving jobs around doesn’t diminish productivity, and you don’t have to manage a variety of different front ends.”

“One thing I have learned in the last decade is that technology changes, and changes quickly,” he adds. “We wanted a solution in place that would allow us to adopt new technology and take advantage of improvements regardless of whether it was from one company or multiple companies. We needed a solution that would set us apart and that was agnostic to the printing press. EFI Fiery JobFlow has fit the bill perfectly.

“And EFI has been fantastic to work with. EFI had a big task in working with us and our homegrown system to not only match what we had but also improve efficiency and throughput. They were up to the task — in fact, they knocked it out of the park!”

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