

EFI Fiery JobFlow builds productivity for Snap West Melbourne

Al Babicka, co-owner of the Snap Franchise Centre in West Melbourne, has been in the printing business a long time and has seen a lot of changes. “Ten years ago, 80 percent of our business was traditional offset printing,” he says. “Today, that represents 6 percent of our turnover. The rest is all digital. We run very high-end digital machines, driven by EFI Fiery, coupled with a commercial bindery.”

That switch to digital has been part of another shift in the marketplace. “In the digital space, according to Babicka, “we do lots of very small jobs with very fast turnaround. We get a job in, and sometimes within an hour or two, we need to turn that around and deliver it.”

Babicka says his part of the Snap Franchise Group does a lot of corporate and government work. He describes competitors for that business as “very price focused.” Addressing productivity is the way his Centre is working to bring down the cost to manufacture. “When a job is on the press and we’re printing, that’s the area we do very efficiently and quickly,” he says. “Often, the delay is getting it on to the machine — getting the artwork print ready. The other component of that is getting the client to sign off on the proof.”

“We spent some time looking at different workflow solutions,” he adds. “Fiery® JobFlow™ is a part of the same workflow family with Snap’s web-to-print solution, EFI Digital StoreFront®. Digital StoreFront also integrates into the back end of our operations, which is EFI PrintSmith™, and to the Fiery servers that run our digital machines. We wanted a seamless flow from client order, to putting it on the machines, to print.” EFI Fiery JobFlow provided the missing productivity piece needed.



Peter Pawelzig and Al Babicka, owners of the Snap Franchise Centre in West Melbourne.

Challenge:

“If you can’t handle fast turnaround, you’re not going to survive in an ever-increasing competitive landscape.”

AL BABICKA, CO-OWNER
SNAP WEST MELBOURNE





Franchise Owners Al Babicka and Peter Pawelzig are proud of their four-time award-winning Snap Centre. The business' focus is on accuracy with each job. This large West Melbourne Franchise Centre offers services that include logo development and personalised design, business stationery, point of sale, promotional materials, and corporate printing.

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Building workflows to boost productivity

The first implementation phase was to learn the steps required to assess a file. Babicka says this is often, “no bleed or crop marks, the file comes in as a spread instead of a one-up, or we get a file that’s set up for the wrong size paper.” Next, “We identify the actions to fix those. And that’s our workflow.”

“We’ve experimented with lots of different workflows and processes,” he adds. “We found we could use about half a dozen Fiery JobFlow workflows for practically 80 percent of the work we do.” Since a lot of Snap Melbourne’s regular customers send files by email, the customer service consultant selects the correct hot folder and puts files into that JobFlow workflow.

According to Babicka, “That whole process, from receiving a file to getting a proof to the client can take just a couple of minutes.”

Before, Snap Melbourne operators would have printed the job ticket, stored the file, and sent the job to prepress to check and impose. Then they’d send the PDF back to the consultant to get it approved. Finally, they’d package everything up to send to the press operator. Babicka estimates, “In the typical scheme of things, that could take half a day to a day because of the time the job spent in process queues in the Centre. So there’s substantial savings in the turnaround time to get a print-ready proof to the client.”

He uses an example of a client that sends a job every month with on average 110 different files. It used to take 4 hours to set all the files up.

“Now I have workflows set up for the different kinds of products in that order,” he says. “Today, I process that job myself — and I have no prepress skills. But I can process all 110 files in about 4 minutes. It’s brilliant.”

Solution:

“EFI Fiery JobFlow is game-changing technology.”

AL BABICKA, CO-OWNER
SNAP WEST MELBOURNE



EFI Fiery JobFlow gave Snap West Melbourne Franchise Centre increased efficiency and productivity.

He describes how simple the process is. “I can take a block of files and just drag and drop them into the hot folder straight into the workflow and then on into the Fiery. The other thing that’s really neat about it is the imposition. Our prepress manager sets up the templates and I just have to pick the right one and the stock. The press operator built us a preset with all the print engine settings. I can combine all those so the file is ready to go on the machine with all the settings. All the operator has to do is to take the quantity off the job ticket he’s been sent.”

Babicka cites this as a clear-cut example of the productivity gains. “When the client sends me the job, I can get all the proofs back in the same day.”

Building regional expertise

One of the reasons for prepress bottlenecks was the fact that the West Melbourne Centre shares the service of a regional design team, which was also responsible for prepress work. Now, “We estimate that about 80% of the work we receive can be processed through JobFlow by the customer service consultant,” he says. “That leaves the other 20% of the work that you need skilled operators to do.”

Babicka offers this example of a process they’ve moved from the design team to a JobFlow workflow. “People send us an A4 file they want blown up into a poster. Depending on what prepress software that is being used that could take 10 or 15 minutes for a prepress person to do. Now we have a workflow that does that. I have many templates set up to use including different paper sizes and even from portrait to landscape. The workflow also checks the dpi to make sure the print will have adequate resolution at the requested size.”

Result:

“EFI Fiery JobFlow can handle such a vast variety of files and product types in such a short space of time, that it improves both customer service and profitability.”

AL BABICKA,
CO-OWNER
SNAP WEST MELBOURNE

Snap West Melbourne is part of the Snap Group of 146 Centres with close relationships. Babicka says, "We act as a support printer for other Centres. For example, we're one of the few that still has offset printers. Using JobFlow, we could also check and fix files for some of the smaller Centres. Eventually, there is the possibility we could become their prepress and production facility."

Building customer relationships

For Snap West Melbourne, the focus has to be on service: The right product in the right time. Babicka says, "Anything we do that reduces the time to get the client the proof and the product is how our clients judge us and why they keep coming back to us. When we need to react, we can — and still be profitable."

In addition to quick turnaround, EFI Fiery JobFlow has also increased customer confidence in the quality of their work. "If you have the right process and the client can approve it before you start, you shouldn't have to re-run a job or have it rejected," according to Babicka. "Putting pre-flight in the workflow catches issues before you print it."

It also speeds up the approval process. As Babicka points out, customers are not pleased if the job sits in the shop for several days before they find out there's a problem on the day it was due. "The proofing process is critical," he explains. "We used to produce a printed proof. Now we use the soft proof PDF process more. But a PDF is not colour accurate, just indicative. If they need that, they can request a printed proof."

Building the future

Snap West Melbourne believes it has the makings of a really good system, and have demonstrated it works. Babicka says, "The challenge for us now is to continue refining business processes. We need to get our workforce to use the system the way we want them to and get our consultants to follow the process."

It has been a productive partnership. "I've found EFI exceptionally good to deal with," he adds. The company's main service contact, Babicka says, has come in here a number of times and worked on JobFlow workflows.

Babicka views all this as the possible future for a franchise group like his. "Smaller Centres might still do the walk-in production locally," he noted, "But the larger Centres will do the production for their area, in multiple locations per state. Fiery JobFlow could make this future vision possible."

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