

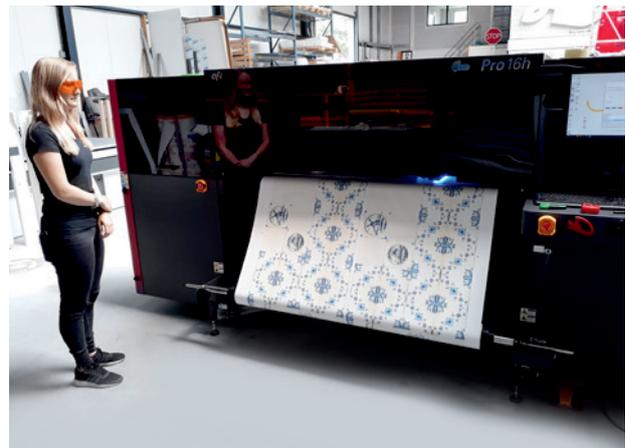
Commitment to high-quality print leads dutch digital print company Free D-Sign to EFI's Pro 16h

Raymond Zutt, CEO, founder, and owner of Free D-Sign, has been working with his team for over 19 years on all kinds of indoor and outdoor advertising, interior styling, and decoration printing jobs. The company prints stickers, foil, signage banners, flags, and more, mainly for customers in the northern part of the Netherlands. It acquired the Dutch "Si'Bon" quality label and helps businesses as well as other customer types, including cities such as Alkmaar and Amsterdam, social care organisations, and so on.

Free D-Sign prides itself on taking on any job, regardless of the challenges, and always delivering the highest possible quality. It approaches every job as a made-to-measure solution and helps and assists customers with spontaneous and unpaid advice. Until early 2018, however, the company could only print car wraps, banners, and other flexible and semi-flexible surfaces in-house; print jobs on rigid media were outsourced.

While the company has been growing steadily over the years, by the end of 2017, it became clear to Zutt that the business volume of rigid media printing had grown to a level where it would be wise to invest in a new printer. It was paramount that the machine could handle the growing volume at a quality level in compliance with the company's philosophy of always going the extra mile. A careful investor, the CEO decided the new machine had to be a very fast hybrid flatbed/roll-to-roll printer, capable of the type of high-end work that would be worthy of a photo printer.

Free D-Sign opted for an EFI[™] Pro 16h, which was to be the company's first rigid media-capable printer.



Challenge:

Address growing demand for roll-to-roll and outsourced rigid media work.



Free D-Sign was established in 2001. Founded by Raymond Zutt, the company includes a team of 15 highly skilled and experienced employees. Free D-Sign services the northern Netherlands, providing customers in Amsterdam, Haarlem, Alkmaar, Delft, Leiden, The Hague, and elsewhere with high-end indoor and outdoor signage, graphics, and décor work.

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Speed, quality, and greater flexibility with 3M inks

Free D-Sign turned to its long-time local machine supplier Vink VTS to explore and ultimately buy a machine that would fit its needs. The EFI Pro 16h was chosen as the best product for a number of different reasons. “The machine offers a good price/quality ratio. It is a hybrid as we wanted, and it is very fast, even at the highest resolution,” Zutt states. “Those were the most important criteria we wanted to see filled in a generous way.”

In addition, the EFI Pro 16h uses flexible 3M™ ink, which proved to be another feature that won him over. “With the 3M flexible inks, we can print on all types of materials – not only rigid media but also flexible materials – without having to switch between ink types,” says Zutt. Even better, EFI’s 3M inks all come with the 3M MCS™ Warranty, which covers finished graphics that are made entirely with 3M Graphics products by the most complete and robust graphics warranty in the business – another factor that perfectly fits the company’s philosophy.

Free D-Sign’s new printer sets a new entry point in the market for hybrid roll/flatbed production printing. This new Fiery® Driven™ printer includes white ink and is designed with a robust package of features to assure the lowest total cost of ownership, superior image quality, and a broad range of applications. This new printer platform has faster speeds as well, with some print modes offering up to 30% greater throughput compared with other EFI entry-level hybrid production platforms.

The printer’s powerful LED technology drives lower operating costs and prints on a wide range of media, including substrates that cannot withstand the heat required with curing or drying with UV or latex printers. It prints in four colours plus white ink and offers multilayer printing. The EFI Fiery proServer digital front end included with the printer features FAST RIP acceleration technology plus RIP and print-on-demand functionality or the ability to print pre-ripped files at the printer interface.

Solution:

“The machine offers a good price/quality ratio. It is a hybrid as we wanted, and it is very fast, even at the highest resolution.”

RAYMOND ZUTT, CEO
FREE D-SIGN



EFI VUTEK Pro 16h in action

Rigid and roll-to-roll growth

The EFI Pro 16h was installed in January 2018 and has since been used for all types of jobs the company puts its teeth into. Free D-Sign has continuously been expanding the types of jobs they print, ranging from indoor shop displays to outdoor backlight displays. "Although the EFI Pro 16h system is capable of printing at 90 square metres per hour at a reasonable resolution, so far we have used the machine with speeds of 17 to 29 square metres per hour," Zutt explains. "At these speeds, we are able to deliver those really high resolutions to our customers that allow for close-up viewing of the printed work."

If required, Free D-Sign can go slower at an even higher photographic-quality resolution of 1200x1200 dpi for photographic wallpaper prints, as an example.

After almost five months of using the EFI Pro 16h, Free D-Sign has seen a continuously higher demand for rigid printing jobs in addition to its already high volume of flexible work. The new machine is now one of the major contributors to Free D-Sign's growth. "We expect the EFI Pro 16h to enable us to grow quite a lot more in a relatively short time span. Soon, our team of 15 will be expanding to 20," says Zutt.

Result:

"We expect the EFI Pro 16h to enable us to grow quite a lot more in a relatively short time span. Soon, our team of 15 will be expanding to 20."

RAYMOND ZUTT, CEO
FREE D-SIGN

EFI fuels success.

We develop breakthrough technologies for the manufacturing of signage, packaging, textiles, ceramic tiles, and personalised documents, with a wide range of printers, inks, digital front ends, and a comprehensive business and production workflow suite that transforms and streamlines the entire production process, increasing your competitiveness and boosting productivity.

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