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AlphaGraphics Portsmouth Expands Large-Format Business with EFI Pro 16h UV LED Printer

Franchise print shop aims for growth and offers new, innovative products for its seacoast and Boston Metro-West region customers

FREMONT, Calif., Aug. 5, 2021 – Looking to grow its large-format business among growing post-COVID market demand, the AlphaGraphics® franchise in Portsmouth, New Hampshire has invested in an EFI™ Pro 16h UV LED wide format printer manufactured by Electronics For Imaging, Inc. Purchased from authorized EFI dealer Nazdar SourceOne®, the hybrid roll-to-roll/flatbed inkjet printer bolsters the services that the premier marketing and printing shop offers to its local clients operating in a wide range of vertical markets, including food, medical manufacturing, real estate, government and education.

Co-owners Chris Carrier and Chris Oberg purchased the business in October 2019 and brought the AlphaGraphics franchise brand to the previously independent shop. Carrier and Oberg brought a vision with them to grow the business and had the idea to invest in a hybrid machine that could bring more efficiency and greater variety and capabilities than what the shop's existing roll-to-roll printers offered. "We have a philosophy of continuous improvement when it comes to sales and operations," said Oberg.

Working closely with their Nazdar sales contact, Carrier and Oberg researched the EFI printer and were impressed with its performance. Strategically designed with a comprehensive package of features to assure the lowest total cost of ownership, superior image quality and an ability to handle a wide range of substrates, the Pro 16h printer promised a growth in possibilities that Carrier and Oberg were looking for. "We try and push our customers toward creative thinking, but people equate creativity with higher costs," said Oberg. "The Pro 16h gives us the ability to push creative boundaries at a lower cost."

The availability of local service from the EFI display graphics operations located a short distance from AlphaGraphics Portsmouth – and valuable input and feedback from a network of other AlphaGraphics owners – helped convince Oberg and Carrier of their decision. "We are active in our network of other AlphaGraphics owners who use a lot of different flatbeds," said Carrier. "There was a large contingency of owners who were glad they went with EFI and said they would make the same choice if they had to go back."

The duo is also able to bounce ideas off their AlphaGraphics colleagues who are experienced with the same printer and handle similar customer projects. "Having that additional network of support goes a long way," Carrier said.

Leveraging efficiencies and lowering TCO with the Pro 16h
Prior to installing the Pro 16h printer, printing rigid-substrate jobs was a multi-step process at AlphaGraphics Portsmouth, involving a roll-to-roll machine and the manual mounting of printed sheets to boards. "Every rigid material job involved cutting, applying vinyl, rolling through twice, and trimming everything," said Oberg. "That multistep process is no longer needed for a majority of our orders, simplifying around 90% of our orders."

The Pro 16h printer's powerful UV LED technology is capable of printing directly on a wide range of substrates that cannot withstand high heat required for curing or drying with traditional UV or latex printers.

AlphaGraphics Portsmouth's new printer features an EFI Fiery® proServer Core digital front end with FAST RIP acceleration technology that helps get work prepped and printed faster than before. The team was familiar with Fiery, having used it on its cut-sheet digital printers. Training helped the team adapt quickly to the new hybrid large-format device. "After install and training our staff really took to it," said Carrier. "They saw the efficiencies and elimination of extra steps."

Four hours of labor savings daily
The shop has already started to benefit from higher throughput and more reliable production turnaround. Printing at resolutions up to 1,200 dots per inch, the EFI Pro16h prints at a production speed of up to 311 square feet per hour in four colors, and it includes a high-quality, highly opaque white ink that gives AlphaGraphics Portsmouth more options to produce vibrant, full-color work on projects printed on clear or colored substrates. Between the printer's technical capabilities and the shop's new ability to print direct to substrate, AlphaGraphics Portsmouth has saved about four hours in labor every day and eliminated the need for reprinted jobs that resulted from human error.

"We're seeing growth as our customers recover from COVID," said Carrier. "We couldn't quite justify hiring an entire new team member, but the time and labor that the Pro 16h has saved us essentially equates to half of a person.

"Our customer-facing folks have become more confident in committing to job fulfillment," he added. "That's a benefit you can't necessarily measure, but you can feel it and it makes a real impact."

For more information on EFI's advanced technologies for digital printing, visit www.efi.com.

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boost productivity. To do that, we develop breakthrough technologies for the manufacturing of signage, packaging, textiles, ceramic tiles, building materials, and personalized 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. (www.efi.com)

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