EFI Pro 16h
Case Study

PCI Printing sets profitable new course with EFI Pro 16h hybrid printers

PCI Printing is in the enviable position of being the only printer in Atmore and its surrounding area in Alabama. Its closest competitor is more than an hour's drive away. While the company certainly has enjoyed the benefits of having the local market locked up, it has also been coping with labor issues and an outdated, inefficient production system that struggled to keep up with growing demand.

It is quite difficult for PCI Printing to find qualified equipment operators in its small town. "We get a lot of business, but my main challenge was staff size. It's hard to find anybody with experience running equipment," says Adam Nix, production supervisor for PCI Printing. "We couldn't keep up with demand with the staff level we had."

Seeking a time-saving solution

Nix was also looking for the ability to print directly onto rigid media and to update cumbersome production processes. Producing foamcore board posters, for example, was an intensive exercise that involved printing on adhesive vinyl, waiting 15-20 minutes for the ink to dry before gluing the vinyl to the board, and then waiting another eight hours if the item needed lamination. "For us, it was critical to be able to print directly onto rigid media. We do more than 50 foamcore boards per month, for example, so we were wasting a lot of time," says Nix.

PCI Printing incurred a lot of overtime as a result of staff shortages and the time-wasting mounting procedures for foamcore work. Nix and his staff were overburdened, and because they had difficulty meeting customer demand, the company was also outsourcing a substantial amount of printing. All these challenges and inefficiencies increased turnaround time, erased profits on existing jobs, and limited the company's ability to take on more business and grow.

Challenge:

"For us, it was critical to be able to print directly onto rigid media. We do more than 50 foamcore boards per month, for example, so we were wasting a lot of time."

ADAM NIX, PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR
PCI PRINTING

PCI Printing is a thriving business with two locations in Alabama. The larger shop employs a staff of four in Atmore, just north of the Florida border. PCI does double duty as an in-plant print provider for three casinos operated by its parent company, Wind Creek Hospitality, and as a commercial print provider for its community and surrounding area. Clients include local businesses and institutions; the company receives a good amount of walk-in business as well. Print offerings include posters, backlits, banners, rack cards, promotional items, a monthly publication, and invitations. PCI Printing's second location, a one-person shop in Montgomery, serves solely as the in-plant print provider for another Wind Creek casino.

PCI Printing
202 N. Main St.
Atmore, AL 36502

+1-251-368-1650

PCI Printing has cut printing time in half on most wide-format print jobs using its pair of EFI Pro 16h LED inkjet hybrid printers.

EFI LED technology delivers on all levels

It was with these issues in mind that PCI approached Ricoh®, a leading EFI™ reseller and an existing supplier of digital toner presses to PCI. "I asked Ricoh, 'What can I do to print directly onto rigid media, cut production time, and take steps out of my process?'" says Nix.

Ricoh recommended the 65-inch-wide EFI Pro 16h LED hybrid flatbed/roll wide-format printer. The printer features an EFI Fiery® proServer Core digital front end (DFE) — which was beneficial for PCI Printing because the staff was already familiar with EFI Fiery workflows on their Ricoh digital presses.

"I already used EFI Fiery DFEs and I knew EFI's reputation in the industry," Nix says. "Knowing all of that made the decision to add the EFI printer even easier.

"Ricoh has been a great partner for us," he adds. "We've been with them for seven years, and they've always been there addressing our needs. Whenever someone comes into our shop, they always compliment us on the quality we output, and Ricoh has been a big part of that," Nix says.

Solution:

"We can now increase output to meet demand without expanding our staff, deliver jobs more quickly, cut costs, eliminate wasted time, and reach a higher level of profitability."

ADAM NIX, PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR
PCI PRINTING

PCI Printing added two Pro 16h printers, the first of which went to the company's Montgomery in-plant. "When I saw how great it was, I wanted one for my Atmore location too," Nix says. The second printer was installed shortly afterward.

PCI Printing's new EFI LED printer model offers a package of features to help ensure the lowest cost of ownership and superior image quality. It prints in four colors as well as white at a production speed of 311 square feet (29 square meters) per hour with up to 1,200 dpi output.

Boosting profitability

The two EFI wide-format printers delivered everything PCI Printing was looking for. According to Nix, the company has streamlined production, increased output, and become more profitable.

PCI Printing has cut printing time in half on most wide-format print jobs. Nix can, for example, print three, double-sided, 24-by-36-inch foamcore boards for the casinos in about 10 minutes — a vast improvement over the 30-45 minutes the work used to take. He can also print directly onto substrates up to two inches thick.

Other benefits include ink that cures instantaneously, lower ink costs, substantially lower running costs because the device uses less power and generates less heat than PCI Printing's previous devices, and fantastic quality and color output.

Work that used to be outsourced, which Nix estimates to be about 15-20% of total revenue, has come back in house, and Nix can comfortably run both locations with the staff at hand while cutting back on the draining, 70-hour weeks he and his staff were putting in.

"We can now increase output to meet demand without expanding our staff, deliver jobs more quickly, cut costs, eliminate wasted time, and reach a higher level of profitability," says Nix. "I love having the machines. They're great."

Result:

Increased profitability and reduced outsourcing, with 15-20% of revenues coming back in-house.

EFI fuels success.

We develop breakthrough technologies for the manufacturing of signage, packaging, textiles, ceramic tiles, 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, increasing your competitiveness and boosting productivity. Visit www.efi.com or call 650-357-3500 for more information.

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