RICOH
imagine. change.

Alta Systems

Ricoh's Production Print Solutions Reinvigorate Alta Systems' Digital Business, Restore Customer Confidence and Elevate Employee Morale

"I do believe the Ricoh printers are awesome, but the real difference between Ricoh and everyone else is the professional service. It's astounding the difference in service level we get from Ricoh compared to other vendors. And I've had every vendor there is in here."

– Rick Nesbit
Owner
Alta Systems
Gainesville, Florida

aLTa
Fine Printing • Digital Printing • Mail Services

ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

It's a familiar story for commercial printers that have been in business for decades. Information had long been brought to life through offset printing—which became the bread and butter of the operation for many years.

Then digital presses came along. They brought the promise of making information work through affordable short runs, faster turnarounds, variable data printing (VDP) and specialty product offerings.

Like most commercial printers, Alta Systems in Gainesville, Florida, first added a digital press to its offset-centric operation in 2004 to complement its offerings and provide more of the services customers were starting to request. As time went along, digital jobs became more and more prevalent and more digital presses were added to keep up with demand.

Fast forward to 2015. Alta Systems had three digital presses in its shop—two monochrome units and one color production printer. It's digital business should have been thriving, but technology had become more of a hindrance than a help.

CHALLENGE

After decades of working with all the big-name offset and digital printers in the industry, Alta Systems owner Rick Nesbit suddenly found himself considering a relative newcomer to digital printing—Ricoh. That's after learning that Heidelberg and Ricoh announced a global strategic cooperation to distribute Ricoh's production printing product portfolio.

CHALLENGE
- Unreliable monochrome production printers
- Missed deadlines, unhappy customers
- Disjointed workflow, low employee morale
- Undependable service

SOLUTION
- Ricoh monochrome and color production printers
- EFI Fiery® SeeQuence Suite, JobMaster™ software
- In-depth, thoughtful, pragmatic training
- Relocation of highly skilled production technician

RESULTS
- Restored customer confidence
- Growing digital business
- Engaged employees, enthusiastic sales team
- Reliable solutions, impressive service

RICOH
imagine. change.

"I had a lot of respect for Heidelberg's work ethic. They're a first-class organization," said Nesbit. "That really piqued my interest and gave Ricoh instant credibility in my eyes."

That announcement led Nesbit to purchase a RICOH Pro C901 color production printer. This printer allowed Alta Systems to seamlessly shift some of its color work from its more costly offset printers to a digital system that affordably produced near-offset quality.

So when the competitor's monochrome printers began to relentlessly break down—often at the same time—Ricoh's name once again stood out. Alta Systems could no longer suffer printers being down anywhere from several days to several weeks, putting the digital side of its business at risk.

"We couldn't provide reliable service to our customers with our monochrome presses breaking down so often," said Nesbit. "We were constantly racing to meet deadlines and apologizing for missed deadlines."

The breakdowns were also taking a toll on employee morale. Alta Systems' operators persistently voiced frustration with their work environment on a daily basis.

"I was getting pressure to make a change from both sides—customers and employees," said Nesbit.

With the leases on its two monochrome printers set to expire, Alta Systems had finally reached the breaking point. They were happy with their RICOH Pro C901 system and Ricoh rose to the top of the field to provide replacement monochrome production units.

However, Ricoh knew that just replacing the monochrome printers wouldn't completely solve Alta System's issues. Sure, Ricoh's production printers could provide the uptime and redundancy that Alta Systems needed. But there was another key problem that needed to be solved—Alta Systems' disjointed workflow.

The EFI Fiery® controllers installed on all of Alta Systems' digital presses, including the RICOH Pro C901 printer, couldn't talk to each other. There was no way to easily transfer files from system to system, and one controller installed on a monochrome unit wasn't even working.

Ricoh also needed to win over Alta Systems' production manager who was well versed in the digital press and workflow technology from another manufacturer. The relationship the production manager had with Ricoh's competitor resulted in an eleventh-hour counteroffer that could potentially compromise the deal.

Alta Systems was also concerned that its local Ricoh production technician had recently left the Gainesville area. Still battle-worn from prolonged downtime with the competitor's presses, Alta Systems needed assurance that if issues occurred with Ricoh technology, service would be readily available and systems would be back up fast.

"You need awesome machines, but I believe it's the service organization that you're ultimately hiring," said Nesbit.

SOLUTION

Ricoh knew that Alta Systems could soar with the right technology and support. And in the end, Nesbit chose Ricoh over the last-minute proposal from the competitor.

"I had a great experience with the Ricoh sales person when I bought the RICOH Pro C901. He taught me a lot about digital color printing and added a lot of value," said Nesbit. "There was no question I would go forward with Ricoh."

The Ricoh team replaced Alta Systems' problem-prone monochrome printers with a pair of RICOH Pro 8100se black-and-white production printers. This system produces crisp, clear images at 1200 x 4800 dpi resolution and can output 95 pages per minute.

> "Many commercial printers like us don't have the digital volume to justify the most expensive digital presses. I feel like a genius for getting the quality I need with these Ricoh systems—at 10 percent of the cost of a top-dollar digital press."

But hardware was just one part of the solution. To improve the workflow throughout its digital shop, Alta Systems needed a solution that allowed operators to retrieve jobs from one central location—whether the job called for color or black-and-white printing.

To this end, Ricoh installed Fiery® SeeQuence Suite and Fiery® JobMaster™ PDF-based makeready software on the new digital production printers as well as the RICOH Pro C901 color unit to unify the workflow. SeeQuence integrates intuitive tools for document imposition and composition, automating and simplifying preparation tasks while reducing job set-up times.

Ricoh was able to deliver redundancy, higher productivity and a common, centralized workflow at a significantly lower cost than Alta Systems had been paying to lease the competitor's systems. In fact, Ricoh even bought out the remaining leases so Alta Systems could get the new printers in place quicker.

The savings brought by the Ricoh solutions encouraged Alta Systems to add a RICOH Pro C7100X color production printer to its digital fleet and designate the existing RICOH Pro C901 unit as a secondary color device. The RICOH Pro C7100X printer outputs up to 80 color pages per minute with up to 1200 x 4800 dpi resolution, offers a fifth color station and can print on a variety of media types including synthetics, envelopes and textures.

"Many commercial printers like us don't have the digital volume to justify the most expensive digital presses," said Nesbit. "I feel like a genius for getting the quality I need with these Ricoh systems—at 10 percent of the cost of a top-dollar digital press."

Ricoh conducted lunch and learn training sessions with Alta Systems' staff to show them the new way to design jobs for the new digital presses. Alta Systems' sales staff also attended the training sessions to learn about all the new products they could offer customers and grow its digital business.

"Ricoh's approach is similar to what other vendors talk about, but their delivery is more thoughtful, helpful and pragmatic," said Nesbit. "They delve into issues, come back and provide helpful information that has been utilized by my staff."

Ricoh even went the extra mile to assure Alta Systems that there would be local support if an issue with one of the production printers did occur. The Ricoh sales team worked with its service team management to transfer a highly experienced production technician from Georgia to North Florida to service Alta Systems and other printers in the area.

RESULTS

With reliable printing technology and a unified workflow solution in place, Alta Systems has not only been able to regain the confidence of its digital customers—they have grown their client base and digital printing volume. In fact, their digital business is now growing faster than their traditional offset base.

The new RICOH Pro C7100X has introduced many new capabilities for Alta Systems to showcase and sell. For example, they can now print business cards on linen stock with digital technology, rather than its more expensive offset presses. They can really go after the five-color market, using the fifth station to print white or clear. Covers can be printed in color on the offset press with aqueous coating and then shifted to the RICOH Pro C7100X to print text with no bleeding. The possibilities are seemingly endless.

"We're not afraid. We'll print anything now," said Nesbit. "As our customers learn about our new capabilities, they are creating new uses for us."

Engaged Employees, Enthusiastic Sales Team
Alta Systems' employees took to the new Ricoh technology right away. Designers were eager to learn the new way to design for the Ricoh systems and operators were equally thrilled by the user-friendly, unified workflow and reliable printers that made their jobs easier and improved their productivity.

"Our sales team is so happy showing off our work and talking up our company now. We even had one customer who hadn't used us in eight years come back."

"Getting rid of the negativity has been the best part of this whole thing," said Nesbit.

Alta Systems' cut-sheet sales staff has also been invigorated by their new digital capabilities. They no longer have to explain delayed or missed deadlines. Customers are eager to learn what Alta Systems can do to make their information shine—at a fraction of the cost.

"Our sales team is so happy showing off our work and talking up our company now," said Nesbit. "We even had one customer who hadn't used us in eight years come back."

Reliable Solutions, Astounding Service
Since installing the new Ricoh production printers, Alta Systems has had virtually no production problems and the systems run as promised. Now equipped with a unified workflow for all its digital systems, operators have one central location to pull jobs from and conduct prepress steps.

As someone who values service above all else, Nesbit gives Ricoh the highest marks. In fact, he has shared his experiences with his printing peers and he says everyone he talks to is installing Ricoh systems.

"I do believe the Ricoh printers are awesome, but the real difference between Ricoh and everyone else is the professional service. It's astounding the difference in service level we get from Ricoh compared to other vendors. And I've had every vendor there is in here."

www.ricoh-usa.com