

Case Study

production

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Pacful Inc.

Commercial Printer Achieves Rare, Successful Transition from Print Services to Marketing Services Provider

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- Jennifer Hudek
President, Pacful
Rancho Cordova, CA



ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

Pacful Inc., headquartered in Rancho Cordova, Calif., started out as one in an innumerable legion of print service providers competing for business in a crowded industry. Then three years ago, Pacful made the bold strategic decision to transition into marketing services to expand its business opportunities. Realizing many others have failed to navigate such a turn, Pacful partnered with Ricoh Production Print Services for hardware, software and expertise to help the company become a true marketing services provider.

CHALLENGE

When Pacful Inc. began as a print services provider in 2010, the company had an impressive model that successfully competed in the extremely crowded commercial printing market. As demand grew and Pacful set out to broaden its footprint, the company expanded by acquiring two additional locations in California and a facility in Indiana—totaling 230,000 square feet of print and fulfillment space. However, with a sole focus on printing and a sizeable stable of high cost printing technology, Pacful's leadership soon recognized its limitations for ongoing growth.

Pacful had already developed an impressive client list, typically serving marketing and event departments at large well-known companies. For one of these customers, Pacful had implemented on-demand "click, print and ship" that allowed the company's administrative staff to either send print jobs, such as corporate stationery, to a nearby office printer or route to Pacful for fast, high-end output. This print on demand capability combined with the storage of event and promotional materials made Pacful their "One Stop Shop".

CHALLENGE

- Transition from print services to marketing services provider
- Determine software and hardware solutions to support transition
- Move away from large offset printing technology

SOLUTION

- PTI MarcomCentral® web-to-print solution
- Ricoh Pro C901s Graphic Arts+ color production printers
- Service contract

RESULTS

- Rare, successful transition from print services to marketing services provider
- Nearly 50 clients using MarcomCentral storefronts
- Converted offset evangelist clients to Ricoh digital output

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Pacful's leadership saw the potential to broaden this concept and create custom web storefronts. The goal was to create storefronts that employees could use to seamlessly order stationery items as well as marketing collateral, promotional items and event support from their desktop computer, tablet or mobile phone with on-demand results.

With the concept fully envisioned, Pacful sought to transition away from just print services and become a true marketing services provider. Knowing others have tried but failed, Pacful needed to find the right technology and partner with an expert that could cost effectively implement the high quality software and hardware solutions needed to support its vision.

"We had digital printers from other manufacturers that cost nearly a half million each and there were many issues with these systems," said Jennifer Hudek, President of Pacful. "Also, offset printing was dying and we knew we wanted to move to digital. We were impressed that Ricoh was in a joint venture with Heidelberg for digital technology. That spoke volumes and we decided to work with Ricoh."

SOLUTION

Three years ago, Ricoh began working with Pacful to fuel its transition and deliver a combination of strategic insight and powerful tools that Pacful could use to create customized web-based storefronts for its clients. With Ricoh's guidance, Pacful selected the PTI MarcomCentral® web-to-print solution that integrates online ordering, personalization, production and fulfillment with a multi-channel web services solution that automates these processes for Pacful and its clients.

The MarcomCentral solution allows Pacful to develop customizable storefronts and design templates. It accommodates job submission and tracking. The solution also enables variable data printing (VDP), campaign management, mailing list purchasing, digital asset management, inventory control and integration with the production workflow.

"When clients work in our web storefronts, they often don't even realize they've left their own intranets," said Hudek. "That's because our print management infrastructure is so well integrated into their normal intranet experience. It's seamless, and with Ricoh's support, we've effectively become an extension of their marketing team."



The RICOH Pro C901s Graphic Arts+ Color Production Printer

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To support the anticipated growth of Pacful's printing business, Ricoh introduced the company to its Pro C901s Graphic Arts+ color production printer—best-in-class digital printing technology offered in joint partnership with Heidelberg. The C901s rivals offset print quality but is priced at a mere fraction of an offset system and about one-fifth the cost of a high-end digital printing system.

Intrigued but skeptical at first that the C901s could meet the strict PMS color matching requirements of its clients accustomed to offset quality, Pacful worked with Ricoh to adjust the C901s system for precise PMS color matching. The results astounded Pacful.

"There was no discernable difference in color quality to the naked eye when printing PMS colors on the C901s production press," said Hudek.

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The C901s printer is able to achieve near-offset results with Ricoh's PxP™ chemical toners and oil-less fusing technology. This combination creates smaller, more uniform toner particles that deliver sharper images and better fills with a matte finish.

Ricoh also provided Pacful with a service contract stipulating a two-hour window for a tech visit when issues arise. Coupled with the expertise of Ricoh's technicians, Pacful President Hudek rests easy knowing the company's production printing systems are in highly capable hands.

RESULTS

Today, Pacful is considered among the few industry success stories for transitioning from a print services to marketing services provider. With a true story of innovation to tell, Pacful now leads its new business initiatives with the MarcomCentral solution—giving the company a significant edge in a highly crowded print services market.

A seamless transition

"No matter how smart we are, print service providers need the right tools to become successful marketing service providers," said Hudek. "Our tools come from Ricoh—MarcomCentral backed up by Ricoh Pro C901s Graphic Arts+ color production printers. These 90 page-per-minute workhorses handle the growing volume that MarcomCentral has generated for us."

Today, nearly 50 of Pacful's clients use the web storefronts to specify and order everything from business cards to multi-piece mailings. Through the storefronts, Pacful also provides tracking and status updates to clients, fulfills orders and stores materials.

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Exacting, tailored color output

Also, some of Pacful's customers who previously insisted on offset printing to achieve a true PMS color match have now migrated to digital printing after seeing the high quality output from Ricoh's Pro C901s production printer. As a result, Pacful has become an even more valuable partner to its customers by providing high quality on-demand color printing, VDP and just-in-time delivery—at a fraction of the cost of high-end digital or offset.

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Reliable, proven performance

Pacful now has five Ricoh Pro C901s production printers installed and networked throughout all of its facilities. In combination, they are used to print on average 500 jobs a day at 500 copies per job. All together, these five printers are comparable in price to one large digital press. While service issues plagued the company's previous digital printers, Ricoh now routinely visits Pacful's facilities just once a month to make sure the systems are running smoothly.

"With our previous printers, service techs were out here every two or three days. I'm amazed by the quality of Ricoh's Pro C901s and how well they hold up," said Hudek. "I choose my vendors wisely and make sure I've got good partners. Ricoh has the best press and service out there."

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