

Case Study

production

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Alphagraphics Lehi, Utah

Ricoh Production Print Capabilities Support Aggressive Growth Goals

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—Philip Davis,
Co-owner,
Lehi, Utah Alphagraphics



ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

Philip Davis and Lynn Nelson were not new to Alphagraphics and the franchise experience when they purchased the Alphagraphics in Lehi, Utah in 2016 from its previous owner. Davis spent part of his career working for Alphagraphics Corporate and three years as General Manager of the Lehi operation prior to the purchase. Nelson already owned four Alphagraphics franchises located throughout Idaho and Utah. Today, due to the business acumen of these new partners, the Lehi location acts as a showcase for Alphagraphics Corporate opening its doors to potential new franchisees to view a thriving operation or get more training.

CHALLENGE

When the partnership between Davis and Nelson began, they knew they had purchased a profitable business, but not one focused on growth. "We wanted to operate as an aggressive forward-thinking operation," said Davis. "So we are always testing new ideas. I think it is our growth model that Alphagraphics likes to show incoming franchisees."

With growth as their goal, Davis and Nelson began to look closely at their inherited production equipment and its capabilities. The previous owner was loyal to another manufacturer and most of the equipment in the operation was from that supplier. While the equipment operated satisfactorily, it didn't have several of the production options the new owners wanted to offer more services. In addition, the turnaround time on service was an ongoing issue.

CHALLENGE

- Upgrade production color for high quality print at fast speeds
- Gain reliable B&W capability
- Source the right additional equipment to enhance capabilities

SOLUTION

- The RICOH Pro C9100 with Plockmatic Booklet Maker to complement the versatile RICOH Pro C7110X
- A RICOH Pro 8120s and Pro 8120se
- Mimaki JFX200 and Xante Envelope Printer

RESULTS

- High-impact color applications and fast turnaround
- Impressive B&W for reports, booklets and more
- Revenue growth and additional efficiency with signage and envelope capabilities

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"There were so many capabilities we knew we needed—better quality, larger sheet size, being able to print clear and white, and sharper black-and-white delivery," said Davis. "Speed was also critical. We do a lot of work for tech companies in this area called 'Silicon Slopes.' These companies do a ton of events and often need things turned around fast. To meet those stringent deadlines, we have to have high-speed equipment and a supplier that can service the equipment in a timely manner."

Before the purchase, when Davis was general manager of Lehi, he started looking at new equipment on the market to replace a machine coming off lease. Davis did very intensive testing of machines from various manufacturers being considered to ensure the quality he wanted was there. When reviewing the RICOH Pro C7110X, he sent an employee to the Ricoh Showroom in Los Angeles, who came back with a very favorable report, and that was the production press he chose.

"We landed a new customer with 130 locations and hitting the PMS color on their logo was critical. We tested it on our old machine and on the Pro C9100, and the Pro C9100 was better. It was able to hold color extremely well and so we replaced our other machine with the Pro C9100."

The Pro C7110X was in operation for about two years when Davis and Nelson purchased the franchise and Davis was happy with its performance and the service attention. "At first, I was nervous because we didn't have a relationship with Ricoh. It was a risk on our part to invest in the Pro C7110X," said Davis.

"However, our corporate offices have a good relationship with Ricoh and Ricoh sells equipment successfully to other Alphagraphics. This made us more confident in our decision."

With more of their current equipment up for renewal or replacement, Davis and Nelson were ready to kick their growth goals into high gear and upgrade their production processes even further. They began to look more closely at the other production equipment we had to offer them, including a high-speed digital color press, a higher quality black-and-white solution and flatbed wide format to grow their signage business.

SOLUTION

Davis and Nelson wanted a heavy-duty production color digital press that could meet their aggressive turnaround time, yet still produce a print quality that rivaled offset—and at a competitive price point. After doing their due diligence, they purchased the RICOH Pro C9100 and a Plockmatic Booklet Maker.

The Pro C9100 gave them the high quality and the efficiency they were looking for. "We landed a new customer with 130 locations and hitting the PMS color on their logo was critical. We tested it on our old machine and on the Pro C9100, and the Pro C9100 was better. It was able to hold color extremely well and so we replaced our other machine with the Pro C9100," said Davis.

"We also decided to replace one of our black-and-white machines with the RICOH Pro 8120s because we were so impressed with the quality," said Davis. "For our clients who run manuals and other black-and-white documents, we knew we would take full advantage of 1200 x 4800 dpi resolution to produce reports, booklets, newsletters and more with the crisp text and images it was capable of producing." Soon after the purchase of the Pro 8120s, Lehi Alphagraphics purchased a Pro 8120se as well as a Xante Envelope printer, once again removing another competitive press.

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Another goal for Lehi was to double its signage business. As monthly sales rose and they felt ready to justify the purchase of another piece of equipment, Davis and Nelson decided it was time to invest in a flatbed printer. "With a flatbed, you lower your operating costs and there are so many different things you can do on it beyond just large format, like printing on glass and other substrates. We saw it as a way to expand our capabilities and provide yet another revenue stream."

The company purchased the Mimaki JFX200 wide-format flatbed UV printer from Ricoh. With the capability to print on substrates up to two inches thick, the JFX200 can produce a diverse range of prints for both indoor and outdoor use and offers a versatility that makes it cost-effective to run everything from Coroplast for signs to point-of-sale and other applications printed on substrates such as MAXmetal, Dibond, PVC and wood.

RESULTS

Lehi Alphagraphics cites that the Pro C7110X has delivered on both the reliability the company needed as well as the additional options they wanted to offer their customers. Using the 5th color station, they are enhancing business cards by spot coating them with the clear ink and using the white ink to make applications like menus or wedding invitations 'pop.' "For short run digital printing jobs, if someone wants to enhance the piece with the white or clear option, it is very affordable and easy to do," said Davis.

Another feature on the Pro C7110X that expands opportunities for Lehi Alphagraphics is the oversize print tray that makes it possible for them to print up to 13" x 27.5", which is perfect for the event marketing pieces the company produces. "We are able to produce an oversized landscape catalog we do for a client that typically couldn't be done on any other digital press out there. It would need to be done on an offset press," said Davis.

The fast production capabilities of the Pro C9100 have come through for the company as well. Recently, one of their clients decided to throw an impromptu event together and 5,000 more people than expected signed up two weeks before the event. "We had to run 4,500 booklets with the final files coming to us at 8 p.m. and everything had to be delivered at 7 a.m. the next morning," said Davis. "With the speed of the Pro C9100 and the Plockmatic Booklet Maker we were able to get it done."

As for the Pro 8120s and the Pro 8120se, the company couldn't be happier. "With these machines, it is like running in black-and-white mode on a color machine. One of our biggest customers is now doing more charts and graphs on their black-and-white manuals because they really like the incredible quality we can produce on these machines," said Davis.

The JFX200 is delivering the added revenue stream the company was looking for too, giving them the ability to print a host of short run commercial products that they previously had to send out.

"I think our future with Ricoh is very bright," said Davis. "I have been doing this for a very long time and I don't know if I've ever had a supplier treat me on the service side the way Ricoh has. Ricoh is really dedicated to the print-for-pay market. I sense a different kind of commitment than we see from other suppliers. That is very important to both Lynn and me."

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