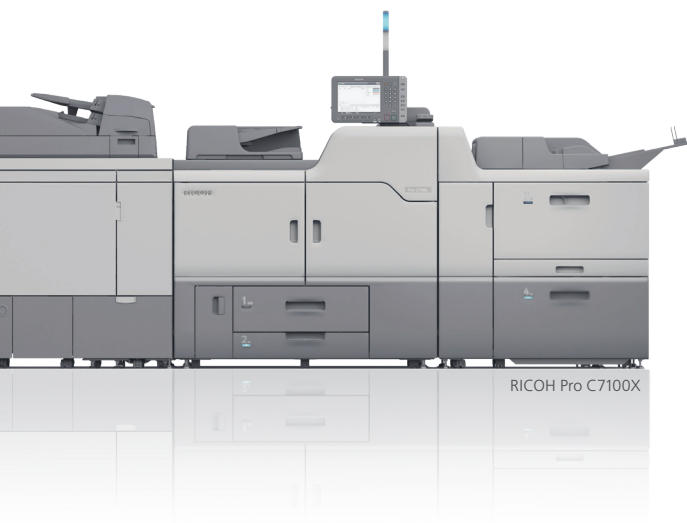


Tackling customer marketing challenges

Case Study — Commercial Printing

RICOH
imagine. change.



RICOH Pro C7100X



RICOH Pro C9110

Higher productivity
and in-line capabilities
reduced production time.

Using targeted marketing campaigns and a dynamic sales team, AlphaGraphics San Francisco and Marin County, California, have leveraged their Ricoh technology investments to broach new markets, including healthcare.

alphagraphics®

San Francisco & Marin County, CA

About the Customer

In a city of innovators, dreamers and risk-takers, AlphaGraphics San Francisco & Marin County, California, distinguish themselves by being effective problem-solvers for their customers. Managing Partner Manuel Torres and his staff understand that stimulating creativity is an important key to their success in this market. Both with their clients, by being part of the brainstorming stages of a project, and with internal staff. "Every day is a new day, and that's what makes us excited to come to work," says Torres. "My job is to recruit talent that has the skill set and passion that not only reflects what San Francisco is about, but who can also be a peer level to our client base. Our brand reflects not only where we are, but who we are as a company and the kind of client we can attract."

With multiple locations and mix of existing offset and digital equipment, the business has faced the challenge of making strategic choices that will impact their performance today, and in the years ahead. After acquiring another business within the city, Torres knew that upgrading its existing equipment would provide higher quality, and improve productivity.



"We're able to use less people, in less time to produce the same amount of work, which, obviously, improves our bottom line."

—Manuel Torres,
Managing Partner

Challenges

- Meeting demand for faster turnaround times, short-run work and heavy stocks
- Building incremental capabilities without slowing production
- Driving increased productivity at the same staffing levels
- Managing color across both offset and digital assets
- Wanted to pursue opportunities in high-end real estate, healthcare and other vertical markets that require printing on specialty media, including synthetics

"When I was going to make what I consider a relatively large purchase, we did a pretty robust evaluation process looking at various vendors," explains Torres. "I reached out to other owners within the AlphaGraphics network that had used a combination of either Ricoh equipment or some of the other vendors that I was looking at. I called at least three to four other AlphaGraphics owners that have already been down my path."

"The investment in new technology in our business is typically about being able to do what you can't do, incremental capabilities that we can offer. But it also has to do with productivity. Quite honestly, we have grown our business while keeping our staffing the same over a long history," says Torres.



One particular colleague that Torres has relied on for sound advice, and had a RICOH Pro C9110 in his own operations, helped solidify his confidence in moving forward with Ricoh. "I was looking for the quality level of a particular vendor class and he said, 'You're gonna get that.' So that kind of sealed it for me."

In evaluating Ricoh's solutions, the 13" x 27.5" oversized sheet capabilities on the RICOH Pro C9110 and support for media up to 400 gsm stood out. By providing the ability to keep previously outsourced work in-house and meet tightening customer deadline requests comfortably, the system was a win-win. Adding the redundancy of a second Pro C9110 after acquiring another print shop improved productivity even more.



Results

- Higher productivity with the redundancy of two RICOH Pro C9110 Digital Presses
- Faster turnarounds, with in-line punching capabilities, reduced production time by 75% for a particular product
- A color management approach in place with G7 processes to provide accurate color matching between offset and digital devices
- The ability to produce short-run books on the RICOH Pro C7100X Digital Press
- More dynamic direct mail campaigns using the 5th Color Station
- An increase in substrate capabilities, including 13" x 27.5" oversized sheets for tri-fold brochures
- Printing on stickers, synthetics, thick and textured stocks opened new business opportunities in real estate and healthcare
- Trained Customer Replaceable Units (TCRU) help make preventative maintenance more predictable and easier to manage



Beyond hardware, Ricoh provided assistance with space planning and workflow to help ensure AlphaGraphics not only had the right technologies in place, but the capability to maximize their ROI across the operation.

"We bought our first 9110 a couple of years ago, and then we picked up another one earlier this year. As an example, because of those acquisitions, because of the speed, because of its ability to not slow down on jobs, specifically with inline punching, we're able to run one specific job about 75% faster than before," says Torres. "Behind the curtains we're able to use less people, in less time to produce the same amount of work, which, obviously, improves our bottom line."



The company also added a RICOH Pro C7100X Series Digital Press featuring the 5th Color Station. “We have an industrial manufacturer in the Bay Area who used to print 20,000 – 50,000 run books. Based on the quality that the RICOH 7100SX provides, they’re able to run shorter runs. And so they’ve tailored some of their channel marketing programs to use that to their advantage. Instead of having a one-size-fits-all book, they can customize it and tailor it to their distribution channels, possibly co-branding maybe a few different products that they do on the bigger run. They really liked that, and they’re not making a tradeoff as far as quality. So, that’s kind of fun for us.”

Using the 5th Color Station on their Pro C7100X Series Digital Press, AlphaGraphics has also been able to produce noteworthy marketing efforts for their business, particularly using white toner on dark substrates for impactful direct mail campaigns to existing customers and prospects.

Ricoh’s Color Management services have helped the business maintain consistency on jobs that are proofed digitally and produced on offset technology in the company’s Marin County location. By training staff on G7 protocols and putting processes in place to ensure consistent color on high-volume direct mail projects, the company can produce proofs faster and more efficiently with the confidence that the final print run will match their clients’ expectations.

Using targeted marketing campaigns and a dynamic sales team, AlphaGraphics San Francisco and Marin County, California, have leveraged their Ricoh technology investments to broach new markets, including high-end real estate and healthcare. Taking advantage of the ability to print on durable synthetic media, they have found success producing healthcare training binders, among other wins. Looking to the future, Torres is optimistic about the prospects for the company based on his ability to accept new and different work, without the fear of compromising on quality or his ability to meet stringent deadlines.

“I give a lot of credit to Ricoh, because what it allows me to do is say yes, more often. ‘Can you do this? Yes. Can I get it by such and such a time? Yes,’” explains Torres. “It’s really me being able to say yes to as many requests as possible, because our turnaround times...the runs don’t slow down based on oversized sheets or 400 gsm. We can run very fast, and we can meet their quality requirements.”



How We Did It

- Installed two RICOH Pro C9110 Digital Presses
- Installed a RICOH Pro C7100X in Marin County location for high-quality, short-run work requiring quick turnarounds, special substrates and 5th color
- Increased productivity with inline Plockmatic booklet finishers
- Added capability to produce short-run books more efficiently
- Increased substrates capabilities, including 13" × 27.5" oversized sheets for trifold brochures
- Utilized Trained Customer Replaceable Units (TCRU) to help make preventative maintenance more predictable and easier to manage



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