



commercial print

CHALLENGE

- Responding to the market potential of end-to-end digital workflow capabilities
- Overcoming the reduction in throughput caused by an unreliable digital press that was under a lease

SOLUTION

- Transition from a single unit contract to a new business partnership with two new Ricoh digital presses
- Ricoh's consultative approach enabled the customer to create a full-service digital department

RESULTS

- A 15% to 20% improvement in throughput with two RICOH Pro C901 presses
- A true end-to-end digital department that will improve efficiencies in ordering, reduce job costs, and allow the company to expand its customer base

DigiLink, Inc.

Always Rethinking the Future

ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

DigiLink, Inc. is a privately held company located in Alexandria, VA. Founded in 2000 by partners Michael Wight, President and CEO; James Lerner, Senior VP and CFO; Hank Russo, Senior VP Sales; and Ed Hartman and Senior VP Manufacturing, DigiLink launched with a focus on comprehensive prepress services. Committed to offering its customers the utmost in innovation, the company responded to changes in the industry by adding its first offset press in 2002. From there DigiLink grew rapidly, relocating twice in 11 years to expand its facility. In a short time, DigiLink transformed from an entrepreneurial start-up to a full-service, award-winning commercial printer offering high quality offset and digital printing, finishing, wide format and mailing and fulfillment services. Today, DigiLink is the 11th largest commercial printer in metropolitan Washington, DC.

CHALLENGE

In true fashion for this forward-thinking company, DigiLink responded to the increasing demand for variable data capabilities, shorter runs and faster turnaround times with the installation of its first digital press in January of 2009. Over the course of the next two years, DigiLink frequently experienced downtime with the press. While it was extremely pleased with the service the dealer provided, the company could not achieve the turnaround times needed to meet the growing demand due to the interruptions caused by the unreliable press. As a result, DigiLink's management began to explore an alternative solution.

"We began to rethink our entire digital operation based on the problems that we experienced with this press," said Michael Wight, president and CEO of DigiLink. "We knew we needed back-up capacity to complete the work that was coming through the door, but what we really envisioned was a fully contained digital department that had finishing capabilities as well. We wanted to move away from a digital press operating in an offset world. We envisioned a completely independent department with its own workflow capabilities."

Wight and his business partners began investigating a number of options, holding discussions with the incumbent press manufacturer as well as several other vendors in the marketplace, including Ricoh. Recognizing the direction DigiLink wanted to pursue with its digital department, the Ricoh representatives consulted with DigiLink's management to put together a solution that would deliver a complete end-to-end digital workflow and run in parallel with its offset capabilities. Capitalizing on the idea of an independent digital division as a way to expand its customer base, DigiLink

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decided to give the division its own identity—DigiXPress.com. Today, DigiXPress.com is a viable independent division of DigiLink, bolstered by Ricoh equipment, and a wide array of the industry's top finishing equipment.

SOLUTION

Ricoh approached DigiLink's opportunity with a strategic focus on the potential new market served by digital printing technology, the finances surrounding the arrangement and the equipment that would best support DigiLink's vision.

As a starting place, the Ricoh representatives recommended DigiLink replace the existing press with two new RICOH Pro C901 Graphic Arts Edition production printers. The RICOH Pro C901 is equipped with a powerful EFI Fiery print controller that provides DigiLink advanced color and job management tools to execute sophisticated document assembly and variable data print workflows with ease. For professional in-line finishing, DigiLink installed Morgana finishing equipment and also acquired and installed a Duplo DSF-3500 full-bleed booklet making system to round out its new digital department.

"We have a lot of trust in the Ricoh team. They came to us with a complete solution that also included working out the finances to allow for the replacement of our existing press which was still under lease," said Wight. "No other vendor offered a realistic solution to terminate our lease. They also came to us with ideas that matched our vision for expansion, including the idea for the Duplo."

RESULTS

DigiLink now has complete digital production capabilities that will allow it to keep ahead of a growing number of digital print needs and one that complements its offset production.

"Our scope of capabilities has evolved both for large jobs, which we can run on our offset equipment, and now for the shorter-run work we couldn't do cost effectively without the digital presses. We have the ability to move jobs to the most cost-effective and efficient equipment. This allows us to be highly competitive and helps our customers get receive the best value," said Wight.

DigiLink also is enjoying the exceptional output quality of the RICOH Pro C901 digital presses.

"One of the aspects we experienced from the previous digital press is that the output had a shiny appearance. About seventy percent of what we print digitally today requires a "silk" finish, not a gloss. With the Pro C901, we can receive the finish that we get with offset," Wight explained. "The solids are printing smoother and we have better overall densities to match that offset feel and look."

The RICOH Pro C901 also raises the bar for production speed, with 90 pages per minute regardless of media type, weight, or when duplexing.

"We are realizing somewhere between a 15% to 20% improvement in throughput, which has been a very positive experience for our operators," said Wight. "The old press had a much longer distance for the paper to travel, so there were just a lot more places where sheets would get hung up and cause a jam. The distance the paper travels in the Pro C901 is much shorter, resulting in dramatically improved reliability."

Wight sees many opportunities to expand his business with the new digital department. "We anticipate a rapid rate of growth with our robust DigiXPress.com workflow solution," said Wight. "The C901s are the baseline to support a full-fledged web-to-print solution that we will roll out soon. We intend to introduce a very convenient method for ordering digitally printed materials, that will be backed up by our strong commitment to quality, customer support and professional printing expertise."

DigiLink's decision to choose Ricoh has furthered its ability to continue to offer the flexibility, knowledge, and innovation it promised its customers when it first opened its doors, and to stay one step ahead of a rapidly changing marketplace. According to Wight, "Ricoh was the only vendor that offered us what we were looking for. They understood the big picture and knew how to get the results we wanted. They stood by us and supported our vision, making it easy every step of the way."

RICOH


Ricoh
Production
Printing