



Case In Point

Graphic Arts Solutions



EFI Colorproof XF Goes the Distance for TracyLocke's N-GEN Studios

Profile

N-GEN Studios is a new division of TracyLocke formed to focus on specialty services for clients including Pepsi Domestic and Pepsi International, Frito-Lay, Hershey's, and global brewer InBev, with its extensive portfolio of beer brands. N-GEN Studios delivers the next generation of studio services executing marketing communications via print, motion and on-line. Formed in 1913, TracyLocke is a leading brand-experience marketing agency, which specializes in building brands and driving volume for leadership at retail. The agency has offices in Dallas, Texas, Wilton, Conn., Bentonville, Ark., and New York, N.Y., as well as on-site presence with clients in 38 field offices. (More information is available on the company's Web site, www.n-genstudios.com.)

Challenge

N-GEN Studios provides pre-press, interactive, retouching, illustration, broadcast and motion & 3D. The technology solutions they deploy must provide maximum efficiency – for N-GEN professionals and for their clients.

Intrinsic to the vision of N-GEN is that they be "location-agnostic." Consistency across all locations is critical to N-GEN Studios as they service clients domestically and internationally. In addition to working directly with clients, N-GEN Studios works with various factions across TracyLocke, reinforcing the need for standardization

across the agencies. As they evaluated proofing solutions, N-GEN Studios emphasized their demand for the greatest increase in output speed, profit margins and stability, as well as optimal efficiency.

Solution

N-GEN Studios chose Colorproof XF, EFI's Bestcolor-driven, scalable and versatile client/server-based proofing and wide format production platform designed for print and prepress professionals, publishers, and creatives. N-GEN also takes advantage of the Fiery Option, a feature that fully integrates EFI Fiery digital color print server technology and ensures that consistent color is delivered across any Fiery-driven output device. The agency deploys several Fiery-driven Canon digital output devices and four wide format printers, two from HP and two from Epson – all integrated with Colorproof XF.

Results

N-GEN Studios reports doubled profit margins as a result of using Colorproof XF. Saving the agency considerable time, paper, ink and money, N-GEN calculated that Colorproof XF paid for itself in less than a month. Colorproof XF has halved the agency's proof production time, taking them from 30 minutes to 12 to 15 minutes per proof, and exponentially decreased their spending on consumables. And to date, they have experienced 100 percent up-time.



“Colorproof XF’s color matching is superior to anything I’ve ever used.”

– Scott McVeigh, Pre-Press Manager, N-GEN Studios

TracyLocke’s N-GEN Studios Chooses EFI Colorproof XF

N-GEN Studios is a new division of TracyLocke, chartered with delivering the next generation of studio services, executing marketing communications via print, motion and online. N-GEN Studios is constantly looking for ways to deliver greater value for their world-renowned clients, which include Pepsi Domestic and Pepsi International, Frito-Lay, Hershey’s, and InBev. That’s where Colorproof XF comes in. N-GEN Studios needed a proofing solution that would enable them to standardize across TracyLocke offices – one that would meet their demand for optimal output speed, profit margins, reliability, and efficiency. Formed in 1913, TracyLocke is a leading brand-experience marketing agency, which specializes in building brands and driving volume for leadership at retail. The agency has offices in Dallas, Texas, Wilton, Conn., Bentonville, Ark., and New York, N.Y., as well as on-site presence with clients in 38 field offices. More information is available on the company’s Web site, www.n-genstudios.com.

Colorproof XF is EFI’s Bestcolor-driven, scalable and versatile client/server-based proofing and wide format production platform designed for print and prepress professionals, publishers, and creatives. N-GEN Studios uses Version 3.0 of the award-winning software, which includes a new output option for gravure printers, a new production option for wide format production environments and the Fiery Option,

fully integrating Fiery server technology and ensuring that consistent color is delivered across any Fiery-driven output device. EFI’s compliance with GRACoL, CGATS, ICC, JDF, PDF, PPML and other open standards ensured Colorproof XF’s seamless integration into the agency’s print operations.

An Increase in Capabilities, Stability, Speed and Cost Savings

Robert Webber, N-GEN’s director of studio services, reports that while they purchased Colorproof XF based on the solution’s impressive capabilities, the agency has found the incredible savings in costs to be a terrific surprise. Illustrating this point, he said, “The increase in capabilities and stability was the initial strong sell, but after working with Colorproof XF for just a short while, we realized that we really have a cash cow on our hands in terms of savings.” Particularly, the savings on consumables have made a great impact on N-GEN’s bottom line. Webber explains, “Colorproof XF has dramatically dropped our spend on consumables. First off, we run fewer proofs knowing that what’s on the monitor will be 99 percent plus hit of what’s coming out of the proofer. We were shocked by the savings on ink alone – we’ve gone from paying \$2400 for a set of inks to \$400 with Colorproof XF. And we’ve experienced a similar degree of savings on paper. With our former system, we were paying \$1000 for one box. With Colorproof XF, we’re not locked into proprietary media and are down to paying approximately \$300 per box of paper.”

The significant cost savings Colorproof XF affords simplified Webber’s approval process with N-GEN’s parent company to purchase the solution to standardize across the offices. He said, “It was not hard to sell into our financial department. Colorproof XF would deliver tremendous value to the agency, and ultimately to our clients. We were able to quantify an exceptional cost savings, and that absolutely eased the bureaucracy of acquiring the new equipment.”

Cost saving aside, Webber points to reliability as perhaps the most critical factor in his business. He said, “When your proofing system goes down, you’re brought to your knees, and with our former system, we were down at least weekly. With Colorproof XF, we have a tremendous increase in speed – and no crashing.”

N-GEN Studios credits Colorproof XF’s Nesting feature for saving the agency considerable time, paper, ink and money. The Colorproof XF Nesting function allows N-GEN to output any number of files collectively as one single job, even files with different color spaces. N-GEN Studios is able to work with process colors, spot colors or combinations at the same time. A preview window simplifies work processes by showing the nesting layout and supports a wide range of functions such as moving, scaling, rotating, flipping and cropping. Colorproof XF also allows N-GEN Studios to order, align and distribute multiple pages simultaneously, delivering greater efficiencies.



“EFI has been incredibly responsive. Their level of knowledge and their dedication is amazing. Whenever we’ve had a question – no matter the time of day, EFI has had the answer.”

– Robert Webber, Director of Studio Services, N-GEN Studios

N-GEN Studio’s Pre-Press Manager, Scott McVeigh, was also impressed by Colorproof XF’s color management capability. “Colorproof XF’s color matching is superior to anything I’ve ever used.” This statement is significant coming from the color management expert of approximately fifteen years experience. McVeigh relies on Colorproof XF’s 3D Optimizer, an easy-to-use tool embedded in the software that optimizes printer output to a specific reference, whether a printing press or another printer. Optimizer supports the GretagMacbeth automated measurement device that McVeigh uses almost perpetually, providing fast, accurate reading of test charts in addition to supporting the Colorproof XF linearization tool. Colorproof XF increases McVeigh’s productivity and ability to deliver proofs that approximate the brilliant color of the ads the agency produces.

A Boon to Cross-Office Collaboration

As Director of Studio Services, Webber manages N-GEN’s pre-press, creative support, production room, retouching and illustration, broadcast, and motion & 3D sub-departments. Colorproof XF enables more productive collaboration among the departments than he imagined. “Colorproof XF has delivered more than we anticipated. With our international business we do an enormous amount of retouching and illustration of both product and talent. We have a retouching manager in Wilton and another in Manhattan’s SOHO area. With Colorproof XF, one manager can

immediately review and approve the retouching executed by a colleague in another location – this is a huge time-saver. We used to do what we called ‘sneaker netting’ – referring to our need to have someone drive proofs from location to location. Colorproof XF has eliminated that drain on our time and money.”

To further enhance collaboration across the multiple-office agency and deliver accurate color, N-GEN Studios chose the Colorproof XF Color Verifier Option. The Color Verifier Option enables N-GEN to easily measure and compare color values when individuals across offices are working with, for example, proofs with reference, print-run profiles, proofs with proofs, and proofs with print, and ensure that colors are identical to the print output. With Color Verifier, N-GEN is able to check their results against industry standards; set their own quality standards; and define the tolerances for specific values or the average for all values. Delivering reliable remote proofing, Color Verifier ensures that any N-GEN Studios office can quickly produce a printout with accurate color. They can go into a client meeting with the complete confidence that they’ve accurately reproduced the client’s corporate colors in the materials they’re presenting.

Improved Efficiency, Seamless Integration

The Fiery Option has also boosted N-GEN Studios’ efficiency. The Fiery Option smoothly incorporates color values from Colorproof XF into a Fiery workflow, ensuring

that consistent color is delivered across any Fiery-driven output device. McVeigh is responsible for the eight Fiery-driven digital output devices deployed throughout the N-GEN Studios’ locations. N-GEN’s Fiery servers deliver precision color, consistent high quality output, workflow innovation, connectivity to all popular pre-press applications and seamless integration with Colorproof XF. For McVeigh, what is most important is the increased efficiency and positive impact on his personal productivity. He said, “With the Fiery server, I don’t have to physically go to the different machines to manage the printers, or to rely on operators to let me know when there is a workflow deviation – I can manage everything from my location.”

Integrating EFI solutions was smooth for N-GEN Studios, and McVeigh and Webber thank the EFI team for that. According to Webber, “EFI has been incredibly responsive. Their level of knowledge and their dedication is amazing. Whenever we’ve had a question – no matter the time of day, EFI has had the answer.” McVeigh was impressed by the diligence EFI applied to an issue that was idiosyncratic to N-GEN’s equipment and business. “We were experiencing a minor yet disruptive oddity and there just wasn’t an obvious fix. Though they’d never come across our problem before and probably haven’t since, EFI worked at it until they nailed it. We’ve had a terrific experience with the team at EFI. They’ve been very receptive to our suggestions that would help our business even more, and we look forward to continuing to work with EFI.”



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– Robert Webber, Director of Studio Services, N-GEN Studios

Get Connected with EFI

EFI’s integrated solutions—Production Printing, Prepress and Graphic Arts, Web to Print, Print Management Information System (Print MIS) and Corporate—give your company a competitive edge in increasing profits, improving productivity, streamlining business processes, reducing overhead costs and enabling your team to work more productively and profitably. Visit www.efi.com to learn more.

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