Formerly the founder of Milton Keynes-based Icon Graphics, Baz Ogle started Format Graphics to concentrate on producing a broad portfolio of high-quality, wide-format applications for a diverse customer list. Working primarily with designers and agencies with blue chip clients, fine standards of print with accurate colours are vital to meet the exacting criteria of end customers, many of them major brand owners.

Format Graphics Gets “Cool”

*Versatility of LED curing is key to company’s wide-format investment*

**Challenge:**

“Format Graphics needed the right technology that would allow it to concentrate on producing a broad portfolio of high-quality, wide-format applications for a diverse customer list.”

As a long time user of VUTEk platforms, starting with an early PressVu 200-600 and followed more recently by QS and GS machines, it was a straightforward decision to continue with EFI technology. As a result, Ogle was quick to invest in the first “cool cure” GS3250LX 3.2-metre flat-bed and roll-fed system with LED technology to be installed in the UK.

Originally considering the VUTEk QS3-Pro, Ogle changed his mind when he discovered more about the opportunities available and the overall benefits of the GS3250LX. “The idea of EFI’s ‘cool cure’ technology appealed to me greatly, and it was easy to assess the advantages of LED curing with the diverse variety of materials we use at Format Graphics,” he states. “The ability to print direct even to the most difficult media without compromising on either speed or quality made me decide that the VUTEk GS3250LX was the machine we needed. Buying this wide-format printer also meant we could become more environmentally responsible through using a greener technology and reducing our power consumption.”
Ogle looked at wide-format printers from other manufacturers but decided there was no alternative to the VUTEk, the only printer to give him all the production and quality capabilities he needed. Of particular importance was the fact that the GS3250LX has a full 3.2-metre width for both rigid and roll materials, plus the capability to print continuous boards, a feature no other printer in the same class was able to provide.

Format Graphics also required a true hybrid printer with quick change-over from rigid to flexible materials and back again. Currently the company’s throughput is split evenly between flat-bed and roll-fed work, and the capabilities of the GS3250LX along with its LED curing have proved to be ideal for handling sensitive media which reacts badly to heat.

The environmental benefits of the VUTEK GS3250LX were another key benefit for Format Graphics. “These days many of our clients want to work with suppliers that offer greener productivity,” continues Ogle. “Using UV-curable inks with LED lamps means that there are no emissions, such as ozone or VOCs, and our energy requirements are lower.”

Dan Preston, a very experienced VUTEk operator who joined Format Graphics at the outset, is finding the GS3250LX is a joy to use. “As well as the advantages we’re finding with the LED curing, this printer gives us stronger, more vibrant colours across all materials,” he says. “We use a lot of white ink, and the opacity on this machine is particularly good.”
“Having a printer that is kinder to vinyl and other difficult materials has extended our range of applications as we can print direct to media that might not be suitable for use with mercury-arc curing lamps,” states Ogle. “We also don’t get any ruined jobs. There’s nothing more disheartening than finding a surface that should print perfectly has been damaged beyond use at the curing stage because of the high levels of heat that have been emitted. Knowing that applications won’t buckle or warp, and eliminating the possibility of head crashes, is a tremendous advantage.”

The speed of throughput has also impressed both Ogle and Preston who are using the latest version of EFI’s Fiery XF RIP. Able to run the machine at 90 square m/hour means that a 2.4 x 1.2m (8 x 4ft) board prints in less than three minutes. Additionally, experience with VUTEk for many years has shown the machines to be extremely reliable and hard-working, both essential prerequisites for Format Graphics.

Also available as the 2-metre GS2000LX and, as an option, as the Pro with greyscale capabilities, this printer series has quickly gained a reputation for being able to handle difficult, heat-sensitive materials and surfaces that, hitherto, have been unsuitable for the UV-curable production process.

**Result:**

“Having a printer that is kinder to vinyl and other difficult materials has extended our range of applications...[plus] there are no emissions, such as ozone or VOCs, and our energy requirements are lower.”
EFI invents integrated digital technology for businesses and enterprises worldwide that helps them increase their profits, productivity, efficiency and customer satisfaction.

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EFI™ (www.efi.com) helps businesses worldwide bring their visions and goals to life with a scalable, digital product portfolio. Our powerful servers; controllers; RIPs; inkjet printers, and precise colour and imaging solutions help companies increase their brand recognition and market reach on signs, buildings, bus wraps, graphic displays and more. Our business automation software helps companies work faster and more cost-effectively. Our office, enterprise and mobile cloud solutions help companies create, access, and communicate impactful information that can win them more business.