The QS2000 has exceeded our expectations.

– David Pesnell, Founder Austin Graphics

CHALLENGE:

Austin Graphics faced increased demand for rigid display graphics, but its existing production process, which included printing on flexible substrates that had to be mounted and laminated, was creating production bottlenecks, high production costs and extended turnaround times. They required a superwide format printer that could print directly on rigid substrates in order to leverage market demand into continued business growth.
Growth Brings Challenges

“One area we have excelled in is the production of vehicle wraps,” said Pesnell. “In fact, we have about 95% market share in the region. This area of business is growing as more companies use vehicles as an effective means to promote themselves.”

Austin Graphics also produces signage for a wide range of businesses and trade show exhibits.

“The move into superwide format was the best thing we could have done for the business,” adds Pesnell. As business grew, so did the demand for rigid displays. Pesnell explains, “We were able to produce terrific rigid displays, but it was a time consuming and costly process, especially with the cost increases we have seen in mounting adhesives and laminates. Not only that, it was a five-step process for us to create a rigid display – printing, mounting, laminating, die cutting and finishing. We needed to find a more efficient way to handle this business.”

From Five Step to Two Step Process

Pesnell needed to find a direct-to-rigid substrate UV solution that would allow him to eliminate production steps. He says, “We were delighted when we discovered the VUTEk QS2000. It was our first superwide flatbed printer that also offered white ink, a key factor in our buying criteria. The speed of the QS2000, at 750 square
The VUTEk QS2000 has reduced the cost of time and materials for producing rigid displays by 30% to 40%, and has reduced the process from five steps to two. Pesnell says, “We print directly to the rigid substrate, die cut the piece, and it is out the door. We have reduced the customers cost while increasing company profit.”

**Impressing Samsung**

Korea-based Samsung constructs a new $3.5 billion semiconductor facility in Austin, Texas. “Samsung wanted to use printed glass and mirrors in its locker room and smock room, and clean rooms to eliminate dust, static and contaminants and to provide an attractive employee environment;” said Pesnell. The original plan was to image large glass and mirror panels – 118 inches tall and ranging from 52 to 60 inches wide – in Korea and ship them to the U.S. but were concerned about logistics and breakage. They looked for a local product source and contacted Austin Graphics. “We produced high definition samples with the QS2000 whose quality flabbergasted our Korean visitors; they felt it was so much better than anything they could produce in Korea,” adds Pesnell. “We had to overcome a number of obstacles in producing the panels, but with the support and assistance of VUTEk specialists we were able to produce 26 tempered glass panels, 15 mirrored panels and several PETG panels.

**Production Versatility**

“Another slick feature of the VUTEk QS2000,” adds Pesnell, “is the ability to quickly switch between rigid and flexible substrates – in about a minute. While we expect to produce mostly rigid displays using this printer, it is nice to have the versatility to switch to flexible printing on the same device.”

**Marketing New Capabilities**

Pesnell concludes, “This is a fun business to be in, and the VUTEk QS2000 has added a new dimension. 2007 has been an exiting year for us and 2008 is looking even better.”

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**RESULTS:**

The VUTEk QS2000 has reduced the time and materials associated with producing rigid display graphics by 30% to 40% while improving the quality of output. The ability to print white ink with the QS2000 has opened up a range of new applications, including high quality backlit panels for trade shows and other applications. Austin Graphics has increased production capacity without adding additional staff.
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