Palm Printing is a small family-run business located in Sarasota, Florida, that serves a diverse group of customers from large churches and local florists to Fortune 400 companies. Projects range from business cards to orders of 100,000 16-page catalogs produced on the offset devices and shipped to states across the country.

Palm Printing began in 1988 as a quick print shop with a duplicator press, and evolved into a commercial printer that offers six-color printing with many finishing options such as embossing, foil stamping, laminating, and UV coating. It also provides perfect binding, saddle stitching, and die cutting. In 1995, it was the first in the area to offer full-color digital printing.

EFI Rastek H652 UV Printer Enables Palm Printing to Enter New Market

Challenge:
Since the company started in 1988, Palm Printing has had a method for staying ahead of its competition—the printer has continuously implemented state-of-the-art equipment and technology. As a result, Palm Printing has grown at a steady pace. Since its inception, the company has grown from a two-person shop located in a 900-square-foot site to a 15-employee printer operating out of a 17,000-square-foot facility.

In the last few years, however, the economy took its toll on Florida and customers weren’t purchasing anything unless they absolutely had to, says president and owner Randy Hedrick. “The last few years have been a challenge in this industry,” he says.

In the last twelve months the printer has noticed a slight shift in its customers’ ability to spend more money and generate higher quality pieces. In addition, there’s been increasing demand for wide-format printing. Listening to its customers, the printer decided that it could once again rely on implementing the latest technology to help widen its margins.
Solution

About a year ago the company started researching wide-format printers and selected the EFI™ Rastek™ H652 UV hybrid printer because it delivers near photographic image quality with saturated color. The printer uses four-color plus white, 8-level grayscale technology, resolutions up to 1200x900dpi and speeds up to 230 sq. ft. per hour. It also handles a wide range of materials including printing directly on rigid media with its vacuum belt media transport system. The company was swayed by the quality and the price, states Hedrick.

“The EFI printer won out,” says Hedrick, “partly because it was a four-color machine with white. A lot of the other machines were six-color machines plus white. We looked at the speed of the machine as well. We felt that for us it was a good entry-level machine that would give us the ability to grow over the next several years.”

To prepare for the new device, the sales reps spent six to eight months talking to customers and selling jobs. In conjunction with other printers, Palm Printing was able to deliver vinyl banners, Fom-cor, and easel signs. Once the machine was installed, the printer had enough momentum to keep the machine busy. “It was nice that I had enough work to make the payment on the machine before it even hit the floor,” says Hedrick.

Solution:

“For us the H652 was a good entry-level machine that would give us the ability to grow over the next several years.”

— Randy Hedrick
President and Owner
Palm Printing
Results

“The response has been great,” he says. “We’ve run several banners a day since it was installed. The biggest one was a 4 x 20-foot vinyl banner.”

“We'll be producing poster work, backlit material, and we have a couple of customers who are asking us about wallpaper,” he continues. “The machine prints up to 65 inches wide and as long as you want, so the possibilities are endless.”

One of the first jobs Palm Printing is producing on the EFI printer is five-foot-wide banners. Hedrick says a job can consist of ten posters or 200 yard signs. “We do a lot of work for real-estate agents so it could be open house signs, for example,” he says.

Hedrick is pleased to be able to print on rigid materials. “The device gives us the capability of printing right on the rigid substrate without having to go through another process,” he says. “Whereas a sign company would have to print the job on a lighter weight stock and then actually mount it to a heavier weight board. The client will see the advantages in cost because there’s not as much labor involved. They’ll also see the advantages in turnaround time; we can do it a lot quicker. If they come to us in the morning and really need the job in the afternoon, we can do it.”

In fact, one customer is already benefitting from this capability. “We’ve got one real-estate company that is re-branding and they’re looking for 200 new “For Sale” signs made on aluminum. That’s something that we would not have been able to supply them with in the past,” enthuses Hedrick.

The machine will provide the competitive edge that Palm Printing is looking for. “It’s a whole new ballgame,” he states. “There are only one or two machines in the area that will match the caliber of this machine. That was one of our tricks to growing at a steady pace, to constantly stay one step ahead as far as the technology goes. And the EFI Rastek H652 will continue that trend.”

Results:

“One of our tricks of growing at a steady pace was to constantly stay one step ahead as far as the technology goes. And the EFI Rastek H652 will continue that trend.”
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