Case In Point
PRODUCTION PRINTING SOLUTIONS

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EFI’s integrated, end-to-end 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.

Workflow solutions in a repro production environment

When France based Graphelio decided to go digital, while facing a strong growth in production volumes, there was no time to spare at the shallow end of the learning curve. To make the move a success within the shortest time frame, the fast growing repro house decided to invest in a Ricoh Aficio 2090 production copier, driven by EFI’s MicroPress Prodigy Workflow Server.

Graphelio started out as a repro house in the mid seventies, based in Mont Saint Aignan, in the industrial suburbs of Rouen in Normandy. Today, with 13 employees and 1.2 million euros of annual turnover, the company produces both black and white and colour documents and does most of its business printing training material and responses to public bids, for a customer base of local government bodies.

“These mission critical documents can contain up to several hundreds of pages, including large format blueprints,” explains Jérôme Frechon, Graphelio’s production manager. “Any printing or binding mistake can lead directly to a bid being rejected”. In such a critical environment, a flawless production organisation is a must.

Keeping production capacities in line with a growing business

Graphelio saw its business take a strong step forward at the beginning of 2000. Over the past 5 years, the company maintained a healthy growth-rate. In the first half of 2004, it gradually became clear that the company’s production equipment was not enough to get the job done with the right level of control anymore. “We were facing 2 distinct challenges.” remembers Jean Roussel, Graphelio’s managing director. “First of all, we wanted to complete our move into digital production, several of our printing units were still analogue driven at that time. Additionally, we needed to boost our production capacities, to cope with our increasing business”. At that time, Graphelio’s production units included 7 black and white copiers, some digital and some analogue, along with 3 digital colour copiers. All in all, the company had a production capacity of 36,000 pages per hour in black and white, and 6,000 pages per hour in colour.
In the middle of 2004, the company invested in a Ricoh Aficio 2090 black and white copier (90 pages per minute, 1,200 dpi), driven by a MicroPress Prodigy Workflow Server, from EFI. "Until then, a good part of our printing equipment came from a single vendor. We wanted to move out of this single supplier situation" explains Jean Roussel. "We settled for Ricoh, both for the quality of the equipment and the professionalism of their customer service. The MicroPress workflow server driving the printing engine was also a strong element in our decision to invest".

Maximising efficiency

The purpose of EFI's MicroPress is to allow repro houses and printing companies to make the most of a high speed printing engine, through efficient digital prepress and workflow management. "In effect, the MicroPress server acts as a hub, into which we feed our incoming jobs" emphasised Jérôme Fréchon. "The server checks all pages to make sure they meet our production requirements, and drives the printing process according to the instructions we provide in the corresponding job ticket".

Making incoming files consistent is clearly one of the most distinctive features of EFI's MicroPress. Graphelio's customers provide all types of file formats, from production class PDF files, all the way down to Microsoft Word documents and Excel spreadsheets, that may or may not have been created by production minded users. Effective preflighting is therefore a key aspect in preparing jobs for printing. "The MicroPress frontal allows us to resize and centre pages, when we are provided with documents in varying page sizes, that need to be merged into a single job" notes Jean Roussel.

In addition to job preparation, EFI's MicroPress allows Graphelio to optimise production speed and ensure job integrity throughout the printing and finishing process. "This is particularly important when inserting colour pages into a black and white document" explains Jean Roussel. Indeed, colour pages printed separately can be fed into the Aficio printing engine, to be included into a print job. The MicroPress server's job ticketing features allow to specify the insertion parameters, with an on screen document preview. "Previewing the complete document before printing allows us to make sure all pages are in place. Any error is therefore spotted very early in the production cycle, before a single page is even printed" adds Jean Roussel.

Graphelio also invested in a Ricoh SR 90 in line binding unit. "In association with MicroPress' imposition features, this equipment allows us to produce booklets, complete with a saddle-stitch binding" explains Jérôme Fréchon. "Having our binding unit in line is a distinctive advantage, that allows us to offer our customers high quality finishing, without compromising our short deadlines".

Remaining fully competitive

The addition of the Ricoh Aficio 2090 and EFI's MicroPress workflow management server to Graphelio's production line-up has been instrumental in driving the company forward. "This investment allows us to remain very competitive both in terms of speed and pricing" notes Jean Roussel. "This is the direct result of having all these production tools accessible from the same user interface, of having our binding equipment in house and in line, and having highly efficient error tracking features. All in all, we have noted a speed increase of over 30% on most of our jobs".

Jérôme Fréchon shares the same point of view. "We clearly couldn't do without the benefit of MicroPress anymore. Our customers just wouldn't accept the longer deadlines. As a matter of fact, we even use the MicroPress server to prepare jobs for some of our other printing engines, thanks to the PDF export features". Graphelio currently outputs over 150000 pages per month through the MicroPress Prodigy Workflow Server.