print to win case study

More in store for Miller Zell with an EFI VUTEk flatbed and roll-to-roll superwide UV printer

An Atlanta-based leading world-class retail design company, Miller Zell, Inc., applies valuable shopper insights to help retailers create selling environments that captivate and engage shoppers, enhance the in-store experience and optimize sales opportunities.

Worldwide clients from major retailers and financial institutions, to restaurant chains and consumer products manufacturers continue to benefit from Miller Zell’s proven range of comprehensive services. These include retail brand strategy development, shopper marketing, design programs, in-store brand auditing and repositioning, prototype implementation, installation services, digital signage planning, site surveys, and full ROI analysis.

CHALLENGE:
“We needed tightly managed color and a seamless, integrated workflow between all of our existing screen and litho presses, plus we wanted to add digital production to the mix.”

—Ford Bowers, general manager

Miller Zell has two six-color inline screen presses, one six-color carousel, and three single-color presses as well as several wide-format litho presses. But with retailers seeking increasingly shorter screen runs, lower inventory quantities and the ability to provide more regionalized offerings, Miller Zell decided it was time to invest in greater production throughput to meet their client’s short-run, quick turnaround projects. And that meant going digital. The company can still produce graphics for national rollouts, but with digital superwide format capability, they can more easily regionalize the messages and provide near just-in-time inventory replenishment.

“We envision converting up to 25% of our regionalized and variable screen runs to digital output over the next few months,” states Ford Bowers, general manager of Miller Zell’s print division. “We will also be able to bring in-house virtually all of our digital printing for prototype projects.”

Increasing digital capabilities presented a number of other workflow challenges. For example, it was important for Miller Zell to be able to create seamless workflows between all screen, litho and digital outputs while tightly managing color across the board. Complicating this was the need to tie into their legacy financial software, which is still utilized in other areas of the company for creative, engineering, logistics and installation support.
SOLUTION: "The versatility of EFI’s VUTEk GS3200 was exactly what we were looking for, the Fiery XF RIP eliminated our color concerns, and the EFI Pace MIS could give us huge efficiencies.

— Bowers, general manager

Miller Zell did their due diligence and searched for the best superwide digital printer out there—one that would offer the quality, reliability and productivity they were looking for, with a good ROI. Their choice: the VUTEk® GS3200 flatbed and roll-to-roll UV superwide digital printer from EFI™. Designed with all the latest digital superwide technology, the VUTEk GS3200 is capable of handling materials up to 126.5 inches wide and two inches thick. Since quality is extremely important when working with clients such as Walmart, Home Depot, Citizens Bank, and Exxon Mobile—especially when it comes to matching all corporate colors—the VUTEk GS3200 comes equipped with EFI’s Fiery® XF RIP. The white capability and the variety of substrates that are compatible with the GS3200 printer were also key factors in Miller Zell’s decision.

“EFI offered us a solution to our current print management information systems as well,” said Bowers. “EFI’s Pace MIS could handle all of the workflow for our screen, litho, and digital technology, and tie into our legacy system through its API—achieving a seamless system and allowing bi-directional data transfer,” said Bowers. This system will afford them tremendous efficiencies in all three disciplines.
“Part of our decision to purchase EFI’s VUTEk GS3200 and the Pace MIS was based on our partnership with our long-time supplier, Nazdar. They had a good hold on our challenges for quality and workflow. It has been a very smooth implementation with them and their suite of services speaks to our core capabilities,” added Bowers.

Miller Zell has been able to convert a substantial portion of their screen work to digital in just a few short months. “At our current trajectory, the GS3200 should be able to pay for itself in less than 12 months,” said Bowers. They are already running two shifts in their new digital department and are on track to continue expanded productivity through the early months of next year. They recently did a multi-store rollout for a national grocery chain consisting of interior POP displays and signage that required a combination of both rigid and flexible substrates and presented a number of corporate color matching challenges.

“With EFI’s VUTEk GS3200 and its Fiery XF RIP we are able to match the colors produced on various substrates and come in at a substantially lower price-point than screen printing, which carries much higher makeready costs,” said Bowers. “Additionally the speed of the VUTEk is such that we can produce high quality digital prints faster and less expensively than we could previously.”

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**RESULTS:**

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—Bowers, general manager
Print to win with EFI.

EFI (www.efi.com) is a world leader in digital print servers and controllers, superwide format printers and inks, wide-format printers, industrial inkjet printing systems and Web-to-Print, Print MIS and Proofing solutions. EFI is dedicated to giving customers a competitive edge with award-winning, scalable solutions from creation to print that maximize productivity and increase profits. EFI maintains 23 offices worldwide.