

CASE STUDY: ProTech Printing & Graphics – Investing for Growth

Company

ProTech Printing & Graphics, Kennesaw, Georgia

Profile

Founded in 1984, ProTech Printing & Graphics has ten full-time employees and specializes in quick turnaround quality printing.

Challenge

The company was near capacity on its conventional four-color press and was looking for a way to increase both capacity and quality without adding a second shift or overtime.

Solution

A 34cm Presstek DI press

Results

- Volume of four-color work increased up to 40 percent in the first three months after the DI press was installed
- Added the equivalent of 15 hours of additional monthly capacity without adding shifts or overtime
- Reduced average makeready from 250 sheets to 20 sheets
- Reduced the time from receipt of a client's files to sellable sheets from up to two hours to an average of 30 minutes
- Able to deliver high-quality offset printing more cost-effectively than competing printers with larger presses

"... we are producing 35 to 40 percent more work now with the DI press, and there is still more capacity available. The productivity of the DI is unbelievable."

Presstek DI® Delivers Increased Capacity and Higher Quality

Since its inception in 1985, ProTech Printing & Graphics has become known in Cobb County, Georgia, for exceptional customer service and trouble-free, high-quality, fast turnaround printing services. With a staff of ten full-time employees, the company offers design services, offset printing, and full in-house bindery capabilities that include laminating, die cutting, and folding.

"I am a small printer and I have always wanted to be able to compete with printers who operate big presses," says owner Bob Ferega. While he wasn't looking to change his small-format press sizes, he did need to increase shop productivity and improve overall printing



performance to better compete in the market. Now, after installing a highly automated Presstek DI press, Ferega finds that he not only has increased capacity, but he has gained a competitive edge in a broader market.

According to Ferega, ProTech experiences a constantly growing demand for short-run, fast turnaround four-color printing. ProTech had reached capacity with its ABDick 4995 four-color offset press, so Ferega was looking for a solution that would increase his shop's capacity without adding overtime or a second shift. He also wanted to increase the quality of his output with more consistency and predictability, further improve turnaround times, and widen the range of print projects he could produce for new and existing clients.

Meeting the Challenge with Presstek DI

Ferega learned about DI presses from his Presstek sales representative and immediately saw the potential DI has to revolutionize a printing business. Presstek DI presses combine the efficiency of an all-digital workflow with the versatility and quality of offset printing. Files are sent directly

to the press, where the entire on-press imaging process is automatic—all four plates are automatically advanced into position and simultaneously imaged in precise registration. On-press imaging eliminates all the materials, labor and potential errors involved in off-press platemaking. In addition, Ferega was impressed with the 300-line and stochastic screening capabilities of Presstek DI.

Continued on reverse

Case Study:

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Continued

35 to 40 Percent More Four-Color Work in Three Months

ProTech Printing & Graphics installed a 34cm DI press in July of 2006. By the end of September, according to Ferega, the shop was producing 35 to 40 percent more four-color work without overtime or additional shifts. “What’s more,” says Ferega, “due to the extreme productivity of the DI press, we estimate that we have the equivalent of at least 15 hours of additional capacity every month, and that will enable us to continue to grow our four-color business.”

Ferega reports that with conventional four-color printing, the pressman was continually struggling with ink/water balance and toning issues, and the press required his full attention during every press run to ensure the level of quality the shop prides itself on. “Now,” comments Ferega, “ink/water balance is no longer an issue with the waterless printing process of DI. Once a job starts printing, our pressman is free to begin setting up the next job so that there is virtually no downtime between jobs.”

According to Ferega, it required 45 minutes to an hour and a half just to prepare plates for mounting on the conventional press, even though ProTech was utilizing a CTP solution. In addition, once plates were mounted, the pressman had to adjust their fit and bring the press up to color, so it could be an additional 45 minutes before sellable sheets were exiting the press. “With the DI press,” Ferega points out, “we can be ready to send a job to the press within 30 minutes of receiving the client’s file, and once plates are imaged on press, in perfect register, we have sellable sheets in as little as two minutes.” This, says Ferega, combined with the faster-drying waterless printing of DI and the ability of the pressman to prepare for the next job while the press is printing, have been responsible for the company’s amazing increase in throughput and productivity.

Fine Art Quality

ProTech employs two full-time sales people, unusual for a shop its size. “One is focused on new business development and the other primarily supports existing customers,” Ferega explains. “Both have been able to bring in more work as clients and prospects see the quality of the printing delivered by the DI.” Ferega adds, “In one case, we spoke with an artist who was using a large, well-established printer to produce brochures showcasing his artwork. We showed him the quality and guaranteed he would be satisfied with our work or he would not be charged. We now have all of his business. He was

thrilled with the quality and told us that the 300-line printing raised the visible levels of both depth and detail, making it look as though clouds actually stood off of the paper.”

For another customer, ProTech recently produced a pocket folder and inserts printed in seven runs, each of 10,000 11 x 17 sheets. “This is a project we never would have attempted before,” says Ferega. “It had a stair-stepped image of the American flag actually printed across seven sheets, and each stair-step had to line up perfectly with an exact color match. Printed with the DI press, it looks like one continuous piece where it is actually seven inserts.” Not only was the quality exceptional, but Ferega indicates that had he tried to run this job using conventional offset, the printing time would have been three to four days, compared to just eight production hours with the DI press.

Bigger Is Not Necessarily Better

“Not only has our makeready waste dropped from an average of 250 sheets to 20 sheets, the quality we produce on the DI is unsurpassed by anybody out there. I will put my quality up against any press. And I can print with lower production costs,

less waste, faster set-up and unmatched turnaround.”

Ferega remarks that his shop was always optimized for short-run printing, and even with the conventional

press, he could achieve reasonable quality in runs up to 500. Beyond that, he says, quality would start dropping as the pressman constantly adjusted settings and dealt with toning issues in order to just keep ‘commercially acceptable quality.’ “Now, with the DI press,” Ferega says, “we get consistent quality throughout the run. Runs of 500 are a breeze—and so are runs of 10,000.”

While ProTech’s conventional four-color press was always running, Ferega says, “Now it seems that we don’t have enough four-color work. The reality is that we are producing 35 to 40 percent more work with the DI press, and there is still more capacity available. The productivity of the DI is unbelievable.”

Ferega and his team can’t produce samples fast enough. He says, “Once a customer or prospect sees the quality, they can’t wait to have us produce their work.” About those printers with large presses, Ferega happily notes, “I don’t have the overhead they do, so I can be extremely cost competitive, and with DI, I can deliver the highest quality. Now these bigger printers have to compete with me. And that is a great position to be in.” ■

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