International Minute Press/ Lasting Image ups its color game with EFI and Canon

Promotional products entrepreneur Rick Mann had a significant opportunity. A major client wanted him to print and store sales collateral alongside the promotional products warehoused by Mann's other business, Lasting Image, a promotional products company.

The move into printing had all the potential to be a growing profit center when he started offering it three years ago with the opening of an International Minute Press franchise. His current customers showed consistent interest, and Mann had structured his print offering around an efficient, just-in-time inventory of digital print offerings that would help his base of large industrial corporations reduce their costs when compared with a wasteful and costly offset print fulfillment requiring high volumes of print that was not needed. Mann's business offers a robust print management system that helps determine the needed quantity. The two businesses also offer warehousing.

But just as his print business was taking off, he realized he needed better digital print management systems. The production workflow, even on very short-run jobs, would sometimes take hours, making it difficult to meet delivery requirements profitably. The business was selling more variable data printing work, increasing workflow demands. Plus, production operations for commonly produced products like tabbed binders did not have the amount of automation needed to handle growing volumes.

Despite those challenges, International Minute Press was delivering an exceptional value for its customers. With several promotional products clients showing great interest in moving their print to Mann's operation, the company traded its existing digital color press for two Fiery Driven™ digital presses: a Canon imagePRESS

Challenge:

Shifting a burgeoning, just-in-time fulfillment operation into a higher gear to meet growing opportunities.

International Minute Press and its sister company, Lasting Image Promotional Products, Inc., service industrial accounts with high-end printed marketing collateral and promotional products. The sister companies are located near Reading, PA., and employ a talented team of diversely skilled professionals who continually push themselves to learn and evolve.

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EFI Fiery technology helps International Minute Press/Lasting Image boost digital print productivity

C800 with an imagePRESS Server F200 and a Canon imagePRESS C10000VP that uses an imagePRESS Server B5000 powered by the EFI™ Fiery® QX digital front end platform.

"I started our promotional products business, Lasting Image, Inc., 26 years ago," Mann says. "About three years ago, one of our large clients in the commercial battery business asked us if we could warehouse their printing, and we said no. But after they asked a couple more times, we realized that if we didn't add printing to our portfolio of services, we were likely to lose the promotional products business to someone else who could do both."

That client got more than its money's worth by partnering with Mann for its printing. By moving from offset to print-on-demand, Mann was able to reduce the inventory value by 34%, reduce the amount of inventory destroyed due to obsolescence by 71%, and reduce the overall amount of inventory by 45%. "And we are continually driving ourselves to improve those percentages to further save the client money," according to Mann.

Digital printing was the linchpin in International Minute Press franchise's success story, as it gave the company the power to have clients re-think how they approach their marketing while saving money and improving results. But having consistent, high-quality printing with a growing volume of orders is an important part of the equation. "Brand management is key for our clients," Mann explains. "A client might have 500 SKUs and they all need to match. We were spending hours trying to get color to match. We believed in the print-on-demand model and knew there had to be a better solution out there."

The Fiery workflow at the International Minute Press franchise includes Fiery JobMaster™, an advanced makeready tool that reduces job preparation times and last-minute corrections by enabling users to do document composition and content editing operations, including reducing the steps required to design and add tabbed dividers to jobs. The franchise's Fiery workflow also includes Fiery Impose, which applies imposition layouts to jobs, creates layouts for variable data jobs, and saves imposed jobs as PDF files.

Those features, along with exceptional Fiery color imaging capabilities, helped ensure exceptional results for customers. "It made a huge difference in our business," says Mann. It is similarly transformative for Mann's customers, who are now getting better-quality printing with shorter turnaround times and fewer mistakes, even on complex jobs.

Solution:

"Our Canon imagePRESS C800 and C10000VP digital presses, each with imagePRESS Servers powered by EFI Fiery technology, have been a dream come true. We have almost zero problems with our printing workflow now."

RICK MANN, PRESIDENT
INTERNATIONAL MINUTE PRESS/LASTING IMAGE

Rick Mann

A medical device company the International Minute Press franchise serves is a good example of the value Mann and his team offer. Mann could tell from the beginning that the medical device company could benefit from a robust digital print operation: the client had 500 SKUs and more than a dozen color palettes that had to match exactly.

"The challenge here was selling the print-on-demand concept," Mann says. "The company was buying 10,000 brochures for $200 more than I offered them for 1,000 units. I explained to them that with 500 SKUs, reducing $200 in spend on 500 SKUs equals $100,000, but it does not end there. If they were to print the extra 9,000 pieces that were not needed just because it was only slightly more to print them, they would have additional warehouse costs as well."

These coupled savings — printing less and having less in inventory — reduce costs and add to the company's bottom line. Managing the right amount of inventory takes a system that Mann has built in 2012 to manage cost cutting. Mann believes that technology is the thrust of today's business environment. Properly managed inventory can save hundreds of thousands of dollars over a two- to three-year period, more or less depending on the size of the company and how their print is being managed. Many times, customers just guess at a quantity or rely on quantity savings when, in reality, they are overspending.

"Our system helps customers manage their spend better," says Mann. "And then, on top of that, when customers stop buying more than they need for no reason, they have the ability to make frequent changes in their marketing pieces with little waste. Plus there is the risk of inventory obsolescence."

The print operation goes to great lengths to save its customers' money and avoid waste. Obsolescence, costly as it can be, is the

Result:

"With our ability to efficiently print high-quality materials with accurate, consistent, and reliable color in a print-on-demand model, we have been able to save clients hundreds of thousands of dollars. Our EFI Fiery digital front ends are a key element of this success."

RICK MANN, PRESIDENT
INTERNATIONAL MINUTE PRESS/
LASTING IMAGE

type of problem that can be caused by "something as simple as a trademark symbol being changed to a registered trademark symbol," Mann explains.

With the major boost in production capability received with the Fiery workflow and Canon presses, the franchise can really back up what it promises. "For the medical device company, our newest client, we've committed to saving 41% on storage fees annually and reducing their inventory by 67% over the next three years," Mann notes, "and we are on track to do so." Mann continued, "We have certainly improved quality by managing the color through the performance of the Fiery and Canon equipment compared with what the offset company had in their warehouse when we took it over."

With the Fiery Driven front ends for its Canon digital presses, International Minute Press has seen many other benefits in addition to cost savings and color fidelity for its clients, including:

- Faster job set-up. Orders for business cards, for example, are submitted and automatically imposed 24-up.
- Streamlined production of variable data using the DFE's Fiery HyperRIP technology, which can process variable data and other complex jobs up to 50 times faster than other print servers. "We run variable data, and the Fiery server doesn't hold anything up," Mann says.
- Exceptional color matching. Once a color has been specified through Fiery workflow, it prints faultlessly. In many cases, customers are happier with Fiery color than they were with offset.

"With Fiery, everything is faster!" Mann explains. Plus, it meets his company's high standards. "I am a quality-oriented guy," he says. "I will stop a press on a dime if the quality isn't there. I have seen customers who have used several different printing companies see the variation in quality between multiple suppliers. In many cases, those customers have consolidated all of their work with us because of the quality and efficiency of our offerings. Our new equipment and the technology of our online systems offer quality, cost savings, and effective brand management. We have our proprietary CEO-Tool, Fiery QX, and our Canon imagePRESSes to thank for that!"

EFI fuels success.

We develop breakthrough technologies for the manufacturing of signage, packaging, textiles, ceramic tiles, and personalized documents, with a wide range of printers, inks, digital front ends, and a comprehensive business and production workflow suite that transforms and streamlines the entire production process, increasing your competitiveness and boosting productivity. Visit www.efi.com or call 650-357-3500 for more information.