For over 35 years, HPI in Houston and API in Austin, Texas, have provided visual solutions to the southwest region's leading ad agencies, corporations, architecture firms and retail establishments. HPI and API are leading suppliers of banners, digital imaging, wide format graphics, POS display services and much more. Their vast array of cutting-edge production equipment and team of knowledgeable technicians stand ready to complete any project on time, regardless of size or complexity. From design and production, to shipping and installation, HPI and API are dedicated to providing the highest level of service and quality.

Fiery XF proServer and VUTEk printers deliver blazing speed and top quality for HPI and API

Challenge:

"Our press operators used to wait on files to RIP, so they could run the VUTEk printers. We needed to add more speed, without adding more people."

— Steve Hogan, President

In business since 1976, originally as a photo processing shop, HPI of Houston is known for high quality, high-speed digital print work. President Steve Hogan has been at the helm since 1987, and relies on cutting-edge technology to exceed customer expectations and grow the business.

HPI operates two EFI™ VUTEk® GS3200 UV hybrid printers and a VUTEk GS5000r UV roll-to-roll printer with the new EFI Fiery® XF proServer as their production RIP solution. API runs a mirror copy of the same printers and RIP in Austin. HPI's typical jobs are in quantities of 100 or 200 prints for applications like large full color signs, billboards, point-of-purchase signs and displays, menu boards and cut-out displays. Typical turn-around times are 24 to 48 hours.

With these large files and demanding deadlines, Steve was looking for more speed, and turned to EFI for the solution.
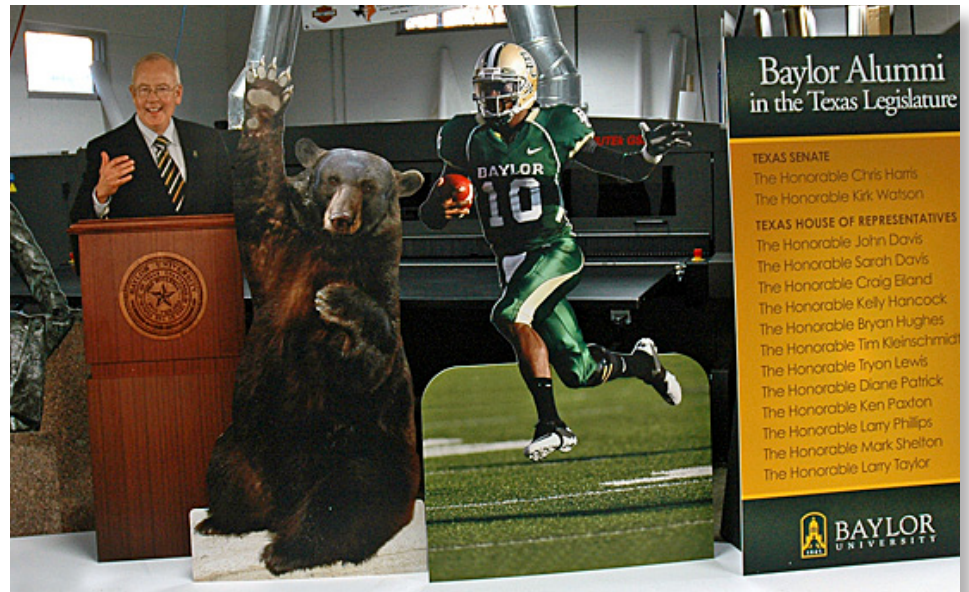
"We've been running VUTEk printers for over ten years," says Hogan. "We've moved up in models from the original VUTEk PV200/600 to the QS2000, then QS3200 to the GS3200's we own now. We added the GS5000r for even greater speed. The quality of all our printers is exceptional. We switched to the Fiery XF RIP recently, and then to the Fiery XF proServer to take advantage of every bit of performance from our printers."

Continues Steve: "Adding the Fiery XF proServer has cut our processing time for jobs in half over our old Fiery XF RIP system. And it's eight to ten times faster than the ColorBurst RIP we previously used. The net gain in productivity is a 25 percent increase in throughput on each printer every day. I can't fathom running the shop without the proServer!"

Steve explains that having the Fiery XF proServer RIP station has been a night and day difference in his shop performance. "Our operators used to wait on files to RIP, so they could run the VUTEk printers. With the Fiery XF proServer, multiple files can be ripped at the same time, so the operator never waits for a file. We stay ahead of both operators and printers. We don't need to add personnel to increase productivity, instead we buy the best technology."

HPI gains productivity for the printers by building job queues overnight. Most of the prepress staff takes their tablets home to maximize access to the proServer, logging in remotely using *GoToMyPC* or *LogMeIn* to prep the jobs and queue the RIP. Next morning when they arrive, all of the day's printing files are ready to go.

HPI profiles all of the many media choices for each printer at 600 and 1000 dpi, building two profiles a day on various materials. Hogan explains,

"Throughout a given day we may switch media four to eight times on the VUTEk GS5000r and ten to 15 times on the GS3200 hybrid printers, because we print foam core one minute, and make a fine art print for a museum the next minute." The included EFI Color Verifier Option in the Fiery XF RIP allows color control of production jobs and could help HPI with color accuracy of all of their profiles. This includes EFI Dynamic Wedge, which customizes a color control strip to only use image relevant colors, including spot colors. This control data can also be used to automatically color correct a potentially wrong output, ultimately reducing the amount of reprints and saving ink, media and valuable time on equipment.

They also match color between the printers at HPI in Houston and API in Austin so that jobs can be load balanced between shops. Steve affirms that there has been no downtime, as all of his VUTEk printers have been as reliable as their industrial strength reputation warrants.

The company's strong capabilities and color-matched printers in both locations led to being awarded the huge printing contract for the *South by Southwest (SXSW) Music Festival* in Austin for the fifth year in a row. HPI is expecting to print more than 1,200 unique files in a two-week period.

According to Steve, "This job will be 90 percent produced in Austin with back-up firepower in Houston, all matched and profiled." Every day the VUTEk printers will each run four or five hours of mesh banners, self-adhesive signs and every other informational product for the international multi-media extravaganza. At the end of every day, Steve will go home happy. He says, "This year will be cool. The multi-media SXSW festival is a nice job. With our VUTEk printers and Fiery XF proServer, we know we have the speed and color accuracy to get it done."

Results:

"With the Fiery XF proServer, the operator never waits for a file to RIP. We stay ahead of both operators and printers and don't need to add personnel to handle increased workloads."

— Steve Hogan
President
HPI of Houston

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04/19/12