Direct Marketing Concierge: Expanding Horizons Globally

DIRECT MARKETING CONCIERGE
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Direct Marketing Concierge, located in Tampa, Florida, began doing business in 2008 as a digital-only print shop, building on an existing ten-year-old business. With five employees, the firm specializes in acting as a collaborative partner in print, design and marketing for clients ranging from small start-up ventures to Fortune 500 companies.

CHALLENGE:

"We decided to carve out a niche in digital printing, including variable data, variable imaging and personalized URLs. We outgrew our first digital press, which had an EFI Fiery® server, and needed to find a second color press, also powered by Fiery, that would enable us to continue to grow."

—Lee Weiner, Owner

One of the key differentiators for Direct Marketing Concierge is its marketing focus. "We have truly become a direct marketing company that owns printing equipment, and not a printer that does some marketing. We sell direct marketing campaigns with a minimum of three drops," says Lee Weiner, founder and owner. "We do all the copywriting, all of the design and tie in variable data where it makes sense. Because we use variable imaging and specialized Direct Smile image fonts, we needed a press and RIP that could handle very large files effectively while ensuring good color quality."

Direct Marketing Concierge selected the Canon imagePRESS C7000 powered by the Fiery A3100 for its new print engine. "Our previous smaller color printer was also powered by Fiery," Weiner says, "and we liked the fact that we could stay with the same familiar prepress workflow. Had Canon bundled the C7000 with a different server, we likely would have questioned why we couldn't have a Fiery. Now that we are adding our second Canon imagePRESS C7000, we are looking forward to using Command Workstation to make our workflow between the two presses as efficient as possible." Weiner reports that in transitioning to the new Fiery RIP, he noticed significant improvements, especially in usability. "I can walk up to Command Workstation in case our Production Manager is unavailable," he says, "right click on a job that is ready to print, follow a couple of simple steps we have written down, and get the job started myself. It's that easy."

Fiery Drives Business Growth

Direct Marketing Concierge grew by 25 percent in 2009. "We are already up 100 percent in the first quarter of 2010, compared to first quarter last year," Weiner says. "We attribute this growth to the ability to stay focused on doing direct marketing campaigns for our customers. We researched for a long time before we chose the Canon imagePRESS C7000 with its EFI Fiery server. We push that server as hard as we can, and it takes it and doesn't

fight back. We could not have done what we have done without the Fiery and the Canon."

Improved Productivity for Improved Profitability

Many Direct Marketing Concierge campaigns are extremely graphics-intensive. Weiner points out that a postcard could have a personalized URL that appears on both sides, custom Direct Smile fonts, and as many as six to ten other pieces of variable data. "That adds up to the need for a great deal of computing power," he says, "especially when you consider we are running at least three postcards per sheet." In addition, Weiner likes the ease of error recovery enabled by Fiery in case of issues with the print engine.

The Direct Marketing Concierge staff is also very pleased with SeeQuence Impose, Fiery's imposition tool, since most of the work the firm prepares must be imposed. "You can set up templates, and in one or two clicks, the job is imposed, complete with crop marks, gutter and color bar. It's much faster and more accurate than doing it manually," says Will Brenner, production manager. "This has helped us become a true on-demand printer. When a client calls and wants a job tomorrow, I know that I can easily say yes, because with Fiery, there is little I need to do in terms of up-front processing. It speeds up our in-house workflow, and we can charge a premium for these types of rush jobs."

Color Critical Jobs Made Easy

"We also have a number of clients with very color-critical jobs," he adds. "Fiery helps us ensure that we hit their PANTONE or other spot colors, and we calibrate the systems daily to ensure that we do so."

Brenner comments, "I have worked with other workflows, and Fiery is definitely the most user friendly. It is very intuitive and the interface is not cluttered with a lot of unnecessary things I have seen in other RIPs. Considering the volume of campaigns we do in a given week, this ease of use and the Fiery's processing power are extremely important. For example, it is easy to manipulate and save a color profile, and I can show others how to use it in a couple of minutes."

Positioned for Future Success

Weiner concludes, "If the systems weren't working for us, I wouldn't have made the investment in the second Canon imagePRESS C7000 with the Fiery. Now with double the power, we are well-positioned for explosive growth in 2010."

RESULTS:

"Focusing on variable data campaigns has been great for us and our customers. Once someone responds to a mailer and visits a personalized URL, our average conversion is 35 to 40 percent. It takes a great deal of computing power to prepare these highly graphics-intensive personalized campaigns for print, and we couldn't deliver these types of results and the business growth we have achieved without the Fiery."

—Lee Weiner, Owner

print to win.

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