B2B Brand Consultancy Catalyst Leverages the Power of Fiery for Improved Efficiency, Reliable Color

Challenge:

"We needed to upgrade our in-house color printing capabilities and at the same time, wanted new tools that could make our operating processes more efficient. With our existing system, printing color proofs was extremely slow, and that is simply not acceptable in a fast-paced business such as ours."

— Patricia Marraffa, VP of Finance and Operations

As Catalyst continued to move its workflow more exclusively into the digital realm, the firm wanted to ensure that the resources for internal printing of proofs for marketing collateral made the process as efficient and accurate as possible. At the same time, new color printers had to support other departments including Finance and HR, with an easy-to-use interface and a minimum of fuss with training.

Catalyst, a B2B brand consultancy and marketing communications firm, positions itself as an agent of change. With a mantra of "get the brand right, then get the right communications," Catalyst helps clients to figure out the best branding strategy, and weave stories around the brand to bring it to life, both internally to the organization and externally.

Catalyst selected Ricoh Pro printers with EFI's Fiery E-8100 and inline finisher/booklet makers as its next-generation in-house printing solution. "We must be as color-correct as possible to keep clients happy," says Eaton. "And since the days of three-day lead time for proofs are long gone, those color-correct proofs must be made quickly." Eaton points out that it is not uncommon to have multiple account teams vying for their prints at the same time to prepare for customer meetings, while general business printing needs must be accomplished in a timely fashion as well.

Improved Efficiency Improves Customer Service and Satisfaction

"As a branding agency," says Marraffa, "we need to ensure that the color palettes we design reproduce as faithfully in our digital proofs as they do when we go to press." Marraffa points out that in the past 15 years, not only has the industry shifted from film-based to digital processes, but client expectations about faster turnaround time have also grown. "The speed of our previous controller was a significant issue in meeting client requirements. Since upgrading to the Fiery, we can easily delight our customers with fast turnaround time," she adds.

Booklets Made Easy

As the Creative Director, Eaton was also pleased with the ease of creating proofs for applications such as booklets. "Before," he says, "you couldn't trust the imposition and duplexing, so there was a great deal of manual processing, including printing and laying out dummy proofs, manually duplexing them and then saddle stitching." Eaton indicates that could take as long as 30 minutes, depending on the complexity of the booklet. Since Catalyst produces many booklet formats, Eaton found the ease of laying out these complex documents using Fiery imposition software, Fiery SeeQuence Impose, to be amazing. "Now we produce booklets completely inline with full bleeds within minutes, and all we have to do is trim. With the Fiery driving our Ricoh press, we now have a fully functional printer for proofs and booklets in house."

Eaton cites a client situation where the company needed to be concerned with the amount of reflex blue in the Pantone colors that were chosen, making it difficult to match with CMYK. "This is an example of where Fiery Spot-On comes in handy," he says. "We can simply name their color as a special color in Fiery and be assured that it will come out right every time on proofs, with no worries about matching at the press."

Solution:

"I had experience with EFI Fiery in the past, and when our printer supplier suggested we switch to Fiery from our existing print controller, not only was I supportive of the suggestion, but I was pleasantly surprised with the enhancements EFI had added since I last used Fiery technology."

— Mike Eaton, Creative Director

Catalyst is also pleased with the ability to quickly generate laser proofs to accommodate last-minute client changes. "We don't use traditional proofs anymore," Eaton explains. "Instead, we digitally shoot the product, retouch the shots, and once the images are in layout, they must exactly match the product itself. Fiery makes that easy." Especially for Catalyst clients that have highly regulated businesses with internal reviews that can take weeks, with not only marketing, but internal and external legal counsel and outside regulatory bodies. "We have to get it right the first time," he says. "Neither Catalyst nor clients can afford to have to go through another two week review cycle because of variances between the image and the actual product." Eaton also points out that in many sectors, footnotes and the infamous "small print" must be a minimum of a 7-point font. "With Fiery proofs," he says, "those are extremely legible and we rarely have issues of print readability delaying reviews. In fact, the Fiery digital print often looks better than the final offset output!"

Doing More with Less
The increased productivity across the entire administrative, creative and production process, as well as the reliability and accuracy of Fiery color, has enabled Catalyst to do more with less. "It is amazing that printers can now handle all of our creative and administrative needs so efficiently," concludes Marraffa. "No more haggling over whose job takes priority at the printer, and a lot fewer revision cycles with customers. In addition, Fiery does just as well with Mac as PC output, eliminating many of the cross-platform issues we had in the past. From a financial perspective, Fiery is a win/win for us. I can't imagine changing horses again."

Results:
"Even before the prints come off the printer, Fiery has improved our efficiency because the interface allows more control before you even hit print. When you hit print, you are not rolling the dice anymore; you know exactly what you are going to get. We save significant time and money by eliminating rework."

— Mike Eaton, Creative Director

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