

Case Study

production

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Sir Speedy, Downtown St. Petersburg, FL

Turning to Ricoh to Keep Ahead of an Evolving Market

"Making the transition to an all-digital shop isn't an easy one. But when we started working with Ricoh, we experienced amazing support, all the way from service to help with business development. The equipment is very reliable and the color quality is amazing."

—Jason Powers,
Vice President of Operations,
Sir Speedy, St. Petersburg, FL



ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

St. Petersburg is the fifth-largest city in Florida, and has become one of the brightest spots in the Southeast for new businesses. Recognizing the potential growth of the St. Petersburg area, Jerry and Lillian Powers purchased a Sir Speedy there 28 years ago, migrating from Michigan, where they founded their first Sir Speedy years before. The St. Petersburg franchise now serves all types of clients, from financial to medical to the little shops that support the popular community. Twenty years ago, Jason Powers joined his father and mother at the St. Petersburg location as vice president of operations, and now plays a key role in growing the business.

CHALLENGE

Over the years, the nature of their business changed. New print solutions evolved, bringing in new customer requests. While the company produced the bulk of their work on three offset presses, the demand for long runs began to decrease just as the demand for quicker turnaround times was increasing. In response to these changes, the Powers decided the time was right to make the leap to digital. Approximately four years ago, they shut the presses down and became a full digital shop.

"There was a general decline in press work, and as the quality of digital became more sophisticated, we felt it was an appropriate time to make this transition. Not only could we produce more work in a quicker timeframe, we could also have better control of our paper costs due to less waste, and better control of our production costs in general," said Jason.

CHALLENGE

- Transition from offset to an all-digital shop
- Streamline black-and-white workflows
- Meet the growing demand for wide-format applications

SOLUTION

- The RICOH Pro C7110X for fast, cost-effective digital production with advanced image capabilities
- The RICOH Pro 8110s with user-replaceable parts
- The Mimaki JFX200 for fast wide-format printing

RESULTS

- Reliable digital production with offset-like quality
- High-volume black-and-white capabilities with improved uptime
- Expanded wide-format capabilities that push creative boundaries

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Originally, Sir Speedy St. Petersburg chose another digital manufacturer for their shop—however, the equipment couldn't accommodate some of the specialty markets the company served. While customers didn't want to pay the price required to print offset for smaller quantities, there was still a need to replicate the offset quality the company previously produced—including heavier stocks for thicker postcards and business cards, and long-sheet, six-panel, 8.5" x 11" pieces for brochures.

Additionally, as more sophisticated digital color work continued to be in demand, so did the request for wide-format capabilities. It was a side of the business that was growing rapidly. For example, the company was asked to do work for a children's museum that wanted to produce a two-paneled, eight-foot by eight-foot dinosaur.

"Museums are big clients of ours, and they started coming to us for signage when they bring in traveling exhibits. We print the outdoor and indoor promotional signage as well as the reproduction art they hang on the wall when an artist is unable to bring the entire collection. So, of course, color quality is critical. Suddenly, we were in the market for a large format machine that could deliver on both size and exceptional color quality," said Jason.

With the transition to an all-digital business model, the Powers family knew that they needed to find reliable, cost-effective digital production solutions that could deliver the image quality and diverse applications that their customers were looking for.

SOLUTION

Jason Powers began to hear about our new production equipment at a Franchise Services, Inc. (FSI) convention. FSI owns the Sir Speedy brand, and FSI and Ricoh have a strong corporate partnership, which added to the comfort of purchasing equipment from us. "I felt I would have support through both FSI and Ricoh, and that was very reassuring as we made this investment," said Jason.

Initially, the company decided to purchase a RICOH Pro C7110X and a RICOH Pro 8110s to answer their growing customer demands.

With the ability to produce 90 pages per minute (ppm) for higher throughput and faster transitions between high-duty runs, a 5th Color Station for outstanding image quality and support for a wide range of substrates, the Pro C7110X provided the production printing and advanced color capabilities the company needed. They particularly like the ability to offer applications that include the machine's fifth color capability, such as adding clear, white or neon yellow toner in addition to CMYK to highlight point-of-purchase displays, business cards, menus, oversized prints and more.

They also chose the Pro 8110s black-and-white production printer with a cutter for its ability to offer a 1200 x 4800 dpi resolution to produce applications such as reports, booklets and newsletters with crisp text and images, advanced scanning capabilities and inline punch for spiral-bound manuals. The Pro 8110s simplifies production tasks for high volume black-and-white applications, and its many user-replaceable parts, including drums, rollers and fusing units, ensure maximum uptime.

To address the growing demand for larger formats, Jason also looked for a wide-format printer with more media options and faster speeds than the hybrid model they already had. Jason chose the Mimaki JFX200 from Ricoh after seeing it in action at an FSI convention in New Orleans. The JFX200 is a powerful, inkjet flatbed designed to print on virtually any substrate (even wood, stone and tile) up to two inches thick and up to four by eight feet. It is ideally suited for applications such as backlit displays and signage, signs and posters, interior décor, glass and metal decorative panels. Its UV-LED lamps also offer reduced energy consumption and a longer lifetime.

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RESULTS

“Making the transition to an all-digital shop isn’t an easy one,” said Jason. “But when we started working with Ricoh, we experienced amazing support, all the way from service to help with business development. The equipment is very reliable and the color quality is amazing. What we really like is that Ricoh continues to make advances in the marketplace.” With the new equipment in place, the company is producing more work with quicker turnaround.

Sir Speedy St. Petersburg is actively getting the word out about their new capabilities by offering a “lunch and learn” seminar every week, inviting a small group of customers or potential customers to join them for lunch and a tour of the facility. “We’ve kept it a smaller event, just one to three people at a time. We want it to be an intimate setting where we can learn more about their business and they can view the capabilities to support them. We talk freely during lunch and then walk through the shop to see the different applications we offer. It has been very successful for us,” said Jason.

While the demand for quality digital color is still high and may push the company into purchasing a second color machine, they see wide format printing as their biggest growth potential. Because of that, print quality and versatility were extremely important in the selection of the JFX200, as the requests run the gamut from art reproductions to construction signs to printing lifting platforms on 4 x 8 sheets of plywood for weightlifting competitions.

“The capabilities of the JFX200 brought us a broader selection of substrates, unmatched color quality and speed. The media selection can only be described as fantastic,” said Jason. “It really pushes your creative boundaries when you can print on anything from Plexiglas to plywood.”

Additionally, the company has noted it has reduced servicing time with the advantages our Trained Customer Replaceable Units (TCRU) program offers. The TCRU program enables Sir Speedy St. Petersburg’s operators to pick the best time to perform their own preventive maintenance, and makes sure they have spare parts on hand to install as needed—ensuring more uptime.

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“When you are running a business, support from your suppliers is very important,” said Jason. “How a supplier interacts with you all stems from a corporate culture. Everybody from Ricoh that I have met is always helpful and knowledgeable. You can call and get questions answered, and the support from the Ricoh team I have here has been a great asset to me. I really love working with Ricoh.”

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