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The Xerox iGen3® Digital Production Press helps a small print operation meet the demands of its customers—and generate even more volume.



Ithaca College Print Shop

Since 1970, the Ithaca College Print Shop has been providing printed materials to meet the needs of this picturesque campus that lies on a hill overlooking Cayuga Lake in Upstate New York. The print operation, bindery, and copy center occupy approximately 3,800 square feet and employ nine full-time workers to keep up with increasing demand.

The print shop executes a high volume of short-run work—everything from letterhead, envelopes, and business cards to media guides, boxes, posters, postcards, and direct mailers. For applications such as sports team schedules, the print shop also uses Xerox DocuCard® and DocuMagnet® specialty media.

“I really don’t believe there’s another company out there who can match their quality—along with the people, support, service, and all they can do.”

—Wayne French, Director,
Ithaca College Print Shop,
on Xerox color solutions

On the Web: www.ithaca.edu/genadminserv/printshopoperation/printshop/

Challenge

The Ithaca College Print Shop serves a population of about 5,500 students and 1,200 faculty with a staff of nine people. Due to the shift in the print business to color—with ever-increasing customer demand for quicker turnaround—the print shop’s director, Wayne French, found that his offset press and HP® Indigo® Digital Press “just couldn’t keep up.” Turnaround time was at a premium—but of course, not at the expense of quality or accuracy. To disprove the notion that you can’t deliver all three, French turned to Xerox digital color solutions. “It’s the smartest thing we’ve done in 30 years,” he says.

The print shop wanted to simplify the workflow to provide quicker turnaround times. They evaluated the benefit of a digital electronic workflow with inline booklet making versus the traditional multi-step workflow of offset press printing and offline finishing. When considering the time for design, plate making, printing, and finishing for an entire document’s workflow, it became evident that a digital workflow could yield gains in productivity that would enable the print shop to better meet the needs of its customers now and in the future.

In addition, administrators were aware of the problems in working with offset press technology as it relates to “green” environments and initiatives. They’re currently constructing a new building that incorporates the latest “green” initiatives, and positions itself as a leader in advancing “green” technology. With traditional press technology and the workflow of the HP Indigo, chemicals and cleaning solutions were being used that did not fit with the college’s environmentally friendly initiatives. The Xerox iGen3 solution addressed these environmental considerations and delivered the quality, workflow, and cost considerations that French was looking for.



Solution

The print shop deployed a Xerox iGen3 Digital Color Press to keep up with the high volume of color work. The transition was so successful, the print shop later purchased a second iGen3 with inline finishing capabilities—as well as a Xerox DocuColor® 250 Color Printer, on which the print shop “does a tremendous amount of work” to help it stay ahead of its burgeoning color workload.

The key to procuring the right solution at a college or university, according to French, is having the support of your administration. “When we have a need, they make it happen,” he says. “We have some of the nicest equipment in the country for a small operation.” French is confident that the switch to Xerox color solutions has his operation well-positioned within the organization. “This is the wave of the future,” he explains. “It aligns us with the direction the school is heading.” Future plans also include adding Xerox XMPie® software to enhance the print shop’s variable information capabilities, and working with Xerox to add an online store for customers to order and track their jobs via the Web.

French adds that Xerox support also helps to keep the print shop up to speed. “They have a group that meets with you and talks about the kinds of media you can run. They also put us in contact with other universities across the country to see what they’re doing. That’s worth its weight in gold—I don’t think there’s another company who does that.”

Benefits

Thanks to the iGen3, the print shop was able to increase production rapidly—by reducing make-ready time and increasing turnaround time and throughput. Jobs that used to require a week on an offset press now can be turned around in two to three days on the iGen3. By boosting the print shop’s speed and volume, it was better able to meet its customers’ needs, keep work that may have been outsourced in-house, and enhance its value to the organization. Furthermore, the iGen3 allowed the print shop to take on more work to smooth out the “peaks and valleys” of its predominantly short-run workload.

This is graphically illustrated by the startling results of a recent open house held by the print shop. Poor weather didn’t keep 150 people from attending—including all key college administrators—and according to French, they were “blown away” by the performance and quality of the Xerox equipment. “They said, ‘Wow, I can do this?’ The next day, I had six estimates to do before noon,” he relates. As a result, the print shop is now actively working with department-level graphic designers, as well as marketing, to share how to use and improve digital design to work with the iGen3 and a digital workflow. By engaging the departments at the design step, it will simplify the workflow for everyone involved, and open avenues for more dynamic documents that incorporate variable data and graphics. To capitalize on the campus buzz that the print shop has created, French plans to hold smaller open houses for individual departments such as Admissions, Alumni Relations, Human Resources, and more.

As part of its initiative, the print shop is also working to install Xerox Web Services to provide an electronic storefront to allow customers to easily order documents such as business cards, calendars, and other campus forms and documents electronically. The Web Services software will also provide a way for departments to upload their own documents and photos to the print shop for a more efficient workflow.

The other benefit of this campus-wide collaboration is the use of Xerox XMPie for advanced variable data campaigns. Competition for students is becoming fiercer every year—and the college is discussing positioning the print shop as a key partner in helping improve the message the college delivers through customized documents and campaigns. The development office for alumni giving is also interested in understanding the benefits, value, and effort required to incorporate variable data and graphics in its fundraising campaign materials.

