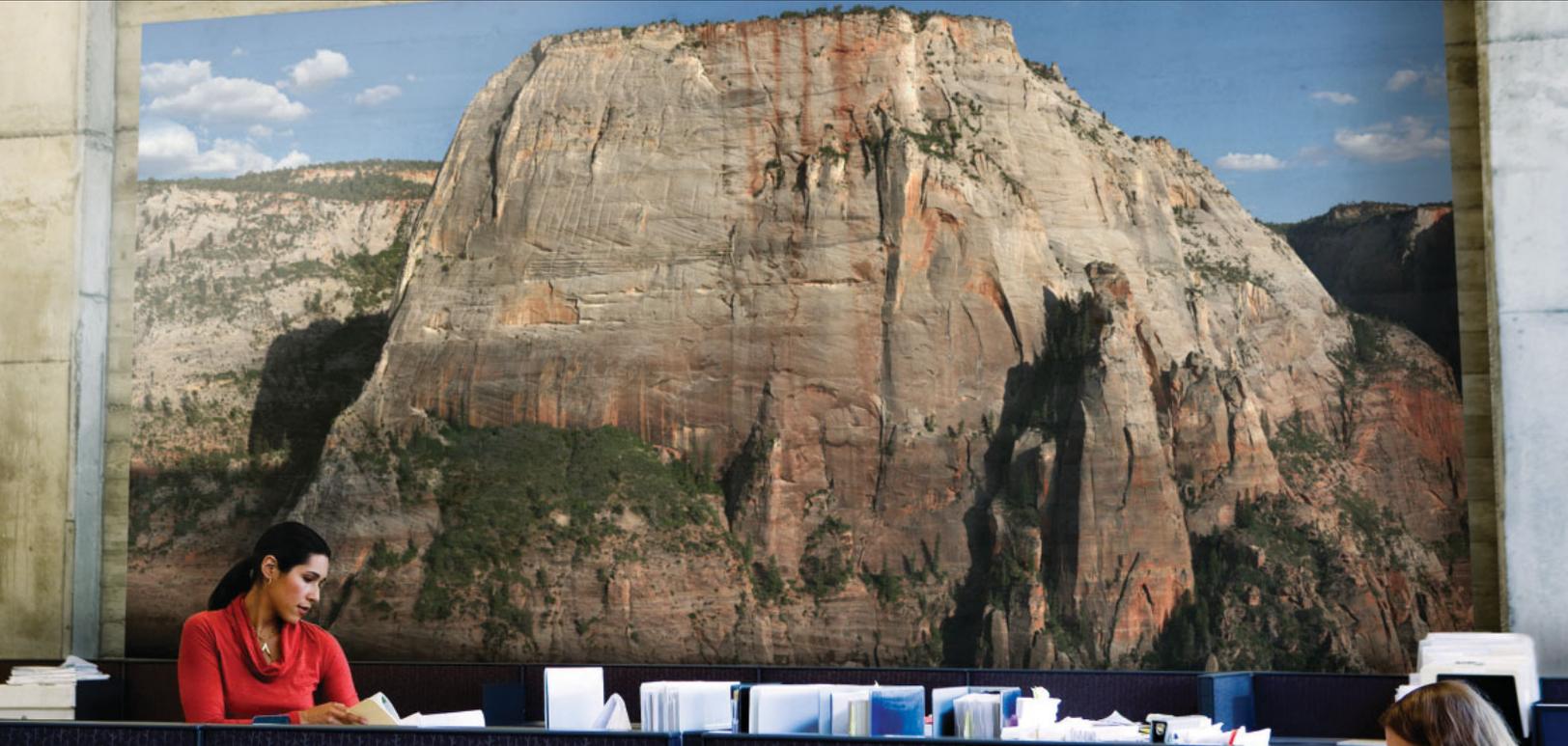


APPLICATION TEAM INCREASES TURNOVER VIA NEW WALLPAPER-PRINTING SERVICE USING HP LATEX PRINTING TECHNOLOGIES



Application Team, based in Charleroi, Belgium, was founded in 1996 by Jean Hans and today comprises of a team of ten employees. The family owned business is part of the Deltenre & Co Group and specializes in POP items for the retail, food & drinks sector, and also offers vehicle wrappings for both domestic and French markets.

Having operated solvent-based digital printing equipment for six years, Application Team sought to further increase its ability to offer more innovative applications to its clients, while working to increase its sustainability. This saw the company install an HP Designjet L25500 Printer in 2010.

"Health and safety was obviously a key issue for us," explains Jean Hans. "Our employees were handling potent solvents with high emission levels and were exposed to strong odors, but we also wanted to help create a more pleasant environment for our customers, especially with a new business idea we had in mind."

Application Team: Individual decors enabled by HP Latex Inks

As a direct result of the company's HP Designjet L25500 Printer installation, Application Team has been able to realize this lucrative business idea – a personalized wallpaper print and decoration service, enabling customers to have a photo of their choice printed onto wallpaper. Crucially, the L25500's use of water-based HP Latex Inks makes it possible to create odorless⁽¹⁾ interior wall decorations that are ideal even for venues where unpleasant and distracting odors would be particularly unwelcome.

The company were so excited about the opportunity, that the team has redecorated their office building with a vibrant, full color wallpaper display as a means of presenting the stunning visual results achievable to customers.

"People can obviously take their own pictures, but royalty-free photos can also be sourced on the internet for a small fee," explains Hans. To make the service even more simple and customer-friendly, Application Team has two in-house photographers, allowing the company to offer a direct photography service to customers. Moving forward, Jean Hans plans to develop a new e-commerce service that will enable customers to order and upload their own designs.

"We are currently finding that most people install their wallpapers on their own, but we can also offer an installation service if required," he explains. "Customers are thrilled by the idea of decorating their own homes with an individual design and they often comment on the striking image quality of the printed output. Being able to have a large format picture of themselves or a loved-one printed and displayed on a wall, has proved a huge hit as the idea is so quirky and different."

At a glance

Industry sector:
Large format

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CHALLENGE

- Offer attractive and innovative new services to customers
- Use one printer for indoor and outdoor work
- Reduce the impact of their printing on the environment

SOLUTION

- HP Designjet L25500 Printer with HP Latex Inks
- HP PVC-free Wall Paper

RESULTS

- 50 percent increase in annual turnover
- Innovative products that realize customer's creative individuality
- High-quality graphics with a lower impact of printing on the environment
- Provide an improved working environment for employees

Keeping one eye on the environment

The versatility of HP Latex Inks allows users to produce a wide range of outdoor and indoor applications without sacrificing the all-important quality or durability. As a result, despite its popularity, Jean Hans doesn't envisage the company's personalized wallpaper service being the only work keeping the L25500 busy.

"We are not only using the latex printer for indoor work like the wallpaper products, but also use it for outdoor work such as vehicle wraps. The L25500 and HP Latex Inks offer durability, exceptional quality and help reduce the impact on the environment, so as far as we're concerned, we enjoy three advantages in one," he explains.

Keeping one eye on the environment, while also serving the needs of customers is an important objective for Jean Hans, who admits to constantly seeking new ways of ensuring his business limits its impact on the environment. According to Hans, there is a notable increase in the number of clients who are requesting prints with a better environmental profile – especially companies from the retail sector, such as large supermarket chains.

"The need to meet ever-increasing expectations on print quality, while also fulfilling the objectives of environmentally conscious customers, is vital to the long-term survivability of our business," he continues. "By working with HP's Latex Printing Technologies, we significantly strengthen our ability to accommodate both of these requirements.

"We are even trying to go one step further, by using more and more HP media, including HP PVC-free Wall Paper⁽²⁾ for the production of our wallpapers."

Not surprisingly, Application Team typically has to work to tight deadlines to ensure timely delivery of those urgent projects that can come through the door at the eleventh hour. As a result, to maintain production workflow, it is critical for Hans' team to be able to produce graphics that come off the printer completely dry and can be installed or dispatched immediately after being printed.

This is achieved by the easy setup and minimal drying time delivered by HP Latex Inks. Furthermore, no special ventilation⁽³⁾ is required; the inks do not require hazard

warning labels and are both non-flammable and non-combustible⁽⁴⁾, which can help reduce storage, handling and waste disposal challenges, while contributing to an improved printing environment.

"Having worked with both solvent and latex technologies, we realized that latex would increase our flexibility and afford us a plethora of new benefits," says Hans. "We can now take on more projects and offer our customers faster turnarounds."

Reliability, production security and rapid return on investment

"The Designjet L25500 also fulfils HP's promise in terms of its reliability," he adds. "On average we work ten hours per day but often we do night-shifts as the printer does not require much handling or maintenance. Over 5000m² worth of output, we changed the printhead only twice," he continues.

According to the company, turnover has increased significantly since the installation of the L25500 printer. Indeed, such has been the impact of the L25500 on Applications Team's business that Jean Hans is already looking to purchase a second machine in the next few months.

"We are so happy with the performance and quality of the HP Designjet L25500 Printer that we are planning to buy a second one later this year to further expand our production capacity and deliver our offering to customers even quicker," he concludes.

⁽¹⁾ Some substrates may have inherent odor.

⁽²⁾ HP PVC-free Wall Paper printed with HP Latex Inks is GREENGUARD Children & Schools Certified.SM (see www.greenguard.org) and HP PVC-free Wall Paper printed with HP Latex Inks meets AgBB criteria for health-related evaluation of VOC emissions of indoor building products (see www.umweltbundesamt.de/produkte-e/bauprodukte/agbb.htm).

⁽³⁾ Special ventilation is not required to meet US OSHA requirements on occupational exposure to VOCs from HP Latex Inks. Special ventilation equipment installation is at the discretion of the customer—no specific HP recommendation is intended. Customers should consult state and local requirements and regulations.

⁽⁴⁾ HP water-based Latex Inks are not classified as flammable or combustible liquids under the USDOT or international transportation regulations. These materials have been tested per the Pensky-Martins Closed Cup method and the flash point is greater than 110°C.

"A picture has to be perfect in today's commercial world and our customers ask increasingly for superior quality. HP Latex Technology is the future for us and through its utilization, we expect to further develop our wallpaper-printing business and expand into the whole of Europe."

— Jean Hans, director, Application Team

To learn more, visit www.hp.com/go/graphicarts

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