



KEYBOARD GROUP GROWS BUSINESS WITH HP WIDE FORMAT GRAPHICS PRINTERS



As a wide format graphics company specialising in bespoke exhibition, in-store and roadshow stands, Keyboard Group has developed expertise not only in innovative design but also in the production of high quality graphics. To meet its customers' demands for creative stands, the company has to keep up with design trends, new materials and print production methods.

Its investment in and use of HP Scitex flatbed and HP Latex Inks printing technologies has enhanced Keyboard Group's position as a leading supplier and won it wider industry recognition and awards. Based in Swanley, Kent, UK, Keyboard Group was established in 1990 as a design agency. Originally employing three people, the company now has 26 employees and offers an end-to-end service, including design, production, printing and logistics and warehousing. It develops and produces exhibition stands, retail displays, PVC banners, interior and exterior signage for its well-known, blue-chip customers.

Keyboard Group's growth has been furthered by investing in market leading technologies to help it break into new markets and to offer new services and applications to attract new customers.

Leading the market

In 2009, Keyboard Group purchased the UK's first HP Scitex FB950 Industrial Printer to move into the point-of-purchase (POP) and point-of-sale (POS) market and to deliver work within shorter turnaround times without compromising on quality.

"We purchased our HP Scitex FB950 Printer to cut out the lengthy process for manufacturing and so that we didn't have as much expenditure on materials and labour," says Grant Mahoney, managing director, Keyboard Group. "The real beauty about this industrial flatbed machine is that we can print onto media that is 2.4m (98.5in) wide, to any length⁽¹⁾ and up to 6.3cm (2.5in) thick. We can print straight onto the substrate and can print in different blocks of wood, acrylics, dye bond and metal - so we can actually print on someone's door."

Investing in the right combination of technologies

With most of its work printed for indoor use, Keyboard Group was attracted by the advantages of HP Latex Inks Printing Technologies.

"We purchased the HP Scitex LX800 in May as we wanted the capability to print graphics up to 3.2m (126in) wide," explains Mahoney. "We also looked at speed and wanted to invest in a machine that would print faster than 20m² (215sq ft) per hour. With our HP Scitex LX800 Printer, we are actually printing between 60 and 80m² per hour (645 and 861 sq ft) - which is fantastic."

The HP Scitex LX800 Industrial Printer is a six-colour printing system which features the HP Optical Media Advance Sensor to automatically achieve high image quality and consistency between prints. The printer uses an embedded spectrophotometer to automatically scan a printer-generated colour target, measure its properties, then make and record any corrections, allowing for fully automated colour calibration.





“For us, HP’s Latex Ink printing solutions are a proven product. We’ve looked at the various equipment available in the marketplace but we know that this technology works and it has definitely made us more profitable.”

Grant Mahoney
Managing director,
Keyboard Group

Since installing its HP Scitex LX800 Industrial Printer, the company has benefitted from reduced maintenance levels compared to more traditional technologies, experiencing a significant increase in productivity.

“We’re not cleaning the machine as much as the solvent machines we previously operated,” says Mahoney. “Those took up to an hour clean before we could print, which impacted our workflow.”

The company operates its HP Scitex LX800 Industrial Printer alongside an HP Designjet L25500 Printer, allowing it to effectively manage its workflow during peak production times.

“The HP Designjet L25500 Printer supplements what we get out of our larger HP Latex printer,” says Mahoney. “If we are busy we can run two rolls on the HP Scitex LX800 Industrial Printer and one on the HP Designjet L25500 Printer and still get the same quality across all the prints. This makes us much more productive.”

Improved sustainability thanks to HP Latex Inks

Keyboard Group’s HP Scitex LX800 Industrial Printer and its HP Designjet L25500 both use water-based HP Latex Inks which combine the quality and durability of eco-solvent and low-solvent ink technologies for increased application versatility. Not only do the odourless prints⁽²⁾ produced by HP Latex Inks printers offer increased indoor and outdoor opportunities for graphics, but they also enable the company to attract more environmentally conscious customers. Such opportunities including printing graphics for enclosed areas like hotels, restaurants and hospitals which would not have been possible before.

“Latex is a major benefit for us as a business,” discusses Mahoney. “Not only by the fact that our productivity has gone up but it also offers us an improved working environment, so it’s much cleaner for our staff to work in.”

Having HP Latex Ink printing technologies also enables Keyboard Group to meet its clients’ environmental criteria when deciding where to place work.

“We’re aiming for zero landfill waste,” explains Mahoney. “Our clients are actually requesting it and HP’s Latex Printers give us the opportunity to do just this. I believe that it is the only equipment on the market that will give us that possibility. The greater availability of recyclable substrates is another factor contributing to reducing the environmental impact of printing.”

Award Winning Success

Following its recent installations, the company has gone from strength to strength, being recognised in industry awards for its high-quality production and creative applications.

“This year - 2011 - has been a great year for us,” concludes Mahoney. “We were the ‘European Prize Winner for the most surprising, innovative and original project’ in the MACtac Awards for some window graphics we produced for a well-known luxury department store and thanks to our HP large format printing line-up, we are progressively moving forward as a business.”

AT A GLANCE

Industry sector:
Sign & Display

Business name:
Keyboard Group

Address:
Keyboard UK Ltd
Unit 2, Moreton Industrial Estate
London Road, Swanley
Kent BR8 8DE

Tel:
+44 1322 616 000

Web site:
www.thekeyboardgroup.com

CHALLENGE

- Expand range of services and applications.

SOLUTIONS

- HP Scitex FB950 Industrial Printer
- HP Scitex LX800 Industrial Printer
- HP Designjet L25500 Printer

RESULTS

- Established as a market leading company in the POS/POP and 3.2m (126in) markets.
- High speed, quick turnaround digital printing service offering.
- Increased productivity with less time spent on maintenance.
- Streamlined workflow migrating work between its HP Latex printers.
- Improved working environment.
- Industry recognition through awards.

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

¹⁾ For flexible substrates; maximum rigid substrate length is 150in (381cm).

²⁾ Some substrates may have inherent odour.

