



LIKE IRN BRU'S JET GETAWAY CAMPAIGN, SIMPSON GROUP'S DIGITAL PRINTING BUSINESS SOARS WITH HP SCITEX



Simpson Group, a leading UK producer of high-quality, branded in-store advertising, is known for offering innovative solutions and a responsive service. With almost 40 years in business and a broad litho, screen and digital printing offering, the company has a proven history of rising to challenges and delivering outstanding results.

Since the mid-2000s, Simpson Group has been steadily expanding its digital printing capabilities to gain application flexibility, reduce job turnaround times and allow shorter run lengths to be profitable. Most recently it invested in two HP Scitex FB7500 Industrial Presses, expanding its digital capacity as well as its ability to produce larger format jobs, short runs and creative applications. As part of its digital workflow, it uses an EskoArtwork Kongsberg Cutting Table, enabling highly productive cutting of the prints off the HP Scitex Press.

HP Scitex Press proves critical for creative in-store application

A recent job for AG Barr, the maker of Scotland's popular Irn Bru soft drink, is an excellent example of how Simpson Group brings its combined digital and analog production platform into play to produce innovative jobs with great success.

To support AG Barr's "Jet-Bru" competition for a trip to the Canary Islands, Simpson Group created an oversized point-of-sale (POS) display in the shape of a jet plane. The main POS standee body was printed digitally on EB corrugated cardboard using the HP Scitex FB7500 Industrial Press. A litho-printed PVC pallet skirt and hanging signs screen printed on display board completed the display.

As just 50 displays were needed, it made sense to print the majority of the job digitally. The unusual shape and large dimensions of the standee meant that the HP Scitex FB7500 Industrial Press was the ideal machine for producing the main structure.

Lower costs benefit both brand owner and print service provider

"Digital printing was a must because we avoided the setup, screens and media waste of screen printing," says Mark Simpson, chairman of Simpson Group. "It was important that we could cut it on the digital cutting machine so that we could eliminate the dye cut and tooling costs. If we'd produced it on screen, it would have cost around 50 percent more."

With the help of the eye-catching POS display, the Jet-Bru campaign turned into one of the most successful on-pack promotions of all time for the Irn Bru brand. Sharon Clare from AG Barr's in-store visibility team told Simpson Group: "Wonderful work, love it!"

New press spurs growth and opportunities

According to Mark Simpson, digital printing accounted for just three to four percent of Simpson Group turnover in mid-2010. Then, after the company installed two HP Scitex FB7500 Industrial Presses, its digital printing business took off, reaching around 35 percent of turnover in less than a year. Most of the digital work has come from moving existing customers' jobs from litho and screen to digital; and the rest is new business won from competitors who lack such versatile printing capabilities.





“Prices are being pushed down. But using our HP Digital Presses, we’re able to get more volume out, more competitively, which helps protect our margins.”

Mark Simpson
Chairman,
Simpson Group

“We decided to purchase the first HP Scitex FB7500 Industrial Press after a financial analysis of the work we were printing on screen and litho showed that we could get payback on a digital press very quickly,” recalls Simpson.

“The ink costs were a big factor in our decision. We saw that it was at the point where we could shift a substantial amount of business away from litho and screen. Also, we were impressed with the ability to upgrade the machine, making it a longer term investment.”

Other benefits of the HP Scitex Industrial Press that Simpson highlights include its media versatility, print quality, speed and ease of use. “We’re very happy with the 3/4-automated media loading; it’s very straight forward,” he says. “You can put operators on this press who don’t have much experience and they can print productively. You can’t do that with litho or screen.

“It has saved us a lot on labor. Instead of having seven or eight people involved in the process with a litho job that has to be laminated onto a board and then die cut, it’s now down to two people.”

A year after the first installation, Simpson Group installed an additional HP Scitex FB7500 Industrial Press in October 2011. Mark Simpson says the increased digital capacity is opening new opportunities and supporting the company’s growth.

“Having the two machines makes a difference because we now have a backup,” he says. “It strengthens what we can offer to the marketplace. We can print runs of five to 10 and even up to 100 or 200 productively and competitively. We have an advantage over pure-digital shops because we can handle mixed campaigns, and this has enabled us to gain new business from our existing customers. We have doubled our business from certain customers over the past year.”

The HP Scitex FB7500 Industrial Press has also increased Simpson Group’s flexibility. “We’re now able to switch between jobs very quickly and even interrupt a big job to do an urgent order,” says Simpson. “Doing proofs and experimenting are easier. We’re able to provide better service and be more reactive.”

AT A GLANCE	CHALLENGE	SOLUTIONS	RESULTS
<p>Industry sector: Sign & Display</p> <p>Business name: Simpson Group</p> <p>Address: Influence Park, Rutherford Road, Stephenson Washington, Tyne and Wear NE37 3HX, UK</p> <p>Tel: +44 191 416 1579</p> <p>Web site: www.simpsongroup.co.uk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost-effectively produce short runs and multi-version applications. • Meet customer demands for faster turnaround. • Expand digital printing capacity to counterbalance shrinking margins. • Produce innovative, multi-substrate POS display for soft drink campaign. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two HP Scitex FB7500 Industrial Presses. • EskoArtwork Kongsberg Cutting Table. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital printing turnover grew from four percent of business to 35 percent after one year with one HP Scitex FB7500 Industrial Press. • Digital workflow has cut labor costs, only two people are now required for a typical job instead of seven to eight. • Can now offer speedy turnaround on urgent and low-volume jobs. • Can print bigger applications than possible with litho and screen printers. • Winning more business from existing client base up to double from some customers. • Saved 25 percent on soft drink POS costs by primarily using the HP Scitex FB7500 Industrial Press instead of a screen press.

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