

Elanders puts digital printing at the heart of its UK operation



AT A GLANCE

Industry: General Commercial Printing

Business name: Elanders

Headquarters: Sweden

Website: www.elanders.se



CHALLENGE

- Elanders wanted to extend its digital printing capability and handle increased volumes while introducing new consumer-oriented services including web-to-print and manuals.

SOLUTION

- The company added an HP Indigo 7500 Digital Press to its existing HP Indigo press 5000 and 5500 models for increased speed and optimised quality.

RESULTS

- The HP Indigo 7500 Digital Press prints twice as fast as previous presses, allowing Elanders to produce more material and shift lighter print jobs from offset to digital.
- This is helping the company's digital revenue grow 30 per cent year on year.
- Over two million digital prints are produced every month.
- Waste is significantly reduced, saving cost and minimising environmental impact.
- Stock obsolescence has been eliminated, freeing up cash flow and reducing costs.
- Customers such as Bentley can enjoy customised print runs of as little as one copy thanks to the print-on-demand flexibility of the HP Indigo Presses.

“The HP Indigo Digital Presses have enabled us to grow the business and introduce new services such as web-to-print and photo books. Their quality, speed and efficiency make a real difference to our bottom line.”

– Kevin Rogers, UK MD, Elanders



Elanders is a Swedish printing group with a global production base and facilities in 10 countries on four continents, with 1,600 employees and net sales of more than SEK 1.8 billion (€200m/\$270m).

The business specialises in books, photo products, packaging and manuals. It also offers services in web-to-print, EDI, advanced pre-media, fulfilment and logistics.

In the UK, Elanders has a focus on the automotive and educational sectors, the company's print solution portfolio has included digital printing for more than 10 years, but demand for digital has boomed in recent years. As a result, the company needed to invest in a new digital press to handle the increasing workload.

Extending digital boundaries

“We purchased our first HP Indigo Digital Press in 2001 because of the print quality it offered combined with the flexibility in terms of media,” explains Kevin Rogers, managing director, Elanders UK. “Since then we've continued to invest in HP technology.”

Elanders produces more than two million prints using the HP Indigo press 5000 and HP Indigo press 5500 every month – a 30 per cent increase over the previous year. The presses have helped Elanders to grow its digital presses to represent 15 per cent of the business and to introduce new product offerings including personalised photo books and web-to-print services. To service these expanding markets, the company has since added an HP Indigo 7500 Digital Press to its portfolio.

“We're expecting the digital side of the business to represent 40 per cent of overall revenue in five years, so it's essential we have the best digital press available to support that growth,” adds Rogers. “Services such as web-to-print are a great market for us because it goes direct from the internet to the printer, requiring minimal administration, plus the customer pays upfront – that helps our margins and cash flow.”

Speed, quality and control

The attraction of digital printing is not just the speed and quality, but also the ability to control stock more efficiently. With traditional offset printing, it makes sense to print in large volumes, but this means lots of valuable stock sitting on shelves where it might become obsolete.

“Printing smaller batches more often is a smarter way of working, we need less material upfront, can eliminate retooling costs and have minimal stock,” comments Shaun Du Randt, production manager. “The Indigo 7500 can print twice as fast as its predecessors, we can now print a book in a matter of hours.”

The HP Indigo Presses also help the company minimise waste because there is no make-ready process required and only the exact quantity required is printed.

“Around seven per cent of the offset process is wasted,” says Rogers. “That's not just a waste of money, time and resources, it is also harmful to the environment. We have attained the ISO 14001 environmental management standard, so we take sustainability seriously. The HP Indigo Presses support us in that because we can print only what we need.”

Flexibility for customer satisfaction at Bentley

One customer that benefits from the advantages offered by the HP Indigo Presses is luxury car-maker Bentley. Previously, its manuals were printed on offset presses, but this created significant stock obsolescence. Moving to digital gave Elanders the flexibility to run small volume batches more regularly and allowed Bentley to produce more customised material.

“From doing print runs in the thousands, in only six languages, we are now printing in 20 languages for 12 models, where we might only need one or two copies of a specific manual,” says Mel Sly, Bentley's account manager at Elanders. “It's a print-on-demand model where we deliver to Bentley every Monday around 200 Owner Literature kits, tailored to the company's vehicle production line, which produces 10,000 cars per year.

“Every week, Bentley sends us the sequencing list for the production line. We assemble the content of each kit, such as 500-page hand cased-in Owners Handbook, Service book and Quick Reference Guide. That's what we deliver every Monday to Bentley. There's no excess stock and all the content is bang up to date. In addition, the print quality is superb which is of course vital to a brand of Bentley's calibre.”

This feature enabled Bentley to produce just three copies of a special manual to accompany the Bentley State Limousine which the company gifted to the Queen as part of the Jubilee celebrations. The print-on-demand approach is saving Bentley up to £50,000 per year because there is no obsolete stock.

“One of the elements Bentley liked about the HP Indigo prints wasn't just the quality and the cost savings, but it was also the distinctive print aroma,” adds Rogers. “To reflect its luxury positioning, Bentley wanted the distinctive aroma you associate with traditional printing, so they were delighted by the scent that came off the HP Indigo print.”

Durability is another consideration for the automotive industry. Bentley tests every aspect of its vehicles in what is known as the Bumper Test, where each car is subjected to extreme temperatures.

“Bentleys will go to a desert where it is plus 70 degrees or to the Arctic where it hits minus 40, and that car has got to stand up to it. Every facet of the vehicle, including the printed product, has to withstand the extremes,” adds Sly. “Only if our printed material survives intact is it considered good enough. Thanks to the quality of the HP Indigo output, it passes with flying colours.”



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