

Snapfish enhances high-volume canvas print production with HP Latex Printing Technologies



At a glance

Industry sector:
Sign & Display – Decoration

Business name:
Snapfish

Headquarters:
San Francisco, CA, USA

Website:
snapfish.com



Challenges

- Snapfish wanted to improve the consistency and image quality of its canvas products.
- The photo-printing service used print service providers (PSPs) with different printing technologies to fill orders, and the process needed to be more efficient and enable greater quality control over the final product.

Solutions

- Snapfish examined its production techniques and decided to rely exclusively on PSPs who use HP Latex Printing Technologies, which consistently deliver top-quality prints at efficient production speeds.
- After extensive testing, Snapfish elected to use HP Latex printers and certified HP canvases to achieve excellent image presentation and quality on a durable surface.

Results

- Snapfish has grown the volume of its canvas business and introduced canvas products in new sizes and styles.
- The photo-service company has dramatically improved the production capacity of its PSP network.
- Snapfish can offer its customers canvas photo products with consistently brilliant colour and image quality – on a stylish and durable canvas.

“Overall, HP Latex Printing Technologies provide a complete solution that helps us offer top-quality products, which is paramount because the images we print are very personal to customers.”

—Bakty Motiram-Barnett,
Vendor Operations Manager,
Snapfish

Snapfish has always connected with its customers' creativity to drive strong business results. Since the online photo-printing service began in 2000, it has provided personalised ways for customers to share and display photos – from loose photos and photo books, to jewellery and blankets.

In keeping with today's trend of increasingly personalised products, the company introduced a line of framed and unframed canvas photo products in 2011. “Home décor products have become a growing market for us because they provide our customers a great way to express their personal interests and passions,” says Bakty Motiram-Barnett, a vendor operations manager at Snapfish. “Our customers want to create high-quality, custom portraits and artwork that they can display in their own space.”

Despite the early popularity of its canvas products, Snapfish had trouble maintaining consistent, outstanding image quality and presentation on the canvas medium through its network of print service providers (PSPs) – each of which used different printing equipment and supplies. The network also struggled to fill orders during peak business periods.

That's why in 2012, Snapfish collaborated with its network of PSPs and HP to extensively evaluate the printers, canvas material, and the finishing techniques used to make its canvas products. The tests clearly showed that HP Latex Printing Technologies consistently delivered the best image quality and the most durable prints.

Today, the company delivers top-quality prints and meets production demands by working with PSPs who exclusively use HP Latex printers to fulfil orders. Almost a year after the switch, Snapfish has grown the volume of its canvas-printing business significantly and introduced new canvas products to its line-up.

Quality images that last

Snapfish strives to offer brilliant photo products that stand the test of time. “Using HP Latex printers and HP Latex Inks, we now achieve very accurate colours that bring images to life,” says Motiram-Barnett.

“During the test phase, we compared our images to silver halide prints to make sure they're as close as possible, and the HP Latex prints really pop,” Motiram-Barnett adds.

HP Latex Inks provide high-quality images for a variety of outdoor and indoor applications, including Snapfish's line-up of canvas offerings. The odourless prints produced with HP Latex Inks emit extremely low levels of volatile organic compounds, making them suitable for the sensitive indoor environments Snapfish customers want to decorate – including homes, hospitals, and offices.

HP Latex Inks have also helped Snapfish increase the durability of its canvas products, preventing ink from cracking when the canvas is stretched around the frame. “Stretching ink on canvas can affect the finished product over time. But HP Latex Inks have proved to be a very sustainable option for us. They also resist scratching quite well,” says Motiram-Barnett.

Outstanding presentation

Snapfish found a great match for the performance of HP Latex Printing Technologies in certified HP canvas. Thanks to the combined solution, Snapfish delivers vivid, memorable home décor time and again.



Using HP Latex Inks with certified HP canvas helps Snapfish offer its customers images with excellent colour brilliance, long-term fade-resistance, and the distinctive, luxury touch of fine canvas. It also delivers fast dry times, resistance to cracking, and durability.

“Building our canvas products requires manually stretching the fabric across the frame. If you don't do it right, it will sag,” says Motiram-Barnett. HP Satin Canvas, one of the certified HP canvases, has offered excellent presentation performance for Snapfish. “The look of HP Latex Inks on certified HP canvas is more elegant than all of the other products we tested – and the fold in the corners is nice and thin.”

Increased business and production power

Snapfish wanted to enhance the look of its canvas products, but also needed to improve its production process. Relying on its old network of PSPs – who used a variety of printers – the company struggled to fill orders during peak holiday seasons. But by standardising production across its PSP network with HP Latex printers, it made dramatic productivity gains, while also increasing the consistency of the finished product.

“With the rising popularity of home décor – and our improved product quality and production capacity after switching to HP – our canvas business has grown,” says Motiram-Barnett. The success has prompted Snapfish to introduce more canvas sizes and styles, including collages, and both gallery-wrapped and museum-wrapped edges.

“Now, during peak demand, our PSPs sometimes hire two to three shifts just to handle the volume that comes through,” says Motiram-Barnett. Thankfully, HP Latex Printing Technologies help the company's network of PSPs efficiently produce prints that are completely cured inside the printer to form a durable image that's ready for finishing, shipment, and display. “Using HP Latex Printing Technologies exclusively, we can now place more orders with our PSPs and get better price breaks with larger orders – savings we can pass on to our customers,” she adds.

Looking ahead, Snapfish plans to continue using HP Latex Printing Technologies to develop top-quality canvas products that deliver an exceptional value to customers. The company also looks to enhance its online portal for product design so that customers have more options to create customised products.

Motiram-Barnett concludes: “Overall, HP Latex Printing Technologies provide a complete solution that helps us offer top-quality products, which is paramount because the images we print are very personal to customers.”

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