

HP Indigo Digital Presses guide CMYKhub into a broader digital printing future



At a glance

Industry: General Commercial Printing

Business name: CMYKhub

Headquarters: Heidelberg West, Victoria, Australia

Website: cmykhub.com



Challenge

- To satisfy the demand for cost-effective, high-quality short run print production that matched or exceeded offset print output.

Solution

- Installed the HP Indigo 5600 Digital Press to accommodate customer requests, complemented by the HP Indigo 7600 Digital Press as the workhorse production machine.

Results

- Measurably increased the incremental turnover percentage of digital printing without advertising this capability.
- Achieved high-quality short print runs that met the profit margins set for both CMYKhub and its print customers.
- Demonstrated to CMYKhub that the successful transition to HP Indigo press technology could be a foundation for a future business model centred on digital printing.

“Digital printing is clearly going to become the future cornerstone of the print industry. Within just six months, we have witnessed the productivity, cost effectiveness, the flexibility and above all else, the high quality that digital printing delivers. HP Indigo digital technology is guiding us and ensuring we will have an important role to play in that future.”

– Trent Nankervis,
owner, CMYKhub

A sense that digital printing promised potential was the catalyst that prompted one of Australia's most successful commercial offset printers, CMYKhub, to seriously research the digital print sector. The “toe in the water” approach paid off. The organic growth of their digital printing output, with no promotional effort, surprised the company and led CMYKhub to more than doubling its digital printing capability in just 12 months.

CMYKhub began in 2006, supplying offset printing to the commercial printing sector. Customers are typically printers, print brokers and print franchise groups such as SNAP, Kwik Kopy, Minuteman Press and Worldwide Online.

CMYKhub strictly adheres to a business-to-business model and has built a strong national footprint with 85 experienced staff in the major centres of Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney. Through this approach, it has become Australia's largest printer in the business card market.

CMYKhub owner, Trent Nankervis, says the company met the commercial printing world's requirement for products. This was typified by a huge demand for stationery and business cards that began to snowball. At the same time, the company began to be bombarded by many other requests. The message was loud and clear: “We want to work with you for all our print needs – can we get that same quality for shorter run lengths and still achieve competitive margins?”

Understanding the potential of digital printing

Nankervis decided to investigate the potential of digital printing. He recalls: “Our proven track record in offset printing had to be complemented by our ability to deliver digital printing.

“This was a key matchup because we wanted to blur the line between offset and digital printing. As far as our customers were concerned, it shouldn't matter which process we used as long as the finished quality was first class.”

The company visited DRUPA 2012, the world's largest printing equipment exhibition held once every four years in Dusseldorf, Germany. “We looked at a number of different machines, but then we saw the HP Indigo 5600 Digital Press in action. The variety of substrates, even synthetics, it supported was impressive. HP Indigo One Shot process was delivering perfect registration from the first sheet. The sheet movement was consistent throughout, and it eliminated any potential crease and fold issues.

“In our opinion, prior to the introduction of HP Indigo technology, the finished quality of offset printing was winning hands down. The purchase of the HP Indigo 5600 Digital Press was an initial entry-level investment. We decided to dip our toe in the water as a painless way to understand the workflow issues and opportunities that were possible with digital printing.”

Flexibility, low cost and high productivity

“The HP Indigo 5600 gave us the flexibility to test a wide range of digital colours, including special effect inks such as white and UV red ink for print that was only visible under UV light. At the same time, it delivered a low-cost solution with high productivity for jobs with fewer than four colours.”



Within months, the company noticed how the proportion of digital printing work was growing; however, no marketing resources were being applied. Nankervis admits the company was surprised by the rate of organic growth of its digital printing output. He says it prompted the purchase of a second press, the HP Indigo 7600 Digital Press, within 12 months of the decision to offer digital printing. “That was earlier than in our original plan, but it became clear that a digital print capability was now a vital part of our business.”

The HP Indigo 7600 Digital Press is the world's fastest 13 x 19 inch format digital sheet-fed press. CMYK uses the HP Indigo 7600 as a production workhorse with its ability to print up to four million colour pages per month. Nankervis points to the HP Enhanced Productivity Mode (EPM) as a key discovery. “We never thought of EPM as a standard feature. It is delivering impressive results. Using only three separations - Cyan, Magenta and Yellow inks - to produce full colour jobs, it increases throughput by 33 per cent to 160 pages per minute. Even with some of our projects that are complex and colourful, EPM has made significant savings in the turnaround time and cost of production.”

Nankervis describes the role of the HP Indigo 5600 as being ideal for the smaller quantity print runs – which are an important backbone of the business and must still deliver a profitable margin.

Multiple streams of valued HP support

From a business owner's perspective, he sees CMYKhub benefitting from the multiple streams of valued HP support. He adds: “HP is clearly very committed to the future of digital print. We have been surprised and impressed by the generous level of HP's knowledge transfer to our organisation.

“Their clear and comforting support has quickened our confidence and enthusiasm for digital printing. Although the HP Indigo technology was a new experience, it proved a seamless transition for us.”

His prediction is that the HP Indigo digital technology, with its flexibility to hold a wider range of stock, will open new revenue streams and the majority of CMYKhub print output will be digital as opposed to offset. “I believe with more investment and more focus from ourselves, digital printing will play a key role in our future growth.”



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