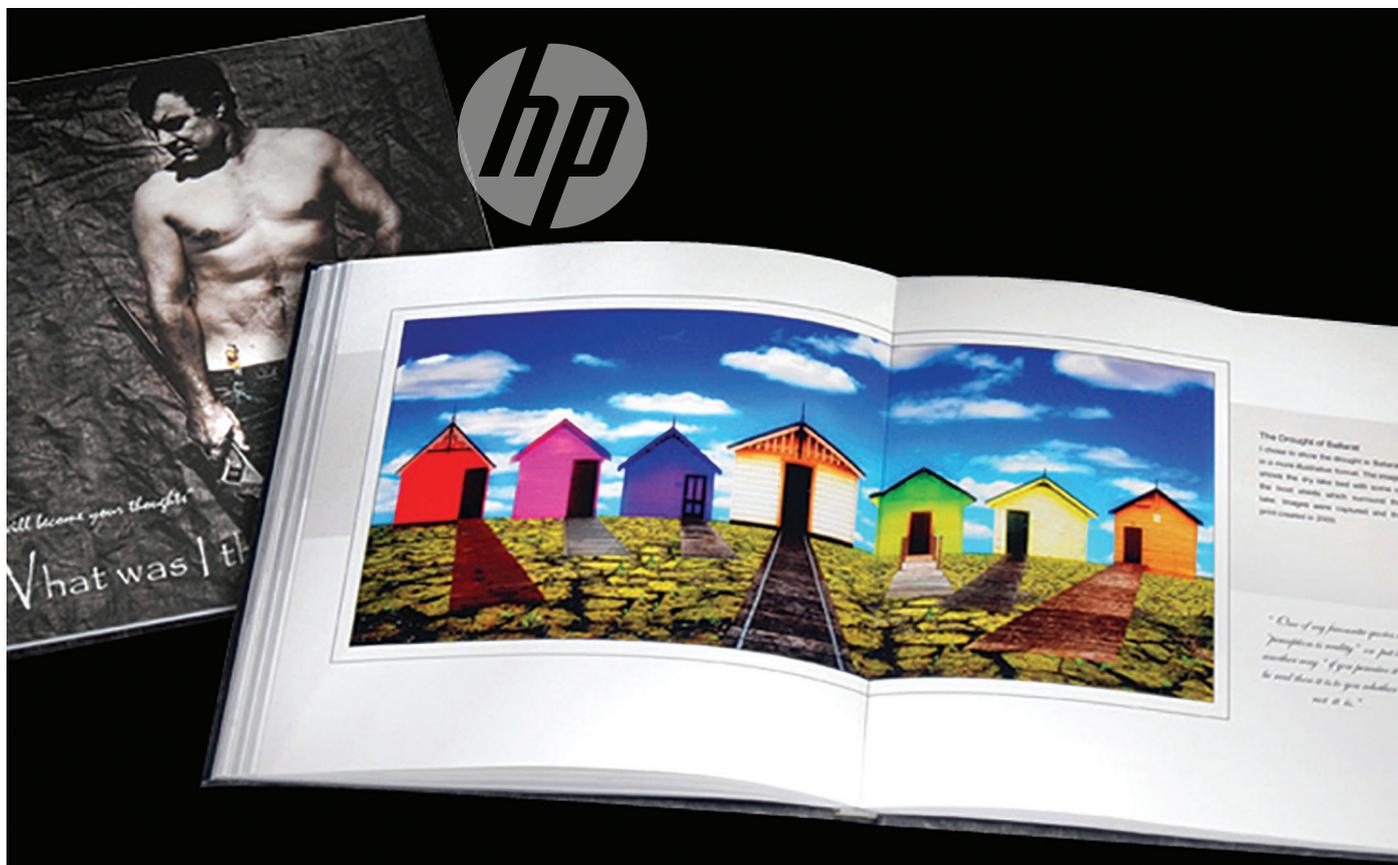


Nulab Australia's leading photo laboratory group meets industry benchmark goal with HP Indigo 7600 Digital Press solution



At a glance

Industry: Photo Specialty

Business name: Nulab Group

Headquarters: Melbourne, Australia

Website: nulab.com.au
picpress.com.au
nushots.com.au

NULAB GROUP

Visual Communication Print Specialists

Challenge

- To handle rapid expansion of successful photo specialty business catering for commercial photographers and consumers.
- To move away from expensive and environmentally unfriendly silver halide technology which had long been the backbone of photography.
- To provide a centrepiece solution for nationwide educational seminars targeting commercial photo labs.

Solution

- Deployed HP Indigo 7600 Digital Press alongside existing HP Indigo 5500 Digital Press.

Results

- Achieving greater productivity while delivering high quality solutions to expanding customer base.
- Enhanced HP Indigo 7600 Digital Press special effect capabilities create new opportunities to deliver high-value applications.
- HP SmartStream Director helps achieve workflow efficiency and productivity for commercial clients.
- Positioning the HP Indigo 7600 Digital Press as the centrepiece for nationwide educational seminars to professional photo lab owners.
- Producing photo prints that have won industry recognition by winning a host of global photo specialty awards.

“The HP Indigo 7600 Digital Press enables us to consistently deliver a high quality finished product to all our customers. I don’t believe there is another printer on the market at the moment that reaches that consistency. It is the industry benchmark.”

– Michael Warshall, executive director, Nulab Group

Photographer turned printer and technology evangelist

Photographer, printer and educator – that sums up the three dimensional working life of Michael Warshall. He built Australia’s largest photo laboratory; he is ranked as one of the country’s leading professional photographers and is a far sighted evangelist for high quality printing technology.

A career that spans 40 years began with a reluctant study of industrial chemistry. It was overtaken by a love of performing as a jazz drummer and sharpened by an envy of the money being made by photographers covering his nightclub gigs. It was transformed by an introduction to the business opportunities offered by not only taking photos but producing photo prints.

Warshall bucked the trend in wedding photography by only offering colour shots to the happy couples. “There were a few professional photo labs and they couldn’t cope with my colour print output, so I became a photographic printer to handle my own work.”

The move away from silver halide

He founded Nulab in 1972, and this successful business flourished, keeping his three studios fully occupied. Warshall attended drupa, the world’s largest printing equipment exhibition, and saw the myriad of different finishes possible on different papers and substrates. That was when he began to think of decommissioning the use of silver halide – the light-sensitive chemicals used in film and paper. It was older technology which had been the backbone of the photographic industry for many decades.

“I was immediately impressed by the undoubted quality and the higher levels of productivity we could achieve with the HP Indigo 5500 Digital Press. It was going to deliver a much better result for our customers while achieving higher profitability for our business. It was clearly more cost effective with the ability to deliver the range of finished results that would excite our customers. It was also more environmentally friendly, since it eliminated chemical processing.”

Picpress was formed in 2008 as Nulab’s digital photo printing subsidiary. It became a member of the Australian Printing Industry Association. Warshall says he realised he now had a foot in two professions: “I was a photographer and a printer.”

Digital printing win-win solution

The response from professional photographers was phenomenal. Picpress was printing, binding and delivering the highest quality digitally printed books, calendars, cards, and variable data promotional pieces. All the while, Picpress was collecting prestigious print industry awards on a global, Asian and Australasian scale.

“A key to our success was that we understood colour. That was important because professional photographers are very particular about the finished effect. With HP Indigo digital technology we could deliver 100 per cent of what they saw on the monitor.”

Consumer demand for photobooks, calendars and greeting cards led to the second subsidiary, Nushots, being formed in 2011. The company needed to increase its print capability to handle the volume of work from consumers as well as commercial photographers. In late 2013 Warshall added two HP Indigo 7600 Digital Press machines to the print production line.



Hitting the industry benchmark

He says: “We did our homework and looked at many print solutions, but there is no other press around like the HP Indigo 7600 Digital Press. HP has developed the technology that allows ink powder to be dispensed as if it were liquid. It lays it down so well that the finished result is equal to the best possible quality photographic image. That is still the benchmark in the industry.”

He is enthusiastic about the countless different finishes the press can deliver: “The HP 7600 Digital Press understands perfectly how to put a particular ink on a particular stock, no matter whether it is matt, gloss, oyster, metallic or canvas. The seven cartridges of HP Indigo liquid Electrolinks gives us a fantastic digital colour gamut.

“In addition we deliver unusual effects with spot varnish or white ink on media such as transparencies or on dark or metallic substrates. A layer of transparent ink applied directly to substrates also enables a raised printing effect.”

He remembers how in the pre-HP Indigo press era, seven people alone used to be needed just for customer order data entry. “Now the customer controls the online order process – just pointing to a product, creating a file, prepaying via credit card. The software sends all the details to the HP Indigo 7600 Digital Press. For our commercial clients the HP SmartStream Director enables them to use a wide variety of customisable workflow solutions to tackle virtually any print production need from creation to fulfilment.”

Workshops for fellow professionals

Warshall is embracing his third dimension – educator – with typical thoroughness. His stature in the industry adds another dimension of credibility to his desire to help fellow professionals build their businesses. Warshall’s workshops have been a step-by-step blueprint about how professional photographers can build, package and market perceived value to their potential customers.

In 2014 Warshall is creating a series of Australia-wide seminars to “educate as many professionals as possible about the opportunities that exist for them to grow their business by offering first rate photographic products. My message is two-fold:

“Consumers and companies will happily pay for quality, when they can see it with their own eyes; and without losing any high quality the right print technology can make your output faster, simpler and more cost effective.

“During the seminars I will demonstrate how and why the HP Indigo 7600 Digital Press more than meets both criteria.”

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