

Pureprint gains production time, reduces stress, and improves print quality, with HP Indigo Customer Excellence Programme



At a glance

Industry: General Commercial Printing
Business name: Pureprint Group
Headquarters: Uckfield, East Sussex, UK
Website: pureprint.com

PureprintGroup

Challenge

- Reduce unplanned press downtime, to predictably meet tight turnaround times and relieve stress.
- Improve consistency of printed quality to meet internal and customer requirements and reduce waste due to rejected prints.
- Extend lifespan of consumables to reduce time spent on too-frequent replacements.

Solution

- HP Indigo Customer Excellence Programme enabled Pureprint Group to return its three HP Indigo 7500 Digital Presses to top working condition, adopt maintenance best practices, and closely track productivity and uptime improvement.
- Operator training at the HP training centre in Barcelona raised operators' ability to self-maintain Pureprint's HP Indigo presses.
- Pureprint has since added an HP Indigo 10000 Digital Press, expanding the benefit from the Customer Excellence Programme process.
- HP and Pureprint worked together to enhance the maintenance schedule in existence, to ensure a more robust programme was used moving forward.

Results

- Weekly production time is up by 50-60 hours a week – gained by replacing typical unplanned downtime of 72 hours (total for three presses) by just 12-15 hours of scheduled maintenance.
- There are far fewer mechanical failures as operators now typically identify and replace worn parts during regular maintenance, before problems occur.
- Average consumables lifespan has increased 32 per cent, sharply reducing time spent replacing PIPs and blankets.
- Spoilage is now significantly lower due to more consistent colour and quality of output, saving significant costs.
- Pureprint now takes on more colour-critical jobs due to new confidence in ability to produce virtually any kind of application, from business cards to high-end brochures and fine art books.

“The Customer Excellence Program is another pair of eyes looking at our business, presses, training and workflow, and coming up with recommendations. It’s a way to increase productivity, press utilisation, product quality, profitability and customer satisfaction.”

– Aaron Archer, business development director, Pureprint Group



Digital print production at the Pureprint Group today is remarkably different to what it was two years ago – and that’s an excellent thing. Although its core press fleet and team are the same, the way they work together has undergone a fundamental shift, thanks to Pureprint’s participation in the HP Indigo Customer Excellence Programme. The result: Pureprint’s HP Indigo press utilisation and print quality consistency are way up; and wastage and team stress are way down.

At Pureprint, excellence is part of the company’s DNA. The East Sussex, UK, company has won numerous print industry awards and it is well-recognised for its technological and environmental leadership. It was the first in the UK to install an HP Indigo 7500 Digital Press, starting with two presses in 2010, and then quickly adding a third. More recently, in 2013, Pureprint was one of the first companies in the world to get an HP Indigo 10000 Digital Press. Today, digital printing accounts for about 20 per cent of the Pureprint Group’s revenues, and the rest comes from litho printing, finishing, warehousing and fulfilment.

The three HP Indigo 7500 Digital Presses were initially very successful for Pureprint, significantly boosting its digital quality, capabilities and capacity. But by early 2012, it became clear that performance had dropped and there was much more that Pureprint could get out of its digital presses.

Steve Frost, Pureprint’s digital pressroom manager recalls: “We were doing a large volume of work; and the machines weren’t performing to our expectations. We were averaging 72 hours a week of downtime across the three machines, with far too many breakdowns and quality issues.”

Although Pureprint’s operators were trained to handle routine maintenance and many fixes, they struggled to balance maintenance schedules with the unrelenting pressure of tight-deadlines and urgent jobs.

Collaborative programme to improve productivity, predictability

To help Pureprint overcome its production issues, HP invited it to participate in the HP Indigo Customer Excellence Programme – which focuses on improving press condition, boosting proficiency and establishing best practices in order to maximise technical performance and business predictability.

Under the programme, HP technicians identified Pureprint’s pain points, and then spent a week at Pureprint’s site bringing the presses back to optimal condition and training the operators. HP then worked with Pureprint to set a maintenance schedule and conduct regular follow-up calls to review progress over six months.

Pureprint did its part by working to the maintenance schedule and keeping logs of maintenance and incidents, and sending several operators to advanced training to bring them up to speed for shared maintenance.

Within three months of the programme start, the benefits were evident. “We found a huge impact,” recalled Frost. “We had very little downtime, minimum quality issues, and the many things that people here complained about went away. No more poor fit, dripping or colour variations, and we didn’t get nearly so many miss-feeds.”

Regular maintenance instead of unplanned downtime

Frost notes that as a result of the HP Indigo Customer Excellence Programme, attitudes to press maintenance have changed at every level, from production floor to management. Now, there is wide support for the constant adherence to maintenance schedules that is crucial to keeping presses in optimal operating condition.

Production at Pureprints runs 24/6 or 24/7, with two 12-hour shifts every day. To minimise downtime during the work week, Pureprint now schedules each HP Indigo digital press for planned maintenance on Saturdays, enabling jobs and production schedules to be planned accordingly.

Keeping to the new maintenance schedules and having operators that are more educated about maintenance and trained to a higher level, have made all the difference. “We are now getting 50-60 hours a week more production,” notes Frost. “We have far fewer mechanical breakdowns. Things get replaced before they break down because we notice when things are getting worn out. We have a much happier press room because there is far less frustration.”

In addition to reducing its unplanned downtime, Pureprint has also gained extra production time as it has increased its consumables lifespan by 32 per cent, saving time through less frequent replacements.

More confidence in printed quality

“We’ve seen a massive improvement in our printed quality, particularly in our colour consistency, because the machines are running better,” notes Frost. “I now have more confidence to print jobs and we now take on more colour critical jobs.”

A recent job involving brochure reprints for a high-end clothing manufacturer is a case in point. “Two years ago I would have been terrified to take on the job, but not now. The rep said the digital brochures look as good as what we did on our litho press.”

The quality improvements have also significantly reduced Pureprint’s spoilage rate, saving costs and reducing waste because the colour is right the first time on many more jobs.

Long-lasting benefits

The HP Indigo Customer Excellence Programme ran for about six months, including the initial press tuning, training and follow-up calls with HP and Pureprint working together. But, the pay-off continues.

Aaron Archer, Pureprint’s business development director, comments: “It’s now two years later, and even though our volume has gone up, the benefits are still evident. We’re seeing greater consistency in the prints we produce, increased uptime, increased utilisation, with fewer jams and less effort, which means more productivity.”

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