

PhotoBox improves productivity thanks to the HP Indigo Customer Excellence Program



At a glance

Industry: Photo Specialty
Business name: PhotoBox
Headquarters: Sartrouville, France
Website: photobox.com

photobox

Challenge

- PhotoBox's aim was to improve productivity to deal with the various seasonal peaks in activity.

Solution

- In spring 2014, PhotoBox implemented the HP Indigo Customer Excellence Program which puts in place complementary methodologies regarding routine maintenance and workflow improvement, and ultimately enables increased press uptime and productivity and a longer lifespan for consumables.

Results

- The lifespan of the Photo Imaging Plates and Binary Ink Developers has doubled thanks to the good practices implemented.
- The capacity of the blankets has improved by 30 percent.
- Environmental conditions have improved thanks to the measurement of humidity levels which influence, for example, the quantity of glue required to produce photo books.

“We chose HP Indigo digital presses for various reasons: their excellent print quality, their speed of execution and their versatility. Thanks to the HP Indigo Customer Excellence Program, we’re able to provide our customers with unparalleled service.”

– Claude Hanocq, production manager, PhotoBox

PhotoBox is Europe’s leading online photo printing, sharing and storing service, with over 30 million members. Operating in 19 countries, the PhotoBox group is the result of a 2006 merger between two companies, Photoways in France and PhotoBox in the UK. Currently, the group employs 750 people and prints two million photo books and 18 million special occasion cards each year on HP Indigo digital presses. Due to its double-digit annual growth figures, and strong seasonal peaks in activity, such as Christmas and Valentine’s Day, PhotoBox opted for the HP Indigo Customer Excellence Program (CEP) to improve the productivity of its HP Indigo presses.

Exceptional double-digit annual growth

If you want to print photo books, wall art, calendars, diaries, mugs, magnets and even key rings, PhotoBox is one of the few companies in Europe that is capable of responding to such diverse needs. This is evidenced by the fact that the company offers over 600 personalized products. Users upload their photos and place orders via the website. Towards the end of the year, some days can bring peaks of over seven million photos uploaded. The French site at Sartrouville specializes in photo books and uses its 10 HP Indigo digital presses to ensure service levels are met and each photo book order can be dispatched worldwide within three to four days.

“We chose HP Indigo digital presses for various reasons: the excellent print quality, the speed of execution and the versatility. Thanks to the HP Indigo digital presses, we are able to provide our customers with unparalleled service,” points out Claude Hanocq, French production manager for PhotoBox. The company also has very strict requirements in terms of chromatometrics, particularly with black, grey and plain backgrounds.

Methodologies for improved productivity

PhotoBox’s fleet of HP Indigo digital presses is perfectly suited to the various peaks in activity such as Father’s Day, Mother’s Day, Valentine’s Day, back to school, people returning from holidays, and Christmas in particular.

During these periods, it is imperative that the HP Indigo digital presses maintain high output, with minimal replacement of consumables, and uninterrupted operation. Indeed, the company works 24 hours a day, six days a week. It is also worth pointing out that during these periods of peak activity, when all the machines are operating at the same time, a team of HP Indigo specialists from HP provide support to PhotoBox, “as we do not have all of the necessary skills to deal with certain issues,” admits Hanocq.

To help HP Indigo optimize utilization of their presses’ capacity and maintain continuous operation, HP created the HP Indigo CEP and recommended that PhotoBox participate.



The CEP was implemented at PhotoBox last spring. The general idea is to improve work methodologies in order to achieve higher press availability and even more efficient maintenance. The results are, for example, a more efficient workflow process with improved data circulation between the IT system and the HP Indigo digital presses, as well as longer lifespan of consumables.

After only a few months, this program had already proved successful for PhotoBox. The lifespan of the Photo Imaging Plates has almost doubled. This is also the case for the Binary Ink Developer. The lifespan of the blanket which enables the ink from the PIP to be transferred onto the printed media has increased by 30 percent. Overall, the non-value-added time, i.e. activities that do not directly or indirectly contribute to satisfying customers, such as unplanned downtime, was reduced by 50 percent.

“These results are very encouraging,” says Hanocq. “They allow us to cope with peak production times more calmly, while saving time and money.”

The HP Indigo digital presses are top-of-the-range machines which perfectly meet PhotoBox’s requirements. With the HP Indigo CEP, PhotoBox now has the additional skills to make the most precise adjustments to these digital presses. An outcome which has a positive impact on the company and its customers.

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