



Billings Builders Exchange provides high-quality color prints for clients in an instant

Billings Builders Exchange needs to provide accurate large-format prints within strict deadlines. However, its existing printers were both slow and expensive to operate. It wanted to find a new print platform that could deliver on speed and quality while also making the production process simpler and more automated. Having evaluated a number of manufacturers, the organization invested in two HP PageWide XL printers.



Industry sector: Architecture, Engineering & GIS

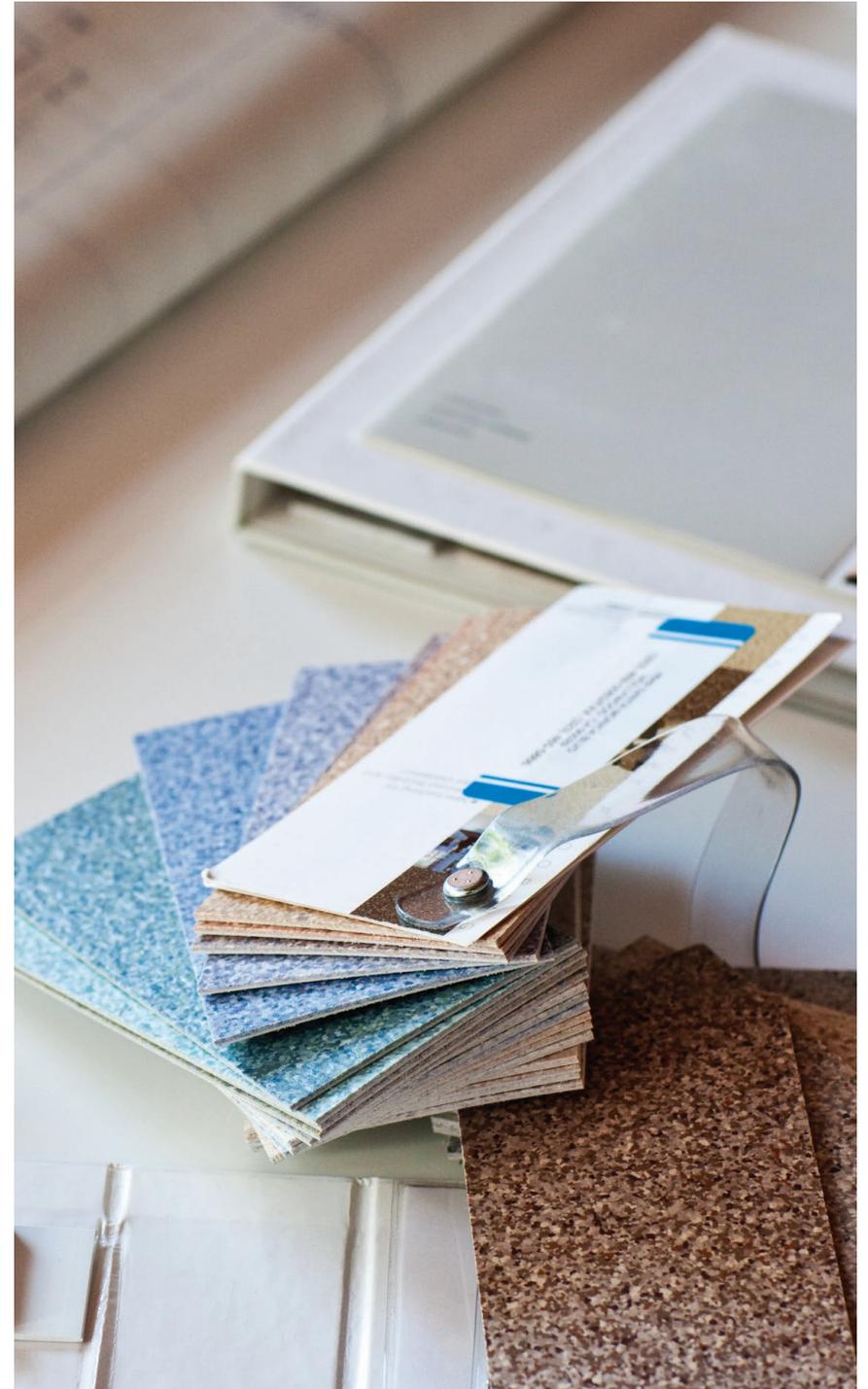
Business name: Billings Builders Exchange

Headquarters: Billings, Montana, USA

Testimonial from: Luke Hudson, manager, Billings Builders Exchange

HP solution: HP PageWide XL 5000, HP PageWide XL 8000
HP SmartStream software

Website: billingsplanroom.com



Challenge

"There is an increasing demand for color but our color printers were slow and expensive, as well as requiring a great deal of manual intervention in the production process. We wanted to find a printer that could deliver color quality at speed while remaining cost-effective."

Luke Hudson, manager, Billings Builders Exchange



Replacing aging, slow and costly printers

The Billings Builders Exchange was established as a non-profit Montana Corporation in February 1951. Its aim is to encourage competitive bidding in the construction trade by providing project leads to contractors and facilitating the bid process including the use of reprographic services. This entails producing quality, large-format prints within tight timeframes.

"We deal with design firms, contractors and government agencies for whom we advertise new projects. These projects are time sensitive, so we need to produce documents lightning fast," explains Luke Hudson, manager, Billings Builders Exchange. "Each month, we typically produce 66,000 square feet (6,130 m²) of printed material but our old machines were slow and expensive."

The organization was also facing growing demand from architects and engineers for color, which needed to be accurately collated within lengthy monochrome document sets. On hearing that HP was introducing a new high volume large-format color printer, Hudson got in touch with his local reseller.

"We evaluated a number of competitive options and broke it down across numerous criteria, including speed, cost, ink types, maintenance requirements and waterproof capability," adds Hudson. "HP came out comfortably on top, particularly in the speed category. Furthermore, a visit to the HP PageWide XL End-user Academy in Atlanta helped to convince me that it was the ideal fit for us."

Having completed the evaluation process, Billings Builders Exchange purchased two HP PageWide XL printers, based on the 12 inch/second (30cm/s) production rate and the ability of the prints to withstand the elements in Montana, where snow, rain and high winds are not uncommon.

Solution

"The HP PageWide XL printers have been an instant success, generating lots of positive feedback from our customers. They are easy to install and maintain while HP SmartStream software makes production simple. By automating so much of the process, it frees up my time to concentrate on more important business."

Luke Hudson, manager, Billings Builders Exchange



Combining speed, quality and low costs

The HP PageWide XL 8000 Printer is currently the fastest large-format monochrome and color printer, delivering up to 50 percent savings in total production costs¹. It can print up to 30 D/A1 pages per minute – the fastest print speed currently available on the market, even compared to LED¹. Billings also purchased a HP PageWide XL 5000 Printer, which offers speeds up to 14 Ds per minute, at savings of up to 30 percent².

"The printers were easy to install and intuitive to use. Whereas, before we had multiple interfaces and needed manual intervention to print color and mono together, now we have a much simpler and more automated process that can do both," says Hudson. "And the quality is superior: immediately upon switching to the new print platform, we received instant feedback from clients commenting on the clarity and precision."

Billings is also using HP SmartStream for HP PageWide XL software, which offers correct PDF management and true print previews through HP Crystal Preview Technology. This makes the workflow much smoother and removes the potential for human error.

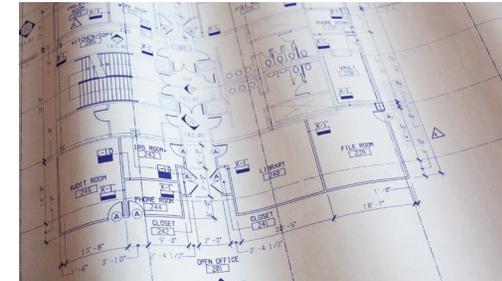
"Now, HP SmartStream software takes our files and automatically provides information regarding page sizes, color and other critical aspects," continues Hudson. "That makes the process quicker and more efficient as well as reducing faults. By saving the preparation time, it frees me up to focus on other tasks."

Billings Builders Exchange now enjoys unmatched speed, quality and accuracy. Files can be prepared and converted much more quickly and without the need for operator intervention. As a result, its clients are delighted and the organization can run much more efficiently.

Result

"We are not just producing better quality prints more quickly; we are also reducing the cost per page – savings which we can then pass on to our customers. We can also print on a wider variety of media than on our previous printers, which means we can offer more services."

Luke Hudson, manager, Billings Builders Exchange



Increased efficiency with improved clarity

"We can deliver documents that have vastly improved clarity and precision within tight timeframes. In the construction industry that is crucial as even the difference between a dot and a dash could prove critical," comments Hudson. "It really has revolutionized how we print and the services we can deliver."

Hudson estimates that the new HP PageWide XL printers have reduced production times overall by 50 percent - time he can spend searching for leads for the organization's members instead, thus providing more value. And, because the printers require minimal maintenance, he doesn't need to waste time firefighting mechanical problems.

"It has been clear sailing compared to previous printers which demanded a lot of attention," remarks Hudson. "Again, it all adds to the efficiency of the process and reduces the burden on my team."

Following this successful deployment of the HP PageWide XL printers, Billings Builders Exchange is keen to continue its relationship with HP and anticipates investing in new printers as the market evolves.

"For five years, we were waiting for someone to master this technology and HP has finally delivered a large-format color printer that produces material quickly without sacrificing quality," concludes Hudson. "HP has gone the extra mile and made us feel part of the family so we are confident that it will continue to play a big role in our organization."

1. Fastest based on internal HP testing and methodology compared to alternatives for large-format printing of technical documents, GIS maps, and point-of-sale (POS) posters under \$200,000 USD as of March, 2015. Production costs savings based on comparison to a setup consisting of one monochrome LED printer and one color production printer, both under \$150,000 USD, as of April, 2015. Production costs consist of supplies and service costs, printer energy costs, and operator costs. For testing criteria, see hp.com/go/pagewidexclaims. 2. Production costs savings based on an HP PageWide XL 5000 Printer compared with a combination of a mid-volume monochrome LED printer and a mid-volume color production printer (both under \$40,000 USD) as of April, 2015. Production costs consist of supplies and service costs, printer energy costs, and operator costs. For testing criteria, see hp.com/go/pagewidexclaims.