

Case study

Professional Graphics combines 30 years of expertise and experience to create grand-format graphics of distinction



Use of HP Latex printers opens new market opportunities for Illinois business serving national clients

Challenge

- Increase production capacity and enter new markets building on core values and expertise
- Provide a safer and more pleasant working environment for employees
- Develop a new phase of activity as part of a strategic reinvention of the business

Solution

- Install the latest HP Latex technologies
- Leverage the advantages of HP Latex Printing Technologies to offer new products and enter new markets

Results

- 80% of work migrated from solvent to water-based HP Latex Ink production
- Odorless internal graphics and displays for sensitive indoor environments
- Production of highly detailed, legible indoor and outdoor graphics for major organizations



“Every image we receive from customers is carefully examined and adjusted before printing. Our HP Latex 360 Printers are able to reproduce fine detail and color quality to our customers’ satisfaction – and ours.”

– Curt Ennenga, project manager, Professional Graphics, Inc.

PROGRAPHICS

Color and graphic management have remained Professional Graphics’ core values throughout its 30-year history. The addition of water-based HP Latex printers in 2013 opened markets for graphics in public environments including hospitals, hotels, restaurants, museums, sporting venues and daycare centers. The company also has a strong customer base for fleet and event graphics, and both have grown thanks to HP Latex technology.

“The images created by Professional Graphics on the HP Latex printers were phenomenal. The staircase color and quality are so incredibly vibrant and lifelike that it literally feels as if you can walk into the photo and up the staircase. Visitors of the museum were so inspired, they returned to Burpee’s 75th anniversary exhibit many times to see the high quality prints.”

—Alexandra Benson, director of Education and Programs, Burpee Museum of Natural History

Industry:

Sign & Display

Company name:

Professional Graphics, Inc.

Location:

Rockford, Illinois, USA

HP equipment:

4 x HP Latex printers

Website:

pgiworldwide.com



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Challenge

Reinventing the future

Professional Graphics, Inc. was established in 1987 as a prepress house under the leadership of L. Harold Goley, an award-winning composition craftsman. His keen eye for color, typography, and use of in-house photographers, took the business into museum work and fine art reproduction, as well as commercial reproduction work.

“The company is still family owned and operated,” says Curt Ennenga, project manager, Professional Graphics, Inc. “That has helped us to keep our core values while adapting to changes in the market and technology. As you know, there was a prepress revolution in the late 1980s and Professional Graphics needed to reinvent itself.”

People still wanted the same things, but the new way of doing things meant that the company’s large team operating drum scanners, producing films, and processing and stripping them for plate production, were no longer required.

“Migrating and expanding from our strong skill set in color and graphic management, we grew our publications business,” Ennenga continues. “We handled fine art publications for museums as well as commercial projects. We still do these core things, but the growth of the web and self-publishing meant that Professional Graphics needed to reinvent itself again.”

In 2003, we moved into large-format printing with two flatbed printers and one 3-meter roll-to-roll printer, both using UV and solvent-based inks,” he says. “As the market and greater environmental awareness grew, we realized that we were in the unique position to meet our own green goals as we diversified and expanded.”

Solution

New levels of quality

“In 2013, HP Latex Printing Technologies met our requirements for color, detail and speed, and shortly afterwards, we installed three HP printers with the latest latex technologies. Production times are cut because prints are ready to finish right from the printer, and we save space too, since there is no need for off-gassing. We can turn around fleet graphics quickly, with minimal time off the road for our customers’ vehicles,” says Ennenga.

“The shift from solvent to water-based HP Latex Ink was welcomed by our customers as it not only met our environmental objectives, but also offered high quality print and faster delivery times,” he says.

Today, Professional Graphics employs 50 people, and its core work is comprised of fleet graphics and event graphics, with the remainder divided among commercial publications, prepress, project management, online print services, and installations and logistics.

The facility operates 24/7 as needs dictate,” explains Ennenga. “Our expertise in all areas of graphic services is also based on the same core values of the last 30 years. Color, typography and photography have not changed, though the things we do and how we do it have.

“For example, the HP Latex printers have enabled us to carry out projects we couldn’t do with solvent inks. We regularly work for restaurants, hotels, hospitals, daycare centers and other indoor public spaces,” he says. “We also print a lot of interpretive signs for use in parks, forests and outdoor areas where detailed graphics combined with legible text are required.”

This combination of Professional Graphics’ skills and experience coupled with their HP Latex printers recently led to a major project for Rockford’s Burpee Museum of Natural History.

Results

Fitting the pieces together

As part of the Burpee Museum’s 75th anniversary celebrations, a gallery was dedicated to showing the museum’s history and development.

“We were in on this project from the beginning,” Ennenga says. “We visited the museum’s storerooms and archives, and photographed key exhibits and assembled old photographs, documents and newspaper cuttings.”

The idea was to create a 10 x 32-foot mural presenting a timeline featuring notable events and acquisitions.

“Images were restored, color-corrected and assembled so that the mural looked like a giant scrapbook of the museum’s history,” he says. “All the text from the newspapers had to be legible, and that meant printing type down to 11 points, which the HP Latex printer did perfectly.”

“The mural was printed on 3M 180C-10 self-adhesive vinyl and laminated with 3M 8519 over laminate to protect the graphics,” says Andrew Goley, project manager/preferred 3M Certified installer, Professional Graphics, Inc. “To create additional interest and further the scrapbook effect, layered pieces of rigid PVC, ranging from 1-12mm in thickness, were applied to the mural.”

A second mural, 10 x 15 feet, showing the grand staircase of the house that contained the original collection, was printed and mounted on an adjacent wall.

“The image is so realistic that you feel you could climb it,” says Ennenga. “This exhibition project brought together all our skills with HP Latex Printing Technologies, and it resulted in high-visitor engagement with the mural, with many people spending as much time reading the timeline as looking at the exhibits.

“The addition of the HP Latex printers has given Professional Graphics a means of continuing its tradition of craftsmanship while providing graphics that meet today’s demands,” Ennenga concludes.

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