

## Case study

# TR Trades creates service difference and commercial advantage as it strengthens long-term future



HP PageWide XL 8000 Printer enables Vancouver reprographics specialist to deliver against cost, quality and speed

### Challenge

- Improve print turnaround times
- Handle large print volumes, often split across smaller jobs
- Ensure efficient management and operations of print infrastructure

### Solution

- HP PageWide XL 8000 Printer
- HP SmartStream Software

### Results

- Dominated the marketplace for clients looking for high speed color prints, with unmatched quality
- Increased capacity, allowing the business to take on new customers and larger volumes
- Increased customer retention by providing the most advanced print available



**“We had the systems and processes in place. Our printers were the bottleneck. We were ready for HP PageWide XL printers.”**

– Carla Duncan, owner and sales manager, TR Trades



TR Trades is a family-owned Vancouver reprographics specialist, celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2019. It has secured its long-term future by creating a service point of difference, based on quality, cost, and turnaround times. The most recent transition to dominate this model is by investing in four HP PageWide XL 8000 Printers.

“I’d seen demos of the HP PageWide XL printers before, and to be honest I thought it seemed too good to be true. It had the quality and was certainly fast, but I had doubts it could manage the capacity. Seeing the HP PageWide XL printers in action in Japan and Australia, running huge volumes, convinced me.”

—Carla Duncan, owner and sales manager, TR Trades

**Industry:**

Large Format; Technical Design

**Company name:**

TR Trades

**Location:**

Vancouver, Canada

**HP equipment:**

HP PageWide XL 8000 Printer

**Website:**

trtrades.com



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## Challenge

### Continued investment in the future

“There are very few businesses where you have to rip out perfectly serviceable equipment every five years and then replace it with something new,” says Carla Duncan, owner and sales manager of TR Trades. “It’s rare to see a print business last 50 years. Not every owner wants to keep investing in the future.”

Short-term thinking was never an option for Duncan. The daughter of Harold Duncan, former president of the original TR Trades business, admits she is “a printer for life”. Schooled in the business from an early age, when an opportunity arose to take on the Vancouver print shop – and allow her father to enjoy his retirement – she grabbed it with both hands.

“My dad always said that if I wanted to work here I had to work other jobs first to gain experience, and I think gain appreciation for what he was essentially passing down,” she says. “I was a painter, a telemarketer, a bus driver, I waitressed. After completing a Marketing Management Diploma, I finished a Business Management Degree at SFU. When the time came to take over, I was ready.”

That was in late 2008, with the economy dipping and sales slipping. “I could see where things needed fixing, but I also recognized that the market wasn’t simple,” says Duncan. “Our customers always want quality, price, and near impossible turnaround times, a model that is hard to consistently adapt to as technology changes. As a full-service print bureau, we need to consistently restructure to accommodate changing customer demands, equipment implementation, and staying on the edge of technology infrastructure to be able to handle the demands of the customers and the equipment.”

For this to work, TR Trades always needs the best print infrastructure. She continues: “If you don’t have the correct systems and processes in place to manage your quality and service, backed by the best print technology, then you’ll ultimately fail.”

## Solution

### The search for quality, speed and capacity

Almost every system within TR Trades is now custom built with the customer in mind, from accounting to online ordering to production. “From an early age my dad always encouraged me to go see print businesses that are bigger and better than us. Go see where you want to be,” says Duncan.

These travels have taken her across North America. In 2017, she went international, with trips to see print businesses in Japan and Australia. It was here Duncan determined where TR Trades needed to invest next.

“I’d seen demos of HP PageWide XL printers before, and to be honest I thought it seemed too good to be true,” she says. “It had the quality and was certainly fast, but I had doubts it could manage the capacity. Seeing the HP PageWide XL printers in action in Japan and Australia running huge volumes, convinced me.”

Within a month of her return to Vancouver, Duncan had ordered two more HP PageWide XL 8000 Printers, giving her a total of four. Thirty days later, all old equipment was removed, with staff retrained, HP SmartStream Software embedded, the four machines became the main production equipment. Throughout, says Duncan, there wasn’t a moment’s downtime.

## Results

### Competitive point of difference

Duncan says HP PageWide XL printers are a game-changer for the industry, and that they arrived at the right time for TR Trades: “We had a solid infrastructure and processes in place, but our printers were our bottleneck. We were ready for HP PageWide XL printers.”

HP PageWide XL 8000 Printers enable TR Trades to deliver high-quality large-format in color, and in turnaround times faster and more cost-effectively than any local competitor. Increased capacity means it can take on new customers and larger volumes. The business does a lot of work with architects, engineers and developers; printing detailed development proposals for multi-million dollar projects.

“These customers have spent a lot of time and money on plans, working up until the last possible moment. The quality of the print is the final step in the process. Average is not good enough. They want the highest, quality, often in color. The final prints could be the difference between winning or losing the contract.”

HP PageWide XL printers mean Duncan’s team is able to offer unparalleled service. Prints can be delivered within an hour, where competitors are quoting days. “We’ll work weekends and evenings – I was here until 1.30am one night last week finishing a job,” says Duncan. “It’s this sort of service level that creates a real point of difference. It takes us past the competition – and once a customer has experienced this service, with this quality, they are likely to be a customer for life.”

Duncan says HP PageWide XL printers are not a destination, rather part of the journey. Innovation and continued investment are her priorities.

“I’m interested in looking beyond the mainstream. I don’t want multiple TR Trades locations throughout Vancouver. I like that we’re a print services business for professionals. I don’t want that diluted,” concludes Duncan.

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