

Pioneering New Market Applications

HP Indigo presses create new markets and opportunities for commercial printer and its customers



Since 1989, A&P Co-ordinator has been meeting the print production needs of leading creative agencies and blue-chip corporations in Singapore. Recognising that its customer base was demanding shorter print runs and turnaround times, the company began investing in HP Indigo presses in 2003 to establish itself as one of the first movers in the digital printing market.

HP customer case study: An established commercial offset printer in Singapore, A&P Co-ordinator invests in HP Indigo presses to demonstrate its persistence to pioneer new applications to the market and improve customer service.

Industry:
Commercial printing

Objective:

- Complement offset printing capability to meet customer demand for shorter runs and shorter turnaround time
- Maintain high standards of print quality and cost-effectiveness for customers
- Tap new market opportunities in personalised campaigns

Approach:

- Steady investment in HP Indigo digital presses to meet market demand
 - 2003: HP Indigo press 1000 (2004: upgrade to 1050)
 - 2003: HP Indigo press 3000 (2004: upgrade to 3050)
 - 2007: HP Indigo press 5000 (trade-in of HP Indigo press 1050)
- Addition of HP Designjet Z2100 Photo Printer with embedded spectrophotometer for accurate colour proofing.

Results:

- Revenue growth, with digital printing targeted to contribute about 25% of total revenue in 2008
- Strong industry reputation as a first mover in offset-quality digital printing in Singapore
- Ability to meet stringent print quality demands from creative agencies
- Improved customer service through output of mock-ups and proofs
- Future potential in introducing image personalisation to the market.



A&P Co-ordinator has been a commercial printer known for its courage to break new industry boundaries in Singapore. Established in 1989, the company was not content with just delivering high-quality commercial offset printing services. It wanted to drive innovations at the industry forefront.

Combining its understanding of market trends and advanced technologies, the company began pioneering many new applications to deliver more options to customers. After its successful foray into e-business solutions and the research and development of colour science, A&P Co-ordinator ventured into establishing a first-mover advantage in digital printing.



"Customers were demanding shorter print quantities and more complex customisation of their marketing materials, within shorter turnaround times. We were convinced that going digital with the HP Indigo press was the only way to stay ahead of the market."

Winson Lan, Managing Director,
A&P Co-ordinator

For many years before that, Winson and his team had been tracking developments in the digital printing technology, particular HP Indigo technology. But it was not until 2003 that the company finally acquired its first two presses – the HP Indigo press 1000 and 3000.

Having established high standards of print quality and colour management, the company wanted to work only with presses that could deliver excellent print quality. Not just any quality, but offset-printing quality that customers had come to expect. It was the HP Indigo presses that impressed Winson with their exceptionally brilliant, high-resolution and high-gloss print output. The difference, according to him, lay in the liquid HP ElectroInk that sits very well on the paper like in offset prints.

Once the decision was sealed, convincing customers to go digital was the next step. Sales staff found that most customers had many negative pre-conceived notions about the quality of digital printing. But on exposing these customers to the superb quality and extensive capabilities of the HP Indigo press, it was not as difficult to sell as they feared.

In fact, Winson won many rounds of beer from his customers from creative agencies when they thought his digital print samples were printed by offset.

"They examined the print quality and were convinced it was from offset. It's not surprising as we can achieve an output of at least 95% close to offset quality at A&P Co-ordinator, by combining the capabilities of the HP Indigo press with our own colour management experience."

Winson Lan, Managing Director,
A&P Co-ordinator



Before long, agencies and large corporations such as banks, automotive and telecommunication customers recognised that A&P Co-ordinator had the capability to produce offset-quality communication materials in small print runs. Professional photographers also approached the company for customised photobooks, and advertising and design agencies for one-time printing of presentation mock-ups.

Many of these digitally printed jobs on the HP Indigo presses went on to win creative and print awards for both A&P Co-ordinator and its customers.

The company is also able to apply variable data printing for the personalisation of highly targeted direct mailers and collaterals. Convincingly, A&P Co-ordinator's experience indicates that response rates for database-extracted personalised direct mail campaigns increase between 4% and 28%. These campaigns also yield more market information than the harder-to-track traditional responses. The value of such detailed information for companies is immeasurable.

Since its initial acquisition, A&P Co-ordinator has been upgrading its technology to keep pace with market demands. In 2004, both presses received upgrades to the HP Indigo press 1050 and 3050. And in 2007, the HP Indigo press 1050 was traded in for the newer HP Indigo press 5000, a high-performance solution capable of high-definition and vibrant colour printing at up to 812 x 812 dpi. The same year, A&P Co-ordinator also acquired the HP Designjet Z2100 Photo Printer (44 inches) to aid in proofing materials out before mass printing.

On the HP Indigo press 5000, fast stops and fast switches between jobs coupled with increased speeds of up to 4,000 4-colour A4 images (two up) would boost productivity further to meet project deadlines.

While the company still operates offset presses, digital printing by its HP Indigo presses has been accounting for a growing percentage of overall revenue. With the addition of the HP Indigo press 5000, Winson expects the contribution from digital printing to reach about 20% of revenue by the end of 2007, and 25% in the following year.

Looking forward to new market opportunities using the HP Indigo presses, image personalisation is the next challenge for A&P Co-ordinator. With the appropriate software, recipients' names can be customised using relevant images such as fruits, flowers, golf balls and even diamonds to reinforce communication messages.

"Image personalisation has a very direct appeal and expected to generate even better response rates in direct mail. Going by the success in Europe and the US, I believe businesses in Singapore and Asia will soon realise the benefits of reaching their customers with image personalisation."

Winson Lan, Managing Director,
A&P Co-ordinator

Once again, A&P Co-ordinator is expecting a busy time in marketing this new application on the HP Indigo presses to customers. However, going by past experiences, Winson knows that his agency customers will eventually welcome the opportunity to explore more creative projects with the new application. The power has always been in the sophistication of what agencies can present to their clients.

And if they're not convinced of the effectiveness of image personalisation, Winson could always line up more bets with them to win a few more rounds of beer!

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