Rotomail Italia reaps efficiency benefits by using HP PageWide Technology

Rotomail Italia decided to install ten HP PageWide Pro printers with PageWide Technology

Industry
Print on demand

Objective
To further accelerate the process of fulfilling orders for books on demand, by implementing a solution and integrating it with the existing systems to ensure high print quality at affordable costs

Approach
Rotomail Italia combined the existing production lines comprising HP Web Press machines with a series of HP PageWide Pro printers that feature the same printing technology (the PageWide printhead). The new equipment is fully integrated into the system controlled by the production management software

IT matters
• The production system need no longer stop to reprint items found to be defective after packing

• HP PageWide Pro machines with PageWide Technology can be used to print very low volumes at significant cost savings

Business matters
• 100 per cent of orders are fulfilled within 24 hours, compared to 90 per cent under the previous arrangements

• Very short print runs become more economical, enabling greater downward scalability

• The PageWide devices support for the HD standard will facilitate attempts to penetrate the photo book market

> **"Our commitment to innovation has enabled us to fully exploit the print quality and scalability that HP products provide."**
>
> – Alessandro Antonuzzo, deputy general manager, Rotomail Italia

Rotomail Italia has a new approach to producing books on demand. The company has introduced a line of HP PageWide Pro printers with PageWide Technology to handle short print runs and individual copies

To keep improving order turnaround times, Rotomail Italia has decided to complement its production line of HP PageWide Web Press machines with a fleet of HP PageWide Pro printers with PageWide Technology. The result? Improved scalability for the Vignate plant, with the same finished-product quality as before.

Challenge

Software in the blood

Rotomail Italia was established in 1996 as a software house specialising in one-to-one marketing solutions. It is now one of the largest businesses in the digital-printing sector and in the development of software and hardware solutions for print on demand and for the personalisation of books, business cards, luncheon vouchers and documents, even in large format.

It was the first company in the world, in 2000, to use high-speed full-colour PageWide Technology and the first to become active in the transpromo field (i.e. for messages that are both transactional and promotional). Rotomail has always sought to utilise technology for competitive advantage to meet the needs of small but significant market niches.

The company now has 115 employees and turns over more than 21 million euros a year.

After winning a sizeable slice of the Italian books-on-demand market, thanks in no small part to its constant focus on technology innovation, Rotomail Italia has made a point of enhancing the service it offers to customers, which include hundreds of publishers, distributors and e-commerce sites.

"We are the only company in Italy," says Alessandro Antonuzzo, deputy general manager and son of the founder, "to introduce the automatic format change into book production, working with the machine suppliers to modify both the printing and the packing devices. We can now produce up to 800 books per hour, with batch sizes as small as one."

The installation at the Vignate facility includes powerful HP PageWide Web Press and HP Indigo printers, all coordinated by software developed in-house and integrated with the HP Production Center solution. These systems take care of the entire book production cycle, from receiving the digital files via the customer portal to optimising, printing, packing and packaging and on to the start of the logistical process through to shipping.

"To keep enhancing our service to customers," says Antonuzzo, "we decided a year ago to find a solution to handle very short print runs and even individual copies – for example, to replace items that came out defective from the normal production lines. That scenario, in particular, was forcing us to reprogramme the machines and waste a great deal of time: we wanted to raise the percentage of orders fulfilled within 24 hours from 90 to 100 per cent."

Solution

A single printing technology

Innovation comes as standard at Rotomail Italia: the Vignate factory uses cutting-edge solutions, often in partnership with the vendors of printing and packing machines. The management decided to experiment with a new alternative – HP PageWide Technology – which is used on the large HP PageWide Web Press machines and has also been available since 2014 in desktop business printers.

The Antonuzzo family and their managers thus elected to deploy a fleet of 10 HP PageWide Pro devices featuring PageWide Technology to print copies to replace defective individual books and to meet the demand for very short print runs.

Rotomail Italia was already familiar with HP PageWide Pro printers having used them in their natural environment (in the office), where they had earned kudos for their reliability, precision and cost-effectiveness. Using them in an industrial setting, though, was the Antonuzzos' idea. They have a track record of exploring new technological avenues, backed by the excellent IT team that is a strong part of the company's DNA.

"We have bought ten HP PageWide printers," says Antonuzzo, "and our software people have done a sterling job to integrate them completely into our production systems. After a year of testing, we are delighted with the results. The printers have become a permanent part of our production cycle, and not only have they improved the performance of the entire system but they have also enabled us to handle very small orders with greater flexibility."

Benefits

Scalability, reliability, innovation

The role of the HP PageWide Pro may seem only marginal, but their contribution has been crucial for Rotomail Italia. The company has further sharpened its competitive edge over the other print-on-demand players in a growing market fuelled by both the web phenomenon and shrinking average print runs. "Automating the workflow," comments Antonuzzo, "is the most important factor in enabling us to compete on price, and thanks to this new project, we are now competitive on very short print runs too. Being able to print even a single copy of a book on an industrial production line brings economies of scale and certified quality that would otherwise both be hard to achieve."

Customer solution at a glance

Hardware
- HP Production Center
- Main hardware: HP PageWide Pro with PageWide Technology
- HP Web Press

HP services
- Consumables
- Technical support

The adoption of PageWide Technology even for very short print runs will soon allow Rotomail Italia to enter the photo book market. The company is developing a dedicated portal to do just that. "We shall probably exploit HP PageWide Technology again to penetrate this new segment," concludes Antonuzzo, "because these machines will soon also offer the high resolution (2,400 dpi instead of 1,200) already supported by the inkjet printheads on the Web Press machines. The productivity levels and cost savings achievable will be a real benefit and could even encourage us to attempt to serve the entire European market."

"The HP PageWide Technology, used both with the heavy-duty Web Press machines and with the HP PageWide Pro printers, has given us reliability and continuity at very modest costs."

– Alessandro Antonuzzo, deputy general manager, Rotomail Italia

Rotomail Italia's volumes are set to increase in the traditional print-on-demand market too. With an agreement already signed with Ingram, one of the world's largest distributors, and other high-profile partnerships on the horizon, demand is sure to rise. And the company is well placed to meet it with ease, courtesy of the great scalability of HP PageWide Technology.

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