

Innovative Labeling Solutions increases strategic labels and packaging runs with the HP Indigo WS6600



At a glance

Industry: Labels & Packaging

Business name: Innovative Labeling Solutions

Headquarters: Hamilton, Ohio, USA

Website: www.ilslabels.com



INNOVATIVE
Labeling Solutions

Challenge

- Innovative Labeling Solutions (ILS) wanted to increase productivity and reduce time and labour investments in its prepress operations, better positioning the company to work with brands as a total digital solutions provider.

Solution

- By upgrading its HP Indigo WS6000 Digital Presses with the capabilities of an HP Indigo WS6600, ILS can achieve better economics for high-volume production runs compared with previous generations of HP Indigo digital presses.
- With the HP SmartStream Labels and Packaging Print Server designed specifically for HP by Esko and a Management Information System (MIS) from Label Traxx, ILS has streamlined prepress and press operations.

Results

- The company has doubled its overall production in the last 4 years.
- Jobs that took up to 8 hours of prepress labour can now go to the press in minutes.
- ILS can now print up to 182,880 linear meters (600,000 linear feet) in a single run in Enhanced Productivity Mode.
- By partnering with its clients to produce digital print packaging solutions, ILS has developed a loyal client base.

“[With the HP Indigo WS6600 capabilities], we have the ability to rapidly deliver what ILS clients need right now, which reduces inventories and obsolescence.”

—Jay Dollries, Owner and CEO,
Innovative Labeling Solutions

When Innovative Labeling Solutions (ILS) adopted digital printing in 2005, it quickly realised the opportunities were big. The company decided it was time to change the way it provided package print services to the market.

With the installation of three HP Indigo WS6000 Digital Presses, ILS began taking advantage of the new platform's unique value. “The HP Indigo WS6000 allowed us to talk about the value of digital printing – that it was more than just a piece of equipment,” says Kathy Popovich, director of marketing and communications at ILS. Popovich thinks her company's ability to adjust quickly, combined with its solutions expertise, allows ILS to help brand owners adapt to shifts in the marketplace.

Now ILS is taking that vision further. The company has upgraded all three of its presses to perform like the HP Indigo WS6600 Digital Press—a process that was faster and more cost-effective than buying new presses. With its HP Indigo WS6600 capabilities, ILS can now deliver the outstanding print quality its clients have come to expect along with new efficiencies that can save time, reduce labour and media costs, and deliver longer runs that are competitive with conventional printing.

The engine of innovation

The speed and productivity of the the HP Indigo WS6600 features and enhancements make ILS's timely delivery model possible. The press can print up to 40 linear meters (131 linear feet) of colour per minute in Enhanced Productivity Mode (EPM). The company currently runs a large percentage of its new work in EPM with digital runs up to 182,880 linear meters (600,000 linear feet).

ILS also saves time and reduces labour and materials costs by using the optional Inline Priming unit available with the HP Indigo WS6600 Digital Press. “We don't have to get material in, prime it, and then time it into the schedule. The material shows up at the door and we can immediately start producing the product,” says Jay Dollries, owner and CEO of ILS.

However, the benefit of upgrading the HP Indigo WS6000s with the capabilities of an HP Indigo W6600 may be the full integration of its advanced workflow solutions. “The front end used to be a big bottleneck,” Popovich notes. “We knew the presses could run efficiently, but we couldn't get the art in there fast enough.”

Now, using the January 2012 version of the HP SmartStream Labels and Packaging Print Server designed specifically for HP by Esko and a Management Information System (MIS) from Label Traxx, ILS is able to eliminate nearly all of its manual prepress work. Jobs that previously required up to 8 hours of prepress labour are sent to the press in minutes. Dollries is impressed with the results. “In the last four years we've doubled our business, but have not added a single prepress person.”

Digital printing – just in time

ILS's commitment to digital technology began to pay off during the downturn in the US economy. Companies began



to evaluate new purchasing models because they didn't have the budgets or the cash on hand to print and store enough labels or packaging for several months, which conventional printing required.

“Most companies look at the marketplace and ask, ‘How can I save costs using digital printing?’ We look at it and ask, ‘What can we do to enhance our clients' ability to sell their products?’” Dollries says.

Beyond cash flow benefits, digital printing helps brands stay nimble. Not only are brand owners better able to adapt to changes in the marketplace, but they can get ahead by regionalising, customising, or creating seasonal products. Dollries adds, “We have the ability to rapidly deliver what ILS clients need right now, which reduces inventories and obsolescence and increases their ability to deliver the product to the consumer.”

A strategy that's paying off

Robust digital capabilities have enabled the company's rapid growth. “Whether they have jobs that make sense to run conventionally or digitally, we're sitting in the catbird seat,” Dollries says. Popovich adds, “We spent a lot of time, money, and resources creating awareness about what digital technology can deliver. Now all that hard work is paying off.”

In one telling case, ILS invested years in a particular brand owner. The company was comfortable with the conventionally produced packaging it received from another print service provider, but as ILS built the case for digital, the potential client grew more interested. It began giving ILS small projects and, liking the results, soon brought all of its work to ILS. Even when its previous label provider converted to digital, the company wasn't interested in going back. “They stayed with us not only because we have digital, but because of how we've assisted them in leveraging that technology to their fullest advantage,” Popovich says.

The productivity of its HP Indigo digital presses and its front-end solutions allow ILS to produce labels, flexible packaging, shrink sleeves, and folding cartons on a larger scale than ever before. And as a beta tester for the HP Indigo 20000 Digital Press, ILS continues to push its flexible packaging business further. Says Dollries, “It's

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