

FLEXTech DOUBLES SPEED, GROWS BUSINESS WITH HP INDIGO WS6000 DIGITAL PRESSES



Flexible Technologies is an early adopter. Many print service providers start out using traditional printing technology and then add digital capabilities as they expand. On the other hand, Flexible Technologies—better known as FlexTech—was designed from the ground up as a digital label and packaging printing company.

Maui Chai, president and co-founder of Utah-based FlexTech, says that speedy, cost-effective short runs drew him to digital printing. Thanks to his foresight, FlexTech can offer its customers a unique set of benefits: high quality and incredible turnaround, with almost no inventory management. Over the years, FlexTech has relied on several generations of HP Indigo digital presses for leading-edge technology.

"We're a very customer service-oriented company," Chai says. "Our customers really like quick turnarounds. HP Indigo digital presses have allowed us to take what would have otherwise been an impossible situation and offer a solution to the customer."

Double the speed

In 2010, FlexTech acquired its first HP Indigo WS6000 Digital Press, which operates at 30 metres (98 feet) per minute for four-colour jobs. As a result, FlexTech was able to replace its two existing digital presses.

"The HP Indigo WS6000 gave us twice the output as our previous digital presses," Chai says. "We just transferred all the work from our two other presses onto the HP Indigo WS6000 and were nearly full the day we installed it."

In response to fantastic results from the new digital press and a surge in business, FlexTech soon purchased a second HP Indigo WS6000 to add even more capacity.

FlexTech's goal for turnaround time is normally three days. Chai says that using its two HP Indigo WS6000s has made hitting that mark easier, because operators can load so much work onto the digital presses. However, rush orders can even be completed the same day—or, incredibly, the same hour. Chai says that with two HP Indigo WS6000s, FlexTech has completed jobs within 45 minutes of receiving the customer's file. "That's the marvellous thing about digital," he says.

Saving money with short runs

HP Indigo WS6000 Digital Presses also allow FlexTech to print shorter runs at a cost-effective price—a difficult, if not impossible, feat to achieve with conventional printing. These smaller orders offer more flexibility to FlexTech's customers, such

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Labels, stickers, and flexible packaging

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**CHALLENGE**

- Rapidly growing FlexTech needed to increase speed and capacity for its digital label and package printing business.

SOLUTION

- An HP Indigo WS6000 Digital Press absorbed the entire workload from FlexTech's two previous digital presses.
- Months later, FlexTech added another HP Indigo WS6000 to take on even more work.

RESULTS

- With double the speed of FlexTech's previous digital presses, the HP Indigo WS6000 helps the company meet tight customer turnaround goals while reducing labour costs.
- FlexTech has improved profit margins by moving more work to the HP Indigo WS6000 Digital Presses. And greater flexibility has helped to attract new customers.

as companies with large product lines that include many different SKUs. If a product label must change slightly, the customer can get the new label faster and avoid throwing away thousands of outdated labels.

Chai likes to challenge his customers by asking them to calculate their true cost for labels, which are usually printed on flexo. "It's not just the price for printing but also how much inventory and time you waste," he explains.

For example, one customer scrapped \$900,000 USD worth of outdated labels that had been printed on flexo. Chai says that was when a light bulb went off for the customer. "When you compare wasted materials and the time you spend managing large inventories, digital labels can cost significantly less," he says. "And digital can offer better quality to boot. So it became a matter of not if our customers would switch to digital, but when."

Flexibility wins business

Some of FlexTech's customers have taken advantage of shorter print runs to market products that are customised to ultra-niche markets, such as a drink sold at a specific event or during a particular season.

"In certain markets, short-run digital printing is a relatively new offering, and it's taken our customers a few years to decide how they're going to use that flexibility," Chai says. Now, they're quickly catching on to the benefits. "Our work is growing every year."

With the HP Indigo WS6000, printers can transfer jobs up to about 3,962 metres (13,000 linear feet) from conventional printing to digital—at a lower cost—while continuing to achieve superior quality, productivity, and profitability. The digital press also minimises operator intervention and setup time, saving on labour.

"We've been running work on flexo that was too long to be cost-effective on our older digital presses. Now, we can move these jobs to the HP Indigo WS6000," Chai says. "This gives a boost to our profits, since my margins are better on digital than on flexo."

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— Maui Chai, President and Co-founder Flexible Technologies

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