

HP Indigo Photo Success Stories



Scalable solution

Virtually all digital jobs are submitted to WHCC online. Hanline says photographers are used to working in Adobe Photoshop, so they prefer to submit jobs as JPEG files. “We’re big on customer support here,” he says. “A few years ago, we taught them about Photoshop. Now we teach them how to build cards. We don’t just send them a template and say, ‘Fit it here.’”

WHCC has developed a software link that uses its existing workflow software to produce PDF files. Those files are then routed to the HP Indigo Production Manager, a scalable off-press production engine, configured with eight RIPs at WHCC.

“The process is fully automated,” Hanline says. “So most days, five or six minutes after a job is received, the file is ready to be printed.”

Both the RIP solution and the actual printing are easily scalable to accommodate future growth, Hanline adds. “As we’ve grown, we’ve become more productive because one person can really run three Indigo presses,” he says. “As demand increases, we can simply add more press capacity without changing the workflow. We know of businesses that are running 16 or 20 Indigo presses.”

“I think the quality produced by the Indigo’s liquid ink process — compared to the dry toner offered by other manufacturers — is a big advantage. You can print the same job on an Indigo press and a press that uses dry toner, and the visual difference is striking.”

– Chris Hanline, Chief Technology Officer,
White House Custom Colour

WHCC’s business, like that of most color labs, is highly seasonal. Some 40 percent of its volume comes in the fourth quarter — and most of that, beginning in late November. So the company might go from running only two presses on a single shift in the summer, to running all five presses around the clock during the pre-holiday rush.

There will even come a point in December, Hanline acknowledges, when the company’s normal one-day turnaround for offset digital products will stretch to two or three days. “But people won’t complain about that. Even three-day turnaround is quite acceptable in our business.”

A decade ago, digital presses weren’t known for their reliability, Chris Hanline says. But the HP Indigo presses, he notes, “are very good. We can depend on them to run reliably when we absolutely need them to.” The company has purchased an 18-hour-a-day support package from HP.

“Long term, we expect HP to remain a leader in digital offset printing for the photographic industry, and we expect to take advantage of that leadership to deliver our customers the best possible photo products.”

– Mike Hanline, Co-CEO and Co-Owner,
White House Custom Colour



Mike Hanline notes that the company’s digital offset printing products have been critical in attracting new customers. “We’ve had some clients who just come to us for presswork, and some also bring us their traditional photographic printing and finishing.” Regardless of how a new client relationship begins, he notes, the important thing is to form a bond with that customer.

Looking ahead, he expects to see digital offset replacing more and more traditional silver halide products, such as wedding albums. “The technology will continue to advance. Long term, we expect HP to remain a leader in digital offset printing for the photographic industry, and we expect to take advantage of that leadership to deliver our customers the best possible photo products.”

Customer solution at a glance

Primary application

Photo specialty printing

Primary hardware

- HP Indigo press 5000
- HP Indigo press 5500
- HP Indigo Production Manager

The company initially outsourced production of the new greeting card line to another company that was using an HP Indigo press. “Within a couple of weeks, we realized we had a solid product that our customers would continue to buy, and we didn’t like outsourcing very much. So we were anxious to get our own Indigo press. It was a perfect complement to what we had been doing in the photo processing business.”

Just two years later, digital products produced on HP Indigo presses will account for nearly 25 percent of the company’s revenue. The company has moved into a new 47,000 square foot facility and added four more Indigo presses, including a second HP Indigo press 5000 and three HP Indigo press 5500’s. In addition to greeting cards and announcements, WHCC now offers photo books and ancillary products such as business cards, bookmarks, gift tags and more.

The HP Indigo press 5500 offers several improvements over the 5000, including light cyan and light magenta inks to improve photo reproduction, on-press fast ink replacement technology, oil recycling, and an improved paper feed system. “The new feeder is the change that’s really paying off for us,” says Chris Hanline. “The 5500 is more productive, and when we’re running the presses full out, seven days a week, that’s going to prove very useful.”

“The photo book market for professional photographers is different from the amateur market. It has to have the look and feel of a premium product. That’s another reason we’re glad we’re working on Indigo presses.”

– Mike Hanline, Co-CEO and Co-Owner,
White House Custom Colour

Quality pays

Hanline says WHCC was one of the first custom professional labs to offer digital offset printed products. The company chose the Indigo press in part because the Hanlines were comfortable with HP and its local sales staff. The installed base of Indigo presses — much larger than the competitive products — gave them the confidence to go ahead with the purchase.

But it was quality that really sold them. “I think the quality produced by the Indigo’s liquid ink process — compared to the dry toner offered by other manufacturers — is a big advantage,” says Chris Hanline. “You can print the same job on an Indigo press and a press that uses dry toner, and the visual difference is striking.”

In fact, for jobs printed on 110# gloss cover stock (the most popular choice among WHCC customers) with UV coating, Hanline says the look is almost indistinguishable from traditional photographic prints. “A trained eye can tell the difference, but most consumers can’t.”

In addition to the gloss cover stock, WHCC also offers linen, felt and pearl finish papers. “People talk about the pearl and art papers, but the gloss seems to be our most popular,” says Chris Hanline. “Photographers get a sample pack from us, they pick what they like, and that’s what they show. In the studio market, photographers traditionally print the product one way and that’s what they sell.”

“We were anxious to get our own Indigo press. It was a perfect complement to what we had been doing in the photo processing business.”
– Chris Hanline, Chief Technology Officer,
White House Custom Colour

Greeting cards remain the company’s biggest seller. In addition to traditional single-fold cards (in sizes ranging from 4x5.5 to 5x7 inches), the company offers premium products including a tri-fold card and accordion fold.

But Hanline expects their photo book business to grow quickly. Books are available in three different sizes, horizontal 8.5x11 and 11x14, and a square 10x10 book. The company offers five different cover materials including fabrics and leathers. “The photo book market for professional photographers is different from the amateur market,” Mike Hanline notes. “It has to have the look and feel of a premium product. That’s another reason we’re glad we’re working on Indigo presses.”

Table of Contents

A&I/Isgo	4
African Footprint	7
Couture Book	10
District Photo Inc	13
Proven Pictures	16
R and R Images	19
Wayne Shoenfeld	22
White House Custom Colour	25

Isgo Photo

HP Indigo press 5000 improves photo lab's workflow, opens up new business opportunities

"With the HP Indigo press, the opportunities are almost limitless. It has opened our eyes to the enormous benefits and quality of a digital workflow. It's so much simpler and more flexible. We're now considering many ways to expand our business. The sky really is the limit."

– Baret Lepejian, Co-Owner, Isgo Photo and A&I Photographic and Digital Services

HP customer case study:

HP Indigo press changes economics of printing

Industry:

Photographic output

Objective:

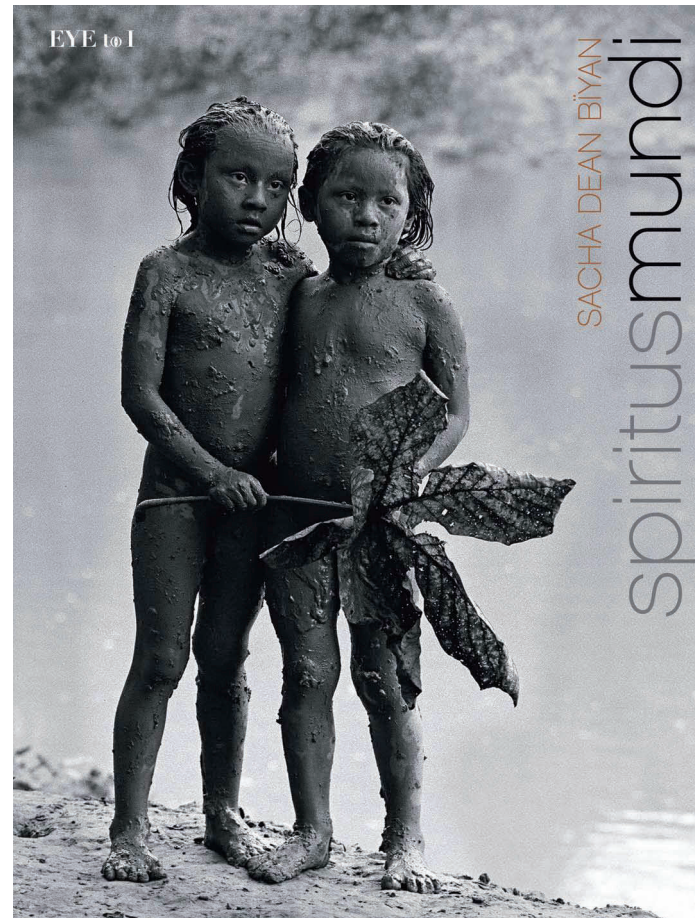
Enable high-volume production of photographs, with an open and flexible workflow that doesn't rely on highly skilled press operators.

Approach:

Isgo Photo/A&I Photographic and Digital Services purchased HP Indigo press 5000's to facilitate consistent, high-quality printing for head shots and to pursue new markets, including short-run fine art book printing.

Business benefits:

- Consistent image quality without print variables.
- Ability to accept a wide variety of digital file types.
- Business risk mitigated by removing reliance on individual press operators, and cross-training multiple members of staff.
- Ability to show clients exactly what a final-run print will look like with minimal time/cost.
- Elimination of traditional makeready.
- Opportunity to pursue new imaging output businesses.



When Baret and Vic Lepejian, co-owners of Isgo Photo in Los Angeles, visited a trade show to see the HP Indigo press 5000, little did they know how dramatically it would transform their business.

"We found the HP booth and handed the salesman a disk containing sample photos. While we were standing around looking at the machine, he popped in the disk and within a minute handed my brother and me the prints. They just looked perfect!" recalls Vic. "He did another print, and then another. Each was as good as the one before. The consistency was fabulous. After we took a close look at the images it was pretty much a done deal: The HP Indigo press had exactly the kind of output quality we were looking for."

Technology transforms a business

For nearly 40 years, Isgo has provided actors, studios and others in the entertainment industry with photographic services. The family-run business has become the premiere photo lab for actors in need of headshots.

White House Custom Colour

HP Indigo presses power professional photo lab's entry into new markets

"We think HP Indigo presses provide a higher level of quality than the platforms used by many of our competitors, and give us an important competitive advantage."

– Mike Hanline, Co-CEO and Co-Owner, White House Custom Colour

HP customer case study:

White House Custom Colour uses HP Indigo presses to add photo books, greeting cards and other specialty items to professional lab services

Industry:

Photo specialty

Objective:

Provide flexible, photo-quality printing for new specialty products including greeting cards, photo books and more.

Approach:

White House Custom Colour has chosen HP Indigo presses and a scalable RIP solution to produce new specialty products and accommodate rapid growth.

IT improvements:

HP Indigo Production Manager with eight RIPs drives work to all five of White House's Indigo presses, and can accommodate more.

Business benefits:

- The flexibility of offset printing combined with quality that rivals traditional silver halide photographs.
- Ability to offer several new formats in greeting cards, as well as brand new products such as photo books, bookmarks, gift tags and more.
- Scalability to accommodate future growth.



For nearly 30 years, White House Custom Colour has offered professional photographers custom lab services. Now the company has expanded its product line with greeting cards, photo books and other items produced on HP Indigo presses.

"The market for digitally printed photo products is growing very quickly. It's an important growth opportunity for our customers," notes Mike Hanline, co-CEO and co-owner of the lab. "We think HP Indigo presses provide a higher level of quality than the platforms used by many of our competitors, and give us an important competitive advantage."

New market requires new technology

White House Custom Colour (WHCC) was founded in the late 1970s by Webb White, a photographer who wanted custom lab capabilities to support his photo studio in St. Paul, Minn. When Hanline bought into the business in the late '90s, he began transforming the lab's production to digital technology.

In 2005, WHCC committed to begin offering greeting cards, wedding announcements and similar products produced using the HP Indigo Digital Press. "The photo industry had been offering one-sided photographic greeting cards for years. But they were very limiting," explains Hanline.

Hanline and his son, Chris, evaluated the industry and chose the HP Indigo press 5000 to produce their cards. "We saw the Indigo press at the PMA show and thought, 'There is a real opportunity here,'" recalls Chris, who is now the company's Chief Technology Officer.

commercial potential. Great Circle Books, by contrast, serves a different market: established and emerging photographers producing perhaps 200 to 300 books at a time for specialty audiences. For this, the HP Indigo press 5000 is ideal.

Great Circle's print provider is A&I Photographic and Digital Services, a subsidiary of Isgo Photo. The A&I staff, Schoenfeld says, have such expert eyes he's never once sent a proof back for adjustment. What's more, A&I is located right in Great Circle's hometown of Los Angeles. That means photographers can review their proofs without the time and expense of overseas travel or deliveries.

"Offset was not viable for us either economically or operationally," Weiner explains. "Discovering the HP Indigo press here in Los Angeles was nothing short of miraculous. The press allows us to print a single book of proof, hand it to the artist, and let them not only make corrections but also replace images if they wish, until every detail satisfies their requirements."

"Printing by offset is expensive, cumbersome and too often disappointing in quality. With the HP Indigo press 5000, I just set up what I want, which I can do on my own through a template, and it's there for me to look at that afternoon. What's more, the quality is amazing, particularly the way colors jump off the page."

– Wayne Schoenfeld, photographer and chairman, Great Circle Books, Los Angeles

A boon to photographers' career development

The single most important career-development milestone for a photographer, Schoenfeld says, is to publish a book. Before the HP Indigo press, that goal usually was beyond reach. Now the HP Indigo makes high quality short runs an economic and operational reality. The press also produces career-building marketing material. Schoenfeld uses the HP Indigo press, for example, to create professional-quality leave behind portfolios for individual agencies, as well as work samples on short notice.

"If I get a phone call about a new opportunity and want to get custom materials prepared by the end of the week, I can do that with professional-level quality on the Indigo," he says. "If I wanted to do something like that on offset, it would be impossible. I wouldn't even be ready to go to press by then. I'd have to cut-and-paste one-up."

Schoenfeld's latest marketing tool and charity fundraiser is a 2008 Icons/Iconoclasts calendar sponsored by HP. "It's a standing door opener for me as an artist," he says. "People will put it on their walls and every month will look at what I do." Next up for him is a trip to Nepal with

volunteer surgeons. Meanwhile, Great Circle Books is preparing its next four-series project, this time on endangered species. The wind at their backs as they move forward with these ambitious projects continues to be their partnership with HP and the advanced capabilities of the HP Indigo press 5000.

"I have never before experienced such a meaningful coinciding of interests with a corporation," Schoenfeld says. "HP cares about the quality of its products, the users of the products and about what the products are used for. The company enthusiastically jumped in to support our vision, and as a result the lives of thousands of children have been changed."

Customer solution at a glance

Primary applications

Short-run, fine-art photography books; customized artist portfolios; single-book proofs; calendars and marketing materials

Primary hardware

- HP Indigo press 5000
- HP Designjet Z3100 Photo Printer
- HP Scitex XL 1500 Printer

HP services

- HP sponsorship

Six years ago, Isgo Photo supplemented the photographic workflow by adding an alternative: actor composites and head shots printed lithographically, utilizing direct-to-plate printing to produce 300 to 500 images. The technology was fabulous. But it changed the business in an unanticipated way. "We were relying completely on the press operators," reflected Baret. "We were really exposed if the pressmen were out sick, or if they took an unscheduled absence. Not being able to run the press ourselves was a pretty scary scenario, given the importance of the output to our operation and our clients."

For years the Lepejian brothers had been monitoring the quality and capabilities of digital presses. The right device could potentially provide a solution to their concerns. "For us, quality is always by far the most important criterion," says Baret. "But we never found a digital press that could quite deliver the quality that we were seeking."

That is, not until they saw the HP Indigo press 5000 in action. In addition to its impressive quality, the press also addressed Isgo Photo's business requirements. "Now we're able to take employees who understand color, give them some minor HP training, and they can operate the HP Indigo press," says Vic. "Our best people can now multitask and cover each other—they can continue their creativity from the beginning of the process to the very end. With the HP Indigo press 5000 we have everything we need rolled up in one cost-effective package — it has excellent quality, speed, and ease-of-use."

Driving web-based business with electronic workflow

Today, the HP Indigo press has transformed the workflow for head shots at Isgo. On the company's website, customers access a "Head Shot Kiosk" to electronically deliver an image file and place an order. They have the option of specifying digital photographic printing, or offset printing on the HP Indigo press. About 70-80 percent of the incoming work from the web portal ends up being printed on the press.

"When people come in the lab, they say, 'Let me see photos and let me see offset,'" explains Baret. "Most will choose offset printing — what comes off our HP Indigo. Offset is cheaper; for the price of 100 digital photos, you get about 300 prints off the HP Indigo. And personally, I often think the HP Indigo prints look better, especially if the output is UV coated." Unlike traditional offset printing that produces a dot pattern that's clearly recognizable to the naked eye, the HP Indigo press utilizes a stochastic print process with much finer dots. The result is reproduction that rivals photographic printing.

To ensure customer satisfaction, Isgo counsels customers to start with a test print. The company produces a 12 x 18 sheet from the HP Indigo press with two images — one is direct output from the customer-submitted digital file, and the second, a file that has undergone minimal color correction in Adobe Photoshop software.

"The great thing is that with the HP Indigo press, people are getting a test print that will truly match the final results," says Baret. "In the past, they

might see an inkjet print that would be kind of close to what would come off our previous press. But now we can print a single sheet on the HP Indigo, and tell customers, 'This is exactly what you'll get.'"

The press also facilitates consistency, one of the highest goals for any photo lab. "With a traditional press there are so many variables in the process," explains Vic. "With the HP Indigo press the variables are gone. It prints consistently from sheet one right through to the last. That's a massive benefit. And the same quality gets consistently reproduced on every run, be it the second, the third or even a run performed weeks later."

Vic says that ink plays a key role in determining the HP Indigo press' ability to create quality images, "The HP liquid ink is amazing. You can look at it from any angle and there's no toner-like build-up or any of the other issues that we typically see with digital press output from lesser equipment. The HP Indigo press lays down the ink in such a way that someone can take a magnifying glass and barely see the dot pattern because it's so fine. It's fantastic!"

"The great thing is that with the HP Indigo press, people are getting a test print that will truly match the final results. In the past, they might see an inkjet print that would be kind of close to what would come off our previous press. But now we can print a single sheet on the HP Indigo, and tell customers 'This is exactly what you'll get.'"

– Baret Lepejian, Co-Owner, Isgo Photo and A&I Photographic and Digital Services

Expansion into books, other potential markets

In 2004, Isgo acquired A&I Photographic and Digital Services, a high-end lab catering to artists and photographers. On that side of the business, the HP Indigo press has enabled the company to expand into a brand new market — short-run, full-color photographic book printing.

A&I had long established itself as a premier lab serving some of the area's most demanding photographers. There was always a client who had just had a coffee table book of photographs published. But the economics of printing and publishing kept many photographers out of print. The cost of prep and "makeready" — getting an offset press properly set to print the pages of a book with full-color images — meant that photo books had to be ordered in quantities of several thousand, making the cost prohibitive.

The HP Indigo press has changed all that. Makeready doesn't exist for a digital press. So A&I can utilize the HP Indigo press 5000 to print one book, or 10, or 100. "It gives young photographers the opportunity to design their work, to be hands-on with a project, and to showcase their work even if they can't afford to print 5000 copies," says Baret.

The company has added a full-time coordinator to handle book production. Its price list gives flat project pricing for book production, starting at 100 copies of a full-color book for \$1,800 (\$18 per book) with perfect binding; 500 books are just \$3,600 (\$7.20 each).

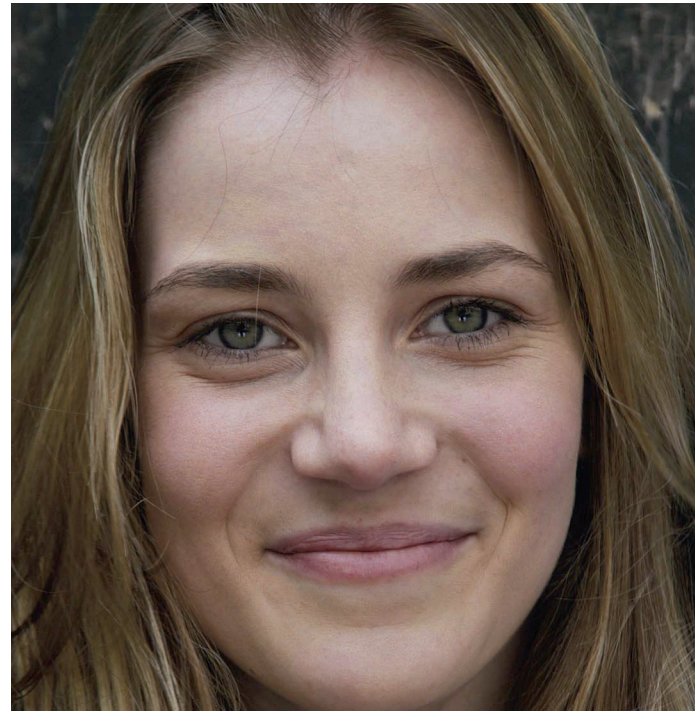
Great Circle Books, a boutique publisher launched in 2005 specifically to provide access to high-quality book publishing at an affordable cost for photographers, spent months evaluating printers in the U.S. and overseas. It ultimately chose A&I to handle its printing. "A&I is the top of the line for fine art printing in Los Angeles, and highly respected among photographers," says Rex Weiner, co-owner of the company.

A&I recently had four Great Circle book projects in process. Each was to have 1000 copies printed. Great Circle also worked with A&I to coordinate an exhibit and reception showcasing each photographer's work to promote the books, with proceeds from book sales that night going to a non-profit organization related to the book project.

The first book off the press, Spiritus Mundi by photographer Sacha Dean Biyan, captures indigenous peoples living in endangered environments. "The "Spiritus Mundi" book produced by the HP Indigo press was a smaller version of the hard cover book of the same name," Biyan explains. "Books of this type can be an asset to any photographer because each is like a high quality portfolio, and it is much more cost effective to distribute these to potential clients than the actual hard cover books. These books can actually be distributed to a broader spectrum of clientele due to their compact size and light weight."

He also expresses the importance of quality reproduction. "Printing in black and white is very subjective and I, particularly, am very picky about the way my images are presented," he says. "I have a very specific 'look' that is my signature style so the fact that we were able to capture that accurately made me very happy. I was pleasantly surprised at the quality of the book, and it was a great experience working with everyone who was involved in producing it." He adds, "Quality is paramount because after all, in the eyes of the client or an audience, you are only as good as what you present. I specialize in high-end commercial and artistic photography where quality is not a negotiating factor."

While the book itself is impressive, Weiner says its production was almost stunning. "Sacha's show was three days away, and we worked with A&I and their designer to produce the book before the show. Sacha was able to do quality control and color correction right there, they printed page proofs, and we very quickly gave the go-ahead for the press run. It was an amazing process."



New markets? New products? The sky's the limit

Fine art books may be just the first step. The first HP Indigo press 5000 proved so successful that Isgo Photo soon bought a second. That gives the company live backup for a critical production resource, additional capacity, and the opportunity to explore new markets.

"With the HP Indigo press, the opportunities are almost limitless. It has opened our eyes to the enormous benefits and quality of a digital workflow," says Baret. "It's so much simpler and more flexible. We're now considering many ways to expand our business. The sky really is the limit."

Customer solution at a glance

Primary applications

- Printing photographs in large quantities
- Printing books in small quantities

Primary hardware

- HP Indigo press 5000



Books that make things better

In his wide-ranging career, Schoenfeld has been a psychotherapist, a talk show host and president of an international airline. But his passion is humanitarian photography. Schoenfeld's partnership with HP began with the book "Through This World But Once," documenting a 2006 mission of 40 volunteer surgeons, nurses and civilian aides to Ethiopia through the non-profit organization Rotaplast International. His latest work produced through HP sponsorship is "Icons/Iconoclasts," Schoenfeld's personal recreation of the North American circus of the 1930s.

Cross-eyed as a child, Schoenfeld remembers an experience of transformative joy when his parents hired a clown for his fifth birthday party.

"Great Circle Books is a small business. We can't afford to make mistakes. The HP Indigo press 5000, with its fast turnaround and its ability to produce one book or a thousand, is essential to our goals."

– Rex Weiner, editor-in-chief,
Great Circle Books, Los Angeles

Decades later, Schoenfeld spent \$150,000 of his own money to assemble a panoply of authentic circus performers, tents, costumes and vehicles—even a live elephant named Thai—to descend one day on a vacant lot in Los Angeles for a massive photo shoot exploring the circus as a metaphor for the human psyche. The resulting work drew the attention of the world-famous Cirque du Soleil™, which mounted an Icons/Iconoclasts exhibition—extended for a month because of its unprecedented success—at the circus group's international headquarters in Montreal, Canada. Next came a touring exhibit. Now comes the ongoing benefit of charity fundraising: All proceeds from "Icons/Iconoclasts" book sales will be donated to the Rotaplast Missions Social Circus Project. Schoenfeld's work with Rotaplast merges two of his great passions: the circus and medical missions for children. Preparing for his Rotaplast trip to Ethiopia, Schoenfeld recalled the tension always present when frightened children meet scary foreign doctors. He had an idea: Why not bring a clown along to brighten the atmosphere? Rotaplast linked with circus performer David Fiset of Clowns Without Borders, and the entire group headed overseas in November 2006. The results can be seen in "Through This World But Once": physically restored children beaming with delight, entire villages chortling over Fiset's sweet, goofy antics and preposterous red nose. "Doctors heal the body, clowns heal the soul," Schoenfeld says. "You can just see the magical difference laughter makes."

"Through This World But Once" is one of a series of four HP-sponsored books published by Great Circle Books in its Eye to I series. Founded in 2005 by Chairman Schoenfeld and Editor-in-Chief Rex Weiner, Great Circle Books publishes fine-art photography books with a humanitarian theme. Eye to I, in addition to Schoenfeld's Ethiopia book, includes "Spiritus Mundi" by Sacha Dean Biyan, depicting indigenous tribes of the Amazon Basin; "Migrant Artifacts: Magic and Loss in the Sonoran Desert" by Michael Hyatt, recording objects left behind by undocumented workers; and "a.k.a. BooBoo" by Robert Yager, exploring the life of a Latina gang member in Los Angeles. Each book was created as a benefit for a particular non-profit organization.

"HP's support for telling these stories has been a significant factor in raising hundreds of thousands of dollars that go directly into helping people around the world," Schoenfeld. "My appreciation for that is from the heart."

HP graphic arts solutions contributed to the entire project. The promotional posters were printed in photographic quality with the HP Designjet Z3100 Photo Printer. Invitations for the Gala Opening as well as the fine-art books themselves were printed on the Indigo digital press and an outdoor building banner to promote the opening event were created using the HP Scitex XL1500 Printer wide-format digital printing system.

Enabling the short-run business model

Schoenfeld's appreciation for HP comes also from his business sense. He and Weiner say the very business model under which Great Circle Books operates would not be possible without the HP Indigo Press. "The HP Indigo makes Great Circle Books viable because our business plan is based on short-run printing of very high quality," Editor-in-Chief Weiner says. "I would put our books up against any other publisher's products and ask them to match aesthetics, customer satisfaction, reader satisfaction and critical review."

The first HP Indigo advantage is image quality. With its Adaptive Halftoning technology and unique liquid HP ElectroInk, the HP Indigo press 5000 produces crisp, sharp images with rich, vibrant colors and accurate skin tones. Schoenfeld says the HP Indigo's quality in his experience surpasses that of offset.

"For photographers, we fuss so much to get our colors right, to then see them not quite perfect, as often happens with offset, is really a disappointment," he says. "From an artistic point of view, the HP Indigo has a broader palette of colors from which to draw. It makes our job of recreating the work in our minds much easier."

Another great advantage of the HP Indigo digital press is its ability to produce short runs cost-effectively. Many fine-art books, Editor-in-Chief Weiner explains, are produced by offset press in China, Italy or Germany. With offset economies requiring print runs of at least 10,000, most publishing houses won't even touch a book that lacks substantial

HP Indigo press 5000 supports photographer's mission

Wayne Schoenfeld's photographs explore the human spirit through vibrant images

"HP jumped in enthusiastically to help me tell these stories and as a result, the lives of thousands of children have been changed. It couldn't have happened without the superb image quality and cost-effective flexibility of the HP Indigo press 5000."
– Wayne Schoenfeld, photographer, chairman and co-founder, Great Circle Books, Los Angeles

HP customer case study:

Photographer Wayne Schoenfeld of Great Circle Books relies on the HP Indigo press 5000 for economically viable production of short-run, high quality fine-art books for humanitarian causes

Industry: Publishing

Objective:

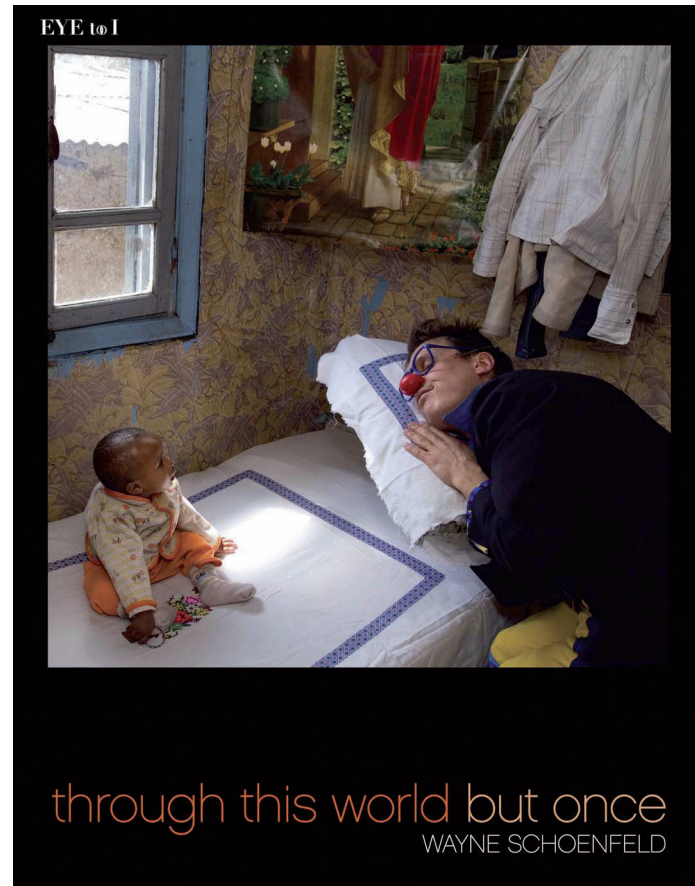
Create fine-art photography books with humanitarian themes for niche markets

Approach:

Produce short-run, high quality books on the HP Indigo press 5000

Business benefits:

- Enable economic and operational viability of short-run business model.
- Cost-effectively create high-quality photography books for niche markets.
- Satisfy artistic demand for excellent image quality and color accuracy.
- Create critical marketing vehicles for a career in photography.
- Generate income for humanitarian organizations.



Wayne Schoenfeld is a photographer with an eye for human emotion and a passion to make a difference. Look at two Schoenfeld photos side by side: One shows an Ethiopian child, eyes wide with fear, deformed teeth poking through the skin of a cleft lip. The other shows the same child's beauty shining after a volunteer surgeon has repaired the damaged flesh and restored the child back into the arms of community. See, his camera seems to say over and over—see what people can do when they care.

Today thanks to a partnership with HP, Schoenfeld's award-winning photographs are shared with the world through superbly printed books produced on the HP Indigo press 5000.

"The HP Indigo is amazing, particularly the way colors jump off the page," Schoenfeld says. "For example, I do a lot of photography of people, and it's always been difficult to get skin tones right with offset. The Indigo technology seems to do it magically."

African Footprint

HP Indigo press pops African Footprint images to life with vibrant color

"The HP Indigo press has been critical to this project. Its superb image quality brings the show's color and vibrancy to life. What's more, the HP Indigo's total flexibility lets us continue building our book as we tour the world, showing the production's empowering impact on the communities it visits."

– Corey Ross, tour promoter, African Footprint

HP customer case study:

African Footprint musical documents rise to worldwide triumph in vibrant souvenir book printed on HP Indigo press

Industry:

Entertainment

Objective:

Create souvenir book and other promotional material to raise funds and promote African Footprint U.S./world tour

Approach:

HP sponsorship of material created on HP Designjet large-format printer and HP Indigo press

IT improvements:

- Create vibrant, colorful souvenir book
- Supply venues with promotional material
- Incorporate new content as tour progresses
- Adjust press runs to match demand

Business benefits:

- Raise targeted \$250,000 from souvenir-book sales
- Publicize U.S./world tour
- Bring South Africa to life for audiences
- Enable ongoing performance and youth empowering educational projects



Meet Thabo Komape, from Johannesburg. Nontle Mondie, from Capetown. Jabu Ngcobo, from Soweto. These three are among the 30 South African artists taking the world by storm in the touring performance of Richard Loring's African Footprint. Called an 'explosive stampede of song and dance,' African Footprint in 2008 caps triumphant runs in Europe, Australia, China, Mexico and Canada with its first-ever U.S. tour. Thanks to HP sponsorship, now the remarkable story of African Footprint will be available to audiences in a luxurious souvenir book printed on the HP Indigo press.

New Year's Eve with Nelson Mandela

The longest-running musical in the history of South Africa, African Footprint is the brainchild of the South African theater star and producer Richard Loring. Inspired by the work of gang-leader-turned-poet Don Mateta, Loring opened a performing-arts school to give young South Africans from the townships an alternative to lives of violence and poverty. After a year of intensive vocal classes and dance instruction, Loring's students were invited to perform on December 31, 1999 before top South African leaders including former President Nelson Mandela. An historic event, the performance was held in Block B of Robben Island—the very place Mandela had been imprisoned for some 18 years. Not only was this a milestone of empowerment for South Africa, but also CNN, reporting how countries around the globe were celebrating the millennial New Year's Eve, broadcast the performance to more than 250 million viewers worldwide.

The next day, Loring’s phone rang off the hook. Everyone wanted tickets to the show. Except, there was no show, just a dance school that had staged a special performance. Recognizing an unprecedented opportunity, Loring worked fast. In six months, the traveling performance of African Footprint was born: 30 performers, 10 backstage professionals, drums, saxophones, one and a half tons of costumes—all gathered to depict the history of South Africa through a celebratory meld of Afro and Euro-centric music and dance. The show toured for two and a half years in Europe—where it was the first South African show invited to perform for Prince Charles—then moved on to dazzling runs in Australia, China, Israel, Canada and Mexico. Its planned U.S. premier, on September 11, 2001, was cancelled after the terrorist attacks; already in Atlanta, the troupe backed its bags and went home. Six years later in November 2007, African Footprint finally made its U.S. premier, as the first big musical theater production in New Orleans since Hurricane Katrina. In that New Orleans audience sat a marketing manager from HP, who recognized immediately in the exuberant performance, visual beauty and empowering message a clear alignment of purpose and vision between African Footprint and HP. “HP realized the excitement demonstrated in the colors,” recalls African Footprint Tour Promoter Corey Ross, of Starvox Entertainment Inc. “We’ve got all these amazing traditional through modern-day costumes of absolutely extraordinary vibrancy. To be able to reproduce those images on massive banners and in a gorgeous souvenir book really did need HP technology. There was a perfect meeting of interests.”

The HP Indigo press: bringing color to life

For nearly 10 years, African Footprint has been creating a photographic record of its development and performance history. Now these extraordinary images, thanks to HP sponsorship and the technological advances of the HP Indigo press, are coming together in a gorgeously colorful souvenir book available for sale at each performance. Titled, like the show, “Richard Loring’s African Footprint,” the book tells the stories of individual dancer’s rise from impoverishment to world renown. It also recounts how African Footprint developed as a unique collaboration between white and black South Africans.

“The message is inherent in the show about coexistence and working together,” Ross says. “Richard Loring and Don Matera were the original white and black collaborators, and the choreographers and cast also are multi-racial. If that kind of collaboration can happen in South Africa, surely it can happen anywhere.”

The HP Indigo press is the perfect tool for telling this story, providing high-definition offset quality with the short-run flexibility of a digital press. African Footprint’s rich costumes pop off the page through the vibrant colors of the HP Indigo press’ unique liquid Electrolnk. With HP’s Adaptive Halftoning technology, the press analyzes content as it’s being printed, adding dots to produce crisp, sharp text and images. What’s more, because the HP Indigo press can easily do short runs down to even a single

copy, African Footprint can produce as many books as needed at a time—and even update content as the world tour progresses.

African Footprint is working with Great Circle Books, which publishes fine-art photography books with a humanitarian theme. Great Circle’s print provider is A&I Photographic and Digital Services, a subsidiary of Isgo Photo. The A&I staff is expert in digital production using the HP Indigo press 5000, says Rex Weiner, Great Circle Books Editor-in-Chief. A&I and Great Circle Books are both located in Los Angeles.

“The HP Indigo press not only produces the vibrant colors and quality to bring the show to life, it also gives us the production flexibility to incorporate on an ongoing basis new images of how African Footprint impacts audiences as it tours around the world.”

– Corey Ross of Starvox Entertainment Inc.,
tour promoter for African Footprint

“The quality of the images is key—the vibrancy of the colors, costumes and scenes that bring South Africa to life. To be able to reproduce that with HP Indigo print quality is critical,” Ross says. “The other key factor is the Indigo’s total flexibility. We’re going to be able to keep building this book as we tour around the world, continuing to incorporate scenes of where we’ve been, what we’ve done, and the show’s impact on the communities it visits.”

That impact is not just a stunning entertainment experience; African Footprint also serves as a global ambassador of empowerment. In New Orleans, for example, the troupe conducted a high school workshop in gumboot dancing—a type of stomp/tap dance that emerged from the mines of South Africa, using the big boots worn by miners. More high school workshops are planned, to train young people in African dance and to connect African-American youth with pride in their African heritage.

“We’re helping bridge the gaps between Africa and America,” says John Rittenour of Starvox Entertainment, business manager for African Footprint. “Through this book, we show the children of America the culture of Africa, and this incredible, empowering movement that can create change and make people proud of where they come from.”

Tour organizers plan to start with an HP Indigo press run of some 1,000 books, then print more as demand requires and new content is created. “It’ll be amazing to get photos and scenes of how this group impacts Americans as it tours,” says Tour Promoter Ross. Since the economies of the Indigo press are not driven by large press runs, we’ll be able to continuously update the books with new, exciting images.”

Small runs, big volume: wedding books and greeting cards

On the short-run side of the business, R and R is serving an exploding market for custom materials. R and R is the manufacturing subcontractor to Web companies that enable their retail customers to create and order custom books, greeting cards and photo albums online. The orders go straight from the client’s Web site to R and R’s automated workflow systems for fast-turnaround printing, finishing and mailing. Each job might produce only 25 to 50 cards, but with hundreds of orders coming in a day this adds up to a continuous stream of work.

A related side of this business is the creation of custom wedding books. R and R works with high-end photographers who take wedding pictures for the rich and famous, including many movie stars and sports celebrities. He’s not allowed to name names, but Key says the photographers resell the albums for up to \$4,000 each.

“There’s absolutely no other digital press our clients would accept the quality from. It has to be done on an HP Indigo.”

– Rod Key, president, R and R Images

“We are producing some of the highest quality work in the country. These books are absolutely stunning,” Key says. “Top notch photographers want a top notch product. To achieve the quality we need, it has to be done on an Indigo.”

New advantages with HP Indigo press 5500

More than satisfied with its first two Indigos and HP’s support for them, R and R is enjoying enhanced benefits from its new HP Indigo press 5500:

Better photo quality: The HP Indigo press 5500’s six-color Light Cyan/Light Magenta process stands to open new markets for R and R bridging the gap between digital and traditional silver halide photographic printing.

Greater efficiency: Because the HP Indigo press 5500 can run a bigger sheet size of 13x19, R and R now can print 4 1/4 x6 postcards eight up instead of six up. That means shorter press runs and less paper waste. Also, press operators now can break into a job to run a proof and keep the press running. That moves proofs more quickly through the shop. Automated workflows have reduced turnaround time by roughly half, as well as reducing error from manual processes.

Operational flexibility: R and R is testing the HP Indigo press 5500’s ability to print on a variety of substrates, including less expensive papers. Success here would both increase profit margins and open the door to new markets requiring lower price points.

Ease of use: The HP Indigo press 5500’s simple user interface and automated self-diagnostics will enable R and R to hire and quickly and easily train workers to handle the new volume as business grows.

Fulfilling the strategic vision

All of this adds up to critical enabling technology for R and R’s future. “We’re brainstorming through our marketing department. Our pressroom is testing its new capabilities. We’re surveying clients and consumers to find out what they really want,” Key says. “Our goal is to develop new product lines that will get us into markets we haven’t been in before.”

The ideas already are popping. R and R could brand photo prints with the photographer’s name and marketing messages on the back, driving more business back to their photographer clients. They could support school fundraising efforts with customized photo books parents could order online. Scrapbooking, personalized kids’ books, Little League event albums—the possibilities are endless.

On the corporate side, R and R can optimize use of customer data in personalized marketing campaigns enabled by the variable-print capabilities of the HP Indigo fleet.

“Over the next two years, you’ll see us transform more and more into a marketing company,” Key says. “We’ll help people with their strategies, so we can drive more revenue to the presses without having to bid on work.”

Customer solution at a glance

Primary application

1-to-1 marketing solutions, customorder fulfillment

Primary hardware

- HP Indigo press 5500
- HP Indigo press 5000
- HP Indigo press 3050
- Two HP Designjet 5500 Printers
- HP Designjet 10000s Printer
- HP Designjet Z3100 Photo Printer

Primary software

HP Indigo Production Manager

HP services

HP Indigo Care with remote access



"They all tie in together," Key says. "We do a lot of campaigns that require Indigo printing, but they also might need trade-show graphics, which we'd print on a Designjet. We might print a custom book on an Indigo and then create the oversize cover on the Z3100."

"With the automation features of HP Indigo Production Manager, we can take a job, put it on the right press, print it on the correct paper and manage the whole process internally throughout the whole building. That is a critical ingredient with the new HP Indigo press 5500."

– Rod Key, president, R and R Images

One-of-a-kind Couture photo books

COUTURE BOOK, which prints its creations at R and R using the HP Indigo press 5500, combines fine quality photographic digital printing with hand-made bindings. They are the fulfillment of photographer Phyllis Lane's vision for photo books.

"Couture books are exactly what I wanted to be able to show as a portfolio when I began shooting weddings several years ago," says Lane. So she and husband/partner Rodrigo Coelho launched COUTURE BOOK to fill that niche. "This product is beyond comparison," claims Coelho. "COUTURE is truly the photo book for people who want the very best."

Lane and Coelho chose R and R in part because Key is himself a professional photographer with exacting standards. And, of course, they had decided early on they wanted to work with a printer using HP Indigo press technology.

"We evaluated two other leading digital presses, but we didn't like them because of the shine you get in photos with heavy toner coverage," notes Coelho. "Our vision was to match offset print quality in order to produce a book that would emulate a coffee-table book with the photos of Annie Liebovitz or Henri Cartier-Bresson."

"The HP Indigo helps us pull more ROI out of a piece for the client by using technology as a real solution."

– Rod Key, president, R and R Images



COUTURE | BOOK

The Sixth Man: selling season tickets

Another win in personalized marketing came from a completely different angle: basketball.

A professional basketball team wanted to thank their season-ticket holders for renewing their seats for the coming year. Not only did they want to thank them, it was important to establish a rapport that would help emphasize the value of their relationship with the organization and the team. R and R had a photograph taken in the team's locker room, showing the name imprinted sports jerseys of the five starting lineups. They printed this photo on the front of a direct-mail postcard. On the back of the postcard, they printed another locker room jersey photo—only this time the name imprinted on the jersey was the customer's. Utilizing their eMotions software with variable content, R and R Images created a more emotional and dynamic thank you.

"It was a great campaign—amazingly simple, but it was hitting the right people at the right time with the right message. It really enabled the organization the ability to communicate on a more emotional level of the importance of the season ticket holder to their success."

"If we can help drive our clients' business with the HP Indigo, we know we're creating loyalty and can keep our margins."

– Rod Key, president, R and R Images

"The HP staff is extremely professional. When they said something would happen on a certain date, they were prepared to make it happen. They've also been very respectful of the work's artistic and social integrity."

– John Rittenour of Starvox Entertainment Inc.,
business manager for African Footprint

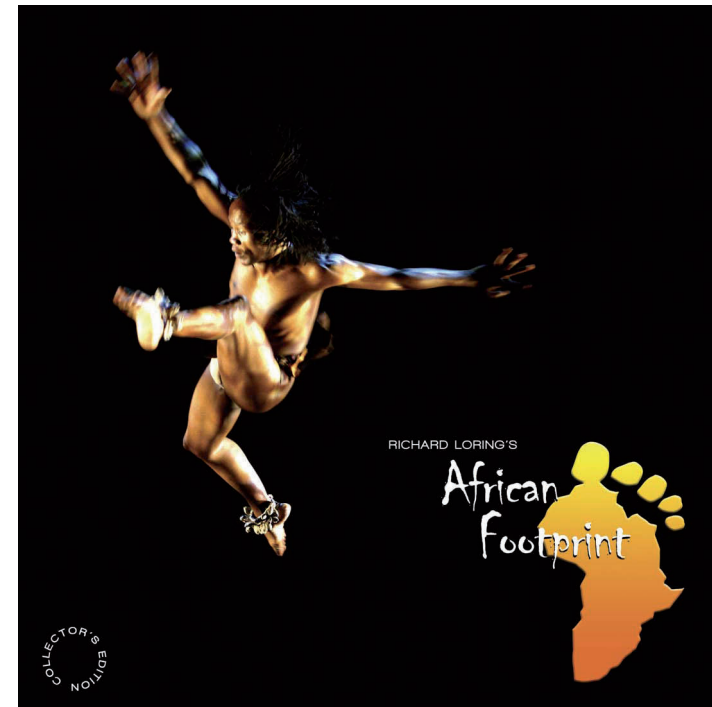
African Footprint hopes to raise some \$250,000 through book sales. The proceeds will go to helping keep the tour operating with costumes mended, bills paid and performers on payroll. With almost 40 percent unemployment in South Africa, it is extremely significant that African Footprint has employed up to 300 artists since its inception.

"South Africa has nearly 40 percent unemployment," Rittenour says. "The dancers of African Footprint in some cases represent the financial income not only of their families but of their entire villages."

In addition to backing the book, HP also is sponsoring creation of African Footprint promotional building wraps, posters and a traveling photo exhibit. These feature the total HP Graphic Arts solution. Colorful, photographic quality posters for the 20-city tour were created on the HP Designjet Z3100 Photo Printer and outdoor building signage for 20 theatres was made using an HP Scitex XL1500 Printer.

Working with HP, Rittenour says, has been extraordinarily satisfying. "When HP made a commitment to do this, it was very professional; when they said something would happen on a certain date, they made it happen. That's very unusual, especially in the world of sponsors."

Looking forward to sharing the magic of African Footprint for the first time with U.S. audiences, Rittenour adds: "We're grateful that a company as large as Hewlett-Packard has stepped up to the plate to help promote this important piece of history and the modern interpretation of a culture that has not adequately been shared with the world."



Customer solution at a glance

Primary applications

Souvenir book and other promotional materials for African Footprint U.S./world tour

Primary hardware

- HP Indigo press 5000
- HP Designjet Z3100 Photo Printer
- HP Scitex XL 1500 Printer

HP Services

- HP sponsorship

COUTURE BOOK

Printing on HP Indigo presses and traditional hand binding combine to produce one-of-a-kind photo books

“We feel that of the digital printing technologies available today, HP is head and shoulders above the rest.”

– Phyllis Lane, professional photographer and owner, COUTURE BOOK

HP customer case study:

COUTURE BOOK, the ultimate photo books, are printed on HP Indigo presses

Industry:

Photo books

Objective:

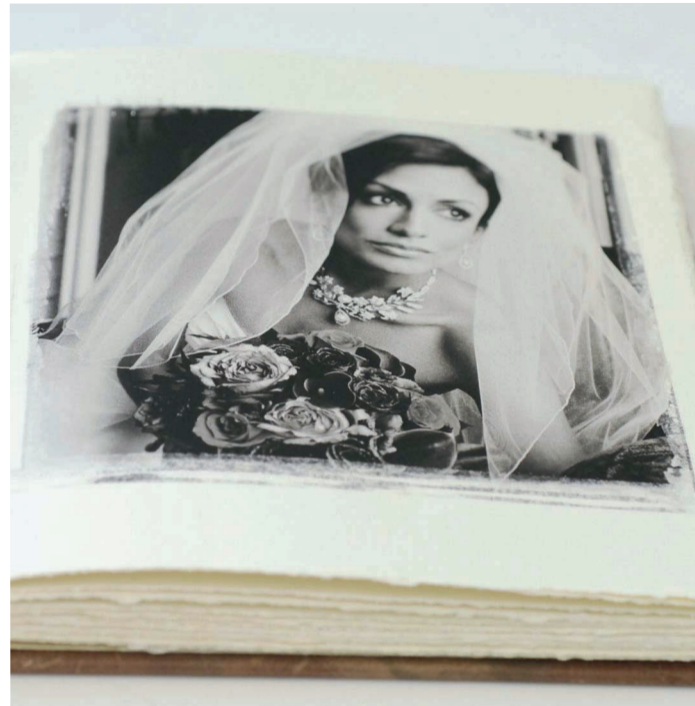
Produce one-of-a-kind, high-end photo books that will command the respect of even the best coffee-table volumes.

Approach:

COUTURE BOOK is offering custom production of photo books printed on HP Indigo press 5500's with custom, hand-made bindings.

The promise:

- Photo-realistic printing, thanks to six-color printing on the HP Indigo press 5500.
- Custom bindings that reflect geographic themes, or user-defined features.
- One-of-a-kind photo books available nowhere else.



COUTURE BOOK, which combines fine quality photographic digital printing with handmade bindings, is the fulfillment of professional photographer Phyllis Lane's vision for high-end photo books.

“This is exactly what I wanted to be able to show as a portfolio when I began shooting weddings several years ago,” says Lane. Alas, she couldn't find anyone to produce such a book. So today, she and husband/partner Rodrigo Coelho have launched COUTURE BOOK to fill that niche. The books are printed using a six-color HP Indigo press 5500, and hand-bound using time-honored techniques.

“This product is beyond comparison,” claims Coelho. “A COUTURE BOOK is truly the photo book for people who want the very best. Now we can cater to every person's needs, from brides, to fashion designers, to corporate marketers.”

Evolving to new heights

Coelho and Lane are no strangers to the photo book industry. When they met, Lane — with her knowledge of high-end fashion and journalism photography —and Coelho — with a solid background in technology— developed CMYK Books. CMYK Books allows users to go online, upload their designed book cover and page layouts and send them for printing on an HP Indigo press. CMYK Books also has a behind-the-scenes wholesale mass production process for several large professional photo sharing websites, with as many as 250 auto-designed books flowing through the production pipeline per day.

R and R Images forges future in strategic marketing

HP Indigo press 5500 powers expansion of 1-to-1 marketing campaigns, custom-order fulfillment

“With the advancements of the Indigo 5500—the bigger sheet size, the six color photo process—we can improve overall quality and even develop product lines that have never been seen before.”

– Rod Key, president, R and R Images

HP customer case study:

HP Indigo 5500 paves way for commercial printer's strategic transformation

Industry:

Commercial printing and photography/1:1 marketing solutions

Objective:

Transform R and R Images from print-services company to strategic marketing solutions provider.

Approach:

Leverage high-end capabilities of HP graphic arts portfolio to provide customized marketing products and solutions.

IT improvements:

- Digital workflows optimize efficiencies.
- Color processes rival traditional photo-print quality.
- Ease of use eases operator learning curve.
- Resource optimization cuts costs.

Business benefits:

- Expand into new markets.
- Innovate profitable new offerings.
- Transform into strategic solutions provider.
- Build customer loyalty.



President Rod Key of R and R Images well understands that in the commercial printing business, to stand still is to fall backwards. That is why his company wasted no time to become one of the very first users of the new HP Indigo press 5500.

R and R Images is an Arizona-based marketing solutions company that specializes in personalized 1-to-1 marketing, commercial photography, large-format output, design, production, scanning, bindery, fulfillment and mailing. Launched in 1986, the company has seen the commercial printing business revolutionized—and challenged—by digital technologies.

“If we're just a print-services provider, we're holding on for dear life; we're going to see prices come down and our margins come down with them,” Key says. “But if we take a more proactive stance, we'll be offering solutions that maximize ROI for our clients and build customer loyalty for us.”

The HP Indigo press 5500 is a cornerstone of this strategy.

HP presses form dynamic portfolio

R and R runs two main lines of business. The 1-to-1 marketing side conducts direct-mail campaigns for organizations ranging from manufacturing firms to sports franchises. The custom-orders side creates shortrun books, greeting cards and wedding albums for photographers and online retailers.

The 60-employee firm relies heavily on HP products. In addition to the new HP Indigo press 5500, it runs an HP Indigo press 5000, an HP Indigo press 3050, two Designjet 5500 Printers, one HP Designjet 10000s Printer and an HP Designjet Z3100 Photo Printer. Further, it recently purchased 4-RIP HP Indigo Production Manager for enhanced workflow management and high performance processing.

All this printing power adds up to dynamic end-to-end solutions for R and R clients.

Versatility makes a difference

"HP Indigo presses not only offer superb color reproduction, but also the ability to print on a variety of substrates," Limbach says. That allows Proven Direct to offer hard and soft cover books with a variety of textured, smooth and fine-art finishes; greeting cards on everything from matte coated paper to UV coated glossy and water-color papers, and highgloss calendars that could easily come from your local bookstore.

In addition to the company's original HP Indigo press 3000, Limbach's companies also now boast an HP Indigo press 3050 and three HP Indigo press 5000's. "Every generation is an improvement over what came before," he says. "The 5000 handles all the different substrates well, and different sizes of material."

When the presses are used for the direct marketing side of the business, designers like the HP Indigo's liquid inks and the ability to use Pantone (PMS) colors, allowing it to effectively mimic traditional lithography.

The photo market, on the other hand, demands more exacting color reproduction, especially in serving professionals. The HP Indigo press' seven-ink system means it can reproduce a wide color gamut rivaling traditional photo-sensitive materials.

Rapid growth ahead

Looking ahead, Limbach is planning for rapid growth on both sides of his business. The direct mail side — particularly the web-to-print dimension — should continue to grow at a healthy 30 to 35 percent annually.

On the photo side, Limbach is negotiating to broaden the number of business partners for whom Proven Direct will offer fulfillment, including expansion into the professional market. After signing up new partners, he'll project volume for the holiday season and determine whether the company needs to invest in additional RIP capability, HP Indigo presses, or finishing capabilities. He expects the photo specialty business to account for half the company's revenue by 2009.

He also expects that side of the business to continue being heavily weighted toward the holiday season — accounting for up to 70 percent of its annual sales. "The seasonality of this business is a real test," he says.

Last December, when the holiday rush stressed the presses, he called on HP service to keep them running. "They were great — always here within about four hours. You can't keep a press from being down sooner or later, especially if you run it night and day. But fast, reliable service is the difference between making a deadline and missing it. With HP's help, we delivered on time."



Customer solution at a glance

Primary application

- Photo specialty items

Primary hardware

- HP Indigo press 3000
- HP Indigo press 3050
- HP Indigo press 5000

HP services

- SRS simplified RIP system

Lane's vision for COUTURE BOOK was to produce truly one-of-a-kind masterpieces. "In the fashion industry, the word couture means one-of-a-kind, handsewn garments," she notes. "Our books will carry the 'couture' message, that is - one-of-a-kind, hand-sewn, custom books."

At the company's website, www.couturebook.com, users will be able to upload photos for a book, then either utilize an online design engine to lay out pages, or arrange to work with a Couture Concierge to enlist a professional designer. The online design engine offers a number of simple, understated designs with fine-art borders. "The page designs are intended to be more about the image, not a complex design," notes Coelho.

The company will use HP servers and storage to power the COUTURE BOOK website and process hundreds of gigabytes of data prior to printing.

"We evaluated two other leading digital presses, but we didn't like them because of the shine you get in photos with heavy toner coverage. A lot of our photos have heavy black coverage, which produces shininess that distracts from the overall impact. Our vision was to match offset print quality in order to produce a book that would emulate a coffee-table book with the photos of Annie Leibovitz, Steve McCurry, or Henri Cartier-Bresson."

— Rodrigo Coelho, owner, COUTURE BOOK

Printing on HP Indigo presses

COUTURE BOOK will print at R and R Images in Phoenix, the same digital printing company that has produced CMYK Books. Lane and Coelho chose R and R in part because its owner, Rod Key, is himself a professional photographer with exacting standards. And, of course, they had decided early on they wanted to work with a printer using HP Indigo press technology.

"We evaluated two other leading digital presses, but we didn't like them because of the shine you get in photos with heavy toner coverage," notes Coelho. "A lot of our photos have heavy black coverage, which produces shininess that distracts from the overall impact. Our vision was to match offset print quality in order to produce a book that would emulate a coffee table book with the photos of Annie Leibovitz, Steve McCurry, or Henri Cartier-Bresson."

HP Indigo presses employ liquid ink rather than toner. And the HP Indigo press 5500 prints with a six-ink system — adding light magenta and light cyan to the standard CMYK color palette—to produce photorealistic colors and tonality. For oversize wedding albums, the company uses HP Designjet printers and HP Viverra inks.



"We feel that of the digital printing technologies available today, HP is head and shoulders above the rest," says Lane. "With the new six-color printing and smaller dot size, you get a more continuous tone look with smoother skin tones and richer colors." Lane notes that COUTURE BOOK will cater to some of the most demanding printing customers on earth — including leading photographers and graphic designers — who want their images presented in the most pristine form possible.

Adds Coelho: "We set out to find printing that emulates high-quality offset printing, but in some ways, HP Indigo presses exceed the quality of offset. If you look closely at offset printing, you can distinguish the dot patterns. But the dots are all but invisible in images printed on the new HP Indigo press 5500s."

"We set out to find printing that emulates high-quality offset printing, but in some ways, HP Indigo presses exceed the quality of offset. If you look closely at offset printing, you can distinguish the dot patterns. But the dots are all but invisible in images printed on the new HP Indigo press 5500's."

— Rodrigo Coelho, owner, COUTURE BOOK

Custom bindery

It may be the traditional, hand-made bindings that distinguish COUTURE BOOK above the rest. They recall a bygone era in which bookbinding was a true art. Imagine books with richly embossed, or sometimes hand-engraved, leather covers; along with hand-made papers with decorative edges, hand-antiquing and hand-sewn bindings.

COUTURE BOOK will offer customers several different “lines.” Among them: the Italian line, with 100-pound cream-felt pages and hand-torn edges (like a deckleedge); the Himalayan line, with hand-made Nepalese paper; or the French line, with a velvet cover. Pages will be hand-sewn and gathered for the binding, using a technique that allows the page to lay flat when the book is opened. Books can be up to 300 pages.

“We offer a wide, wide variety of choices in these standards. But from the design to the binding, customers can also create something that’s nonstandard. So it’s truly a one-of-a-kind, hand process,” says Lane.

The bindery that Lane and Coelho have selected to produce COUTURE BOOK products is a 40-year-old, family-owned business that’s known as one of the few binderies in the country with traditional artisans that devotes itself to producing one-off books. The company has dedicated a part of its facility to meeting the needs of Lane and Coelho’s photo books.

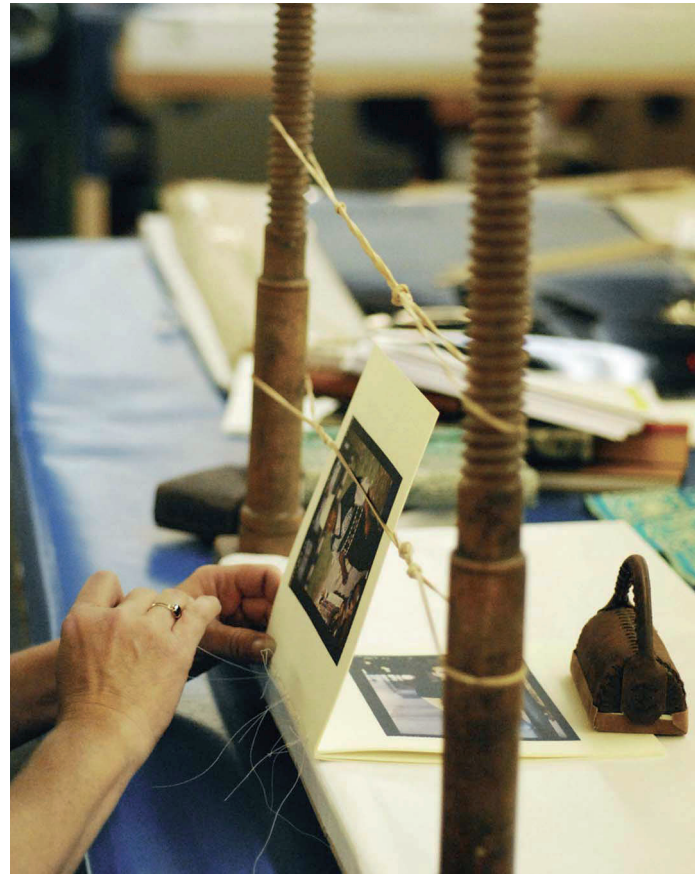
“We offer a wide, wide variety of choices in these standards. But from the design to the binding, customers can also create something that’s nonstandard. So it’s truly a one-of-a-kind, hand process.”

– Phyllis Lane, professional photographer and owner, COUTURE BOOK

“We’re kind of a quarterback for COUTURE BOOK,” notes Coelho. “First we partnered with R and R, which is known for its quality in digital printing; and with our custom binder, which is also known as being premiere in its field. We’ve written software that brings the images into the process and manages pagination. We oversee production and ensure a high-touch customer experience. Now we can step back and see the synergy of all those pieces working together, realizing our customers’ vision.”

Reaching an untapped market

Prices at COUTURE BOOK will start at more than \$200, and some of the design lines using leather covers will be several times that. Coelho says their market survey estimates the business opportunity at \$50-\$100 million annually.



In addition to her peers in the photographic and graphic design communities, Lane anticipates COUTURE BOOK will include brides who crave unique wedding albums; corporate marketers who need presentation books, architectural books, graphic design portfolios and the like; and even style-conscious shoppers at high-end stores.

In fact, looking ahead, the company would like to make the books available at high-end department stores like Neiman Marcus and Bergdorf Goodman, with exclusive lines available only by ordering through the store. Further into the future, Lane and Coelho would like to create COUTURE BOOK boutiques, where customers can browse through books, drop off digital images, and talk with designers. “Seeing the books and holding them will make the difference for some customers,” Lane says.

She clearly believes COUTURE BOOK will serve an untapped market. “A lot of people who want better things are spending their money today on the very ordinary, like \$450 sunglasses,” Lane continues. “These are books that will be valuable treasures to people for the rest of their lives. They are meant to last generations. We feel the value proposition is tremendous.”

Evolving to serve new markets

In 2003, Limbach took the existing mail house business Postal Solutions, added new capabilities like graphic design and creative services, as well as additional equipment including their first HP Indigo press 3000, and transformed it into Proven Direct, a direct marketing service provider featuring database services, creative services, graphic design, output and mailing capabilities. Today the company can handle an entire direct marketing campaign, from planning to response tracking.

Proven Direct utilizes five HP Indigo presses to produce direct mail communications, combining high-quality color graphics with variable elements driven by the client’s database. As part of the company’s capability, it built several web-to-print applications enabling clients in manufacturing, finance and healthcare to log in, customize marketing templates developed especially for their needs, and order customized printing off the HP Indigo presses.

That allows Proven Direct clients to target an individual, use variable data to personalize a mailing, speak directly to the customer’s specific needs or wants, and make an offer that is relevant to that customer. As a result, it can promise clients a response rate of up to 25% — far exceeding the average response for a direct marketing campaign.

In preparing to launch the business, Limbach consulted with one of his largest customers, a financial services company, about what kind of output device he should get. “They had a very high-end clientele, so their hot button was print quality,” he explains. Limbach showed them print samples from an HP Indigo and two competitors, and without hesitation, they chose the HP Indigo.

Business-to-business photo specialty

Three years later, Limbach became aware of the photo specialty business involving customized printed products such as calendars, photo books and greeting cards. “We learned that it was a rapidly growing market, and we already had HP Indigo presses, which are the de-facto output device for such products.”

He began researching the marketplace, and soon decided that rather than try to offer photo specialty products directly to consumers, he would pursue a business-to-business model. “There are already a number of companies serving consumers directly; we didn’t need to try to create a brand and immediately go up against every other online photo retailer,” he says.

Proven Direct’s first holiday season results more than met Limbach’s expectations. “During the peak photo season — from mid-November through mid-December — in those 40 days we produced more than 200,000 books, calendars and greeting cards on our HP Indigo presses,” he recalls.

“We had heard about organizations that had taken on large partners in the past and failed because they didn’t have the infrastructure right. We worked with HP to set up our infrastructure to be bulletproof. They had the experience and knew what to do and what not to.”

– Mike Limbach, owner, Proven Direct

Building a bulletproof infrastructure

But before the 2006 holiday season, Limbach’s technology team worked furiously to prepare for the onslaught of holiday gift orders. To ensure he had adequate production capability, Limbach added three more HP Indigo presses and worked with HP to implement the SRS simplified RIP system, designed to support high-volume photo printing.

“We had heard about organizations that had taken on large partners in the past and failed because they didn’t have the infrastructure right. We worked with HP to set up our infrastructure to be bulletproof. They had the experience and knew what to do and what not to.”

In negotiating with national business partners, he says, a young company needs a bulletproof architecture that can withstand shocks and surprises. Again, his technology team worked with a local managed service provider to set up a scalable client-facing application to handle orders. The infrastructure allows partners to electronically drop off an XML file along with the associated image files, which then feeds into an automated workflow for printing and finishing capabilities to produce a dozen different sizes of books, plus cards and calendars. “In one sense, we’re selling HP Indigo printing, but all those other capabilities add value,” Limbach says.

Proven Direct

HP Indigo presses combine superb photo quality with versatility to launch new photo specialty business

“HP Indigo presses not only offer superb color reproduction, but also the ability to print on a variety of substrates. With HP Indigo presses and our custom workflow, we know we can deliver.”

– Mike Limbach, owner,
Proven Direct

HP customer case study:

A direct marketing company leverages its investment in HP Indigo press technology to create an entirely new photo specialty business

Industry:

Photo specialty

Objective:

Launch new photo specialty business supplying customized photo books, calendars and greeting cards to serve photo retailers nationwide.

Approach:

Direct marketing company Proven Direct used its existing HP Indigo press 3050's – and added three more HP Indigo presses – to launch a new photo products business, and prepare for a seasonal business that produced over 200,000 books, calendars and greeting cards in just 40 days.

IT improvements:

HP integrated a high volume SRS simplified RIP system designed specifically for high-volume photo work.

Business benefits:

- Superb photo quality in a high-volume printer.
- Flexibility to print on a variety of substrates.
- Printing that's suitable for both direct mail and photo specialty businesses.



The HP Indigo press is an enabling technology for numerous small businesses. Just ask Mike Limbach, owner of Proven Direct.

Founded in 1997, in 2003 he transformed his company from a traditional mail house into a direct marketing service provider with custom printing capabilities, courtesy of an HP Indigo press 3000. Then in 2006, he leveraged the company's HP Indigo printing expertise, adding three HP Indigo press 5000's to launch a new photo products business in a market with 70 to 90 percent annual growth.

For Limbach, the future has never looked so bright. “We have tremendous opportunity, not just because of the projected growth of the photo market, but also because we have positioned ourselves with an infrastructure that allows us to take on new partners and dramatically expand our work. With HP Indigo presses and our custom workflow, we know we can deliver.”

District Photo

Photofinishing powerhouse adds HP Indigo presses to its arsenal

“The HP Indigo press is a brand that everybody knows, both in terms of its quality and its reliability, which is essential when you have short deadlines.”

– Bob Friend, Executive Vice President and
Chief Operating Officer, District Photo

HP customer case study:

When District Photo decided to produce photo books, calendars and cards in-house, it chose HP Indigo presses

Industry:

Photo retailing

Objective:

Extend the “season” for photo specialty item gifts, so that orders can be accepted much closer to Christmas.

Approach:

District Photo elected to begin producing photo specialty items such as photo books, calendars and cards in-house using multiple HP Indigo presses.

IT improvements:

Scalable RIP Solution gives District Photo total control and flexibility to distribute work efficiently across all its HP Indigo presses.

Business benefits:

- High-quality, lifelike color printing that meets or exceeds consumer expectations.
- Complete solution from HP (RIP solution, Indigo presses and storage area network) helps to ensure steady throughput without bottlenecks.
- Continuing design improvements to Indigo presses promise improved print quality, production efficiency.



District Photo was founded in 1949 as a small lab developing black-and-white photos for customers in the Washington, D.C. area. More than a half century later, the company has become one of the largest photofinishers in the world, serving wholesale customers as well as direct-to-consumer, using its expertise and market position to carve out a large piece of the digital photofinishing business.

That business expanded into the photo specialty market in 2006, as District Photo began delivering custom photo books, calendars and Christmas cards — both directly to consumers and as a wholesaler to major eBusinesses across the nation — using HP Indigo presses.

“When we decided to get into the business, our first call was to HP about the Indigo press,” recalls Bob Friend, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of District Photo. “We spent three days with the HP team at their U.S. demo center. We reviewed the Indigo products, the equipment, the proposed RIP solution, and the return-on-investment we could expect. We went with HP Indigo presses, and it was the right decision for us.”

Fulfilling promises to the consumer

District Photo's expansion into photo specialty items printed on the HP Indigo press is the third leg of a triad of imaging technologies. The company already had a major silver halide print business, producing prints from wallet-size up to 20 x 30 inches; as well as a photo gifting business using dye sublimation and other processes to print on t-shirts, mugs, mouse pads and more.

"When we decided to get into the business, our first call was to HP about the Indigo press," recalls Bob Friend, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of District Photo. "We spent three days with the HP team at their U.S. demo center. We reviewed the Indigo products, the equipment, the proposed RIP solution, and the return-on-investment we could expect. We went with HP Indigo presses, and it was the right decision for us."

– Bob Friend, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, District Photo

It also had participated in recent years in the photo book and calendar market, buying those products from an outside supplier. But that arrangement proved unacceptable to District. "We were not maximizing our potential because of cut-off dates that forced us to quit taking orders too many days prior to Christmas," recalls Friend. "It was jeopardizing everybody's business and chasing the consumer's discretionary dollars to other channels. That's when we decided we had to learn how to do it, and learn how to do it in a fashion that had not been done before."

District Photo staff met with the HP Indigo marketing staff, and worked to develop a production model that would serve District's needs. "We developed a very open relationship that made everyone comfortable in building a framework of what we needed to accomplish – for HP, from a technology perspective; and for us, from a process perspective. And it's been a terrific partnership."

Friend says that District developed a workflow utilizing a number of HP Indigo press 5000s, along with an HP Scalable RIP solution (SRS) and HP Storage Area Network, to virtually guarantee the company's ability to deliver on time, accepting orders with most accounts through December 20. "We changed the paradigm for production of those products for Christmas delivery," Friend says. "We were able to go to our clients and say, 'We can add X dollars to your top line because we can extend your gift order deadline by over 10 days.' It made business sense."

Another essential ingredient to success is one's distribution system. Without ensuring that you can deliver the product by the date you promise it, he adds, you can nullify all the good things you have achieved.

"We were running 7x24 for 31 straight days. The equipment stood up very well."

– Bob Friend, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, District Photo

Success in first season

Friend says the 2006 Christmas season was "right in line with what we projected," in terms of market demand, production capability and delivery. "We were running 7x24 for 31 straight days," he says. "The equipment stood up very well. The HP Indigo press is a brand that everybody knows, both in terms of its quality and its reliability, which is essential when you have short deadlines."

"It really couldn't have gone better. The time we spent developing the process in partnership with HP, understanding the equipment, software and workflow challenges, all paid off."

That's not to say Friend is content to think back on this past success. He says the company is continually striving to improve the quality of the print, and reduce costs, to help District's marketing partners maintain their margin while lowering the final cost to the consumers.

"That will broaden the appeal of our products, and attract more consumers to spend those discretionary dollars in the photo specialty market," he says.

HP Indigo press 5500 promises quality, production gains

The new HP Indigo press 5500 will help District Photo achieve its many goals. It incorporates a number of new features designed to improve quality while boosting production efficiency.

The addition of Light Cyan and Light Magenta inks will improve image quality, making tonal transitions smoother and photos more lifelike. "Going six color instead of four can help us improve on quality that's already very, very good," says Friend. "Any time you can improve flesh tones and make people look more natural, people will warm to it and that leads to more product satisfaction."

Mechanical improvements make the press and overall workflow more efficient. One change is an improved paper feed system, which promises smoother performance. Friend welcomes any improvement that reduces production interruptions, though he says District's Indigo presses performed well during their first holiday season.

The addition of in-press oil recycling on the HP Indigo press 5500 is another welcome change. Friend acknowledges he hadn't figured the cost of oil disposal into his original return-on-investment calculations. With in-press oil recycling, it becomes a non-issue.

Refined workflow based on SRS RIP, Indigo presses

As a major wholesale lab, District Photo has refined photographic production to a fine art over the years. For its initial foray into the photo specialty production, the company spent months developing a workflow to achieve consistent throughput at every step in the process. District Photo market planners sat down with the HP Indigo team to thoroughly examine production requirements for different types of jobs and files.

A critical component of that workflow is the HP Scalable RIP Solution (SRS), which District tested extensively. "You're only as fast as the slowest point in your production stream," Friend says. "If you have bottlenecks — whether it's bandwidth for receiving jobs, your middleware, your RIP, the presses themselves, your finishing area or distribution — the bottlenecks will define your maximum production capability. If every part of the flow isn't moving constantly, you're creating obstacles to success."

SRS helps District meet the peak seasonal demand of the photo specialty market because it can scale to keep multiple HP Indigo presses running at continuous engine speed. The RIP solution automatically balances jobs among presses to improve throughput. It also gives District centralized control and a real-time view of production status.

The HP Storage Area Network gives District the capacity to accept the large influx of jobs that hits in late November, process and store jobs as production needs dictate, and access finished job files in case of re-orders or spoilage in the production process.

"When you have a digital business, storage and archiving are critical to your success," Friend says. "No matter how good your production tools and systems are, there will always be some waste that comes off the press. If it's necessary, we want to be able to go back and pull the job out of storage to reprocess it without having to go back to the customer or our marketing partner."

Looking ahead, Friend says District Photo's performance in its first holiday season gets "two thumbs up." Now he's planning for the second season. "I see the market continuing to grow as the end consumer understands more and more about digital, and what it can do. Our job is to be ready to deliver whatever that consumer wants, and HP Indigo presses are now an integral part of our preparation."



The Christmas season "really couldn't have gone better. The time we spent developing the process in partnership with HP, understanding the equipment, software and workflow challenges, all paid off."

– Bob Friend, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, District Photo