



amsive

An Informed Inkjet Investment

Building for the future.

Amsive, Bolingbrook, IL, made the move to production inkjet after a methodical evaluation of investment benefits, equipment options and operational readiness. The company established a comprehensive and systematic due diligence process that guided its decision to purchase a RICOH Pro VC70000. This case study details the actions Amsive executives took when making the decision to invest in production inkjet printing press.

A Ricoh Commercial Printing Business Case Study



RICOH
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Discover how Amsive can amplify your results.

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Provider of Turnkey Personalized Marketing

The company has been in business for over 50 years and is a leading provider of technology-enabled, data-driven marketing solutions focused on customer acquisition and engagement. Amsive provides personalized, turnkey marketing solutions designed to provide high returns on investment across the financial services, insurance, healthcare, retail and automotive industries. The company recently acquired Chicago-based Sourcelink, also a fully integrated marketing services provider focused on delivering ROI-driven omnichannel marketing solutions. Sourcelink provides an array of services to middle-market clients. In-house database and analytics experts use customer intelligence tools to profile and segment client prospects through predictive modeling. The combined entities employ 800 people in seven locations with nationwide sales coverage and almost \$200 million in annual revenue.

Markets Served



Financial



Insurance



Healthcare



Retail



Automotive



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The Inkjet Decision

While Amsive was an early adapter of digital print technology, company executives held off on making the inkjet investment. According to Executive Vice President John Gagliano, “We looked at inkjet for a long time. We needed the right blend of quality, speed and format to make inkjet work for our business and, most importantly, for our customers.”

Initially, Amsive outsourced the inkjet printing of healthcare and insurance welcome kits; Amsive would set up the files and send the work out for printing. The firm was also laser printing personalized content on pre-printed shells.

An important investment factor for Amsive was having enough volume to justify bringing inkjet in-house. According to Gagliano, “We also wanted to increase capacity, reduce cost, improve turnaround time and get mail out more quickly. The maturity of inkjet technology combined with existing volumes meant it was time for us to seriously evaluate making an investment.”

Company decision-makers viewed inkjet as a game-changing technology investment and believed that choosing the right supplier was imperative to making the investment successful. Gagliano explains, “Investing in inkjet meant moving outsourced work in-house as well as grabbing share from cut-sheet digital devices and pushing the offset to digital conversion. We realized that inkjet changes not only the pricing model, but also how we handle workflow and automation because of the increase in uptime and print volume.”

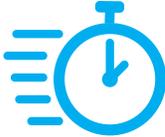
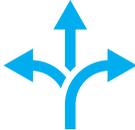
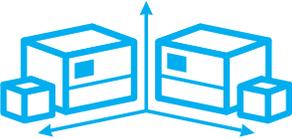


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– John Gagliano, EVP

The Evaluation Process

Given the importance of selecting the right inkjet press, Amsive developed a method to evaluate and score presses against key attributes. The company established key metrics and created a “graded summary report card” to evaluate inkjet printing presses on quality, speed, format, price, cost of consumables, workflow, service, paper stocks and upgrade path. In addition to the scorecard, Amsive created a cross-functional team to evaluate options. The team, comprising staff from operations, technology, marketing and finance departments, conducted on-site visits to equipment manufacturers and their customers.

 <p>Equipment Pricing Leasing Options</p>	 <p>Consumables Pricing Ink & Media</p>	 <p>Performance Quality, Dryer Type, Print Speed & Resolution</p>
 <p>File Workflow File Flexibility</p>	 <p>Substrate Flexibility Card, Coated, Offset, Uncoated Stocks</p>	 <p>Finishing Solutions Book, B1 Large-Format, Lettershop, Finishing Options</p>
 <p>Format Web Width</p>	 <p>Footprint Press Configurations, Operations Footprint</p>	 <p>Service Localized Presence, Maintenance Options</p>
 <p>Upgrade Path Software, Hardware, Future Upgrades</p>	 <p>Vendor Relationship Partnership & Alliance</p>	<p>Graded Category Summary</p>



RICOH
Pro VC70000

The Ricoh Pro VC70000 met Amsive's needs for speed, quality, flexibility, price and performance.

The RICOH Pro VC70000 features Ricoh-patented drying technology and extended gamut inks. These innovations work together to increase ink limits for higher image quality, drive down turnaround times to help meet service-level agreements (SLAs) and increase throughput, as well as enable printing on uncoated, offset-coated,

inkjet-treated and inkjet-coated stocks without pre-treatment or priming. The press supports a wide variety of media with basis weights of up to 260 GSM and as thin as 40 GSM. The RICOH Pro VC70000 is highly productive with speeds up to 492 feet per minute and up to 130,000 A4/letter impressions per hour.

Learning Experiences

Gagliano reports that the press installation was seamless. One of the bigger challenges, he says, was profiling the various substrates to effectively manage ink consumption. Gagliano explains, "Given our customer base, we need to generate a number of custom profiles. We have G7 experts, but we learned that speed, ink, drying temperatures and variety in paper stocks added to the complexity and profile creation time." While inkjet production presses are delivered with standard color profiles, Fortune 500 customers frequently require printers to tweak specific colors for specific stocks. Changing papers or inks can increase or decrease the color gamut, depending on the combination. This creates a need to develop custom profiles.

Another key area that requires focus is finishing. As production inkjet continues to grow, and technology continues to improve enough that it makes sense to move more jobs onto that equipment, it is becoming increasingly important to make sure the finishing side of the equation keeps up.

Gagliano says, "Because there is greater demand than ever for variety and complexity in applications, finishing equipment must also be able to keep up with the high-speed inkjet presses on the market today. We need to be able to print on a wide array of substrates, offer unique shapes, and overcome other challenges, while also maintaining an efficient level of production to meet customer deadlines. Given the volumes we are running and difficulty in hiring operators, finishing automation is essential. It has taken us a while to get our lines up and running the way that we want them to work." Amsive invested in a Hunkeler Roll-to-Roll system, as well as a near-line Standard Hunkeler Roll-to-Stack system with a DP8-II Dynamic Perforating module.





“We are running three shifts a day, six days a week.”

Inkjet Delivering Results

But the benefits are far greater than the volume of paper running through the machine. Amsive is improving delivery times for clients’ mission-critical applications including, trigger programs, data-driven direct mailers for retail clients, jobs coming in over their marketing automation portal, and welcome letters for healthcare and insurance customers. Jobs that took two to three days to produce are getting out in the same day.

Because work is no longer outsourced, Amsive is saving money in both production cost and transportation. The RICOH Pro V70000 is enabling Amsive to reduce costs by migrating digital cutsheet work to inkjet as well as providing substantial capacity to onboard new clients.

Gagliano believes that they are just getting started. He says, “I challenged my production team to look at what we could move from offset to the inkjet press. We realized that we haven’t even really gotten started with the work that can be produced more cost-effectively using inkjet technology.”



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Recommendations to Peers

Gagliano offers the following tips for successfully investing in inkjet:



1. Take a deep look at your current business. Make sure that you know how you are going to fill up machine capacity. Technology is changing fast and early success is important.



2. Being a printer is not enough in today's market. Amsive has made substantial investments to be a data-driven omnichannel marketer that works with clients on ongoing programs and agency services.



3. Consider how to optimize your entire production process. While we have not yet invested in Ricoh ProcessDirector, we did explore the workflow options the equipment manufacturers had in place. This gave Amsive confidence in Ricoh.



4. Include the entire team in the decision-making process. Amsive included operations, sales and marketing, finance and estimating to make sure everyone was comfortable with the decision.



5. Substrates are critical. Bring in your paper partners early to have clarity on the stocks that will run the best to meet your clients' needs.



“Inkjet has afforded our customers all the benefits of digital, including more color, personalization and versioning.”



The Bottom Line

In wrapping up, Gagliano says, **“Inkjet has afforded our customers all the benefits of digital, including more color, personalization and versioning.”**

Amsive’s customers have also experienced an increase in value predicated on faster time to market and more engaging messaging on each document. With the elimination of outsourcing and pre-printed shells, Amsive is experiencing cost savings and streamlining production.

Investing in production inkjet requires a solid business plan, appropriate infrastructure and the right volumes. Now is not the time for print providers to stand on the sidelines. The technology is mature and there are many benefits for print providers and their customers.

Why Ricoh?

While Amsive followed a structured evaluation process to “grade” its inkjet options, another critical decision factor was building a strong partnership with the device’s vendor. Gagliano says Ricoh took the time to really understand Amsive’s business and priorities. He says, “They worked with our entire team to make sure we understood all aspects of the ROI. And after we purchased the press, they provided training, service and support to back us up.”

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www.ricoh-usa.com

Learn more about Ricoh Services and Solutions or contact us
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