**efi**

# Producing soft signage
with EFI soft signage printing solutions

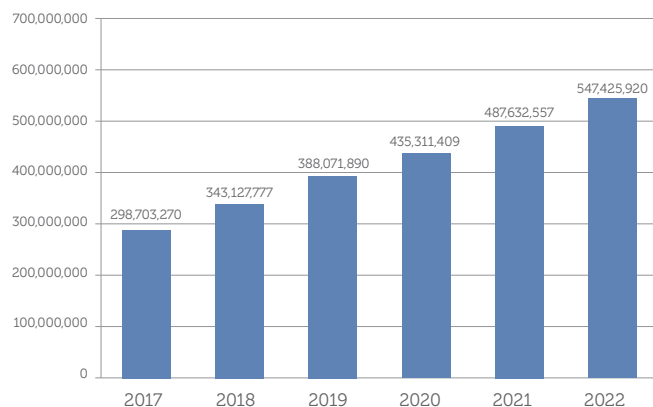# Hear that boom? The soft signage market is exploding!

The soft signage market — defined as digitally printing display graphics direct or transfer to polyester-based textile media — is experiencing unprecedented growth. In fact, according to IT Strategies, the output of dye-sublimation digital soft signage printing is expected to enjoy an 6% CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) between 2017 and 2022.*

# Move over vinyl, paper and PVC – soft signs are better

*What's driving the growth of soft signage? Buyers. They think it's better for four key reasons:*

**1** Soft signage is reusable. Unlike vinyl and paper, it can be displayed, then folded up, stored, and shipped to another location to be displayed again; most can be washed and dried.

**2** Soft signage textiles weigh less than vinyl and PVC. That makes shipping costs lower. It also makes installation faster and easier, reducing labour costs.

**3** Soft signage has a higher-value look and feel to it as compared to vinyl and paper.

**4** Soft signage has a better environmental footprint than vinyl or PVC.

**Global Soft Signage Development Square Metres of Output**

| Year | Output |
|------|--------|
| 2017 | 298,703,270 |
| 2018 | 343,127,777 |
| 2019 | 388,071,890 |
| 2020 | 435,311,409 |
| 2021 | 487,632,557 |
| 2022 | 547,425,920 |

*\*Info provided by IT Strategies 2018*

**The five-metre wide EFI™ VUTEk® FabriVU® 520 digital fabric printer**

# Soft signage can be your strong competitive differentiator

You'll command higher prices and greater margins as you take command of your market with these applications:

- Banners
- Flags
- Backlit displays

- Indoor point-of-sale
- Outdoor displays
- Furnishing

- Event and fence graphics
- Theater backdrops
- Wall coverings

## *Everything customers are willing to pay a premium price for*

Vivid colours. Excellent drape and feel. Longevity. No lingering smells or odours. These are the soft signage attributes that keep customers coming back for more.

## *A green solution for the environment — and your bottom line*

Dye-sublimation digital printers are environmentally responsible — from their aqueous-based inks to their smaller footprint, less ink consumption, and lower energy usage. And because of the lightweight nature of soft signage, transportation is more efficient and delivery costs are lowered. All of this adds up lower costs for each high-margin job.

Thanks to our unique ink-recovery system, which circulates ink through the printheads and puts it back into the primary containers, we save you more than 95% of the ink lost in other systems on the market.

## *Make more profit with high value soft signage*

| | € PER SQ MTR | £ PER SQ MTR |
|------|--------------|--------------|
| 1.8M | €26.40 | £23.80 |
| 3.2M | €35.10 | £31.69 |
| 5.2M | €79.10 | £71.41 |

*Note: Prices above are for high value applications, such as POP and or backlit applications.*

# Go with the flow: Understanding the required equipment and processes

From job submission and colour management to printing, cutting and sewing, there are new processes and equipment that you'll need to understand to produce soft signage applications. Let's explore some of the key components.

| Job Submission | Pre-production<br>File Prep<br>Profiling<br>RIP<br>Media Handling | Printing<br>Direct<br>Transfer | Sublimation/<br>Fixation | Finishing<br>Cutting<br>Sewing | Fulfillment &<br>Installation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
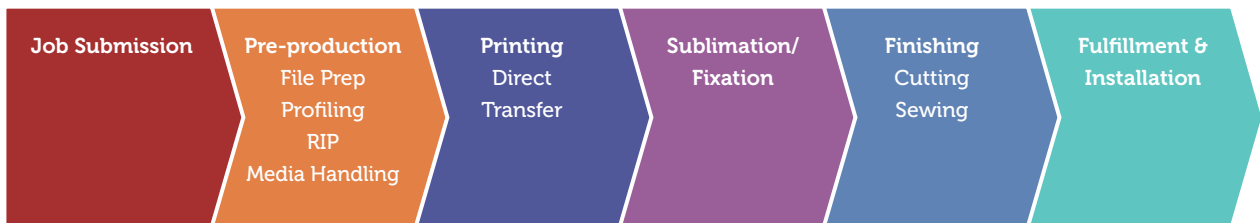
### Order acquisition

EFI's eCommerce for Soft Signage streamlines the process of order entry through production and is designed specifically for soft signage and other fabric printing applications.

### RIP and colour management software

Creating consistent, quality colour is likely the single most important thing you do as a print shop. For fabric printing, the wide assortment of surface textures and white points can seem more challenging than traditional print media, but the process is largely the same. Our Fiery® XF RIP software streamlines the process of building ICC profiles and provides power colour management tools so you can keep delivering the high-quality products your customers expect.

### Preparing and controlling your print environment

You will need to add water and drainage into your production process. Factors like controlling and measuring humidity, dew point and temperature, as well as maintaining a clean production environment, also need to be addressed to ensure your equipment stays up and running at optimum levels.

### Textile substrates

Soft signage products are manufactured by printing images directly on or sublimating to polyester, canvas, flag and other polyester-blend fabrics. Please see the Resources section on the back cover for a sampling of textile and flag materials and suppliers.

### Transfer papers

Sublimation experts will say that printing to transfer paper provides better quality since there is absolutely no ink wicking (absorption), making edge detail sharper. If image quality is of utmost importance for a job, printing to transfer paper will produce better quality than printing directly to fabric. Please see the Resources section on the back cover for a sampling of transfer papers and suppliers.

### Direct-to-textile and transfer with dye-sublimation inks

Direct-to-textile printing allows deep penetration of the ink into, and saturation of, the fabric, and you also can benefit from the cost savings of not having to use a transfer paper. It's ideal for applications where a continuous length or ink penetration on the backside is required, such as for dimensionally long event and fence graphics, building wraps, and flags. With this process, waste is reduced because no transfer carrier paper is required.

Transfer printing is accomplished by printing direct to transfer paper and then using a calender to transfer the graphic to the final polyester material, resulting in high-quality, vibrant images with fine detail.

Because both processes have their advantages, it only makes sense to utilise soft signage printers that do both with an easy changeover.

### Sublimation / Fixation

This transformation happens when microscopic particles of solid ink dyes are heated to the right temperature, changing them into a gas, and pressed with a fixation heat press or calender. When applied to the polyester surface, these dyes form a permanent bond by interacting within the subsurface of the fabric. The result is superb colour saturation, sharply defined text and graphics, and long-lasting results.

### Finishing

You may already own and be familiar with the use of cutting and sewing equipment. That same equipment is suitable for soft signage products. If not, you may have to purchase a cutter and industrial sewing machine and hire personnel to operate them.

### Shipping

Textiles weigh less so shipping costs less. And it's easier, too, since finished graphics can be folded or rolled into smaller shipments without damaging the graphics.

UNLIKE COMPETITIVE SYSTEMS, OUR MEDIUM-VISCOSITY, HIGHER-CONCENTRATION INKS ARE EASIER TO DRY, BECAUSE THEY CONTAIN LESS WATER. THAT MEANS THEY BEHAVE PERFECTLY ON PAPER AS THIN AS 57 G/M$^2$.

# Now is the perfect time to invest in your future

Today's digital dye-sublimation printers are better than ever and made to precisely fit your needs. Your future can be filled with the lucrative soft signage capability that commands hard profits.

## EFI VUTEk FabriVU series

**Designed to put you in the soft signage market fast.
High-quality images. True production-level speeds.**

Enter the world of profitable soft signage graphics printing with the EFI VUTEk FabriVU series of digital fabric printers. They offer everything you need to produce high-quality images at true production-level speeds — all while keeping your running cost low and profit opportunity high.

• Specifically designed for the soft signage market

• Industrial build and 24/7 operation for more jobs and profits

• Two times the productivity of competitive models

• Unique features like ink recovery system

• Lowest cost per metre in its category

• Manage future substrates like lighter fabrics

**EFI VUTEk FabriVU series' features at a glance:**

|  | VUTEk FABRIVU 180 | VUTEk FABRIVU 340 | VUTEk FABRIVU 340i | VUTEk FABRIVU 520 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Colours | CMYK | CMYK | CMYK | CMYK |
| Print width | 180 cm | 340 cm | 340 cm | 340 cm |
| Resolution | 2400 dpi | 2400 dpi | 2400 dpi | 2400 dpi |
| Max. productivity/hr | 400 m² | 500 m² | 250 m² | 446 m² |
| Inline Dryer | Heated platen | Heated platen | Heated platen | Heated platen |

# Suppliers

### Transfer Papers

www.bergertextiles.com
www.coldenhove.com
www.beaverpaper.com
www.cham-group.com
www.spectrajet.com

### Textile Materials

www.pongs.com
www.g-o-friedrich.com
www.fishertextiles.com
www.bergertextil.com

### Heat Presses

www.klieverik.com
www.montiantonio.com

### Rotary Cutters

www.zund.com
www.esko.com

### Laser Cutting

www.MCTdigital.com
www.maticmachines.com

### Sewing Equipment

www.maticmachines.com
www.weldmaster.com

# EFI fuels success.

We develop breakthrough technologies for the manufacturing of signage, packaging, textiles, ceramic tiles, and personalised documents, with a wide range of printers, inks, digital front ends, and a comprehensive business and production workflow suite that transforms and streamlines the entire production process, increasing your competitiveness and boosting productivity. Visit www.efi.com or call 0808 101 3484 (UK only) or +44 (0)1246 298000 (UK), or +61 (0) 7 3625 9200 (ANZ and Asia Pacific) for more information.