

CASE STUDY

Speed, Quality, Width: A Game-Changing Combination for GCI Digital Imaging

Over the years, GCI Digital Imaging has continued to make investments in the latest printing technology to provide the best possible service and most unique products to its growing customer base. “Our first major upgrade to our production was the acquisition of two EFI™ VUTEK® GS3250LX Pro UltraDrop™ Technology hybrid printers in 2018,” said TJ Bedacht, owner. “They made a huge difference in our business as we moved from the need to print and laminate to board to the ability to print directly to board. That saved us a huge amount of time and labor. When we look back at how we used to work before we got the GS3250s, it feels prehistoric! We printed on roll-fed substrate and then did the cutting manually with scissors. Often these pieces then needed to be laminated onto Coroplast or some other rigid material. It was a time-consuming and error-prone process.”



The company continued to grow and expand its offerings, and it became clear to Bedacht and his team that without enough operators to run both the VUTEK GS3250LX Pro printers around the clock, they needed a printer that would increase their capacity with faster print speeds. That’s when the company decided to add an EFI VUTEk h5 hybrid flatbed/roll-fed LED printer that can produce 100 boards or more per hour, allowing GCI Digital Imaging to take on quick marketing campaigns and larger jobs.

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CHALLENGE

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GCI Digital Imaging added an EFI VUTEk h5 printer (left) to be able to take on quick marketing campaigns and larger jobs.



Cincinnati, Ohio-based GCI Digital Imaging, founded in 1991, is a national manufacturer of grand format printing, including banners, mesh, billboards, political/yard signs, wall graphics, and vehicle wraps, primarily for the trade service. GCI Digital Imaging has a staff of 35 and offers customers the highest quality graphics using the latest technology. With over 100 years of combined printing experience from the executive staff of this fourth-generation family business, there is deep expertise in how to build powerful advertising campaigns for customers.

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The GCI Digital Imaging team's production floor now includes two EFI VUTEk Q5r roll-to-roll printers, a VUTEk h5 hybrid printer, and two EFI VUTEk GS3250LX Pro hybrid printers.

meet but also increase their capacity levels. That's when Bedacht discovered the 5-meter EFI VUTEk Q5r roll-to-roll LED printer, which replaced three latex machines. "About 75% of our work is roll-fed," Bedacht said. "When we first saw the Q5r, we knew it would be a game changer, and it certainly was. In fact, as soon as we installed it and started producing work on it, we knew we needed a second one to keep up with demand!"

The VUTEk Q5r printer configuration Bedacht chose for GCI has four-colors (CMYK), white ink and in-line X-cutting and Y-slitting options. "So, no more scissors," he says. "We don't need to wait for the whole roll to print; each job is ready for the next step once it comes off the printer."

Before acquiring their first VUTEk Q5r printer, the company was producing somewhere between 30,000 to 50,000 square feet per day of roll-to-roll mesh fencing. Bedacht adds, "The speed of the Q5r has allowed us to really

SOLUTION

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OWNER

chew through that volume quickly and we're now running approximately 60,000 square feet per day through the two VUTEK Q5r printers. Plus, the 5-meter width has been a huge advantage, allowing us to print larger panels without having to seam them together, which our customers love. Before, we were having to seam 15-foot banners together. Now we can hit it in one piece, much more quickly and in one step. And my team is also able to run more jobs efficiently on larger rolls. With the cut option, we're pulling orders off as they're printing as opposed to rewinding on a roll. It's made a huge difference in our productivity. The two or three people that were doing the cutting and seaming are now helping with other tasks, such as adding grommets. We have been able to tremendously increase our throughput without adding staff and with less overtime."

GCI Digital Imaging also chose the EFI UltraClear Coat option for its two VUTEK Q5r printers, which can be used for decorative applications as well as for a final protective coating. UltraClear Coat prints inline, simultaneously with the image, saving time versus using a separate offline coating system, and in gloss or matte finishes. "The UltraClear Coat is one of those competitive advantages that we could sell to our customers to get a few more years out of their flex face signs. It gives us the option to get rid of film lamination for certain applications, says Bedacht.

"Our customers are delighted with the quality we can generate with the Q5r. That alone would enable us to gain more business, and with all the other benefits, these

printers have truly been game-changers for our business," Bedacht adds.

Bedacht's team also takes advantage of the substantial amount of online training EFI offers, either to refresh their knowledge, learn a new skill, or to onboard a new employee. "The material is great," he says, "and they can do the learning as they have time for it, from work or from home, whichever they prefer. It's fast and it's convenient. The equipment is relatively easy to learn and operate. You don't necessarily have to have printing experience to be trained on the new equipment whereas before you might have needed two to three years of printing experience. That's really helpful, especially in light of the labor constraints in today's market."

RESULT

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Let's be brilliant. Together.

We understand you want breakthrough technologies to lead you through your digital journey. That's why we're passionate about driving your business growth with a scalable portfolio of products, solutions, services, support, and world-class partnerships for the manufacturing of signage, packaging, textiles, ceramic tiles, and building materials with a wide range of printers and inks. Our unwavering commitment is to increase your profits, cut costs, improve productivity, and optimize efficiency — job after job, year after year. We're obsessed with your success. And we definitely believe we have the right people, technology and experience to help your business achieve its goals. Visit www.efi.com or send an email to info@efi.com for more information.



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