

Signkiosk: Changing the face of signwriting with the Epson Stylus Pro GS6000



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Brett Boland
Director
Signkiosk.com



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For third generation signwriters Brett and Greg Boland, the traditional hand-and-brush model of signwriting has been forever replaced; and with the introduction of a 64-inch Epson Stylus® Pro GS6000, the team at their company, Signkiosk.com, means a radical change in the signwriting industry.

The search begins

The list of Signkiosk's high profile clients reads like a who's who in the Australian corporate community. Civic Video, Iris Group, Rent-A-Space, General Pants, Turnbull Ossher Design and Diageo are only a handful of the companies that rely heavily on Signkiosk's sign printing expertise and levels of excellence.

The search for a printer that would give Signkiosk the competitive edge well beyond that it already held within the signwriting industry, started well before the release to market of the Pro GS6000. About one-and-a-half years, in fact.

According to Greg, he first came across rumours of an Epson large format printer that addressed all a signwriter's needs in mid 2008. "We were looking for a printer that could take us beyond having to rely on outdated technologies, such as computerised vinyl cutting and the major health and environmental risks typically associated with solvent ink printers," he says.

When he started reading more about the new Epson printer, which would eventually be released as the Pro GS6000, Greg soon realised that it was the printer the signwriting industry had long been waiting for. No surprise then, that within months of the Pro GS6000's release to the Australian market, Signkiosk was running one in its Marrickville premises.

One printer for all applications

A major advantage of the Pro GS6000 for Signkiosk is that rather than operating three different printers to cover the distinct requirements for internal and external signwriting, it's now one printer for all applications. In the Signkiosk offices, an old solvent printer, water-based ink printer and vinyl cutter lay unused since the Pro GS6000 was brought on board.

"Water-based ink printers have always been regarded as the best solution for exhibition prints and in-store signage," Brett says. "Quite simply, it was a case of better quality over what could be generated with solvent ink printers. Like so much else in the signwriting game, the GS6000 has changed the playing field for ever.

"It doesn't matter what printing a client wants, we know that with this printer we have the best possible solution. The durability required for external signage is there. The high print quality for business signage and exhibition prints is there. And the colour to meet virtually any corporate branding specifications is almost guaranteed."

On the issue of durability, Signkiosk has seen one of its greatest challenges totally eliminated. Pointing to the extensive work

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With the Pro GS6000, that “extreme” investment is now a thing of the past. Instead of hundreds of different vinyl rolls, Signkiosk works with a handful of laminate, gloss, lustre and satin self-adhesive vinyl rolls.

In commenting on how this impacts on projects for key clients such as Civic Video, Brett says: “Civic makes use of very vibrant colours, including reds, yellows, blues and even some purple. The challenge in using the vinyl cutter for those types of jobs is that each colour has to be cut, laminated and applied individually.

carried out for Civic Video, Brett explains that with around 300 Civic stores located across Australia, the need to create signage that could withstand the varying weather extremes of this country was a constant headache. “The durability we get on all media types with the GS6000 stand up against any other type or style of signwriting,” he states. “We’re able to create banners and external signage that can be used anywhere in Australia, despite the heat, cold and wet they’re subject to.”

Massive savings on ink and media

While print quality and durability are key measures, massive cost savings are providing an even greater edge. On ink alone, the company’s cost per lineal metre has dropped by a staggering 90 per cent since the introduction of the Pro GS6000.

Where ink costs were generally around \$35 per lineal metre with other printers, Brett states it’s now closer to the three dollar mark. “It’s like jumping out of a petrol-guzzling V8 car into a very small car, but actually getting more power and performance at every level,” he says.

In regard to the media, the savings are just as marked when compared to the traditional – and still prevalent – computerised vinyl cutting technology. Greg explains: “Using a vinyl cutting system, there’s the need to have an enormous number of different coloured and sized vinyls on hand. Actually, it’s quite standard to have anywhere up to 1,000 rolls; and with prices ranging from a couple of hundred dollars up to a couple of thousand, the investment that needs to be made is pretty extreme.”

“Having the Pro GS6000 means that we’re now able to create signage – and that can be anything from in-store and window right through to vehicle wraps – in a single process.”

Keeping business on the go... and safe

According to Greg, the combination of the Pro GS6000’s 950ml hot-swappable ink cartridges, automatic take-up reel and internal heating system establishes the printer as a unique unattended signwriting tool. “For Civic, we can easily be printing out several hundred lineal metres of signage per week,” he says. “The fact that we can load a full roll of media and know that there’s more than enough ink in the cartridges to see it through, means we’re able to set a job printing at the end of the day and have it ready and waiting when we come in the next morning.”

With a relatively long history of using technology in signwriting – and the significant health and environmental issues to which it often gave rise – the two brothers were quick to realise the immediate benefits of the Pro GS6000’s nickel compound-free ink.

“For the first time,” Greg states, “the industry has a solvent ink printer that can be used safely without resorting to forced ventilation systems. We’re able to use the GS6000 in the office and, unlike with other printers, there’s absolutely no odour at all.

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