

Epson 64-inch printer delivers it all for leading Snap Printing centre

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case study



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Matt Sandford
Managing Director
Snap Printing Eastwood

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Providing design and printing services throughout Sydney, Snap Printing Eastwood is recognised as one of the most successful owner-operator Snap Printing centres.

Challenges

- Increase print job throughput without sacrificing quality
- Provide customers with a greater range of print products and services
- Further streamline print production workflows

Solution

Epson Stylus Pro 11880

Benefits

- Greater flexibility in media types and sizes
- Print speeds of up to three times greater than previous models
- Savings in time and media costs resulting from advanced media management features

With over 25 years experience in the print-for-pay industry, Snap Printing Eastwood's Managing Director Matt Sandford knows more than a thing or two when it comes to delivering quality prints. For a number of years, that knowledge has been at the crux of his decision to rely on Epson large format printers.

When the 64-inch Epson Stylus Pro 11880 was launched in mid-2007 Sandford was quick to recognise the benefits this new printer held for his business. Key among those benefits would be speed, quality, cost efficiency and media versatility – benefits that Snap Printing customers have come to expect as standard.

Colour brilliance and consistency

Talk to Sandford about printing and it doesn't take long before you fully appreciate the absolute importance of print quality and colour integrity. "Colour and print quality have always been among the main strengths of the Epson printers," he says. "And the colour consistency between different models is spot on."

Having recently replaced his Stylus Pro 10000CF with the new Stylus Pro 11880, Sandford has retained the A1 Stylus Pro 7800 and A2 Stylus Pro 4000, the latter of which functions as the company's proofing printer. "We can proof prints on the smaller 4000 then, because we have consistent colour profiling across all three of the Epson printers, generate a larger print on the 11880 and generate a print that's true to the original proof.

"That feature means that when we show our customers a proof, we know full well that the final product will be precisely the same colour. Added to this, the colour gamut of the 11880 is so wide that we're able to provide exact colour matches to whatever our customers ask; and in this business, being able to say 'yes' to every customer request contributes to success."

The gamut capabilities of the Stylus Photo 11880 result from the introduction of a new pigment ink-set – the Epson UltraChrome K3 ink with Vivid Magenta – and the UltraChrome K3's three-level black ink technology.

With the addition of two new high-density inks – Vivid Magenta and Vivid Light Magenta – the Stylus Photo 11880 has a dramatically expanded gamut with the additional benefit of a significant reduction in the metamerism effect.



“The UltraChrome K3 ink is definitely a drawcard for me to the Epson large format printers,” Sanford says. “More than colour, at which it excels, the ink lets me create prints that reach full colour stability in about half-an-hour and lead the market when it comes to lightfastness and durability.”

Three times the speed

As a printing industry veteran, Sanford is only too well aware of the challenges facing print-for-pay operators. Primary among those is delivering high quality prints to customers in a very short time frame.

“When a customer comes in and says they need something printed tomorrow, the last thing you can afford to say to them is that you’re unable to deliver on time,” Sanford says. “Do that, and they’ll take their business elsewhere. Do it too many times and business suffers.

“With the Stylus Pro 11880, I’m gaining throughput at up to three times greater than the earlier Stylus Pro 10000. Given we’re undertaking a major new initiative that offers a broader range of marketing support services to small businesses, that high speed throughput is going to be a critical component.”

Instrumental to the high speed of the Stylus Pro 11880 is the printer’s advanced Epson Micro Piezo Thin Film Piezo (TFP) print head. With 360 nozzles for each colour, the one-inch wide print head is able to lay down areas of solid colour in a fraction of the time achievable with earlier generation print heads. Just as important, the new print head’s increase in nozzle numbers further enhances print quality with resolutions of up to 2880 by 1440dpi.

“Print quality is what it’s all about,” Sanford says. “Speed is one thing, but the quality has to be there as well. This printer delivers both!”

Delivering on versatility

Speed and quality aside, versatility is fundamental to the success of Sanford’s business. He explains: “The nature of this business is that you never know what will be asked of you by the next customer who calls or walks through the door. Where one customer might want little more than several hundred business cards, the next one could well require high resolution colour photographs printed on canvas.

“What it comes down to is having the ability to meet those needs without having to even think about it.”

Therein lies one of the major benefits to Sanford resulting from the Stylus Pro 11880, a printer designed to manage and print on an exhaustive range of media, including canvas, adhesive synthetic, photo grade, matte, proofing, semi-matte and even watercolour.

“Operating the Stylus Pro 11880 means I can take on virtually any job regardless of the customer’s requirements,” Sanford says. “Importantly, the printer has been designed

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with media management and handling capabilities that make it pretty easy to switch between print media, keep track of lengths remaining on rolls and even walk away from a large job without worrying about paper running out.”

The “walk away” benefit mentioned by Sandford refers to the Stylus Pro 11880’s built-in automatic take-up reel. Using specially designed optical sensors, the take-up reel detects when printed media is about to reach the floor. When this occurs, the reel takes hold of the media, rolling it around the spindle to avoid folds and creases that can otherwise happen when printing banners or multiple un-cut images.

“Even though we’re in the business of printing,” Sandford continues, “we can’t afford to have someone standing at every printer, every minute of the day. With the 11880 we’re able to send a job through to the printer then forget about it until it’s ready to be removed prior to the next job, something that’s given even greater support with the high capacity ink cartridges.”

The 700ml capacity ink cartridges that are standard with the Stylus Photo 11880 are of particular value to Sandford’s business. Designed specifically to reduce the cost and time of ink management in high-demand print environments, the high capacity cartridges also feature Epson’s Intellidige (Intelligent Cartridge) technology.

Utilising an on-board integrated circuit, Intellidige maintains an accurate record of the amount of ink used in each cartridge, reporting that information back to the printer driver for access by users.

Tracking media

In order to meet the ever-changing needs of his customers, Sandford and his team are constantly changing the media on the Stylus Pro 11880. Traditionally, unless the operator manually maintained a record of the amount of media remaining on each roll, there was little way of knowing for sure if there was enough media left on the roll for the next job.

Enter, the Media Bar Code Tracking and Identification System.

By tracking the amount of media used for each print job, the new system records the type of media and remaining length by printing a small barcode on the leading edge of the media. When a new job is submitted, the Stylus Pro 11880 automatically checks if the correct media has been installed and if the amount of media remaining on the roll is sufficiently long enough to meet the print job’s dimensions.

“Time, money and effort!” Sandford states. “That’s precisely what this new system is set to save us. Even if there’s an enormous rush going on and someone forgets to change the media or inadvertently starts a print job without enough media available on the roll, the printer automatically does the checking and lets us know – before we’ve wasted time and media.”

For more information on Epson Large Format Printers please call 1300 131 928 and quote reference 40053.

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