



CASE STUDY:

Leading book printer Liberdúplex responds to market change by introducing digital print



Liberdúplex deployed the RICOH Pro™ V20100 digital inkjet print system to provide greater flexibility to meet new demands from a changing publishing industry.

COMPANY & CHALLENGE

Liberdúplex, based near Barcelona, Spain, prints and binds more than 35 million books every year, serving global publishers. The company employs 160 people at its highly automated factory, offering prepress, traditional web and sheet print, binding, and, most recently, digital print.

The economics of traditional offset printing rely on volume production to reduce the per unit cost. For publishers, though, printing large numbers of books in advance means estimating likely total sales and taking the commercial risk of over printing, as well as tying up capital investment.

However, recent cost pressures – particularly arising from global supply chain difficulties – are encouraging publishers to look for ways to respond to market appetite with smaller initial print orders that can be matched more closely to demand, with repeat orders for successful books.



Victor Trillo, Chief Executive Officer at Liberdúplex, comments, “Publishers have been undergoing a continuous transformation of their business model for years. They are under continual pressure for supply chain flexibility and cost reduction. Even years before the pandemic, we observed how print runs were continuously and drastically reducing.”

Because very short print runs of a few hundred copies are not economically feasible on sheetfed and web fed offset presses, the Liberdúplex team turned to digital print as a possible solution.

Victor Trillo adds, “When we made the decision to start up the digital plant and migrate workloads from offset, we had two main objectives: on the one hand we wanted to improve service flexibility for our clients, and on the other to increase our service range.”

SOLUTION

To enable the project, Liberdúplex looked for a partner that understood the publishing sector and could provide digital print technology that would integrate fully with its highly automated operations, from physical paper handling to data management.



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In addition, Liberdúplex wanted to ensure the digital print device was able to meet the high production quality that publishing clients demand and expect.

"We wanted to deliver a product where it was not possible to distinguish its origin as offset or digital. We also wanted a printer with higher speed and wider web width than typical models available at that time," remarks Victor Trillo. "Ricoch proposed the Pro V20100, which undoubtedly met with everything that we requested, and the Ricoh specialists helped us enormously with systems integration."

The Pro V20100 provides Liberdúplex with dedicated mono digital capacity, capable of printing up to 150 metres a minute at 600 dpi. This high capacity mono option enables Liberdúplex to produce short print runs of books rapidly and economically, and the wide continuous feed up to 558 mm permits four up duplex pagination that optimises throughput. In addition, the Pro V20100 offers seamless integration with the Liberdúplex automation philosophy.

In addition, Liberdúplex invested in a RICOH Pro™ C92100

sheetfed device to print book covers in both colour and mono. This printer provides consistency from the first sheet to the last, even for the bold, vibrant, solid colours of manga graphic novels, which often have production runs of just 500 copies.

BENEFITS

With the new digital print solutions in place, Liberdúplex is starting a transformation journey that could have profound effects on the book publishing industry. Rather than commit to high production volumes, Liberdúplex offers the ability to print smaller quantities at very high quality and at commercially attractive rates. The short run digital printing capability helps publishers to cut the number of books kept in storage, reduce the pressure on logistics chains, and take a new, highly flexible approach to sales and marketing. There are environmental advantages too in that waste is reduced as only what can be expected to be sold is produced.

"Our new digital printing plant is just the beginning of a process of transformation and migration from offset to digital. We see a great challenge in changing the way to bring books to the market. This is being radically transformed, and digital printing offers competitive advantages that are not yet being fully exploited," comments Victor Trillo.



Ricoh's HENKAKU philosophy of transformative innovation blends perfectly with our passion for books, and we very much look forward to the next wave of digital progress.

Victor Trillo, Chief Executive Officer



"We are convinced that the competitive advantages of digital printing with the Pro V20100 will allow us to provide solutions to meet these new needs in the book supply chain." Liberdúplex has outlined an ambitious target of 3.5 million digitally printed books a year, and is working closely with Ricoh to achieve greater digital throughput to accelerate the transformation. Victor Trillo concludes, "Ricoh's HENKAKU philosophy of transformative innovation blends perfectly with our passion for books, and we very much look forward to the next wave of digital progress."

ABOUT RICOH

Ricoh is empowering digital workplaces using innovative technologies and services that enable individuals to work smarter from anywhere. With cultivated knowledge and organisational capabilities nurtured over its 85-year history, Ricoh is a leading provider of digital services, information management, and print and imaging solutions designed to support digital transformation and optimise business performance.

Headquartered in Tokyo, Ricoh Group has major operations throughout the world and its products and services now reach customers in approximately 200 countries and regions. In the financial year ended March 2022, Ricoh Group had worldwide sales of 1,758 billion yen (approx. 14.5 billion USD). For further information, please visit www.ricoh-europe.com

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