



The Digital Commercial Retrofit Inkjet Printing Revolution



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OVERVIEW

Today's printed communications are changing. Consumers who receive targeted messages online now expect that same level of personalization from their printed communications. As a result, print service providers must ensure that they can produce targeted, relevant materials that have the same look and feel as other forms of branded communications.

Inkjet printing solutions have the potential to support printers while they make this change. Using these solutions, printers can open up new opportunities by printing the type of customized communications that stand out in today's market.

But with opportunity comes challenges. Adopting an inkjet press is an expensive proposition, and it is one that requires printers to transform the way they do business.

How can printers take on inkjet printing without having to make substantial investments in both capital equipment and in the skills to leverage that equipment? Today's retrofit inkjet printing solutions provide the answer.

In this white paper, we'll look at the role inkjet printing can play in a commercial printing operation and why many printers have been reluctant to make the move to inkjet. We'll then look at how retrofit solutions can help printers leverage their existing assets to capture inkjet opportunities without having to sacrifice time, profitability, or capital.



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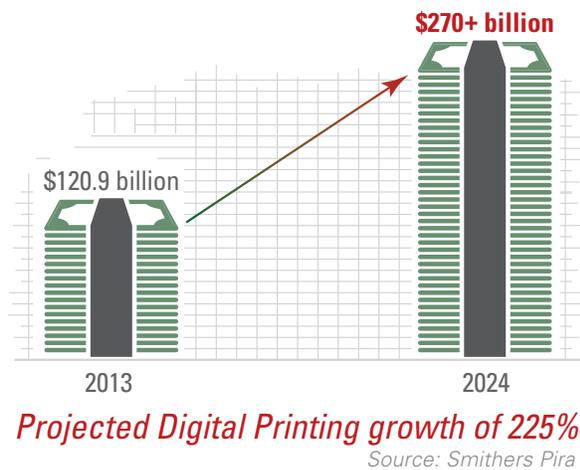
Part Eight: The Time for Digital Printing is Now

Printers are coming to the realization that quick-turn, even short-run customization is needed in a more personalized consumer oriented society.



THE INKJET OPPORTUNITY

The driving force behind this growth is the demand for more personalized communications and ever-shorter offset runs. Digital inkjet printing solutions allow printers to economically produce the short runs that come with the versioning and personalization included in some of these printed communications.



A new market study conducted by Smithers Pira, entitled *The Future of Digital Printing to 2024*, shows the fast pace at which digital print is growing. In 2013, the global digital print market was worth \$120.9 billion. By 2024, Smithers Pira projects that the total digital market will reach 225 percent of that value.

By producing these types of targeted, relevant communications, printers can expand the range of services they offer to existing customers and attract new business opportunities that provide greater revenue potential.

THE CHALLENGES OF CHANGE

Though inkjet printing can enhance printers' operations, many have been slow to adopt these solutions.

Because while offset printing can be the best solution for long print runs, inkjet is more suitable for printers who produce short runs and variable data. As a result, it is not easy for many printers to shift their business models and processes to accommodate the increasing demand for short-run jobs.

Another factor affecting the adoption of inkjet is the expenditure it requires. New presses, either offset or inkjet, are expensive and require a significant outlay of capital. If printers invest in an inkjet press, they then need to retrain staff members; employees need to change from performing trade-focused roles to operating a digital process,

and salespeople must engage in new sales conversations to quickly fill the machine and achieve the expected ROI.

Inkjet printing also requires a physical and electronic workflow that is very different from an analog workflow. Tasks like color management, automatic job queuing, and even specialized document finishing differ from their counterparts in an analog workflow.

Moreover, the Service Level Agreements (SLAs) that printers have with their customers will undergo significant changes. Customers will expect very quick turnarounds, putting a new kind of burden on plant logistics.



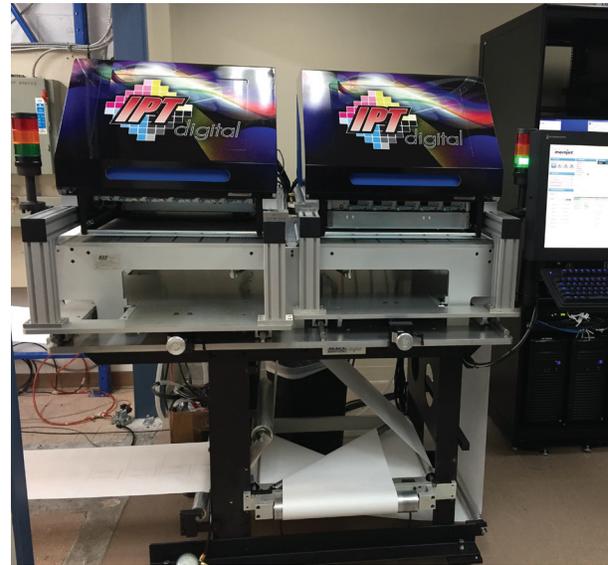
WHAT IS A RETROFIT PRESS?

A retrofit press can give printers many of the benefits of inkjet printing while reducing the costs, risks and challenges that can come with adopting a stand-alone inkjet press.

But what is a retrofit press?

A “retrofit” printing system entails adding an inkjet-powered print engine onto an existing analog printing press. This combined use of inkjet and analog production processes within one printing system is often referred to as “hybrid printing.”

The combined digital and offset printing system gives printers much greater production efficiency and flexibility than would purchasing a stand-alone inkjet press to complement an existing offset press. The printer can choose the right printing method to suit the job at hand—offset for long runs, digital for short runs, or a mixture of both.



CREATE SUCCESS USING WHAT YOU HAVE

Retrofit solutions use printers’ existing assets and operations, which means printers can invest their money where it makes the most sense: on the digital inkjet portion of their press operations.

For example, when printers choose to retrofit an offset press, it means they can also leverage the on-board finishing tools of that existing press instead of purchasing all new finishing equipment. Retrofitting an existing asset also lets printers utilize much of their existing workflow and processes. In most environments

minor changes in upstream content preparation will not affect the current workflow.

A printer’s existing team of employees can often operate the retrofit press. With minimal training, press operators and other skilled personnel can run hybrid print jobs on these retrofit presses.



QUALITY LEADS TO OPPORTUNITY

Printers can use the water-based color inkjet engines of their retrofit press to produce high-quality, full-color digital printing with near-offset quality.

This enhanced quality comes from the next generation of inkjet technology developed by Memjet. The Memjet-powered engines found in retrofit solutions use water-based inks to create some of the smallest droplets of ink used in any inkjet printing process. These small, water-based droplets produce high-quality results because they can be precisely placed with high density.

This level of quality gives printers more options during the production process. No matter what the client demands, the printer

can easily move between digital and offset printing to achieve the desired results.

For example, printers can run high-volume jobs on their offset presses and produce low-volume jobs digitally. They can also combine the two solutions by printing static components of the document on the offset press and adding variable content using the inkjet retrofit to reduce overall printing costs or to provide colors and specialized inks that might be better printed traditionally.

NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Retrofit solutions provide a level of flexibility that gives printers the resources they need to better meet the demands of their existing customers while opening up time and resources for new business.

Because inkjet printing doesn't require film, plates, or color checks, retrofit solutions can eliminate the bottlenecks that come from setting up an offset press. Less setup time reduces waste and increases press utilization, which allows printers to print more orders and make more money.

In addition, the enhanced flexibility that retrofit solutions allow gives the printer's sales team a larger portfolio of solutions to present to prospects and customers. Whether it is a small run of personalized direct mail, a large run of full-color brochures, or a catalog that mixes both personalized messages and large print quantities, retrofit solutions mean the printer can meet the demand.



CREATING REAL-WORLD SUCCESS WITH A RETROFIT PRESS

As we have learned, a retrofit press enables printers to achieve improved results at a low total cost of ownership. But to realize the potential of a retrofit press, the printer needs to work with the right partner.

For over 25 years, RDP Marathon has been engineering and manufacturing high-speed offset presses. IPT Digital is one of Memjet's leading custom integrators. The companies have combined their engineering expertise with the power of Memjet inkjet-printing technology to create the JFlex SD Retrofit Digital Print Conversion System.

Still Creek Press, a midsize commercial printer and mailer based in Vancouver, Canada has been providing commercial printing, business forms, digital, and ticket printing for almost 25 years with a specific focus on direct mail and transactional documents.

Still Creek Press is committed to maintaining a state-of-the-art operation so it can keep pace with customer

demands. To achieve that goal, Still Creek decided to retrofit its business-forms press into a high-speed digital printing platform using the JFlex SD Retrofit Digital Print Conversion System from IPT Digital.

Retrofitting their existing business-forms press with the JFlex solution meant that Still Creek Press could offer inkjet digital printing

at a highly affordable cost of ownership. The fast cycle time from order to start-up meant the printer could quickly get the press up and running and producing jobs. And because the printer is using his existing team of employees and workflow, jobs of all types seamlessly flow through the production process.

The JFlex system enables the printer to print at speeds up to 520 feet per minute with a resolution of 1600 x 725 dpi. The

system uses Memjet inkjet technology that includes "drop-on-demand" thermal inkjets that have four print heads printing CMYK and an optional fifth print head that can be used for a spot color.

With the ability to produce short runs in a cost-effective manner, printers are now able

to take on jobs that they previously had to decline. For example, using the JFlex solution, printers can produce four-color variable-data jobs quickly and easily.

This short run capability, combined with the greater efficiencies the printer has gained, have resulted in a quick ROI.

“Every printer we talk to says that they want to get into digital printing, but are worried about how they can generate a positive return on such a large investment. That's why there is such a demand for retrofits like the JFlex SD. It let's printers use their knowledge, resources, and existing equipment to offer digital printing and stay competitive.”

Peter Kuschnitzky, president of IPT Digital.



THE TIME FOR DIGITAL PRINTING IS NOW

Digital inkjet printing is no longer an optional service for today's print providers; it is required if the printer is to remain competitive in a market driven by customized communications.

Fortunately, retrofit solutions like the JFlex SD Retrofit Digital Print Conversion System mean that the printer can access the digital printing opportunity while reducing the time, capital, and resources needed to purchase a standalone digital inkjet press.

We invite you to learn how a retrofit solution can benefit your operation.

Visit us www.memjet.com or email us at info@memjet.com

