

**CASE STUDY:****Crafting streamlined
production with 94 per
cent faster printing**

First Class
ARGENTI

Personalised gift company First Class cuts production times, improves profitability, and offers a wider range of visual effects with the RICOH Pro™ TF6250 and ColorGATE Productionserver software.

COMPANY & CHALLENGE

Based in Sant'Antimo, Naples, First Class designs, manufactures, and delivers customised gift items and small furnishings. Operating for more than 30 years, the company fuses the traditions of Italian craftsmanship with technological innovation to offer more than 1,000 high quality products, including wall and table clocks, wedding favours, photo frames, religious icons, stationery sets, and jewellery boxes.

Consumers in Italy and beyond rely on First Class to provide gifts for every occasion, from baptisms and birthdays to weddings and anniversaries. Customer orders arrive all year round, although the company sees significant peaks in demand, for example, during the wedding season in high summer.

For many items, production involves printing images, text, and graphics onto materials such as glass, wood, and metals. To add these designs, First Class previously used a small flatbed printer, with screen printing for more customised patterns. However, the limited size of the print table on the flatbed device meant the company could print only onto a small number of items at one time, slowing down production. Furthermore, the screen printing process involved many time consuming, manual steps to apply and dry different inks.



SOLUTION

First Class engaged Ricoh to evaluate the current production processes, and to identify possible solutions that would meet the desire for both speed and new capabilities. Ricoh demonstrated large format devices that could significantly increase productivity and enable printing on a wider range of industrial substrates. After a series of successful tests that included printing complex designs onto glass photo frames, First Class selected the RICOH Pro TF6250, with ColorGATE Productionserver software.

Giovanni Femiano adds: “We analysed large format devices from several high profile vendors before selecting Ricoh. The Pro T6250 offered the best print quality available, thanks to the 12 fifth generation Ricoh printheads and the maximum resolution of 1800 dpi. We saw the Ricoh solution was a high end print device available at a good price point. And the sales and technical support from Ricoh was excellent, too.”

Where the previous flatbed device offered only a small scale print table, the Pro TF6250 enables First Class to print onto materials of up to 2,500mm x 1,300mm. This increase in capacity allows the company to print images, text, and graphics onto many more objects, at the same time, boosting production efficiency.

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We wanted to accelerate production and dispatch of customer orders. Essentially, we looked for much higher print speeds to help us manage large and small orders seamlessly, and ways to offer customers a broader range of design options and visual effects.

*Giovanni Femiano,
Managing Director*

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"With Ricoh, we have gone from relying on a limited small scale flatbed device and manual processes to using a best in class large format printer. The Pro TF6250 is helping us to create great quality items in shorter lead times that meet and exceed customer expectations."

Giovanni Femiano, Managing Director



Impressive digital marble effect printed with Ricoh UV flatbed

As well as CMYK colours, the Pro TF6250 enables First Class to print in white to create vivid and striking visual effects. The company uses Ricoh's Pro UV Ink DG130 formulations, which provide exceptional adhesion and durability for both standard media and industrial substrates, such as glass, metals, and wood, and even enable the reproduction of marble and other visual effects.

The ColorGATE Productionserver software forms a key component in the new production workflow. As well as helping to calibrate and optimise colour output, the solution enables First Class to calculate costs for specific customer requests, based on factors such as ink and power consumption. This detailed, accurate information enables the company to provide competitive quotes to customers that also protect its profit margins.

Mr. Giovanni Femiano adds: "Ricoch provided excellent support, helping us set up the Pro TF6250 for different media types and training us to use ColorGATE Productionserver. Being able to calculate costs before starting a print job will be very useful, especially for large volume work, and help us to operate profitably at all times."

BENEFITS

The engagement with Ricoh has had a highly positive impact on productivity at First Class. The high speeds and large print table of the Pro TF6250 enable the company to create many more items in a much shorter timeframe, ready for dispatch. For example, First Class could print only onto the face of one wall clock in 40 minutes with its previous flatbed device; now, with the Pro TF6250, the company prints one clock in two and a half minutes, and eight in 20 minutes — 94 per cent faster.

Furthermore, the Pro TF6250 makes it much quicker and easier for First Class to add personalised designs and text to objects, such as wedding dates and names on aluminium or silver photo frames. The digital large format printer eliminates the large number of labour intensive manual steps involved in screen printing, saving time and freeing the company's skilled designers and craftsmen to focus on other production work.

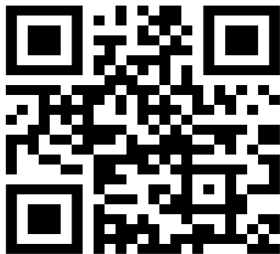
Giovanni Femiano comments: "One of the key advantages of the Pro TF6250 is the flexibility it gives us to manage every kind of customer request, without a hitch. If we receive a large order

for hundreds of wedding photo frames, we can easily scale up production to have items ready for shipping in quick time. Conversely, we can also craft one-off products with highly customised and intricate designs for a customer.”

In addition, the ability to print in white using the Pro TF6250 and ColorGATE Productionserver software allows First Class to offer customers a wider array of design possibilities. For example, by printing various gradations of white ink onto glass objects, the company can create an impressive marble effect.

Giovanni Femiano concludes: “With Ricoh, we have gone from relying on a limited small scale flatbed device and manual processes to using a best in class large format printer. The Pro TF6250 is helping us to create great quality items in shorter lead times that meet and exceed customer expectations. As we continue to scale production volumes, we are becoming a more competitive and efficient business, with a bright future ahead.”

Scan to find out more about First Class:



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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