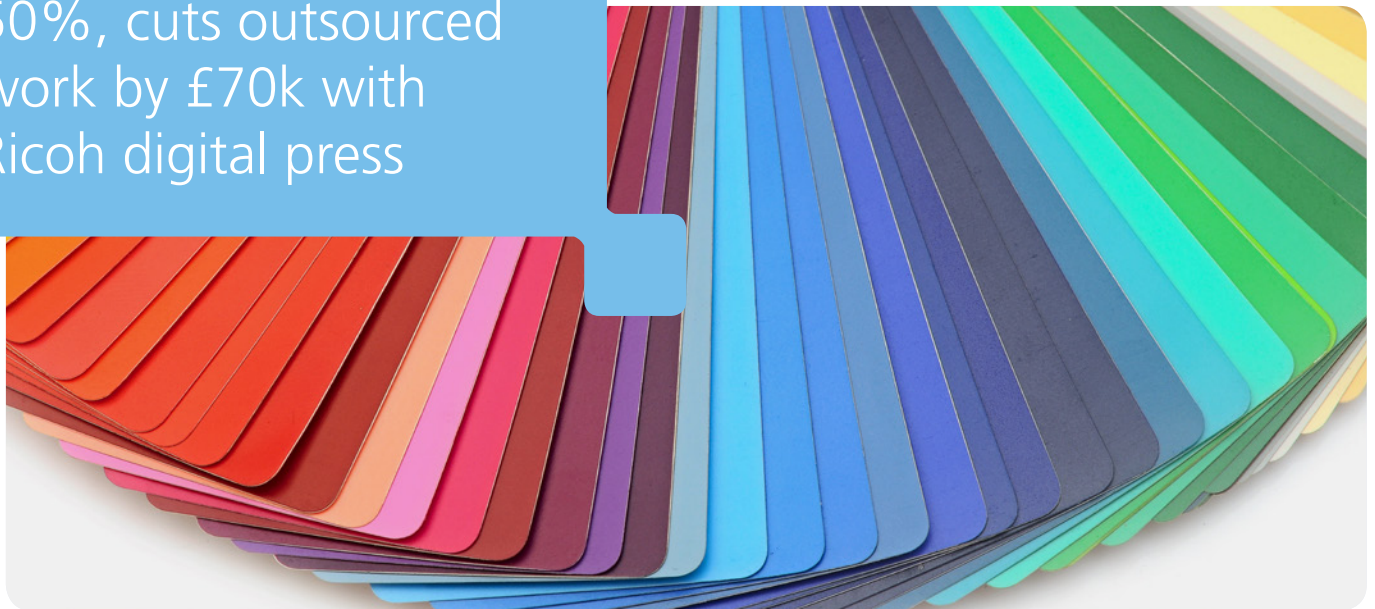


Case Study

Appeal Media
Production Print
Commercial printing

Scottish printer grows revenue and profit by 50%, cuts outsourced work by £70k with Ricoh digital press



Scottish commercial printer, Appeal Media, needed to expand and upgrade operations to meet growing customer demand for premium quality products and service. After deploying a Ricoh Production Print solution, the company

has cut outsourced work, made the workplace better for staff and seen revenues and profit up by 50%.

Executive summary

Name: Appeal Media
Location: Falkirk, Scotland
Size: 10 staff
Activity: Commercial printer

Challenges

- Customer demand for high-quality, complex print products increasing
- Poor, underperforming print equipment
- Constant firefighting, high level of outsourcing

Solution

- Ricoh Production Print

Benefits

- Helps grow revenues and profit by 50%, business activity up by 150%
- Cuts volume of outsourced litho work by £70k a year
- Develops an efficient, target-driven workplace
- Ricoh technology described as "championing success"
- Ricoh litho-like digital print quality embarrasses competitor

Challenges

Appeal Media is a commercial printer in Scotland producing a variety of products for a range of customers across the UK. The business started out in 2008 in a tiny office with two people and a basic printer. Now it has ten staff serving some prestigious national and international customers like Macdonald Hotels and G1 Group.

Appeal Media had acquired a standard digital printer for basic production print work. But after only two years, the device was causing significant problems. Quality of output was poor, and the printer was breaking down, almost daily. Quite apart from the effect on business, it was starting to impact the workplace, with staff struggling to keep the printer running and having to come in on weekends to complete jobs.

It came at a time when demand for complex, high-quality products - from customers like G1 Group, Scotland's largest hospitality business - was increasing. For example, customers liked the speed and flexibility of digital print but also the flat, less shiny finish of litho.

Also, Appeal Media was outsourcing as much as £100,000 worth of litho work which meant relying on other companies to meet customer challenges. So, there were some strong business and service reasons for improving in-house print technology. It was an opportunity for Appeal Media to see how it could improve operations and product quality, as well as the work environment for staff.

Appeal Media spent around nine months researching the market and testing new technology. It selected several leading print manufacturers, showed the quality of print work it wanted to achieve on various paper stocks and asked the manufacturers to demonstrate what their products could deliver.



Solution

Stephen Matthews, Operations Director at Appeal Media, says, "We found the Ricoh technology absolutely miles ahead of anything else we saw. We were blown away by the litho-like finish. When a competitor salesperson saw the Ricoh examples, he couldn't get his own product's examples off the table quickly enough he was so embarrassed. And the service and support from the Ricoh sales team was second to none. Although prices across the board were much the same, the package, along with significantly better performance, made Ricoh very cost effective."

Appeal Media decided to partner with Ricoh and has installed a Ricoh production print solution comprising a Ricoh digital colour press, digital printing consultancy, training and an ongoing support service. The high-quality and high-performance capabilities means the Ricoh press bridges the gap between offset and digital processes. Its modular design enables customers to adapt the press to their specific needs. Appeal Media has incorporated a banner feeder for extended sheet printing.

Ricoh provides Appeal Media with a four-hour response time support service. When required, which has not been often – just two minor instances in nine months - engineers are on site quickly and the device is up and running on the same day. Matthews says, "The Ricoh service has been fantastic. The support team didn't need to do this but once when we had an issue and the engineer was on holiday, he came in on Saturday morning to make sure we were up and running."

Appeal Media also benefits from Ricoh's ORU (Operator Replaceable Unit) facility, which means customers stock and replace standard parts without the need for a Ricoh engineer, further increasing efficiency and reduced downtime.

Benefits

"There are other digital print devices that compare with the Ricoh press, but when you look at the reliability, the scope of stock it supports, the control and the excellent litho-like quality, the Ricoh technology is an absolute stick out, no other machine is even close. It's the engine room of the business and is essential to helping Appeal Media deliver first-class products and services to customers," says Matthews.

Just before Christmas a customer approached Appeal Media because it had been let down by another supplier. Appeal Media had just two and a half weeks to produce 100 luxury advent calendars comprising 24, 80mm-square boxes with draws, different images and text, formed in a pyramid to look like a Christmas tree. The Ricoh press was critical to helping Appeal Media complete the job in time and to a very high standard.

continued overleaf

Case Study Appeal Media

The quality, flexibility and scope of the Ricoh technology is helping Appeal Media grow its business and move into new markets, especially in the hospitality sector. The company has seen significant growth since installing the Ricoh press; increasing from 40,000 A3 printed pages a month to 100,000, an increase of 150 percent. Revenue and profit have also increased by almost 50 percent. The company has taken on more staff and expects to increase headcount even more.

One new service that Appeal Media is planning is an online, self-service portal. Appeal Media is working with one customer that has a network of over 100 leased pubs to set up a portal so that pub landlords can order print online directly with Appeal Media, providing a fast and efficient service for both the customer and landlords.

Scott McCabe, Managing Director at Appeal Media, says, "It's all about 100% confidence in our products. With the Ricoh press we can stand up against any competitor and say our product is as good if not better. Appeal Media has a reputation for meeting complex, demanding and unusual jobs that appear to be unachievable with a can-do attitude. The advent calendar job was a real testament to the outstanding quality of the Ricoh technology. And, as a sales and branding tool, the calendar was a huge success for the customer."

Appeal Media recently employed a new production director from a large business with a top-of-the range offset printer. He was astonished at how much better the quality of the Ricoh was compared to the offset device he used previously. The ability of the Ricoh technology to replicate a litho-quality finish has enabled Appeal Media to bring back in-house around 70 percent of the work it was outsourcing, accounting for some £70,000 a year.

Previously, Appeal Media had issues with print registration resulting in a lot of waste and delays. The Ricoh press is so precise that Appeal Media no longer even mentions registration. This is important for Appeal Media since many customers, who demand a premium quality product, have their own inhouse design teams who look for and can spot tiny discrepancies in registration. The company also does a lot of form-cut printing where accurate registration is needed for fine-detail cuts.

Alongside business improvement, the Ricoh technology is a significant part of creating a more productive workplace. Having a fast, efficient and reliable press, delivering consistently high-quality print products has seen a marked improvement in staff morale.

McCabe says, "Constantly firefighting, doing your best but getting nowhere, and having to work all hours to compensate for poor equipment impacts how people feel. The Ricoh technology has been a game changer. Of course, complex equipment like this goes down, but device quality and the competence and reactivity of Ricoh means we're up and running in hours, not days. Now we're setting aggressive production targets and meeting them, which gives staff a greater sense of purpose and achievement. At Appeal Media the Ricoh press champions success."

Ricoh Solution/Products

- Ricoh Pro C9100
- Ricoh digital production print consultancy & training
- Ricoh service and support

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Stephen Matthews, Operations Director, Appeal Media

