

EFI Pro 24f flatbed printer unlocks new opportunities for DeLargy's

DeLargy's Print Solutions entered the signage business with a roll-to-roll eco-solvent printer a few years ago. The company realized that it was likely leaving business on the table because of the requirement for post-print mounting, lamination, and other manual finishing processes needed for jobs that required rigid surfaces. To meet these requirements, DeLargy's began investigating wide-format flatbed printers that would enable high-quality printing direct to rigid substrates, a process that promised to be more cost-competitive than its existing process. Key requirements were white ink and the ability to print high-quality fine lines and small text. The company investigated possibilities at the 2017 SGIA Expo and chose the EFI™ Pro 24f dedicated flatbed LED printer.

"I was amazed with EFI's ability to print small text," said the company's president, Jimmy DeLargy. "We looked at a number of other flatbeds that couldn't do it. And the printer's white ink opens up many new opportunities to print on clear and dark substrates as well."

This LED flatbed printer features variable drop grayscale head technology and a true flatbed design with moving gantry and multi-zoned vacuum table. The company uses EFI Fiery® digital front ends (DFEs) on its two Xerox® digital color printers, which made the learning curve that much easier for the Pro 24f, which features an EFI Fiery proServer Core DFE.

Revenue growth and a fast ROI

DeLargy's installed the printer in mid-January 2018 and began generating revenue immediately. "Our revenues are already up 18% because of this new printer," said Jimmy DeLargy. "And it will easily be paid for in 18 months or less."



Challenge:

"We looked at a number of other flatbeds that couldn't print small text."

JIMMY DELARGY, PRESIDENT
DELARGY'S PRINT SOLUTIONS

DeLargy's Print Solutions began its life 46 years ago as an answering and secretarial service. Over the years, the company added office products and printing services. Today the company has offset, digital, and wide-format printing and still maintains its office products business. Its broad offering is about 75% custom work, ranging from signage to office products to laser checks.

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A Charlotte skyline backdrop printed on 4x8-foot Correx® using the EFI Pro 24f wide-format printer serves as the background for the Watch Charlotte Network's Carolina Kids News.

The printer gives the company capabilities it did not have before for direct-to-substrate printing of rigid signage, eliminating the time and expense of mounting and lamination, but the company has even printed roll material on the Pro 24f as well. "We've used the Pro 24f to create banners and to print on clear vinyl, which we can spot or flood coat with white," DeLargy explains. "It's more economical to print banners smaller than 4x8-feet on the Pro 24f because it uses less ink than our eco-solvent roll-to-roll printer. What's really cool is that it is fast, and the material is immediately dry, so we can proceed right to hems and grommets."

DeLargy has also created an eight-up jig to accommodate its most popular signage sizes. "We tape the jig to the table and use a template to impose the artwork," he says. "Once printed, we just slide off the print, reload, and keep going. It's remarkable how fast we can get things done. Before, we had to wait 24 hours for prints to dry before we could finish them. Now we can have 100 signs out the door by 11 a.m.!"

Solution:

"It's not all that unusual to get calls on a Friday for 25 signs needed at an event on Saturday. We couldn't have touched that before, but now it is a breeze."

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The EFI Pro 24f at DeLargy's has been useful for direct-to-rigid applications, such as this display for a local high school prom.

Capturing missed opportunities

The company does a lot of printing for nonprofits as well as B2B work, and fast turnaround is important for these customers. "It's not all that unusual to get calls on a Friday for 25 signs needed at event on Saturday," he says. "We couldn't have touched that before, but now it is a breeze. I never realized how many opportunities were passing us by with our existing customers! I never would have thought that to be the case."

The new printer has also opened up new creative applications as well. "We had a bride who wanted Plexiglas place cards for the 50 tables at her reception," DeLargy explains. "We printed a piece of 6x9-inch clear Plexiglas for each table, with the guests' names in alphabetical order. It was printed on the back with a white background. We bent the Plexiglas bottoms to form a stand. The result was absolutely beautiful, and the bride was delighted."

He also cites another recent project, a backdrop printed on 4x8-foot corrugated plastic. He reports, "It was the City of Charlotte skyline for a local YouTube channel that publishes a kids' news program. The customer is thrilled with the outcome, and it looks really great. It was another project we couldn't really have done before."

"We are absolutely thrilled with this printer," DeLargy adds. "It's a lot more fun quoting a job when you can be competitive."

Another application the Pro 24f has improved is menu boards for food trucks. "The print can be small on these," DeLargy explains, "EFI was the only vendor we found that could meet that requirement."

In terms of the support he has received from EFI, DeLargy had this to say: "EFI has been great to work with. If there are any issues – and there haven't been many – they are right there to take care of it."

Result:

"We are absolutely thrilled with this printer. It's a lot more fun quoting a job when you can be competitive."

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The company's overall impression is that the printer has given DeLargy's Print Solutions a path to higher-value digital graphics work that meets growing customer demand.

"I was amazed at how much direct-to-rigid work and printing on clear and dark substrates my existing customers were doing," DeLargy says. "While we have gained new customers because of the Pro 24f, we have also been extremely busy with existing customers. I'm tickled to death we got involved. It's opened up a lot of doors for us."

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