

Taking Advantage of Digital. Commercial Printer and Direct Mail.



by Melissa Donovan

Digital presses offer efficiency in production, as well as specialty options. This is attractive for commercial printers serving the direct mail space. Not only can they rely on their printer to meet quick turnarounds, they can also offer customers standout pieces with features like fluorescent highlights or metallic undertones.

Expanding Direct Mail

Founded in 1981 out of Asheville, NC, Advantage Direct was originally a franchised, quick print shop. Over the years, its success helped it grow into a consultative commercial print marketing company that today offers a multitude of services—like direct mail—out of a 10,000 square foot production facility in Arden, NC.

Additional services include multicolor offset, digital, and wide format printing, as well as finishing equipment for die cutting, booklet making, and mail inserting—all under one roof. A staff of 18 employees allows Advantage Direct to reach customers on a national level, offering everything from online storefronts and fulfillment to wide format displays and design.

Advantage Direct partners with clients in healthcare, education, real estate, outdoor recreation, and performing arts verticals. Each vertical presents a different requirement when looking for a new direct mail project, according to Daniel Durand, director of sales, Advantage Direct. Two consistent requests the company sees from nearly every vertical include meeting quick turnarounds and standout graphics.

The mid-2000s the commercial printer was confronted with the need to expand its direct mail offering. More importantly, the staff recognized the advantages of leveraging variable data in its work. In response, it brought in a Xerox 260, but quickly realized it needed more capacity. Over the years Advantage Direct has owned and operated a series of Xerox production presses including the ColorPress 800 and 1000. Today, it runs a Xerox Iridesse Production Press, Xerox Versant 280 Press used for variable color envelopes, as well as two Xerox PrimeLink B9125 copier/printers for monochrome work.

Committed Customer

There were a number of reasons why Advantage Direct turned to Xerox initially and continues to rely

on the vendor today. “Our suite of Xerox equipment allows us to bring together a full direct mail package efficiently. When Advantage Direct was looking to update equipment, Xerox had the answer to increasing efficiency and adding unique products,” explains Durand.

The Xerox Iridesse with Xerox Color FLX Technology offers up to six inline print stations that print in a single pass, at rated speed, with spot on color-to-color registration. The press is rated at up to 120 pages per minute (ppm) and up to 475K pages per month.

Advantage Direct’s Iridesse press is equipped with high-capacity feeding and stacking units, which is ideal for printing work more efficiently. Durand gives the example of it being beneficial for long-run variable data postcards for college admissions.

The printer is outfitted with expanded ink stations, which allows for the addition of white, clear, metallic, and fluorescent pink. The team at Advantage Direct enjoys this feature because “it allows us to produce direct mail pieces on dark materials and specialty finishes,” shares Durand.

The Xerox Versant 280 is a mid-production press offering production printing of up to 47 inches at 80 ppm and 150,000 pages per month. Users can swap CMYK toners with specialty colors with the Xerox Adaptive CMYK Plus Kit. Print traditional digital applications with CMYK. Swap out toners for the Xerox Vivid Specialty Toner set to run metallics, white, and clear.

The Xerox Versant 280 in Advantage Direct’s location is used exclusively for variable color envelopes. “As part of our fulfillment and quick turn programs we inventory offset printed letter and postcard shells. This allows us to pull from inventory and print black, variable information on demand with our Xerox PrimeLink presses,” explains Durand.

Xerox PrimeLink B9125 copiers/printers are designed to bridge the gap between high-performance office print and light production. The devices are available with more than a dozen feeding, stacking, and inline finishing options.

Direct Advantage

Advantage Direct is backed by its portfolio of Xerox presses to continue offering its clients quality service as well as impressive output.

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