UNLOCK

YOUR

PRINTING POTENTIAL

10 ways you can optimize your print operations and reduce costs.

Many print businesses that define themselves as specialists in wide-format printing now run multiple printers—both roll-to-roll and flatbed—and often with a variety of latex, aqueous, UV, and solvent inks. Sometimes this also means tussling with several different RIP solutions driving those printers. And that's just the print process—there's also print finishing to consider.

It's a complex world, and that's why print businesses are focusing on efficiency like never before.

1 CONTINUALLY SEEK OUT WAYS TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS

Print businesses—and digital print businesses in particular—evolve constantly. New products and technology require regular reviews and adjustments of your overall production process. It's vital that you continually seek out ways to make improvements, because even minor changes are cumulative and together can be highly beneficial. It's an ongoing process that should be subject to regular review.
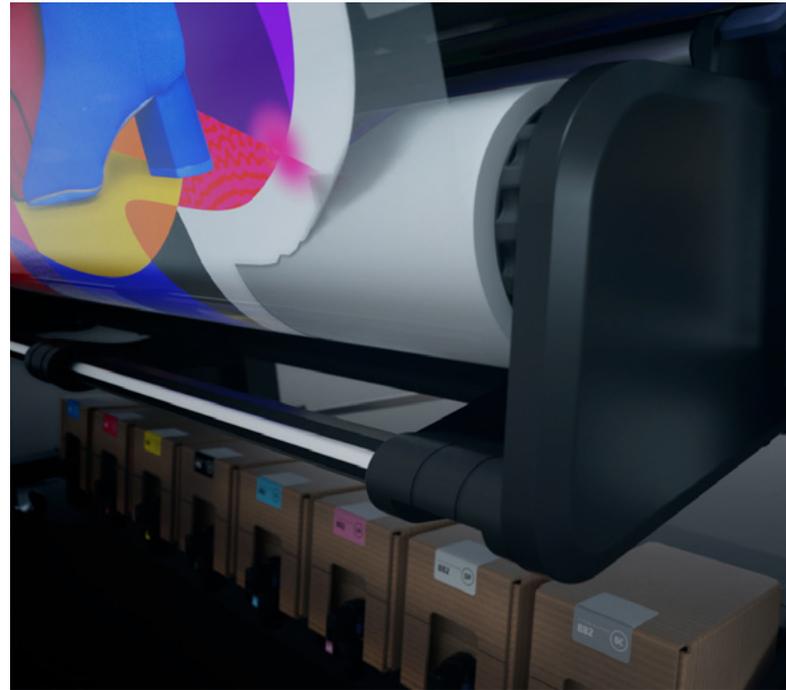
2 COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR STAFF IS VITAL

Efficiency experts typically lead with this recommendation; listen to your employees. Your staff are often more informed on the production processes and any associated bottlenecks than you are yourself. Furthermore, if you want any planned changes to succeed then your staff need to embrace them, so get them involved, prove to them that their opinion counts, and make them part of the process right from the start.

3 AUDIT YOUR CURRENT PRINT PRODUCTION

Over time even an effective workflow can become fragmented, this is particularly true in a growing business where the pace of change can overtake you. Together with your staff, take a microscope to your production. Take a job and follow it from the minute it comes in the door until the minute it ships. Repeat that with several jobs and look for any patterns of inefficiency that can be eliminated.

4 CONSIDER STANDARDIZING ON ONE RIP SOLUTION

Are you printing using multiple RIP software solutions from multiple manufacturers?
It's highly likely that all your printers can be run from one single RIP, and often all you need are additional printer drivers. In some instances, you can pay one monthly subscription after which every printer can be run by a single version of software that's seamlessly and automatically updated across your entire business. That one single monthly payment ensures that your entire RIP workflow stays up to date.
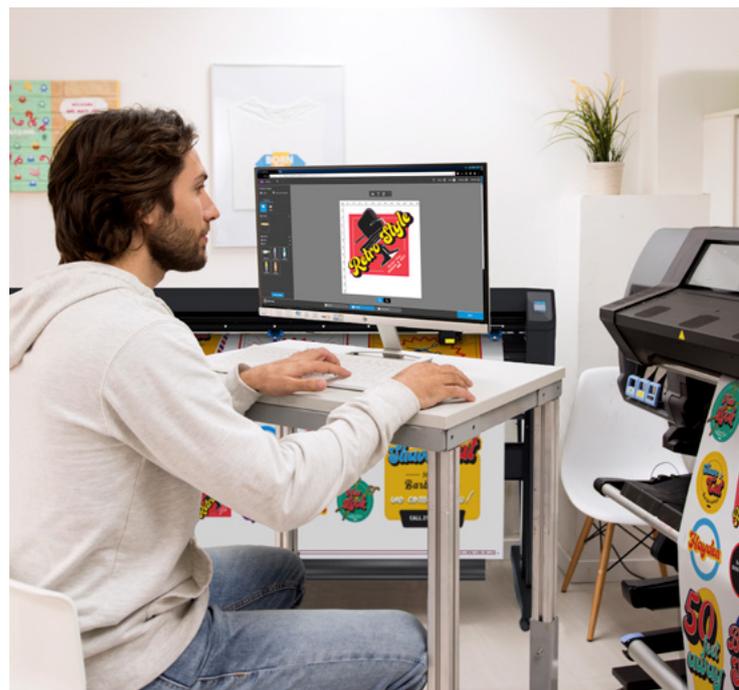
5 EMBRACE CONNECTED PRINTING TO ELIMINATE WASTED TIME

Is your print operator regularly baby-sitting a printer when they could be doing something else? If it's a current HP large format printer[1] then that really isn't necessary. HP PrintOS, compatible with all HP Latex, Stitch, and some DesignJet printers, can help to reduce downtime by sending your operator an alert when a print job is completed or the printer requires attention. Other key benefits provided by HP PrintOS include quick access to media profiles, production control, analytics, and job costing—all of which help speed up the end-to-end printing process and leave you free to do other things.

6 CONNECT ONLINE ORDERS AND PRODUCTION

Some corners of the print industry have been faster than others when it comes to embracing the digital world. Where does your business stand? One step in the right direction is to connect your e-commerce platform and/or online orders with your production capability. That will enable you to move into a more seamless printing process, saving you valuable time and money. The digital economy is thriving and you should make sure you're set to take advantage of the opportunities it offers.
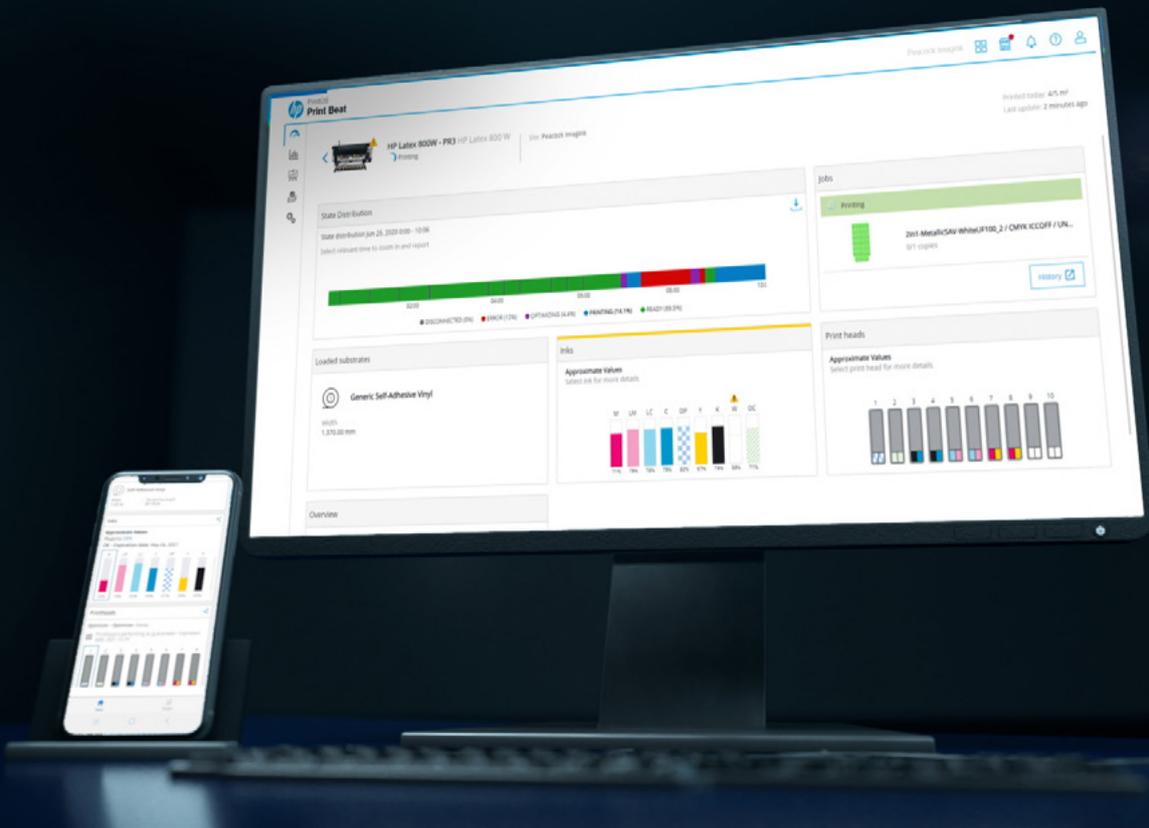
7 CONSIDER EXISTING TOOLS THAT CAN HELP TO ELIMINATE WASTED MATERIALS

Did you know that your current RIP either already has, or can easily add, additional functionality such as Job Nesting that can take multiple print jobs in your queue and bundle them together for optimal material usage? On things like cut-to-shape decals you can realize media savings of up to 70%. You should also look to work with a manufacturer that offers an end-to-end print solution; the workflow process is more than just print—it also includes cutting, laminating, and finishing.

8 DON´T ACCEPT MISTAKES, DEMAND EXCELLENCE.

Mistakes happen, but accepting them makes errors more likely and numerous small errors can quickly become a significant cost. Understanding where the mistakes are happening is critical; you can then figure out how they can be reduced as there are lots of things you can do to ensure the best-quality work, every time. For example, printing multiple substrates—both flexible and rigid—with a single technology will help to ensure color consistency and quality across an entire print campaign. And you could also look at your workflow process: anti-scratch prints don't need laminating for short-term applications—removing one step of a typical workflow—and instantly-dry output would reduce your print production time as it doesn't need outgassing.

9 AUTOMATE LABOR-INTENSIVE PROCESSES AND MAINTENANCE

Using automated solutions to replace manual processes can save PSPs time and money. For example, the routine maintenance of printheads and white ink cartridges can be time consuming, labor-intensive, and impact your overall productivity. Using an automated solution not only reduces your business's manual labor hours, but prevents more costly delays in the long term—such as waiting for a technical service intervention to replace your printheads.

10 TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK

Staff that are used to doing things a certain way might be resistant to change. Again, this is where good communication is key. If they know why the changes are being made, were involved in the decision-making process, and are subsequently trained in how to make those changes, then they are more likely to transition effectively and embrace these new production efficiencies.

1. Compatible with HP PrintOS