# PIXARTPRINTING CHOOSES CANON AS TECHNOLOGY PARTNER TO MAINTAIN COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

**Company Name:** Pixartprinting, a subsidiary of the Cimpress Group
**Industry:** Online Commercial Print
**Founded:** 1994
**Location:** Quarto D'Altino, Italy
**Services:** Printing of multiple customised applications ordered online
**Relationship with Canon:** 2017

## Objective

To fill the 'margin maximisation' gap between Pixartprinting's existing offset and digital B2 toner technologies without compromising print quality.

## Challenges

- Identifying a digital web-fed press and finishing equipment that would achieve high performance and productivity
- Ensuring that the press could produce offset-like quality, look and feel
- Finding a technology partner that was willing to share both Pixartprinting's vision of fully automated print lines, and to mitigate the risk involved in setting up the lines.

## Approach

Pixartprinting installed three Canon ProStream web-fed inkjet printers configured for integration with third-party finishing equipment to achieve maximum flexibility for shorter print runs.

## Benefits

- Significantly improved ease of use, productivity and uptime
- Gained a streamlined, end-to-end workflow to save labour costs through reduced manual intervention
- Strengthened ability to deliver outstanding services and customer experiences.

Canon

## Pixartprinting looks to the future as an online printer

Founded in 1994, Pixartprinting is a commercial print service provider with an online shop that is one of the largest web-to-print operations in Europe. The company is headquartered in Quarto D'Altino, Italy and in 2014 it became part of the Cimpress Group, a world leader in mass customisation.

Pixartprinting delivers a range of online print services: small format applications, including catalogues, postcards, stickers and flyers, large format products including high-resolution posters, banners and display stands, as well as labels and packaging. Today, Pixartprinting has over 1,000 employees and services more than a million active customers across Europe.

From printing to binding and cutting, through to laminating and creasing, Pixartprinting is focused on optimising the entire production process from order to delivery.

For some time, Pixartprinting had relied on its portfolio of offset and digital B2 toner presses to produce the high-quality output expected by customers for whatever number they ordered. To simplify the overall process and to reduce manufacturing cost, Pixarprinting decided to implement a web fed technology with higher productivity in printing and in finishing, enabling the shift of shorter run length jobs from offset to digital.

### Next steps...

Based on that decision, Pixartprinting made its first investment in a high-speed digital inkjet press with the Canon ProStream 1000 series. Alessio explains, "We carefully analysed the range of options on the market to identify a technology that would make short-run printing even more competitive. We chose to explore inkjet because, in our opinion, there was no other technology,

"Our products are printed using only the most advanced printing machinery, and we are regularly investing in new inks, printers and materials that provide exceptional results."

**Alessio Piazzetta**
**Chief Manufacturing Officer**

from a productivity and cost perspective, that was at the same level. In addition, we saw that inkjet technology was now mature enough to be able to use in our production environment and to deliver offset quality."

With a focus on the complete production process, Pixartprinting's goal was to streamline processes, saving labour cost and preventing errors by limiting the amount of manual intervention. The company therefore concluded that web-fed presses would best deliver these goals and the level of productivity required from fully integrated high-speed finishing lines. "We decided on a web-fed solution for two reasons: for the speed of the press and the fact that web-fed finishing technology is much faster and much more productive compared with sheet-fed finishing technology," says Alessio.

The foundation of the fruitful partnership was laid in September 2018 with Pixartprinting investing in its first Canon ProStream 1000 web-fed inkjet printer, followed by a second press in September 2019 and a third in March 2021.
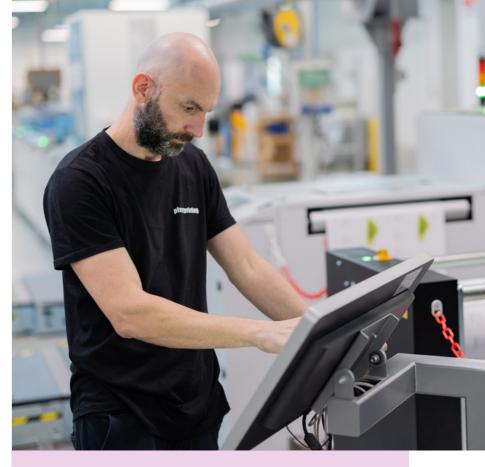
Quality is a key attribute that Alessio highlighted.

> Customers expect quality. They expect short delivery times. They expect a high service level. And that's what they receive. So it was important to us that Canon understood and could help us to deliver that. Even from the first test print we saw, we were certain of the ProStream's potential. Canon was committed to delivering on the quality and this was very encouraging for us.

### A complete end-to-end solution

Alessio describes how the three presses are being utilised, "We now have three different configurations to give us the maximum flexibility in terms of productivity and workflow optimisation. Our latest ProStream has been fully integrated into the finishing line we're using to produce flyers and foldables for restaurants."

The ProStreams are also linked with Pixartprinting's own workflow, which manages the way customers order on the website and then automatically drives the jobs to the most efficient printing technology depending on the requirements of the job, for the imposition, preparation and printing of the final application. As a result, the company has experienced significant efficiency gains, and since transitioning work to the ProStreams, has achieved cost savings of 25 – 30%.

"The new ProStreams have allowed us to further optimise production by choosing – based on variables such as quantity, media, turnaround time and format – the most cost-effective system out of offset, digital B2 toner and inkjet, and pass on savings to customers through even lower prices."

**Alessio Piazzetta**
**Chief Manufacturing Officer**

Another huge advantage of the web-fed ProStream is its ability to handle varying format lengths dynamically. Helping to significantly increase the overall productivity of the system, it will automatically switch to the new format without stopping, wasting paper or making unnecessary roll changes. This means that, independent of the format length, all jobs that need to be printed on the same paper to fill one roll can be bundled together and printed one after the other without stopping the system. While not previously possible on either their offset or digital B2 toner systems, thanks to the ProStream's image format possibilities, Pixartprinting can now produce longer format applications, such as calendars, point of sale displays and posters, and group applications on format sizes longer than B2, resulting in cost benefits and less waste.
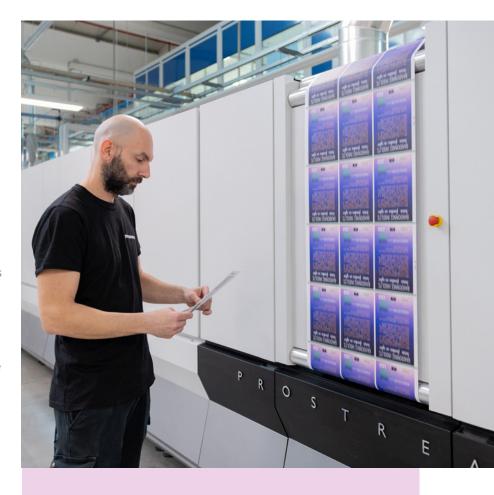
## A highly productive press

The high uptime and productivity of the ProStream stood out to Pixartprinting, too. "When we began our conversations with Canon," continues Alessio, "overall equipment efficiency (OEE) was a key target we discussed. We want to attain a certain efficiency level so we monitor the OEE regularly and Canon is continuously working closely with us to make adjustments that will enable us to reach our goals.

"Since installing the ProStream, we have transitioned 10-15% of our offset volumes to the ProStreams and a much higher percentage from our pre-existing digital technology. As a result, I'd estimate that our uptime has increased by 20%. In addition, we're now better equipped to handle peak volumes, for example, in the months leading up to Black Friday and Christmas."

## A strategic partnership aligned with pixartprinting's dna

Alessio talks about Pixartprinting's relationship with Canon, "Since the beginning, Canon understood that what we were looking for was not a technical solution, but a technology partner, and they were very focused on being a partner for us. They were honest throughout the journey and shared the risks with us. They acknowledged that investing in inkjet technology would be a challenge as well as an opportunity. It took some time to fine-tune everything, but there was good cooperation and commitment from Canon and they helped to identify issues and address them quickly."



"The main benefits for us since installing the ProStreams are the higher productivity and efficiency they deliver, and the fact that the technology is more user-friendly for staff due to its easy to operate interface."

**Alessio Piazzetta**
**Chief Manufacturing Officer**

He concludes, "Our relationship with Canon is much more than just a commercial agreement; it's a strategic partnership perfectly in keeping with the technological innovation that is in Pixartprinting's DNA. Both we and Canon want to experiment and strive to offer customers quality products at ever more competitive prices and if we're able to work towards continuous improvements on both sides, I think we can work together for many years to come."