



Seeing the world in black and white sometimes has its benefits.

Company Name

Formara Limited

Industry

Graphic Arts

Founded

1971

Location

Southend-on-sea, Essex, UK

Services

Design, litho and digital printing; variable data printing; comprehensive finishing, fulfilment and mailing services; complete communication and marketing projects from start to finish

Website

www.formara.co.uk

Overview

Founded in 1971, UK-based printer Formara currently employs over 50 staff and offers both lithographic and digital printing services. Originally a lithographic printer that specialised in the printing of technical manuals for the automotive and construction industries, Formara first added digital printing to its services in 1999. Today the company operates a hybrid environment, offering a wide range of offset and digital printing services, including variable data printing, poster and banner printing and mailing services.

Formara has had a longstanding relationship with Canon since taking its first steps into digital with Canon printers, so when the need arose to increase the productivity of their digital black and white equipment, there was no question of who to call.

According to Freddie Kienzler, Managing Director of Formara: "As digital print has grown over the past several years, we've continued to experience demand for black and white digital print, so much so that we felt it was time to upgrade our digital black and white equipment to increase speed, productivity and flexibility. We are a very environmentally conscious business, so it was vital that any investment would be in keeping with this by saving on energy usage and cutting down noise and other pollution."

The company certainly does have strong environmental credentials, having achieved ISO14001 environmental accreditation in 2002 and Carbon Zero status in 2008. It also holds FSC accreditation and produces most of its work on these papers. Its efforts in this area have not gone unnoticed, with Formara being named Environmental Printer of the Year by the British Association for Print and Communication in 2007 and 2011.

The perfect solution

Canon has always remained in close contact with Formara, keeping the company abreast of technological developments in the industry and relevant sector trends, as well as working to understand the company's needs and challenges. So when Formara began to look for a new digital monochrome solution, Canon was quickly able to identify the Océ VarioPrint 6160 Ultra – part of the Canon and Océ portfolio since Océ joined the Canon Group – as the solution that would be most suitable for Formara's needs.

Formara's decision to invest in the machine, however, did take a bit more time. "We knew that we needed to make an investment, but we also had to make sure that the quality produced on the new machines would be at least as good as what we already produced for our customers," says Kienzler.



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Freddie Kienzler, Managing Director.

Any concerns Formara had about print quality disappeared when Kienzler attended one of Canon's regular Customer Open Days at the Canon Professional Print Centre in Brussels in July 2011.

These events give Canon customers a chance to explore industry developments, market trends, application opportunities and other new ideas with industry peers from across Europe. For Formara, this particular event also presented a perfect opportunity to learn more about the portfolio of technologies offered by Canon and Océ and how they could work for their business. Kienzler attended a number of seminars on topics such as commercial printing trends, black and white printing applications and photo print services, and was given a full demonstration of the Océ VarioPrint 6160 Ultra. He says: "The seminars provided a useful insight into the industry and further opportunities for business growth, and I was certainly impressed with the black and white technologies that were offered by Canon and Océ."

On the second day of the event, Canon hosted an individual session for Kienzler to showcase the capabilities and unique aspects of the products he was most interested in. "Most importantly, the quality that was produced on the machines was excellent, and laid to rest any concerns I'd had about quality consistency," continues Kienzler.

Following the Customer Open Day, Formara again visited the Canon showroom in Brussels, this time for the company's Print Room Manager and Operations Manager to try out the product using the company's own media and files to test how well the product would actually work in Formara's print environment. This proof of concept trial proved very successful and Formara subsequently placed an order for two Océ VarioPrint 6160 Ultra devices.

A seamless transition

The devices were installed in November 2011, a busy time for Formara, so it was vital that there was minimum downtime. A third device, which was also being replaced, was kept on site as a back-up machine, but with a specialist Océ installation team ensuring that the transition went smoothly – it wasn't needed.



The machines are now bedded in and performing very well according to Kienzler, who confirms that the user-friendly software and reliability of the machines has impressed his team. He says: "The Océ VarioPrint 6160 Ultra machines have not only increased our productivity, but the option to temporarily increase the speed of the machines is a great benefit when we need flexibility. In addition, the energy savings and lower running temperature delivered by the machines, together with the fact that they produce no waste, solvents or noise pollution, has kept us on track with our environmental targets."

Since the installation, the new Océ VarioPrint 6160 Ultra machines have been producing a broad range of work, from manuals and market research questionnaires to variable data printing onto lithographic printed output. But Kienzler believes that this is only the start: "Lots of businesses are continuing to buy black and white print.

There is plenty of work out there that doesn't need to be printed in colour, or which only needs colour on the cover. At Formara we use whatever equipment is best for the job given the timeframe and cost, and the Océ VarioPrint 6160 Ultra is a perfect fit for this."

The success of the installation is indicative of the strength of the relationship between Canon and Formara. Kienzler concludes: "Right from the start Canon worked closely with Formara, supporting us in identifying the right solution to meet our needs, then giving us a comprehensive overview of how the solution would fit into and benefit our business, and finally providing an installation and training that made for a smooth transition and has boosted productivity."



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