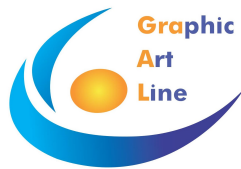




West African print leader seizes new market opportunities with innovative low odour latex inks



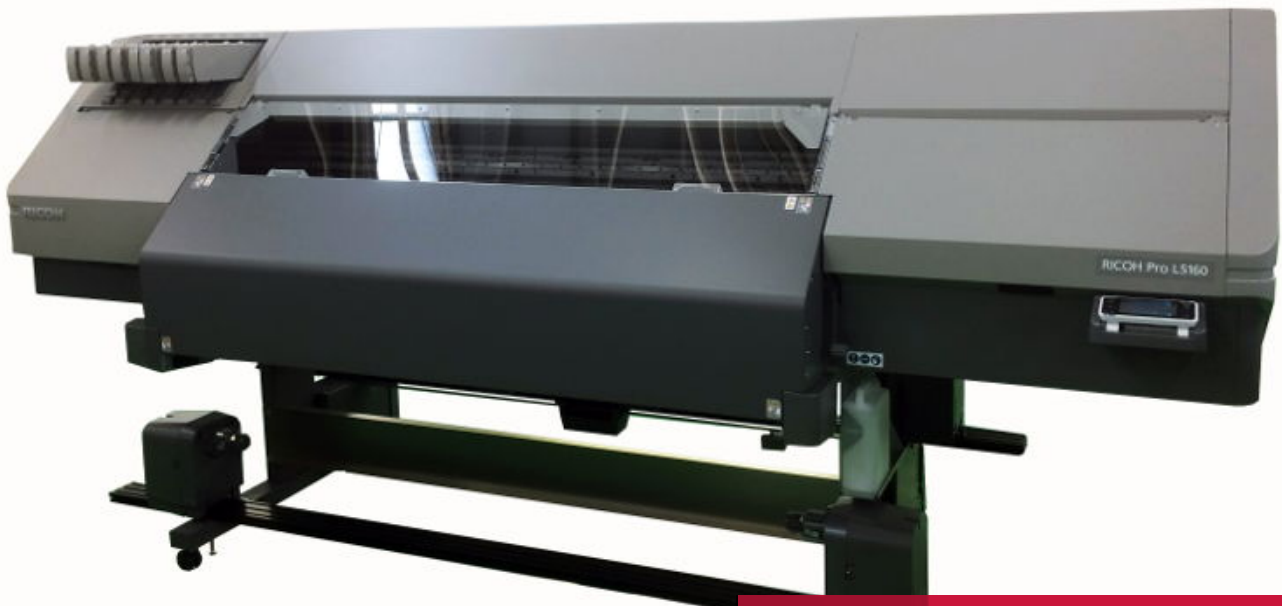
Visuel Concepts expands its range of interior décor products, including wallpapers and canvases, powered by the RICOH Pro™ L5160e large format printer with integrated colour calibration and profiling solutions.

COMPANY & CHALLENGE

Based in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, Visuel Concepts creates advertising and printed materials for international and local brands. Specialising in the production of outdoor and indoor signage, interior décor, and vehicle wraps, the company offers a full service from design to manufacturing and installation. Visuel Concepts possesses wide ranging production expertise, from large format digital printing to metal, wood, and plastics processing.

The construction sector in Ivory Coast has boomed in recent years. Property developers have built many hotels, restaurants, shopping centres, and office premises, especially in the country's economic capital and largest city, Abidjan. One knock-on effect of the construction boom is surging demand for interior décor products.

That's good news for Visuel Concepts, a leading large format printer in western Africa. To capitalise on the rise in demand, the company looked to increase production capacity for three product lines: wallpapers, decorated canvases, and window and floor graphics made with adhesive vinyl.



In the past, Visuel Concepts handled many large format print jobs using eco solvent inks. However, the odour of the inks makes them unsuitable for indoor applications. The company had also experienced finished output quality issues with eco solvent inks on adhesive vinyl. For example, the cutting of printed vinyl shapes often led to sticking issues at the edge of each design.

Mounir Younes, Founder and General Manager at Visuel Concepts, explains: “We are a leading print house in western Africa authorised by many global brands, and extending our capabilities would offer our clients exceptional new opportunities. To reach new customers and drive revenues, we wanted a technology that would deliver the highest levels of colour consistency on multiple substrates and enhance our productivity.”

SOLUTION

As a first step, Visuel Concepts identified low odour aqueous resin (AR) latex ink printing as the ideal way to create interior décor products at high volume and speed. Then, the company looked for a latex ink solution that would integrate with its colour management and finishing equipment. After assessing two options, Visuel Concepts selected an end to end solution from Ricoh business partner Graphic Art Line, consisting of the RICOH Pro L5160e large format printer, colour profiling software tools, and ongoing support services.



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Mounir Younes, Founder and General Manager



"We have developed a valued partnership with Graphic Art Line and Ricoh. Their comprehensive solutions provide Visuel Concepts with excellent print and colour management capabilities, and will help us to expand our range of indoor applications and to capture new business."

Mounir Younes, Founder and General Manager



Mounir Younes adds: "Of the latex printers available, we chose the Pro L5160e for the superior printhead durability, which will help to minimise running costs. More than just the device, it was vital for us to have access to local support, and we felt confident in the expertise and capabilities of Graphic Art Line."

With the Pro L5160e and AR latex inks, Visuel Concepts can print unique designs onto wallpapers, canvases, and adhesive PVC substrates. The company uses ColorGATE Ultimate software to manage colour profiles, with the option of using ink saving functionality to minimise consumption and costs. Graphic Art Line also configured a driver interface with the XRite i1 iO colour calibration solution used by Visuel Concepts, which enables the company to create specific colour profiles when an accurate profile is unavailable in the ColorGATE library.

In addition, Graphic Art Line integrated the Pro L5160e with an Esko cutting table and Summa roll cutter. The interface means that an operator can define cutting patterns during printing, rather than requiring creative teams to spend time defining requirements at the prepress stage, helping to accelerate production.

Mounir Younes continues: "This was a very demanding project to create a complex, customised latex printing workflow.

Graphic Art Line and Ricoh rose to the challenge, and provided strong knowledge and resources, plus the print hardware and colour management and finishing solutions to help us to reach our goals."

BENEFITS

Working with Ricoh and Graphic Art Line, Visuel Concepts is in an excellent position to seize the opportunities presented by the rise in demand for interior décor products. The company is gradually increasing production volumes on the Pro L5160e and will soon start to accept client orders. The water based AR latex inks from Ricoh have minimal odour and carry a Greenguard certification for improved air quality, making them the ideal choice for large scale indoor applications, such as wallpapers and canvases.

Furthermore, the rapid drying latex inks will help to accelerate production at Visuel Concepts, removing the 24 hour wait incurred when using eco solvents. With the Pro L5160e, the company can complete printing onto indoor applications and move the output straight to finishing processes, such as lamination and cutting. This streamlined workflow will help to boost productivity and ensure short lead times for clients.

Equally, the integrated colour profiling solutions will help to ensure high quality output that meets the requirements of international brands. And the AR latex inks from Ricoh offer superior performance and durability on adhesive vinyls during cutting, eliminating the quality issues that Visuel Concepts faced using eco solvents.

Building on the success of the large format printing project, Visuel Concepts has invested in additional Ricoh digital printing technologies. To increase inhouse capacity for sheetfed print jobs, the company worked with Graphic Art Line to implement a RICOH Pro™ C5300 printer, with an integrated Duplo finishing unit. This solution enables Visuel Concepts to handle short run full colour work easily and quickly, matching the very high quality standards of the large format solutions.

Mounir Younes concludes: “We have developed a valued partnership with Graphic Art Line and Ricoh. Their comprehensive solutions provide Visuel Concepts with excellent print and colour management capabilities, and will help us to expand our range of indoor applications and to capture new business. In future, we will welcome visits from other print service providers from overseas that wish to see the Pro L5160e in action.”



ABOUT RICOH

Ricoh is a leading provider of integrated digital services and print and imaging solutions designed to support digital transformation of workplaces, workspaces and optimise business performance.

Headquartered in Tokyo, Ricoh's global operation reaches customers in approximately 200 countries and regions, supported by cultivated knowledge, technologies, and organisational capabilities nurtured over its 85-year history. In the financial year ended March 2023, Ricoh Group had worldwide sales of 2,134 billion yen (approx. 16.0 billion USD).

It is Ricoh's mission and vision to empower individuals to find Fulfillment through Work by understanding and transforming how people work so we can unleash their potential and creativity to realise a sustainable future.

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