



KONICA MINOLTA



**UNIVERSITY OF
BEDFORDSHIRE**
INCREASES PRODUCTION WITH
ULTIMATE QUALITY AND
PRODUCTIVITY BY INVESTING IN
ACCURIOPRESS C3080



University of
Bedfordshire

Giving Shape to Ideas

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The print department at the University of Bedfordshire is more than your typical public sector print room, it also functions as a local digital print company, known for its attractive pricing and excellent print quality. When the department needed to upgrade an existing printer, it decided to install an AccurioPress C3080 digital colour production press from Konica Minolta to remain competitive and retain its top-quality offering to staff, students and local customers.

David Plummer is the Head of Print & Document Services at the university. Over the years, he has built up a robust working partnership with Konica Minolta: "We've always had a good relationship with Konica Minolta, because we've had their machines for so long. But more than trusting the technology, when you build up relationships with the individual people, you start to have that additional benefit, that additional value that comes from dealing with people you know and trust."

CUSTOMER PROFILE

The University of Bedfordshire has two main campuses, located in Luton and Bedford, where more than 20,000 students from over 100 countries study a wide range of degree courses. Its dedicated print department, known as The University Print Shop, serves not only the students and staff, but also the wider local community with leaflets and flyers, business cards, letterheads, copying and binding, pull up banners, external signage, label printing, vinyl cutting, photobooks and canvas prints.

David has been with The Print Shop since 1989 and seen it develop from what he describes as 'a justified loss' to a viable commercial business. The department, which has eight employees, functions as the central print and post room for the university as well as a commercial print shop, all under one roof. Originally sited on campus, and later in an industrial unit a short walk away, the shop is today located on the edge of the university on Park Street amongst a row of shops, thereby offering a better opportunity for passing trade, whilst still giving easy access for staff and students.

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David Plummer
Head of Print &
Document Services



CHALLENGES

Over the years, the commercial side of the print department has continued to grow with ever more work coming in from the local community. In terms of equipment, the first step into professional print came in the form of a Konica Minolta bizhub Pro C6500. David says, "The C6500 replaced our very first Konica Minolta copier device, it really changed us and took the whole department forwards. From being what was essentially just a copying service, we started developing better in-house printing and looking more commercial, because we had this great new piece of kit and could sell to outside companies."

Continuing on this path with Konica Minolta, the C6500 was later upgraded to the flagship bizhub PRESS C8000 digital production printer, which served The Print Shop well, until it came to the end of the contract in early 2019.

Despite the well-established relationship, the decision to take on another machine from Konica Minolta was not made lightly. Having had some issues with overextending themselves in the past and ending up with kit with unused capacity, David and the team set about finding the perfect solution that would combine cost-efficiency with quality.

He explains, "More than just having the right equipment, we needed to make sure it was fit for purpose. And it had to be what we needed now, with a small amount of leeway to increase production, but not something that we would potentially grow into given the best-case scenario. We wanted to make absolutely sure we got the best value, but also the highest quality, so we went through a very long and very robust testing procedure."

In contention were production printers from four major manufacturers. Each was put through its paces with test files that reflected the work it would be producing at The Print Shop, checking every aspect from continuous tone to graduated tints to fine line text and reversed out text. The photo print quality in particular was in focus. "We went through a series of images including portraits, nature, architecture; we made sure we were getting skin tones right. We tested every machine in the way that we would use it, which is maybe not necessarily how other people would test," says David.

On the list of criteria was also razor-sharp registration and high productivity as well as reliability over long runs, features that would need innovative automation software for quality adjustments in real-time.





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SOLUTION

With other local commercial printing companies in close competition, The Print Shop could not afford to make the wrong decision, so all print tests were analysed carefully. "On some machines, the print came out quite grainy with a bit of noise in the background and what we wanted to see was a smooth continuous tone," says David. "At the end of the day, the Konica Minolta AccurioPress C3080 won on the excellent quality of the print, but what really pushed it over the finishing line was the new IQ-501 Intelligent Quality Optimizer for automated inline adjustments."

The Konica Minolta C3080 is a colour digital production press, with printing, copying and scanning functions all rolled into one multi-functional device. Offering high productivity at up to 80 pages per minute, it can automatically duplex media up to 350gsm and be configured with a host of converting options to suit each business perfectly. At The Print Shop, the C3080 includes a high-capacity paper feeder, stapling unit, punch kit and a conveyance unit with 21-step mechanical media decurling unit for maximum versatility.

David also chose the optional IQ-501 Intelligent Quality Optimizer for automated inline adjustments. This closed-loop quality management system combines a spectrophotometer and two scanners (one for each side of

the sheet) to examine every sheet for accurate colour reproduction and precise front-to-back registration, making corrections in real-time. Not only does the IQ-501 ensure the highest possible print quality, it also minimises downtime and rejection of jobs for a more sustainable operation.

"Instead of choosing the top of the range machine from Konica Minolta, we chose the one just below, but with the IQ-501 unit added, it is on a par with the best you can get," declares David. "The IQ-501 unit saves us so much time and the operator loves it, because she knows the job will come out in register. Whether it's a multi-page booklet, business cards or postcards with print near the edge, we don't have to worry anymore."

The C3080 is run through an AccurioPro Flux workstation, which manages incoming jobs by choosing from a wide range of intelligent print functions. Another firm favourite with the operator, it has been integrated well and David is now looking at options to expand its use.

In line with social distancing rules during the COVID-19 pandemic, work practices have had to be adapted with The Print Shop turning to a click and collect model to avoid handling any paper files or even memory sticks. Customers now email files or submit them via the shop's website and then simply collect the order at the door. The

quick turnaround made possible by digital print technology means that some are even sending their order while waiting in the queue outside.

RESULTS

There is no doubt that the AccurioPress C3080 and Flux Essential has been the right choice for The Print Shop and that despite the very challenging working conditions during 2020, the company has been able to enjoy significant benefits in the first 18 months since its installation.

"The C3080 has definitely accelerated growth for us. When people come in, they're quite precise about what they want, and we know this machine can deliver, we know that we're not going to get the job kicked back," says David. "We previously lost a client who went to a commercial printer and had the job printed offset, but they returned to test the new Konica Minolta solution with uncoated and recycled stock and, I'm pleased to say, we won them back because the results were just perfect - the IQ-501 unit holds it all together. It's simply brilliant and it's the icing on the cake."



LET'S TALK

Contact us to find out how Konica Minolta can support, protect and optimise your business today and in the future.

For more information please visit:

www.konicaminolta.co.uk/rethink-central-communications

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