Business Image Group

HP Designjet photo printer meets standards of quality, affordability and speed

Industry
Facility visual solutions

Objective
Deliver exhibition-quality photo printing with in-house convenience and high reliability

Approach
Convert from outsourced premium printing to the HP Designjet Z3200ps Photo Printer, premium printing mediums and inks

IT matters
- PostScript® file print option enables control of graphics and text
- Broader color gamut from a 12-color ink set
- Optimized dpi delivers high quality prints

Business matters
- Provides greater control over output quality to produce images for the customer as envisioned
- Meets the demands of an intense workflow to ensure a successful, timely delivery
- Automatic servicing routines improve ink efficiency and prevent nozzle clogging for greater reliability
- Original HP inks and premium printing materials deliver prints that will outlast customer's needs

"Without our HP Designjet photo printer, we would be unable to execute projects in a way that meets our standards of quality, affordability and speed. It has become an integral part of what we offer to clients."

—Bennett Hall, president and founder, Business Image Group, San Francisco, Calif.

Business Image Group (BIG) was established in San Francisco, Calif. in 1980 by photographer and designer Bennett Hall. It has produced visual programs for clientele including district courts, major hospitals, corporations, hotels, universities and investment firms. Hall's vision, over three decades ago, was to deliver visual solutions that represent an organization's heritage, marketplace and communications strategy. In the past, that meant outsourcing print fulfillment—forfeiting control and timeliness. Now BIG prints its own imagery using an HP Designjet photo printer.

Creating images that communicate a mission

BIG's mission is to replace conventional artwork with images that educate, inspire and influence both visitors and employees and communicate the organization's mission.

"The more common way to approach art programs has been to select images as a complement to the finish schedule led by the architect, coordinating artwork to blend with the furniture, wall colors and carpet," explains Bennett Hall, president and founder, Business Image Group.

This décor-centric approach leads to a selection of artwork for its attractiveness, however images were often disconnected from the mission of the organization. "We design programs that communicate the legacy and culture of the enterprise. Our approach is to create a look and feel that is both strategic and tactical, reinforcing the market position of the client and supporting human factors," Hall says.

Single-source solution

Today BIG provides a single-source solution, from inception to installation, of exhibition-quality images, graphics and signage for clients. "It was always intuitive to me that our clients did not want to deal with five different vendors," Hall says. Equally important, he wanted total control over the production process in order to control image quality and ensure timely delivery.

He started in the 1980s by meticulously hand printing images and murals in his own darkroom, then framing them in-house. As the company grew, that became unrealistic; technology emerged changing the industry leading to Hall closing the lab operation in 1996. Hall gradually shifted to relying on photo labs to print images and then a Lightjet laser printer. However, that left him vulnerable on tight deadlines and unable to do real time proofing and output.

"Large jobs frequently had to be uploaded overnight before we could do the sizing and printing," Hall recalls. "There wasn't always time for proofing. We would approach a due date and pray that our files were perfect and the printer would produce the images as envisioned."

With those frustrations in mind, he kept a close eye on the capabilities of emerging photo-quality digital printers. The future was introduced to him by a forward thinking HP rep in 2004, which would allow him to again bring printing in-house. The HP Designjet 130nr Printer was the first large-format photo printer acquired by Hall that met his standards for output. Its six-color ink set produced a broad color gamut, and its small dot size enabled the printer to virtually match photo quality of the Lightjet.

> "There is no way we could meet the demands of a workflow that's this intense without a high-quality workhorse printer like the HP Designjet photo printer. It saves time desperately needed for successful delivery."
>
> —Bennett Hall, president and founder, Business Image Group

"We immediately noticed how impressive the output quality was," Hall recalls. "The HP Designjet prints provided the quality we were seeking with the control and timeliness we wanted back in our court."

HP Designjet photo printer advances quality, efficiency

A few years later, the company moved to its current output engine, the HP Designjet Z3200ps Photo Printer, as soon as it became available. Again, Hall was amazed by the technology.

"I can really see a distinct difference in the HP Designjet Z3200ps Photo Printer. It's at a new level in terms of quality," Hall says. "Part of that is due to the reduced dot size, measured in picoliters, combined with how HP technology fuses the ink onto the paper. I'm impressed with the artistry developed into the technology and engineering at HP. The multiple greys, blacks and gloss enhancers enable exceptionally high-quality black and white printing—a requirement for many of our historical exhibits. They really seem to understand how to create a device that recreates the artist's intent in an image."

HP Designjet photo printer ensures project success, satisfied customers

The smaller dot size enables the printer to produce up to 2400 x 1200 optimized dpi for high-quality photo printing.

Hall is particularly excited about the printer's 12-color ink set. He says he did direct comparisons between HP, Canon and Epson printers, and concluded the HP Designjet Z3200ps Photo Printer provides an ideal color gamut for his needs. Indeed, the 12-color ink set expands the color gamut to cover 95% of PANTONE® colors.

The printer is also highly reliable and efficient. "The HP Designjet Z3200ps Photo Printer can kick out a lot of work, with consistently high quality and very little waste," Hall continues. "I can walk away to have dinner and come back a few hours later with finished, trimmed large-format prints waiting for me."

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The HP Designjet Z3200ps Photo Printer at BIG handles media up to 24 inches wide

and a larger version will output media up to 44 inches wide. It is engineered for reliable performance, with proactive automatic servicing routines that improve ink efficiency and Optical Drop Detector (ODD) to prevent nozzle clogging. For BIG, the result is more time spent printing, and less time servicing a printer.

Hall chose the PostScript® version of the printer because his projects include integrated signage and graphics, often printed directly from Adobe® InDesign®. "With the ability to print PostScript files, I can control graphics and text," he says.

Hall is a loyal user of Original HP inks and HP premium printing materials. "It wouldn't occur to me to use third party ink or media. I'm not looking to shave pennies from my cost. What's important to me is producing the best possible product for my clients," Hall says.

Since he began doing inkjet printing using HP photo printers, Hall's medium of choice has been HP Premium Instant-dry Satin Photo Paper. BIG has used almost a mile-long length of it since acquiring the Designjet photo printer. Hall says he's now producing a centerpiece mural to finish a 1,000 piece exhibit project and has chosen a premium printing material, the HP Professional Matte Canvas.

The combination of Original HP inks and HP premium printing materials give him confidence that the inkjet prints he creates

Customer at a glance

Application
Exhibition-quality, in-house photo printing
Visit: businessimagegroup.com and
eco-framing.com

Hardware
• HP Designjet Z3200ps Photo Printer

Supplies
• HP Premium Instant-dry Satin Photo Paper
• HP Professional Matte Canvas
• Original HP inks

will outlast his customers' needs. In indoor applications, prints are projected to resist fading for up to 200 years, depending on the lighting conditions and glazing.[1]

Satisfying clients, meeting tight deadlines

For Hall, having a productive, in-house printing solution can mean the difference between success and failure on a large project. Early in any project, he establishes deadlines for image selection and print orders. Almost inevitably, changes occur along the way, such as content selection or design, therefore flexibility is critical to the workflow.

On one recent project, "If the HP printer wasn't in my toolbox, we would have failed," Hall says. "Part way through the project, the client changed their requirements and wanted everything in the building to be 100% unique,

new content." Hall began the laborious process of hand-tinting dozens of large-format digital image files in Adobe Photoshop®. Some of the prints were ordered just days before the project completion deadline and public opening. He worked through several nights to complete the prints, which were then custom framed by BIG's in-house frame shop, Eco Framing, and delivered on deadline in time for the grand opening.

"Weeks go by. Decisions are delayed, and then we race the clock to get the job done in time for the opening," Hall says. "There is no way we could meet the demands of a workflow that's this intense without a high-quality reliable 'workhorse' printer like the HP Designjet Z3200ps Photo Printer. It saves time desperately needed to ensure a successful delivery—we can depend on HP to perform."

Learn more at
hp.com/go/designjet

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[1] Image permanence estimates by HP Image Permanence Lab based on testing on a range of HP photo, fine art, and specialty papers: confirmation tests in progress at Wilhelm Imaging Research, Inc. For details, see hp.com/go/supplies/printpermanence.