Epson® Business Inkjet Printer

Case Study | CRW Engineering Group LLC
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PROFILE

Industry: Engineering Services

Name: CRW Engineering Group, LLC

Location: Anchorage, AK

Founded: 1961

Website: www.crweng.com

CHALLENGE

Improve printer speed and capacity, while reducing maintenance costs and downtime to serve multiple, high-demand departments within a busy multi-faceted engineering firm.

SOLUTION

The Epson WorkForce® Enterprise WF-C20590 inkjet printer delivered the speed, quality and consistent reliability required, while Epson's PrecisionCore technology has saved the firm money on ink. The addition of print management software has helped CRW turn printing into a revenue driver instead of an expense.

Simple and Smartly Built

Engineering Firm Learns the Benefits of Epson WorkForce Inkjet Printers

"It just seemed too good to be true. Faster, cheaper and better quality?"

That's Brian Looney, Principal and Civil Engineer for CRW Engineering Group, LLC, of Anchorage, Alaska, talking about the Epson WorkForce® Enterprise WF-C20590 A3 multifunction network printer.

Looney had just finished a two-month free trial arranged by his local dealer Bruce Ross at Alaska Printer Supply, of the high-speed, high-volume printer, which uses Epson PrecisionCore® inkjet technology to compete with laser printers and copiers. Based on the trial, he knew the Epson was the obvious choice.

"It was just the simplicity of it," he explains. "It's so simply and elegantly built that it outperforms everything else we've tried."

Elegant Engineering Solutions

As an engineering firm, CRW is all about simplicity and elegance. The 38-year-old company is known for its thoughtful solutions to the challenges of public infrastructure: designing roads, bridges, airports, utilities, and water and sewage systems.

Though originally employing only civil engineers, over the years CRW added the disciplines of surveying and mechanical, electrical and structural engineering. With about 80 people on staff, they serve all of Alaska, with about half of their work in the cities of Anchorage, Juneau and Fairbanks, and about half in rural areas and small towns.

Looney remembers buying CRW's first laser printer back in the 1980s. "That was our first shared printer, and it was a big

deal, a real breakthrough," he recalls. The technology kept getting better and better, but it's anything but simple.

In 2008, the firm bought two state-of-the-art laser copiers. "They were great, at first," Looney recalls, "with high quality color printing at 50 pages per minute. Gradually, however, they required more and more maintenance, until last year, at any given time one of them would generally be down," he adds.

He intended, at first, to buy replacements from the same company, getting their latest model, which prints at 75 pages per minute. But in doing his research, he learned about Epson's WorkForce Enterprise inkjet

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printers. “Our dealer Bruce Ross said he had one in his shop, and I should come and check it out…Then he offered to put it in my office for a few weeks, with no commitment. We’ve always been happy with his customer care and personal touch, so I said yes.”

When Ross and his team brought out the WF-C20590, Looney asked them to install it next to one of their big laser printers. Then he let the CRW engineers and administrators choose the machine they wanted to use. “It didn’t take them long to get to the Epson. It was screaming fast: 100 pages per minute.[1] The copies looked better, too. The quality was really great, and pretty soon the old printer was just sitting there.”

He adds that he and his partners have always preferred to buy their office equipment rather than leasing it. In doing so, however, they would buy a service contract and pay a negotiated rate per copy to keep the machines running.

There is a print head, but it uses Epson’s unique PrecisionCore technology. It’s the width of legal paper and it doesn’t move. Beyond that, there are five high-yield large capacity ink cartridges, two for black that lasts up to 50,000 ISO pages and one each for cyan, yellow and magenta that each last up to 50,000 ISO pages.[2]

Since CRW Engineering started using the WF-C20590 in November 2018, it has only required two service calls. One was to fix a control screen that broke when a shelf fell on it during an earthquake and the other to show the team how to change the ink cartridges and discharge the ink cleaning system. In both instances, the visits from Alaska Printer Supply were quick and easy.

Powerful, Printed Proposals

Today CRW has six WorkForce Epson printers. There are two WorkForce Enterprise WF-C20590 printers, one with a sorting and stapling unit and one without, two smaller WorkForce Pro WF-C869R multifunction printers with Replaceable Ink Pack Systems that let you print up to 84,000 ISO pages without changing the ink packs[3] and prints 24 ISO pages per minute (black/color),[4] two WorkForce Pro WF-M5799 monochrome printers, and one Epson Stylus® Pro 3880, which is a professional inkjet photo printer.

To manage the new Epson printers, CRW integrated PaperCut NG print control software on the WF-C20590 to track printing expenses and billing for specific client contracts. The team found PaperCut simple to implement on the WF-C20590 and the interface made it easy to use. Using Papercut has allowed CRW to turn printing into a revenue driver instead of a loss.

Looney says it’s the marketing and administrative group, located on the company’s third floor, which is the heaviest user of the WF-C20590 with the finishing unit.

“Most of our work comes from state and local government, and each government entity will convene a committee to review the qualifications of the design firm. They always ask for a written submittal, and given the competitive nature of our business, the printing quality is crucial.”

The marketing group prepares these proposals, which are often 50 pages or more, and filled with color photography, drawings and other graphics illustrating the work of CRW.

With color laser, he says, the toner will melt onto the paper and form a semigloss image that stands up on top of the surface of the paper – a nice effect, but not as nice as with the Epson, where the ink creates a more natural look similar to a printed book or magazine. “The one variable is the paper,” Looney adds. “You don’t want photo paper, but good quality, bright-white stock.”

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Once the body of the proposal is printed, the marketing group prints the covers on the Stylus Pro, using heavy photographic cover stock. They bind the covers and the bodies using a spiral binding machine.

In addition to the marketing group and administrators, engineers on the third floor use the WF-C20590 for a variety of applications – printing CAD drawings, surveying documents, spreadsheets, cost proposals, and other design-related documents. “We still have a plotter, but we hardly ever use it, given that we can print 11” x 17” drawings on the big Epson for construction drawings and bid packages.” Looney says, the tabloid drawings save money and are more portable since the previous standard in the engineering industry was full size 22” x 34.” They use the WF-C20590 for scanning as well, inputting drawings and documents that they receive on paper into their digital systems.

Engineers on the second floor use the second WF-C20590 for similar kinds of printing, and on the first floor, smaller workgroups use the two WF-C869R printers for everything but CAD drawings. Looney explains that a handful of engineers and managers keep smaller printers in their offices, purely for convenience.

Simple, Elegant Technology

When he first had the Enterprise printers installed, Looney says there were a few adjustments that had to be made, but they were minor. “I don’t remember ever having a paper jam,” he says.

“Having two big printers has always been important to us. When we have a proposal due, we have to rely on them, and if one goes out, we just use the other. But since we installed the Epson printers, we haven’t had to.

“I always knew inkjet was out there, but with the home-style printers, a company like ours would spend a fortune on ink. But now, with the WF-C20590, I don’t see a place for toner anymore…There’s no advantage for text, and ink just shines for photos.”

As professional engineers, Looney and his partners appreciate how a better idea implemented well can make all the difference.

“We like the simplicity of this technology for sure,” he adds. “It’s not the simplicity for its own sake, but the reliability and the quality of the printing that the simplicity makes possible.”

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1 Black and color print speeds are measured in accordance with ISO/IEC 24734. Actual print times will vary based on system configuration, software, and page complexity. For more information, visit www.epson.com/printspeed

2 Replacement cartridge yields are based on ISO/IEC 24711 tests in Default Mode printing continuously. Cartridge yields vary considerably for reasons including images printed, print settings, temperature and humidity. Yields may be lower when printing infrequently or predominantly with one ink color. All ink colors are used for printing and printer maintenance, and all colors have to be installed for printing. For print quality, part of the ink from the included cartridges is used for printer startup and a variable amount of ink remains in the cartridges after the “replace cartridge” signal. For more information, visit www.epson.com/inkinfo

3 Black and color print speeds are measured in accordance with ISO/IEC 24734. Actual print times will vary based on system configuration, software, and page complexity. For more information, visit www.epson.com/printspeed

4 Ink pack yields are estimated based on ISO/IEC 24711 test in Default Mode printing continuously. Ink pack yields vary considerably for reasons including printed images, print settings, temperature and humidity. Yields may be lower when printing infrequently or predominantly with one ink color. All ink colors are used for printing and printer maintenance, and all colors have to be installed for printing. For print quality, part of the ink from the included ink packs is used for printer startup and a variable amount of ink remains in the ink pack after the “replace ink pack” signal. For details, see www.epson.com/inkinfo

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