

Greyhounds WA and Ricoh



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Richard Such, Print Shop Supervisor



Greyhounds WA: Premier racing and entertainment venues

Greyhounds WA takes in-house print production to new levels with the Ricoh Pro C900

Background: Full service printing

Throughout Western Australia, greyhound racing is a multi-million dollar business that attracts participants and enthusiasts from virtually every walk of life. As the organisation responsible for operating the State's three greyhound racing venues, Greyhounds WA strives to ensure its operations are benchmarked as premier Australian racing and entertainment facilities.

In the background, and playing an important role in supporting Greyhounds WA operations, is its in-house Print Shop delivering a professional and highly efficient print production service. Key among the projects undertaken by the Print Shop are: over 2,500 saddle-stitched A4 race books every week, the weekly production of approximately 3,000 A3 colour TAB posters, and a myriad of *ad hoc* print jobs in direct support of the organisation's marketing department.

Challenge: Colour production excellence

In 2008, the Print Shop introduced a Ricoh Pro 1356EX black-and-white production print engine that provided it with the on-demand ability to produce high volumes of black-and-white prints, complete with in-line finishing to create folded and saddle-stitched booklets.

According to the Print Shop Supervisor, Richard Such, the challenge lay in colour production, most notably the full-colour race book covers and posters. "A few years ago we leased two A3 colour print production units from another vendor, but the units' low level of reliability and an inability to handle A3+ stock meant they were creating a very real production bottleneck," he explains.

The Answer: The Ricoh Pro C900

Faced with that challenge, Greyhounds WA went to tender for a high-speed colour solution that would complement the Ricoh Pro 1356EX and establish an almost seamless print production workflow.

"When the Ricoh sales team gave us a demonstration of the Pro C900, we were totally sold on the quality, speed, ease of use and versatility,"

Richard says. "Added to that, the sales people demonstrated a solid knowledge and were able to answer any question we asked."

While the Print Shop team's opinion was taken into consideration, the deciding factor was based on a series of comprehensive calculations made by the organisation's Financial Controller. Richard explains: "Our financial controller created a spreadsheet into which he entered an enormous amount of data relating to the production specifications, leasing costs and numerous other factors.

"Despite various offers to 'sharpen the pencil' from the other two vendors we were considering, the Pro C900 came out on top – and that was from our team's perspective and that of senior management."

Seamless integration and immediate gains

Following implementation of the Ricoh Pro C900 at the Print Shop, and a seamless integration with the Greyhounds WA network operating environment, productivity gains were almost immediate. Ricoh product specialists provided on-site training and worked alongside Richard and his team to develop accurate colour profiles that would deliver optimum colour accuracy on a range of specified media.

From that point on, the Print Shop's productivity soared. So much so, that within a matter of weeks one of the three team members was able to move to a different area of operations without any impact on productivity.

In commenting on how the introduction of the Ricoh Pro C900 in conjunction with the Pro 1356EX resulted in such a large gain, Richard says: "It's due to a large number of factors, not least of those being an increase in print speed, a dramatic reduction in the amount of time required to manage and maintain the environment, and a highly streamlined workflow."

The time savings are particularly evident when it comes to producing the full-colour covers for the race books. "We simply take the printed pages to the guillotine, trim them, then transfer them to the 1356EX's interposer tray, which inserts them as wrap-arounds of the black-and-white prints, ready for automatic saddle-stitching," Richard explains.



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Richard Such, Print Shop Supervisor



“The main reason we’re able to achieve such a rapid turnaround is simply because we have a print production system that has reduced the time required to deliver on the major print jobs, such as the racing booklets and TAB posters.”

Delivering on quality and colour

With over forty years experience as a professional printer, Richard regards the Ricoh Pro C900’s high levels of colour accuracy as fundamental to the Print Shop’s ability to meet the quality demands expected of its internal and external customers as well as senior management’s financial expectations.

“Increasingly, digital print production is more economical – in time and money – than traditional offset printing,” Richard states. “And when it comes to quality, the advances have been so great that where I used to be able to tell easily the difference between offset and digital prints, with the Pro C900 and Pro 1356EX, I now need a magnifying glass.

“When you consider that since introducing the two Ricoh production systems we have reduced our personnel overheads by over 30 per cent while actually increasing our workload, any initial financial concerns there may have been are well and truly negated.

“Justifying it even more,” Richard continues, “is the fact that the quality of our colour printing is now massively better than we were ever able to achieve.”

The support element

While the Ricoh Pro C900 and Pro 1356EX deliver print production power and quality for Greyhounds WA’s Print Shop, Richard states that it’s the ongoing support from Ricoh that plays a major part in ensuring the entire operation runs faultlessly.

“Right from the very start,” Richard says, “the Ricoh team – sales, training and technical support – has been nothing short of excellent in their relationship with us. Even the on-site training we received after implementation was designed to meet our business needs, rather than a generic print environment. Then there’s the dedicated Ricoh colour management specialist and direct access to the service technicians, all of whom are only a phone call away and generally on site within a matter of hours – at the most!

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Contributing even further to the Print Shop’s increased productivity are a number of Ricoh Pro C900 features that have been designed specifically to eliminate instances of production holdups. “Just the fact that we’re able to swap toner cartridges in the middle of a print run without halting production is a major advantage,” Richard says. “Added to that is the ability to have different media stock already loaded, means we’re no longer swapping paper every time a print job requires different stock. Those are the sorts of features that enable us to concentrate on generating print output rather than constantly managing the equipment.”

Meeting the needs of business

Versatility is now a standard feature of the Greyhounds WA Print Shop, and the organisation is benefiting from an internal print production environment that has the ability to respond rapidly to all print requests. This is demonstrated almost daily, with the Print Shop receiving a steady flow of print requests from the Greyhounds WA internal marketing department.

Special tickets, brochures, business cards and tent menus are just a handful of the print projects the Print Shop receives from marketing; and, not surprisingly, time is generally always of the essence. “In the majority of cases,” Richard says, “all it takes is just a few minutes to set up the job and slot it into our production schedule, then have it delivered within a matter of hours.

Product code: 950481

Printed on the Ricoh Pro C900