



AlphaGraphics, Inc.

AlphaGraphics embraces change and gains new business with help from Adobe® PDF Transit™

AlphaGraphics, Inc.

- Leading desktop publishing and printing retailer
- Location: Rancho Cordova, California
- Employees: 26

www.us202.alphagraphics.com

Industry

Graphics and Printing

Solution

Automated Preflight and Printing

Products Used

- Adobe Acrobat®
- Adobe InDesign®
- Adobe PDF Transit

Company Profile

AlphaGraphics opened its first print shop in 1970, and became the industry's first desktop publishing retailer in 1984. Today, AlphaGraphics boasts 325 shops in 17 countries and attributes its growth to a technology-driven infrastructure and worldwide vendor alliances.

This successful business model did not go unnoticed by Michael Kennedy, an independent print shop owner, in the 1970s and 1980s. Kennedy watched as AlphaGraphics emerged as a pioneer in digital publishing and reported the highest average sales revenues in the industry. In 1990, he purchased an AlphaGraphics franchise in Rancho Cordova, California, offering a full range of quick printing and digital publishing services, including design, production, bindery, and fulfillment to large banking, medical, insurance, and high-technology companies.

Challenges Faced

Keep pace with rapidly changing industry

In an industry evolving as rapidly as electronic publishing, it's easy to imagine one growing weary of constant change. But when asked, "Can we find a better way?" Kennedy describes himself as, "Genetically incapable of responding, 'No.'"

From his first days as an AlphaGraphics franchise owner, he began researching and implementing new technologies and training—organizing his staff to operate at maximum efficiency and helping his customers to adopt a more productive way of working.

"Change must be committed to from the top, setting goals and time frames to guarantee success," explains Kennedy. There's a fortunate synergy here, for as much as Kennedy embraces change, so does the AlphaGraphics corporate office. Jason Kol, manager of support and design services at AlphaGraphics headquarters, shares Kennedy's technical savvy and entrepreneurial spirit. Together they have worked to beta test, train, and implement advanced design and workflow technologies throughout the organization.

Streamline preflight and printing processes

Traditionally, the process of obtaining a disk from a client, placing the job into production, performing preflight, and preparing the file for output was a manual and time consuming process. How rapidly a job would be produced was largely dependent on the preparation of the file by the client. Missing fonts and graphics, incorrect color spaces, text reflows, and more, were enough to stop a job in its tracks and send costs soaring.



“AG PDF Express is a real boon to automated workflows. It speeds the learning curve and makes doing business with AlphaGraphics faster and easier.”

Michael Kennedy,
Franchise owner,
AlphaGraphics, Inc.
Rancho Cordova

Success Strategy

The Rancho Cordova shop has adopted and promoted many Adobe technologies, most recently Adobe Acrobat, Adobe InDesign, and Adobe PDF Transit. As one of AlphaGraphics’ leading adopters of new technologies, the Rancho Cordova franchise was selected, in a joint effort with AlphaGraphics headquarters, to beta test AG PDF Express, a new Web-based file submission program developed by AlphaGraphics with Adobe PDF Transit at its core.

Kennedy served on the committee to review the new product, a customized implementation of Adobe PDF Transit that enables AlphaGraphics customers to submit print-ready files to shops via the Internet. Teamed with Adobe Systems, AlphaGraphics connects customer’s desktops to print shops around the world, making Internet-based print-on-demand a reality.

AlphaGraphics was one of the early adopters to bring a customized version of Adobe PDF Transit to market. Adobe licensed the PDF Transit software development kit to AlphaGraphics, who in turn created AG PDF Express. With AG PDF Express, AlphaGraphics customers have a printer-chooser-level option on their desktops that will convert a file to Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF), preview it for proper print parameters, and submit the order with a job ticket directly to an AlphaGraphics partner for production.

AG PDF Express automates the submission process, requiring fewer people to intervene as a file travels through production. Such automated workflows are one reason that Michael Kennedy’s lean and mean AlphaGraphics production team of 26 can support \$2.6 million dollars in annual sales volume and keep customers coming back for repeat business.

Business Benefits

- Greater customer satisfaction and repeat business
- Increased customer sales with automated workflows
- Reduced time spent on file transfer and preflight by 30%
- More productive design team

Strong support by AlphaGraphics Corporate and a strategic partnership with Adobe, allow AlphaGraphics franchise owners to offer their customers superior products and service. By utilizing Adobe PDF Transit, Acrobat, and InDesign, the Rancho Cordova AlphaGraphics shop reduced the time spent on file transfer and preflight by 30%. By leveraging Adobe technologies, AlphaGraphics can now offer their customers a communications strategy—not just a printing service—giving the company a key competitive advantage. Kennedy believes the implementation of Adobe PDF Transit, Acrobat, and InDesign provides his customers with a faster and better way of doing business.

“Adopting a new way of preparing, producing, or submitting jobs may require learning a few extra steps, but I’ve found that if you provide the proper training and support, customers are more than happy to find a better way to do their jobs,” says Kennedy. “AG PDF Express is a real boon to automated workflows. It speeds the learning curve and makes doing business with AlphaGraphics faster and easier.”

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