

PROFILE

Name: Alaska Printer's Supply

Location: Anchorage, AK

Founded: 1976

www.alaskaprinterssupply.com

CHALLENGE

Profitably expand current customer and product base to serve the area's office printing and copying market.

SOLUTION

Leverage Epson's Replaceable Ink Pack System printers to offer a new approach to printing and copying in the Alaska market, to better serve small business and commercial print customers.

When Opportunity Knocks

Alaska Printer's Supply Takes on Disruptive Epson Technology

Bruce Ross knows an opportunity when he sees it.

As owner of Alaska Printer's Supply in Anchorage, he has spent more than 36 years steering his company successfully through massive economic and technology changes.

He has been a supplier to photographers and artists, to commercial offset printers, and to the digital printing industry.

"We were one of the first resellers to embrace the Postscript revolution, then direct-to-plate, then inkjet proofing, and now high-speed inkjet printing," he explains.

The company was founded in 1976 as a camera store, but Ross says by the time he acquired it he realized that industry was already mature. The company was, however, already doing business with commercial printers, so he used the profits from selling cameras and film to expand into the printing market.

As a commercial printer supplier, Ross and his people became experts in digital printing, finishing and bindery equipment. He has offered Epson products for about 15 years, including Epson inkjet proofing printers and Epson SureColor[®] photographic inkjets. He was one of the first companies to offer Epson's Replaceable Ink Pack System printers, and that has taken him into the office printing and copying market.



The trick to staying profitable, Ross believes, is to keep looking for the next trend, always building on your knowledge and relationships, but never resting on what works today.

"I believe this inkjet technology is going to be disruptive of the toner industry, and a huge opportunity for a company like ours."

A whole new approach to printing and copying

According to Ross, office printing and copying is dominated by toner-based machines using a technology introduced more than 60 years ago. "These machines are inherently self-destructive, needing very regular service to keep operating."

"I see it as a great fit for large companies, schools, larger churches, anywhere you need speed, quality and a low cost per print."

— BRUCE ROSS, OWNER OF ALASKA
PRINTER'S SUPPLY



Part of the problem is the high temperature needed to fuse the toner to the paper, which causes electronic and mechanical parts to deteriorate. Another is the large number of working parts these printers have. Inkjets use a much simpler technology and run far cooler, but until recently they have been very expensive to operate, just because of the way manufacturers have packaged and sold the ink.

Epson is turning the industry around with the next generation of inkjet printing technology. The WorkForce® Pro WF-R5690 integrates replaceable ink packs with enough ink for up to 50,000 ISO pages¹. The larger WorkForce Pro WF-R8590 delivers up to 75,000 ISO pages before changing the ink packs², and now the WorkForce Pro WF-C869R, delivers up to 84,000 ISO pages before changing the ink packs¹.

The WorkForce Pro MFPs are suitable for smaller offices or workgroups, printing at a quick 20–24 ISO pages per minute⁴ with no warm-up time. Ross says he has sold them into various small businesses, including medical practices and engineering firms, plus his commercial print customers for their office operations.

“We’ve had a WF-R8590 in our office here for a few years, and it’s been fabulous. I’m amazed at how frugal it’s been, and it’s been service-free.”

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PRINTER’S SUPPLY

The WorkForce Enterprise WF-C20590 departmental MFP will bring these economies to high-speed high-capacity printing: up to 100 ISO pages per minute⁴, with optional sorting and stapling capabilities.

“We’re really looking forward to selling them,” Ross says. “I see it as a great fit for large companies, schools, larger churches, anywhere you need speed, quality and a low cost per print.”

Alaska-sized Reliability

One reason Ross stayed out of the office equipment market for so long was the need to constantly service toner-based machines. “Alaska is a gigantic state, although economically a very small market,” he says. If he sells a printer in Anchorage, service is no issue, but Fairbanks, the second largest city, is a six-hour drive, and Juneau definitely an airplane trip.

“A traditional print shop is set up to be super reliable,” he adds. “We service presses, 60” paper cutters and other heavy equipment, but the amount of service needed to keep them running is nominal.” To be constantly on the road or in the air replacing fusers, drums, high-voltage power supplies and other such items is not something Ross has ever wanted to add to his business model.



“On the other hand, we’ve had a WF-R8590 in our office here for a few years, and it’s been fabulous. I’m amazed at how frugal it’s been, and it’s been service-free.”

As an Epson dealer for more than 15 years, Ross says he has sold photographic printers all over the state – “even into little villages where we have to put the printer on a float plane to carry it out there, but our experience has been good.”

Still, he is only now gearing up to sell to office clients on a large scale, anticipating the WorkForce Enterprise WF-C20590 printer. “The next step is to add a specific sales staff to address this market,” he explains. He sees it as an opportunity that the product requires a professional sales staff. “People don’t know about this yet, and they’re not going to stumble into it. It requires someone to go out and tell the story.”

It’s a great story to tell, he adds. It’s a faster, better, far more reliable printer to operate. “Toner is at its apex, but the high-speed, high-capacity Epson is poised to take over that space.”

“It’s a very interesting time to jump into this market,” he adds. “We’re the first in Alaska to sell Epson, and we’re the right company, with all of our experience in high-quality printing and finishing. That’s a very good place to be.”



¹ Ink pack yields are based on testing with ISO/IEC 24712 patterns with Epson’s methodology in Default Mode, printing continuously. Yields may vary considerably for reasons that include 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. For print quality, part of the ink from the included cartridges or 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

² 75,000 pages available with WorkForce Pro WF-R8590 only. Replacement ink pack yields are based on ISO/IEC 24711 tests in Default Mode, printing continuously. Replacement ink pack yields are based on testing with ISO/IEC 24712 patterns with Epson’s methodology. Yields may vary considerably for reasons that include 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 or ink packs is used for printer start up and a variable amount of ink remains in the cartridges or ink pack after the “replace ink” signal. For more information, see www.epson.com/cartridgeinfo.

³ Cartridge yields are estimated 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

⁴ WorkForce Pro WF-R5190 WF-C869R WF-R5690 WF-R8590 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

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