



Océ at Beeline + Blue

Exceeded our expectations



Continued growth with Océ in its corner

Beeline + Blue, located in Des Moines, IA, is a progressive large format digital service bureau offering a full range of services including scanning, blueprinting, brochures and display graphics, plus offers color photo printing and has an online planroom. In October 2010, the company installed an Océ Arizona® 550 XT printer to keep up with the demand for increased production capacity. The printer fits the workflow of the shop; the high-quality output keeps customers happy; fast throughput delivers jobs on time and application flexibility opens new revenue streams.

Canon
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Blueprints to display graphics

Starting out in 1958 to provide blueprint services to the AEC market, Beeline + Blue has always had a keen eye for the latest digital printing technology that could boost its business and keep it ahead of the competition. In the mid-1990s, Beeline + Blue was one of the first reprographic shops to adopt large format digital printing for producing display graphics output. Through the years, Beeline + Blue has seen – and used – many different technologies, from electrostatic to solvent flatbed and aqueous inkjet to photo laser. The company has followed a carefully laid-out plan for meeting the needs of its customers by utilizing the most appropriate technology available for the job.

In late 2006, the company began looking for the next technology that would take it to the level of quality and production necessary for additional markets that it wanted to penetrate. The company was experiencing an increase in rigid jobs for its existing Océ Arizona T220 solvent printer and had already made the decision to look at UV technology. More capacity, consistent high quality output and cost reduction were primary factors in determining which product would next join the Beeline + Blue line-up.

Because of the company's past experience with Océ equipment, the Océ Arizona 250 GT UV flatbed printer was a serious contender. Once the metrics of running

costs were analyzed – particularly the increase in production efficiency and reduction of media and ink waste – the company decided to purchase two Océ Arizona 250 GT printers. The two units worked as 'twins' and provided consistency from print to print, regardless of which machine was being used. In this way, Beeline + Blue could increase throughput while still guaranteeing quality output to its clients.

In less than two years, Beeline + Blue needed even more capacity, and replaced its two Océ Arizona 250 GT models with an Océ Arizona 550 XT extra-large, high-capacity printer, with the White Ink Option.

“We can compete effectively with the Océ Arizona 550 XT printer because of its high print speed, the high throughput by using its two ‘virtual print zones,’ its exceptional print quality and the ability it gives us to offer premium-priced services.”

Steven Strooh, Vice President, Beeline + Blue

A conversation with Steven Strooh

Océ recently talked with Steven Strooh, Vice President, Beeline + Blue, to find out how his new Océ Arizona 550 XT printer is helping his business.

Océ: What makes the Océ Arizona Series UV flatbed printers unique in the marketplace?

Steven: The value is outstanding. For the price, the performance, reliability and quality are unmatched in my opinion. The Océ Arizona 550 XT printer is the ideal footprint size for my shop, and it delivers more throughput than our two previous Océ Arizona 250 GT printers.

Océ: What are the major benefits of the Océ Arizona 550 XT printer to you as a print shop?

Steven: The ease of use and speed of training make this device ideal for us. We are able to operate the machine, including setup and maintenance, without specialized knowledge and extensive training. Getting work onto and off this machine is as easy as any basic inkjet printer we have. Unlike a solvent printer, the Océ Arizona 550 XT printer needs no additional ventilation requirements to run in our shop, which also add to the convenience of using this device in our business.

We keep the printer running all day. We use the two independent vacuum zones as ‘virtual printers’ so we can maximize throughput. With the second zone we can most efficiently keep running multiples of the same job, or place material in the second zone for the next job while the first is printing in the other zone.

Since the printer never has to stop printing for a media change, no time is lost between prints and we can achieve a significantly higher net productivity.

Océ: How have your Océ Arizona Series printers – first your two Océ Arizona 250 GT models and now your Océ Arizona 550 XT printer – had an effect on your business?

Steven: At first, our profits increased primarily due to lower ink costs and less substrate waste from accidental head strikes or incorrect size and quality issues. Our revenue increased because we were able to push more work through consistently over 18- and 24-hour shifts, which previously was not possible.

We can give an operator 15 minutes of training and that person can keep the machine running for hours without supervision or intervention. In the first year after the Océ Arizona 250 GT printers were installed, our revenues in color sales jumped significantly – up 277% over the previous year.



Now that we have the faster Océ Arizona 550 XT model, we can further reduce our costs and continue to improve our margins. Labor costs are lower now because of the high speed and throughput capacity of the printer – we produce what we need in one shift per day, so we’re minimizing overtime pay.

We have also realized additional revenue with the White Ink Option. To be honest, I wasn’t sure how we were going to take advantage of this option, but I’m glad we have it now. I didn’t know there were so many jobs out there that need white ink! With the White Ink Option, we are now able to take on jobs that other shops – particularly offset and screenprinters – can’t do, and many of them are premium-priced jobs, which result in healthier margins for us.

Océ: How are you using the White Ink Option?

Steven: One job that was interesting has had a particular impact on how we use the White Ink Option. The client was a convenience store chain that wanted easy-apply / easy-remove promotional pieces that could be displayed on the glass at the main entry doors. This client came to us on the recommendation of its offset printer, which decided it would be too cost-prohibitive to print these on any of its offset printing devices. The client had also already received a sample and a quote from a screenprinter. The screenprint quality was acceptable to the client, but the job through the screenprinter was quite expensive because it required so much time and handwork.



We were able to produce the pieces – 800 window clings, each 23 by 5.25 inches with right reading text facing both sides – on our Océ Arizona 550 XT printer at a price that the client found reasonable but was still quite profitable for us. The white ink capability and production speed of the Océ Arizona 550 XT printer made it cost-effective to produce and required no handwork.

Because of the technique we used on our Océ Arizona 550 XT printer to create the block-out layer for double-sided printing on window cling, we were able to take on similar jobs. What started as a solution for one client expanded into a specialty business for us. We recently produced custom cut window graphics for Mercy West Lakes Hospital using the same technique. We were able to offer the client an attractive solution for its foyer while realizing comfortable profit margins for us and an affordable solution for the customer.

Our Océ Arizona 550 XT printer is now 100% occupied with jobs that require white ink. It’s not unusual for it to be booked for an entire week running nothing but white ink jobs.

Océ: Would you say the Océ Arizona 550 XT printer has lived up to your expectations?

Steven: I would say that all of the Océ Arizona Series UV flatbed printers we’ve had or that we currently run have exceeded our expectations fully. The units produce identical quality. Our customers are completely satisfied, and our operators have no complaints.

Because of the high quality output, we are able to position the output of the Océ Arizona 550 XT printer as a premium quality product to our customers. We can compete effectively with the Océ Arizona 550 XT printer because of its high print speed, the high throughput by using its two ‘virtual print zones,’ its exceptional print quality and the ability it gives us to offer premium-priced services.

Business Beyond the Ordinary

Océ helps the people who make our world. Companies everywhere use Océ high-speed printing, technical documentation, and professional document systems to keep the wheels of business, industry and government turning. Océ also helps the world. Developing products and services that add value to the document processes of our customers, while minimizing environmental impact and protecting health and safety, has always been one of our core principles. From bank statements to utility bills, from blueprints to newspapers, from on-demand documents to wide-format display graphics, Océ helps our professional customers go “Beyond the Ordinary” in print and document management.



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Océ North America

Océ Wide Format Printing Systems
5450 North Cumberland Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60656
1-800-714-4427
1-773-714-4076
Fax 1-773-714-4056
email: us.info@oce.com

Océ-Canada Inc.
4711 Yonge Street, Suite 1100
Toronto, Ontario, M2N 6K8
Canada
1-800-668-1945
Fax 1-416-224-5778
email: info.ca@oce.com

Océ Mexico, S.A. de C.V.
Ave. Pol. Paseo de la Reforma No. 1236 Piso 4
Mexico City, DF 05348
52-55-5089-8700
email: mex.info@oce.com

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