



KONICA MINOLTA



SOABAR MOVES INTO DIGITAL WITH KONICA MINOLTA bizhub PRESS C71cf

CUSTOMER'S COMMENT

“We chose Konica Minolta because the service side has been fantastic, as has the support and back-up. They didn't just sell us the machine, it's everything else they have helped us with.”

Robert Gallagher, Soabar Production Director

“We were looking at HP Indigo and Xeikon machines initially. But when we saw the Konica Minolta press, we were impressed by the color gamut it could hit and the quality of the solids it could produce.”

Simon Tolley, Digital Sales Manager, Soabar

“The cost to quality ratio is very good, there's little maintenance, and the fact that it can print on virtually any material is a huge advantage. Our clients have been very happy with the results.”

Phil Achurch, Managing Director, Soabar



When UK converter Soabar made its first investment in digital printing with Konica Minolta's bizhub PRESS C71cf, they were buying into world-class back-up support and service - not just a product. The highly successful move has elevated Soabar's label offering and cemented a long-term partnership.

Customer Presentation

Soabar was founded in the USA as a textile machine supplier, and continued to serve that market under the Soabar name after its acquisition by Avery Dennison. It had offices around the world and its UK site opened in the 1970s. This site was later acquired by the Sessions family, owners of the historic UK converter Sessions of York. Michael Sessions was managing director of Soabar until 2008, until a management buyout by Phil Achurch and his wife Jo. A year later, production director Robert Gallagher bought into the company and joined the board. Since the buyout, the company has been profitable every year. Turnover has risen to £2.2 million [€2.48m] and nine per cent growth is forecast for the next year.

The challenge

The operation's revenue is divided equally between sales desktop printers and label printing. Forty per cent of the label printing revenue is dedicated to blank and 1-2 color labels. The other 60 per cent is from swing tickets, hanger tags and self-adhesive labels. Tags and tickets are for the textile sector – the company supplies tags for UK retailer Next, among others. For self-adhesive labels, the food, chemical and automotive markets are Soabar's strongest end user sectors. The latter is the fastest growing.

The company also serves the logistics and pharmaceutical markets. The majority of label sales are in the UK. The owners wanted to elevate Soabar's label printing services while at the same time meeting the need for short run, high quality, fast turnaround work and expand its customer base.

Konica Minolta Solution

In early 2016, Achurch and his team began to evaluate the digital printing options available in the market. During this process, Soabar farmed out work to external suppliers with digital capabilities. When the company decided to install a bizhub PRESS C71cf in December 2016 – now known as Konica Minolta AccurioLabel 190, an evolution of the bizhub PRESS C71cf, – the work was easily transferred. Achurch described the quality as 'superb,' and 'more than comparable' to the work produced on a competitor press. He adds it is a fraction of the cost of the bigger machines, the inks are very durable, there are no hidden costs and it is also very easy to run. Also, clients like the fact that they can press a button, look at a sample, and pass the job. The relatively small footprint of the Konica Minolta press was also an advantage.

Improvements and Benefits

- For Soabar the Konica Minolta bizhub PRESS C71cf
- Delivers high quality short run fast turnaround print while expanding the customer base
 - Is part of a long-term partnership that encourages profitable growth
 - Supports customer involvement and greater engagement



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