

User report

Sign Ink LLC, Ashland VA, USA

A Nyala 2 large format printer has transformed a small print shop into a serious player in the wholesale digital printing market. Diversity, reliable quality, productivity and an optimal price/performance ratio are the cornerstones of this success story.



Swiss Army knife printer

Tom compares the Nyala 2 with a Swiss Army knife: "You can do anything with it." There is a stable flatbed for rigid substrates, i.e. boards of different types and sizes. Sign Ink sometimes prints an entire sheet, in other cases only a part. As Tom knows, "The others can't handle this variety of formats." And he explains, "Thanks to the registration pins, we can make optimal use of the print bed with any given format." The Nyala 2 is also equipped with a roll to roll option so it can also process flexible media.

"The ink adheres to all materials and the print quality is impeccable," says Tom in praise. Furthermore, the Nyala 2 is user-friendly and efficient: the output software allows settings that would normally mean going back to the RIP process. The Nyala 2 is also low-maintenance. As Tom explains: "I wanted a machine that is easy and economical to maintain."

The first time he caught sight of the swissQprint he recognised the solid and thought-out design. In fact, the Nyala 2 works so reliably that it often takes over jobs if the company's roll to roll printers are having a technical problem. "The Nyala 2 runs every day, all day," says Tom.

If there is someone who works passionately, it is Tom Matherly, the owner of Sign Ink. His position does not stop him from getting operationally involved. In fact, he can be found buzzing around the print shop at all hours of the day and night. His motto: "Do and learn everything that goes on in the business so you understand it from the ground up." Tom especially likes operating the Nyala 2 large format printer that stands at the heart of his operation. As he points out, "If we didn't have the Nyala 2 our business wouldn't exist."

The competition operates large, expensive equipment. Sign Ink, by contrast, processes the majority of orders using just two machines: a Nyala 2 large format printer and a Zünd cutter. Together, this Swiss duo covers practically everything, and does so with high standards of quality and productivity.

Sign Ink can offer competitive prices thanks to a relatively low capital investment and equipment that does not require a lot of floor space. Tom is convinced: "The Nyala 2 is the most economical machine for what it does."

David vs Goliath

As a small business, Sign Ink has proven itself in the highly competitive wholesale market. The company is a subcontractor to copy shops, sign makers, print shops and brokers: places that outsource everything they cannot handle themselves. That may be due to a capacity bottleneck, or simply lack of the proper machinery. Fast turnarounds, reliability and flexibility are crucial in this business. And, of course, a good price/performance ratio.





Registration pins do valuable service, especially with the flip function. In general, they ensure a precise registration and help to make full use of the print bed.

Material choice made easy

"There really isn't anything that we don't print with the Nyala 2," Tom points out. Plastics, acrylic glass, polycarbonate, foam boards, all the way through to metal, wood and paper. Because the ink has such good and wide-ranging adhesion properties, standard-quality material generally suffices, says Tom. It does not have to be the expensive kind, optimized for digital printing. "That has a positive effect on cost," he concludes.

Special prints

Producing corporate and product brochures occasionally involves the use of special paper. Here again, Tom leverages the strengths of the Nyala 2: for example, he will use varnish effects. As he knows that the vacuum is powerful enough to hold material that tends to curl flat on the print bed, he can lay back when it comes to running jobs. The registration pins do valuable service by ensuring a precise registration. The flip function is often used for double-sided printing with absolute registration accuracy. The output software

controls the process and the registration pins ensure that the media is precisely positioned. "Double-sided printing used to be a nightmare," Tom recalls. After printing one side, the operator would have to cut first before printing the reverse side because board material is often cut inaccurately.

White and varnish win business

The possibility for printing white has won Sign Ink a number of new customers. "The double white configuration is paying off," Tom mentions, adding that white can slow operation down with conventional solutions. "Running with four white heads makes us extremely productive," he explains. Besides, the varnish applications were something quite new and appealing for some customers. He names Dropgloss for tactile and visual effects as one example.

Specific finishing

Sign Ink delivers ready-to-use products. Printing is followed by cutting, sewing and laminating as necessary. Holes are

punched, corners rounded. For delivery deadline reasons - one-day turnaround is the rule - Sign Ink entirely eliminated liquid coating. "It's also hardly necessary," adds Tom. "Outdoor applications produced on the swissQprint are weather-resistant for a couple of years anyway."

A full-grown David

Tom says: "Our yearly sales are up by 30 to 50% since the Nyala 2 arrived." Customers very quickly noticed improvements in print quality and delivery times. Thanks to higher productivity, Sign Ink was also able to drop prices. All this has led to more orders. "We have become a serious player," Tom points out. "With our swissQprint, we cover areas that are out of reach for our competitors."

In addition, Sign Ink has good and reliable employees. Professionally as well as personally, they know how to deal with customers and their concerns. Given this growth, Sign Ink will sooner or later run into production limits and Tom will need to expand his machinery. "I can already see us operating two swissQprint machines," he muses, "the extra printer will likely be an Impala 2."

Info Box

Sign Ink LLC, Ashland VA, USA
 signink.net
 Segment: Digital printing
 Established: 1996
 Employees: 8
 Printer: Nyala 2
 References:
 Digital prints for
 copy shops, sign makers,
 print shops and brokers