

## Case Study

production



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—Wood Huntley,  
Owner,

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## Museum Store Products Inc.

Producing True Works of Art with the RICOH Pro C7100SX

### ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

Wood Huntley got the idea for Museum Store Products in 1978 when a friend who worked at the Philadelphia Museum of Art asked him if he could help her find a way to produce a magnet she could sell to museum visitors. Huntley agreed to help and found a photography studio in Brooklyn that could reproduce the image for the magnet with the best color match possible.

As it turned out, timing in this case was opportune. Museums were just becoming interested in expanding their revenue models to include retail products. Huntley recognized there was a viable business opportunity to provide custom products for museum visitors who want to take their museum experience and memories home.

From prints and posters to key chains, coasters, postcards and more, today Museum Store Products provides a wide variety of unique items to the company's prestigious list of customers that includes the Smithsonian; The National Gallery of Art; The Guggenheim; The J. Paul Getty Museum; the 9/11 Memorial; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Detroit Institute of Art; the Salvador Dali Museum and the Art Gallery of Ontario.

However, critical to the company's success is the ability to please the most discerning staff members of these customers that you could imagine—museum curators.

### CHALLENGE

“Initially, we provided small things like magnets to the museum stores, laminating them in-house, but using an outside source for print. It became clear that to grow our business beyond the small items we were selling, we needed to bring all the production, including printing, in-house,” said Wood Huntley, owner of Museum Store Products, Inc.

#### CHALLENGE

- Gain the ability to reproduce colors with accuracy and high quality
- Expand the portfolio of products the business offers
- Increase revenue while maintaining competitive pricing

#### SOLUTION

- The RICOH Pro C7100SX Multifunction Production Color System with 5th Color Station
- Gaining the ability to handle a wide variety of substrates
- Expanding its product line with a more robust solution

#### RESULTS

- Production speed with color quality at a level that satisfies museum curators
- Versatile capability to produce new items cost-effectively
- A yearly increase in revenue and new business opportunities

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Museum Store Products initially purchased two digital color copiers from another manufacturer. While this allowed the company to expand its product line to include items like matted color prints, color consistency and quality was an ongoing problem. "We could print something in the morning and, if we needed to reprint part of it just an hour later, the color would not come out the same," said Huntley. "We were color correcting almost everything we printed. You can imagine when you have to reproduce a recognized masterpiece, color is critical. It was very frustrating."



Pleasing curators is no easy task, yet highly important to the business, so it quickly became evident that keeping these customers satisfied required only the best when it came to the company's technology infrastructure. Museum Store Products needed production capabilities that would support meeting its requirement for high quality color, quick turnaround times and the exceptional service Huntley wanted to provide.

Seeking an alternative solution that would answer these qualifications, Huntley agreed to meet with a Ricoh Sales Specialist who introduced him to the RICOH Pro C900 digital press and showed him how it could take color quality and output to a new level.

After the installation of the Pro C900, the business continued to grow and the company continued to see new opportunities for product development that required expanded use of substrates and even more sophisticated color capabilities. Huntley was pleased with the improvement in color quality and consistency the Pro C900 delivered, but wanted more features. When the RICOH Pro C7100SX became available, the Ricoh team introduced the new technology to Wood and his graphic manager, Shane Butts.

The Pro C7100SX was part of a new series of Multifunction Color Production Systems from Ricoh designed to reproduce colors with incredible accuracy and near-offset quality; creating images with up to 1200 x 4800 dpi resolution that impresses even the most critical customers. It offers intuitive controls, innovative five-color printing and the ability to handle more substrates to produce products like color post cards, textured papers and oversized prints. When Huntley and his team saw a demo of the Pro C7100SX, it didn't take long to decide to upgrade again to gain these enhanced capabilities.

### SOLUTION

The Pro C7100SX, the benefits of the 5th Color Station, its 80-color pages-per-minute throughput and ability to handle substrates like synthetics and heavier paper has made it possible for Museum Store Products to deliver on its plan to expand its product line extensively.

One key driver in choosing the machine was its ability to run the heavier paper in duplex mode. "We couldn't produce postcards because we could only run them on a material that was too thin or we could only run single-sided," said Huntley. "Now we can run heavier stock in duplex and produce lower quantities of an image at a very attractive price. And the museum retail stores continue to be extremely pleased by the color quality. This new machine has been a terrific addition enabling us to gain a new revenue stream."

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The ability of the machine to print on thicker substrates and different sizes means Museum Store Products can produce its postcards and note cards in a variety of sizes. Additionally, production is seamless from start to finish by coupling the Pro C7100SX along with the Duplo paper cutter the Ricoh team sourced for the company. The company has increased its volume for those products because the museums can get any configuration they want at a great price and quickly. With the Pro C7100SX they now have the ability to produce at least 5,000 postcards on any given day.

The 5th Color Station of the Pro C7100SX is another feature that the company's graphic manager, Shane Butts, is using to add more creativity to product packaging, particularly for the traveling exhibits.

"We have increased our revenue by year after year by upgrading to the Pro C7100SX. Being able to produce things we couldn't do before, like postcards, at good margins with the amazing color quality and the fast turnaround our clients have come to expect has made a world of difference for us."

Traveling shows, such as a Monet exhibit, are important to museums because they give those who may have seen the museum's permanent collection one or more times another reason to visit the museum. Ricoh's 5th Color Station allows the addition of white or clear toner to pages to enable the creation of new applications and effects like spot gloss. "We have been using the clear toner with logos and certain packaging for these shows. As a graphic person, I really like that it adds a unique personality to the piece and helps the items we produce for these shows stand out," said Butts.

For example, Museum Store Products produced note cards for a show at the Missouri Historical Museum entitled 'The Little Black Dress,' which features black and white photographs of black dresses throughout history. "We were able to use clear in the border of the note cards, which gave them a special highlighted look and made them a very popular item in the store," said Butts.

### RESULTS

With the versatile capabilities of the Pro C7100SX, Museum Store Products has been able to significantly grow both its product portfolio and its revenue. "We have increased our revenue year after year by upgrading to this digital press," said Huntley. "Being able to produce things we couldn't do before, like postcards at good margins with the amazing color quality and the fast turnaround our clients need, has made a world of difference for us."

Exceptional color consistency is the biggest advantage the Pro C7100SX delivers, paying dividends in reduced production costs and enhanced reputation. Shane Butts particularly likes the fact you can change toner adhesion to adapt to the different paper stocks, including gloss-coated paper so you always have accurate brightness and clarity and the toner density is continually checked and adjusted to ensure color consistency.

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“When you are reproducing images from artists like Renoir, Matisse or Monet, they have to look exactly like the original. The Pro C7100SX makes it possible to replicate these masterpieces with accurate color matching, which has really defined our business,” said Butts. “The best part is once we get a color match approved by the client, we can take that color and put it on different products and it stays consistent. We don’t have to keep making constant adjustments like we used to do prior to our relationship with Ricoh.”



Huntley is confident that as his business continues to evolve, Ricoh will be right there to ensure that he has the technology he needs to succeed. “We are in the process of expanding into membership and development projects for various museums, which we think is a logical addition to our offerings. We are limited to some extent in what we can do creatively when we are reproducing fine art, but look forward to using more techniques like adding clear and white toner when we design the membership and development materials,” said Huntley. “Having the 5th Color Station makes it possible for us to offer more types of output, which is right in line with our plan to continue to expand what we offer.”

Being able to produce this type of color quality has contributed greatly to the company winning two important industry awards—the Museum Store Association Service Award in 2016 and the Inaugural Museum Store Association Vendor of the Year Award in 2014.

Ultimately, it is the way the Ricoh team supports Museum Store Products’ business approach that Huntley appreciates most. “I can’t say enough about the customer service we receive. I feel completely supported every day, which is a very good feeling when you are running a business like ours. They knew the Pro C7100SX was a perfect fit for our business,” said Huntley. “It gives me peace of mind knowing I can count on my Ricoh team to continue to introduce me to the technology I need to move my business forward. For reasons like these, we hold our relationship with Ricoh in high regard and consider it crucial to our mission.”

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