

Case Study

Early Digital Printing Adopters See Continued Success

Located in the Pacific Northwest, the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) and National Barricade Co. are two of the region's earliest adopters of digital traffic sign printing. Both shops believed in the benefits of digital printing, but had concerns. Would the quality meet transportation agency specifications? Would the printer be easy to use, and who would support them if problems arose?

Seattle Department of Transportation

Can we eliminate screen printing?

Robin Ford, Sign Shop Crew Chief at SDOT, was looking for a reliable printer to speed up production and reduce or eliminate screen printing. The shop's current fabrication methods also created a number of waste disposal problems. Waste screen print ink and cleaning solvents needed to be temporarily stored in explosion proof containers and sent to a waste incinerator. The City's Public Utilities Department needed to be contacted each time wastewater was flushed while cleaning silk screens. Computer cut films filled several barrels of waste daily requiring disposal.

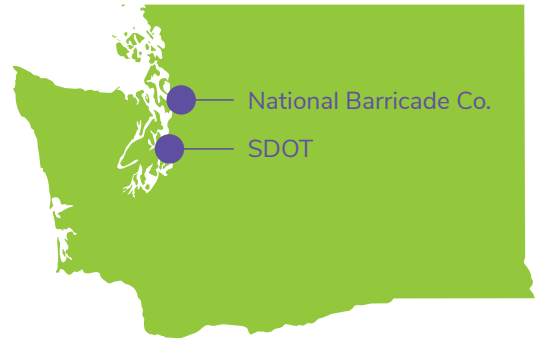
“Multiple colors printed on reflective material meant that 70% of our signs didn't need be screened or plotter cut.”

Robin Ford—Sign Shop Crew Chief, SDOT

SDOT wanted assurances that a printer would include a strong warranty, and would be backed by a support team. “I was nervous to start with digital,” said Robin. “I don't consider myself a tech person so I was worried about working with it. We wanted to have excellent customer service and tech support.” Any digital printer chosen also



Seattle Department of Transportation



State of Washington

had to increase their production speed and provide a quality finished product. “We were looking for production speed, we were also looking at the reflective portion of it. Printing on reflective material was huge, and having multiple colors printed on reflective material meant that 70% of our signs didn't need be screened or plotter cut.”



King County Metro Sign, multi-color digitally printed traffic sign



National Barricade Co.

Can we decrease production time?

National Barricade needed a system to speed up the production and eliminate the need to outsource some of their printing. Their most complicated contract was with King County Metro, involving two-sided bus stop signs. Said shop manager, Brett Rogers, “these signs needed seven colors on each side. We’d print quantities of 500, but you could only screen print one color per day on that many signs. It would take a solid month of printing, and when you have a 2,000 sign order, you shut off the sign department from any other project!”

When an order included signs with complex designs, we’d send out the artwork to other graphics shops, and they’d actually print it on clear film since they weren’t familiar with reflective sheeting. Then we’d apply it over the top of the sheeting in our own shop.” This took time, and increased sign costs to their customers.

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Brett Rogers—Shop Manager, National Barricade Co.

The TrafficJet™ Digital Print Solution

Both shops looked to digital printing for production solutions. Catching their attention was the TrafficJet Print System, distinguished from other printers by the beginning-to-end service provided by Avery Dennison’s own personnel.

TrafficJet uses spot color inks that are manufactured by Avery Dennison using the same pigments found in screen print inks with specification compliance and proven durability experienced around the world. Each system is installed by Avery Dennison’s own certified technicians who provide customer training and ongoing support.

The CLEAR✓ Maintenance Program helps operators new to digital printing understand the in’s and out’s of maintenance, enabling them to keep their investment in top condition. This service package provided directly by the sheeting manufacturer provides customers the same level of support that they rely upon today with screen printing and computer cut film production.

Even though SDOT is tasked with maintaining 167,000 signs in the city, their goal of keeping up with production using digital printing has become a reality. After its first printer in 2016, SDOT now operates three TrafficJet printers and several work tables to keep up with production.

At National Barricade, the 2015 purchase of their first TrafficJet Print System has allowed them, in the words of Brett, “to accept smaller on-demand orders for signs like the Metro bus signs. It’s no longer a headache to produce just ten signs. It’s given us a lot more flexibility and sped the whole process up.” Currently two TrafficJet printers are providing National Barricade the capacity to keep up with growing sign demand.

To learn more about the benefits making the Avery Dennison TrafficJet Print System the most popular selling digital print solution for specification-compliant and fully warranted traffic signs around the world, please contact your local representative, or visit us on the web, at reflectives.averydennison.com/trafficjet.



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