

Staples capture the large-format market in the Netherlands with fast, high quality prints produced with HP Designjet Z6200 Photo Printer



At a glance

Industry: Repro Houses and Copy Shops

Business name: Staples

Headquarters: Boston, USA

Website: staples.com

Challenge

- Staples, Netherlands wanted to capitalize on the emerging large format print market but needed the right printer to do so.

Solution

- The company invested in the 60-in HP Designjet Z6200 Photo Printer for each of its 16 Copy & Print Centers and later introduced HP Latex Printing Technology with the HP Designjet L26500 Printer at its new production center for outdoor print capability.
- Staples also switched from unbranded media to a wide range of HP media due to its versatility and the superior print quality it offers, including HP Everyday Pigment Ink Satin Photo Paper and HP Universal Adhesive Vinyl.

Results

- Staples can produce high quality A0 prints in-store on a range of media within 10 minutes thanks to the HP Designjet Z6200 Photo Printer.
- HP media provides far better quality than the unbranded media previously used, as well as a much wider range.
- The success of the large-format service has helped the company expand from 16 to 28 outlets within two years.
- Staples can now also offer outdoor prints and a web-to-print service with HP Latex Printing Technologies.

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“We chose the 60-in HP Designjet Z6200 Photo Printer because it delivers optimal quality at a low price per print in addition to high speed, making it ideal for use in a retail environment.”

– Richard Houppermans,
Business Service manager,
Staples, Netherlands

Staples is the world's largest office products company and second largest internet retailer. It provides every product businesses need to succeed including office supplies, technology, cleaning and break room supplies, copy and print, and furniture. With nearly \$25 billion in sales, Staples serves businesses of all sizes as well as consumers throughout North and South America, Europe, Asia and Australia.

One of the company's primary lines of business is the Copy & Print Service. In 2010, there were only 16 Copy & Print Centers in the Netherlands and the local leadership was keen to explore new ways of expanding this side of the business.

A large format future

“Following a strategic reorganization, we wanted to kick-start the copy and print business to enable future expansion. There was no nationwide leader so there was a clear opportunity to establish Staples as the pioneer in this space,” explains Richard Houppermans, Business Service manager, Staples, Netherlands. “Central to this vision was the decision to offer large-format printing in each location and online. This was a sector of the market that was enjoying steady growth driven by posters, roll-up banners, foam boards and art prints. Additionally, we foresaw further areas on which we could capitalize, such as signage and material for trade fairs and presentations.”

Staples tested a number of large-format printers from a variety of vendors before deciding that HP Designjet Printers offered the best solution. As a strategic partner and one of the largest resellers of HP computers and printers in the country, it was familiar with the quality and reliability offered by the HP brand.

Staples undertook extensive tests at the HP showroom, putting the HP Designjet Z6200 Photo Printer through its paces using different media at varying speeds. Because the HP Z6200 Photo Printer can print at A0 format up to three times faster than the competition, Staples could meet the critical deadlines demanded by its business clientele.

“HP won for a number of reasons: firstly, it had a deep understanding of the market and what we wanted to achieve,” continues Houppermans. “This was further supported by the quality of its devices. We chose the 60-inch HP Designjet Z6200 Photo Printer because it delivers optimal quality at a low price per print in addition to high speed, making it ideal for use in a retail environment.”

A quality finish at super speeds

“The devices were simple to get up and running – it took no more than half a day to bring each printer online. We also offered internal training but the devices are user-friendly so again this didn't take long,” adds Bertil Eijbersen, Copy & Print manager, Staples, Netherlands. “We introduced the new large-print service across three basic lines: technical, photographic and poster with a 50 percent discount to encourage customers to try it.”

For customers, the service is simple – on arrival at the Copy & Print Center, the trained Staples operator will discuss what the print is for, where it will be located and find out as much as possible about the client's project. They can then recommend the best size and media for the job. Within ten minutes, the final print is ready to take away. Initially, the company used unbranded media but quickly switched to HP media because of the wide range on offer and the unparalleled quality.



“It is this speed, combined with the quality, that most impresses the customers. At first, we were worried that the HP Everyday Instant-dry Satin Photo Paper wouldn't deliver the high quality that some demand, but even professional photographers have been amazed at the finished product,” says Eijbersen. “Most customers come in asking for A1 poster prints on HP Universal Coated Paper but when they see the quality of the HP photo paper, they often choose that instead, even though it costs more.”

To ensure optimal color consistency, HP also created print profiles for 12 different media formats. This means each printer can automatically calibrate itself to deliver the most accurate color reproduction.

Rapid growth through new services

Since installing the HP Designjet Z6200 Photo Printer, the number of Copy & Print Centers has grown to 28, due in no small part to the success of the large-format service. This provided the foundation for Staples to introduce a production center and web-to-print service. Staples was keen to extend its range of print services with the new center and explored the option of offering outdoor print solutions.

“We were fielding a lot of enquiries about outdoor signage printing so we again looked at what was offered by the main competitors,” comments Eijbersen. “Thanks to the quality HP offers with its HP Latex Printing Technology, which allows us to print on a variety of media including HP Matte Polypropylene, it won out again with the HP Designjet L26500 Printer. We now have one of these installed at our central production facility in Almere, and since February 2013 we have been offering a web-to-print service as well.”

Customers can now go online, upload images, photos and logos, select the size and media as well as a destination store for collection. In future, Staples hopes to also enable the direct delivery of prints to the customer's own address. It is also introducing HP Universal Adhesive Vinyl media and has plans to allow customers to create their own bespoke wallpaper online.

“The large-format offering is a key driver behind our rapid growth and has put us well on the path to becoming the number one print service provider in the Netherlands. The new production center is also helping cement our position in the market,” concludes Houppermans. “At the heart of both is our relationship with HP which has been a truly collaborative partnership. HP has helped us develop the business and will continue to do so in the future.”

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4AA4-6510ENW, May 2013, Rev. 1

