

Business Image Group utilizes an in house HP Designjet 130nr to bring powerful historical images to life



“Having artistic control enables us to improve the quality of communication from the images. Now we produce pieces entirely to our own controllable timeline, knowing that we can meet our clients’ deadlines... Thanks to the predictable output excellence of the HP Designjet 130nr, I can be confident that we’re giving our customers the best quality possible.”

– Bennett Hall
President and Founder
Business Image Group





Business Image Group (BIG) was established in San Francisco, California in 1980 by designer and commercial photographer, Bennett Hall. BIG delivers visual solutions that integrate an organization's heritage, market position, and communications strategies and displays them within the business' facilities. BIG has produced programs for diverse clientele including Charles Schwab, the United States District Courts, Starwood Hotels, Nestle Beverage Company, University of California and major community hospitals.

Hall, now President of BIG, explained, "Our mission is to replace conventional artwork with powerful images that educate, inspire and influence both visitors and employees. We use content that is strategically selected rather than conventional decorative artwork for facility programs. In particular, we utilize community and historical images to create a unique chronological context that is very specific to the heritage of the organization with which we are working."

The firm offers a single-source solution, from inception to installation, and its staff is very skilled at handling and enhancing antique prints. Content resources are culled from collateral relating to a client's community, history, culture, and market position. After identifying suitable original materials, a physical-to-digital system developed by BIG is used to acquire, refine, and manage the media resources. Once in digital form, media assets are manipulated and prepared for each specific application. Today, printing is done on an HP Designjet 130nr, which delivers exhibition print quality.

Removing critical business dependencies

Hall reflected, "Until 2004, we outsourced the printing of final pieces to several local printers with Kodak Lightjet 430 printing equipment. We would upload, via File Transfer Protocol (FTP), large digital files from our server

to the facility that produced the final prints. Large jobs, often approaching several gigabytes in size, frequently had to be uploaded overnight before we could do the sizing and printing. Consequently, there wasn't always time for complete proofing, as the content development process for our enterprise jobs can often become extended, while the deadlines remain the same! We would frequently approach a due date and pray that our files were perfect and the printer would produce the image as envisioned."

Hall was not comfortable with this critical dependence on a third party. He stated, "It was stressful because we didn't have enough control over our deliverable. We were uncertain where we stood in the queue of work being handled by the printer, so we would get very tight to some of our deadlines."

He continued, "We wanted to eliminate this reliance on other businesses: 20 years ago, we did a similar thing when we brought our own framing work in house. It's very technical, and required precise craftsmanship and an additional layer of operational management. However, the reward of having our own dedicated framing facility, available to work exclusively on our jobs in priority order set by us, outweighs all of these costs. We have been able to deliver top quality on time for 100 percent of jobs, even on seemingly impossible deadlines, because we control the timing of the work in progress."

BIG became focused on delivering a complete in house solution – from the discussions about concepts all the way through to the deliverable. It also set a goal to make this end-to-end process optimally efficient and effective. Key to its success was sourcing an affordable print device that could output color and monochrome exhibition quality prints on a wide variety of substrates, and in a large range of sizes. This printer also needed to be capable of being driven by both Apple Macs® and PCs.

The HP Designjet 130nr is compelling

Hall recalled, "I had been keeping a close eye on the market ever since inkjets first came out, waiting for the dot size to reduce to the point that the images would appear photographic – close to four picoliter. When the HP Designjet 130nr was introduced, we noticed how impressive the output quality was in achieving this benchmark, and combined with its attractive price, we decided to test it further."

"Thanks to the output excellence of the HP Designjet 130nr, I can be confident that we're giving our customers the best quality possible." – Bennett Hall, President and Founder, Business Image Group

The HP Designjet 130nr printer is a six-color, multi-format printing solution that produces fade-resistant, photo-quality images. It offers a wide range of print size flexibility via its automatic roll-feed capability up to 24 inches. Color technologies – Automatic Closed Loop Color (CLC) calibration, automatic Pantone calibration, offset emulations, and CMYKplus support – provide accurate and predictable color. HP Color Layering produces a range of colors and smooth tonal transitions. It also is optimized to support both Mac and Microsoft Windows® printing.

"The HP Designjet 130nr's ability to handle 24 inch rolls of media was very important because it enables us to print dramatic panoramas for our clients. Its range of substrates and flexibility allows it to output 95 percent of all our permanent wall displays," noted Hall. "For the most part I use the HP Premium Plus Photo and HP Proofing Gloss papers because the combination of the HP printer technology, with HP Viverra Inks, on the HP media gives outstanding print quality."

He continued, "The HP Designjet 130nr was a compelling solution to meet our output needs, so we decided to buy one and handle our printing in house. There's not a device on the market today that handles substrates up to 24 inches wide with the same amount of color fidelity, range, and resolution. Plus, it's completely compatible with our mixed PC and Mac environment."

He added, "I also felt the pre- and post-sales support from HP was superior to other vendors. HP's field representatives care about us, and our opinions. We are a small business; sometimes dealing with a seemingly endless variety of issues. We can't afford to dedicate someone to baby-sit our printer, and it counts a great deal to get such good support from HP."

Delivering top quality on time, every time

BIG helps its customers take their brand and integrate it into their facilities via the use of historical imagery. Hall described, "It's a daunting task that we take very seriously. We want to consistently turn out excellence for our clients. Having full artistic control enables us to improve the quality of communication from the images. Now we produce pieces entirely to our own timeline, knowing that we can meet our clients' deadlines. It enables us to keep our own production flow optimally balanced, so as prints are produced they move directly into the framing department for immediate completion. If there are any adjustments needed to the prints that we didn't initially notice while soft proofing on the monitor, we can easily and efficiently make changes and re-print them so that they are perfect. Thanks to the output excellence of the HP Designjet 130nr, I can be confident that we're giving our customers the best quality possible."



He added, "We have had other HP Color LaserJet printers – models 8500 and 4500 – as well as some scanners and faxes, so we already had exposure to HP's great support. In fact, HP has exceeded our expectations with the HP Designjet 130nr. There will always be things that come up when you change production processes – I'm meticulous about details and we are striving for nothing short of excellence. HP listens to our input and always works hard to resolve any issues. Understanding this critical component of customer support sets HP apart, and we believe assists in our mutual success."

Final pieces are produced by the HP Designjet 130nr in both monochrome and color. "This printer delivers crisp, rich black and white output that is essential for our historical work, and the vibrant color that meets our standards – for framing and sales – as a finished product. The average

At a glance

- **Company:** Business Image Group (BIG)
- **Headquarters:** San Francisco, California
- **Founded:** 1980
- **Size:** <20 employees
- **Telephone:** 415-434-8745
- **URL:**
www.businessimagegroup.com
and www.sfimages.com
- **Primary focus:** Helping companies and corporations enhance branding through their history.

person cannot tell the difference between the HP Designjet 130nr prints and those produced by our external print shops," observed Hall.

BIG recently produced permanent exhibits for the new multi-million dollar boathouse for the three-time Olympic Gold Medal winning UC Berkeley Cal Crew rowing team. The program included an extensive exhibit encompassing historical images, new photography, and original artifacts as well as signage and digital archive development. Hall described, "This was a complex display to develop, as we had to restore many aging images, and blend these with new photography in a style that matched highly modern architecture and displays of antique artifacts and cast bronze signs. We feel that we were able to create the perfect ambience throughout the Boathouse and express the heritage goals of the Crew."

Photographic reproductions and temporary signage were printed on the HP Designjet 130nr. BIG received rave reviews on its ability to perfectly capture the essence of the teamwork, friendship and success that the club has enjoyed for over a century.

The firm also recently produced a major project for the 9th District U.S. Court in San Francisco, installing an exhibit of over 250 images directly linked to the local communities served by the Courts. Using local historical photographs, the public corridors outside the courtrooms of four different floors of the building and jury rooms are now appointed with vintage content that connects the public to their community's history.

Hall enthused, "This has turned out to be the largest and most diverse exhibit on the history of the City. The content was digitally mastered, which enables us to re-purpose it conveniently and economically for other businesses within the area that may want to use images of the City. Just after we deployed the HP Designjet 130nr, we had a client come to us needing 75 historical prints of the City for their office space, and we were able to turn the job around in record time and for a record low price point. The printer paid for itself on that job alone!"

Challenges

- Remove dependencies on third parties.
- Source an affordable capability to produce prints in house, supporting Windows and Mac platforms.
- Deliver exhibition level output quality.
- Produce large-format pieces.

Solution

- HP Designjet 130nr printer
- HP Premium Plus Photo and HP Proofing Gloss papers
- HP Vivera Inks
- HP support

Results

- Full in house artistic control now possible across all stages of process, enabling on-time delivery of top quality pieces.
- Simplified production processes.
- Significant cost savings.
- Opened up new, fast-turnaround market opportunities for images already on file.

For more information on how working with HP can benefit you, contact your local HP sales representative, or visit us through the Internet at our world wide web address: www.hp.com

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