

CASE STUDY / **KOKO BLACK**

Koko Black boosts product personalisation capabilities with Ricoh

Established in 2003, Koko Black is one of Australia's leading manufacturers and retailers of chocolate. While a significant proportion of sales occur through its website, the company also operates a network of stores in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Perth and Canberra.



The challenge

To set its offerings apart from others in the market, Koko Black has long offered a range of personalisation options for its chocolate products. Customers have the ability to include a personal message or card, or have a message or logo included in the wrapping.

To handle this personalisation, the company had been using two

alternatives. One-off messages were simply printed on an in-office laser printer while larger jobs were sent to an external printing business.

Koko Black chief executive officer Nicolas Georges says that, while this had worked for some years, it wasn't providing the level of flexibility the company was seeking.

"It meant we had limits in terms of minimum print runs and also had

to allow additional time for printing before an order could be filled," he says. "Also, being reliant on a laser printer made meeting increasing customer orders rather challenging."

Earlier this year, the company realised it had to find an alternative way of filling its printing requirements. The need to change was made even more urgent with the advent of COVID-19 which closed stores and pushed more orders online.

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– **Nicolas Georges**, chief executive officer

“We had to find a better way of meeting the increased online order volume that the lockdown caused,” says Georges. “We set out to find the most appropriate alternative.”

The solution

After examining a range of different printing equipment offerings, a decision was made in February 2020 to purchase and deploy a Ricoh Pro C5200s colour production printer. The machine was teamed with a Duplo 616 Pro finisher to handle paper cutting and creasing.

The Pro C5200s offers print speeds of up to 65 pages per minute and can handle paper of up to 360 gsm in weight. The device can also be used as a scanner.

“Deployment was very trouble free and we were up and running in a matter of weeks,” he says. “Ricoh worked with us to help with staff training as well as integrating the printer with other facets of our business such as our website and design software applications.”

The benefits

With the new equipment in place, Koko Black staff were quickly enjoying some significant benefits.

“One of the first things we noticed was the quality of the prints that we can now produce,” says Georges.



“They are as good as anything that we could achieve when using an external professional print shop.”

Georges says staff found the printer’s interface intuitive and easy to use. Its ability to be linked both to the company’s e-commerce platform and graphic design applications also helped to streamline workflows and allow orders to be completed more quickly.

“Our designers can work remotely and send their completed jobs directly to the printer for output,” he says. “The website integration means customers can enter their required personal message and it can be sent directly to the printer before being included with the selected chocolates.”

Georges says the company is now much better placed to meet increasing customer demands for personalised items with such

products now accounting for more than 60% of all output.

“Also, as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions, our volume of online orders has increased by a factor of six. There is simply no way we could have coped with this had we not had the Ricoh printer in place.”

In coming months, the Koko Black team plans to increase the variety of personalised items available for purchase. This will include the production of personalised packaging that will make chocolates even more appealing as special occasion gifts.

“I am confident that the Ricoh printer will continue to provide invaluable support to us as we continue to grow in the months and years ahead,” says Georges. “Ricoh has become a valuable partner for us and I look forward to working closely with them in the future.”

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