

Skipnes Kommunikasjon
Success Story
Workflow Automation Solutions



Workflow software boosts
growth and improves bottom
line for Norwegian printer.

Exponential increase in production capacity and accelerated customer delivery time.



About Skipnes Kommunikasjon

Skipnes Kommunikasjon was founded in 1957, and has long been a pioneer in the Graphic Arts printing arena in Norway. In 1978, they were the first in their country to experiment with digital printing, culminating in their entry to the digital printing market in 2000 with the purchase of the Xerox® 700 Digital Press. In 2005, Skipnes purchased a Xerox® iGen 3—the second to be installed in Norway at that time. Most recently, they purchased the Xerox® iGen® 150 Press when it was introduced at DRUPA in 2012, the first installation of this production press in the county. Always on the cutting edge of technological advancements, Skipnes' applications span a wide range of functions. They remain committed to leverage these innovations in printing to help them best serve their customers.

The Challenge

Graphic arts firm Skipnes Kommunikasjon had the opportunity to win a very large new customer, provided they could meet the demanding delivery time required for the job. They also had a current customer who required that thousands of complex variable data files be processed in a very tight time frame, creating bottlenecks on their network.

Need for increased production capacity to win new business.

For Skipnes Kommunikasjon to win the business of the largest University in Norway, they needed to meet a demanding delivery time requirement. The University of Trondheim (NTNU) was looking for a printer who could process thousands of small orders received over a 2-3 day period—each with an extremely tight turnaround deadline.

NTNU needed a print solution whereby their students could have their theses printed. Typically, the students aren't ready to submit their documents for printing until just before the University's deadline, leaving little time for printing. It would not be uncommon to receive 1 - 2,000 orders in one weekend. According to Tore Slettahjell, Manager of Digital Workflow, for Skipnes to win this business they needed to demonstrate that they could handle this spike in volume, efficiently and productively, in such a tight time-frame.

Need to improve efficiency for complex variable information print jobs.

The printer faced another challenge with variable information printing and delivery time. Skipnes printed packaging labels for one of the country's main exports,

Norwegian salmon. Each label contained unique, variable and complex information pertaining to the product. Due to the perishable nature of the product and the need for same-day shipping, producing the packaging labels was also extremely time-sensitive, with the need to produce 10,000 - 40,000 records with variable information. This high volume of variable-data records created extremely large file sizes to be prepared and printed. This resulted in a huge stress on the network as the large files were sent to print. Additionally, this job monopolized the printer for long periods of time as the files were ripped before printing, which took between four - five hours. All of this contributed to a bottleneck filled with other jobs that were in the print queue, delaying production and increasing Skipnes' operating costs. It was also essential that the information on each label be correct, since a label containing errors would require the disposal of that product, resulting in a loss for their customer.

The Solution

Skipnes needed to find ways to improve efficiency for both managing and preparing large quantities of very small jobs and also reduce bottlenecks for their variable data print jobs. They needed to better manage production capacity, as well as improve delivery time and accuracy for complex, variable, shorter run jobs. "It's very important to have a secure workflow and fast production. Without that, you lose money," said Slettahjell.

To meet the capacity and turnaround demands required to win the demanding NTNU business, Slettahjell worked with Xerox to integrate Xerox® FreeFlow Process Manager® workflow software into their business. As a result, students are able to submit individual orders via a University web site which are routed



directly to the workflow software. This software is able to interrogate, edit, construct, and add value to each file. For example, steps that in the past required manual intervention—such as preflight, imposition, image enhancement, review, join, PDF conversion—now take place automatically, and then files are immediately sent to the printer. Since most of the students submitting these files do not have graphic arts expertise, their print jobs would typically require extensive time-consuming prepress work which, without automation, would require costly operator intervention.

Xerox also recommended that Skipnes implement VI Compose—one of the tools in the Xerox® FreeFlow® Variable Information (VI) Suite to address the delivery time demand for their packaging label production. With VI Compose, a user simply sends the data to print, completely eliminating the need for precomposition of variable document files. Regardless of the number of records, each unique variable document is composed, ripped and printed “on the fly” at the print engine—drastically reducing production time for complex variable jobs.

At the same time, Skipnes also purchased a Xerox® iGen 150 when it was introduced in 2012. The printer was the first to install this brand-new flagship device in Norway and it has helped them to substantially boost productivity, further accelerating their transition from offset to digital printing.

The Results

According to Slettahjell, the integration of the new software and equipment should have taken three to four months.

The University, however, had given Skipnes a three-week deadline, so Xerox helped to quickly and easily integrate the software solution into their infrastructure. “We would not have won the business without the Xerox® workflow software solution,” says Slettahjell. “It has helped us to process thousands of student online orders with an extremely low error rate.”

With the implementation of FreeFlow VI Suite and the Xerox® iGen® 150 Press, the time to RIP and print the variable information packaging labels has gone from four to five hours to four to five minutes. “High security workflow with no errors is very important for us, which the VI Suite has provided. The best thing, though, is the increased speed,” says Slettahjell. The time required to RIP the file has been dramatically reduced. Printing starts right away and the print server continues to rip the file while printing. Previously, Skipnes would receive an order at 9:00 a.m. and deliver the printed labels at 8:00 or 9:00 that evening. Now, with the ability to print between 10,000 and 40,000 records in just minutes, they are able to deliver the labels that afternoon. Additionally, the entire job now starts to print almost immediately, whereas before they had to run the jobs in small batches to handle the volume.

Thanks to the boost in productivity due to Xerox® workflow automation solutions, VI Suite and the iGen 150, there are no more bottlenecks delaying other jobs from running, so Skipnes is seeing real results across their entire shop, for all their customers. By eliminating the need for operator intervention, they have also decreased operating costs, moving from

“We would not have won the business without the Xerox® workflow software solution.”

Tore Slettahjell
Manager of Digital Workflow
Skipnes Kommunikasjon

four to five production operators to just two to two and one-half, whose primary function is to deliver orders.

In one year, Skipnes has transitioned a large part of their business from offset to digital, won the business of the largest university in Norway, and significantly increased delivery time for their label packaging orders. Looking ahead, Slettahjell believes they will be able to bring on other universities to replicate the thesis printing process they’ve developed, thanks to FreeFlow Process Manager. And they are using the VI Suite to print innovative specialty items to showcase their capabilities for new applications to continue to win new business.

Skipnes Kommunikasjon currently uses the following equipment and software which are totally integrated for their workflow automation solution:

Xerox® Equipment

- Xerox® iGen® 150 Press
- Xerox® 700 Digital Color Press
- Workflow Software:
 - Xerox® FreeFlow® VI Suite
 - Xerox® FreeFlow Process Manager®
 - Xerox® FreeFlow® Print Server

Meet the next generation of Xerox® Workflow Automation.

Introducing Xerox® FreeFlow® Core, the newest workflow software solution from Xerox that is simple to use, scalable, and easy to integrate into your existing processes. FreeFlow Core intelligently automates and integrates the processing of print jobs—from file preparation to final production—for a touchless workflow that operates easily, adapts effortlessly, scales quickly and delivers consistently.

FreeFlow Core will help to streamline your print process and reduce your costs. It automates and streamlines a wide variety of print production applications, meaning you'll see a bigger boost in efficiency and elimination of touches.

Easy to integrate into your existing workflows, FreeFlow Core includes advanced features such as PDF conversion, imposition, job splitting, and more. Manual data entry is eliminated with job information automation. And you'll always have easy access to real-time production information.



This browser-based solution is easy to use and set up—right out of the box. No need for an IT professional or engineer to get started—with the simple, graphical, drag-and-drop interface, anyone can learn to use it within minutes.

With the introduction of FreeFlow Core, you can manage your workflow with a single application, operating your entire print process from job submission through final output right from your desk.



About Xerox® FreeFlow VI Suite

Xerox® FreeFlow® Variable Information (VI) Suite provides powerful tools that enable dynamic and efficient print and electronic production of complex variable files at high speeds and in real time, eliminating the need for time consuming and costly precomposition.

The award winning VI Suite delivers the fastest personalized printing methodology available—decreasing the time you spend on document design, file preparation, composition and output. No matter if you choose hard copy or electronic, color or monochrome, cut sheet or continuous feed, Xerox® or non-Xerox® printers—with the Xerox® FreeFlow VI Suite, your entire operation will be more productive.

With Xerox® FreeFlow VI Suite, you'll be able to build your business with sophisticated, personalized documents with the speed and accuracy you need to maximize productivity.



For more information on workflow solutions for automation, variable data and more, visit <http://www.xerox.com/automate> and www.xerox.com/variabledata