Paradigm Imaging Group Becomes a Player in the Wide-Format MFP Market
Henrik Vestermark, BERTL Director of Wide Format Analysis

In my recent column “The Emerging Market for Wide Format MFP Systems,” I identified Paradigm Imaging Group as a leading player in the wide format market. While Paradigm is certainly not an HP or Océ Company, it has positioned itself as a wide format MFP vendor with cost-effective solutions ranging from less than $7,500 to more than $32,000. This makes HP’s single offering a pale comparison. I recently had the opportunity to speak directly with Randy Geesman, President of Paradigm Imaging Group, about his company’s growth and strategy for the future.

Randy Geesman, President of Paradigm Imaging Group, tells BERTL about the company’s unique combination of solutions, which has positioned it as a cost-effective vendor in the large format arena.

Q: Who is Paradigm Imaging Group and how did the company get started?

The company was originally founded in 1989 as a large-format scanning service bureau specializing in the conversion of paper-based engineering documentation to CAD format. Soon after the company was founded, many of our customers began to ask if we could provide a product solution so they could utilize the technology in-house.

In the early 1990s, our business approach evolved from document imaging services only to a two-pronged approach, offering services or a product solution (or a combination of the two). The imaging services background really helped us provide value for a product approach. We were able to customize a system to meet our customers’ requirements based on our hands-on, day-to-day experience with operating a service bureau.

In the mid 1990s we began to offer large-format scanning solutions at the distribution level. In product distribution we continued to leverage the synergy between the service bureau and the product side of the company. Since the majority of the products we supplied were also used in our service bureau, we promoted our product line as products that were “tried and tested,” and we worked closely with our resellers to ensure their customers ended up with the right solution.

Seeing a need to fill gaps that current large-format scanning and printing solutions didn’t fill, we began to develop solutions using “best-of-breed” components that address evolving market needs. Today our service bureau continues to provide us with valuable insight to address our customers’ needs.

Q: With your three color MFP’s solutions — Quatra, Supra, and Ultima II — you offered the industry’s widest range of MFP solutions right from the start. How did you foresee this need in the market?

Spending the time to really get to know our customers’ needs helped guide our product plans. Also, we recognized a need for systems to meet varying requirements at different price levels. We have practical large-format multi-function solutions that range from $7,500 to $32,000, depending on capabilities and features.

Q: What are your key differential points?

- Use best-of-breed components from premier manufacturers whose products utilize the latest in technology.
- Focus on ease of use in our imageFLOW interface copy software.
- High degree of flexibility to connect to a wide range of printers.
- Excellent price-to-performance ratio.
- MFP for almost any application or need.
- Powerful controller with open architecture.
Q: For all your MFP solutions you offer the imageFLOW application as the common denominator. What is your strategy behind the imageFLOW solution?

Many scanners and scan-to-print solutions require two different software applications to get the job done and are designed for more sophisticated users. imageFLOW is a single software application with a touch screen interface that is designed to be easy to use for a novice. Furthermore we added SA PhotoPrint backend RIP, which supports more than 550+ printers on the market today. This further expands the versatility of our solutions by allowing customers to incorporate already existing printers to the system for higher productivity and resiliency.

Q: Besides your color MFP solutions, you have a black and white MFP solution called the Turbo. What need does this product fill?

The EIS Turbo addresses the need for fast black and white copying and printing, but it has a color scanner so you can also create color image files. By using imageFLOW, you can connect to just about any large-format color printer for color printing or copying. Another benefit of our solution is its open architecture, meaning that it can fit into almost any existing heterogeneous printer environment.

Q: What are the Solo and the Flex solutions? How do these products fit into the big picture?

The EIS Flex is for the user who already has a printer and wants a multifunction system in a single-footprint configuration. The Flex is compatible with almost any printer that is less than 47 inches in height.

The EIS Solo is basically for the same purpose, but it does not utilize the ErgoStand for a single-footprint configuration.

Q: You have developed your own unique MFP stand solutions. Why did you do that?

In the MFP market there is a clear need for a coherent complete solution. Remember our goal was to create solutions using the best-of-breed products. We needed ErgoStand so we could assemble a line of multifunction solutions using best-of-breed products, and we could differentiate our product offering by addressing a growing trend in the marketplace for a fully bundled solution.

Q: You bundle a one-year, onsite warranty service with all your MFP systems. What does an onsite warranty mean to your customers?

It means a lot. Customers want to be assured the system will be up and running quickly in the event that service is required. They don’t want down time to affect the flow of business. Furthermore, offering an on-site warranty on our products also shows our commitment to our own solutions and signals that we really stand behind our solutions. Additionally, we offer our customers the option of an extended on-site warranty beyond the first year.

Q: What is your advice to a company looking for an MFP solution?

Since we offer several large-format multifunction systems, we first try to fully understand the requirements of the customer. Then we recommend the best fit for the customer at an affordable price. We also try to leverage existing equipment — such as other printers on their network — that can be utilized to expand the capabilities of the system.

Q: What is your current outlook for the color MFP market?

Since we introduced the product line in Q1 2007, our multifunction sales have grown to 38 percent of total scanning system sales. We expect the percentage of MFP sales to grow as people continue to look for more integrated large-format scanning and printing solutions.