



Quality Graphics Center

Adobe® in-RIP trapping

QGC Leverages Adobe in-RIP trapping to improve quality and shorten turnaround time

ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

Quality Graphics Center is an \$8-million, family-owned general commercial printing company that specializes in high-quality color work, primarily for ad agencies and designers.

- Location: Roselle, New Jersey
- Employees: 48

BENEFITS SUMMARY

- With the integration of Adobe in-RIP trapping, QGC's RIP times dropped by approximately two-thirds—resulting in a major speed improvement.
- QGC was able to handle 25 percent more work due to the productivity benefits resulting from Adobe in-RIP trapping.
- Adobe in-RIP trapping allowed QGC to improve product quality, shorten turnaround times in getting proofs to clients, and lowered error rates.
- Adobe PDF is an integral part of QGC's workflow, accounting for 95 percent of their work.

www.qgcnet.com

Darren Yeats is general manager of Roselle, New Jersey-based Quality Graphics Center (QGC). This \$8-million, family-owned general commercial printing company specializes in high-quality color work, primarily for ad agencies and designers. Started in 1956 by Yeats' father, Richard, QGC produced primarily stationery products on letterpresses using handset metal type. Over the years, the company progressed through phototypesetting and mechanical art, to a high-end CEPS, to PostScript® film imagesetter, and then to the company's current workflow—100-percent digital computer-to-plate (CTP), leveraging Adobe in-RIP trapping.

Prior to Adobe in-RIP trapping, QGC had been trapping everything manually using the built-in capabilities of Adobe Illustrator®, Adobe PageMaker®, Macromedia Freehand®, and QuarkXPress®. "Although these tools steadily improved, it took too long when trying to meet constantly tighter customer schedules. There were also certain types of trapping situations that could not be done properly using these methods, particularly when dealing with blends and scanned image," Yeats recalls.

What to do? Last year, QGC installed the initial release of Agfa's implementation of Adobe in-RIP trapping on a Taipan RIP on QGC's film imagesetter. Adobe in-RIP trapping provides support for composite Adobe PostScript 3™ and Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) printing in an advanced, automated package. Adobe in-RIP trapping includes support for all Adobe PostScript 3 features, including smooth shading, DeviceN color space, and masked images. Advanced graphic constructs, such as Hexachrome color, duotones, and custom color gradients, can be trapped in a composite workflow. Once traps have been specified, there is no additional operator intervention required—traps are executed in the PostScript RIP before the file is imaged to paper, plate, or film. Adobe in-RIP trapping traps all elements in a document, includes all the necessary features to create quality traps, includes support for unlimited custom colors or varnishes, and supports rich blacks, gradient and imaging trapping, and sliding traps. All objects in the document are trapped, regardless of the originating application.

“Adobe in-RIP trapping can be easily integrated into an existing print production workflow without the need for a dedicated or comprehensive prepress system or additional training,” reports Yeats. “We spent a few months running jobs that we could not trap manually, to see how it would handle them. We were very impressed with the results, although there was not a lot of time saved due to the longer RIP times. However, when we installed the updated version of Adobe in-RIP trapping late last year, we were pleasantly surprised by the major speed improvement—RIP times dropped by approximately two-thirds.”

QGC opted to maximize the increased turnaround time granted by shrinking RIP times. Adobe in-RIP trapping was implemented onto the company’s Agfa Galileo digital platesetter. “With Adobe in-RIP trapping, we knew that we could save a lot of time—we installed it on our Galileo platesetter.” At the same time, Yeats and his team in the prepress department at QGC made an unplanned discovery regarding the company’s move to Adobe in-RIP trapping.

Shortly after Adobe in-RIP trapping was linked to the company’s Agfa Galileo, one of the 48-employee company’s four full-time prepress operators resigned. “It quickly became apparent that, due to the lower workload from not having to manually trap files anymore, we would not have to replace that particular spot on our prepress team. In fact, we are projecting that, upon restoring our prepress workforce to the staff of four operators we had before in-RIP trapping came aboard, we will be able to handle 25 percent more work—no other single workflow tool has had this great an impact,” Yeats says. As an added bonus, QGC’s press operators and customers no longer have to put up with excuses for objects that the company could not trap manually.

“Anyone still struggling with manual trapping would realize far greater efficiency in their prepress operation and improved quality using in-RIP trapping.”

**—Darren Yeats
General Manager**

“In a nutshell, Adobe in-RIP trapping has allowed us to improve our product quality, shorten our turnaround time to get proofs to our clients, and lower our error rates by allowing our operators to focus on other areas of a job, instead of making sure they manually trapped everything properly,” Yeats states. “Trapping has always been challenging and time consuming in prepress, from table stripping to electronic prepress on computers—anyone still struggling with manual trapping would realize far greater efficiency in their prepress operation and improved quality using in-RIP trapping.”

QGC began its foray into PostScript based electronic prepress with the purchase of its first few Macintosh computers in 1991. In 1993, QGC standardized its shop on Adobe based RIP devices, including laser printers, film imagesetters, and inkjet proofers. In early 1998, QGC was the first production installation of an Agfa Galileo digital platesetter in the United States. Using Agfa’s Apogee workflow system, QGC converted 100 percent of its workflow to CTP over a period of six months in 1999. In the past six to eight months, Adobe PDF has become a major component of QGC’s graphic arts production workflow.

“We have used PDF to clean-up the PostScript from troublesome jobs for a couple years now. Until recently, it was just another tool in a wide assortment of tools we would use to troubleshoot files. Now, PDF has become an integral part of the workflow for 95 per-

cent of our work,” Yeats reports. “We use the Agfa Apogee Create Normalizer to process PostScript files into PDF files of jobs as a standard part of our workflow. The only files we don’t process this way are black text pages that typically don’t have output problems.”

By creating a Normalized PDF early in a job, QGC’s files RIP faster and more reliably, Yeats reports. “Many things that we used to have to find and fix manually, are now fixed automatically, like hairline rules, spot color separation issues, duotones, and bleeds,” Yeats states. “We are so impressed with PDF as a workflow instead of just a tool, that we are hosting a series of free seminars for our clients showing them how PDF can save them time and money.”

As for Adobe in-RIP trapping, Yeats and his team at QGC remain equally impressed. “Adobe in-RIP trapping allows us to simply print to output in the regular manner, files are trapped as part of the PostScript or PDF interpretation process,” Yeats reports. “Adobe in-RIP trapping is a seemingly simple solution that allows for the efficient use of our system processing resources with minimal operator intervention—it is combining the functions of RIPing with trapping into one operation, eliminating redundant work and allowing us to maximize our efficiency.”

TOOL KIT

Software

Adobe PostScript 3
Adobe in-RIP trapping
Adobe PDF
Agfa Apogee PDF RIP
Agfa Apogee Workflow System

Hardware

Agfa Galileo Platesetter