



CASE STUDY

FIRESPRINT SECURES STRONG FOOTPRINT IN STICKER MARKET WITH SUPPORT FROM CANON

Nebraska-based wholesale print provider revolutionizes sticker production with Canon's Colorado printer series

About:

FireSprint, a wholesale trade sign and graphics printer, provides both screen and digital printing services. Specializing in the printing of stickers, labels, banners, yard signs, posters, political signs, and more, the company originated as a modest operation in 2007 to become a major player in the wholesale printing business. FireSprint's philosophy centers on a commitment to quality, speed, and accuracy, offering reasonable wholesale prices, maintaining high-quality standards, ensuring quick production and shipping, and providing knowledgeable and friendly service to their customers.

FireSprint by the Numbers



30
Employees



17 Years
in Business



Produced More
Than **3 Million**
Stickers in 2023

**The sticker industry is
projected to grow to
\$6.05 billion by 2032.**

*Sticker Printer Market Size,
Share Forecast 2032 | MRFR*

Climbing Out of the Cellar

Pivoting is a key component to any successful business. For FireSprint, a wholesale trade and graphics printer based in Omaha, Nebraska, transitions help shape the twists and turns rooted in their constantly evolving story.

Motivated by the ideology of American ingenuity and entrepreneurship, CEO **Gene Hamzhie** started the company as a makeshift retail sign shop in his parents' basement in 2007. Experiencing steady growth, Hamzhie quickly realized his passion was more geared toward the manufacturing side of the business than the artistic end.

To take the next step forward, Hamzhie and his two business partners acquired their first graphic screen printer in 2010, leveraging the low cost of entry and a sizable gap in overall quality, speed, and accuracy throughout the market, to transform FireSprint into a supplier. While this helped to ramp up the production of yard signs and prints on corrugated plastic, aluminum, and more, by 2015, the company underwent a significant transformation to remain competitive. The addition of eco-solvent technology and digital flatbed equipment to the FireSprint fleet opened the door to producing high-volume rigid signage more effectively.

But Hamzhie still saw room for further growth on the horizon. In yet another substantial shift, FireSprint entered the sticker and label market in 2020, providing services to other print shops who either couldn't handle excessive requests or didn't have the capabilities to create stickers or labels in-house.

"WE SIT IN THE SHADOWS, AND WE JUST CHURN OUT WHAT WE DO. IT'S A LOT OF FUN. STICKERS ARE INCREDIBLE. THERE'S SUCH A RANGE. YOU HAVE FORTUNE 500 COMPANIES ORDERING THEM FOR PROMOTIONS, YOU HAVE INDIVIDUALS WHO...RUN 10 OF THEM, AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN." – *Gene Hamzhie, CEO of FireSprint*

Samples Speak Volumes

Breaking into any new category is always a challenge. So, to successfully seize new business in a relatively unknown market, FireSprint needed to invest in a roll-to-roll device that could handle the heavy workload.

That's when they did their due diligence. Navigating the endless options of a crowded marketplace, FireSprint leadership reached out to several vendors, including the team from Canon, to evaluate output. By conducting live tests and then surveying all the samples

"WE SAW THE STICKER AND LABEL MARKET GROWING IN 2020, AND WE WERE REALLY LOOKING FOR A MACHINE THAT COULD OUTPUT THE SPEED, THE DURABILITY, AND THE QUALITY THAT WE NEEDED. WE LOOKED AT ALL THE MAJOR PLAYERS IN THE MARKET, AND IT REALLY CAME DOWN TO THE CANON COLORADO PRINTER SERIES. WE BUY MORE INK AND RUN MORE MEDIA THAN THE COST OF THE PRINTER. IT WAS A NO-BRAINER FOR US." – Gene Hamzhie



spread out across a large table, one, in particular, stuck with Hamzhie.

As with any new device, he was searching for technology that could work in parallel with FireSprint's commitment to reliability, speed, and overall quality. In serving a diverse customer base that includes small sign shops, commercial printers, and distributors of promotional products, the color vibrancy and fine text details of the sample produced on the Canon Colorado printer series clearly stood out.

It's All in the Decals

In January of 2021, the first Canon Colorado printer, with its innovative UVgel technology, was installed at FireSprint. And the results were almost immediate—supplying customers with brilliant colors, maximum durability, and crisp image quality in each print and providing Hamzhie and his team with high speeds to contend with the often-quick turnaround requests. The robust technology inside the device supported FireSprint with a competitive advantage, transforming the company into a dominant player in the label and sticker market.

In 2023 alone, FireSprint produced more than three million stickers, with an average run size of 120 pieces per job. The benefits for FireSprint, which manufactures short-run decals ranging from die-cut and kiss-cut stickers to product nutrition labels and barcodes, in utilizing the Canon Colorado printer came in droves.

The device's consistent UVgel ink showcases a desirable texture and gloss level, excellent uniformity, and a cost-

effective option compared to other technologies. As the UVgel ink sits on the surface, the technology provides a film that contributes positively to the overall quality of the prints.

Benchmarking media with Canon also helped FireSprint

"I CAN'T STRESS ENOUGH THAT WHEN YOU'RE RUNNING YOUR REDS AND BLACKS AND YELLOWS AND THINGS LIKE THAT, IT LOOKS SCREEN PRINTED. IT HAS THE TEXTURE AND GLOSS LEVEL OF A REALLY NICE, SCREEN-PRINTED GRAPHIC. THE FINE TEXT AND REVERSE TEXT IS AMAZING." – Gene Hamzhie

overcome previous challenges to ensure optimal performance. Prints produced on pressure-sensitive vinyl stock are now only laminated for visual effect if the customer requires it—a nearly instant process when using the Canon Colorado printer. Noting that 40 to 50 percent of all stickers produced are unlaminated, Hamzhie said this optionality, along with the high print quality and nonexistent ink abrasion issues that had been regularly experienced with past eco-solvent output, makes the Canon Colorado printer a clear-cut choice.

By Popular Demand

With a focus on fast same-day or two-day production, FireSprint's output has now been streamlined with the Canon Colorado printer. Job completion is no longer days. It's hours.

Operating with a second shift and running six different types of material through the device, the Canon Colorado printer requires minimal floor space and can function almost 24 hours a day with only one operator needed on multiple machines. FireSprint's commitment to delivering orders promptly is also facilitated by the operation's five cutters which are required to keep pace with the Canon Colorado printer's level of production.

"WHEN WE GOT THAT NAILED DOWN, GOT OUR WORKFLOW FIGURED OUT, GOT OUR SPEED UP, AND STARTED REALLY GETTING STUFF OUT ON TIME, IT MADE IT A LOT EASIER FOR US TO START GROWING. I THINK THAT'S WHY WE'RE GOING TO DOUBLE WHAT WE DID LAST YEAR. THAT'S PRETTY SIGNIFICANT. MILLIONS OF STICKERS WILL RUN." – Gene Hamzhie

High uptime and consistent print output over time has given the FireSprint team the confidence needed to thrive in the label and sticker market and support customers

"ANY TIME WE HAVE AN ISSUE, THEY'RE JUST HERE ON THE SPOT. AND THAT IS INCREDIBLE. I DON'T KNOW THAT ANY COMPANY WE'VE WORKED WITH HAS AS MANY TECHNICIANS AS CANON U.S.A., AND THAT'S REALLY COOL." – Gene Hamzhie

For more information on FireSprint, visit www.firesprint.com.

As of January 1, 2025, Canon Solutions America, Inc. merged into its parent company, Canon U.S.A., Inc. The relationship described in this case study initiated with Canon Solutions America and continues with Canon U.S.A.

Canon

with the quality they expect. In 2023, Hamzhie added two Canon Colorado series printers to FireSprint's growing fleet, a move driven purely by the need for ongoing production to help meet client demands. This will also support the company in its quest to branch out to produce more specialized output, including holographic, foil, clear media, and high-speed white ink capabilities without the need for lamination. As FireSprint continues to craft its story, the

Sales of labels in the United States are set to be valued at \$15.7 billion in 2023.

Label and Narrow Web. Label Demand in U.S. to Reach \$21.9 Billion by 2033. January 19, 2024.

level of service and support they have experienced with Canon will allow them to reliably focus on an uninterrupted operation, putting them in a prime position to capture more of a consistently growing sticker and label market.

To learn more about the capabilities of the Canon Colorado printer series, call or visit

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