

Fiery Navigator helps BOND increase efficiency during rapid growth

BOND Reproductions grew from a small print shop with one printer, to quite a large company. But, as digital operations supervisor Kara Marcal says, "Even though we're one of the largest digital printers on the West Coast, we were still doing a lot of processes manually. We finally asked, why are we doing this? It's taking so much time and labor."

BOND decided to try out some software tools. The company has EFI™ Fiery® digital front ends on all of its digital print engines.

Initially, BOND went with another vendor for a web-to-print and variable data printing solution. Marcal says it didn't go well. "Integrating our system to the other vendor's software was unworkable." She says she spent months learning SQL database technology just to get any functions to work, and the service and support was really lacking. "Even our customers were frustrated with the layout of the old storefront. Our salespeople haven't been selling the online ordering because of the problems."

The move to EFI

Marcal is the primary digital print operator, as well as the person in charge of workflow reporting, software collaboration, and digital print production scheduling. This gave her the confidence to convince her managers to move to EFI. "All the web-to-print features we wanted were already in Digital StoreFront®. We're also using Fiery Go as a mobile app for monitoring production, and Fiery JobFlow™ for prepress automation. But, for my job, Fiery Navigator quickly became my go-to tool."

Marcal explains that her job is to make operations more efficient so BOND can deliver the excellent service the company is known for. "Our pride and



Challenge:

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KARA MARCAL (RIGHT),
DIGITAL OPERATIONS SUPERVISOR
BOND REPRODUCTIONS



Design · Print · Finish

Founded in 1992, BOND now boasts 80 employees to do commercial design, digital and offset print, and finishing. Customers range from walk-in to commercial, and local to international. BOND handles work for law offices; as well as signage, packaging, and distribution for retail accounts; plus local government work for the metro Vancouver area.

BOND Reproductions specializes in great service and impeccable quality. Their top-of-the-line fleet of Xerox and Ricoh digital presses provide an affordable solution and quick turnaround for any size runs.

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BOND's office in Vancouver, Canada.

joy is top service and response time. We accommodate a customer timeframe as opposed to designing one for them—whether they need something in a day, or in five days. That really is our focus, and trying to make sure that customers are impressed with the quality too.”

Navigator nails down workflow issues

With the high volume of jobs the company does, BOND needed a tool to help identify what types of jobs are running, the sizes, and what causes production to drop off.

Marcal says, “Fiery Navigator is really helping us identify workflow issues so we can be more productive.” One example is media management.

Ending the paper chase

She explains that Fiery Navigator’s aggregation and view of media usage helped BOND forecast how much stock the company should have on hand, and in what size, at any given time.

BOND stocks both pre-cut and full-size sheets, with the pre-cut sheets used mostly for rush or small runs. But the company can reduce its costs by buying full sheets and cutting them down, because BOND gets good prices on full sheets based on the volume of paper the company orders. Using full sheets gives the company more flexible estimating options too, and allows the company to run odd or uncommon sizes in order to impose more efficiently.



Marcal, on the left, supervises operating the fleet of BOND's digital presses.

Because of limited storage, BOND gets delivery of this larger paper twice a day. Fiery Navigator showed company staff that delays in cutting stock and getting it to the printers created dips in production. Marcal says, "With Navigator, we could see that the machines were not used as much when the paper came in, because we need 30 to 45 minutes for cutting. Now we can find ways to make sure that the afternoon paper is prepped and ready to go in the morning, so that the machines are not stopping."

Navigator also helped her see the result. "We saw an increase of 4,000 to 6,000 impressions per day. Even though we're doing upwards of 120,000 clicks a day, every little bit makes a difference. It's especially important because some of our presses run best when they're always printing."

The team at BOND also found that the presses are less likely to jam and the image quality is better when the paper is fresh. By being able to schedule deliveries more accurately, BOND avoids problems like card stock that has curled because of high humidity and has to be thrown out because it won't run. Marcal says, "Cutting down on waste makes a difference on the bottom line."

Straightening out scheduling

Scheduling is another area where Navigator is showing productivity gains for BOND. For example, the company can reduce downtime by scheduling maintenance or upgrades on days and times when the production floor is not as busy.

Solution:

"We find that the EFI products talk to each other quite well. And we've had some of the best support from EFI, including the digital services and online forums, in person, or emails. We're using EFI's products to be as productive as possible."

KARA MARCAL,
DIGITAL OPERATIONS SUPERVISOR
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BOND's production room with their fleet of digital presses.

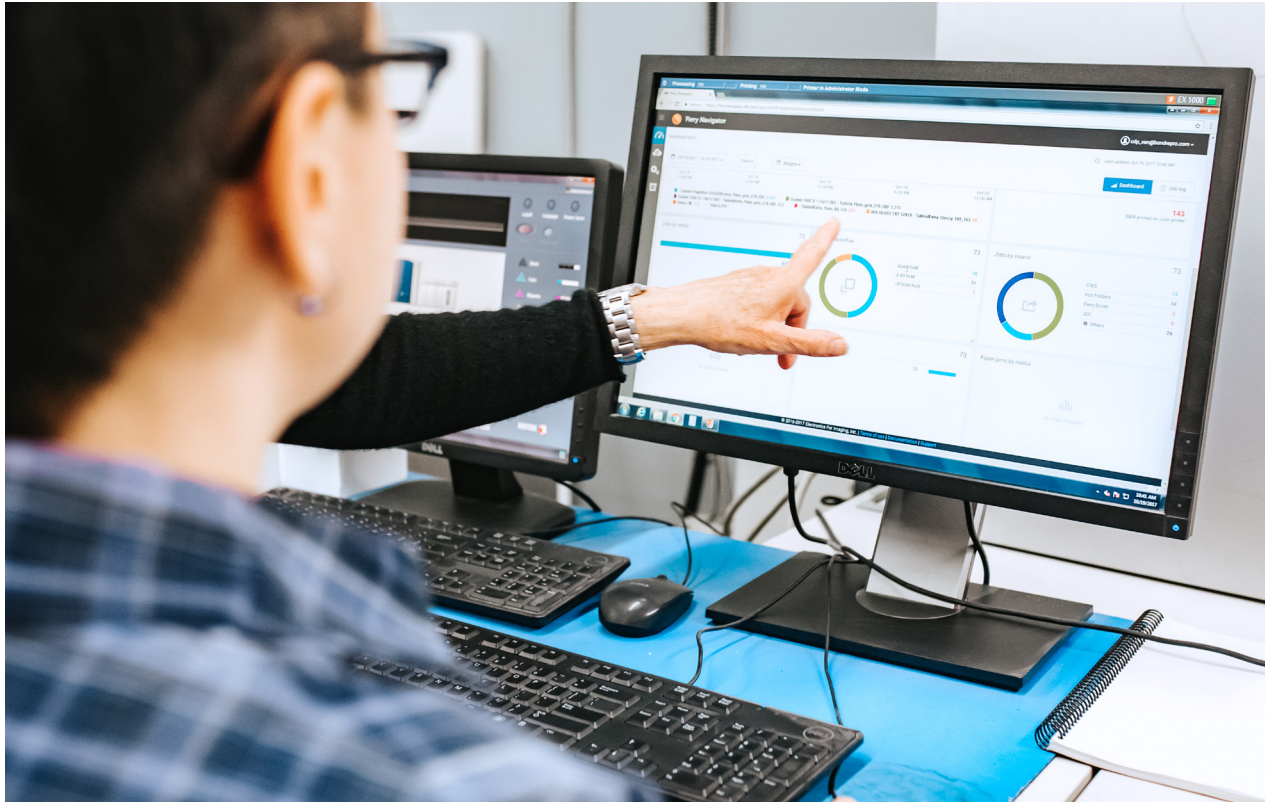
But the biggest impact Navigator has had on BOND's bottom line is how the company used the data to reschedule employee shifts. BOND's managers were able to see what days and time of day were the slowest, and to schedule more accurately.

Marcal gives a specific example, "We used to have a morning and an afternoon shift. We actually found there wasn't enough work to have 16 hours of print, 5 days a week. But we often get a lot of work in on Friday for people who want it by Monday. So we changed to 12-hour shifts instead. We have an operator who works a 12-hour shift on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, and another here for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. The productivity figures are higher with the new schedule."

The power of information

Marcal claims the widget view in Dashboard Trend on Fiery Navigator is her favorite. "I love the trend widget! This is where I spend most of my time. It lets me forecast usage of each printer so I can minimize downtime and maximize usage of each print engine."

She says, "We also use the Compare feature as a good general overview of how we use each printer, so we can schedule each printer properly. We want to make sure that every machine always has some sort of work." The impression count gives her an idea of what the maximum output is on a given day. She uses that data to balance larger and smaller jobs for a steadier workflow.



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Before Navigator, Marcal had to walk around every morning and check each digital press to see how much work had gone through every day. Then she'd write down the previous day's production and reset the counters. Now, "With Navigator, I can just log in and I get a breakdown by machine. I can export it to a PDF. That lets me know what our monthly volume is, so I can compare it against last year. I can also share data with managers. When we have meetings, I have answers for them."

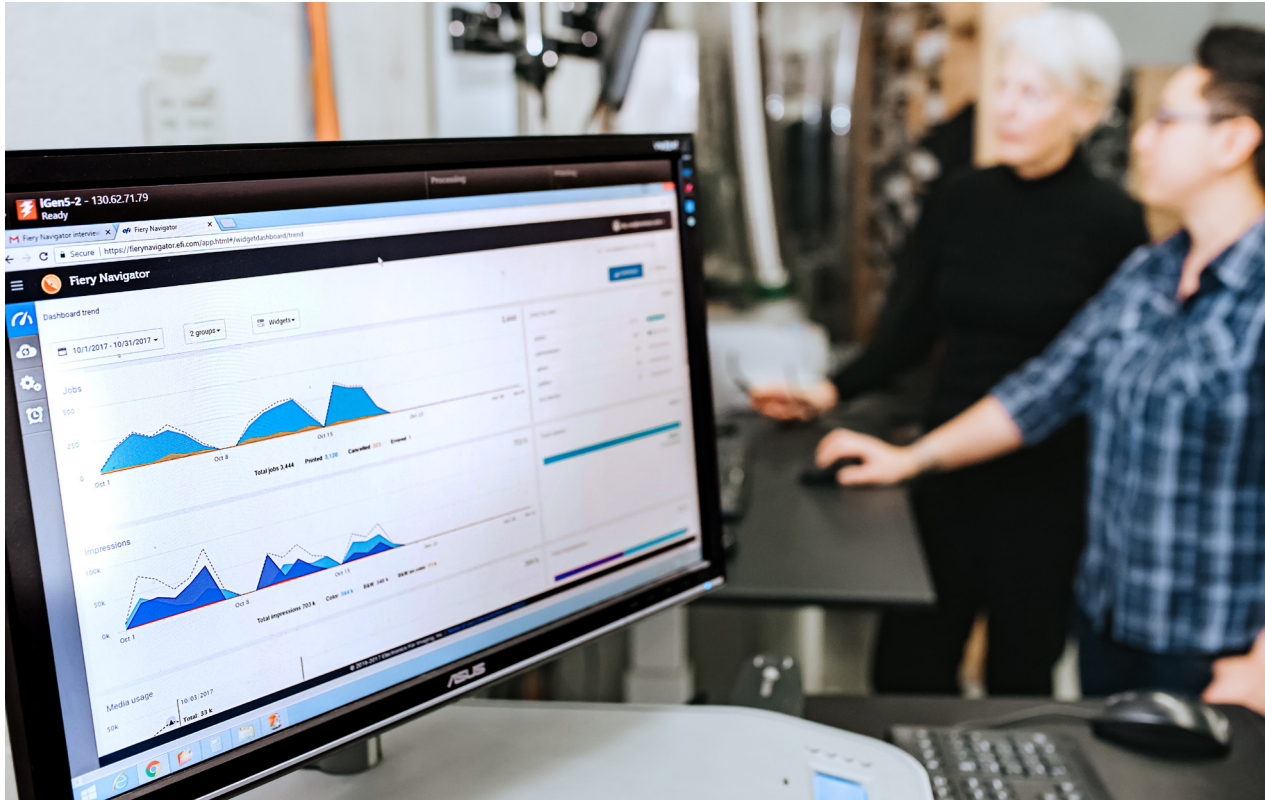
Navigator data helped Marcal fully understand how the large number of small jobs were impacting BOND's business every month and look for productivity improvements. She explains, "When we first got Navigator, I was surprised to see how many jobs we were really doing. In a given month, we'll hit 7,000 or 8,000 files through these machines. That made it clear that we needed ways to process files so the operator isn't handling them as much."

She knows from experience that every job—small or big—requires operator setup time. "If we have to set up every one of those files, that's excess handling on top of the fact that we're image shifting them, printing them, and proofing them five or six times," she says. "We now use Fiery JobFlow to make sure that jobs are set up in advance, to reduce the amount of file handling, and to make us more efficient. With JobFlow, we use more server templates than we were before to automate all these necessary but commonly used repetitive tasks."

Result:

"Fiery Navigator has been able to identify workflow issues and help us become more productive. We have the ability now to go much further with Fiery software to ramp up our profits."

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Navigator also showed that small jobs sometimes bunched up on a single printer. Marcal says, "If we have a lot of jobs going through, but not a lot of impressions, it means we're doing too many small jobs." This indicated that one press operator could have an easy day with a few large jobs that kept the printer running while the other operator was frantically handling files for tiny jobs with the printer cycled down. Now JobFlow helps BOND mix small jobs in between large jobs to maintain a steady flow coming in to appropriate printers. The operators can set up the small jobs while the large job is printing. Marcal adds, "The impression count is our overall busyness indicator. It also gives us an idea of what the maximum output is for us on a given day."

Navigator helps Marcal decide what JobFlow workflows to design by making it easy to see what types of jobs the shop is running. "Right now, I'm designing workflows based on what I see in Navigator about the actual number of specific types of jobs we're running. That way I know I'm setting up workflows to increase our productivity."

Another Navigator feature that will grow in importance as BOND continues to leverage its integrated workflow is Jobs by Source. This feature shows which jobs were processed using the JDF automation from Digital StoreFront, the templates from JobFlow, or manual operator submission. With this data, BOND can monitor and adjust job submission to maximize the return on the investment the company has made in automated workflows.



"We're looking forward to seeing what we can do when we hook up to our other services. Navigator will tell us how it's working."

The promise of integration

Marcal says, "We have some really exciting things that we're planning to do with Fieri software. I love using every single feature I can get my hands on. So my primary job right now is actually making sure that we use these products to the fullest. We have the ability now to go much further with Fieri software to ramp up our profits."

One of the things BOND is currently doing is integrating the various EFI tools. "We've had products from other companies, and just integrating them was such a headache. We find that the EFI products talk to each other quite well. And we've had some of the best support from EFI, including the digital services and online forums, in person, or emails. When we do run into a hiccup, we've always had somewhere to go to get the answers.

"We're looking forward to seeing what we can do when we hook up to our other services. Navigator will tell us how it's working."

EFI fuels success.

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