

PROFILE

NAME: Gotham City Online

LOCATION: Austin, Tex.

FOUNDED: 2012

WEBSITE:

www.gothamcityonline.com

CHALLENGE

Increase efficiency for the print-on-demand textile and graphics business to meet growing demand.

SOLUTION

Add three Epson SureColor® F3070 direct-to-garment printers and six SureColor P10000 wide-format printers for enhanced print speeds and easy-to-use features.

Pop Culture Retailer Finds Efficiency with Epson DTG and Wide-Format Printers

Gotham City Installs Multiple Epson SureColor F3070 Direct-to-Garment Printers and SureColor P10000 Wide-Format Printers for Increased Efficiency for Apparel and Poster Applications

As one of the first online print-on-demand manufacturers, [Gotham City Online](http://GothamCityOnline.com) is now a leading e-commerce pop-culture retailer based out of Austin, Tex. Their brands, [Pop Threads](http://PopThreads.com) and [Poster Foundry](http://PosterFoundry.com), provide customers with a variety of garment and poster designs featuring their value-added licensed designs, as well as designs unique to the company.

Founded in 1999, in its namesake New York City, co-founder David Topkins set out to build a scalable e-commerce company. Starting out as a small business, Gotham City originally sold to customers on eBay as a way to gauge what people were interested in purchasing. Based on their research, they ultimately focused on fashion through partnerships with known brands. Over time, the company

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- DAVID TOPKINS, CO-FOUNDER, GOTHAM CITY ONLINE



developed its own fashion brand Pop Threads, and also expanded into the poster industry, forming Poster Foundry. Initially, the facility build-out was complicated, with a relatively new concept of printing directly on apparel, and the vast array of different types of t-shirts and textiles. Eventually, the Gotham City team built a system to efficiently create graphic t-shirts and posters and then outgrew their ‘Gotham City’ headquarters, expanding into a larger facility in Kentucky, and later Texas.

The Business Expands

“The industry started maturing, and soon, what used to be low hanging fruit was not as low anymore. There was less value in being the middleman, using only other companies designs and logos, as more people were doing what we were doing. So, we started exploring ways to move up the food chain and began looking into generating our own content. That’s what made Epson a great partner – their technology was ideal for both t-shirts and posters,” said Topkins.



As the team looked to purchase less content from wholesalers, and find a scalable solution, they attended Print Expo in Long Beach, Calif. and attended a direct-to-garment (DTG) seminar hosted by Equipment Zone and Epson that highlighted the benefits of the SureColor F2000, Epson's first DTG printer and the flagship model during the time.

Today, Gotham City has invested in multiple SureColor F2100 – Epson's next-generation DTG printer – and is now adding SureColor F3070 industrial direct-to-garment printers to scale and streamline the Pop Threads business.

Pop Threads: Selecting the Best Equipment for ROI

"We are always interested in the latest technology to power our business. Whether it's for expansion of a new product line or to improve upon prior technology we already utilize. If it can add value to our business, we definitely want to evaluate the equipment," said Topkins.

Today, Pop Threads produces a variety of print-on-demand garments with both licensed and commissioned designs ranging from baby onesies to tank tops, short sleeve and long sleeve t-shirts (size 6-months to 6XL), sweatshirts, and tote bags.

Topkins continued to purchase Epson DTG printers as new product evolutions became available. "The newly released SureColor F3070 is a product designed more for commercial printing, as opposed to the first-generation mom and pop or kiosk style DTG printers," he said. "It included compelling features, such as increased print speed and enhanced functionality and sensitivity of the platen height."

"In addition, the larger, bulk-sized ink tanks help our team stay on track. With less frequent ink changes we save time, and it looks like a nice overall price improvement when purchasing larger volume inks for these machines," continued Topkins.

To date, the SureColor F3070 has helped improve overall workflow efficiency at Gotham City. "Due to the speed of the SureColor F3070, we've seen better ROI with orders that require larger images, and more ink. Especially those that use a lot of white ink," shared Topkins.

Pop Threads has leveraged their fleet of SureColor F3070 printers to increase productivity with larger sized garments and garments with big images. In addition, thicker garments, such as sweatshirts, have been beneficial due to the new platen height sensor in the SureColor F3070, making printing on a sweatshirt pocket easier than ever.

Subsequent to purchase and installation, Topkins and his team were thrilled with the unexpected maintenance improvements. "Our previous machines would conduct maintenance suddenly, and interrupt workflow. The SureColor F3070 gives our staff a heads-up, and even lets us schedule maintenance, so we can minimize the negative impact to our production," said Topkins. "The SureColor F3070 communicates with the user in a very efficient way. It makes a noise and lights up. It's a visual warning that grabs our attention. We like the way the maintenance has evolved over time."

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– DAVID TOPKINS, GOTHAM CITY ONLINE

Poster Foundry: A Fleet of Robust Printers

Poster Foundry, the poster and gifts division of Gotham City, also leverages Epson wide-format printers for poster production.

“Previously, we used HP printers,” said Topkins, “Initially, we invested in one very large, commercial grade printer. We realized that if our machine goes down, it can have an outsized impact on workflow. We quickly learned, for our set up, it was more beneficial to have a decentralized workflow that involved a fleet of robust machines.”

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“At the time, we were looking for a machine that provided an economical solution to full bleed prints and auto-cut functions. Epson has a great product with the SureColor P10000 that met the needs of our expanding business.”

Today, Poster Foundry has numerous SureColor P10000 wide-format printers installed. “These printers have a good balance of what we need without too many additional bells and whistles,” shared Topkins.

“The SureColor P10000 printers include a stand, which is helpful, and an efficient auto-feed mechanism for media,” continued Topkins. “The learning curve is shallow, and they just work.”

“Furthermore, these printers have stunning color reproduction, when using official Epson paper. Our customers are thrilled with the final product.”

Gotham City Continues to Seek Epson Solutions

Since its origin, Gotham City has shipped over 20 million packages to e-commerce shoppers worldwide.

“Installing Epson printing solutions has made our workflow processes more efficient,” shared Topkins. “These printers have enabled us to open the door to customization, beyond traditional print-on-demand items, and have allowed for expanded made-to-order printing.”

“Even the shipping processes have been fairly seamless. Epson takes a lot of care in their packaging, and products arrive safely,” continued Topkins. “Epson paper and products always come well packaged and well presented.”

Topkins and his team have relied on Epson for years and look forward to continuing the relationship with Epson.

“We have been happy with Epson products – the machines, consumables and customer service,” highlighted Topkins. “So much so, we are looking into switching to the SureColor F570 desktop dye-sublimation printer for our custom mug production, a secondary product sold through Poster Foundry. We are currently testing printers, and we continue to lean towards Epson.”

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the individual. Individuals were not compensated for this article.