

Advantage Group Realty uses the Lexmark C534n to print color brochures and business cards.

Real estate firm cuts costs and refines its image with Lexmark C534n

The Organization

Located in Georgetown, Ky., Advantage Group Realty serves the home-buying needs of a community that is growing quickly. The growth is largely due to the presence of a major automotive assembly plant that built its five-millionth car in September 2006, and other allied industries. Similar to hundreds of thousands of small businesses, Advantage Group Realty has a total staff of 16, a limited operating budget and no in-house IT staff. It depends on technology that is reliable, affordable and easy to use.

The Challenge

In business for little more than one year, the employees of Advantage Group Realty rely on marketing, both online and in print, to drive sales of homes throughout the booming central Kentucky and greater Cincinnati real estate market.

To keep individual homes fresh in the minds of prospective buyers, real estate agents routinely print profile sheets that contain detailed information about each property, along with several exterior and interior photos. Achieving maximum impact to differentiate one property from another is essential, especially when a buyer tours many homes in a single afternoon.

Needing to print a hundred copies of each home's profile sheet, Advantage Group Realty tried two methods: using an outside copy center and printing internally on inkjet printers.

"We designed an original here and brought it to the local copy center for duplicating," said Sandy Sowers, Real Estate Broker and Owner of Advantage Group Realty. "The quality was acceptable but at 12 cents per page, the cost was high, and we had to wait several hours before they could get to our job."

If the staff guessed wrong and additional copies were needed in the

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Advantage Group Realty



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Georgetown, Ky.

www.advantagegrouprealtyhomes.com

midst of a busy weekend, the delay could cost a sale. On the other hand, if too many copies were made, money was being wasted.

Taking duplication in-house, the firm purchased nine inkjet printers, connecting them directly to each of the nine computers used by its agents – even though the computers were fully networked. The strategy eliminated the delay associated with using an outside service, but print quality suffered and costs soared.



Sandy Sowers, Owner of Advantage Group Realty, replaced nine inkjet printers with one Lexmark color laser printer and says the results are stunning to customers and her budget.

“For all nine printers, we were replacing color and black ink cartridges an average of three times a week at a cost of \$60,” said Sowers.

“And to keep the photographs from bleeding and smearing, we had to purchase expensive inkjet paper.” The math was alarming: more than \$3,100 annually for ink and up to \$10 for each 500-sheet ream of special inkjet paper.

To Sowers and her associates, neither method was acceptable. They needed an affordable solution to print hundreds of profile sheets on demand with bright colors and high image quality to differentiate Advantage’s profile sheets from the others buyers were collecting.

The Solution

Advantage Group Realty chose to evaluate the Lexmark C534n color laser printer. Ideal for small businesses, departmental workgroups, and branch offices, the C534n delivers brilliant photorealistic output and razor-sharp text at up to 22 color and 24 monochrome pages per minute on plain paper. It met the needs of Sowers and her colleagues perfectly.

“The quality of photographs and crispness of text were just stunning,” said Sowers. “We had no idea that a color laser could be so affordable and easy to operate.”

Unlike an inkjet, whose wet ink bleeds, causing absorbent standard paper to buckle and images to smear, the C534’s dry micro-powdered toner allows Advantage Group Realty to print profile sheets in vivid full color. To achieve professional-quality color images with 4,800 Color Quality and available 1,200 x 1,200 dot-per-inch resolution, the C534n leverages the latest advances in microscopic spherical toner technology.

Equipped with a standard Ethernet port and automatic network self-discoverability capability, Sowers’ administrative assistant set up the C534n on the firm’s network, installed the cyan, magenta, yellow and black toner cartridges, loaded paper, and had the unit printing in less than 20 minutes. “We didn’t need a network expert; the illustrated set-up guide led us through the entire process,” she said.

Today, Advantage Group Realty’s Lexmark C534n is churning out thousands of photorealistic profile sheets, open house listings and invitations, and personalized portfolios for each of the firm’s agents.

“We’re even using the C534n to print our business cards,” said Sowers. “We use heavyweight, die-cut business card stock from the local office superstore and the results are exceptional.”

For Advantage Group Realty, like thousands of other small companies that do not have an in-house IT department, ease of use is essential. The Lexmark C534n delivers. With its full graphical LCD operator panel, the C534n displays images that guide users through toner cartridge replacement, loading paper or clearing a rare misfeed.

For larger businesses, the same display can provide IT administrators with detailed status and usage information. Routine maintenance is simplified with toner cartridges and paper that load from the front.

The Results

By replacing its fleet of inkjet printers with one Lexmark C534n color laser printer, Advantage Group Realty is saving money, eliminating delays, and perhaps most important, setting itself apart from the competition.

The results were immediate. “One home builder we represent noticed the difference immediately,” said Sowers. “He was impressed by the brightness of the photographs and the rich color. With the inkjet printers, colors were dull and lacked impact.” Buyers too, are taking notice.

In the highly competitive real estate industry, anything agents do to be noticed directly affects the bottom line. With the Lexmark C534n, Advantage Group Realty found the perfect solution. You might even say they’ve been floored by the results.

Lexmark C534n

