

Snapshot of Success

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David L. Keel, Chief Operating Officer,
National Science Center



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Located in downtown Augusta, GA, the National Science Center (NSC) is a 128,000 square-foot facility where 250 hands-on exhibits, custom digital theater programs, a portable planetarium, and educational workshops and demonstrations make math, science and technology come alive for thousands of visitors each year. A unique partnership between the non-profit National Science Center, Inc. and the U.S. Army, the NSC is also the home base for an array of national educational outreach programs.

From simple visitor guides that outline the programs of the day to detailed educational publications and fundraising materials, the NSC produces and distributes a large variety and volume of documents – as many as 250,000 per year. For several years, the NSC had been using a RISO 3700 Printer-Duplicator,

which offered tremendous cost-effectiveness and reliability, and easy-to-use spot color capabilities. However, the NSC wanted to more fully exploit the advantages of full color printing. When introduced to the HC5000 Full Color ComColor™ Printer, they decided to take advantage of the new technology.

"We had been very happy with RISO, and when I learned about the new HC5000, I didn't hesitate to upgrade," said David L. Keel, NSC Chief Operating Officer. "I knew that its color capabilities and low running cost would enable us to cost-effectively increase our in-house production capabilities in full color."

As a non-profit organization, the NSC relies heavily on membership as well as local, regional, and national financial support to survive. Being able to

communicate with this support base on a regular basis is very important to the success of their fundraising efforts. Several years ago, the NSC's development department was forced to discontinue production of its quarterly newsletter due to cost constraints. With the HC5000 in place, however, the development department is looking forward to producing a new, higher quality, full-color newsletter.

"The newsletter really is an important tool in our development efforts," explained Keel. "We had been exploring producing it outside again, but we quickly determined that the HC5000 will produce the quality we need at half the cost."

In addition to the newsletter, the development department sends out numerous informational packets to prospective donors. Another advantage the HC5000

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has brought to the staff is the ability to customize these packets. “With the HC5000, you can efficiently and cost-effectively personalize the packets to the donor,” said Keel. “To get a good price from an outside vendor, you need to print many copies. With the HC5000, quantity is irrelevant. Whether you’re printing one copy or 1,000 copies, the cost per page is the same. The turnaround time is also very fast. You can instantly make edits and print the revised document, rather than waiting days for a new proof to arrive from an outside source. The development department can now go to a donor and tell our story with a document that is personalized and has pizzazz – it really helps.”

Because the HC5000 can be networked, the NSC has been able to move all color printing off employee desk top printers to the HC5000 at a considerable cost savings. “We were spending \$100 – 200 per month on ink jet cartridges,” said Keel. “With the switch to the HC5000, we’re finding that the staff is actually producing more in color, and we’re still saving money.”

Visitors coming through the facility are also noticing the increased use of color in NSC documents. “Feedback is very important to us, and we ask our visitors to complete a customer service form about their experience,” said Keel. “Since we began producing the customer service form in color, we’ve noticed an increase in the return rate.”

RISO’s customer support also played an important role in the NSC’s decision to purchase the HC5000. “We’ve had RISO machines for six years, and I know I can count on their support and a quick response time,” said Keel. “The first few days we had the HC5000, I had a question regarding a document I was trying to print. RISO’s response was immediate, answering my question the same day and sending a technician over the next day to make an adjustment for me. It’s important to have that kind of support. It means that I can feel good about recommending the HC5000 to any organization that needs an economical solution for high quality, high volume color documents.”
