Making a Difference with Color-Logic

Tactive
A Rebranding Effort

COLOR LOGIC ®
Special Effects for Print™

By Dennis Mason   JANUARY 2020

When Tim Browning and Kurt Ellinger set up shop as Print Resources in 2000, they intended to simply apply their previous experience working for several multinational printing companies as print brokers in the Indianapolis area. They soon found, however, that the printers they sought to do their clients' work often could not meet the delivery times and quality required. So Print Resources quickly acquired a color copier and became a printer. Three years or so down the road, Browning and Ellinger began offering promotional products, and by 2009 kitting and fulfillment had become a major business segment. Through the years, their ability to print was enhanced with the acquisition of an HP Indigo 5900, a Canon imagePRESS C10000VP, and recently a Xerox Iridesse, as well as an HP Latex wide format machine, a small heat press, and dye sublimation capability.

Consistent growth has been the hallmark of the business. In 2005, 2017, and 2018, Print Resources made the *Indianapolis Business Journal* list of the 25 fastest-growing

Tim Browning (L) and Kurt Ellinger, Tactive Co-Owners

businesses in the Indiana capitol region. By 2020—with the company diversifying into promotional products, kitting, fulfillment, and other areas for clients—it had become clear that the name Print Resources no longer described what the company offered, so the business name was changed to Tactive, using this brand positioning statement: *Engagement Experts Who Help Busy Marketers Reach Audiences and Achieve ROI.*

Today, Tactive is nearing US$10 million in sales and—having sustained operations during the Covid-19 pandemic—continues to grow and to provide clients with new, non-print services in addition to digital.   Sales consist of approximately 40 percent promotional items, 30 percent printing, and 30 percent kitting and fulfillment. All market segments are supported by a vigorous information technology capability and supporting clients with focused marketing using databases is the norm. Today, more than 40 percent of the Tactive employees are

women—and they may be found throughout the company—in top management, production, and graphic design. Tactive clients are primarily B2B companies, although local companies such as restaurants, breweries, and nonprofits remain a focus, too.

Becoming Tactive, rather than Print Resources, meant successfully implementing a business model that emphasizes close relationships with its clients. And that business model also describes how Tactive assists customers in rebranding their marketing efforts. Tactive Marketing Director Robin Lanning describes the company response to client rebranding needs as "Say yes and then figure it out!" With this mantra as a brand pillar, Tactive has broadened efforts to provide client services not available from most traditional printers. One excellent example is work Tactive did for a major client that traditionally held a large annual meeting for its customers. In previous years, Print Resources would provide each customer at the meeting with a grab bag containing promotional items, printed client sales

In rebranding Print Resources to Tactive, the idea was to put the Tactive name in front of clients using something of value that would not be quickly thrown out. These notebooks, printed on the Tactive HP Indigo using HP Mosaic, became key items in the Tactive rebranding effort. The covers were die cut to reveal the Tactive name on the first page of each notebook. In the inset, a sticker utilizing the Color-Logic Pattern-FX software. Putting these items in clients' hands resulted in several inquiries and orders for similar items.

The Tactive building in Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

Tactive Graphic Designer and Resident Prepress Guru, in her studio overlooking the Tactive production floor.

literature, and other takeaway items—a rather traditional printing and kitting task. But in the Covid-19 environment, the client held a virtual meeting, and needed to deliver grab bags to individual meeting attendees' residences rather than simply sending them in one shipping box to the meeting venue. Thus Tactive was charged with creating a way for the client to collect attendees' home addresses. Tactive did this by creating a secure, web-based form that could be distributed vie email to all attendees. Tactive then ensured the grab bags were delivered correctly and on time.

Another way Tactive differs from more traditional printers lies in how individual employees take initiative and independently develop new client services. Take, for example, the role Ruby Porter, the Tactive graphic designer and prepress expert, played in broadening the Tactive efforts in variable data printing. Although Tactive was using variable data when Porter joined the company, she expanded the Tactive variable data capability by using HP SmartStream Designer and Adobe Illustrator/InDesign to generate variable print data from lists as well as from images and patterns. This enabled Tactive, using the HP Mosaic feature in HP SmartStream to create unlimited designs based on one or more stationary vector patterns.

Another capability Porter learned to exploit was Color-Logic—a software solution that enables HP Indigo and Xerox Iridesse owners to consistently and reliably print a broad selection of metallic colors, on either conventional or metallic substrate. Without any pending prospect or order, she became familiar with Color-Logic, and Tactive purchased a Color-Logic license and installed the software. Then, when a potential client from northern Indiana called—having learned from the Color-Logic website of the Tactive ability to print metallics—Tactive was ready to help. The customer, after reviewing their requirements with several nearby printers, chose Tactive because of the can-do Tactive attitude. Familiarity with Color-Logic also led to the incorporation of metallic printing as a key part of the company rebranding effort from Print Resources to Tactive. Because Color-Logic works on most output devices, Porter was able to incorporate metallics into the literature and stickers used to acquaint clients with the new business identity.

Tactive prints Color-logic swatchbooks on both the HP Indigo 5900—to illustrate how metallic substrates can spice up a campaign—and on the Xerox Iridesse—to showcase the use of metallic silver ink. Says Porter: "Having metallic examples and swatches produced in both ways really demonstrates our flexibility and the subtle differences the two presses produce." In addition, Porter uses Pattern-FX—an optional Color-Logic add-on—to

Random pages from the Tactive sales handout:
Left: Color-Logic special effects. **Center:** Color-Logic Pattern-FX examples.
Right: Color-Logic swatches from which clients can select colors for insertion into their designs.

produce samples and swatches featuring detailed repetitive patterns within the metallics.

Tactive clients typically call looking for help without really knowing everything the company can produce. And this methodology has resulted in a different kind of selling at Tactive. Client Success Managers (who might be called sales personnel at a more conventional company, but who also follow jobs through Tactive from start to finish) carry preprinted Color-Logic metallic swatchbooks and leave them with prospects who can then use them to specify colors and patterns in jobs.

Color-Logic metallic printing has become one of the major capabilities Tactive shows customers. Says Porter: "We work with many marketing departments and teams that do not have in-house designers but are very creative and have fantastic ideas. We are able to assist those clients with even their most complicated designs, integrating Color-Logic to add a bit more intrigue."

Porter continues: "The Color-Logic license allows printers to provide the Color-Logic metallic design software to clients for their own use, but most Tactive customers work with Tactive to expand upon their unique ideas. As a result, most clients see no need for the extra training costs involved with learning the Color-Logic software suite on their own. Moreover, it allows us to make print file adjustments at any time, should the printed color not meet initial design expectations."

Tactive is not just a company on the move, but a company that is constantly changing as technology and the needs of their clients evolve. Tactive today is a vastly different company than Print Resources was five short years ago. And it is a sure bet that Tactive in five years will be different yet.