



MY PERSONAL POSTCARD – INNOVATION IN PRINT



Sending postcards to friends and family is a time-old tradition that is receiving a makeover with My Personal Postcard, an iPhone® application that allows people to create a postcard on their smartphone using their own photos, add a personal message and send it to print from anywhere in the world.

Co-founder of My Personal Postcard, Sam Carter, who has a background in printing, had the HP Indigo digital press in mind when originating the application, knowing it would ensure the printed cards would be high quality and worthy of being kept as a souvenir or memento.

"We want to see our postcards on refrigerators, office desks, and in photo albums. I've seen the high-quality photobooks that you can produce on the HP Indigo, and it was this quality assurance that made the decision for us to partner with HP Indigo Print Service Providers (PSPs) an easy one," says Carter.

"We are not interested in making a product that will be received and discarded. We are printing keepsakes that hopefully people will display and enjoy for years to come – that's our value proposition. The HP Indigo technology enables us to produce the exact type of product we want."

An innovative take on the traditional postcard

My Personal Postcard operates with three manufacturing hubs positioned strategically around the world – US, Asia Pacific and Europe. Taking as little time to create as sending an email, people can upload their postcards at anytime, hit send and the print-ready file will be sent directly to the nearest hub where the postcards are printed, laminated and dispatched within the next business day – all for a cost of US\$2 per postcard (discounts apply to bundles).

Launched in April 2011, My Personal Postcard is currently only available as an application for the iPhone, but the company is currently developing versions for the iPad®, iPod Touch®, Android, BlackBerry®, Windows® Touch and even the web. An upcoming Version 2 of the iPhone application will include significant improvements based

on customer feedback gathered over the last six months. "With the number of smartphones in the world expected to reach over two billion by 2015, we see enormous potential for growth in the number of people using My Personal Postcard on a regular basis," explains Carter.

Repeat customers

Even though the application has only been available since April 2011, My Personal Postcard reports a high level of repeat use from customers, meeting one of Carter's primary objectives. "There are strong advocates out there and some very big fans of the service," Carter says. "People who sign up do come back and we are noticing a trend towards multiple card purchases at a discounted rate by regular users. What pleases us the most with the start-up is that some customers are using us quite frequently and others every now and then, but none have given up. That is the most satisfying aspect because it means we are delivering on our promise to provide a high-quality product that is easy to use, accessible and personal. All users end up sending a postcard to themselves, also proving the theory that these postcards are keepsakes."

Carter says that some customers have sent more than 50 cards. "The application allows users to create multiple postcards and send them to print in one batch.

"Our user base is growing by 10 per cent each week, week on week, and people who are using the programme are staying, so we are confident of the future. At present the highest traffic is from the Asia Pacific region, but we are also seeing traction in the US and Europe."

Capturing memories

My Personal Postcard is using today's mobile phone technology – high-quality cameras that allow people to take a photo and upload it immediately via the internet – and taking it one step further, says Carter.





“Working with HP on workflow solutions and utilising the HP Indigo 7000 Digital Press for output ensures we are providing not only high-quality products, but high productivity.”

John Gagliano
senior vice president, Vision

“Every month around 2.5 billion pictures are posted on Facebook – almost 1,000 pictures a second. These photos have to be viewed electronically and are often forgotten in the pace of the digital world as more images are uploaded every day. What we offer customers is the opportunity to freeze their images in time and create something very personal and special, something they can share with their friends and families, something that can be kept forever.

“Most people display the postcards they receive on their fridges as a sign of connection to the person who sent it, and to share with their friends and family. One of our unofficial goals is to walk into a friend’s house in the future and see one of our postcards on the fridge. That’s what we are aiming for, to make My Personal Postcard a permanent aspect of travelling,” he says.

Staying connected with friends and family

My Personal Postcard is also a great tool for anyone who wants to share a personal experience or milestone.

For example, My Personal Postcard user Michelle Brainwood says she has been using My Personal Postcard for about four months to send about 15 postcards. She calls it a user-friendly application that is great for sending cards “for any occasion and from any location.”

“I have found the functionality user friendly, the cost of each card is more than reasonable and delivery reliable,” she comments. “Most recently I used the app to send thank you cards to friends and family following the birth of our baby boy. I loved that I could send different photos and messages to each person. For example I sent a photo to my sister showing her holding her new nephew. That’s special.

“Within a few days after sending the postcards I always hear from people saying how much they loved their postcard and that it is either going on the fridge or in a photo frame,” she adds. “As a busy mum it’s certainly easier than shopping for a suitable card. And it’s personal which makes all the difference.”

HP Indigo production hubs

Partnering with established HP Indigo PSPs around the world, My Personal Postcard products are printed directly from print-ready PDF files received from the iPhone user. The postcards are grouped together, printed, laminated and then dispatched via mail.

The US hub for My Personal Postcard is Vision Integrated Graphics (Vision). John Gagliano, senior vice president at Vision explains, “When My Personal Postcard approached us to explore production options for their personalised postcard app, I knew their photo-quality postcards would fit perfectly within our automated workflow and HP Indigo digital production process. As early adopters of HP digital and with extensive experience in automated workflow processes we are able to deliver My Personal Postcard’s requirement for 24-hour order-to-ship.”

Print ready files are uploaded daily to the Vision FTP server where they are processed, colour calibrated and transferred to the digital print centre, as well as onto the HP SmartStream Production Pro Print Server. All postcards are produced on the HP Indigo 7000 Digital Press using 175 LPI screening resolution, then UV-coated to enhance the image before being mailed.

Carter says the postcards are robust and weather the international mail system in the same way that ordinary postcards do, so delivery rates are high and the postcards usually arrive before the traveller gets home.

“We control every aspect of production but the actual postal delivery, and our consumers are aware of this. So far this hasn’t been a problem. Unlike postcards that you buy, you’ve got a record of the postcards you’ve created and sent so you can always get more produced if necessary,” Carter continues.

The My Personal Postcard app includes features that prompt the customer to provide the right information to avoid errors. For example, it will not send the file if address fields are incomplete. This ensures files arrive with the basic information for printing and dispatch.

“This streamlined approach removes the need to check files making it very simple for our hubs to print and dispatch the postcards. That’s the beauty of the system and the HP Indigo technology. The PDF goes directly to print so it is easy for the PSP to schedule a daily run,” Carter explains.

He concludes, “We could not be happier with the quality of prints produced from the HP Indigo Digital Presses.”

AT A GLANCE

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General Commercial Printing

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CHALLENGE

- To produce high-quality personalised postcards quickly and cost-effectively for a worldwide market.

SOLUTIONS

- HP Indigo Digital Presses partnering with HP Indigo Print Service Providers (PSPs) worldwide.

RESULTS

- Consistent high-quality prints which create impact and a memory that lasts.
- Network of PSPs able to maintain quality and delivery expectations even with steady weekly growth of 10 per cent in print volume.
- Offer postcards printed and delivered at a competitive price.

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