

Artisan Books founded on the innovative digital printing capabilities of the HP Indigo 10000 Digital Press



At a glance

Industry: Publishing

Business name: Artisan Books

Headquarters: Oxted, UK

Website: artisanbook.co.uk



Challenge

- Fill a gap in the market for affordable, high-quality books in the larger-size formats that are favoured by the creative industries.
- Launch a business that would provide artists, photographers and other businesses with well-designed, traditional books with longevity.
- Find a cost-effective solution for producing short-run, high-end publications.

Solution

- HP Indigo 10000 Digital Press. The B2 format (75cm) sheet size combined with its high print quality gave the print service providers to Artisan Books, an efficient and innovative production solution, enabling the new company to offer high-end, large-format books to its target market.
- High-quality Mohawk paper and traditional craft techniques for finishing and binding completes the books' hand-made, luxurious design.

Results

- First book orders exceeded company's targets for the year within the first three months.
- Satisfied customers that value the quality of the finished product and level of service delivered.
- Successful company launch attracting the attention of Artisan Books' target market of artists, photographers and creative professionals.

"I have been working with many artists to provide them with high-end books designed to showcase their photographs and artwork in a way that does justice to the beauty of the original image. As such, quality is crucial and, in my opinion, HP Indigo digital technology has no competition when it comes to print quality."

— Francis Atterbury, founder, Artisan Books



Now is a good time to be making books. That is what Francis Atterbury, co-founder and partner of book printing consultancy Hurtwood Press, says with certainty. Digital media may be a competitor to the printed book, but Atterbury is in no doubt that our long-standing culture of enjoying printed books will keep demand high for well-designed, quality publications for the foreseeable future. Atterbury also believes that the technological innovations in this sector, and in particular from HP, will play a big part in helping the high-end book publishing industry adapt, stay profitable and even create new revenue streams.

"Working with this industry for as long as I have has enabled me to see the value people place on books, not only as a source of revenue but as a precious memento – capturing memories or a life's work in a way that only a well-printed book can," says Atterbury. "In the same way that radio survived the development of television, books will always have their place."

Atterbury has the experience and knowledge to support his claims. Starting his career at Westerham Press, the UK-based fine art printing company his father founded in 1950, Atterbury has never strayed too far from the industry and his calling to create beautiful books. Since he completed his first digitally printed job in 2006, he has also been a loyal advocate for the HP Indigo printing process.

"For years now, I have favoured HP Indigo digital printing technology for its ability to deliver consistently high quality print and cost-effective short-runs," says Atterbury. "I am passionate about books, but not about badly printed pieces of paper that are stuck together and can barely pass for books. A book should be high-quality and made to last. HP shares this view and continues to develop the technology required to make it achievable."

New large-format press creates a big business opportunity

Hurtwood Press is now synonymous with good quality publishing and uses HP Indigo print service providers almost exclusively. However, HP Indigo digital printing has not only become an integral part of Atterbury's existing business, but has recently enabled him to launch a new business venture.

Atterbury was one of the first to learn about the development of the new B2-format (75cm) HP Indigo 10000 Digital Press. He knew instantly that this new, larger format press would open up an array of business opportunities and had the potential to transform the publishing market.

"In addition to printing larger, multipage impositions for standard-size books, the HP Indigo 10000 enables efficient production of layflat books, coffee table books and large dust jackets – bringing all the benefits of HP Indigo quality to large-format applications that could previously only be accommodated by litho," explains Atterbury.

He continues, "I had wanted to start a business that would offer traditional, high-quality book production, complete with cloth covers and hand-bound pages, but I wanted to offer these books in the larger-size formats favoured by the creative industry. I also wanted them to benefit from the same bespoke consultancy and production typical of Hurtwood Press, and all at an affordable price. Once I heard about HP Indigo 10000 Digital Press, I knew that it would be the solution with which I could launch my new company, Artisan Books."

Artisan Books was officially launched in October 2013 to provide creatives, artists, architects and corporates with affordable high-end books.

“Photographers always want their pictures to look like the original prints, but that is never 100 per cent achievable as the ink and paper are completely different. However this book was extremely close. In fact, when I received the finished product, it looked so impressive that I didn’t actually want to give any of them away!”

— John Swannell, photographer



The company's publications are finished using traditional techniques with optional custom foiling and incorporate the finest art papers guaranteed not to fade or discolour for 500 years.

Although Artisan Books can be delivered to order, Atterbury decided to create three standard book sizes – Large (330 x 330mm), Photographers' Landscape (230 x 340mm) and Standard (235 x 210mm) – all of which make the most efficient use of the larger sheet size. Working closely with HP Indigo 10000 customers, Atterbury ensured that the new press' print quality was every bit as good as previous HP Indigo press models.

Artisan Books first orders exceed customers' expectations

Prior to the official launch of Artisan Books, Atterbury was approached by three high-profile names in the worlds of art and photography to produce luxury, short-run publications. Artisan Books' offering would prove to be a perfect fit for these discerning customers, and the orders exceeded Atterbury's annual targets in the first three months.

Renowned contemporary painter, Humphrey Ocean has been working with Atterbury for many years and wanted his most recent book, *A Collection*, to become his latest artwork.

“A book isn't a reproduction of the original pieces it showcases; it is a work of art in its own right,” says Ocean. “My experiences of working with digital printing are very recent but even so, I instantly discovered that it brings all sorts of advantages. Being able to print 1, 20 or 1,000 books presented an opportunity that altered our approach to this project from the start.”

The first run of *A Collection* was a limited edition of just 15 copies, then Ocean and Atterbury discussed creating a more distinctively Artisan Books style publication for sale at the Royal Academy of Arts.

Ocean continues, “I know nothing about printing, but I know what I don't like. I have seen the developments in printing techniques materialise over the years and digital is very clearly the next generation in printing technology. The differences in the final printed piece we created this time are palpable. The technology has come so far now that the quality and definition are clearly visible.

“Combine this with Artisan Books' attention to detail and knowledge about colour, a crucial element of my work, and I am able to create a book that is better than I ever imagined. All my books are different and have their individual merits but honestly, with this one, there is no comparison,” Ocean says.

The second Artisan Books customer was John Swannell, one of the biggest names in British photography.

Atterbury says, “Swannell loves producing books, he finds they embody an element of romance and magic and I can absolutely identify with his passion. For this book, entitled *Portraits*, he wanted to collate his favourite photographs in an exclusive, limited edition publication and then give them as Christmas presents to clients and friends who enjoy his work. This book therefore needed to be something that each recipient would want to cherish as a personal gift from the photographer himself.”

Similarly to Ocean, Swannell had little experience of working with digital printing technology to produce a high-quality book.

“I wanted the book to appear luxurious and expensive. Artisan Books genuinely cared about the printing methods and the way the final book was going to look as much as I did, and this filled me with confidence,” Swannell explains. “Photographers always want their pictures to look like the original prints, but that is never 100 per cent achievable as the ink and paper are completely different. However this book was extremely close. In fact, when I received the finished product, it looked so impressive that I didn't actually want to give any of them away!”

"The HP Indigo 10000 has put technology back into the hands of the craftsman and its availability marks an important development in the publishing industry."

— Francis Atterbury, founder,
Artisan Books



Dany Arduouin, gallery director at Helly Nahmad, a London art gallery specialising in impressionist and modern art, wanted to produce a beautiful, visually impactful publication that would highlight the nature of Claude Monet's paintings.

"We have worked with Francis before to produce a book showcasing Monet's most famous paintings and we came back to him again on this occasion, as we knew we would receive the same consistent high-quality product," Arduouin says. "This publication was intended as a memento from our recent Monet exhibition, and we wanted it to be in a larger format. This would enable us to include, in detail, more of the painting on the page, but we also wanted the book to be something unique and special that people would hold onto long after the exhibition was over."

Arduouin had clear views about how she wanted the book to be produced and key to her vision was to draw the reader in with the expressive details in the paintings, reflecting the real experience of viewing Monet's original work.

"Monet was a very textural painter and his work was all about the saturation of colour and using light to highlight the subject of the painting. This really comes through in our new book. Aside from the exceptional print quality, the large-format design, tactile cloth covers and uncoated paper gives the impression of a sketch book that Monet himself might have used," says Arduouin.

The B2 format of the HP Indigo 10000 Digital Press was crucial to Atterbury being able to produce this size of book efficiently and at the high standard Helly Nahmad required.

Arduouin concludes, "Artisan Books very much appreciates the kind of books that we want to produce and what we are trying to achieve. The service received is fantastic and, even though we will often ask for a quick turnaround, we don't expect anything less than perfection and Artisan Books will always meet our expectations."

Artisan Books' future with HP

Atterbury acknowledges the vital role the HP Indigo 10000 Digital Press plays in realising this new, and already successful, company. He is certain that as HP continues to help bring innovation and revenue opportunities to the publishing industry, his alliance with HP and its customers will continue for many years to come.

"Humphrey, John and Dany were immediately impressed with the Artisan Books concept and were extremely pleased with the quality of the final results," concludes Atterbury. "The success of these first books confirms the gap in the market that Artisan Books is bridging, for both creative professionals and the art enthusiasts that purchase their titles. It also testifies to the high-quality HP Indigo digital printing delivers time and again. In my view, HP is the only digital player; it doesn't really have any competition."

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