

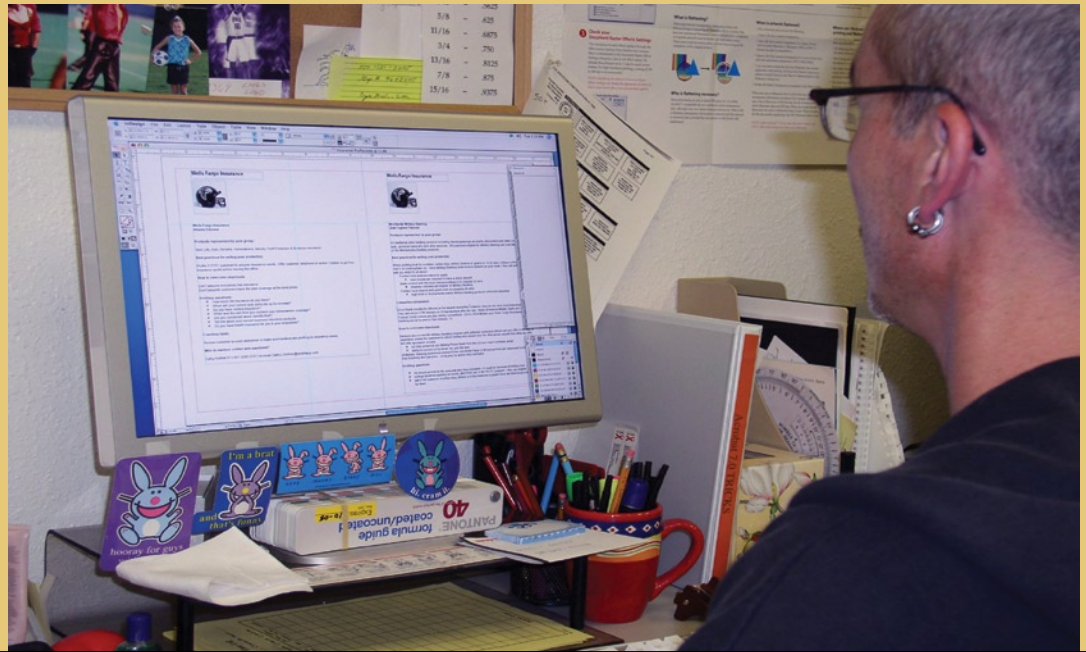


## Embracing **innovation**

AlphaGraphics reduces preflight time by 30% and offers customers strategic Variable Data Publishing capabilities using technologies and software from Adobe

Michael Kennedy, CEO of the AlphaGraphics franchise in Rancho Cordova, California, is a master at wielding the latest technologies to advance the convenience, efficiency, and quality of services he provides to clients. In 1990, he purchased an AlphaGraphics store offering a full range of quick printing and digital publishing services to medium- and large-sized businesses, including design, production, bindery, and fulfillment.

The AlphaGraphics staff uses Adobe® Creative Suite 2, including Adobe InDesign® CS2, to fine-tune page layouts. Smooth integration with Adobe Illustrator® CS2 and Adobe Photoshop® CS2 streamlines the design process.



Today, Kennedy continues to increase productivity and quality, offering cutting-edge services such as Variable Data Publishing (VDP), a process that merges database content with page templates to generate customized print materials. The Rancho Cordova shop attributes its ongoing success to adoption and promotion of several Adobe technologies, among them the Adobe Creative Suite 2 software and a workflow based on Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF). Kennedy is also furthering client service and growing his business through his membership in the Adobe Solutions Network (ASN) program, which provides seminars, webinars, training, newsletters, and tools to increase knowledge and pass it along to customers.

“Adobe tools, combined with the training and support Adobe provides through ASN, give us and our clients a competitive advantage,” says Kennedy. “With Adobe creative and production tools, a reliable Adobe PDF workflow, and a strong partnership with Adobe, we can offer customers a communication strategy—not just a printing service.”

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Michael Kennedy, franchise owner, AlphaGraphics, Inc., Rancho Cordova

## Technology savvy

The AlphaGraphics Network is the leading provider of print-related and digital publishing services for businesses worldwide. Since its introduction in 1970, AlphaGraphics has grown to 300 locations in 10 countries.

The company’s corporate office, as well as its franchises, shares Kennedy’s can-do attitude and enthusiasm for advanced design and workflow technologies. For instance, AlphaGraphics is working toward standardizing on an Adobe PDF workflow for franchises worldwide to produce printed materials and repurpose content for the web in a more consistent, efficient manner.

Kennedy and his staff have already adopted Adobe PDF as the basis of their workflow, and the Rancho Cordova store is a showcase for how other print providers and AlphaGraphics franchises can increase productivity by embracing Adobe PDF. Prior to moving to a workflow based on Adobe PDF, the process of obtaining files from clients, placing jobs into production, performing preflight, and preparing files for output was a manual and time-consuming process.

“We specialize in serving the general business community, so most of our customers are not designers or publishers and do not have training or experience in properly preparing files for output,” says Kennedy. “As a result, when we receive native application files from clients, roughly 65% of them have issues such as missing fonts and graphics, incorrect color spaces, and faulty text reflows. When this occurs, our workflow grinds to a halt and we spend hours attempting to locate fonts or graphics or otherwise fix the file.”



**“Adobe PDF is having a tremendous impact on our ability to provide cost-effective, fast, and reliable publishing services for clients. Adobe PDF files fly through production 30% faster.”**

Michael Kennedy,  
franchise owner,  
AlphaGraphics, Inc.,  
Rancho Cordova

## Production 30% faster with Adobe Acrobat® and Adobe PDF

To overcome these issues and streamline production, AlphaGraphics trains its clients to properly create Adobe PDF files for reliable output. Adobe supports AlphaGraphics in its educational efforts with co-hosted events offered through the ASN program. Membership in ASN also helps ensure that AlphaGraphics has the most current versions of Adobe software, including the Adobe Creative Suite 2 and Acrobat 7 Professional, as well as the latest training and technologies.

In addition to providing education to customers, AlphaGraphics offers AG PDF Express, a free downloadable software tool that enables customers to submit print-ready files to AlphaGraphics via the Internet. AG PDF Express converts files to Adobe PDF, previews them for proper print parameters, and submits the order directly to AlphaGraphics for production. AG PDF Express automates the submission process, so fewer people need to intervene as a file travels through production. When customers use AG PDF Express, Kennedy estimates that file transfer and preflight time is reduced by 30%. Thanks to Adobe and AlphaGraphics' customer education efforts and tools based on Adobe PDF, 30% to 40% of files submitted to the Rancho Cordova store are in Adobe PDF, and Kennedy says that percentage is growing.

“Adobe PDF is having a tremendous impact on our ability to provide cost-effective, fast, and reliable publishing services for clients,” says Kennedy. “Adobe PDF files fly through production 30% faster. That’s why, in cases when clients still submit native application files, we first convert them to Adobe PDF and preflight them using Acrobat to help ensure faster, more reliable output.”

## On-demand, fully customized publishing

Using Adobe and third-party plug-ins for VDP, Kennedy and his staff are also differentiating their services, increasing client convenience and loyalty, and winning new business. “We’re now serving 2,000 Wells Fargo employees in 23 Western states who order print jobs online through our store,” says Kennedy. “Many of these jobs require VDP, and our ability to provide on-demand, customized publishing services was a crucial factor in winning the business.”

When Wells Fargo needs tailored materials such as brochures and collateral, personalized financial reports, or any type of one-to-one communication to strengthen customer relationships and enhance marketing efforts, they can submit their request to AlphaGraphics online. To complete VDP jobs, Wells Fargo supplies AlphaGraphics with a digital database containing information such as customer contacts, imagery, and other assets and data. Wells Fargo staff simply logs onto an AlphaGraphics web site, where they can select from numerous templates AlphaGraphics has created using Adobe InDesign CS2 software. Staff then specifies how they would like the template populated from the database of data and assets.

In the background, Printable Technologies' FusionPro VDP plug-in and Adobe Acrobat Professional software automatically pull content from the digital database and merge it with the selected page layout templates. Once templates are populated with the pertinent content and graphics, Adobe Acrobat converts them to Adobe PDF files and submits them to AlphaGraphics for final printing.

### Company

**AlphaGraphics, Inc.**  
Rancho Cordova, California  
[www.alphagraphics.com](http://www.alphagraphics.com)

### Challenge

- Efficiently handle roughly 65% of client files received with issues such as missing fonts and graphics and incorrect color spaces
- Become a strategic communications partner to clients versus just a printer
- Win more business through differentiated services like VDP

### Solution

- Enhance design services using the Adobe Creative Suite 2
- Streamline file submission, preflight, and production using an Adobe PDF workflow and tools like AG PDF Express based on Adobe PDF JobReady™
- Build VDP capabilities using Adobe Acrobat and third-party plug ins
- Provide training to customers through the Adobe Solutions Network

### Benefits

- Reduced file transfer and preflight time by 30%
- Offered strategic communications services to clients through VDP
- Enhanced client design options while improving print reliability and quality
- Increased new business and customer loyalty

### Tool Kit

- The Adobe Creative Suite 2 Premium. Components used include:
  - Adobe InDesign CS2
  - Adobe Photoshop CS2
  - Adobe Illustrator CS2
  - Adobe Acrobat Professional 7.0
- Adobe Solutions Network
- Adobe PDF Workflow
- Adobe PostScript® 3™
- AG PDF Express
- Printable Technologies' FusionPro VDP plug-in
- Apple Power Mac G4 and G5 computers running Mac OS X
- PCs running Microsoft® Windows® XP Professional

Kennedy and his staff are enthusiastic about adopting advanced design and workflow technologies. The Rancho Cordova AlphaGraphics store is a showcase for how print providers can increase productivity by embracing a workflow based on Adobe PDF.



**“We’re always asking ourselves: ‘can we find a better way?’ The answer is usually yes, and the solution often lies in tools and support from Adobe. Without Adobe, we literally would not be in business.”**

Michael Kennedy,  
franchise owner,  
AlphaGraphics, Inc.,  
Rancho Cordova

“The VDP files can be quickly previewed and printed efficiently because they are small and compact. The entire process is fast,” says Kennedy. “The resulting Adobe PDF files can be sent to any number of digital output devices, increasing our output flexibility and productivity. Better still, using VDP we can become a strategic communications partner by giving our clients a powerful way to market their services and strengthen customer relationships.”

### **Sophisticated designs**

When clients need design services, the AlphaGraphics staff uses Adobe InDesign CS2 software. Kennedy describes InDesign CS2 as an “incredible tool with an impressive array of creative options built-in.” Designers spend far less time on sophisticated effects such as drop shadows, because InDesign CS2 offers transparency built in, and the effects remain editable within page layouts. InDesign CS2 also integrates smoothly with Adobe Illustrator CS2 and Adobe Photoshop CS2 for increased design speed and flexibility.

Kennedy also raves about the integration between InDesign CS2 and Acrobat Professional 7.0. “The designs we produce with InDesign CS2 are beautiful, contributing to increased customer satisfaction,” he says. “And, when designers export the InDesign CS2 files to Adobe PDF, all of the bleeds, page information, and spot colors are correct, making the file extremely printer-friendly.”

From design through production and customized printing services, Kennedy is carrying on the AlphaGraphics tradition of innovation. In 1970, America was introduced to AlphaGraphics “Printshops of the Future.” In 2005, Michael Kennedy and his staff at the AlphaGraphics in Rancho Cordova are advancing this concept. “We’re always asking ourselves: ‘can we find a better way?’” says Kennedy, “The answer is usually yes, and the solution often lies in tools and support from Adobe. Without Adobe, we literally would not be in business.”

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