

Leisure:

Castleford Tigers gives promotional campaigns added bite by 'signing up' new OKI printer

As a founding member of the engage Super League and four-time winner of the famous Challenge Cup, Castleford Tigers has an illustrious history stretching back more than 80 years and can justifiably claim to be one of the most famous and respected Rugby League clubs in the UK.

Marketing and promotions are key focus areas, as the club looks to keep its loyal fan base informed of developments on and off the field and concentrates on engaging with the local community and supporters across the UK through a host of activities, offers and events. While Castleford Tigers regularly attracts crowds of more than 7,000 to its Wheldon Road ground, it needs to still rally more support to compete effectively against local rivals including Leeds Rhinos, Super League champions in 2007 and 2008.

To achieve this objective, the club understands the need to focus on enhancing the quality and timeliness of its promotional campaigns. To meet this goal, it recently decided to invest in the OKI ES3640 A3 colour printer - a high-quality, high-performance in-house solution that would allow it to design and develop collateral quickly and easily.

As Mark Wilson, lottery manager, Castleford Tigers says, "Before we purchased the OKI device, we were having to outsource all of our printing. It was taking three or four days to turn around even the simplest documents. "This was not fast enough to meet our needs." Wilson explains: "The club's marketing department is consistently busy and preparing materials to tight deadlines is an ongoing pressure. We have a game most Sundays and we need to get promotional material out to our target audiences – particularly if we win – as soon as possible after that.

In doing this, the great benefit for Castleford Tigers is that using the OKI printer allows it to print on-demand.

"Previously, we had to wait until the following Thursday or Friday before we had finished material. Now we can get output printed and ready to go out on Monday morning," says Wilson. "We have been amazed at just how much you can do with the printer." In line with OKI's Look What You Can Do messaging, the club makes extensive use of OKI's free in-the-box software utility, Template Manager to customise material to its precise needs.

"We use banners, posters and flyers in our campaigns in and around the local community and within schools in particular," says Wilson, "so being able to design and create these quickly and easily using the OKI software is a major advantage." The ability to switch between different sizes of paper is another important benefit. The OKI ES3640 device allows posters and team pictures to be printed quickly in A3, while flyers can be rapidly produced in either A4 or A5.

As Castleford Tigers has found out more about the versatility of the OKI printer, its use of the device has grown.

Recent applications include printing literature for community development programmes and door-to-door leaflet drops and special promotions targeting between 30-40 local schools. It now also uses the device for routine club business including printing business cards, general office administration and to support the club restaurant and the lottery department. It even uses it to help sell advertising space, thereby generating revenue allowing the printer to quickly pay for itself.

Service and Support

It is not just the performance of the OKI printer that has impressed Castleford Tigers, it has also been pleased with the overall service package it has received. "Although we have had very few operational issues with the printer, we have had excellent support when required from OKI and its reseller partner, ALT-P, based in Horsforth, near Leeds," said Wilson. And while Castleford Tigers bought the printer outright, it has chosen to go onto a cost-per-copy contract. Effectively, the club is now paying a usage (or click) charge based on the number of prints it carries out. The usage charge covers the cost for all consumables together with a full service and support package, enabling it to budget more effectively and to exert much tighter control over costs incurred. As Wilson explains, "almost all of our printing is in full colour. If we bought toner cartridges individually, the price would mount rapidly. Cost per copy is a much more cost-effective approach for us."

Positive Prospects

Castleford Tigers is an ambitious club with a formidable pedigree. Since its foundation in 1926, it has only spent two seasons out of Rugby League's top tier. The club aims to attract 9,000 spectators per week. As its present ground has a capacity of 12,000, it sees a move to a brand new stadium as a key goal – an objective it is hoping to achieve by 2011. With a focus on maintaining a reputation for excellence as it enters a new exciting phase in its history, Castleford Tigers plans to continue using the OKI printer to generate interest in and raise revenues for the club.