Connected wearables, augmented reality: reinventing the product support experience

Industrial print shops that purchase HP, Inc.’s multimillion-dollar digital printing presses expect the systems to run 24/7. But these complex, technology-driven machines require service and support, which translates to costly downtime. To help its customers minimize downtime and maximize value from their investments, HP, Inc. uses connected wearables and augmented reality for remote support. The solution leverages HPE Visual Remote Guidance (VRG), powered by HPE MyRoom. As a result, HP, Inc. helps its customers resolve printing press problems twice as fast. Customers win by saving thousands of dollars in lost press time, and HP, Inc. wins with the “cool factor” of wearable technology that’s become a competitive differentiator and growing source of new revenue.
Business in living color

HP leads the digital revolution in industrial printing.

HP, Inc. is a technology innovator with a portfolio of printers, PCs, mobile devices, specialized business solutions, and services that are engineered to create experiences that amaze.

In the world of graphics and imaging, HP is leading the digital revolution in the printing industry with large-scale presses that produce vibrant color, sharp text, and uniform graphics at mind-blowing speeds—up to 800 feet (244 meters) per minute. If that’s not amazing enough, they can print on just about anything, from corrugated packaging, to building-size signage, to laminated skins that wrap Formula One race cars or the sides of buses.

$48.2B
2016 annual revenue

250B
Pages printed worldwide on HP PageWide presses

15%
Year-over-year page growth in 2017
Specialty print companies running multimillion-dollar digital presses can’t afford lost productivity.

HP’s customers invest millions of dollars to acquire the most technologically sophisticated, versatile, and high-quality digital printing capabilities available. Customers need to keep their presses running 24/7 because every minute of press time means revenue for the business. Therefore, if something stops the presses—whether a software error or a hardware failure—time is of the essence. Extended delays getting back online could mean missed deadlines, delayed invoicing, unhappy end customers, and lost revenue.

Keeping its press customers productive is a top priority for HP. Busy presses translate to more ink sales, so there is a direct financial interest in avoiding downtime. But delivering a positive customer experience is also imperative in the highly competitive, specialized markets into which HP sells its presses. This requires prompt, personalized support to resolve press issues quickly. With many customer printing sites in remote locations, meeting this need is a logistical challenge, often requiring extensive time and expense.

“Like any support group, we want to lower costs and provide a better customer experience. Since customers often have presses in remote areas, we needed to figure out how to provide a more guided experience for operators at the press without spending thousands of dollars to send out an engineer.”

David Froshiesar, GSS Worldwide Program Manager, HP, Inc.
Complex products in remote locations

Onsite or on the phone, product support is time-consuming and error-prone.

Large-format, digital printing presses are highly complex. There are lots of moving parts with advanced software to run the machine and coordinate processing from design input to print output. Parts can fail, software needs to be patched, and presses require periodic maintenance. All of this causes downtime.

Press operators at a customer site often lack the deep technical knowledge to interpret error codes or troubleshoot perplexing press issues. That requires HP to respond with expert support to diagnose and resolve press problems as quickly as possible.

Sometimes HP support staff can help an operator over the phone, but this process is often tedious and prone to error. For bigger issues, HP dispatches a support engineer to work with the customer, but this takes even more time, potentially leaving the customer down for days.

The challenge for HP was to find a technology-driven solution to shrink the time and cost of product support.

“A typical service call could be a few hours or several days depending on the issue. That all translates to the customer being down, which means they’re losing money and HP is losing money. So we want those presses running all the time.”

David Frohiesar, GSS Worldwide Program Manager, HP, Inc.
Remote visual support sheds light on resolving problems

Video-enabled wearables and interactive online conferencing streamline product support.

HP, Inc. worked with Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) to provide a visually interactive remote support solution.

This unique solution provides the HP customer with a wearable optical communication display worn like a pair of eyeglasses. The wearable streams live video from the press site into a virtual conference room hosted by HP's product support team.

Both the HP support engineer and the customer can see exactly what is happening at the press simultaneously. And the press operator can view images shared by the support engineer, such as software commands or part installation instructions, through the wearable on a "floating" screen, which to the wearer looks like an 80-inch screen. HP customers can also use this remote visual support solution through a smart phone, tablet, or any mobile device.

HPE Pointnext runs a 24/7 service desk to assist with any technical issues related to the interactive support software from HPE.

“VRG enables us to remotely connect with a customer, walk through the diagnostics, and visually guide them through fixing the problem, all without the time and expense of having a support engineer onsite. That will save us a lot of money and provide high customer satisfaction.”

David Froshiesar, GSS Worldwide Program Manager, HP, Inc.
RESULTS

Greater support efficiency; happier customers

Remote visual guidance reduces costly onsite visits and elevates the customer experience.

With visual remote guidance, HP support engineers can determine the source of customer problems much faster—often in minutes versus hours—and resolve the problem at least twice as quickly compared to traditional support. This elevates the overall customer experience, which has made the remote support solution a significant competitive differentiator for HP, Inc.

Because HP's customers are assured of minimal downtime, they can maintain high press utilization to stay on schedule and meet their end customer delivery expectations. This helps ensure a smooth pipeline of revenue and boosts the satisfaction levels of HP's customers' customers.

This visually interactive remote support solution also reduces the need for onsite service calls, further saving time and money. HP expects to cut onsite visits by 50%, saving up to $2,000 per customer per year. As HP rolls out additional use cases—such as self-guided parts replacement—the value for HP and its customers will only grow.

~$30K
Savings in support costs for first year

2X
Faster to resolve problems

60-75%
Reduction in time to diagnose issue

“Remotely engaging with customers using visual communication is much faster and less prone to error than trying to guide them blindly over the phone. VRG not only helps us save time and money, it's become a real competitive differentiator for HP.”

David Froshiesar, GSS Worldwide Program Manager, HP, Inc.