

Textbook Case

Tutoring company Hammer Prep says goodbye to toner cartridges

More Americans are going to college today than ever before – but that only makes it tougher to get into the best schools.

That's where tutoring academies like San Diego-based Hammer Prep can be a big help. Founded in 2002 by Stanford economics major Andrew Hemmerich, Hammer Prep provides one-on-one academic tutoring, ACT and SAT test preparation plus admissions essay coaching.

In the fall of 2014, Epson America approached Hemmerich and asked if he'd be willing to beta test one of Epson's revolutionary new EcoTank™ office printers, to give to his tutors, office staff and students to try for an extended period.

The top of the line model of Epson's EcoTank lineup, the new Epson WorkForce® Pro WF-R4640 EcoTank all-in-one, comes equipped with up to two years of ink in the box¹, and does not use ink or toner cartridges. Instead, it uses very high-capacity ink packs with enough ink to print up to 20,000 color/black pages²—a quantity so high that, eight months and thousands of printed pages later, Hammer Prep has yet to replace an ink pack.

Epson has coupled the new ink delivery system with the latest generation PrecisionCore™ printing technology that was introduced last year. PrecisionCore allows high-quality, highly reliable operation from a low-cost, silicon wafer-based, piezoelectric print head. Each nozzle on the printhead delivers up to 50,000 droplets per second for remarkable precision and print quality.

Hammer Prep Program Manager Erin Robison adds, "This new EcoTank printer is remarkably easy to use. For the first time, everybody here is using our office printer for all their print jobs. They aren't worried about printing in color because the cost is so affordable and convenient – we haven't had to replace a single ink pack so far." She says the output quality is unusually high, comparable in quality to color lasers they've used in the past. "We've used it to print our flyers for college fairs, and at this rate, may never need to go back to that old laser printer."

One-on-one tutoring

According to Robison, motivation is the key to successful tutoring. "Each student is a puzzle. You have to find your best match from your tutoring staff, someone who can tailor his or her approach to the way that student learns. It's challenging and it's fun."

Hammer Prep has 23 educators, including 13 test preparation tutors and seven academic tutors. All of the tutoring is one-on-one.

Academic tutors will work with their students' textbooks or classroom materials but often supplement them with exercises they create on their own or find in the company's library of commercial textbooks.

Test preparation tutors use a curriculum Hammer Prep created in-house, in combination with materials from American College Testing, the creators of the ACT, and the College Board, the creators of the SAT.

The EcoTank printer has been helpful in encouraging tutors to share the materials they create with one another. Until fall 2014, tutors would have to ask for assistance to scan or copy materials, because the old printer was simply too slow and hard to use. Hammer Prep keeps a computer next to the WorkForce Pro printer, so if staff want to scan a document, they open the easy-to-use Epson scanner app, save the file to their own computer over the network, or email it where they wish. "It's all very simple," Robison says.

Even printing could be a chore. "With our old machine, we would have to hand out the CD-ROM whenever someone wanted to connect for the first time, but now they can handle setup on their own in just a few minutes." The Epson driver loads automatically from Windows 7, 8 or 10; no driver is needed with Apple computers or mobile devices equipped with AirPrint™. In addition, both Android™ and iOS users can utilize the [Epson Connect™](#) platform to print from their devices.

Saying goodbye to frequent ink replenishments

The cost of operating an Epson EcoTank printer is dramatically lower than a comparable color laser or inkjet.

The WorkForce Pro WF-R4640 EcoTank, though more expensive to start, has a far lower operational cost. The printer and its first up to 20,000 prints worth of ink is just \$1,199*, or about half the laser or inkjet printer with a comparable supply of toner or ink. To print the next up to 20,000 pages with the WorkForce Pro, you just need to buy one set of ink packs at \$480*. Some office spaces simply don't have room to store that amount of boxes, not to mention the environmental impact of ridding an office of old cartridges, boxes and additional packaging.

Time and material is another important part of the story. Not only has Hammer Prep not had to order, store and dispose of a very large number of ink cartridges, employees have not had to drive to an office store or print shop when she needed high quality prints. "Sometimes with the old printer, we would change an ink cartridge and get lines up the sides of the pages. The WorkForce Pro EcoTank printer produces remarkable, high quality prints no matter what paper type we're using."

Robison still uses outside services for business cards and letterhead but the WorkForce Pro is ideal for flyers, presentations and other hand-out materials. "The University of California released new admission stats, which we put into a flyer so parents could see the most current

data.” The fact that the new machine prints two-sided pages automatically, in full color on any kind of matte or glossy paper, helped with the project.

As a combination operations manager and program director, Robison can be remarkably busy. Given the pressure, she says it’s nice to have a piece of office equipment that just works. “We love it. Nothing was as ever as easy as it is with this printer.”

* Manufacturer’s suggested retail price

¹ Based on average monthly print volumes of about 800 pages.

² Yields based on the ISO/IEC 24712 pattern with Epson’s methodology. Actual ink yields will vary considerably for reasons including images printed, print settings, temperature and humidity. Yields may be lower when printing infrequently or predominantly with one ink color. All ink colors are used for printing and printer maintenance, and all colors must be available for printing. For more information, visit www.epson.com/cartridgeinfo

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