

Bullock Professional
Albemarle, North Carolina

"We're limited only by
the imagination, and
the imaginations of
our customers."

Don Bullock, Founder,
Bullock Professional



Kodak Professional
Imaging Solutions



Bullock Professional Proves Money Flows From Good Ideas

Don Bullock, the owner of Bullock Professional in Albemarle, North Carolina, is helping turn lots of people into celebrities. Thanks to his creative digital offerings, ordinary folks are ending up on magazine covers and on television news programs. This is all the result of Bullock's creative imagination, his penchant for marketing, and his commitment to exploiting all the possibilities of his digital lab, driven by KODAK PROFESSIONAL Modular Digital Workflow Products.

Bullock makes available to photographers an offering in which portraits are manipulated to look as if that person appeared on the cover of a special interest magazine, ranging from football and fishing to band and baseball. A year ago, Bullock offered four cover possibilities, but due to their immense popularity—and the flexibility of digital products—he now offers 25 covers, with even more on the way.

Bullock also uses his KODAK PROFESSIONAL Modular Digital Workflow Products to create what he calls "TV Prints." These engaging products make it seem as if the person featured had appeared on television in recognition of some achievement. Both the magazine and the TV prints have been selling extremely well. And that's precisely what Bullock sees as the beauty of having added digital services to his optical lab. He can create unique, captivating offerings that help him help photographers sell more. And that, in turn, means he sells more.

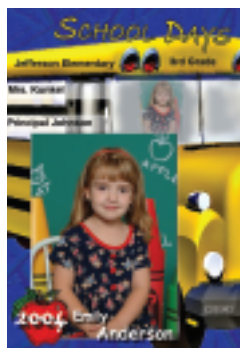
What Bullock finds so effective about digital's ability to grow his business is the show-and-tell factor that's built in. So, for example, he's found that when he shows photographers the four different styles of digital preview albums he's created, they want them. In a big way. The same was true with a designer holiday card product

he created. Over the course of several weeks he included a sample card with every portrait his firm printed for a client. This allowed the photographer to appreciate his or her work in the context of the card. And, just as importantly, Bullock says, "It allowed the photographer to use the piece to turn around and sell their customers." The result? Bullock sold over 100,000 holiday cards in just six weeks.

"Of the photographers we talk to about digital and show samples to, we sell 90 percent of them," says Bullock. "We're limited only by the imagination, and the imaginations of our customers," he says. This is yet more evidence that when it comes to digital photography, seeing is more than believing, seeing is buying.

The Workflow Behind the Growth

It's little wonder that with Bullock's creativity and tireless marketing efforts his business has grown from 36 employees to 50 since 2000. That's when he first dipped his toe into the digital waters



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and expanded his optical lab, known as Bullock Professional Colour, which he began in 1986 with his wife, Barbara. Now, he says, they can't imagine what their business would be like without the digital component. "We're so pleased that we went digital when we did," he says. "When I learned about KODAK PROFESSIONAL Modular Digital Workflow Products, I knew I needed to own them. It's a commitment we needed to make."

He credits Kodak with providing the equipment, the service, and the overall support that has fueled his

company's/lab's digital growth. "It's been a tremendous success," he says. "A great alliance."

Bullock's production line begins with two KODAK PROFESSIONAL HR 500 Plus Film Scanners. "It's an excellent scanner," says Bullock. "It gives high quality scans and the operation is solid." Each scanner has 35-, 120-, and 220-mm Strip Gate Automation Accessories. In the three years he's owned the first HR 500 Scanner he bought, the equipment hasn't required a single service call. The scanners are equipped with DIGITAL ICE

AT A GLANCE

Lab:

Bullock Professional

Location:

Albemarle, North Carolina, USA

Specialty:

Independent
Wedding/Portrait/Sports

Founders:

Don and Barbara Bullock

General Manager:

Pat Bullock

Products Used:

- KODAK PROFESSIONAL HR 500 Plus Film Scanners
- KODAK PROFESSIONAL Digital Multiprinter II
- KODAK PROFESSIONAL Digital Print Production (DP2) Software
- KODAK PROFESSIONAL ENDURA Paper
- DURST EPSILON Printer

technology that automatically removes dust, scratches, and blemishes from a scanned image. This means less labor and time are required in the process downstream.

Prints are produced on KODAK ENDURA Paper from one of three KODAK PROFESSIONAL Digital Multiprinter II printers. One printer is dedicated to

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prints 5x7 inches and larger, the other to smaller prints and proofs. "For us, the ability to print on photographic paper was a big plus," says Bullock. "We love the KODAK PROFESSIONAL ENDURA Paper and trust its archival qualities." For prints larger than 11 inches, Bullock relies on a Kodak-recommended DURST EPSILON Digital Printer.

Each KODAK Digital Multiprinter II is often operating at a capacity of 400 8x10 prints an hour. "Those are great numbers," Bullock says. "Any color lab can make a profit by printing 3,200 8x10s in a regular workday from one printer."

Quality is high, too. "When we first installed the Digital Multiprinters, we tested them using film that customers had sent to our optical lab," says Bullock. "The photographers could not tell they were digital."

All on-screen color checks are performed at the same color-calibrated workstation, with the screen view periodically compared against a reference print to ensure accuracy.

He praised the open, modular design of KODAK PROFESSIONAL Modular Digital Workflow Products. "So much equipment out there isn't designed to mix well with Pro Lab' existing workflows. Labs look at it and see that they can't use their cutters, their packages, their processors," Bullock explains. "But when

they see the KODAK Modular Equipment, they realize they can get high-quality prints without having to replace all their hardware."

Smart Software for Smart Solutions

The workflow is driven by KODAK PROFESSIONAL Digital Print Production (DP2) Software. "In my opinion, DP2 is the only software available that can run a professional color lab," Bullock says. "It can be adapted to almost any lab's needs. It's flexible; there are always ways to accomplish tasks depending on how you want to organize production. And Kodak keeps improving it. We've passed along suggestions for functions that would help us save steps, and in the next version, those features are built in."

Bullock is such a believer in the DP2 that he invested in a site license. "Now we have some 20 computers throughout our building loaded with DP2," he says. This enables virtually everyone involved with the ordering, production, and project management processes to tap into the software to meet their specific needs.

DP2 is also put to other uses at Bullock Professional. The company has begun to design, host, and maintain Web sites with e-commerce capabilities for its customers. For those photographers who already have Web sites, Bullock Professional helps them add and manage e-commerce capabilities. "DP2 has been

instrumental in helping us prepare files for uploading," he says. The lab uses DP2 to create thumbnails, add digital watermarks, and more. "Photographers really value this service," says Bullock. "And DP2 makes it easier for us to deliver more functional, better looking Web sites."

It's All About the Client

"Some photographers believe digital technology is too complicated," he says. "They think if they start using digital photography, they'll have to learn imaging software." Bullock views this as an opportunity for his lab. "Our goal is to make handling digital files as easy for photographers as handling film. We tell them, 'Bring us film or a digital file, it doesn't matter.' We do all the cropping and color correcting. Our customers really appreciate that." He strives to make it as easy on his customers as possible. "Photographers appreciate not having to worry about the hassles of calibrating their monitors precisely, and doing their own color correcting," he says. "We take this burden off their shoulders."

Bullock summarizes his approach to his digital offering as: "Simple. Streamlined. Smart." That tagline speaks to what photographers value most from a lab. And Bullock clearly delivers, in part thanks to the simple, streamlined, and smart capabilities of the KODAK PROFESSIONAL Modular Digital Workflow Products.

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