



B U S I N E S S P L A N · I N D I A

Pre-Press & Design Studio

Artwork, colour-managed proofing and CTP plates for presses, converters and brands

PRINTING

AISEVAK.IN · BY ABL DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

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This document is confidential and prepared for planning purposes. All financial figures are illustrative model assumptions for an Indian MSME context and must be validated against live quotes, local rates and professional advice before any investment or borrowing decision.

1. Executive Summary

This plan sets out a **Pre-Press & Design Studio** in India — an asset-light, expertise-led service that prepares **print-ready artwork, plates, colour-managed proofs & packaging adaptations** for commercial presses, packaging converters, brands & agencies. It sells design/DTP, pre-press make-ready and plate output on a per-job/per-plate/retainer basis — a people-, software-, accuracy- & turnaround-driven business that sits *upstream* of the press.

Every printed job — a carton, a label, a brochure, a book — passes through pre-press before it reaches a press. Presses and converters increasingly outsource this step rather than carry in-house artwork teams, because it is skill-intensive, software-licensed and demand is lumpy. A pre-press & design studio is an **expertise-plus-modest-asset business**: it invests in designers/DTP seats, colour-management & proofing, and (optionally) a CTP plate-setter, then sells artwork, pre-press make-ready, colour proofs & plates. It is utilisation-, accuracy- & turnaround-driven: designer/seat utilisation, first-time-right output, colour accuracy & deadline reliability determine success. Revenue = **jobs × per-job fee + plates × per-plate realisation + retainers**; economics rest on seat utilisation, realisation, plate/consumable cost & rework — expertise-led, low-fixed-asset relative to a press.

This is a low-to-moderate-capex, expertise-led service — funded largely by promoter equity plus equipment finance & working capital. This plan models a pre-press & design studio requiring **₹75 lakh** (₹45 lakh promoter + ₹30 lakh equipment/WC), targeting **₹1.6 crore** revenue in Year 1 and **₹3.6 crore** by Year 3. (*Pre-press & design studio; jobs/plates × realisation, utilisation/accuracy/turnaround-driven, expertise-led — figures illustrative.*)

2. Business Description, Vision & Legal Structure

Concept: A pre-press & design studio - artwork/DTP, pre-press make-ready, colour-managed proofing & CTP plate output on a per-job/per-plate/retainer basis.

Vision: To be the pre-press partner presses & brands trust - accurate, colour-true, on-deadline artwork and plates, first time right.

Mission: Deliver print-ready files, proofs & plates with disciplined colour management - strong seat utilisation, low rework & reliable turnaround.

Legal structure options

- **Private Limited / LLP** — recommended for equipment finance, B2B/brand contracts, software licensing & scale.
- **Proprietorship** — viable at start given low capex; migrate as plate output & brand accounts scale.

Regulatory anchor: a pre-press studio is expertise-led & lightly-regulated — company/GST, shops-&-establishment/MSME, and critically **software licensing** (genuine Adobe/Esco/RIP/imposition licences — unlicensed software is a real legal & brand-audit risk) plus **client-artwork IP/confidentiality** (NDAs; brand assets and unreleased packaging pass through the studio). Seat utilisation, colour accuracy, first-time-right output & turnaround determine success; it is utilisation-, accuracy- & deadline-driven, expertise-led.

3. Promoter & Ownership

Led by a promoter with pre-press, packaging-artwork, colour-management or graphic-design expertise — typically from a press, converter or repro house. The team includes DTP/artwork designers, pre-press/CTP operators, a colour/QC specialist, BD & accounts. Accuracy, colour discipline, turnaround & press relationships are the differentiators. Ownership, equity & any partner are editable inputs.

4. Market Analysis — India

India's print & packaging industry is large and growing, and pre-press is the mandatory first step in every job. Demand is press-, converter-, brand- & agency-driven, and is structurally supported by outsourcing: presses prefer variable per-job pre-press cost to fixed in-house artwork teams. The market rewards colour accuracy, first-time-right output, turnaround, packaging/regulatory artwork competence & price; it is deadline-, quality- & competition-sensitive.

Demand drivers

- **Commercial presses & packaging converters** outsourcing pre-press & plates.
- **FMCG/pharma/food brands** needing artwork adaptation, SKU/variant & label-declaration changes.
- **Agencies & design studios** needing print-ready file preparation.
- **Packaging growth** (e-commerce, retail, regulated labelling) driving artwork volume.
- **SKU proliferation & frequent artwork revisions** (regulatory/statutory declaration changes).

Market sizing (illustrative framing)

Layer	Definition	Indicative scale
TAM	Pre-press, repro & plate services in India	Large
SAM	Regional presses, converters, brands & agencies	Serviceable
SOM (Yr 1-3)	Retained accounts & job/plate volume	Scaling

Target segments

- Commercial printing presses (offset/digital).
- Packaging converters (carton, label, flexible).
- FMCG/pharma/food brands & their packaging teams.
- Advertising/design agencies & publishers.

5. Competition & Competitive Advantage

Landscape: other pre-press/repro houses, presses' own in-house pre-press departments, freelance designers, offshore/remote artwork studios & brand-appointed repro partners. The studio competes on colour accuracy, first-time-right output, turnaround, packaging competence & price.

The business's edge

- **Colour management discipline** (profiles, calibrated proofing, press-matched output).
- **First-time-right artwork** (low rework, fewer press stoppages).
- **Turnaround & deadline reliability** (presses run to schedule).
- **Packaging/regulatory artwork competence** (dielines, declarations, variants, barcodes).
- **Integrated plate output** (CTP) — single accountable partner from file to plate.

6. Services & Revenue Model

Service	Model	Basis
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Artwork & DTP (design, adaptation, typesetting)	Per-job / hourly	Core
Pre-press make-ready (preflight, trapping, imposition)	Per-job / per-form	Core
Colour management & contract proofing	Per-proof / retainer	Value
CTP plate output	Per-plate / per-sq-m	Volume
Packaging artwork & dieline / variant management	Per-SKU / retainer	Niche/value
Brand artwork retainers & asset management	Monthly retainer	Recurring

Revenue is **jobs × per-job fee + plates × per-plate realisation + retainers**. Economics = seat/designer utilisation × realisation – (plates/consumables + design labour + software); seat utilisation, first-time-right rate, colour accuracy, turnaround & rework drive it — the decisive service levers. Retainers convert a job-shop into a recurring-revenue business and are the single biggest quality-of-earnings lever.

7. Go-to-Market — Clients & Utilisation

- **Press & converter** relationships (the volume base — plates & make-ready).
- **Brand/packaging-team** accounts (higher realisation, retainer potential).
- **Agency & publisher** referrals for print-ready file preparation.
- **Accuracy/turnaround** reputation — pre-press is won on reliability, not advertising.
- **Retainers & SKU-variant** annuity work.

Sales approach

Build colour-managed capability & CTP → win press/converter plate & make-ready volume → add brand/packaging artwork accounts at higher realisation → convert repeat brands into retainers → maximise seat utilisation & cut rework → expand into packaging/variant management. Utilisation, accuracy & turnaround build an expertise-led service; packaging & retainers lift realisation and smooth the lumpy job-shop revenue.

8. Operations Plan (pre-press service, expertise-led)

- **Design/DTP seats:** licensed workstations (Adobe/Esko/packaging suites), designer capacity & seat utilisation.
- **Pre-press make-ready:** pflight, colour separation, trapping, imposition, RIP — the accuracy core.
- **Colour management:** ICC profiles, calibrated monitors, spectrophotometer, contract proofing matched to press conditions.
- **CTP plate output:** plate-setter & processor; plate throughput, chemistry & wastage control.
- **Consumables & WC:** plates, chemistry, proofing media; modest inventory + B2B receivables.
- **Data & IP:** client artwork archives, version control, NDAs, backup — brand assets are sensitive.

Workflow

Stage	Activity	Metric
Brief	Job intake / dieline / spec	Win rate
Artwork	Design / DTP / adaptation	Seat utilisation

Preflight	Trapping / imposition / separation	First-time-right %
Proof	Contract proof / colour approval	Colour accuracy
Plate	CTP output / dispatch to press	Plates/day, wastage
Archive	Version control / repeat & retainer	Repeat/retainer share

9. Regulatory, Licences & Compliance (India)

- **Business:** company/GST; shops-&-establishment; MSME/Udyam.
- **Software licensing:** genuine design/RIP/imposition licences — audit & brand-vendor requirement, non-negotiable.
- **IP & confidentiality:** client artwork/brand assets under NDA; unreleased packaging is price-sensitive information.
- **Packaging artwork accuracy:** statutory declarations (Legal Metrology, FSSAI, pharma labelling) are the *client's* legal responsibility, but studio errors carry recall/reprint liability — approval sign-off protocols matter.
- **General:** labour; CTP chemistry handling & effluent disposal per local pollution norms; data backup.

10. Organisation & Manpower Plan

Role	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
Promoter / pre-press lead	1	1	2
DTP / artwork designers	4	7	10
Pre-press / CTP operators	2	4	5
Colour / QC & proofing	1	2	3
BD & accounts	1	2	3
Total	9	16	23

11. Implementation Timeline & Milestones

Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Setup	Month 0-2	Seats, licences, colour management, CTP, first press accounts
Ramp	Month 2-12	Press/converter volume & brand accounts, ₹1.6cr (ramp)
Grow	Year 2	Packaging artwork & retainers, ₹3.0cr
Scale	Year 3	₹3.6cr revenue; utilisation, retainers & low rework

12. Financial Plan (Illustrative)

All figures are illustrative model assumptions for an Indian context, shown so the promoter can replace them with live rates. They are not projections of guaranteed results. A pre-press studio is expertise-led with modest capex; revenue = jobs × fee + plates × realisation + retainers; people, software & plates/consumables are the main costs; seat utilisation, first-time-right output & turnaround are the levers.

12.1 Project cost & means of finance

Capital requirement	₹
CTP plate-setter & processor	30,00,000
Colour management & contract proofing (proofer, spectro, calibrated monitors)	12,00,000
Design/DTP workstations & software licences	13,00,000
Premises fit-out & IT / storage / backup	10,00,000
Working capital (plates/consumables + salaries runway)	10,00,000
Total project cost	75,00,000
Promoter contribution	45,00,000
Equipment / term loan / WC finance	30,00,000

12.2 Projected Profit & Loss (3 years)

Particulars	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Artwork & DTP (design, adaptation, make-ready)	60,00,000	1,15,00,000	1,40,00,000
CTP plate output	70,00,000	1,30,00,000	1,55,00,000
Colour/proofing, packaging artwork & retainers	30,00,000	55,00,000	65,00,000
Total revenue	1,60,00,000	3,00,00,000	3,60,00,000
Plates, chemistry, proofing media & consumables	55,00,000	1,00,00,000	1,20,00,000
Team (designers/operators) salaries	60,00,000	1,05,00,000	1,25,00,000
Premises, software licences, overheads & BD	28,00,000	50,00,000	58,00,000
Depreciation, interest & other	12,00,000	14,00,000	15,00,000
Total expenses	1,55,00,000	2,69,00,000	3,18,00,000
Net profit (before tax)	5,00,000	31,00,000	42,00,000
Net margin	3.1%	10.3%	11.7%

12.3 Unit economics & break-even

- **Seat utilisation × realisation:** billable designer-hours/jobs × fee; salaries are largely *fixed*, so idle seats fall straight to the bottom line — utilisation is the make-or-break. Plates carry a materials cost but add steady volume; artwork & retainers carry the margin.
- **First-time-right & rework:** rework is unbilled labour *and* a deadline risk; every point of first-time-right rate lifts effective realisation without a price increase. Colour errors that reach the press are the expensive failure mode (reprint liability).
- **Mix & retainers:** packaging/variant artwork and brand retainers lift realisation and smooth the lumpy job-shop revenue; plate volume alone is thin-margin and price-competed.
- **Break-even:** at the utilisation/realisation level covering plates, team, software, overheads & finance; margins expand with utilisation, retainer share, packaging mix & low rework.

12.4 Projected Cash Flow — Year 1 (quarterly, illustrative)

Particulars (₹)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Opening balance	10,00,000	6,50,000	6,70,000	7,00,000
Collections	28,00,000	38,00,000	44,00,000	46,00,000
Plates/consumables, team, overheads & operating	31,50,000	37,80,000	43,70,000	45,00,000
Closing balance	6,50,000	6,70,000	7,00,000	8,00,000

The studio is expertise-led with modest capex; consumables & B2B receivables drive WC, and the CTP is financeable. **Receivables are the main cash risk** — presses and converters pay on extended terms while salaries are monthly, so a WC line and collection discipline are essential. Key risks are seat under-utilisation, rework/colour errors, client in-sourcing, software-licence cost & receivables — met with retainers, colour discipline, diversified accounts & advances.

12.5 Key Performance Indicators to Monitor

- **Utilisation:** billable seat/designer utilisation; jobs & plates per day; turnaround (hours).
- **Quality:** first-time-right %; rework hours; colour-approval pass rate; plate wastage %.
- **Mix:** retainer share of revenue; packaging/artwork vs. plate share; realisation per job.
- **Finance:** gross margin per job; net margin; receivable days; client concentration.

13. Funding Requirement & Bankability

Total ask: **₹30 lakh equipment/term loan & WC** against ₹45 lakh promoter contribution — for the CTP plate-setter & proofing setup (financeable) plus working capital on an expertise-led base. Fundability rests on seat utilisation, press/converter relationships, retainer share & the structural outsourcing of pre-press; equipment loans against the CTP are standard, and MSME/Mudra/CGTMSE routes suit the modest ticket. Year-1 profit thin at ₹5 lakh (ramp, as seats fill) growing to ₹42 lakh as utilisation, retainers & packaging mix scale. A low fixed-asset base and financeable CTP underpin the model; the credit story is recurring accounts, not machinery.

13.1 Funding utilisation

Use of funds	₹	% of total
CTP plate-setter & processor	30,00,000	40.0%
Colour management & contract proofing	12,00,000	16.0%
Design/DTP workstations & software licences	13,00,000	17.4%
Premises fit-out & IT / storage / backup	10,00,000	13.3%
Working capital (plates/consumables + salaries runway)	10,00,000	13.3%
Total	75,00,000	100%

14. Risk Analysis & Mitigation

Risk	Mitigation
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Seat under-utilisation (fixed salaries)	Retainers, diversified accounts, plate volume as base load, flexible/freelance overflow
Rework & colour errors reaching the press	Colour management/ICC discipline, contract proofs, approval sign-off protocol, QC checklists
Client in-sourcing pre-press	Retainers, packaging/variant depth, cost-per-job advantage, turnaround presses can't match in-house
Client concentration (few large presses)	Broaden press/converter/brand/agency mix; cap single-client share
Software licence & technology cost	Genuine licences budgeted as opex, phased seats, subscription planning
Receivables & extended B2B terms	Advances on artwork, credit terms & limits, collection discipline, WC line
Digital shift reducing plate volume	Grow artwork/packaging/retainer mix — the expertise revenue is technology-neutral

15. SWOT Analysis

Strengths Mandatory step in every print job; expertise-led with low fixed assets; retainer/annuity potential; packaging artwork depth; financeable CTP; sticky press relationships.	Weaknesses Seat-utilisation dependent with fixed salaries; rework/colour-error liability; client concentration; software-licence cost; receivable risk; talent-dependent.
Opportunities Packaging & label growth; SKU/variant & regulatory artwork churn; brand retainers; outsourcing by presses; asset-management/archive services; remote/offshore artwork work.	Threats In-house pre-press; freelance/offshore price competition; digital printing reducing plate demand; commoditisation of plain DTP; designer attrition.

16. Recommended AiSevak Tools for This Business

This pre-press & design studio would use AiSevak's Printing vertical tools in operations:

- **Utilisation & costing:** seat-utilisation & per-job/per-plate realisation, plate/consumable-cost & rework-tracking tools.
- **Jobs & accounts:** quote/job & retainer billing, receivables, NDA/IP & GST tools (with Media vertical).
- **Practice:** Business Plan, break-even and mix-economics tools to model the studio.

17. Key Assumptions & Notes

- Pre-press & design studio: expertise-led service upstream of the press - artwork/DTP, make-ready (preflight/trapping/imposition), colour-managed proofing & CTP plate output; revenue = jobs × fee + plates × realisation + retainers.
- Seat utilisation × realisation – (plates/consumables + labour + software) decisive; salaries are largely fixed so utilisation, first-time-right rate & turnaround are the levers; packaging artwork & retainers lift realisation and smooth lumpy job-shop revenue.
- Company/GST + equipment/WC finance (CTP financeable); genuine software licences & client-artwork NDAs are non-negotiable; CTP chemistry disposal per local pollution norms.
- Utilisation, retainer share, rework & receivable days drive economics; figures illustrative, exclude GST; deadline-/quality-/competition-sensitive and exposed to the digital-print shift in plate volume.

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