

SMART CHANGE STARTS HERE.

PSPs GAIN SUCCESS FASTER WITH SHEETFED INKJET

THE FOLLOWING STORIES take an in-depth look at how print businesses have expanded their capabilities and increased efficiencies with the support of Canon Solutions America.

From utilizing customer data to obtaining high-quality print results, read how the VarioPrint i-series production inkjet press has helped print providers flourish.

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ACCESS DIRECT SPOTLIGHT

FAST-TRACK INKJET ADOPTION

One of the greatest selling points that Access Direct Systems of Farmingdale, New York, has to offer is its acute sense of — and proficiency in handling — data, as well as the potential value it offers direct mail clients. That is not very surprising to hear, as the 550-employee firm produces more than one billion direct marketing and transactional mail pieces per year from three production facilities on Long Island, New York.

The company supplies a full range of print and mail capabilities, from highly personalized digital printing and packaging segmentation, to data receipt and conversion, list hygiene, document creation and archiving, inserting, and commingling. Access Direct Systems caters to markets including financial and banking companies, insurance firms, publishers, ad agencies, retailers, and Fortune 1000 businesses.

An immutable fact drives the mail industry: response rates can easily be triggered by the acute use of data, not to mention personalization and color. When combined, they become the perfect storm. And a

storm has been brewing at Access Direct Systems since late 2013 — one that washed away a once-mighty fleet of 20 toner-based digital printing devices.

The company embarked on a five-year rebuild plan for its pressroom, intrigued by the prospect of high-speed production inkjet capabilities that could handle high-volume runs, deliver on quality, provide the color consistency customers sought, and do so in a most economic fashion. It would not be long before the rebuild timeframe was further compressed into two years.

Within that span, Access Direct Systems installed a quartet of ColorStream 3900 continuous feed inkjet printers from Canon Solutions America, then complemented the overhaul with a VarioPrint i300 sheetfed inkjet press. The ColorStream 3900 inkjet presses provided huge strides in color and paper management, while enabling the printer to phase out the costly and space-consuming custom of using preprinted offset shells.

“Our move into cutsheet inkjet went a lot smoother and faster than we ever thought possible,” observes John DiNozzi Jr., executive VP of Access Direct Systems. “Even though we were taking a jump into a new piece of equipment that didn’t have much of a history, we felt comfortable making the move. Once the VarioPrint i300 was operational, we moved all of our cutsheet volume onto it in a week. The transition was easy and the uptime on the VarioPrint i300 is incredible. I can’t say enough about it ... the press never stops.”

Before installing the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press, Access Direct Systems experienced a challenge in the quality differential between its ColorStream 3900 inkjet presses and the cutsheet toner work on crossover jobs. The inability to match the runs satisfactorily prompted the printer to just run those jobs on the continuous inkjet devices. When the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press became available, Access Direct Systems executives did not need to have their arms twisted to make the move.



John DiNozzi Jr., Executive VP of
Access Direct Systems.

According to Lori Messina, executive VP, “It gives us the flexibility to run our business based on volume. Now, anything under 100,000 goes on the VarioPrint i300 and anything over that gets continuous. It also gives us flexibility when we need to do reprints. And if there’s any degree of spoilage during a production run for those customers who mandate 100 percent mail volume, we can just print [the lost sheets] on the VarioPrint i300 rather than setting up [a] ColorStream 3900.”

Messina is piqued by such advantages as the new ColorGrip technology and the increased number of qualified substrates. Having the option of digital variable printing in an inkjet environment for self-mailers and postcards is a particular bonus.



Access Direct Systems has its fleet of ColorStream 3900 inkjet presses set up in an “H” configuration, providing the flexibility to operate as four duplex systems or eight simplex systems. The additions also prompted the company to bolster its finishing capabilities, which include a high-speed Hunkeler/Standard Horizon line. On the front end, Access Direct Systems procured Videk camera systems.

In adding more accumulating and inserting equipment, Access Direct Systems was able to expand its express product — the low-volume, quick-turnaround transactional jobs. With the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press and the accumulating gear, Messina envisions the company getting into small booklet mailings in the not-too-distant future.

Having production inkjet options for volume control has made life easier for Access Direct Systems. One of the firm’s publishing clients had previously been running its publication on the ColorStream 3900 inkjet press. It was originally a weekly mailing at upwards of 200,000 pieces, but volumes were being reduced. Instead of bulk mailings, the publication was sent out in waves of 50,000 to 75,000 copies.

“[The client] was struggling with how they were getting the data to us,” DiNozzi says. “They wanted to mail multiple times throughout that week, and that was going to become a challenge for us from a production standpoint. But we were able to simply and seamlessly move their work onto the VarioPrint

i300 and still maintain their mail base, without going through a difficult transition process for color matching and things of that nature.”

In turn, the move freed up capacity on the ColorStream 3900 inkjet press, so it had more time for longer runs. The color matching and auditing processes became seamless.

As the printer continues to flourish, it will look to keep pushing the envelope from a color standpoint. “A majority of our core business is preprinted shells with black ink,” DiNozzi explains. “We’re pushing customers into full-color where it makes the most sense. In order to do that, we need to encourage them to take advantage of the data that they may not be using.

“The big thing for us is getting them to utilize their data to increase their response rates. We’re also looking to educate our customers on how to use inkjet to create more onsert mailings instead of inserts. Right now, a lot of customers are preprinting different components and putting them into the envelopes. But we now have the ability to take a form that we’re printing — because it’s done digitally and in color — and change the size of that piece to any size the customer wants. We’re trying to add more components onto the mail piece rather than them being preprinted someplace else.” ■

AT A GLANCE

Access Direct, Farmingdale, NY

MARKETS SERVED:

Publishing, financial/banking, insurance, retail, advertising, and Fortune 1000 businesses

CAPABILITIES:

Package segmentation, data receipt and conversion, postal presorting, list hygiene, document creation and archiving, and inline and offline affixing

ANCILLARY SERVICES:

Inserting, commingling, and co-palletization



ARNA MARKETING GROUP SPOTLIGHT

SAYING “YES” WITH PRODUCTION INKJET

The capabilities of Arna Marketing Group are highly sophisticated, but the company’s motive for acquiring them couldn’t be simpler.

“It’s because we say yes,” says President Steven Hegna, who vows that “yes” is the only answer his customers will ever hear — no matter how complex or deadline-driven their requirements may be.

To make good on the promise, the Branchburg, New Jersey, company relies on the most advanced solutions it has been able to find for printing, finishing, mail processing, and data management. With these resources, which include high-volume production inkjet printing, it serves a customer base that is diverse in composition but uniform in its demand for fast, secure, and error-free marketing communications services.

Since 2005, Arna Marketing has been providing a growing menu of these services to clients in

the health care, financial services, banking, retail, pharmaceutical, insurance, and education sectors. Direct mail remains the bedrock of what the company produces for its customers, but it also offers everything else that fits the definition of “marketing communications” today: creative support, integrated marketing, online ordering, supply chain management, and data analytics.

This explains why Anthony Mills, chief information officer at Arna Marketing Group, describes the company as “an IT solutions provider that happens to print.” Printing, however, is anything but an afterthought, and the company’s choice of printing systems reflects its commitment to giving its customers the best results that printed communications can deliver. Hegna emphasizes that

the print-supported IT solutions from Arna Marketing are neither generic nor one-off. Everything is customized, and all projects are designed with long-term execution in mind. The success of this approach is one factor in Arna Marketing's fivefold growth in revenue over the last seven years, notes Mills.

A visit to the company's 65,000-square-foot plant, currently undergoing a 40,000-square-foot expansion, reveals a networked printing factory in which production is almost entirely digital. Nearly all of the printed output contains variable data. The goal, according to Hegna, is to move as much work as possible to on-demand production (POD) with two-dimensional (2D) barcodes added for traceability. This combination of POD and 2D, he explains, will help to shrink inventory, eliminate waste, and guarantee the accurate printing and mailing that customers insist on.



Anthony Mills, chief information officer
at Arna Marketing Group

Hegna says high-volume inkjet represents the future of hard-copy output for Arna Marketing because of its speed, economy, and consistent print quality. The technology took center stage at the company earlier this year with the installation of a VarioPrint i300 sheetfed color inkjet press. The VarioPrint i300, a B3-format (13.9" x 19.7") sheetfed press with a monthly duty cycle of 10 million impressions, ran close to that volume (9 million impressions) in its first month of operation. Despite being pushed nearly to the limit during its initial rollout, the press logged uptime of more than 90 percent.

So impressive was the performance that a second VarioPrint i300 inkjet press is in the process of being installed. Also added were a pair of ColorStream 3900Z monochrome continuous feed inkjet presses. All of the devices were supplied by Canon Solutions America (Canon), which also provides the VarioPrint i-series inkjet presses and imagePRESS toner presses that the company continues to use. Arna Marketing has chosen Canon Solutions America as its sole source of digital printing equipment and has implemented more than a dozen of its technologies in recent years.



With the help of its VarioPrint i300 inkjet presses, the company intends to phase out its use of preprinted shells for jobs containing variable data. Printing the static portion of a shell on an offset press and digitally overprinting the dynamic content can take days — a time frame that Arna Marketing has cut down to hours with all-in-one production on the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press. The duplexing press, which can print up to 3,800 B3 sheets per hour at 600 x 600 dpi, was designed from the ground up for exactly the kind of white-paper-in production that Arna Marketing aspires to: full-color and variable data in a single pass, dry and ready for finishing. The VarioPrint i300 inkjet press is rich in features for uninterrupted, high-quality production. Paper from decks holding a maximum of 9,200 sheets is interwoven and registered for printing on both sides under the gaze of a camera-based sheet monitoring system that detects and ejects defective prints.

Sheets also are scanned to spot jet-outs — nozzle failures that can be compensated for by automatically jetting additional ink from adjacent nozzles.

Canon Solutions America's iQuarius water-based pigment inks work in concert with a precoating technology called ColorGrip to improve results on uncoated papers. The ColorGrip fluid goes down first, creating a matrix onto which the CMYK iQuarius inks are sprayed in droplets of varying sizes. By controlling dot gain and expediting drying, ColorGrip produces an apparent visual resolution of 1,200 dpi and lets Arna Marketing print with standard offset stocks. Canon Solutions America says that more than 200 media — including coated, uncoated, treated, and specialty stocks — are certified for use with the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press.

A four-element drying system gently removes water from the printed sheets to dry them without deforming them. During operation, sensors installed throughout the press look for excessive power consumption and other anomalies that red-flag parts needing repair or replacement. This predictive maintenance is one of the things that enables the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press to achieve a 95 percent availability rate.

While these technical fine points may not be of direct concern to Arna Marketing's clientele, they matter because they have everything to do with delivering the level of service the company has pledged to provide. Hegna notes that health care organizations and other customers are required by law to communicate comprehensively and accurately in print with the populations they serve. This means supporting them with technologies that let Arna Marketing plan and execute their print-based campaigns without error or delay. Technically speaking, the company has come a long way from its first attempts to produce what Hegna remembers as "a dynamic letter with a little color" — URLs in blue along with black type in one pass, printed on the kind of digital equipment then available. Today, with the help of Canon Solutions America, Arna Marketing Group has all the capability it needs to explore the many meanings of "yes" in the close and long-lasting relationships it has with its customers. ■

AT A GLANCE

ARNA Marketing Group, Branchburg, NJ

MARKETS SERVED:

Health care, financial services, retail, pharmaceutical, insurance, education, banking

CAPABILITIES:

High-speed digital monochrome and color printing, offset printing, direct-to-plate printing, one-to-one and variable data printing, inkjet web

ANCILLARY SERVICES:

Data services

Branchburg, New Jersey-based Arna Marketing Group relies on production inkjet technology because of its speed, economy, and consistent print quality.



BACOMPT SPOTLIGHT

FINDING THE PERFECT MATCH

When most of your competition is still living in a digital toner-based world, what can you do to stand out?

For Carmel, Indiana-based Bacompt — a provider of data processing, printing, and mailing for high-security documentation — the solution was production inkjet. High-security documents necessitate fast turnarounds, a low cost per piece (due to the sheer volume of jobs), and data-intensive printing and processing. So when Bacompt needed to update its capabilities, a VarioPrint i300 color sheetfed inkjet press fit the bill.

Founded in 1980 as a laser printing service bureau, Bacompt has come a long way to serve customers in the health care, financial, collections, insurance, and government markets. In the late 1990s, when HIPAA and other healthcare privacy laws were enacted, Bacompt began printing documents that required

high security standards and data management. Bacompt now provides its customers with custom programming for data-intensive projects.

Bacompt was perfectly primed for the sheetfed inkjet output press due to the volume of customized work it produces.

“We are not an offset printer that got dragged into handling data due to [the addition of] digital printing capabilities,” says Larry Bauer, Bacompt’s chief strategy officer. “Bacompt is a unique company in that it has always been involved in data-driven printing and some form of digital printing. For most printers, it usually ends up being a migration, but that wasn’t the case for us.”



Larry Bauer, Bacompt Chief Strategy Officer

And even though a former Xerox executive founded the company, the last six presses Bacompt installed have been presses from Canon Solutions America.

“We have all Canon [Solutions America] equipment in our 50,000-square-foot on-demand printing facility, so I like to say it’s a matched set,” Bauer says. “The Canon [Solutions America] team can service anything and we have consistency across the board.”

The new VarioPrint i300 inkjet press, installed last October, was also a high-end production press that Bacompt management believed would engage employees at a high level. Yet it was not just the allure of a new digital output device and a series of great experiences with Canon Solutions America equipment

that lead Bacompt down the path to install the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press; it was the press’ speed and quality attributes that clinched the deal.

“The fact that the VarioPrint i300 is an inkjet production press, combined with [its] ColorGrip technology and its great output quality, has allowed us to improve everything on the transactional side,” adds Dwayne Hurt, Bacompt COO. “Low cost, high quality, and the right time. Before, it was always a trade-off: if you wanted inkjet’s low cost of operation, you had to give up some of the quality work. We don’t have to do that anymore.”

Bacompt already had decades of experience with customized jobs, so with some brief training from the Canon Solutions America technology group, there was not much of a learning curve. Hurt says that the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press’ ColorGrip technology has also allowed Bacompt to continue to use its tried-and-true substrates because it eliminates the need for treated stocks. That also helped to streamline the installation process.

The addition of the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press has also enabled Bacompt to venture into marketing-oriented print jobs. Lisa Thomas, marketing director of Bacompt, explains that the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press opened up new branding capabilities that the company could not offer in-house before. “Anything that our clients send out, including monthly statements, can now be branded with their corporate colors, logos, and typefaces,” she says.



Bacompt has also started to venture into transpromotional printing using the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press, especially for credit unions, which Bauer says can benefit from improved branding. “There will always be some clients who say ‘Why should I care about digital inkjet printing?’” he says. “So we try to stress to them that this is a game-changing technology; it establishes a whole new price point and brings capabilities that they were never able to achieve before.”

Hurt adds that 70 of Bacompt’s clients are credit unions and, prior to the installation of the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press, most of their company’s print jobs were produced on preprinted forms with monochrome overprinting to add the variable data.

“One of our initiatives was to migrate that work over to the VarioPrint i300 because of its low operating costs. Now we can provide them with a color-branded statement digitally printed with their logos and watermarks,” he says. “It’s been a big success. And we’ve picked up a lot of extra work because we have been able to upgrade them to color without many extra costs.”

Although there were a multitude of reasons for bringing the technology onboard, Bauer points to one particular customer project that proved to be the catalyst. “The real impetus to install the VarioPrint i300 was the data portion of a large state contract. [This new contract] required very high volumes. We were looking at buying multiple toner-based digital

presses versus the VarioPrint i300," he says. "We were able to get this great new technology, which was a lot more affordable and gave us more open capacity to run other jobs, while taking on that large contract."

As for long-term goals for its new inkjet capabilities, Bacompt intends to expand its marketing material production and delve further into commercial printing products with a data component. Hurt knows there is potential for these goals because he saw the new in-line booklet making, stitching, and perfining finishing equipment available for the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press while he attended drupa 2016.

And with the 98 percent to 99 percent operating uptime that Bacompt has experienced, Hurt says that the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press has proven to be reliable and efficient. "It's a great piece of equipment," he concludes. "It's made to run." ■

AT A GLANCE

Bacompt, Carmel, IN

MARKETS SERVED:

Finance, health care, collections, insurance, government (state and federal levels)

CAPABILITIES:

Digital printing, mailing, marketing, data-driven printing, custom programming

ANCILLARY SERVICES:

Data management, reseller for third parties

With the addition of a VarioPrint i300 inkjet press, Bacompt has been able to offer new capabilities to its customers and plans to expand its services.



CORE PUBLISHING SOLUTIONS SPOTLIGHT

SOLUTION SHOULDERS THE PUBLICATION LOAD

There is an interesting dichotomy of thought when it comes to print providers with roots in the nineteenth century.

While printers with such a rich and storied history tend to be pigeonholed as loyal toward mature and time-tested methods of manufacturing, one could contend that in order to remain relevant and keep the lights on, adhering to the latest technology is paramount.

Core Publishing Solutions, the Eagan, Minnesota-based print production arm of business/professional publisher extraordinaire Thomson Reuters, is a prime example of this. The printing operation — one of the largest in North America — has come a long way since its founding in 1872 as West Bookstore & Publishing (West), where it developed as a niche in legal publishing market, eventually becoming the content engine behind the online Westlaw legal research service. West expanded its market scope

when it was acquired by The Thomson Corporation in 1996 and when it merged with Thomson Publishing. Additional expansion came when Thomson obtained the global news and financial information business Reuters in 2008.

Core Publishing Solutions has 440 employees working at its 1.3 million-square-foot facility — 650,000 of which are dedicated to production. The shop produces perfect bound, case bound, and loose-leaf titles for Thomson Reuters and more than 100 other publishers that do business primarily in the professional, scholarly, higher education, and trade markets.

The Core Publishing Solutions printing facility boasts web and sheetfed machines, complemented by both

continuous feed and digital sheetfed toner-based presses. The company previously relied on the services of two Canon Solutions America imagePRESS C7010 color toner machines and three monochrome VarioPrint 6000 TITAN digital inkjet presses.

“Like all printers, we work toward solutions to manage shorter run lengths and quicker turn times,” says Larry Soler, director of prepress, press, and digital departments for the company. “We were looking at a growing print-on-demand workload, and we needed to beef up our output because the current imagePRESS C7010s were overloaded. We were churning out more than one million impressions per month between the two printers.”



Larry Soler, Director of Prepress

According to Soler, Core Publishing Solutions had come to a technological crossroads.

What the plant needed, Soler realized, was a solution to support the organization’s business model as a high quality, service-oriented, short-run book manufacturer. As part of the vetting process, Vickie Jensen — the technical supervisor for prepress and digital print at Core Publishing Solutions — explained that the company needed to review its costs to establish what new device would provide the best return on investment. It became a question of digital toner and click charges versus the production inkjet printing model.

In the end, Core Publishing Solutions opted to go with the VarioPrint i300 sheetfed press from Canon Solutions America. The press was installed in November and December of 2015. “Canon Solutions America showed good faith with us, as we utilized our technology rider on [their] imagePRESS C7010 toner machines to get into the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press,” Jensen says.

While Core Publishing Solutions does not have a good deal of trailing results to provide an in-depth evaluation of the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press, Jensen says the installation process was quite smooth when aided by the work of a focused project team. The company benefitted from good vendor connections for the prework of electrical, networking, power, and air.



From a workflow standpoint, Jensen says that many of their custom workflows are using PRISMAsync controllers — utilizing multiple data sources. One production workflow has been completely migrated, she says, and as of press time, the team was working on an automated XML-based workflow.

While still new on the shop floor, the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press has made life easier for a number of Core Publishing Solutions' customers. One of the greatest benefits has been using a single print-on-demand process for both monochrome and color custom reports. The jobs were previously produced on a combination of three devices. Now, the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press handles all 750,000 impressions each month.

"That allows us to service a particular customer that requires same-day printing, binding, and shipping, which will improve our overall customer service," Jensen remarks. "We have been able to deliver a quality product in the short cycle time required for their products."

What this machine ultimately represents, Soler says, is an evolutionary process that sees inkjet printing capabilities as the driver behind Core Publishing Solutions dominance as the go-to provider of excellence in book publishing, while meeting the goals of publishers and outside authors.

Moving forward, Soler foresees the company taking advantage of new upgrades for the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press, including a new spot precoat technology

called ColorGrip. The precoat is placed only where areas will receive ink, allowing the ink to sit high on the sheet and provide better print contrast.

Core Publishing Solutions will also receive a boost to its capacity once the new BLM600 complete booklet making system for the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press becomes available later this year.

“We will work to optimize the VarioPrint i300 speed and quality that supports us to maximize the whole production value stream,” Soler says. “Specifically for the VarioPrint i300, we are looking to ramp up to a volume of five to six million impressions per month. This includes additional loose-leaf products and newsletters once the BLM600 product line is released in Q3. In addition, the new ColorGrip ink set and bonding agent will allow us to migrate products with coated stocks.” ■

AT A GLANCE

Core Publishing Solutions - Thomson Reuters, Eagan, MN

MARKETS SERVED:

Publishing solutions for the professional, scholarly, higher education, and trade markets

CAPABILITIES:

Color and monochrome sheetfed digital printing, web offset printing, binding (perfect bound, adhesive burst bound, Smyth sewn case, saddle stitch, loose leaf)

ANCILLARY SERVICES:

Electronic books, warehousing and fulfillment, custom kitting



DMS INK SPOTLIGHT

OPENING DOORS TO NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES WITH INKJET TECHNOLOGY

Yellow Springs, Ohio-based DMS ink has thrived in the direct mail space for more than 30 years through its ability to adapt — staying at the forefront of the industry with cutting-edge concepts and solutions while serving a dynamic customer base.

The company — originally known as Dayton Mailing Services — was founded in 1983 by Robert Hale, and has been led by Hale’s daughter, Christine Soward, since she purchased the business in 2005.

Since its inception, DMS ink has been known throughout the region for providing best-in-class mailing services and handling its customer projects from design to distribution. With a team of dedicated professionals, the direct mail marketing leader helps a wide range of businesses — including health care, financial, retail, insurance, and many others — to reduce their costs by offering unique capabilities that go beyond industry benchmarks. When DMS ink went looking for an answer to its

crucial digital print needs, it specifically searched for improvements in print quality and a press that could provide commercial-type color at transactional-type costs.

“Our struggle has always been having the ability to scale as we continue to grow. [We need] a solution that allows us to do that predictably. Traditionally we were in the toner market, and it is a very tough platform to scale. The maintenance is unpredictable and it’s expensive,” says Soward, president and owner of DMS ink. “People in our industry are struggling on the coated and cover stock with an acceptable market quality. Toner is what we were pushing and we were struggling with being able to



meet the volume and the scale that was happening in our shop. We were looking for something that had the same quality — equal to, or better — on a sheet.” Additionally, DMS ink needed the ability to move some fairly thick substrates at a very high speed in order to produce multiple projects on a web.

With a commitment to innovation, Soward and her team put an equal focus on finding a digital press (or presses) that could help diversify their client roster and overall offerings while handling new and more diverse applications with an eye toward profitability. “We spent a good amount of time looking,” Soward comments. “Tom [Cooper, VP of operations] and I looked at many types of equipment and continually looked at the toner because that’s what everybody is comfortable with.”

After several months of research and testing, DMS ink initially installed the ColorStream 3900 inkjet press from Canon Solutions America. DMS ink knew that the emergence of new inkjet technologies was the direction it needed to go in order to grow, so the installation of a VarioPrint i300 inkjet press quickly followed.

“The new products have allowed us to run jobs at an unbelievable rate and with incredible quality,” adds Jim Hoffman, vice president of business development at DMS ink. “Of course, [we] always want to get the most out of [our] investment, [but] with the VarioPrint i300 and ColorStream 3900, we can now fully leverage our finishing capabilities, which has resulted in heightened efficiency and automated workflows. Our core goal of becoming less of a mail house and more of a strategic partner has been greatly enhanced with the print functionality we now have with our newest acquisitions.”

“I cannot stress enough the level of activity and excitement within DMS ink as we continue our migration to a critical document company with state-of-the-art digital print capabilities,” says Soward, whose commitment to



innovation and emerging technologies has increased the company's revenue by double digits over the last several years. "You're not making money when a piece of equipment is being serviced and maintained. Having a machine that has a predictable uptime — that's crucial to meeting SLAs. You can predict your maintenance and it's a smaller footprint. It's a no-brainer to me."

"We were up in two to three weeks. We were actually pushing print through in four days," Cooper adds.

"With the VarioPrint i300 we are able to get a much more robust color, much more pop from it onto standard substrates," Hoffman says. "Now, with the VarioPrint i300, we've got the speed, we've got the quality, and we have the technology to go after it all!" According to Soward, the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press was a game changer for her company. The VarioPrint i300 inkjet press specifically has been a "great bridge" which allows the company to capture

more direct mail business. "Being able to put white paper in and create a [specific] document for that particular product is a game changer for anyone who manages inventory," she says. As DMS ink has seen, the digital press was designed to offer premium quality output with proven inkjet productivity and flexibility. "We didn't expect to transition the black over to the VarioPrint i300. It ended up that we are moving more work than we thought we would, and the machine just runs. It doesn't stop," Soward says.

Uptime is crucial to meet today's demanding SLAs. For VarioPrint i300 inkjet presses, uptime is enhanced by automated maintenance routines that help secure uninterrupted production — simultaneously helping maintain print quality, productivity, and uptime.

According to Soward, DMS ink has "every toner machine known to man" and was only seeing 45 percent to 70 percent uptime. Now with the

VarioPrint i300 inkjet press, they are seeing about 95 percent uptime. “That’s really a big deal. That’s a number you can’t make up. It’s either running or it’s not.”

DMS ink has transferred about 90 percent of its color work to the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press. There is still one job that has to print on their toner presses, but the team is working with ColorGrip and the substrate to make the transition. “It’s a big job that has to happen every day and it’s getting hard to manage because we have to print it on a roll toner environment, cut it down, [and] UV coat it. We have to reprint all the time because of color issues. We are working very hard to transition it over to the VarioPrint i300.”

Leveraging printhead technology from the ColorStream inkjet web presses, the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press provides 600 x 600 dpi output with drop size modulation to deliver 1,200 dpi perceived image quality. Automated inline quality control detects nozzle failure and automatically applies compensation to help maintain quality. “It’s exciting,” Soward says. “Being able to print from the VarioPrint i300 and compare it to quality we had previously. It’s always consistent on the VarioPrint i300, so I don’t have to worry about getting the best one out of the stack. Every one is the same.”

Research is essential when it comes to purchasing a major investment piece like a production inkjet device. Soward advises looking at what you are spending now on toner and clicks. “We took about six or seven toner boxes out and replaced them with the VarioPrint i300. You’re talking about an operator and a half for every machine — and when they’re all down at the same time you’re not getting any production,” Soward says. “I think, to me, being able to scale predictably and have a scheduled maintenance is more important than anything as you grow. Time to market is crucial!” ■

AT A GLANCE: DMS ink, Yellow Springs, OH

MARKETS SERVED: Health care, financial, retail, insurance

CAPABILITIES: Sheetfed and continuous feed production inkjet, variable data printing (VDP), laser

ANCILLARY SERVICES: Data management, creative services, comprehensive bindery, extensive mailing and fulfillment capabilities, offset printing, envelope converting, postal optimization

With the new VarioPrint i300 inkjet press, DMS ink has the speed, quality, and technology to go after it all.



ONETOUCHPOINT SPOTLIGHT

EMERGING FROM ITS 'SHELL' WITH CUTSHEET

There is a bit of euphoric overreach that often accompanies the subject of production inkjet printing, and it is a response that Chris Illman would like to set straight.

As amazing as the technology may be, production inkjet is not a magic pill that will transform a company overnight; nor is it accompanied by “the force” or any other supernatural phenomenon that, by extension, will naturally resonate with a printer’s sales team.

By the same token, Illman — president of OneTouchPoint, a digital printing giant headquartered in Hartland, Wisconsin — is a huge proponent of the technology, as it enables both his firm and its customers to be more competitive in the marketplace. His firm was one of the handful of beta testers for the VarioPrint i300 sheetfed press from Canon Solutions America, and the company has experienced much initial success with the device.

While Illman offers some caveats to production inkjet newcomers, it is nothing that a little homework and some preparation would not solve.

OneTouchPoint was founded by CEO Tom Simunek in 2007 following a series of acquisitions that included Coakley Tech, CCI, Berman Printing, and Jenny’s Printing — 10 deals in all. The company prides itself as a single-source, marketing execution services provider, addressing a multitude of needs from digital printing output to direct mail and fulfillment. A \$140 million annual performer, OneTouchPoint employs just short of 1,000 people.

The client list for OneTouchPoint — which includes companies in health care, manufacturing, and retail



OneTouchPoint CEO Tom Simone

— is a perfect match for the production inkjet environment, as their markets require personalized customer communications. The need for variable, monochrome content in tandem with color were easily met by the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press, which provides speed, flexibility, and the ability to offer a lower-cost price point.

“We’re living in the ‘I want it now’ society,” Illman explains. “You have shorter run lengths and more personalized, targeted communications. Every day that goes by, fewer and fewer offset impressions are going to be printed. It’s all about the cost, the flexibility, and the urgency. The flexibility of the sheetfed i300 is going to claim a significant amount of offset impressions.”

From an operational standpoint, the greatest challenge facing not just the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press, but any production inkjet device, centers on the current limitations of stocks. Once paper manufacturers catch up with the technology, Illman says, it will open “an endless amount of possibilities around that unit.”

The ease of use and automation paint a clear picture of the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press’ productivity. OneTouchPoint did not endure any learning curve, as the company has already used several pieces of Canon Solutions America gear, including a bevy of VarioPrint 6250 inkjet presses and monochrome, continuous feed devices, which made the transition to the former “project Niagara” fairly seamless. Adding to that ease is the firm’s use of the PRISMA-based front-end workflow management software.



Production inkjet technology fits well into the wheelhouse of OneTouchPoint's customer base. A large agricultural products and equipment manufacturer relied on the printer to crank out its technical manuals, a production process that entailed offset and monochrome work. That required two runs: one for the offset shells, the second for the digital monochrome printing.

"With the VarioPrint i300, we're able to batch all these technical manuals and run them at very high speeds in one full pass," Illman says. "No more shell covers from commercial offset. Our productivity has increased because we're running multiple manuals and shorter versions that are more targeted — all in one pass."

Another client that benefitted in the same vein was Sportsman's Connection, whose fishing and hunting map guides are sold through major retailers such as

Cabela's and Walmart, as well as sporting goods/outdoor enthusiast chains Bass Pro Shops and Dick's Sporting Goods. This customer did not get left with a cache of unsold product and was able to reduce inventory levels by as much as 70 percent. "Now they don't have all that inventory sitting there. It's a true books-on-demand model, with the cost point where they need it to be," he says.

Output quality may not be one of production inkjet technology's primary selling points, but it has won over some skeptics. Christie Kimbell, vice president of marketing for OneTouchPoint, says that the company has received favorable comments regarding the printing quality coming from the VarioPrint i300 sheetfed press.

"Customers are surprised at how great it looks and are impressed with the sharpness of the picture quality when compared to offset printing," she says.

"It's very respectable."

Illman believes that once more optimized stocks are made available, the quality of printing from the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press will improve even more. "In this day [and age] that we live in, the quality is what it needs to be," he says. "It's the other value propositions that deliver. Part of the allure of this machine is going to be the new applications that it can produce. You need to be selling the flexibility, the cost, speed, and the versioning."

Kimbell explains that in an age of a one-to-one ratio of personalization and variability, OneTouchPoint will increasingly focus its equipment investments on production inkjet to foster success and growth for both the firm and its customer base. "We are innovators and being the second printer to install this technology is an indication that we put our money where our minds are."

And while production inkjet will not transform a printing business overnight, it will certainly accomplish the task in due time, especially for those firms that are careful to cultivate a sales force that is keen to the task. "A traditional sales force is not going to be able to sell these applications," Illman concludes. "You truly need marketing-based, solutions-based, technology-type salespeople. Make sure you have your sales force and sales strategy done first, then look to this type of technology to support that." ■

AT A GLANCE

OneTouchPoint Hartland, WI

MARKETS SERVED:

Health care, manufacturing, retail, financial services

CAPABILITIES:

Commercial sheetfed, digital, wide-format, binding, and finishing

ANCILLARY SERVICES:

Kitting, fulfillment, direct mail, marketing, U.Connect print management, digital asset management, digital storefronts



PINNACLE DATA SOLUTIONS SPOTLIGHT

INKJET: PANACEA FOR PAIN POINTS

As viable candidates for production inkjet printing technology go, one would be hard-pressed to find a firm with a greater need than Pinnacle Data Systems (Pinnacle) of Suwanee, Georgia.

This poster child status has been replaced by a solution that provided relief to numerous pain points. The company debuted in 1999 as an accounting software company that marketed and customized ERP solutions. Pinnacle added print-and-mail document output services two years later, essentially as an add-on service for its existing software client base.

Now, the firm exclusively focuses on print and electronic document output and hosting services, backed by facilities in Phoenix, Arizona; Birmingham, Alabama; suburban Atlanta, Georgia; as well as a satellite in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, which specializes in software development and electronic

products. Pinnacle Data Systems employs 240 workers across its network. The company specializes in transactional mail services — the printing and mailing of business-critical communications — as well as electronic presentment and payment, document hosting and archiving, one-to-one marketing communications (TransPromo), and client interface development (custom portals).

While Pinnacle Data Systems was not suffering from decades-old inefficiencies, the firm nonetheless was in need of a solution to satisfy the evolving needs of its client base. Robert Reddinger, company president and CEO, identified several variables that nudged Pinnacle toward high-speed production inkjet,



including its limited adoption of color output, which was due to the high operating costs of toner-based printers. Nothing but extremely high-value documents — high net worth brokerage statements, for example — could justify the more expensive running costs required for toner color output. Reddinger also found inconsistencies between printed and electronic presentation with regard to brand marketing.

“Clients would create static color inserts to go along with the billing documents and would selectively insert them — providing limited, if any, ability to offer personalized, targeted messages,” Reddinger says. “This was compounded by their ability to offer full-color messaging online, yet they were limited to monochrome (or highlight color) print-based offerings.”

Pinnacle Data Systems was often saddled with a large number of SKUs for preprinted client form shells, which also presented warehousing, logistical, and obsolescence issues. An example of this was being able to offer distributed print in real time across Pinnacle’s three U.S. sites. In the past, it would require ordering materials and getting the supply chain in place for each site before a job could process.

“Prior to adopting inkjet, we also had a large fleet of highlight color printing systems, which were both expensive to run and challenging to keep operational; highlight color was always a difficult technology from a maintenance [and] uptime perspective,” Reddinger notes.

Facing these issues, Reddinger and his executive team set out to find a solution, exploring both toner and inkjet digital printing alternatives. In the end, the company opted to install JetStream continuous feed color inkjet printers, in part, because of Canon Solutions America’s tight integration with Pinnacle Data Systems’ workflow software (PRISMA and SEFAS Innovation).

The move to production inkjet has categorically paid dividends. Color usage is no longer reserved for high-end output products. The color and monochrome inconsistency between electronic and printed content went by the wayside. And, as for the practice of warehousing preprinted shells, its current “white paper factory” structure enables the redirecting of a job to another facility through Pinnacle’s workflow management system.



Pinnacle's initial transition into color inkjet printing did require a learning curve. "The implementation of our first inkjet press was not without its share of growing pains," Reddinger explains. "Everything we knew about color was from the sheetfed world — we had several Xerox toner-based color devices at the time — which did not translate into good color knowledge for inkjet. Additionally, our first installation was a roll-to-sheet configuration. Since we were relatively early into sheetfed inkjet, the finishing process also proved to be quite challenging during the early days of the installation."

The workflow software integration was fairly straightforward, as Pinnacle was already using PRISMA workflow management software. The tricky part, Reddinger says, was getting the workflow timing honed in to prevent the machine from stopping, which can lead to startup waste as the machine cycles up.

"The biggest challenges we faced on the programming side revolved around color management and color matching," he says. "Getting a customer to accept an inkjet version of their logo could require, and can still consist of, multiple iterations to get client acceptance."

The internal efficiencies gained from acquiring the JetStream inkjet presses cannot be underscored enough, however. Pinnacle Data Systems went from 500 SKUs of client-specific forms to roughly 30 specialized applications. This is most remarkable considering that the company had previously been tying up significant amounts of its working capital in the preprinted forms.

"We were essentially stacking cash up on our warehouse shelves in the form of client stock," Reddinger says, wryly. A second inkjet revolution is about to take place at Pinnacle Data Systems.

The company recently installed its first VarioPrint i300 sheetfed inkjet press, and Reddinger calls its acquisition “by far, the smoothest technology upgrade we have ever done.” Pinnacle still operates six toner-based, sheetfed color devices throughout its network, and the goal is to transition all of that work to inkjet using the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press, along with treated inkjet stock to convert the remainder of the color toner-based work.

“This will produce increased margins for Pinnacle Data Systems and lower costs for our clients, so everyone will benefit from the VarioPrint i300 platform,” he says. ■

AT A GLANCE

Pinnacle Data Systems, Suwanee, Ga.

MARKETS SERVED:

Government, insurance, utilities, financial services, trust, health care and collections

CAPABILITIES:

Digital printing; online document hosting, presentment and delivery; marketing; design

ANCILLARY SERVICES:

Disaster recovery services, project management, electronic payments



THE MAILWORKS SPOTLIGHT

BRINGING IT ALL IN-HOUSE

About a decade ago, Brianne Baggetta Noonan, president of Albany, New York-based The Mailworks, had a revelation:

How can you market your product to new customers if you are outsourcing your work and you are not passionate about it? After years of steady growth, the company outsourced 60–70 percent of its work from print brokers or offset printers. Baggetta Noonan wanted to bring work in-house to set the company apart from its competition. She knew that if The Mailworks wanted to grow its business, it could not continue to outsource all of its work to offset printers; but she also knew that it would not be able to add offset capabilities in-house. That is when The Mailworks installed its first color digital printer, transitioning from a letter shop to a direct mail marketing firm.

The company has seen 100 percent growth since 2012, which can be attributed to new technology and services as well as the acquisition of FS Marketing, an Albany-based company offering complete marketing solutions for hearing aid dispensing locations.

“We went from being order takers to order makers,” Baggetta Noonan says. But being order makers meant that The Mailworks would need to meet the demands of its customers. Although the company already had a fleet of digital presses, including two VarioPrint 6000 TITAN inkjet presses, Baggetta Noonan explains that the time came for the company to make a decision: It needed to either continue

down a path of growth while outsourcing personalized direct mail that it could not do in-house, or it could take a “calculated risk” and add an inkjet press.

In September 2016, The Mailworks decided it was time to reap the rewards of inkjet with the installation of a VarioPrint i300 inkjet press. The addition of the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press enabled The Mailworks to bring the last of its outsourced work in-house and offer its customers the full-color personalization that they need in the price range that they want, cost-effectively and quickly.

Baggetta Noonan says that customers are happy with the increased flexibility the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press has brought them. For example, the company can now print card offers as an incentive in direct mail campaigns with colors that vary by segment, allowing cards with multiple companies or offers to be printed on the same sheet.

One of the aspects of The Mailworks’ newly established flexibility is that it can offer customers variable data in full color rather than just monochrome. Previously, The Mailworks had to limit what customers could choose for a direct mail campaign. Now, Baggetta Noonan says customers can change multiple variables on the piece, but she advises her customers to “embrace the new color with caution,” solely from a marketing perspective. Customers who are excited about the new possibilities may make too many changes to their existing products, resulting in brand recognition implications.



Brianne Baggetta Noonan, President The Mailworks

Although the transition to add inkjet has gone smoothly, Baggetta Noonan says that the company did rely heavily on Canon Solutions America to assist in training and ink optimization. The company worked with Canon Solutions America to determine the amount of ink needed from both a quality standpoint and an acceptable price point.

That is one thing about inkjet that encouraged The Mailworks to transition most of its self-mailer work to the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press. By using a 9-pt. matte substrate, the company is no longer experiencing scratch-offs from optical character readers at the post office. With inkjet, the ink sinks into the substrate, resulting in beautiful, high-quality mailers that can withstand the stressors of going through the mail stream. The Mailworks has also transitioned four-card inserts on 9-pt. matte, as well as its letters, which are undeniably unique. The company worked with a paper manufacturer to develop 9' x 19' converted inkjet sheets for its 8.5" x 18.75" finished letters, of which The Mailworks has printed more than one million since the installation of the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press.

The Mailworks — which was founded by Baggetta Noonan's mother in 1984 in an attic — does not just offer unique inkjet options. In fact, it is not a typical direct mail provider. The woman-owned business runs on a non-traditional business model. The company does not employ any sales people; it does all of its sales by marketing its capabilities.



It is a young company in general, which lends itself to a team that has an extensive understanding of SEO, social media marketing, sequence marketing, and AdWords. Its unique marketing strategy is what Baggetta Noonan says differentiates The Mailworks from its competition, but it is also what gave the company the opportunity to add the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press.

The Mailworks operates with a unique incentive-based program: gamification. The company uses a point system in which points are awarded for achieving specific goals. Each department gathers points for things such as mistake-free production, inking a new customer, or printing a record number of pieces in one week. The whole company is treated to lunch when the points reach 100. Personal days are also awarded for reaching certain goals. The departments work as a team to meet the same end goal — a better and more efficient workflow.

Baggetta Noonan says this incentive-based system encourages young people to feel excited about their work and their accomplishments. It is crucial that The Mailworks team feels pride for their end product, otherwise Baggetta Noonan says, they are not succeeding with company culture.

In all, adding inkjet and bringing work in-house has made a difference in The Mailworks' output and morale. Baggetta Noonan adds that other companies interested in the technology would be surprised at the breadth of work that the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press can take on. For The Mailworks however, the most important thing the press has given it is pride.

"We used to be so reliant on offset," Baggetta Noonan says. "When you're outsourcing that much work, you can't take full ownership of it. ... [The VarioPrint i300 inkjet press] gives us control and a sense of pride." ■

AT A GLANCE

The Mailworks, Albany, NY

MARKETS SERVED:

Direct mail, hearing health industry

CAPABILITIES:

Digital printing, mailing, marketing, design, finishing, and programming

ANCILLARY SERVICES:

Graphic design, programming, and copywriting

Stacy Brewbaker (left), inkjet specialist and The Mailworks designated VarioPrint i300 inkjet press specialist, reviews proofs with Brandy McPeek, operator.

The Mailworks' boutique division, Pretty Polite, typically printed promotions on another digital press. However, using the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press, the promotion pictured above was printed with stunning results.

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