



ACTION PRINTECH GAME-CHANGING INKJET

THRIVING WITH PRODUCTION INKJET

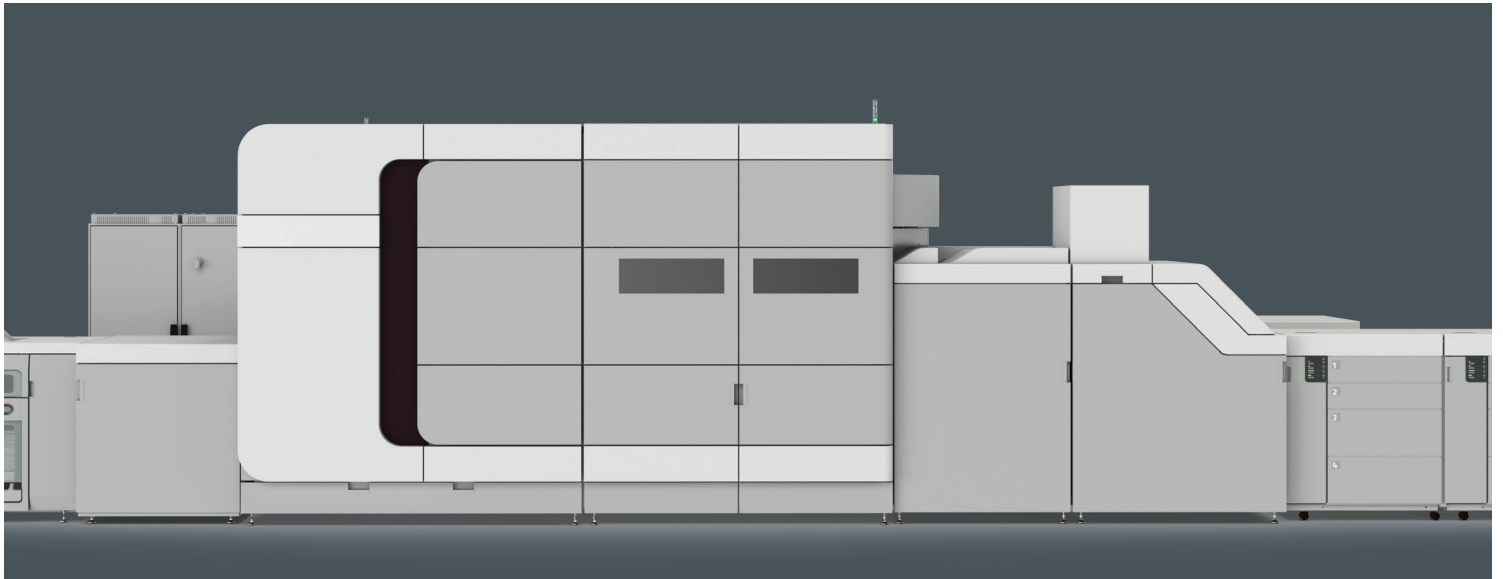
During the Great Recession of 2007-2009, Action Printech faced a difficult reality: limit its product and services offerings or fail. Now, thanks to the addition of the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press, the Plymouth, Michigan-based company has managed to not only keep its doors open, but has experienced a 30 percent growth in sales and volume from January to September 2017 — all with no increase in labor hours.

"We came from a point where we were just trying to survive — it was that simple. 'What do we do to survive?'" said Chris Dunlap, owner of Action Printech. "We succeeded. Now the question is, 'how do we thrive?'"

Thriving for Action Printech has come in the form of an inkjet investment in two VarioPrint i300 sheet-fed presses, technology that Dunlap described as a "game changer in quality."

It hasn't always been easy though. Action Printech started as a mom-and-pop quick print shop, opened by Dunlap's parents in 1979. Unfortunately, only a few years in, his father had a massive heart attack and was unable to continue running the business, so at the young age of 19, Dunlap took over. Around 1990, Dunlap decided to pursue the aspects of the business that he enjoyed the most — the relationships and business-to-business interactions — and closed the company's quick print business to become a full-fledged commercial printer.

**CANON IS THE VENDOR CITED MOST FREQUENTLY BY PRINTERS CONSIDERING
A PRODUCTION INKJET PURCHASE.***



*"Inkjet is going to lead the way
for where we grow." —Chris Dunlap*

When the recession struck, Dunlap decided it was imperative to focus on the vertical that provided the most potential for the company: book printing. Since then, the company, which has approximately 20 full-time employees and 18,000 square feet of manufacturing space, has carved out a niche as a short- to medium-run book printer focused on quality and reliability, from book one to book 1,000.

The company installed its first VarioPrint i300 inkjet press in November 2016 when it realized that finding and retaining employees had become a challenge in the shifting industry. It needed a solution to reduce the labor involved in the process of offset printing while maintaining the quality and reliability it had become known for. It also wanted a solution that would accommodate short to medium runs and increase its capabilities for variable printing.

Dunlap explained that he remembered hearing about the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press in its very early stages, and knew that it would fit his company's needs perfectly.

Action Printech's first VarioPrint i300 inkjet press provided a slight learning curve, Dunlap said, mostly due to the fact that it was an offset-only business at the time. To combat the challenge of learning a new technology, Dunlap said he took full advantage of the help that Canon Solutions America offered, and now he is able to train new employees on the press within a few days.

Less than one year later, Dunlap said that Action Printech had seen enough of a response from his customers that he acquired a second VarioPrint i300 inkjet press. In June 2017, the second press was up and running, contributing heavily to the company's significant growth.

"When I saw the response from my customers — that they weren't just happy about what they were seeing and what the VarioPrint i300 [inkjet press] was allowing me to do in servicing them — they were talking about giving me additional business," he explained. "I saw [that] there was a possibility to grow. That's why you make an investment ... to grow."

The pair of VarioPrint i300 inkjet presses are now the "main workhorses" for Action Printech, Dunlap said, and the consistency is unparalleled for the company. Dunlap points to his experience with offset as a main differentiator with his new presses. Prior to adding sheet-fed inkjet technology, Dunlap says that his team had to contend with the variability of working with offset, which can be affected by environmental factors, including heat generated by the press and humidity. With this technology, he explained, that inconsistency is gone.



In fact, Dunlap said that in his more than 30 years in the industry, he has only seen two technological advancements that he would consider “revolutionary.” The first was when direct-to-plate technology eliminated the expensive part of the prepress process, and the second is production inkjet.

“But inkjet, hands down, trumps what happened with direct-to-plate technology,” he said. For Action Printech, success has come from the VarioPrint i300 inkjet presses, which will enable the company to continue to grow and thrive. Dunlap said that he expects Action Printech to expand geographically, beyond its 50-mile radius of business. The VarioPrint i300 inkjet presses will give the company the opportunity to explore new markets, especially when it comes to variable printing, which just wasn’t feasible with the company’s offset equipment. “Inkjet is going to lead the way for where we grow,” he said. “To me, it’s the future.

This is where the printers of the future are going to have to find themselves if they want to be successful.”

** According to Production Inkjet Printing Consideration, Deployment and End Results, conducted by SGIA & NAPCO Research*

AT A GLANCE:

Action Printech, Plymouth, Michigan

MARKETS SERVED:

Books, specifically college textbooks

CAPABILITIES:

Inkjet, offset, binding

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