



BIP PRINTING SOLUTIONS
Turns to High-Speed Inkjet to
Bring Book Printing In-House



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When you are a publisher of educational books and have the opportunity to bring printing in-house and save tons of money, you do it, right? Then, when you not only save money but begin to generate additional revenue from your investment, you wonder what took you so long.

That's the story of how BIP Printing Solutions (BIP) came to be. The in-house printer was formed by the educational publisher Simple Solutions.

BACKGROUND

Simple Solutions was developed by a teacher, Nancy McGraw, to write, edit, and produce educational workbook supplements for K-8 students. Their customers include school systems, home school partnerships, and other educators.

Simple Solutions publishes 169 titles in runs of 20,000 to 30,000 each. Annually, this amounts to about 500,000 books printed and shipped in an approximately 10-month window.

Until about six years ago, Simple Solutions had been outsourcing all of its book printing. In 2014, it formed BIP Printing Solutions to bring production in-house. High-speed inkjet was cost-prohibitive at the time, so BIP installed a line-up of toner-based machines that allowed it to print 70% of its books in-house. Books printed in black-and-white or with only a small number of color pages were outsourced.

PROBLEM

Over time, however, BIP outgrew its existing equipment. "We were running our toner equipment 18-20 hours per day," notes David Keiger, production manager for BIP. "Yet we were still only producing 70% of the books we needed. There were just not enough hours in the day."

The growing need for color presented a problem as well. The educational market was increasing its use of color on interior pages, and the toner-based machines were not economical at higher volumes.

As volumes built, BIP knew it had to make a change. It either needed to add a third shift or change its technology. "The only options were to go to a third shift and run the print shop 24 hours a day or look at roll-fed," Keiger explains. "We couldn't keep up."

Addressing the issue by increasing outsourced production was not an option. This would have required BIP to order in large quantities to receive price breaks. Then there was the turnaround time to get product, which could be weeks, not to mention the challenges of storage and shipping.

SOLUTION

While high-speed inkjet had been cost-prohibitive in the past, BIP took a second look. It was surprised to find that the costs had dropped considerably. The total cost of ownership and running costs were much more favorable, especially at the volumes the company prints.

BIP began looking at the available technology and was impressed with the Canon ColorStream series sold by Canon Solutions America. Not only was the technology outstanding, but BIP felt that Canon Solutions America would offer the kind of support it needed.

“Ultimately, our decision to go with Canon Solutions America was based on its ability to communicate and effectively guide us to the best possible solutions for our company,” notes Joseph Dambrogio, general manager for BIP. “They offered the best solutions for our current printing needs, but also anticipated our needs for the future. They understood our vision and provided a solution that promoted growth for our company.”

BIP was pleasantly surprised by the financials, as well. Even though the upfront cost of the press was higher than for toner devices, the overall running costs were lower. “Because of the elimination of the click structure and the pricing of the ink, we found that we could print much more economically,” Dambrogio says. “Not only this, but the work we used to outsource we can bring back in-house.”

In February 2018, BIP installed the ColorStream press with Canon PRISMA workflow. The press was up and running, producing live jobs, within four weeks. BIP is now producing 100% of its books in-house.

The ColorStream will print on 20-lb. standard sheets, as well as a stable of pre-approved substrates. “In addition to our regular stock, the press can also run treated and untreated stocks, heavier stocks, and higher quality stocks,” Keiger notes. “It will give us flexibility for a wide variety of jobs.”

According to Keiger, the Hunkeler he uses consists of four parts: C6P, which perforates the paper; the CS6, which cuts the paper; the SE6, which separates the paper; and the LS6, which stacks the paper. “It allows us to print continuously from web to book block,” he says.



Within 4 weeks of the press installation, BIP was producing live jobs. Now, BIP is producing 100% of its books in-house.

With the ColorStream, BIP is adding more pages in color. “Until the inkjet press, we didn’t use as much color as we would have liked because of the cost,” Dambrogio says. “The ColorStream opens new doors in terms of what we can do.”

While BIP has a strong, loyal client base of educators, the ability to add color has strengthened those relationships even further. “With the ColorStream, it’s an easy transition to add extra value to books at minimal extra cost,” Dambrogio adds. “In a black-and-white book, you can’t say, ‘Circle the red square’ or ‘What color is the prime meridian on the map?’ This brings in many other ways to educate students.”

Simple Solutions is looking to expand the use of color in its books for the 2020-2021 school year.

RESULTS

Now, less than a year after installation, BIP couldn’t be happier. The installation and integration process was straightforward, and the company has much more flexibility than ever before. “It’s a huge upgrade,” Keiger says.

Among the results of this investment?



According to David Keiger, production manager for BIP, the new ColorStream gives the company flexibility to print on a wide variety of stocks.

1. Today, BIP is experiencing 95-98% uptime.

“With our previous toner presses, we had many jams and lots of downtime,” Keiger says. “With the ColorStream, the process is consistent. I’m still shocked by how few issues we have. If we have downtime, it’s usually something related to the binding.”

2. BIP is doing in one shift what used to take two.

“We have been able to take our 10-11 months of two full shifts to one shift in eight months,” Dambrogio says.

3. BIP now has the entire second shift available to actively pursue outside production.

“We no longer have to meticulously plan what projects we can take and when,” Keiger says. “We have much more flexibility to schedule the outside work as it comes in.” This new flexibility also creates the opportunity to serve first-time publishers who have great content but had been put off by the barriers to entry.

5. Turnaround time has shrunk from weeks to the same day in some cases.

“Before, it might take a few weeks to get books turned around. Now, we can do them the same day at a reduced price. This makes us appealing to other shops that want to send us their overflow work,” Dambrogio says.

Overall, this has been a huge success story for BIP Printing Solutions and its parent company, Simple Solutions. “We are producing our existing books at a much higher margin, plus we are able to drive additional revenue,” Dambrogio concludes. “We are also showing our clients that we can produce a more dynamic product with more color that better engages students and creates an even better learning experience.”



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