



**The Canon VarioPrint i-series  
Drives 40% Growth Within 24  
Months at McNaughton & Gunn**



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With the growing demand among publishers for shorter runs, more efficient inventory management, and more color on interior pages, McNaughton & Gunn was at a crossroads. Its salespeople were pressing on management. Something had to be done.

## BACKGROUND

McNaughton & Gunn's mantra is "Creating books. Making history." This Saline, MI, book printer is making good on its promise.

A women-owned business, McNaughton & Gunn is led by Julie McFarland, the company's president. It specializes in short- to medium-length runs and leverages the creative and technical talents of its expert team to offer a flexible and customizable process for each customer's unique needs.

McNaughton & Gunn offers offset printing, four-color digital book printing, e-book conversion, and short and medium runs for web, sheetfed and digital printing. Most of its jobs range from 25 to 100,000 copies.

Until recently, the majority of the company's runs were offset, with digital accounting for about 7% of its volume. However, digital is by far the fastest growing part of the business, with growth totaling 40% within the past 24 months.

## PROBLEM

Although offset is the mainstay of its production, McNaughton & Gunn has long had a robust digital capability. However, the market is changing.

Not only is digital on a growth trajectory, but the company is seeing more trade books being printed in full and highlight color. The use of color has been growing in educational books for some time, but now its salespeople are seeing it move into trade books as well.

"Publishers have learned that color sells, and more and more short-run books are including color pages," says Jim Clark, director of operations for McNaughton & Gunn. "We need to be able to keep pace with where the market is moving."

Wasn't adding high-speed inkjet the obvious answer? Not initially.

First, the company's toner fleet is aging. This includes both its black-and-white printers and the four-color device used to print covers and book interiors, which at its current volume, would

soon need to be replaced. McNaughton & Gunn could not cost justify replacing all of its toner boxes and purchasing inkjet.

Second, because many of its customers printed both offset and digital, the company needed to be able to assure publishers that it could maintain consistency in substrates regardless of the printing process used. With substrates for inkjet still limited, this was a major concern.

Third, the cost justification was tricky since inkjet costs are calculated differently from offset or toner.

## SOLUTION

The answer came in the form of one of Clark's colleagues whose company had recently installed a VarioPrint i300 inkjet press from Canon Solutions America.

"We had been talking to Canon Solutions America about inkjet, but we thought we'd never be able to afford it," Clark says. "Then I talked to my friend, whose company had moved from toner to inkjet. I flew down to see his operation. Once I saw what they had done, I said, 'Hey, maybe this is a reality.'"

What about the cost justification?

First, McNaughton & Gunn realized that it could use the VarioPrint i300 inkjet press to replace



**McNaughton & Gunn** was looking for a solution to print more of its jobs with full and highlight color. The solution for the company came in the form of a VarioPrint i300 after Jim Clark, the director of operations, visited a company that had recently installed one.

some of its black-and-white printers, then use the four-color device for covers only. “By moving the rest of the volume to the VarioPrint i300, we realized that this would help preserve the life of the four-color toner device,” Clark says. “That became part of the cost justification.”

Next the company discovered that, with the VarioPrint i300, all of the company’s presses, both offset and digital, could run the same substrates. “We run a lot of uncoated papers, including 70-lb. matte and enamel,” Clark says. “Our toner device can already run the same substrates as our offset press, so when we found out that the VarioPrint i300 could, too, we were ecstatic.”

Canon ColorGrip technology played a role as well. ColorGrip is a conditioning fluid that can be added to the print process to ensure optimal print quality on standard coated and uncoated offset papers. McNaughton & Gunn now runs ColorGrip on all of its VarioPrint i300 jobs. “It’s a relatively insignificant cost, but it makes for a better looking product,” Clark says.

Clark also liked that, with the Canon PRISMA workflow, the VarioPrint i300 would provide outstanding flexibility to change formats, sizes, formats, papers very quickly. “We wanted to be able to make these changes on the fly,” Clark says. “The VarioPrint i300’s capabilities were superior in that regard.”

Canon Solutions America also worked with McNaughton & Gunn to understand how to accurately determine costs. “Inkjet is a different model,” Clark says. “In terms of total costs, the press costs significantly more, but once you get the VarioPrint i300 running, your cost per page actually goes down.”

## RESULTS

With Canon Solutions America training, McNaughton & Gunn’s press operators were up to speed in no time. Once the press went on the floor, it was running jobs within three weeks.

Even the color is perfect. “We used to have to manipulate color to get it right,” Clark says. “With the VarioPrint i300, we don’t. Even when we get in jobs designed to the G7 standard, the color coming off that device is superior.”

PRISMA workflow is used to control all of McNaughton & Gunn’s digital devices, including its VarioPrint i300. This has made integration nearly seamless for its operators. “For our team in production, the computer looks the same — the set-up screens, everything,” Clark explains. “The



**Once the VarioPrint i300** was on the floor at McNaughton & Gunn, it was running jobs within three weeks.

operators had to learn the mechanics of the press and some PMs, but that's it. It was very easy and efficient to step into this."

Today, the VarioPrint i300 is ripping along. By volume, the company's top 10 customers for the VarioPrint i300 are in its top 20 customers for offset. "They are filling our digital platform with work we've always done, just in smaller quantities at a time," Clark says. "We have also regained the business of some of our customers who were already doing four-color text blocks, just not with us. We were able to bring that work back in-house."

The VarioPrint i300 is averaging 2 million 11x17" or 12½x18" sheets and 6.4 million pages per month. Projects include everything from short-run cookbooks and travel guides to short-run textbooks, particularly for medical applications.

McNaughton & Gunn has also seen its customers take advantage of the ability to do highlight color. "If publishers want to change the headers, say, adding color to the first big letter of a chapter opener, this is very easily done," Clark says. "It looks great, and it really sets the book apart."

The uptime? Exceptional. Canon Solutions America had guaranteed uptime not less than 94%. According to Clark, the press has exceeded that promise. "We are seeing uptime of 97-98%," he says. "Our lowest month was 96%, and that was because we had to do a PM."

So far, the VarioPrint i300 has been everything that McNaughton & Gunn hoped that it would be, and more. "We are getting so much volume from our current customers that we haven't even had time to add new customers," Clark says. "We anticipated payback on the press in year two-and-a-half, we are working toward that very quickly."