



CASE STUDY

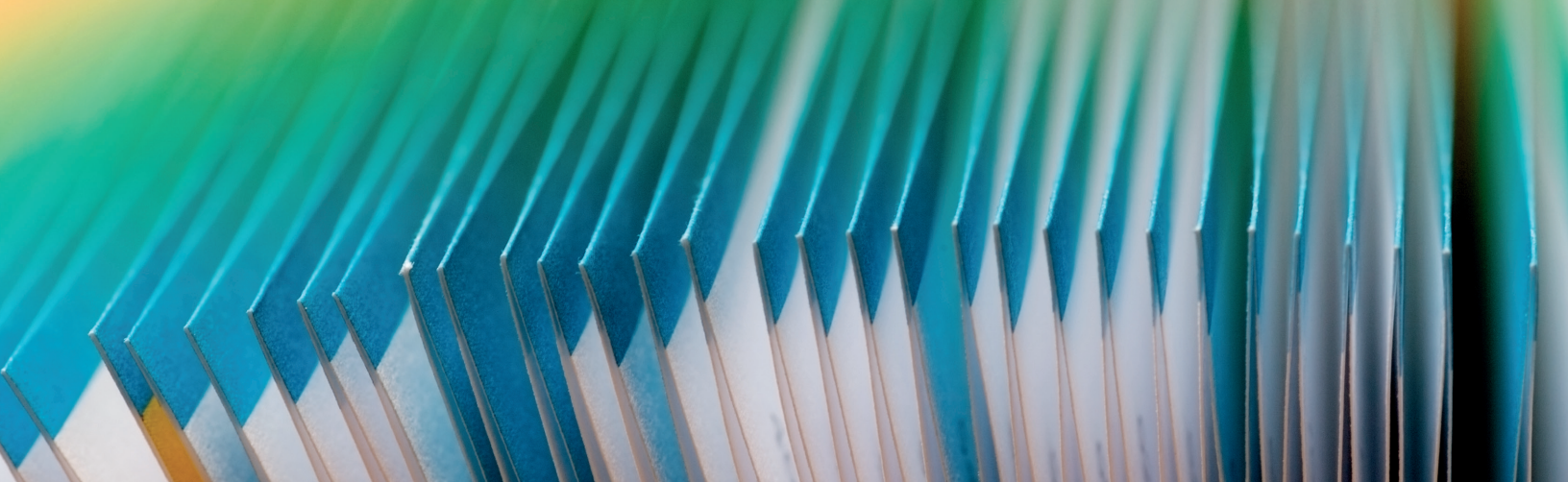
THE MCNAUGHTON WAY

How embracing inkjet catapulted the Michigan printer to new heights

Would you believe it was an insect? Jim Clark swears that was one of the reasons McNaughton & Gunn (M&G) made its foray into the production inkjet game. In a 4-color textbook filled with everything and anything you ever wanted to know about insects, the photos were critical to the presentation. But in short run after short run, month after month, the client was not happy with how the photos looked using toner.

There was another client, too. Clark says the job done with toner featured solid colors throughout the opening pages and across the header on each page of the chapters. The customer ordered 200 copies of the 660-page book, printed on 60# uncoated white, every other month. But as the job went on, the customer complained about the color consistency from run to run. The orange solid for Chapter 5 was not the same from printing to printing.

Between inconsistent insect colors to faded color schemes, Clark, director of operations for the Saline, Michigan based digital book printer, knew something had to be done. In addition, the McNaughton & Gunn sales team told Clark and his team that they needed a better color solution. As more and more publishers turned to 4-color images in the text component of their books, printing with toner was becoming more of a challenge.



One of the solutions they contemplated was inkjet, but Clark and company did not believe it would be feasible for short run, trade paperback books. Could inkjet print on the uncoated substrates that most books use?

The digital printing side of McNaughton & Gunn's business was growing as much as 30 percent per year. The offset side, while still 90 percent of its business, was holding on and not growing. "Publishers and distributors are getting a better handle on inventories and run lengths are dropping," Clark says. "Many were falling into the digital book printing space. We had to find a digital solution that could keep up with demand, be consistent, and help us grow."

Inkjet was the answer, but where to begin? Their search led them to the Canon VarioPrint i300 sheetfed inkjet press. One of the first sheetfed inkjet color production inkjet presses on the market, Clark says the i300 offers an alternative between higher-cost, less flexible inkjet web presses and lower speed, toner-based, cut-sheet printers. It also makes it possible for the M&G team to address new market segments productively and cost-effectively.

"We wanted a machine we could change substrates on by just loading a new drawer, and in sizes that would allow us to do small format books 4-up and large format books 2-up," Clark says. "The

"Our team not only has tremendous experience in producing books, but longevity with our company and our customers."

*—Jim Clark,
Director of Operations,
McNaughton & Gunn*

ROI was tough because we were going to use the i300 to grow our digital book business, not take work away from our already thriving offset business"

In truth, the ROI did not show a payback until the fourth year, but the McNaughton & Gunn team's ability to produce faster and more reliably, and add consistent color, was worth the investment. Canon ColorGrip became a deciding factor, allowing the team to produce books on its standard uncoated house sheets.

"For our publishing clients, they would not have to make changes in substrates," Clark says.

The Inkjet Factor

The biggest thing inkjet brings to the table compared to the traditional method of digital manufacturing toner is consistency. With the adaptation of things like ColorGrip, the McNaughton & Gunn team can print on standard substrates with great quality and reproduce that same quality time after time (remember the insects?).

The other factor related to consistency is speed and uptime. Clark says that toner boxes tend to need a lot of maintenance and diminish over time. "Our experience with inkjet is that the uptime of the equipment brings us speed and reliability. Most people also want to talk about the total cost of ownership for the operation being less, but in our experience, that is not the case. Inkjet ink is very expensive; when you factor in the clicks and the ink, the total cost per page is not significantly lower compared to other digital platforms."

But when you compare it to offset, depending on the size of the project, inkjet is much more favorable. "When we put inkjet in our system, the goal was to increase our digital business, not convert work from offset, so any savings have been done with uptime and consistent output," Clark says.

The process in McNaughton & Gunn's digital effort mirrors, to some degree, the process in offset, with a few less

touches. The unique thing about its digital book production process is that its Top 10 digital customers are in its Top 20 on the offset side of the business.

“The majority of our customers have already produced books with us and they understand the process,” Clark says. “We do use a web portal on the digital side as our primary communication tool, tracking, uploading, pricing, and specification delivery for both our customers and our plant.”

The process is pretty simple: the customer gets a price they can agree on; they then load their files, which are preflighted and proofed. Upon approval, the files move to output devices and are imposed and printed. Once printed, the covers are laminated and the text is cut into book blocks. The books are then perfect bound, packed, shipped, and billed.

“Most of our customers understand the process and what is required,” Clark says. “Their expectation is that the digital process is faster compared to offset. They are using the digital platform for a reason. Generally, it is to get books into the marketplace quickly for whatever reason.”

Leading by example

For new customers, McNaughton & Gunn employs two digital customer service reps who walk the customers through the process, along with a digital preflight specialist who handles any file issues that may arise.

“Most of our ‘self-publishers’ or new customers take considerably longer through the process, but it is extremely rare that they are surprised with the outcome when their books arrive,” Clark says. “That is because we handled them properly from the start.”

Whether it is employing a new initiative or working through the job-to-job responsibilities with a client, the process

The process in McNaughton & Gunn’s digital effort mirrors, to some degree, the process in offset, with a few less touches.

is something McNaughton & Gunn is known for. The family owned, privately held business was founded by Bob McNaughton in 1975—his second book manufacturing start-up. Today, the company is run by his daughter, Julie McFarland, who serves as president.

M&G was founded on two key principles: “Where people make the difference” and “Where we make a difference to our customers.” One of the key ways it has pioneered these promises is through its Earth care and green book printing initiatives.

Clark says that every team member is invested in M&G’s award-winning environmental stewardship and committed to upholding the printer’s high standards. From its paper choices, recycling efforts, and other production practices, every M&G employee is committed to doing their homework when it comes to protecting the environment.

That means procuring materials, engaging vendors, and implementing policies, including its FSC® (Forest Stewardship Council™) Chain-Of-Custody Certification. Books printed on FSC certified paper are eligible to carry the FSC logo, which is used to identify products coming from well-managed forests. Due to the growing awareness and popularity of the FSC logo, McNaughton & Gunn continues to process FSC claims for its customers.

Among the many accolades it has received for its efforts is the “2017 Saline Be Green Award.” Presented by the City of Saline Environmental Commission, the award is given to businesses and residents who demonstrate a concern for the environment through sustainable practices, recycling, composting, watershed protection, rain gardens, energy conservation, clean energy, or simply going that extra step to make the community more environmentally friendly.

“We are a service-oriented company that provides book manufacturing to publishers all over the country and a few worldwide,” Clark says. “Our team not only has tremendous experience in producing books, but longevity with our company and our customers. It shows in the products we produce every day.”



A Closer Look at the VarioPrint i300

The VarioPrint i300 helps bridge the gap between higher cost, less flexible inkjet web presses and lower-speed, toner-based, cut-sheet printers, making it possible to address new market segments productively and cost-effectively. With the VarioPrint i300, you get:

In Productivity...

- Production speeds of up to 294 letter images per minute
- Up to 8,800 letter sheets per hour
- Up to 10 million letter-sized images per month
- Maximum paper capacity: 13,800 letter sheets
- 12 trays (9,200 letter sheets from four trays is standard)
- Standard sheet size of 12.6 inches x 19.2 inches
- Maximum sheet size of 13.9 inches x 19.7 inches
- DFD interface for connection to inline finishing options

In Image Quality...

- 1200 dpi perceived image quality with multilevel droplet modulation
- Drop-on-demand, piezoelectric
- Water-based pigment ink
- Accurate front/back registration
- Nozzle failure detection and compensation

Canon

CANON SOLUTIONS AMERICA

877-623-4969 CSA.CANON.COM