Case Study

PRESS
ENHANCEMENTS
INSTALLATION

GANNETT SPRINGFIELD OFFSET, VIRGINIA, USA

Opportunity: **To create a pressroom of the future designed for speed, quality economy and production flexibility**

Conclusion: **Boost the benefits of existing Goss equipment with the latest in digital inking technology and press controls automation**

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When Gannett Offset, headquartered in Springfield, VA, decided the obsolescence issues concerning presses installed up to 30 years ago were beginning to prove insurmountable, it became clear the company had to take action. Feeling the pressure to become faster, to become more flexible in terms of run length, product and press scheduling and to facilitate faster turnaround times, Springfield Offset was also looking to automate production and create an efficient, cost-effective digital workflow.

With a portfolio of over 60 different publications, including *USA Today* and *New York Times* for distribution along the East Coast of America, as well as a range of commercial print work, Gannett Offset prints between three and four million pieces a week and around 15 million per month. With this volume of work, reducing makeready delays and materials waste are critical in contributing to profit and overall success.

"We had already decided to establish a totally digital prepress workflow, which would include a range of functionality to make our production process as efficient as possible and bring it into the 21st century," explains Jim Jones, director of operations for Gannett Springfield Offset. The company next had to tackle the problem of ink and newsprint waste, particularly when stopping and starting the press frequently for the wide range of products required.

Springfield Offset identified two primary issues impeding progress, according to Jones. Firstly, Springfield's Goss Colorliner® press, the first installed in the U.S. (in 1988), was equipped with an original press control system. The second issue was the need to install digital inkers and press controls on the remaining three presses.

The solution in stages

"We looked at several vendors to see what they could offer," continues Jim Jones. "In the end, Goss was the most cost-effective, and we felt the most comfortable with their solution. Besides that, after some investigation we found that they had the digital inker we wanted."

According to Jones, the process of 'investigation' went far beyond just running trials: "We tore the digital page packs apart and then put them back together again. Having done that, we felt confident they were precisely what we needed."

Gannett Offset decided to install Goss® digital page packs on 60 couples across its two existing Metro Offset® presses and its Metroliner® press. In addition, industry-standard PC based Goss APCS³™ press controls were installed on its Metroliner, two Metros and the Colorliner.

"Goss did a great job," says Jones. "There was a very smooth start-up on all the presses and virtually no downtime at all on the Colorliner as the new controls were installed unit by unit, running parallel to the existing system. The actual changeover took a matter or minutes. The first results on all the presses showed a dramatic improvement in print quality."

All from one - one for all

Christopher McAlpine, Manager of Controls Enhancements at Goss, working on the project at Springfield, explains the technical benefits of the Goss press controls solution: "The upgraded press consoles are now all connected to a single plant-wide data server, which allows the press operators to create, store and modify impositions and jobs from a single location. It's a real time-saver because it also means that all the preset data can be shared amongst presses printing the same product without the need to re-RIP data. What is more, because it's all based on a MicroSoft Windows™ platform, Springfield doesn't run any risk of obsolescence issues in the future."

Jim Jones is more pragmatic about the real benefits to Springfield and its customers: "Makeready used to be very labor-intensive and all the skill and experience of our pressmen still couldn't prevent ink blow-by on the single piston page packs. Now we can take our clients' digital files, read the density data and automatically set the controls and inkers by it. The result is that we have a ± .05 optical density tolerance right from press start-up on all our presses, and best performance is maintained through all press speeds."

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