Interview with thINK Members at Access Direct Systems

Submitted by sjammallo on February 27, 2017

One of the greatest selling points that Access Direct Systems of Farmingdale, N.Y., has to offer is its acute sense of – and proficiency in handling – data, as well as the potential value it offers direct mail clients. That is not very surprising to hear, as the 550-employee firm produces more than one billion direct marketing and transactional mail pieces per year from three production facilities on Long Island.

The company supplies a full range of print and mail capabilities, from highly personalized digital printing and packaging segmentation, to data receipt and conversion, list hygiene, document creation/archiving, inserting and commingling. Access Direct Systems caters to markets including financial and banking companies, insurance firms, publishers, ad agencies, retailers and Fortune 1000 businesses.

An immutable fact drives the mail industry – response rates can easily be triggered via the acute use of data, not to mention personalization and color. When combined, they become the perfect storm. And there's a storm that's been brewing at Access Direct Systems that began in late 2013, one that washed away a once-mighty fleet of 20 toner-based digital printing devices.

The company embarked on a five-year rebuild plan for its pressroom, intrigued by the prospect of high-speed production inkjet capabilities that could handle high-volume runs, deliver on quality, provide the color consistency customers sought and do so in a most economic fashion. It wouldn't be long before the rebuild timeframe became more compressed, as in two years.

Within that span, Access Direct Systems installed a quartet of Océ ColorStream 3900 continuous-feed inkjet printers from Canon Solutions America, then complemented the overhaul with an Océ VarioPrint i300 sheetfed inkjet press. The ColorStream 3900s provided huge strides in color and paper management, while enabling the printer to phase out the costly and space-hogging custom of using preprinted offset shells.

"Our move into cutsheet inkjet went a lot smoother and faster than we ever thought possible," observes John DiNozzi Jr., executive VP of Access Direct Systems. "Even though we were taking a jump into a new piece of equipment that didn't have much of a history, we felt comfortable making the move. Once the VarioPrint i300 was operational, we moved all of our

cutsheet volume onto it in a week. The transition was easy and the uptime on the VarioPrint i300 is incredible. I can't say enough about it ... the press never stops."

Before installing the VarioPrint i300, Access Direct Systems experienced a challenge in the quality differential between its ColorStream 3900s and the cut-sheet toner work on crossover jobs. The inability to match the runs satisfactorily prompted the printer to just run those jobs on the continuous inkjet devices. When the VarioPrint i300 became available, Access Direct Systems executives didn't need to have their arms twisted to make the move.

According to Lori Messina, executive VP, "It gives us the flexibility to run our business based on volume. Now, anything under 100,000 goes on the VarioPrint i300 and anything over runs on continuous. It also gives us flexibility when we need to do reprints. And if there's any degree of spoilage during a production run for those customers who mandate 100% mail volume, we can just print [the lost sheets] on the VarioPrint i300 rather than setting up a ColorStream 3900."

Messina is intrigued by the advantages such as the new Océ ColorGrip and the increased number of qualified substrates. Having the option of digital variable printing in an inkjet environment for self-mailers and postcards is a particular bonus.

Access Direct Systems has its fleet of ColorStream 3900s set up in an "H" configuration, providing the flexibility to operate as four duplex systems or eight simplex systems. The additions also prompted the company to bolster its finishing capabilities, including a high-speed Hunkeler/Standard Horizon line. On the front end, Access Direct Systems procured Videk camera systems.

In adding more accumulating and inserting equipment, Access Direct Systems was able to expand its express product – the low-volume, quick-turnaround transactional jobs. With the VarioPrint i300 and the accumulating gear, Messina envisions the company getting into small booklet mailings in the not-too-distant future.

Having the choice of production inkjet options from a volume standpoint has made life easier for Access Direct Systems. One of the firm's publishing clients had previously been running its publication the ColorStream 3900. It was originally a weekly mailing at upwards of 200,000 pieces, but volumes were being reduced. Instead of bulk mailings, it was being sent out in waves of 50,000 to 75,000 copies.

"[The client] was struggling with how they were getting the data to us," DiNozzi remarks. "They wanted to mail multiple times throughout that week, and that was going to become a challenge for us from a production standpoint. But we were able to simply and seamlessly move their work onto the VarioPrint i300 and still maintain their mail base, without going through a difficult transition process for color matching and things of that nature."

In turn, the move freed up capacity time on the ColorStream 3900, time better spent on longer runs. The color matching and auditing processes became seamless.

As the printer continues to flourish, it will look to keep pushing the envelope from a color standpoint. "A majority of our core business is preprinted shells with black ink," DiNozzi states. "We're pushing customers into full-color where it makes the most sense. In order to do that, we need to encourage them to take advantage of the data that they may not be using.

"The big thing for us is getting them to utilize their data to increase their response rates. We're also looking to educate our customers on how to use inkjet to create more onsert mailings instead of inserts. Right now, a lot of customers are preprinting different components and putting them into the envelopes. But we now have the ability to take a form that we're printing – because it's done digitally and in color – and change the size of that piece to any size the customer wants. We're trying to add more components onto the mail piece rather than them being preprinted someplace else."

Special Note: An important component of the thINK community is learning from one another. Help us create a dynamic community, email ShareYourStory@thinkforum.com so that we can share YOUR inkjet story with the thINK community.

***Sheri Jammallo** is the Corporate Enterprise Marketing Manager at Canon Solutions America; with a keen focus on the Transactional, Direct Mail and Corporate In-Plant print production space. She brings with her a wealth of industry knowledge that enables her to lead field relevant go-to-market production print strategies and programs for Canon Solutions America that bring value-add to their production print customers and overall print industry. Previous to Canon Solutions America, Sheri spent 14 years in several Sales Leadership roles at Xerox.*

thINK.

contact

thINK is an independent community of Canon Solutions America Production Print customers, solution partners, and print industry experts. Led by some of the most successful inkjet service providers in the country, it provides a forum for members to network, gain knowledge, discuss common challenges, and share best practices.