BOUTWELL OWENS PUSHES ENVELOPE WITH

NEW HP INDIGO 30000

This U.S. based folding carton converter sees unlimited applications for digital printing. By Jackie Schultz

Boutwell Owens is the fourth company in North America to purchase an HP Indigo 30000 press. The machine was installed last July. The U.S. based folding carton converter has been evaluating digital presses for paperboard substrates for about seven years. "We've been waiting for one to become available that we thought was the right machine to go with us into the future," says Bill Lorenz, VP of Operations.

The decision to pursue digital printing was the result of significant market shifts. "It was really driven by our customers," Lorenz says. "Running large quantities and warehousing are a thing of the past. Our customers want smaller orders more often. While we may supply them with millions of cartons, they also do introductions where they want smaller quantities of the same product. It needs to look like the same product that is coming off of our offset presses, but run a lot more efficiently when we're dealing with quantities of 100, 500 or 1,000 pieces."

President Ward McLaughlin says the applications for digital technology are unlimited. Applications include product launches, trade shows, product research, test marketing and personalization. "It really comes down to the imagination and how we can help our customers grow their businesses," he says.

The HP 30000 can accommodate a 29- x 21-inch (735 x 535mm) sheet and substrates ranging from 8 to 24 pt. Boutwell Owens is pushing the envelope in terms of the jobs it is running on the press. "We may be HP's biggest headache because we're running the gamut of

From front to back, Ward McLaughlin, President; Bill Hodges VP of Sales & Marketing; Brian Jansson, CFO and Bill Lorenz, VP of Operations, in front of the new HP 30000.

PUSHING THE ENVELOPE

what they told us it would," Lorenz says. "We're using SBS, white clay coated news and we're printing on both sides of the sheet. We also have the capability to run foil laminated stock so we can print whites on top of foil. We're trying to utilize exactly what they sold us."

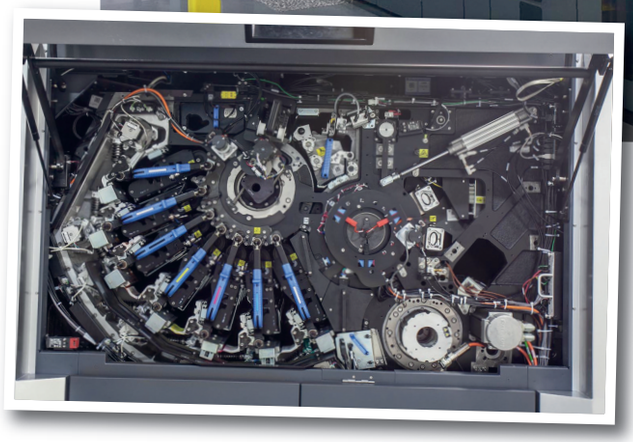
The press is seven-color process. For brand colors that cannot be matched on press, HP will manufacture a special ink. "It's amazing how many of the colors we have been able to match using the seven colors on the machine," Lorenz says. "We did have one customer who was satisfied, but we were not, so we ordered a special match color from the HP factory because we thought it could be a little closer than what we were able to do in process."

An in-line priming unit allows the company to use any type of paper. The machine also has an iCoat inline coating unit from Tresu Group. In March, Tresu will replace the single coater with a double coater. This will be the first double coater in the market. It is being shipped to Boutwell Owens' facility in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, after its debut at Dscoop in March in Washington, D.C.

Breaking The Rules

Boutwell Owens also purchased a Highcon Euclid II+ digital creasing and cutting machine, which will be installed next to the HP 30000 in the same room. Installation was in February. Lorenz and McLaughlin first saw the machine at Drupa. "We spent a lot of time trying to see how it suited our business. We run a lot of very short run work and with the installation of the HP 30000 we knew we would do a lot of short run, one time runs," Lorenz says. "Jobs that really didn't make sense building a die for."

Building a die for a one-time job is time-consuming and costly. In addition, the Highcon's capabilities will open up new markets for the company, Lorenz says. He jokes that the designers can now break all the rules. "We have to un-train our package designers on all the things we told them they couldn't do when designing a carton — all the intricacies of knockouts, stars, flowers and engraving — all those things we told them, 'Don't you ever show me a design like that.' Now we tell them they can."



BOUTWELL OWENS ALSO PURCHASED A HIGHCON EUCLID II+ DIGITAL CREASING AND CUTTING MACHINE.

Prior to the Highcon installation, all digitally printed jobs were diecut on a Bobst 102 diecutter. Boutwell Owens will continue to use that diecutter even after the Highcon is commissioned. "There are a couple of programs where we receive orders every Tuesday and Friday and we are shipping final product the following Tuesday and Friday. We never know exactly what the quantities are going to be, but those are jobs where we already have the dies built so it makes sense to continue to cut those in our conventional workflow," Lorenz says. "If you're going to run something more than twice in the same layout, from a cost standpoint of making the die, if you have the capacity in the conventional diecutting area then it makes sense to continue using that die. After that second job it's justified to have a die rather than going the Highcon route."

100+ Years

Boutwell Owens was founded in 1887 and remained in the hands of the founding family until 1987 when it was sold to McLaughlin's father, Bill. The company has two locations — Massachusetts and Texas — and employs about 200 staff. The Texas plant has a smaller format HP Indigo 5000 that is used for flyers, promotional literature and business cards.

McLaughlin is the sixth CEO since the company's founding. He views digital technology as the next phase in the company's continued growth. "I believe in where we're going," he says. "It wasn't a race to be the first. It was a race to do what is right for our customers and our future."

"It's the right application for our industry," Lorenz says. "It has proven itself in labels. There's no question about it. It's taken a chunk of that market.

"We're not a $500 million company that just buys a machine and says, 'Okay, if it works it works, if it doesn't it doesn't.' This is going to work for us," he adds.

McLaughlin agrees. "We're not satisfied until we get perfection and we push ourselves. We're the biggest critics of ourselves." ■

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