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Steve DeForge, vice president and general manager, Ames On Demand

Ames Makes Workbooks Work

Industry

Commercial printer

Application

On-demand manuals and textbooks

Printer

Xerox DocuTech™ 6180

Solution

DocuSheeter™ DT

Ames On Demand (AOD) is the digital printing division of Ames Safety Envelope Company in Somerville, Massachusetts. Chances are if you’ve had an X-ray or been in the hospital, your health history was stored in a color-coded medical record file folder produced by Ames Safety Envelope Company.

Founded in 1919, Ames has created a number of successful spin-offs, including Ames Specialty Packaging in 1985 and AOD in 1998, both located in the company’s 300,000 square foot headquarters.

AOD is a full service printer specializing in digital and sheet fed printing, binding, and fulfillment and distribution. Its 20 DocuTech® and bindery employees use the latest prepress equipment, along with four Xerox iGen3s and six DocuTech 6180s, to produce digital short run books, customized manuals and textbooks for various financial, publishing and educational institutions.

Using the company’s BookBuild

technology, professors and instructors can select from thousands of modules and custom-build their particular book or course of instruction over the Internet. Then, they can print 25 books or hundreds, whatever they need.

“Whether it be black and white text, or color, we are able to compete in a very competitive market,” said Steve DeForge, vice president and general manager at AOD.

For maximum cost-effectiveness, operators print the majority of books two-up on 11 x 17 paper. Those pages are then guillotined to an 8.5 x 11 size and either plastic coiled or perfect bound. While this system was efficient using plain paper, it wasn’t economical when AOD tried to duplicate it for an educational client’s request for lab workbooks with perforated tear-out sheets.

“We found that 11 x 17 sheets with twin perforations were very costly. So, we knew that we would have to



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find a converting device in order to do the job cost-effectively,” DeForge said.

They didn’t have to look far to find a solution. Lasermax Roll Systems, in nearby Burlington, manufactures the DocuSheeter™ DT roll feed system with running perforator option. The DocuSheeter produces up to 50,000 11 x 17 sheets from a roll (or up to 200,000 duplex 8.5 x 11 images) to continuously feed a DocuTech.

“The DocuSheeter allowed us to maximize our productivity and at the same time control our paper costs significantly for this job,” said DeForge. “Like many printers we are facing very tight margins, so the savings we experienced cutting and perforating our own sheets on the DocuSheeter allowed us to remain profitable.”

Plain 11 x 17 sheets cut off a roll and perforated by the DocuSheeter cost \$8.55 per thousand, versus \$9.90 per thousand for 8 ½ x 11 pre-perforated sheets. Plus, even for

non-perforated applications, rolls saved \$1.65 per thousand compared to buying 11 x 17 sheets.

The DocuSheeter’s running perforator option is also very simple to use. Its perf wheels resemble pizza cutters that perforate the paper before it’s sheeted and fed into the printer.

Since the DocuSheeter DT was installed, AOD has experienced other benefits as well. For starters, since sheets are fed one at a time to the DocuTech, with no pulling a sheet off a stack, the DocuSheeter significantly lessened paper jams.

“These benefits convinced us to add a second DocuSheeter,” DeForge said. “And, we have experienced far less maintenance issues on the DocuTechs that are roll fed.”

The DocuSheeter also improved overall productivity, especially during the company’s peak demand period, from July through September, including a huge crunch in August due to the beginning of the college season.

“The DocuSheeter, with its 20 hours or so between roll changes, allowed us to handle the workload during our busy season without adding labor for that printer,” DeForge said. “Our operators love it.”

While the lab workbooks started out as a small piece of business, they’re now a significant part of the company’s ongoing workload, resulting in several million impressions per year.

“The savings on paper and the increased production on these machines have confirmed to us that adding the DocuSheeters was the correct decision,” DeForge concluded.

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