FORWARD

thINKforum.com | Fall | 2019

Inkjet Networking and Knowledge



thINK.

think 2019: It's a wrap!

Wow - what a great year!

As we begin to close out 2019 and plan for 2020, I can't help but to look back at all we've done together. Five years ago, we started with an idea. As you know, ideas don't get you very far if you don't have the force of a community to help strategize and execute. This community of over 2,000 members has done just that. We've shared pain points and best practices and helped one another as we learn and grow in an ever-changing industry. I'm proud of this community that we've built together, and I hope you are as well.

As we wrap 2019 I just want to encourage you to take advantage of all of the benefits of being a member of this community — here are just a few:

- SAVE THE DATE: thINK Ahead 2020 will be August 31-September 2, 2020 in Boca Raton, Fla. Mark your calendar now and save the date!
- Read more about the Inkjet Innovation Award winners in this issue then start planning your own entry for Inkjet Innovation Awards 2020.
- Watch for an upcoming thINK eNewsletter with more information on thINK Roadshows — coming to a city near you in 2020, as well as Virtual Workshops you can attend right from the comfort of your own desk.
- Visit thINKForum.com and explore the Resource Center to view thINK Ahead 2019 event presentations, valuable white papers, and more.

I encourage you to be a contributor to the thINK community. Email me (bradzis@thinkforum.com) if you are willing to share your story, participate in our mobile app pilot (another way we plan to help community members connect and network), or provide feedback on tools and resources you believe would be valuable to our community.

Wishing you all a great 2019 wrap-up and a healthy and prosperous 2020!



Bob Radzis thINK President SG360° Chief Customer Officer

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With the addition of two Océ ColorStream production inkjet presses and Canon PRISMAproduction workflow, CFC was able to change along with evolving market demands

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think ahead 2019 Valuable for all inkjet users

THE FIFTH ANNUAL INKJET USER CONFERENCE BROUGHT TOGETHER MORE THAN 600 ATTENDEES FOR THREE DAYS OF NETWORKING AND EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS.



From its inspiring keynotes to its plentiful networking opportunities, thINK Ahead 2019 was a resounding success, bringing more than 600 attendees to the luxurious Waldorf Astoria Boca Raton Resort & Club in Boca Raton, Fla., Sept. 16-18. The annual inkjet user conference, now in its fifth year, featured more than 30 educational sessions within seven tracks led by 75 industry experts, including 50 current production inkjet customers, and 25 analysts and other industry experts.

"We're probably going to inkjet you to death over the next couple days," joked Victor Bohnert, executive director of thINK, in his opening remarks.

Though thINK Ahead 2019 didn't go quite that far, it provided a wealth of information, trends, and best practices, much of it offered by current Canon Solutions America inkjet customers who were eager to share helpful tips with their peers.

"The thINK board is very proud of the community we have built, and feel that thINK is different from other inkjet user communities in many ways — for instance, while thINK has industry experts and Canon executives to round out our learning, the majority of our speakers

are inkjet customers, and we think that speaks volumes as to what type of learning environment and community that thINK has been shaped to be," Bob Radzis, thINK president, pointed out.

thINK conference organizers are also very cognizant of the fact that some thINK attendees are coming to the conference with no inkjet experience whatsoever, while others have extensive experience and are seeking to take it all to the next level, he noted. As a result, thINK Ahead 2019 sessions spanned all experience levels to meet each attendee where they are on their inkjet journey.

Fellow thINK board member Dave Johannes agreed that the event has great value for experienced inkjet users and novices alike. "It's the opportunity to learn from your peers and share your experiences in an environment that nurtures collaboration, new friendships, and advances inkjet technology in a way that benefits the industry as a whole," Johannes said. "It is worth every dime we spend on it and the time of every attendee that participates. Whether you are new to inkjet, or an experienced provider, there is always something to learn."

According to Radzis, the thINK attendees that come

think ahead 2019



back year after year are a testament to their ability to keep the content fresh, with new sessions and new learning, to help the community thrive. "thINK is not a one-time conference to attend, but an evolution of learning available to all members."

New this year, for example, were "Ask the Experts" sessions, which gave attendees a chance to ask in-depth questions of current inkjet users and industry leaders in an informal setting. Also new was a full track of sessions for in-plants, a popular addition.

"I really liked the dedicated in-plant track program," remarked Chuck Werninger, senior manager & records management officer at Houston Independent School District Printing Services. "It's becoming more significant that in-plants come to an event like this. Inkjet is a mature platform, not an experiment."

Inkjet users — including both current and potential customers — from many other businesses also abounded: commercial, direct mail, and book printers, transactional printers, publishers, and more.

One topic that came up repeatedly during the breakout sessions — and never failed to elicit surprise from those still considering inkjet — was the impressive uptime of inkjet presses: more than 95%, according to many. Though some who are investigating inkjet expressed concern about replacing all existing digital presses with a single inkjet press, those who have successfully done this assured them that despite similar fears at the onset, their inkjet presses almost never go down; in fact they run best when they never stop running, they said.

Outside of the tracks and sessions devoted to innovation within specific applications and ways to achieve inkjet page growth, attendees were inspired by two keynote speakers — Adam Markel, a recognized expert in professional and personal reinvention who guides individuals and businesses to capitalize on change, and Rorke Denver, Navy SEAL commander, *New York Times* best-selling author, leader, and founder of Ever Onward.

thINK Ahead 2019 was at capacity and — sponsorships sold-out, pointed out Bohnert. "Partners have already

thINK AHEAD 2019



Left: From left, Larry Kuhlman, president of Graphic Village; Mike Jenoski, president of Goodway Group; and Mike Zaia, VP of operations at Medius, participate in a commercial printing panel discussion.

reached out to us to secure their sponsorship for thINK Ahead 2020, which will take place Aug. 31-Sept. 2, 2020, in Boca Raton, Fla., at the Waldorf Astoria Boca Raton Resort & Club," he said.

"We are thankful for the thINK partner community; it is due to their interest and support that we are able to put together one of the largest inkjet user group events in the world." During thINK Ahead 2019, Canon Solutions America, also

made several interesting announcements:

• Francis A. McMahon, Executive VP, Production Print Solutions, and Eric Hawkinson, VP of Marketing, revealed the next iteration of the Océ VarioPrint i-series technology: the Océ VarioPrint i-series+. The VP i-series+ provides a combination of engine technologies, firmware, and performance inks to provide commercial print quality and a larger color gamut on a broader range of standard offset coated media, all with enhanced workflows for increased productivity. Current i-series presses already

in the field can be upgraded, the executives pointed out.

- They also revealed that Canon Solutions America has outgrown its Customer Experience Center and plans to open a new, larger version in March 2020, where even more Canon technology and partner offerings will be on display. It will also enable space for a new media lab.
- "thINK on the Road" is going back on the road. This traveling thINK event which offers inkjet sales training and enables face time with Canon Solutions America leadership will be in a city near you in 2020.

In the end, the value of thINK Ahead 2019 went beyond the sessions. It was more about forming a relationship with the entire inkjet community, shaking hands with the people who develop and support Canon inkjet presses, and experiencing those presses in person at the Customer Experience Center. Attendees got to meet the product managers for each press and ask specific questions. That personal approach really does make a difference.



INKJET SECOND ANNUAL INKJET **INNOVATION AWARD WINNERS**

mented reality.

Some attendees had their inkjet work on display throughout the event, part of the second annual Inkjet Innovation Awards competition, honoring Canon Solutions America inkjet customers who are pushing the boundaries of inkjet.

"We are pleased with the annual Inkjet Innovation Awards as each year we get to see new ideas and new ways our peers are

using inkjet in innovative ways, to move their business forward in new directions," commented Bob Radzis, thINK president. "The competition was fierce this year, but these inkjet innovators had what it takes to win."

Winners, which were announced during a special awards ceremony at the conference, included:

People's Choice: International Paper's "Apollo the Spacedog," a children's book that brings the adventures of a spunky girl and her dog to life, used the magic of aug-



Best in Show: Trekk's "Possibilities Catalog", printed at Specialty Print Communications 1 — a visual and tactile journey through the capabilities of the Océ ProStream — was printed on a wide range of Verso products.





Business Effectiveness: Highnote's Annual Appeal for Family & Children's Place quadrupled the funds raised for the nonprofit year-over-year.



Degree of Innovation: Trend Offset's "Destination Guide" featured advanced variable data and graphics capabilities, including "geo-zoning" to include local advertisements in this national direct mail campaign.



Design Aesthetics: Copy General's "Smart Change" catalog won points for its soft-touch UV coat and spot-gloss UV, which was strategically placed on the photography to pull readers into the experience.

PARTNERING PAYS OFF

CANON SOLUTIONS AMERICA COLLABORATES WITH MEDIA PARTNERS TO PRODUCE EXEMPLARY MARKETING PIECES



HOW TO TELL THE STORY OF YOUR BRAND

To shine a spotlight on the capabilities of its inkjet presses, the Océ ColorStream and award-winning Océ ProStream 1000 continuous-feed inkjet press, Canon Solutions America partnered with three leading paper companies to create unique, memorable pieces that go beyond the typical marketing collateral.

The idea behind the three projects, says Jason Barbero, senior marketing specialist media, Certified Product Manager, Canon Solutions America, "was to promote co-branding opportunities with some of our largest media partners."

The pieces, include "Apollo the Spacedog," produced with International Paper, and Happy Paws, produced with Domtar, both of which used uncoated stock run on the Océ ColorStream. The third piece, the "ProStream Possibilities Media Catalog," jointly produced with Verso, uses coated inkjet-treated stock to great effect, printed on the ProStream.

For the Verso collaboration, the idea from the get-go was to showcase the best-in-class inkjet ProStream, with a catalog "that will blow people away," says Barbero.

"ProStream Possibilities Media Catalog" offers a glimpse into the wide variety of coated offset available for the production inkjet, showcasing samples printed on a variety of stock of different textures, weights, and finishes. It allows commercial printers to see that digitally printed samples match or exceed the quality of offset.

The piece was so successful Canon Solutions America's customer Specialty Print Communications (SPC), who printed the "ProStream Possibilities Media Catalog," garnered two honors from the PIA's Premier Print Awards. Out of 2,240 entries, the "ProStream Possibilities Media Catalog" received:

Award of Recognition Winner in the Product Catalogs category (four or more colors, printers with 101 or more employees).

Certificate of Merit in the Other Special Finishing Techniques category.

In addition, at the Great Lakes Graphics Association's 2019 Graphics Excellence Awards Celebrations, the catalog was named Best of Category in the Product Catalogs (four or more colors) category for superior craftsmanship in the design, creation, and production of top-quality printed material produced for customers.

"The Possibilities catalog demonstrates that the ProStream is more than just a transactional promo inkjet printer, that it has full commercial printing capabilities that brings digital inkjet to the next level in terms of quality," Barbero says.

THE COLORSTREAM GOES COMMERCIAL

"Apollo the Spacedog," an original children's book created by International Paper in collaboration with illustrator Kyle Beckett, is printed on International Paper's Accent Opaque Digital paper and was produced on the ColorStream. The story follows the adventures of Apollo, a shelter dog who longs to find a home, and Andi, a 7-year-old girl who loves astronomy, as they embark on an imaginary space trip.

Scenes from Andi's imagination are brought to life through augmented reality (created by Trekk), and available to the young reader by downloading International Paper's IP4D augmented reality app. "People are blown away," Barbero notes. "The story comes to life with video and sound, transporting the reader's experience to a whole other level with the interactivity."

The partnership with International Paper was a natural fit. "International Paper came up with the idea of us collaborating on a children's book that targets its Fall reading program, Accent on Reading, which it participates in every year," Barbero says.

Throughout the Fall, International Paper distributed "Apollo the Spacedog" to children through literacy partners and local schools.

For a much different take on the ColorStream's capabilities, the effort with Domtar resulted in a direct-mail piece, called Happy Paws, that showcases the variable-data capabilities of the press as well as the paper company's inkjet treated, uncoated stock.

OUTSIDE THE BOX

"For us, the ability to step outside the box with these three projects was really exciting," Barbero says.

Canon Solutions America, he notes, wanted to show off the beautiful quality of the work and the different applications the ProStream and ColorStream can produce. "There's a lot of misconceptions about what our presses can do. Our continuous-feed and sheetfed inkjet presses have a lot of flexibility, and that, along with the quality of work they produce, is why we are the leader in the inkjet market," Barbero says.

These three projects, while all demonstrating different capabilities, were developed to celebrate the strength of Canon's media partnerships, as well as to educate the graphic arts community about digital inkjet technology's capabilities, especially as they continue to improve. "When you compare the ProStream 1000 head-to-head over offset, we often will win," Barbero explains.

All three pieces demonstrate that digital inkjet is here, and it is growing, says Barbero.

"Yes, customers are embracing inkjet, but still there are many printers and buyers who are skeptical or unaware of the quality levels that inkjet can produce. The majority of printers are still using offset presses.

"Inkjet is growing at such a rapid pace," he adds. "The quality, ink, and paper are all there. When customers are shown these pieces, they are taken aback that it is printed on inkjet."

CFC PRINT & MAIL

COLORSTREAM WORKFLOW POSITIONS CFC PRINT & MAIL 'FOR YEARS TO COME'



What do you do when your company has shown **steady growth** for 11 consecutive years, but now changing market conditions are threatening your future growth? If you are CFC Print & Mail, you change along with it, even if that means doing something radical.

"Starting in 2015 or so, we started taking a hard look at our business model," notes Tommy Gillis, managing member of CFC Print & Mail, a trade-only printer in Grand Prairie, Texas. "Our turnarounds have always been fast, but as the market changed, our traditional offset-centric workflow was starting to create limitations on the services and capabilities we could offer."

CFC Print & Mail produces short- and long-run forms, envelopes, and other business-critical documents to a national customer base. Approximately 60% of its business is checks and other financial documents that include MICR.

Before investigating high-speed inkjet, the company had developed one of the most efficient hybrid offset production workflows in the country. Turnaround time was 1.8 days, on average, from the time an order was received until it shipped. Some jobs shipped within 24 hours.

However, even this highly efficient workflow required a lot of manual intervention. An offset plate needed to be made to print the colored background on the check stock. Next, those preprinted check shells would go to a sequencer for numbering, followed by a digital toner printer for adding the variable information like company logo, name, address, and MICR code lines. Finally, the checks would need to be cut, packaged, and shipped.

There were other challenges, as well. Maintaining its four aging offset presses was becoming harder. Parts were more challenging to find, and so were qualified offset press operators. "Younger workers didn't have the necessary skills, and experienced workers were aging out of the workforce," recalls Gillis.

Equally important, CFC saw new opportunities, particularly those coming from its reseller customers, that required 100% variable printing on the fly, something that wasn't possible with its existing workflow.

It was time to transition to a full, secure white paper (end-toend white-paper-in/colored secure-document-out) workflow. This would allow CFC to address all of its critical needs: further reduce turnarounds, take even more cost out of the process, and provide full variable printing capabilities.

But it wouldn't be easy. CFC quickly discovered that most inkjet vendors didn't understand the financial printing business. CFC also had developed a custom order management system called Plantrol that it wanted to integrate into the new workflow. The system covered everything from invoicing, sending advance shipment notifications, and order entry templates, to paper requirements, ink requirements, and inventory control. Totally revamping that system was out of the question. Yet, that's exactly what most inkjet vendors wanted to do.

"We spent two-plus years doing R&D on what was available and what would work best for us," Gillis recalls. "Not just in terms of the capabilities of the different high-speed inkjet presses, but what we could bolt into our existing workflow so that we wouldn't have to totally rebuild or acquire new software."

Struggling to find a good fit, Gillis was in the "eleventh hour" with another vendor when his local Canon Solutions America rep came to visit. Gillis was instantly impressed. "The rep understood MICR and check production," he says. "He also understood the technology. He understood our business model and how Canon Solutions America's production eugipment and software could interconnect with our existing order management without doing a complete overhaul."

Gillis wanted to learn more. The Canon Solutions America sales rep offered to send him and his team to Canon's thINK conference in Boca Raton, Fla., where he could talk to other Canon customers and prospective customers and visit the Canon Solutions America Customer Experience Center. "After the conclusion of the conference, I was sold," Gillis recalls. "I knew this was the right partnership for us."

The next step was to bring Canon Solutions America experts on-site to do a workflow assessment. Drawing on their expertise in financial document printing and conversions, the team quickly determined that CFC's multi-step hybrid manufacturing process could be automated into a highly efficient two-step high-speed inkjet process instead.

They recommended two Océ ColorStream production inkjet presses with Canon PRISMAproduction workflow software, Quadient Inspire Designer software for document composition, Arcis Solutions to add the check security features needed for single-pass check printing, and in-line perfing and slitting finishing

Next, CFC's IT department and Canon's Professional Services co-built a custom desktop application ("e-Job") that merged the Plantrol order information with user provided parameters and graphics files. Now, after entering the information in e-Job, a print-ready file can be ready in as quickly as 10 seconds.

The result is a streamlined workflow that begins with blank white paper and yields a full-color printed check or other financial document at the end. Gillis notes, "By the time the file gets



CFC installed two Océ ColorStream production inkjet presses with Canon PRISMAproduction workflow software.

CFC Print & Mail produces short- and long-run forms, envelopes, and other business-critical documents to a national customer base.

to the printer and it's ready to print, all we're doing is loading the substrate onto the press and hitting the button. The product is coming out as a completed product."

Canon Solutions America also worked with CFC's security paper supplier, Appvion, to develop a security paper specifically for inkjet printing. The new paper, called DocuCheck Basic MOCR Inkjet, provided excellent image quality, runnability, and value.

All along the way was Canon's Professional Services team to ensure that the transition would go smoothly. This comprehensive program, called Canon TrueSupport, covers pre-site preparation, installation and implementation, and post-installation application onboarding.

"Canon Solutions America was really good, not only about the installation, but about the training," Gillis says, noting that five of CFC's employees trained on site in Boca Raton prior to the install. The press arrived in July 2018 and the company was printing live product by the end of October. "That included adding a whole new bindery equipment line, as well," he says.

There were no unexpected surprises. "Canon Solutions America did a great job of letting us know what the expectations were, and they were there all the way," Gillis recalls.

Nothing Short of Phenomenal

The results have been nothing less than phenomenal. In CFC's old multi-step manufacturing process, it took 100 minutes, on average, to produce 3,000 checks. Today, that has been reduced by 93%, requiring an average of only seven minutes to produce 3,000 checks. Overall turnaround time has been cut in half — from 1.8 days to less than one day.

"Give me the order today, and I'll ship it today in most cases," says Gillis. "Worst case scenario is that I will ship it tomorrow."

CFC has now produced 200 million-plus billable impressions on its ColorStream presses. Although some business remains on the offset equipment, such as envelopes and carbonless forms, 60% of its business has been transitioned to the inkjet platform.

But it's not just CFC that benefits. Its customers benefit, as well. "They get the ability to get product faster without paying a rush premium," Gillis adds. "They get new patented digital

security features for financial documents, the ability to add a CMYK or four-color process printing of a customer's logo or name (previously we were providing only a spot color product), and an improvement in color consistency during a print run."

With the patented digital Arcis Solutions, new security features include Digital Void Pantographs, a microprint signature line using microtext, VDot technology (designed to trigger the anticopy function on most copiers), and a hidden microprint number or word in the border of the check that corresponds to a control number, all with no need for preprinted security stock or need to match preprinted stocks with jobs.

But the cost savings don't stop there. CFC has identified 20 to 30 total areas of savings: less plate material, less raw material waste, less finished product waste, and less usage of supplies, to name a few. In total, the company estimates that it is saving \$45,000 to \$48,000 per month.

Annual revenues continue their steady pace of growth, as well. With fully digital variable printing capability, CFC is expanding into direct mail applications. For example, one of its reseller partners is a mailing company for which CFC had been printing shells and envelopes. Now, CFC can offer that customer and other resellers the ability to provide turnkey mailing solutions. It has recently added Quadient bulk mailing software to enable it to verify addresses and change of address as well as comingle addresses for the most cost-effective postal rates.

The new high-speed inkjet workflow has been everything CFC hoped, and more. Without it, Gillis says, the limitations of the offset-centric workflow would have handcuffed the company going forward and even stunted its growth. But with this investment, he concludes, the company will continue to grow.

"With the new ColorStream presses, combined with the PRISMAsync workflow and Aspire software, we have the ability to offer a whole range of new capabilities to both our existing customers and a whole new base of customers," he says. "We can do variable print, direct mail and full mailing services, and mainstream commercial print — all things that we would not have been able to do before. We are positioned for years to come."

SAVE THE DATE: thINK Ahead 2020



August 31 - September 2, 2020 Boca Raton, Fla.



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Inkjet Networking and Knowledge

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The total cost to print this issue of the thINK newsletter is 29¢ per piece and 4 Hours and 48 minutes. Compare that to .44¢ per piece and 8 Hours and 20 minutes of Press time on a 100 page per unit toner engine. Supply and service cost of Ink Jet was 15¢ per set and 30¢ for toner per set. Paper was 14¢ per set. No Labor or lease cost was included. Qty: 4500 **That's profitable print!**

PRODUCTION NOTES

COVER: Veritiv Endurance Gloss 100# Cover TEXT: Veritiv Endurance Gloss 80# Text

PRESS: Océ VarioPrint i-series+

FINISHING: Duplo DDC-810 Raised Spot UV Coater

thINK is an independent community of Canon Solutions America production print customers, solution partners, and print industry experts and Canon Solutions America is a proud executive sponsor. 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. Learn more: thinkforum.com



