Belk Printing Technologies, now a division of Classic Graphics Inc., is based in Pineville, North Carolina, and is an award-winning printing and multi-channel direct marketing company. Serving a diverse customer base for more than 40 years, Belk Printing Technologies offers sheet-fed and digital printing, VDP services, mailing and fulfillment, and is increasingly combining these capabilities into customized campaigns incorporating print, direct mail and interactive media. Lee Ellen Turnbull, daughter of founder Ralph Belk Sr., serves as CEO.

CHALLENGE:
“We wanted to simplify the job planning function and streamline our workflows, and needed the right MIS system to achieve this.”

—Chris Reynolds, vice president of manufacturing

Belk Printing Technologies was an early adopter of print MIS, recognizing before many of its competitors how critical this technology is to ongoing success. After operating EFI PSI for 12 years, the system could no longer keep up with the company’s growth. Chris Reynolds, vice president of manufacturing, and a group of others looked at several MIS options over time.

Belk Printing Technologies selected EFI Pace for a number of key reasons, including its browser-based, user-friendly interface, and common-sense approach to estimating and workflows.

After a successful Pace implementation, Belk soon after purchased the Metrix imposition and layout tool. The Pace development team built the integration between the two systems.
Belk Printing Technologies has realized several significant benefits from EFI Pace, the biggest being able to achieve its goal of a vastly reduced job planning department.

The second biggest result has been a large increase in performance. “The integrated scheduling module is huge. This has trimmed our turnaround time by 2-3 days per job,” says Reynolds.

“The reporting features in Pace are awesome,” continues Reynolds. “Before, all custom report requests had to go through the IT department – now, anyone can pull their own data from more than 200 reports or create their own in ePaceStation. This has made the department heads independent and they love not having to go through IT for every request. The reports themselves are easy to create and we really like the toggle field feature.”

SOLUTION: “Pace is the best choice for us – it’s very user-friendly and extremely stable, and the fact it can be accessed from anywhere is great.” — Chris Reynolds
RESULTS:
“When we selected EFI Pace we had 4-5 people in the job planning function, and now we have one job planner. We’ve transitioned the others to comparable roles in other areas. Thanks to Pace, job planning is now practically ‘push button.’”

— Chris Reynolds

Pace’s data collection has been another big benefit for the company. “Accurate data collection is very important to us, so we can check how we are performing. Data collection with Pace is so simple and makes so much sense. Employees were trained in only 10 minutes, and they like how fast and easy it is to use, especially how easy it is to split time between jobs,” explains Reynolds.

Reynolds notes that Belk Printing Technologies was one of the early “power users” of Pace, and he worried a little that EFI’s purchase of Pace might negatively affect his high level of customer service – his concern has been unfounded.

“We’ve had nothing but positive experiences with EFI since they purchased Pace. It has been a good transition. We have zero regrets about deciding to move to Pace, and know we made the right decision. It’s rare to make a big purchase like an MIS system and not look back and second guess things, but we have never looked back and are very happy.”
Print to win with EFI.

EFI (www.efi.com) is a world leader in digital print servers and controllers, superwide format printers and inks, wide-format printers, industrial inkjet printing systems and Web-to-Print, Print MIS and Proofing solutions. EFI is dedicated to giving customers a competitive edge with award-winning, scalable solutions from creation to print that maximize productivity and increase profits.