Finlay Printing was founded by the Finlay brothers in Hartford, Conn., in 1876. Today the firm is run by brothers Todd and Kevin Kalagher. In its 130th year of doing business, Finlay has about 90 employees and delivers revenues in the $25 to $30 million range. Finlay targets highly branded companies in five vertical markets: education, corporate, retail point of sale, financial services, and design.

CHALLENGE:

“When we installed two new MAN Roland presses in 2004 and 2005, we knew we wanted to establish an end-to-end JDF workflow, right out of the gate.”

– Todd Kalagher, President, Finlay Printing

Living up to its tagline, Delivering Success, Finlay focuses its efforts on making its customers’ projects more profitable with complete turnkey project management from concept through delivery. “In order to successfully deliver against that promise,” says Todd Kalagher, Finlay’s President, “we knew we had to introduce as much automation into the process as possible. The new presses alone were not enough.”

Finlay had been using EFI’s Hagen OA print MIS solution primarily for accounting. Kalagher’s team partnered with EFI to take greater advantage of their existing Hagen MIS and implement direct integration with Agfa platemaking and the new MAN Roland presses. “Our biggest challenge was not the technology,” adds Kalagher. “It was change management – ensuring that all of our employees understood exactly what this initiative meant for the overall business. We were looking to our vendor partners to help us with that education process.” Kalagher also wanted to incorporate as many of his existing processes as possible to leverage the work that Finlay, a technology-driven innovator, had already done to streamline its workflow.
With the installation of two new, more automated presses and the Hagen implementation, Finlay’s pressroom was able to go from six presses to three. As it installed the new presses, Finlay also implemented shop floor, production, scheduling, shipping and more of the services available in Hagen to take full advantage of JDF. “Many of our processes, including things like scheduling and purchasing, were already based on forms,” says Kalagher. “This was important. Because Hagen is forms-based, it was relatively easy for us to migrate existing forms to the new system.”

Kalagher points out that in order to appropriately set up the presses, a plate scan is required, and Hagen became the central point from which data flows to and from the Agfa platesetter and the PECOM front-end controller for the scheduled MAN Roland press. “Our goal was to shorten our makeready times even further,” says Kalagher. “With this new process, the press knows what the next job will be and can start preparing itself even before finishing the previous job by running inks up or down to accommodate lighter or heavier coverage.”

SOLUTION:
“EFI was as excited as we were about deploying a full JDF implementation. They clearly understood how it could benefit our business.”
“It is amazing how fast we can get a job out now,” says Kalagher. “When you are running a 1,500 count job with a press that runs at 12,000 to 14,000 sheets per hour, you need the press to know what to do. Hagen is the link that makes that communication possible.” Because of the increased automation, Finlay has been able to reduce makeready waste from 2,000 sheets to 500, and save some 20 minutes per form in makeready time. This increased efficiency has allowed the company to grow in double digits, even with fewer presses in-house. “With Hagen,” adds Kalagher, “we have a seamless, multi-vendor digital workflow that allows us to concentrate our brain power on the work for the benefit of the customer rather than constantly worrying about process issues. Companies like EFI that are truly JDF compliant and got ahead of the curve in product development have made this possible.”

Finlay has discovered even more benefits with Hagen and JDF than anticipated. “Being successful in a competitive environment is not so much about raising topline revenue,” says Kalagher. “It is more about protecting bottom line dollars. Our ability to integrate Hagen, MAN Roland and Agfa using JDF automation has resulted in enormous savings on paper alone, just in the last year.”

RESULTS:

“With EFI’s help, we became the first fully JDF-compliant printer in MAN Roland’s North American customer base, operating with 10-20% fewer employees than our competition.”
Print to Win

EFI (www.efi.com) is the world leader in colour digital print servers, superwide format printers and inks, industrial inkjet printing systems and print management, Web-to-print and proofing solutions. EFI is dedicated to giving customers a competitive edge with award-winning, scalable solutions from creation to print that maximise productivity and increase profits. EFI maintains 23 offices worldwide.

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