Case In Point
Print MIS Solutions

The JohnsByrne Company: Leveraging EFI Integrated Solutions for Business Success

Profile
The JohnsByrne Company was founded in 1959 by John B. Gustafson, along with his parents John E. and Marie Byrne Gustafson. The company name was created by taking two Johns—the first name of both father and son—combined with Marie’s maiden name, Byrne. Today, the family-owned company employs 185 people and offers a wide range of services, including advanced bindery and finishing.

Challenge
JohnsByrne first implemented EFI Hagen™ Print MIS in 1995 and has continued to add additional EFI modules in order to perfect its computer integrated manufacturing (CIM) model. Most recently, following the acquisition of the Midwest plant of Graphic Converting, renamed to Graphic Technologies, JohnsByrne was looking for a way to gather real time business and production information from Graphic Technologies’ aging, but highly functional, fleet of specialty printing and binding equipment. And they wanted to make sure that this information was being automatically updated in their Hagen OA system.

Solution
In addition to Hagen OA, JohnsByrne has also deployed the EFI MIS to Prepress Workflow to integrate with its Kodak Prinergy workflow system, as well as PrinterSite® Internal to streamline estimating and order entry from sales. Upon acquiring Graphic Technologies, the company purchased EFI Auto-Count for its 13 Bobst presses and older bindery equipment in addition to their existing Komori press Auto-Counts.

Results
By using EFI’s integrated suite of solutions, JohnsByrne has been able to quickly and easily integrate the Graphic Technologies acquisition into its overall operation, including the ability to view real-time information on its production operation across all locations. As a leader and innovator in the implementation of CIM strategies, JohnsByrne credits the EFI solution suite with playing a significant role in the company’s ability to double revenues over the last three years and capture more than $250,000 annually in customer alternations that were previously unbilled.
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— Tim Uchwat, Chief Financial Officer, JohnsByrne

JohnsByrne: Pressing the Limits of Computer Integrated Manufacturing

JohnsByrne is in its third generation of family management, with the four sons of John B. Gustafson—Corey, Jack, Mike, and Pate, the President, Chief Operating Officer, and Executive Vice Presidents—carrying on the tradition of combining quality and innovation with the latest technology and business models.

The JohnsByrne tagline, “Press the Limits,” epitomizes what the company has done with respect to its growth and development over the years. Founded in 1959 by John B. Gustafson, along with his parents John E. and Marie Byrne Gustafson, JohnsByrne prides itself on being an early adopter of leading technologies that allow it to deliver market leading products and services to its customers. Today, the family-owned business employs 185 people and has doubled its revenues over the past three years through both organic growth and acquisition, while still pursuing its mission of providing superior printing solutions and outstanding customer service. The company offers a wide range of printing and related services, from prepress through fulfillment and distribution.

The Promise of CIM

JohnsByrne recognized early on that the industry was shifting from a craft-based process to a manufacturing business. According to Tim Uchwat, Chief Financial Officer, “We knew that a key element of this transition for us was to gain a better understanding of our business with better access to data. So in 1995, we did a study of the print MIS solutions available on the market and decided to implement EFI Hagen print MIS as the beginning of this transition for us.” Over the years, the company continued to act as a beta site for new releases of Hagen, and today runs its business using Hagen OA.

Uchwat adds, “Four or five years ago, when everyone started talking about Computer Integrated Manufacturing (CIM) for the printing industry, we were excited because we thought it would lead us to a capability we had talked about internally for many years—the ability to enter information once and use it many times, across the entire life of a job. This goes way beyond simple input and output on the shop floor.”

In the JohnsByrne vision, a job would commence with information being electronically entered to create an estimate or quote, including type of stock, caliper, quantity, inks, and other job specifications. That information, then, would be seamlessly carried through to a production ticket, purchasing, the press, bindery, shipping and invoicing, with new information being added at each step of the process. “We began an internal effort,” says Uchwat, “to become one of the first CIM-enabled printers and it was quite an undertaking. At the time, no one really knew how it would turn out and what the ultimate impact of standards such as JDF would be.”

Collecting Accurate Information

Under the old model, according to Uchwat, it was difficult to collect accurate information, not only about what was happening on the shop floor, but also prepress activities and items such as customer alterations that should ultimately be billable. To access a broader scope of information, the company added the EFI Prepress to MIS Workflow to integrate Kodak Prinergy with Hagen OA, as well as PrinterSite Internal to improve its quoting and estimating process. He says, “In the old days, a sales rep would often hand a CSR or estimator information about a job scribbled on a napkin. Information was often incomplete or illegible, and this resulted in delays and errors.” In another effort to reduce manual input of data, JohnsByrne installed EFI Auto-Count on its five 40” Komori presses—four six-colors with coaters and one 2/2 perfector—to automatically collect production data.

Change can be difficult within organizations, and Uchwat reports that initially there was resistance to these process changes. “But our management put a stake in the ground,” he says, “and ensured that everyone understood how important this migration to CIM was to the future success of our company.” For example, as the company was transitioning its sales force to PrinterSite Internal, management guaranteed a four-hour response on estimates for requests submitted with PrinterSite Internal, while jobs written up the old-fashioned way could result in estimates being delivered later. “That way,” he says, “we were able to demonstrate the value to the sales force, and over time that caused behavior change.”

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Data collection requirements expanded with the company’s acquisition of the Midwest operations of Graphic Converting, renamed Graphic Technologies. Uchwat remarks, “The Graphic Technologies operation was fairly efficient, but we had vintage equipment that could not communicate, including 13 Bobst presses. We knew we needed a solution to correct that situation without having to replace a lot of equipment. That’s where EFI Auto-Count came in. Because of our success with Auto-Count in our production plant, it was one of the first purchases we made following the acquisition. “ With Auto-Count, production equipment that is not JDF-enabled can communicate its status and activities directly to Hagen OA so that production information can be captured real-time without manual postings.

CIM Delivers Results

Today, JohnsByrne has one of the most advanced CIM implementations in the industry and is reaping the benefits. “It all starts with the estimate,” says Uchwat. “We want to keep our sales professionals on the street as much as possible, and they all have laptops and Blackberries. This gives them the opportunity to enter job specifications right from the customer site using PrinterSite Internal. And we have made it as easy as possible for them to do so, with pull-down menus and the ability to call up old jobs or estimates, make changes and save as a new job.”

This integrated information flow has been beneficial on the production floor as well. Uchwat adds, “In the past, someone might have inadvertently remained logged in to a job after it was finished, or they might forget to enter the number of plates used. Now, every time a user pushes a button to make a plate, inventory utilization is posted, job cost is entered and we know we have correct information without having to worry about error in/error out. This has been very exciting.”

In addition to the productivity improvements and better management based on live data, JohnsByrne has benefited from cost savings and incremental revenue. Uchwat says, “Due in large part to implementation of the EFI suite of products, we have been able to double our revenues in the last three years, including some $250,000 in author’s alternations that we can now capture and make an informed decision about whether or not to bill.” Uchwat notes that automation and innovation has helped the company with both acquiring new customers and growing share of existing customers. Estimates are faster and more accurate and JohnsByrne’s close rates have improved significantly. He adds, “I know exactly what is happening on the floor without having to walk out there, down to the level of which press is undergoing a blanket wash or which three or four projects a prepress operator is simultaneously managing. I am a detailed cost-analysis kind of guy, and this level of detail has helped me do a much better job of managing the business and delivering to the high expectations of our customers.”

Looking Toward the Future

JohnsByrne prides itself on staying ahead of the game in the rapidly changing commercial print market, and Uchwat is looking to EFI for even more functionality moving forward. He says, “We will ultimately add EFI PrintFlow® Dynamic Scheduling to make our scheduling process even more functional and automated. We are also looking forward to implementing Executive Information System (EIS), which is a completely customizable dashboard that integrates with Hagen OA giving us immediate access to the information we need to run our business. Each user can filter information they feel is most important to their functional role in the company and have it accessible all on one screen instead of having to switch between several screens.” JohnsByrne is also looking forward to integrating Hagen OA with its Salesforce.com CRM implementation.

Uchwat concludes, “I talk to a lot of press manufacturers and other suppliers to the industry. Everyone agrees that we are still at the very beginning of CIM in the printing industry, and there is so much potential to come. By partnering with EFI, I have been able to stay at the leading edge of this important industry evolution, keeping our company as competitive and profitable as possible.”
Get Connected with EFI

EFI’s integrated solutions—Production Printing, Prepress and Graphic Arts, Web to Print, Print Management Information System (Print MIS) and Corporate—give your company a competitive edge in increasing profits, improving productivity, streamlining business processes, reducing overhead costs and enabling your team to work more productively and profitably. Visit www.efi.com to learn more.