Modern Litho-Print Co. has been in business in Jefferson City, Missouri for over 70 years, serving customers in over 40 states. Owned by parent company Covenant Graphics, Inc., Modern Litho employs over 100 employees and focuses primarily on large format (40”) work with full bindery and mailing departments.

Sister company Brown Printing, located across town, specializes in digital and small format commercial jobs. Both companies have a long and successful history of producing quality work and together have 14 sales representatives that sell both plants services.

**CHALLENGE:**
“As the volume and complexity of work grew for Modern Litho, it became clear we needed more automated tools to streamline the workflow and keep our costs in check.”

—Jim Tomblinson, plant superintendent, Modern Litho-Print Co.

Modern Litho has been relying on the EFI Monarch (formerly called EFI Hagen™) print management system for more than 10 years. While Monarch was able to help them streamline processes, Modern Litho needed to add a specific solution to simplify the labor-intensive publication work they do each month.

“We were still writing manual job tickets and needed to add people to keep up with the work load,” said Tomblinson. “We also had a disconnect between customer service reps (CSR’s) and pre-press that resulted in a delay in starting jobs due to the lack of complete information from customers. We were in search of a bi-directional solution that would not only give us snap shots but also a panoramic view of our jobs.”

With these challenges in mind, Modern Litho saw a demo of Monarch Planner at an EFI Connect users’ conference, and the solution fit their needs exactly.
Soon after attending Connect, Modern Litho added Monarch Planner and PrintFlow® to their workflow and then worked closely over time with EFI and Kodak to integrate their prepress interface from PRINERGY to Planner to produce plates, becoming the first printer in the United States to do so.

About a year after installing Planner, they added EFI Auto-Count® for shop floor data collection and PrinterSite® Internal to simplify quotes and order placement for the sales team and office staff.

As the size and scope of work at Modern Litho has grown over the years, the company has relied more and more on their EFI solutions to keep pace and ensure smooth operations. PrintFlow, Auto-Count and PrinterSite Internal are key components, with the Monarch Planner to PRINERGY integration the centerpiece of the workflow.

PrintFlow has the ability to forecast long term or short term, which helps Modern Litho accommodate last minute rush jobs. “PrintFlow lets us target in advance the cost centers that require schedule adjustments to meet tight deadlines,” notes Tomblinson. “Also, it gives us the flexibility of scheduling down time for maintenance on production machines as they’re available.”

“Auto-Count runs on all our presses and in our bindery department. It’s made a tremendous impact on our operation from a data collection standpoint,” says Tomblinson. “Auto-Count allows me to compare data for training and evaluation purposes, and provides us the data we’ve been missing to make accurate cost sheet comparisons.”

PrinterSite Internal has made a huge impact as well. “PrinterSite Internal has an easy to use feature whereby data is entered one time into a custom designed job estimate form, and from that form a correct transfer of information through estimating and other departments can occur at a very fast rate. It also allows for customer specific information to be pulled from Monarch and populated into the PrinterSite Internal estimate form, which reduces redundancy and increases accuracy,” explains Tomblinson. “When we receive the job order, the work order can be initiated in PrinterSite Internal,

**SOLUTION:**

“Monarch Planner has allowed us to do more work without adding more people — it gives us more tools to reduce cost on the front end.”

— Jim Tomblinson
which then transmits the quote number, job information and estimate into Planner. This saves a huge amount of time and as the saying goes, “time is money.”

Working alongside these other EFI solutions, Monarch Planner has brought about the most change at Modern Litho.

“The biggest boost to our pre-press operation has been the integration between PRINTERGY and Planner. With this tool, customers upload jobs online and view and approve a proof, while providing us with the impositions from Planner to push to PRINTERGY and print directly from the system,” comments Tomblinson.

“Publication printing is a major part of our business. The ability of Planner to ‘clone’ jobs allows us to get ahead of the curve and have 75 percent of job planning ready to go before we even have the content files,” he continues. Planner creates the job and sends it to PRINTERGY, awaiting the content file upload from the customer which then triggers the next step in the automated workflow process. “Within minutes of receiving the content upload, refined pages are pushed back to Planner for the CSR to view while customer proofing is in progress. This involves our CSR’s directly in the prepress process while they finish the remaining 25 percent of the job plan. The result has been a reduction in information bottlenecks and delays. This is truly an efficient workflow!”

“These EFI tools have greatly impacted our business at just the right time. We’ve seen gains in productivity and throughput speeds and have been able to reposition our workforce to operate leaner and more efficiently,” says Tomblinson. “We have a significant investment of both capital and time in this project and we look forward to receiving an outstanding ROI in the near future.”

“Modern Litho has partnered with EFI to utilize the tools and leverage ourselves to better understand and maintain control of the entire process front to back, which in the end means we control job costing. As the economy comes back we’re positioning ourselves to be more competitive than ever. We believe we will grow while maintaining a clearer picture of how that affects all aspects of each company,” concludes Tomblinson.

**RESULTS:**

“We’re now driving everything from the MIS, which is a huge step and very exciting. We call it a ‘predictable closed loop system’ that allows us to analyze data, compare the estimate to the actual cost, and make decisions that will make us more profitable.”

—Jim Tomblinson
Print to win with EFI.

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